

INSCRIPTION OF AMENI-AMENEMHA.

TRANSLATED BY

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THE following inscription, which is found in one of the entrance halls of the well-known tomb at Benihassan, has been translated by Birch, *Transactions of the Royal Society of Literature*, Vol. V., 1856, p. 212, and by Brugsch-Bey, *Histoire d'Égypte*, 4to, Leipzig, 1859, p. 55–56, again in his *Geschichte Aegyptens unter den Pharaonen*, p. 139 and foll., and by Reinisch, *Aegyptische Chrestomathie*, fo. Wien, Taf. 1, 5. It is also translated by M. Maspero, *Recueil de Travaux relatifs à la Philologie et à l'Archeologie Égyptiennes et Assyriennes*, 4to, Paris, 1879, Vol. I., p. 160. It occurs in a hall, or chamber, leading into the celebrated tomb of Beni-hassan, and refers to one of the ancestors of Chnumhotep, whose inscription is also given, containing the account of the hereditary investiture of

his family with the governorship of the district Mah, or Sah, known, at a later period, by the name of Antinöe. These inscriptions throw some light on the condition of Egypt under the XIIth dynasty, and the present one records the famine which then prevailed, similar to the great seven years' famine recorded in the Book of Genesis. Dependent upon the annual increase of the Nile, which sometimes failed, Egypt was occasionally subject to famines, and these, at the time of the XIIth dynasty, were so important that they attracted great attention and were considered worthy of record by the princes or hereditary lords who were buried at Beni-hassan. Under the XIIth dynasty, also, the tombs of Abydos show the creation of superintendents or storekeepers of public granaries, a class of functionaries apparently created to meet the emergency, while the disturbance of the level of the Nile, at Samneh, points to the cause of deficient inundations. The text is given, Lepsius, *Denkmäler*, Abtheilung II., Bd. IV., Bl. 122. The person who narrates his merits in the text is Ameni, surnamed Amenemha.

INSCRIPTION OF AMENI-AMENEMHA.

- 1 The year 43 of the sanctity of the HORUS, life of the born, the King of the South and North, RA-KHEPER-KA, ever-living.
- 2 Lord of Diadems, life of the born, golden hawk, life of the born, son of the SUN, USERTESEN (I), ever-living, for ages.
- 3 in¹ the 25th year, in Mah, of hereditary chief the officer² AMENI justified.
- 4 The 43rd year, the 15th of Choiak, Oh, all who love life (and) hate
- 5 death, say³ thousands of food and beer, bread, oxen, geese,
- 6 for the person⁴ of the hereditary chief functionary, great one of Mah, guardian⁵ of Syene, superior⁶ superintendent of prophets, AMENI justified, I followed my lord in his
- 7 sailing up the river to overthrow his enemies in the four⁷ foreign lands; I sailed up as the son of a chief chancellor, general of troops, the chief of Mah.
- 8 as the representative⁸ of my old father, the favoured of the palace, beloved⁹ of the court, I passed

¹ *χeft* used as *her*, "when," or "in."

² *Am-tut* "gracious hand."

³ May Osiris give.

⁴ *qaa*, "double," Maspero.

⁵ *Nem*, "lesser guardian."

⁶ *Her* may apply to Syene.

⁷ The cipher four occurs in the text, perhaps by error.

⁸ *Em atten, sa aten* is an officer.

⁹ *Meri*.

- 9 to Kash¹ sailing up. I led things everywhere ;
 I brought all my tribute—my favour it reached as far as
 the heaven.
- 10 His Majesty went, and came round in safety ; he over-
 threw his enemies in the vile Kash. I came, following
 him, protecting²
- 11 no loss of my troops. I sailed up to bring the treasure
 of gold³ to the sanctity of the King of the South and North
 RA-ΧΕΡΕΡ-ΚΑ, ever living for ages.
- 12 I sailed up with the hereditary chief, the prince, eldest
 of his race, AMENI. May he live and be well ! I went with
 my number⁴ of 400 of all the picked men of
- 13 my troops, I came in safety. I did not lose any of
 them. I was rewarded ;⁵ I was praised on account of it
 by the kings.⁶

¹ Aethiopia.

² *Em, sept, her*, no one was wanting of my warriors. Brugsch. "As a brave one."

³ All sorts. Maspero.

⁴ Or body.

⁵ *s'a na*.

⁶ The two monarchs at the time reigning together.

LEFT SIDE.

- 1 I adored the Prince. I sailed up to bring the treasure to the city of Qaba,¹ with the hereditary chief, the governor of the district, the magistrate USERTESEN. May he live and be well! I sailed with my body of 400
- 2 of all the brave men of Mah. I brought in safety my troops; certainly I did all I said. I am a favoured chief, very much beloved, a ruler beloved of his district. I made a course of years
- 3 as ruler of Mah, and all the work² for the palace was done by my hand. I was appointed superintendent³ of the serfs of the temples of the gods of Mah, 3000 bulls with heifers. I was
- 4 praised on account of it by the palace for the yearly produce of cattle. I worked the whole of Mah⁴ with abundant labourers.⁵ No little child have I injured; no widow have I oppressed; no fisherman have I hindered; no shepherd have I detained; no
- 5 foreman of five men have I taken from his gang out for the labour.⁶ There was no poverty in my days, no starvation in my time, when there were years of famine.
- 6 I ploughed all the fields of Mah⁷ to its southern and

¹ Coptos.

² Revenue. Maspero.

³ Brugsch made, "Behold the chiefs of the temples gave me thousands of bulls with their cattle.

⁴ Antinöe, or Beni-hassan.

⁵ Labouring feet, labours. Maspero.

⁶ Referring to the corvée, or forced labour.

⁷ Owner of the land. Brugsch.

northern frontiers. I gave life to its inhabitants, making its food ; no one was starved in it. I gave to the widow as to the

7 married woman. I made no difference between the great and little in all that I did. When the Nile made¹ great waters, all types,² all cultivation³ all things, I did not take out of the fields.⁴

¹ *r* or *ar*.

² *xeper ned*, all things to assume their forms. He who sowed was the master of the crop. Brugsch.

³ A mutilated word, ending *ruti*, determined by two parallelograms.

⁴ I did not take from the revenues of the field. Brugsch.



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