

DEDICATION INSCRIPTION^a

484. A relic of Amenemhet I's building activity at Karnak, is preserved in this dedication, found on the base of a shrine from the Karnak temple of Amon, whence it had been taken to the Ptah-temple:

Amenemhet I; he made it as his monument for his father Amon-Re, lord of Thebes (*Ns' wt-^lwy*), making for him a shrine of pink granite, that he may thereby be given life forever.

485. Another dedication^b at Bubastis runs as follows:

Amenemhet I; he made it as his monument for his mother Bast, making for her^c a gate —————.

THE TALE OF SINUHE^d

486. The tale of Sinuhe is a highly artificial piece of "fine writing" in poetical form,^e most of which is lost to our modern taste. It is, however, so rational and sober throughout, and breathes such an air of reality, that it is not to be disregarded as a historical source.

^a*Annales*, III, 102.

^bNaville, *Bubastis* I, Pl. 33A.

^cAn *s* has been omitted, either in the publication or by the ancient scribe.

^dThe bulk of this tale (311 lines) is preserved in a hieratic papyrus of the Middle Kingdom, now in Berlin (P. 3022), published by Lepsius, *Denkmäler*, VI, 104-7. The beginning, lacking in the Berlin Papyrus, is preserved in a hieratic ostrakon (a large flake of limestone) discovered in a Twentieth Dynasty tomb by Maspero (now in Cairo, No. 27149), and published by him in *Mémoires de l'Institut égyptien*, II, 1-23, and Pls. I, II, 1886. This fragment, excessively corrupt, is supplemented by eleven lines from the Amherst Papyrus (Newberry, *Amherst Papyri*, Pl. I), which have been incorporated with the Cairo ostrakon and published in transcription by Griffith (*Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archaeology*, XIV, 453, 454). The whole has been translated by Erman in *Aus den Papyrus des königlichen Museums zu Berlin*, 14-29. My materials were: all the above publications except Maspero's (which was not accessible), the Berlin original, and especially a transcription of the Cairo ostrakon, made by Erman from the original, which he kindly placed at my disposal.

^eThe Cairo ostrakon containing the beginning separates the lines by red dots, and divides into stanzas. The above translation preserves these lines and stanzas as far as the ostrakon goes, after which the division is uncertain.

487. The hero, Sinuhe, a noble of high rank, is with the young coregent, Prince Sesostris I, in the western Delta, on a campaign against the Libyans, when the message announcing the death of the old king, Amenemhet I, reaches the camp. Sesostris I does not allow the news to be made public, but secretly returns to the royal residence, in order firmly to establish himself as king before any pretender can precede him. Sinuhe accidentally overhears the message, and, evidently for political reasons, immediately flees the country, making Palestine his goal. Here he spends many years, experiencing manifold adventures, until in old age, after becoming rich and powerful, he is pardoned by Sesostris I, and permitted to return to Egypt.

488. The date of Amenemhet's death, given in the tale as in the thirtieth year of his reign, is corroborated by the monuments, where his highest date is also the thirtieth year;^a hence the introductory narrative may probably be accepted as essentially historical. Moreover, the style of the writing in the Berlin papyrus shows that the document could not have been written very much later than the reign of Sesostris I, when the historical facts were still well known.

489. The geography of the flight^b is correct as far as traceable, but the error of Upper Tenu for Upper Retenu, the Empire term for Palestine, shows unfamiliarity with one of the most important, and later the most frequent, designations in the Egyptian's geography of Asia.^c But it is the earliest occurrence of the name; for the tale offers us

^aThe stela of Intef bears the joint date: "*Year 30 of Amenemhet I, year 10 of Sesostris I*" (Cairo, Mariette, *Abydos*, II, 22=Rougé, *Inscriptions hiéroglyphiques*, VIII=Rougé, *Album photographique*, No. 146; Mariette, *Catalogue général d'Abydos*, 104, No. 558).

^bSee especially Müller, *Asien und Europa*, 38-47.

^cRetenu was, however, known in the Middle Kingdom, and is mentioned in a Sinai inscription (see Weill, *Sinai*).

the oldest account of pre-Israelitish Palestine from any source. This account appears to be essentially true to the facts, and shows us how superior was the Egyptian of this time, to the Bedwin of Palestine.

490. Hereditary prince, count,
Wearer of the royal seal, sole companion,
Judge, local governor,
King [among] the Bedwin,
Real confidant of the king, his beloved,
The attendant, Sinuhe, saith:

I was one who follows his lord,
A servant of the royal [harem] of the queen,
Rich in praise,

.
.
.^a

491. In year 30, second month of the first season, on the 7th day,
Departed the god into his horizon,
The king of Upper and Lower Egypt, Sehetepibre.
He ascended [to] heaven, joined with the sun;
The divine limbs were mingled with him that begat him.
In the court, silence [— — —].
The great double doors were closed,
The court sat (in mourning),
The people [bowed down in] silence.

492. Behold, his majesty had sent out
A numerous army to the land of the Libyans;
The eldest son was commander thereof,
The Good God^c Sesostris.
Now, just as he was returning, having taken
Living captives of the Libyans,
And all cattle, without limit;
The companions of the court,
They sent to the west side,^b

^aThese three lines are totally corrupt; the names of Amenemhet and Sesostris, and the pyramid-city, Kenofer (*K^o-n/r*) are mentioned.

^bToward Libya.

In order to inform the king^a
 Of their plan, conceived in the cabinet chamber.
 The messengers found him on the way,
 They reached him at the time of evening.

.
 The hawk,^b he flew, together with his following,
 Without letting his army know ¹it¹.
 Then sent the royal children,
 Who followed this army;
 No one had called ²to¹ one of them.^d
 Behold, I stood; I heard his voice
²As he spoke, while I ¹— —¹,
 My heart cleaved, ³my arms opened,
 While trembling fell on all my members.
 I stole away ⁴— —¹ —,
 To seek for myself a place of concealment.
 I placed ⁵myself between two bushes,
 To ¹avoid¹ the way which they went.
 I ⁶proceeded up-stream,
⁷Not intending (however) to reach the court;
 I thought there was fighting (there).

.
493. ⁸I reached ¹—¹ in the region of Sycomore,
⁹I arrived at the Isle of Snefru.^e
 I tarried in a stretch ¹⁰of field,^f
 It grew light, I went on, when it was day.
 I came upon a man, standing ¹¹in ¹—¹ the way;
 He saluted me, and was afraid.
¹²When the time of the evening meal^g drew on,
 I reached the city of ¹³the Ox (*Ng²w*).
 I ferried over, in a vessel without a rudder,

^aSesostris I.

^bPoetical designation of the prince, Sesostris, who now secretly leaves the camp and hastens to the royal residence, to be crowned.

^cThe Berlin papyrus begins here; the line numbers refer to that manuscript.

^dTo inquire after the absent Sesostris.

^eSee § 312, l. 21, note.

^fSee § 430, l. 12, note.

^gCompare the same meal in § 480.

¹⁴[By means of] a wind of the west.^a
 I passed by on the east of the quarry,
¹⁵Past the highland goddess, mistress of the Red Mountain.^b
 As I gave ¹⁶the way to my feet, [going northward],^c
 I came to ¹⁷the Walls of the Ruler,
 Made to repulse the Bedwin,
 [And to smite the sand-rangers]^d
 I bowed ¹⁸down in the bushes,
 For fear the sentinels ¹⁹on the fort,
 Who belonged to its day (-watch), should see me.
 I went on ²⁰at time of evening,
 As the earth brightened, I arrived at Peten (*Ptn*).^e
²¹When I had reached the lake of Kemwer (*Km-wr*),^f
 I fell down for thirst, ²²fast came 'my' breath,
 My throat was hot,
²³I said: This is the taste of death.
 I upheld my heart, I ²⁴drew my limbs together,
 As I heard the sound of the lowing of ²⁵cattle,
 I beheld the Bedwin.
²⁶That chief among them, who had been in Egypt, recognized me.
²⁷He gave me water, he cooked for me milk.^g
 I went ²⁸with him to his tribe,
 Good was that which they did (for me).
 One land sent me on to ²⁹another,
 I loosed^h for Suan (*Swn*),ⁱ

^aThis shows clearly the eastward direction of his flight.

^bThis is the mountain of red conglomerate just northeast of modern Cairo. It is still called the Red Mountain (Gebel el-Aḥmar), and is still used as a quarry. See Baedeker, 74, and Murray, 418.

^cOnly in Empire text.

^dFound only in the Empire text. ^eUnknown land.

^fLit.: "the great black," the earlier northern extension of the Gulf of Suez. See Maspero, *Dawn*, 351, n. 3, and 471, n. 3, who renders "the very (*wr't*) black," although the writing is always *wr* (= "great," without *t*); and Müller, *Asien und Europa*, 39-43.

^gHere the Cairo ostrakon stops, and the verse division is from here on uncertain.

^hPerhaps a nautical term.

ⁱFrom "swn," "to trade," evidently a trading-post on the Asiatic frontier, like *Swn* (Assuan) on that of Nubia.

I arrived at Kedem^a (*Kdm*);
I spent ³⁰a year and a half there.

494. Emuienshi, that sheik ³¹of Upper Tenu,^b brought me forth
Saying to me: "Happy art thou with me,
(For) thou hearest the speech ³²of Egypt."
He said this, (for) he knew my character,
He had heard of ³³my wisdom;
The Egyptians ³⁴who were there with him, bare witness of me.

495. Emuienshi now questions Sinuhe as to the reason
of his flight, and the latter responds evasively, merging
his reply into a long hymn in praise of the king (ll.
34-77). Whereupon Emuienshi replies:

496. ⁷⁸"Behold, thou shalt now abide with me;
Good is that which I shall do for thee."
He put me at the head of his children,
He married me ⁷⁹to his eldest daughter,
He made me select for myself of his land,
⁸⁰Of the choicest of that which he had,
On his boundary with ⁸¹another land.
It was a goodly land, named Yaa (*Y>>*);^c
There were figs ⁸²in it and vines,
More plentiful than water was its wine,
Copious was ⁸³its honey, plenteous its oil;
All fruits were upon its trees.
⁸⁴Barley was there, and spelt,
Without end all ⁸⁵cattle.
Moreover, great was that which came to me,
Which came for love ⁸⁶of me,
When he appointed me sheik of the tribe,

^aLong misread "Edom;" first corrected by Erman, in 1885, *Aegypten*, 495. The region was east of Jordan and the Dead Sea, and receives the same name in the Old Testament.

^bThis is the first occurrence of Upper [Re]tenu, the usual designation, in the Empire for the higher portions of Palestine. That the text has omitted an *r* is almost certain. See Müller, *Asien und Europa*, 47.

^cAn unknown district in Palestine; it is written as if it were the name of some plant.

From the choicest of ⁸⁷his land.
I portioned the daily bread,
And wine ⁸⁸for every day,
Cooked flesh, and fowl ⁸⁹in roast;
Besides the wild goats of the hills,
Which were trapped ⁹⁰for me, and ¹brought¹ to me;
Besides that which my dogs captured for me.
⁹¹There was much — made for me,
And milk in ⁹²every sort of cooked dish.
I spent many years,
My children ⁹³became strong,
Each the mighty man of ⁹⁴his tribe.
The messenger going north,
Or passing southward to the court,^a
⁹⁵He turned in to me.
For I had all men turn in (to me).

497. The tale now proceeds with examples of the personal prowess of Sinuhe, but the remainder of over 200 lines contains nothing of historical importance.^b

^aThe court of Egypt is meant.

^bThe remainder of the story can be read in the latest and far the best translation by Erman, *Aus den Papyrus des königlichen Museums zu Berlin*, 20–29 (German), or a very free paraphrase by Maspero, *Contes populaires*, or an English version after Maspero, by Petrie, *Egyptian Tales*.

END OF SAMPLE TEXT



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