

The Teaching of King Amenemhet I to his son Senusret

Here begins the teaching which the late King of Upper and Lower Egypt, Sehetepibre, the son of Re Ammenemes made when he spoke in imparting truth to his son the Lord of All.

He said: O you who appear as a god, hear what I shall say to you, that you may be king of the land and rule the Banks, and achieve abundance of good fortune. Be on your guard against all who are subordinate to you when there occurs something to whose terrors no thought has been given; do not approach them in your solitude, trust no brother, know no friend, make no intimates, for there is no profit in it. When you go to rest, guard your own heart, for no man has partisans on the day of trouble. I gave to the poor man, I cherished the orphan, I caused him who had nothing to attain (to wealth) like him who was wealthy, but it was he who ate my bread who raised levies; he to whom I had given my hand created terror thereby; those who wore my fine linen looked on me as a shadow; and they who smeared on my myrrh poured water under (me).

O you living images of me, my heirs among men, make for me a funeral oration which has not been heard (before), a great deed of battle which has not been seen, for men fight in the arena and the past is forgotten; goodness cannot profit one who does not know him whom he should know. It was after supper, and night had fallen. I took an hour of recreation lying on my bed, for I was weary and I began to doze, when weapons were brandished and men argued about me. I acted like the snake of the desert, for I awoke at the fighting and was by myself, and I found that it was a combat with the guard. If I had made haste with weapons in my hand, I would have made the cowards retreat in confusion, but no one is brave at night, and no one can fight alone; no happy outcome can result without a protector.

See, my injuries occurred while I was without you, before the entourage had heard that I was handing over to you, before I had sat down with you. Therefore I will give you good advice, because I neither fear them nor (even) think about them; I take no cognizance of the slackness of servants. Have women ever marshaled the ranks? Are brawlers nourished within a house? Are the waters opened up or the earthen banks destroyed? Are the citizens befooled because of what they have done?

Trouble has not come about me since I was born, and the like of my deeds through the exercise of my valor has not come to pass. I traveled to Elephantine, I turned back to the Delta; I have stood at the limits of the land and have seen its middle; I have attained the limits of my power by my strong arm and by my nature.

It was I who made barley and loved grain; the Nile-god showed me respect in every open place, and none went hungry in my years, none went thirsty in them. Men dwelt (in peace) through what I had done, talking of me, for everything that I commanded was in good order I have curbed lions, I have carried off crocodiles, I have crushed the people of Wawat, I have carried off the Medjay, I have made the Asiatics slink like dogs.

Ammenemes: Amenemhet I (c. 1991-1962)

Sesostris: Senusret I Kheperkare (c. 1962-1917)

He said: ... Breasted [1]: He saith, while distinguishing truth, for his son, the All-Lord; he saith: "Shine as a god! when there occurs something to whose terrors no thought has been given: Breasted: The people give heed to him who terrorizes them. I caused him who had nothing to attain (to wealth) like him who was wealthy: Breasted: I admitted the insignificant as well as him who was of great account. Lichtheim [2]: I gave success to the poor as to the wealthy raised levies: Breasted: made insurrection

images of me: Lichtheim: peers goodness cannot profit one who does not know him whom he should know: Lichtheim: Success will elude him who ignores what he should know weapons were brandished and men argued about me: Lichtheim: weapons for my protection were turned against me, Breasted: weapons were flourished, [council was held against me (?)] protector Lichtheim: helper

my injuries: Breasted: the abomination, Lichtheim: bloodshed Therefore I will give you good advice, because I neither fear them nor (even) think about them; I take no cognizance of the slackness of servants: Breasted: Let me adjust thy administration. For I do not terrify them, I do not think of them. My heart does not endure the slackness of servants.

grain: Breasted: the harvest-god Hapi, the Nile god

Wawat: Lower Nubia. The conquest of Nubia began in earnest during the Middle Kingdom.

Medjay: A Nubian people. The Medjay became synonymous with the Egyptian police force.

Amenemhet took them on in the 29th year of his reign:

Year 29 of the king of Upper and Lower Egypt, Sehetepibre, living forever. We came to overthrow Wawat

Inscription of Korusko

J. H. Breasted, Ancient Records of Egypt, Part One, § 473

I have built for myself a house adorned with gold, its ceiling of lapis lazuli, its walls of silver, the doors of copper and the door-bolts of bronze, it having been made for eternity and prepared for everlasting. I know that the owner of it is the Lord of All. Indeed, many children are in the streets; the wise man agrees and the fool says "no," inasmuch as he who does not know it is devoid of vision.

O my son Sesostris, may your legs walk; you are my own heart, and my eyes watch you. You were born in an hour of happiness in the presence of the sun-folk, and they give you praise. See, I have made a beginning and you have arranged the end. I have moored...what is in your heart ... leaving the White Crown for the seed of the god. The fortification is in good order, beginning from vessels are in the bark of Re. The kingship came into being in my presence, and there are none who could achieve my deeds of valor. Erect monuments, embellish your causeway, fight for... because he does not desire it in His Majesty's presence.

It has come happily to an end

Source: <http://www.u.arizona.edu/~afutrell/w%20civ%2002/tchgammen.html>

[1] Breasted: J. H. Breasted, *Ancient Records of Egypt*, Part One, § § 474ff.

[2] Lichtheim: M. Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, Vol. 1, pp.135ff.

<http://nefertiti.iwebland.com/texts/ammenemes.htm>

walls of silver: Lichtheim: *Walls of silver, floors of [acacia wood]*. Breasted did not speculate on the nature of the floors. Floors in habitations were generally made of packed earth, even in palaces.

prepared for everlasting: Breasted: *at which eternity fears* because in B.'s words, of *not being able to destroy it*.

may your legs walk: Lichtheim: *As my feet depart in the presence of the sun-folk, and they give you praise: Lichtheim: [Before the people as they hail you (?)] I have made a beginning and you have arranged the end: Lichtheim: I have made the past and arranged the future kingship came into being in my presence: Lichtheim: Kingship is again what it was in the past embellish your causeway: Lichtheim: establish your strongholds*