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**DFG-Projekt "Digitalisierung und Erschließung des Nachlasses des  
Ägyptologen Adolf Erman (1854-1937)"**

**Erman's Egypt. Aus Hebraica, 1889 (Drucktitel)**

**Wendel, Frederick C. H.**

**o.D. [1889]**

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Wendel

Erman's Egypt

NOTES ON THE PSALMS.

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"This honor have all his saints," in the received version, is a very doubtful rendering. When a noun is qualified by a demonstrative pronoun as here, both receive the article (comp. Deut. XXI. 3,4), which is absent from both in the present case. Besides, the noun קָדָשׁ is specially used of the divine majesty, so that Gesenius is obliged to find another meaning for it in this place, viz. *honor*. I would therefore translate with Hupfeld. "He (God) is the glory of all His saints," etc., the object of their glory. The conclusion of the Psalm (for the last two words are a liturgical addition) correspond to the commencement, "His praise in the congregation of the saints."

CL. v. 1, "praise God in his sanctuary (earthly temple); praise Him in the firmament of His power," i. e., praise Him whose habitation is both earth and heaven.

ans, Hebraica  
1889 Jan/Apr

## ERMAN'S EGYPT,<sup>1</sup>

BY FREDERICK C. H. WENDEL, PH. D.,

New York City.

This book is an important one, and its first appearance was greeted with joy by scholars and all others interested in Egyptian matters. It is not, indeed, the first book of this kind that has come before the public, but it is the first that embodies in it all the results of recent investigation. Its predecessor, Wilkinson's "*Manners and Customs of the Ancient Egyptians*," though excellent in its time is now antiquated and can give the reading public no idea of the present state of Egyptian knowledge. Still this new book has roused in Germany and France quite a storm of opposition, owing to the fact that the writer treats with a sort of disdain the earlier translators of Egyptian manuscripts, saying in his preface that all of the passages explained in his book had been again translated by him and alluding to the abuse of translations in Egyptology. True it is that there has been published a vast number of flighty translations which, instead of giving the true sense of the passages in question, give but very confused notions of what the original text really does say. But then there is a vast difference between work of this sort and the work of men like Brugsch, Chabas, Goodwin and Maspero, to whom we are indebted for many an excellent translation, and without whose labors we would not be by any means so far advanced in Egyptological science. There is, however, no doubt that by far the greater part of the material presented in this book is entirely new, and I may here remark that this is the first book of the kind that strictly separates the various epochs of Egyptian history. To most of the previous writers the Egyptian people were *one* people, and no one thought that there might be a great difference between the subjects of King Chufu (Cheops ab. 2800 B. C.) and those of Amenemhat I. (ab. 2130 B. C.) and again between these and the subjects of Thutmosis III. (ab. 1450 B. C.). In the history of art Perrot et Chipiez (*Histoire de l'Art dans l'Antiquité vol. I.*) had already made this distinction, but in the history of civilization it was Erman who first introduced it.

He has taken it upon himself to treat of Egypt only up to the close of the XX. Dynasty (ab. 1050 B. C.); and I cannot but think he is right. For after this period Egyptian history presents but a dreary spectacle, and for the next 400

<sup>1</sup> "Aegypten und Aegyptisches Leben im Alterthum" geschildert von Adolph Erman. 2 vols Tübingen, 1885 and 1888.

years we have no documents that can give us any data for the history of Egyptian civilization. The last king of the XX. Dynasty, *Ramses XII.*,<sup>1</sup> was dethroned by the high priest of Amon in Thebes, *Herihor* whose successors ruled in Egypt over a century, when they in their turn were driven from the throne, about 950 B. C., by *Sheshonk*, a Lybian, the Shishak of the Bible, the conqueror of Jerusalem, whose dynasty, the XXII., in its turn had to give way to the Aethiopian, whose rule over Egypt was ended by Assurhaddon's and Assurbanipal's invasions of Egypt. The time of the Psammetichs is a renaissance, but the rulers are of Lybian stock, and the Egyptian people no longer is what it had been 500 years earlier. The centuries had not passed over the land without leaving deeply cut changes to mark their course. It is with full justice that our author remarks at the close of his third chapter, that if by some piece of magic a noble of the time of Chufu (ab. 2800 B. C.) had been transplanted to the court of Ramses III., he would have believed himself in a strange land, and the accompanying woodcut aptly illustrates this remark.

The general arrangement of the book cannot but be considered excellent. In a short introduction our author treats of the reports the Greek writers give of Egypt, and touches upon the monumental records of the country itself as well as the accounts of the Old Testament. He then gives a brief history of the deciphering of the Egyptian script. The first three chapters of the book are, in matter of fact, also introductory, treating of the geography, ethnography and history of Ancient Egypt. These chapters are not original and our writer does not wish to have them so considered. He has, however, used the works of his predecessors with singular judgment and has treated the subjects under consideration briefly and well. Specially commendable is what he says in the first chapter on the geography of Ancient Egypt. In the second chapter, where he speaks of the ethnography of Egypt, he skillfully avoids the knotty question of the "urheimath." He considers the Egyptian race as aboriginal, even if their language should prove to have been forced on them by a foreign invader, much as Anglo-Saxon was forced on the aboriginal Briton and as the Arabic tongue has been forced on the modern Egyptian. It is of importance here to note that the Egyptians considered themselves aborigines. They designate only their own people as "men" *rometu*; the other peoples may be Lybians, Negroes or Asiatics, but "men" they are not. The third chapter is a very skillfully written epitome of Egyptian history. In his chronology he follows *Eduard Meyer's* so-called "approximate dates" which are the *latest* dates for the era in question. If we

<sup>1</sup> Usually but incorrectly called Ramses XIII. The Ramses XII. of Weidemann and others is a fiction. The stele usually attributed to him has been proven by Erman, *Aeg. Zeitschr.*, 1883, p. 54, seq., to have been composed in Persian times by the priests of Chonsu, in order to celebrate his greatness. The whole story related on the said stele is of a mythical character; and it is not to be considered a historical record. The king mentioned in the stele is probably meant to be Ramses II.

thus say King Suesru ruled about 2830 B. C. we would not have this regarded as an exact date; we merely mean that he cannot have ruled *later*, leaving it an open question how long *before* this period his reign really does fall. These approximate dates are of great convenience to the historian, and it would not be amiss, if they were generally adopted until we can give more exact dates.

It is with the 4th chapter that the author's own work begins, a full critique of which would take up more space than I could take for a review of this chapter. In this and the following chapters are treated of: 1) the king and his court, 2) the government of the country, 3) the police and courts of justice, 4) the family, 5) the house, 6) dress, 7) entertainments, 8) religion, 9) cult of the dead, 10) science, 11) literature, 12) fine arts, 13) agriculture, 14) the industrial arts, 15) commerce, and, 16) warfare.

In the 4th chapter, then, he gives a review of the titulature of the king, his various functions, his coronation, the court and court etiquette, touching also upon the harem life. The next two chapters treat of the civil government of the country, the 5th under the old and middle empires (abt. 2830-1900 B. C.), the 6th under the new empire (abt. 1530-1050). Perhaps no part of the entire work is more ably written and presents more new material than these two chapters. It is a strikingly lifelike picture of Egyptian official life that he depicts to us. I would like to call special attention to what he says in the 5th chapter on the titles of the officials, the power of the nomarchoi in the middle empire (abt. 2130-1900) and social conditions of this time. In the following chapter, which treats of the civil government under the new empire, are of special note the paragraphs showing the difference between the hierarchy of this and the preceding epochs, as also those treating of the slaves of the king, who were in large part of foreign origin; and it is an important position that these foreigners hold in the state, some of them ranking as princes. All of these slaves bore Egyptian names, while some have retained their old names besides. We thus know of a Lybian by the name of *Ynene* and a Phoenician by the name of *Maharba'al* (מהרבעל)<sup>1</sup> at the court of Ramses III., as also of a Canaanite by the name of *Ben Mat'ana* (בןמתן) son of *Jupa'a* (יפעה) from *Djarbasana* (צרבשן) at the court of Merenptah. We thus see, and this is a fact Erman does not state, that the Hebrew legend of Joseph is not so unfounded as some critics would have us believe. Of the many foreign slaves that attained high rank one or the other may have belonged to some Hebrew tribe and perhaps the memory of this fact lived with the people who, not uninfluenced by some Egyptian tales, like that of the Two Brothers, in course of time

<sup>1</sup> Maharba'al in Phoen. מהרבעל, Greek μαάρβαλ and μαάρβας, Latin, Maharbal and Maherbai, *dos aut praemium Baal*, "gift of Baal" (Ges. *Monumenta*, etc., p. 409), cf. Hebrew מְהַרֵּי Gesen.<sup>10</sup> s. v. Names with this signification are quite frequent in the other Semitic languages. Thus the Babyl. *Nadin*, probably abbreviated and originally compounded with the name of a deity. Also cf. Eg. *Amenerdas*, "Amon gives her"—the name of the last Aethiopic queen of Egypt.

weaved about their fortunate brother the romantic story we read in the Old Testament.<sup>1</sup> Interesting is also what he says of the scribes and the archives, the relations between officials and their superiors and the social conditions of the period under consideration, in which connection he enters more deeply into the life of the laboring class, giving the history of two great strikes, one in the 29th year of Ramses III. and one in the reign of Ramses IX. In the next chapter which treats of the police organization and the administration of justice, he analyzes the so-called Papyrus Abbot, which is the official record of a criminal procedure against an audacious band of robbers that invested the necropolis of Thebes in the reign of Ramses IX. (abt. 1100 B. C.) He then speaks of the administration of justice and gives an account of the great conspiracy against the life of Ramses III. Of interest is also what he says in this chapter on contracts. The following four chapters I need hardly treat in detail. Suffice it to say that they give a vast deal of new and interesting information on the family, the private houses, the dress and the amusements of this most interesting of ancient peoples. The twelfth chapter, on religion, is perhaps the weakest part of the entire book. Indeed the author feels this himself, for he says he had rather left it unwritten. It certainly is quite impossible to give a halfway adequate account of the Egyptian religion in the space allotted to it in this work. But what he does give is generally correct, only that he does not, in my opinion, lay sufficient stress upon the trinities which play a great part in the Egyptian religion. But he has done well in laying great stress on the local deities, as also on the gradual process of assimilation which finally culminated in a solar monotheism. In all probability it was the priesthood of Heliopolis that first set up this doctrine; but an Egyptian king, Amenophis IV., was destined to be its prophet. The history of this movement up to its final collapse is well depicted. What he says of mythology is also very scant, but the chief points are touched. After this brief survey of the religion, he devotes the remainder of the chapter to the temple and the priesthood.

The following chapter, on the cult of the dead, is a brief account of the ancient Egyptian ideas of life after death, their tombs and burial rites. The fourteenth chapter which treats of science, he quite naturally opens with an account of the schools and teaching in ancient Egypt, and from this he goes on to speak of the epigraphy. He then treats of the various sciences known to the ancient Egyptians. They were theology, which busied itself chiefly with commentaries on the ancient religious writings, of which commentaries he gives a well-chosen example; history, which consists mainly in annals of the kings; astronomy, which they brought to some perfection and which they needed for their calendar,

<sup>1</sup> This story having so many legendary accretions, it is futile to seek after the name of Joseph in the Eg. monuments and to attempt to reconstruct his alleged Egyptian name from that given by the Bible, which may only be an attempt to get something that has an Egyptian sound to it. Such an attempt at explanation as Prof. Lansing gives in *HEBRAICA*, IV., p. 44, is utterly wrong.

arithmetic, elementary geometry, and magic. The following chapter is a brief résumé of the history of Egyptian literature. In chapter sixteen he gives a very brief sketch of Egyptian art, quite inadequate, of course, as the scope of the subject requires a volume or two, such as *Perrot and Chipiez's Histoire de l'Art*, etc. Of interest are also the following chapters, of which the seventeenth is the first adequate account of agriculture as practiced by the ancient Egyptians, and of which the eighteenth presents some new material on the subject of the industrial arts. In the nineteenth chapter, on commerce, he describes the means of conveyance, gives a vivid picture of internal commerce, in which connection he speaks of the ancient Egyptian markets, reproducing some representations of market scenes in the time of the old empire (ab. 2800 B. C.). The last chapter gives a very interesting and instructive account of the modes of warfare practiced by the ancient Egyptians.

On the whole, this book is very readable. The subjects under consideration are briefly, but, for the greater part adequately treated. The illustrations are chosen with great tact, and are well reproduced. A special advantage the book possesses, is that the various chapters bear the character of monographs, and can be read independently of the rest of the work. The index of passages explained, too, is of great assistance, especially to the scholar, making reference to the book easy and rapid. The book is thus of almost equal value to the general public and to the specialist, who is enabled by the copious references in the foot-notes to verify every opinion advanced by the writer. In fact it is one of the few books that avoid the extremes of being too popular, on one side, and too scientific on the other. I can, then, safely recommend the book to all those who would make themselves acquainted with life in ancient Egypt.