

Egyptian sources

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ÄGYPTISCHE GESCHICHTE

VON

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I. ABTEILUNG:

VON DEN ÄLTESTEN ZEITEN BIS ZUM TODE TUTMES' III.



GOTHA.
FRIEDRICH ANDREAS PERTHES.
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Abstract

General assessment of the sources for Egyptian chronology.

English translation of the original German text.

Source

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Fifth Chapter

The sources of the history of Egypt.

The sources which have been briefly sketched for the history of the Egyptians whose ethnographical and religious conditions have been sketched out in the preceding pages are divided into four major sections according to the language in which they are written or the time from which they originate: the Nationalistic-Egyptian, the Asian-Semitic, the Greek-Roman and finally into the modern sources. This classification is, therefore, also the basis of the following sections.

§ 14. Egyptian sources.

The sources of the Egyptian texts are the most important for historical research. They are, in essence, contemporary and free of recent revisions; at the same time, in great abundance, and what we now know of Egyptian history rests essentially upon them.

Historical texts found mainly on stone monuments in Egypt, on steles and on temple walls. The Papyri are less important for purely historical purposes; they usually contain religious or literary texts, such as stories, fairy tales, letters, which are of great importance for cultural history, but less for the political. Nevertheless, as we shall see, some Papyri are of fundamental importance.

We will not concern us with enumerating all the individual Egyptian sources. Since these are all of a contemporary nature, this would be futile. On the other hand, it must be of interest to deal with the individual decrees of these sources from the outset. It will provide an opportunity to examine the value of each of these individual classes for historical research, to pursue their credibility, and thus to discriminate the material which will be truly useful for the restoration of the history of Egypt.

1) *Royal lists.* The lists of Egyptian kings, which are more or less inadequate to us from Egyptian antiquity, are for us the fundamental basis on which we can rebuild the order of the individual rulers. Their importance is especially great for the history of the Old and Middle Kingdoms; for the New Kingdom, only the first three are considered; after the Twenty-first Dynasty, there are no royal lists available. The longest and most important among our lists is:

a) *The Royal Turin papyrus.* This papyrus once contained a complete list of the Egyptian kings, beginning with the god-kings of the country and the sacred animals down to the time of the Hyksos, that is, until the Fifteenth and Sixteenth dynasties. The papyrus would be a definite chronological guide to the Egyptian history of the old periods, especially since the names of

the individual rulers, the duration of their reigns in years, months, and days, were included.

The text was originally found intact, but during the transports to Turin it was broken down into 164 mostly small fragments, and the greatest efforts were needed to save and arrange at least part of these fragments, the value of which Champollion recognized already in 1824. Seyffarth earns the greatest credit for this rescue, who in 1826, glued the fragments, numbered them, and preserved them from total destruction.

Since the beginning of Egyptian studies, the text has often been the object of scientific treatment, confirmed elsewhere. Deriving new facts from the papyrus and its precise figures, is impossible due to its poor preservation, only a brief note here and there. As to the list of kings, it is particularly important for the Thirteenth and Fourteenth dynasties, preserving the names in considerable completeness. For the older dynasties, just a few.

Like all Egyptian royal lists, the Papyrus of Turin introduces the kings with their first names, while the first and surname appear in the inscriptions of the monuments. The Egyptian kings, with the exception of their titles, regularly recite two names, which are always enclosed in the monuments by cartouches or name rings. The first name is introduced by suten net "King of Upper and Lower Egypt", the surname, by the words sa-Ra "son of the Sun". In the literal meaning the first name places the king in a close relationship with Ra, the sun god. This is why Tutmes I is called Ra-aa-kheper-ka "Ra makes his person great." Tutmes III: Ra-men-kheper "Ra made him permanent", Ramses II: Ra-user-Maa setep-en-Ra "Ra made him strong in truth, he is approved by Ra," Psammetich I: Ra-wah-ab "Ra forms his heart", etc. These first names regularly lead the kings in the Middle and New Kingdoms; and are not yet available for a number of rulers. The surname is a simple surname, often used by private individuals in the same or similar form. In the earliest times, the designation of a property, such as Mena "the constant", Khufu "the luminous," Unas "being," was generally chosen as the simplest form of name formation. Later on, one commonly took expressions by which the king concerned should be represented as a child or a gift of divinity, such as Tutmes "Thoth's son," Rameses "Son of Ra." Amen-hetep "gift of Amon," and similar forms. This difference in the choice of surnames seems to indicate that the Egyptian kings were striving more and more to be the god-sent rulers of Egypt, and to promote the divine origin of their royal power.

The double designation of the kings often presents a considerable difficulty in the study of history, since we sometimes lack the means by which to decide which surname corresponds in each case to the first names given by the lists or other documents. For the Old Kingdom it is even more difficulty, as they frequently treated both names in the same manner, in contrast to the later periods, so that suten net sometimes appear before the surname, and sa-Ra before the first names. Only through studying the ever-growing material of the monuments can we gradually assign the corresponding rulers.

While the papyrus of Turin, as we have seen, can only be used for certain periods, as a result of its fragmentary condition, a series of stone inscriptions to be mentioned now have a far

greater value, and therefore greater significance; there are:

b) *The table of Abydos*. This table was discovered in 1864 by Dümichen in a passage of the Osiris temple, excavated at Mariettes, to Abydos, and was recognized and published in its value.

Shortly after the publication in French sheets against Dümichen and Lepsius attacks were made to assign the priority of the discovery Mariette. Dieselbes soon ceased, as also the two most important French agyptologists, de Rouge and Chabas, declared that their landsman had no further merit than to have excavated excavations at the exact place in Abydos; die Entdeckung gebühre allein Dümichen.

On this table of Abydos we see the king Seti I, and his son and successor, Ramses H., the cartouches of his predecessors, which he had recorded before him, and whom he had followed by his own name-rings. These 75 cartouches are ordered in chronological order, and give us a list of Egyptian rulers of Menes up to Seti I. The list is not exhaustive; According to the principles unknown to us, the author has selected a few names from a complete list of kings, and, as far as we can trace, those of the most important. We may, at least from almost all the mentioned rulers, show greater simultaneous monuments, while those of whose government we are informed by other documents, that this was brief or unimportant. The great value which this list has for us lies in the fact that it gives us a firm skeleton of the order of a greater number of rulers, which we may use as a safe foundation in the classification of new names.

A second copy of the same list was discovered at the beginning of this century (1818) by Bankes in Abydos, broken down by the French Consul General Mimaut, and sold to the British Museum. Here we see Ramses H. the same royal names, as above Seti I., and also its own first and last name. This table is preserved only to a small extent - with the names 40-52 and 61 - the end of the table Seti I. - and therefore could not be used earlier. Now, in a comparison of the two texts, it becomes clear that the exact copies must be one and the same original, inasmuch as they can be used in the slightest orthographical details.

c) *The table of Saqqarah* is to be mentioned in the third place. It was discovered at Saqqarah by Mariette in the tomb of a high dignitary Tunurol, who was at the time of Ramses II, and is now in Bulaq. It shows quite similar to the table of Abydos the Cartouche of 47 kings, who lived before his time. There is a gap in their center, which is at least five kings, and the last four cartouches have only received the final sign. The royal names listed are generally identical with those of the list of abydos; But our copy shows several important orthographical errors, which indicates a simple edict of the text. The same volatility can be observed in the list of the names of the rulers of the eleventh and twelfth dynasties. This the writer has copied from his original in the wrong order, without altering his relative position; Apparently, he copied his hieratic model, written from right to left, slavishly exact, instead of shifting the names one by one, as required by his text from left to right. In the 18th dynasty, the order of

the rulers is again the right one. It is remarkable in the list that it begins not with the name of the first Egyptian king Menes, but with that of the sixth king of the first dynasty, Mer-ba-pen. Whether or not we have only to look for a volatility of the editor of the list, or of deeper reasons, does not allow the material which is very small for the first dynasty to be decided.

d) *The board of Karnak.* A linguist discovered by Burton near the sanctuary of the imperial temple at Karnak, which was later brought to Paris by Prisse, plays a peculiar part in the midst of the Egyptian royal lists. Here we see Tutmes' III on two walls facing each other. The cartouches of 61 of his ancestors. These cartouches, however, are not here, as we have hitherto regularly found among the royalists, chronologically ordered, but are apparently systemless. Despite this disorder of names, the list is of high value for the story, since it lists the names of some of the rulers of the 13th-17th Dynasty, who completely overturn the other lists, and also the names of the rulers of the eleventh dynasty in greater numbers As the other texts do. To give a judgment on the motives and purpose of the arrangement of the cartouches makes it very difficult that a number of them are missing, and that we have no means of supplementing them. The first ten names belong to the first six dynasties, followed by a group (12-15) from the seventh to eleventh dynasties, and another (18-23), the rulers of the twelfth, And 24-27 form again a group of the 7th - 11th dynasty, 29-30 (and here also probably 28) belong to the 17th dynasty, 31 finally, the first name Usertesen I., assumes a completely isolated position, Which is explained by the fact that Tutmes III. Had a special interest in this ruler at all. Kings 32-61 all belong to the 13th to 14th dynasties, and are arranged chronologically, at least in general, as far as we can trace them. However, on the other hand, a different principle must have been applied on pages 1 to 31; Here we have names which we would otherwise find in all the lists, and therefore we should expect here, like those of the pyramid builders. On the other hand, there are others which are very rare. It is with preference that we are enumerating the kings, of whom the rulers of the 13th and 14th and the eleventh - 12th dynasty are also found in Thebes.

It seems almost as if Tutmes III. Here the kings who had built or dwelt in Thebes. In this case the arrangement of their names would perhaps be regarded as a topographical one, inasmuch as the rulers would have been assembled, according to the greater or lesser distance in which their buildings were situated.

This would at least explain the task of every chronological arrangement. But the value of this presumption will be judged only after the ruins of Elamak have been thoroughly investigated, in order to obtain a picture of the shape of the temple and its annexes in priests' apartments, ancillary buildings, seas, gates, and envelopes At the beginning of the new empire.

e) *Smaller Royal lists.* In addition to these four great lists of Egyptian kings, we have preserved many smaller ones, which the rulers of a narrowly limited period of time are able to perform, and thus their success can be restored with certainty. In this way several periods of the ancient kingdom have become known to us; But in particular we have thus obtained the consequence

of the more important rulers of the eighteenth to twentieth dynasties by several similar lists. To these smaller lists there are numerous lists, some of which are chronologically, some of which are genealogically or even arbitrarily ordered, which contain a selection of names of divinely honored kings. These specimens mostly date back to the time of the eighteenth and nineteenth dynasties, during which the ancestral cult appeared to have flourished, and was even given an important place in the worship of the great gods. Among these texts is of particular importance a libation table from the former Clot-Bey collection in Marseille. It dates from the time of Ramses II, and contains the names of kings, who were regarded as gods, from the 11th, 17th, 18th, and 19th dynasties. A second interesting list is a Turin papyrus with kings and queens from the 18th and 19th dynasties ; Other texts are found in tombs, as in Der el Medinet etc.