

**Literary Sources
For
Ancient Egyptian History**
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1) **Definition of the Historical literary Sources.**

It is worthy to note that Ancient Egyptians bequeathed a rich literary legacy sincerely representing most of their attitudes in life and obviously assuring that the Egyptians were the first founders of the sublime structure of human thought and that they surpassed other ancient nations in this respect. Such a legacy is also characterized with its historical fundamentality thanks to its valuable historical information which help researchers unveil much of Ancient Egyptian history. That is why it is considered one of the major important sources of Ancient Egyptian history¹.

The literary sources for ancient Egyptian history do not involve the hieroglyphic inscriptions of stelae, statues, obelisks, walls of temples or even tombs. Instead, they include the papyri in which ancient Egyptians record their social conditions in the political, social, economic and legal fields.

2) **Division of the Historical literary Sources.**

In fact, the researcher suggests a division of the historical literary sources into two categories. To the first category belong the **Direct Literary Sources** which directly describes the events. Examples of this category are Historical Narrative Literature (e.g. *the Story of Sinuhe* and that of *Wenamun*), Historical Political Literature (such as the *Papyri of Ipuwer* or *Lament of Ipuwer* and *Eloquent Peasant*), Royal Instructions (like the *Instruction of Khety to his son Merikare* and those of *Amenemhat I to his son Senusret I*), Prophecies (e.g., *the Papyrus of Neferti*), and finally the Religious Books (e.g., *Book of Amduat* - Called by the Egyptians, the Book

¹ Faculty of Education, Dept. of History, Mansoura University.

² A.Loprieno, *Defining Egyptian Literature: Ancient Texts and Modern Theories.* AELHF, pp.39ff. J.L.Foster, "Literature." OEAE, 2, pp.300f. R.B.Parkinson, *Voices from Ancient Egypt: An Anthology of Middle Kingdom Writings* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991), p.26. H.Brunner, *Literatur*, LÄ, III, 1067ff.

of the 'Secret Chamber' , *Book of Gates*², *Book of the Dead - Book of Coming Forth by Day*, *Book of Caverns*, *Book of The Heavens*, and *Book of the Earth*) which focus on the Ancient Egyptian's regard of religion and their belief in the existence of gods and their capabilities.

The second category is based on the **Indirect Literary Sources** which deals indirectly with the event. Examples of such sources are Myths, whether Religious (such as the *Myths of Osiris, Horus, Seth and Isis*) or Irreligious (like the *Story of Bata* and *Myths of the king's Divine Birth*).

I- **THE DIRECT LITERARY SOYRCES**

1- **Historical Narrative Literature.**

a) **Story of Sinuhe:** - The two principal sources of this story are Berlin 3022, a Middle Kingdom papyrus preserving a copy of the Tale of Sinuhe and an incomplete copy of a narrative known in Egyptology as the Tale of the Herdsman Berlin 10499³, a late Middle Kingdom papyrus found in a tomb beneath the Ramesseum precinct at Thebes, preserving copies of the tale of Sinuhe and the tale of The Eloquent Peasant⁴.

The **historical significance** of the Story of Sinuhe may be attributed to the fact that it represents one of the essential literary sources of the period of the 12th Dynasty. Such a period goes back to the reign of King Amenemhat I and his son Senusret I as well. Although the story appears to be a realistic narration of a personal experience that has its own setting, beginning and end⁵; it still conveys many of the important historical events inside and

² In the 5th hour of the Book of Gates four representatives of peoples, i.e. an Egyptian (*rmtw*), an Asiatic (*'3mw*), a Libyan (*tmhw*) and a Nubian (*nhsjw*) are represented in front of Horus, who addresses them. Though a peaceful coexistence of these peoples in the Hereafter seems suggested, the plays of words spoken by Horus make clear that at least the Nubians and the Libyans are deemed enemies of Egypt. Furthermore, the placing of the Asiatics and Libyans under the protection of the war goddess Sakhmet may well have a hidden meaning. See; K.Jansen-Winkel, Zur Charakterisierung der Nachbarvölker der Ägypter im "Pfortenbuch," *Altorientalische Forschungen*, Berlin 25 (1998), pp.374ff.

³ A. H. Gardiner, *Die Erzählung des Sinuhe und die Hirtengeschichte*, *Hieratische Papyri aus den königlichen Museen Berlin* volume V, Leipzig 1909, pls.5-15. id; *Notes on the Story of Sinuhe*, Paris 1916, pp.1ff.

⁴ *Egyptian Research Account*.1896; *The Ramesseum*, by; J.E.Quibell, pp.3f. A.H.Gardiner, *AEO*, I, Oxford 1947, p.6. W.K.Simpson, *Sinuhe*, *LÄ*, V, 948.

⁵ D.N.MacDonald, *The Stylistics of Sinuhe. A Corpus Linguistic Study*, *BACE* 6 (1995), pp.69ff.

outside the country⁶. Among the internal events appears the **strife for the throne in the 12th Dynasty** which resulted in the assassination of the king Amenemhat I in a plot conspired against him in the royal harem while his co-regent Senusret was leading a campaign in Libya⁷.

In his own words, Sinuhe describes how the young king, 'without letting his army know it', 'flew' with his bodyguard to the capital, presumably to deal with the conspirators and to crush immediately any attempt to deprive him of the crown. He says: "The officials of the palace sent to the western border to let the king's son know the events (i.e.; the assassination of Amenemhat I) that had occurred at the court. The messengers met him on the road, reaching him at night. Not a moment did he delay. The falcon flew with his attendants, without letting his army know it."⁸

Sinuhe, overhearing the rival claimant to the throne in treasonous conversation with a messenger and fearing a civil war of uncertain outcome between the two parties; illegitimate plotters party and legitimate Senusret party, deserted the army in a panic and fled precipitately⁹. He tells: "Now there was a despatch with regard to the King's children who were following him in this army one of them (i.e.; the chosen prince by the plotters to ascend the throne instead of Senusret) was summoned while I was standing there. I heard his voice, as he spoke, while I was in the near distance¹⁰. My heart fluttered, my arms spread out, a trembling befell all my limbs. I removed myself in leaps, to seek a hiding place. I put myself between two bushes, so as to leave the road to its traveler. I set out southward. I did not plan to go to the residence. I believed there would be turmoil and did not expect to survive it."¹¹

⁶ Simpson, op.cit, 950f. M.Lichtheim, AEL, I, Berkeley 1973, pp.222ff. E.Blumenthal, Die Erzählung des Sinuhe; in: TUAT (Mythen und Epen) III, Lfg. 5; Gütersloh: 1995, pp. 884ff.

⁷ W.C.Hayes, The Middle Kingdom in Egypt, in; CAH, 1/2, Cambridge 1971, p. 499. cf; Simpson, op.cit, p.950.

⁸ Gardiner, Notes on the Story of Sinuhe, pp.124f, 168f. Hayes, loc.cit. J.B.Pritchard, ANET, New Jersey 1973, pp.18f.

⁹ H.Goedicke, The Riddle of Sinuhe's Flight, in; RdE,35(1984), pp.95ff. Simpson, op.cit, p.950. W.V.Davies, Readings in the Story of Sinuhe and Other Egyptian Texts, in; JEA,61(1975), p.45.

¹⁰ Davies argues that the word of "w3" in "iw.i m 'r w3" means "conspiracy". Davies, op.cit, p.45.

¹¹ Gardiner, op.cit, pp.125f, 169. Goedicke, op.cit, p.100. ANET, pp.18f.

With respect to the **historical external events**, there is the security condition on the western and eastern borders of Egypt before and after the death of Amenemhat I. On the western borders there were many troubles caused by the aggressive attacks of the Libyan tribes Timehu and Tehenu¹² which necessitated the intervention of an Egyptian army under the leadership of the crown prince and the junior coregent Senusret in the 30th year of the senior coregent Amenemhat I's reign, the 10th year of the coregency¹³. At the other extreme, on the eastern borders, the matter was different¹⁴. There were security and stability due to the diplomatic and commercial relations between Egypt and Syria¹⁵. In the Story of Sinuhe, this is indicated in his safe passage through the eastern borders of Egypt to the Syrian lands¹⁶ where, setting for a long time, he was identified and his status acknowledged by Egyptians setting there¹⁷. This hints at not only the good direct relations between Egypt and Syria, but also the existing Egyptian community in Syrian territories and the admission of the Egyptian language there.

*b) Story of Wenamun*¹⁸: - The Story of Wenamun is considered one of the major literary sources signaling the end of the 20th Dynasty and the

¹² of Timehu and Tehenu and the ancient historical relations between Egypt and Libya, see; O.Bates, *The Eastern Libyans*, London 1914. A.Leahy, 'Libya', *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt 2*. Edited by Donald B. Redford. New York.Oxford 200, pp. 290ff.

¹³ Gardiner, *op.cit*, pp.10f, 122f,168f. id; E.Ph, Oxford 1962, p. 130. J.Osing, *Libyen, Libyer*, LÄ, III, 1015. Hayes, *CAH*, 1/2, p.500.

¹⁴ D.B. Redford, *Egypt, Canaan, and Israel in ancient Times*; Princeton/ New Jersey: 1992, 80, 82- 87, 92.

¹⁵ J.A.Wilson, *The Egyptian Middle Kingdom at Magiddo*, in; *AJSL* 58(1941), pp.235f. D.B.Redford, *Egypt, Canaan and Israel in Ancient Times*, Princeton Univ. Press 1922, pp.82ff. Of the relations between Egypt and the Near East in the Middle Kingdom, see; W.Helck, *Die Beziehungen Ägyptens zu Vorderasien i, 3. und 2. Jahrtausend v. Chr. Ägyptologische Abhandlungen 5*. Wiesbaden 1971. C.Eder, *Die Ägyptischen Motive in der Glyptik des östlichen Mittelmeerraumes zu Anfang des 2. JTS V. Chr. Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta 71*. Leuven 1995.

¹⁶ H.Goedicke, *Where did Sinuhe stay in "Asia"?* (Sinuhe B 29-31), in; *CdE* 67, No. 133 (1992), pp.28ff.

¹⁷ Gardiner, *op.cit*, pp.129ff, 169ff. Hayes, *op.cit*, pp.544f. The story of Sinuhe gives some idea of the Asiatic weapons and the nature and conditions of life in Upper Retenu, where he settled as a fugitive, somewhere in the interior of southern Syria. See; Hayes, *op.cit*, pp.552ff. M.Green, *The Syrian and Lebanese Topographical Data in the Story of Sinuhe*; in: *CdE* 58 (1983), pp.38ff.

¹⁸ The text of the Story of Wenamun uses non-literary verbal forms; there are also other formal and stylistic indications for its being a genuine and official report. But there are

beginning of the 21st Dynasty¹⁹. It bears a date, which is given as "Year 5, 4th month of summer, Day 6" and belongs to the new era known as the "Repetition of Births" or, in Egyptian *whm msw.t*²⁰. It seems very likely that the *whm msw.t* was an era inaugurated by Herihor to date events falling within the period of his High-Priesthood and the kingship of Upper Egypt which he announced when he took office. Wenamun presented his credentials to King Smedes, with whom Herihor clearly enjoyed friendly relation, in Tanis, demonstrating that although Ramesses XI, who was the last ruler of the 20th Dynasty, was still alive he functioned only as nominal head of state. A firm historical link is made between the era, Repetition of Births or Renaissance, the reign of Ramesses XI and the beginning of the 21th Dynasty under Smedes²¹.

The story intensively points out the **deterioration of the Egyptian influence** in western Asia after the fall of the Egyptian empire and its consequent negative effect on the rank and veneration of Egypt and the Egyptians abroad²². The **Sea peoples'** defeat prevented them from conquering Egypt itself, but it left the Egyptians incapable of defending their possessions in the East, which were colonized by the Philistines, Sidonites and others²³. The effects of the eclipse of Egyptian power are described in the Wenamun papyrus. Local kings, such as the king of Dor²⁴, showed quite open contempt for the ambassador of the Egyptian king²⁵.

also good arguments in favour of its literary side. See; A.Scheepers, *Le voyage d'Ounamon: un texte "littéraire" ou "non-littéraire"?* in: *Amosiadès. Mélanges Vandersleyen*, pp.355ff.

¹⁹ Cf; A.Egberts, *The Chronology of The Report of Wenamun*, in; *JEA77* (1991), pp.57-67.

²⁰ N. Grimal et B. Menu, *Droit international et commerce au début de la XXIe dynastie. Analyse juridique du rapport d' Ounamon*, extrait de *Le commerce en Egypte ancienne*, in; *BdE 121*, Le Caire 1998, p. 105. Egberts, loc.cit.

²¹ H. Goedicke, *The Report of Wenamun*, John Hopkins University Press: Baltimore, 1975., pp. 6f, 92. D.B.Redford, *Herihor. LÄ, II*, 1131. K.Myśliwiec, *Herr Beider Länder, Ägypten im 1. Jahrtausend v.Chr.*, KAW 69, Mainz 1998,p.30.

²² A.H. Gardiner, *Late Egyptian Stories*, (Bibliotheca Aegyptiaca I), Bruxelles 1932, pp.61ff. id: E.Ph, pp.306f. Wilson, *ANET*, pp.25ff. J. Baines, *On Wenamun as a Literary Text*, in Assmann, J. & Blumenthal, E. (eds), *Literatur und Politik im pharaonischen und ptolemäischen Ägypten*, IFAO: le Caire, 1999, pp.209ff.

²³ Redford, *Egypt, Canaan, and Israel in Ancient Times*, pp.241ff.

²⁴ According to anchors found in the harbour of Dor, Nibbi argues that there is no internal evidence in the story of Wenamun indicating that he was ever at Dor on the Mediterranean coast. Dor itself has produced not a single piece of evidence concerning early links with Egypt, before the Phoenician period. This seems to confirm the

Wenamun, a priest of the Amen temple at Karnak, sailed in a Phoenician ship to Gebal (Byblos) in order to buy wood for the sacred barque for Amun. He carried along a portable idol of Amun-of-the road. He landed in Dor and had his money stolen²⁶ by a member of his crew. Wenamun blamed the local government. The King of Byblos, Zeker-Baal refused to see him for twenty-nine days and finally one of the king's men had a frenzy of prophesying and demanded that they listen to Wenamun and his idol. He faced many difficulties and was not well welcomed²⁷. For example, When he presents the Prince of Byblos with the request for wood, the prince sharply rebuffs him: *"If the ruler of Egypt were the lord of mine, and I were his servant also, he would not have to send silver and gold...As for me-me also-I am not your servant! I am not the servant of him who sent you either! If I cry out to the Lebanon, the heavens open up, and the logs are here lying (on) the shores of the sea!"*²⁸ However, when Egypt was a great powerful empire, such envoys as Wenamen were warmly welcomed²⁹.

Of the **ideological sphere** in the story, the transcendent authority that the ideology of Amun and the pharaoh conferred has nearly vanished³⁰. The Prince of Byblos nearly ignores the blessings of Amun – until one of the youths is possessed while making offerings to the god³¹. Moreover, the prince only hails and recognizes Amun when Wenamun assures him that in exchange for the lumber, the prince can have some of Amun's belongings³².

archaeological data, namely that Dor came to flourish only with the expansion of the Phoenician culture. See; A.Nibbi, The City of Dor and Wenamun, DE 35 (1996), pp.77ff.

²⁵ Redford, op.cit, p.285, 330, 370f.

²⁶ Of the Wenamun's stolen goods and its value, see; R. J. Leprohon, What Wenamun Could Have Bought: The Value of his Stolen goods, in; D. B. Redford - Festschrift, vol. I (June, 2001), pp.1ff.

²⁷ Redford, op.cit, pp.370ff. W. Helck, Wenamun, LÄ, VI, 1215ff. Myśliwiec, op.cit, pp.26ff, 54.

²⁸ ANET, pp.185f;20. Of the last sentence, Winand argues that Zeker-Baal invokes Baal, the god who resides on top of mount Lebanon. The opening of heaven expresses that this divinity heard the petition of Zeker-Baal. The effect of the divine action is the instantaneous throwing of cedar on the sea-shore. This image was meant as a demonstration of the power of the ruler of Byblos to Wenamun. See; J.Winand, Derechef Ounamon 2, 13-14, GM 139 (1994),pp. 95ff.

²⁹ See; E.Otto, Bote (*jpwtj*), LÄ, I, 846f. O.H.Gary, Messengers and Ambassadors in Ancient Western Asia, in: Civilizations of the Ancient Near East. III, New York 1995, pp.1465ff.

³⁰ Helck, LÄ, VI, 1216. Cf; Černý, CAH, 2/2, Cambridge 1975, p.31 and n. 3.

³¹ ANET, p.18. A. Erman, A Handbook of Egyptian Religion, p.195.

³² ANET, p.21. Erman, loc.cit.

– in essence, a substantial bribe. Even the commoner has stopped fearing the wrath of Amun – one of Wenamun's sailors runs off with the god's money³³.

On the other hand, the **Egyptian economic power** was weak in the time of Wenamun. The Prince of Byblos brags about how he can procure a generous amount of lumber if only he gave the command – and his boast is proven true when he later produces for Wenamun the required quantity of wood³⁴. But, in the same time the story refers to the economic relationship between Egypt and Levant in the later eleventh century³⁵. It mentions the shipment of Egyptian linen to Byblos in order to purchase timber. The ruler of Byblos asserts that Egypt gained access to the technology of the maritime lumber trade "only after he [the god Amun] placed Seth [Baal] beside him". Besides, the story provides strong hints that Syrian trading houses were operating in Egypt³⁶.

c) Story of the struggle between Apophis and Seqenenre: - Another important historical story is that of the conflict between Apophis and Seqenenre. It was found on Papyrus Sallier I of the British Museum collection, where it now bears the number 10185. It was written in hieratic, by the scribe Pentawere, and is dated to the reign of Merenptah, the fourth king of the 19th Dynasty. Unfortunately, only the beginning of the story remains³⁷. Although what remains of the story does not mention any kind of battle except a battle of words, it is clear that for the Egyptians of the 19th Dynasty, it was Seqenenre who initiated hostilities with the foreign kings who ruled large parts of Egypt, the Hyksos³⁸. The fact that Seqenenre's mummy bears marks of a violent death suggests that this king may perhaps have died on the battlefield, trying to rid Egypt of the Hyksos³⁹, a task that would be completed by his two successors Kamose and Ahmose. **Another historical information** that can be gleaned from the story is that Egypt was

³³ ANET, p.17. Erman, loc.cit.

³⁴ ANET, pp.21f. Erman, loc.cit.

³⁵ See B. Sass, "Wenamun and his Levant - 1075 BC or 925 BC?", *Ägypten und Levante* 12 (2002), pp. 247ff.

³⁶ E. Wente, *The Literature of Ancient Egypt*. New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press 1972, pp.149ff. Grimal et Menu, op.cit, pp.105ff.

³⁷ P.Sallier I, 1:1- 3: 3. W.K.Simpson, *Papyri Sallier, I; j. BM 10185, LÄ, IV, 730*. Gardiner, *Stories*, pp.85ff. And see; H.Goedicke, *The Quarrel of Apophis and Seqenenre*, San Antonio, Tex. 1986.

³⁸ Gardiner, loc.cit. id; E.Ph, p.136. Redford, op.cit. p.125,128,233.

³⁹ Redford, op.cit, pp.124f, and pl.12.

a divided land, the area of direct Hyksos control being in the north, but the whole of Egypt possibly paying tribute to the Hyksos kings⁴⁰.

The opening paragraph reads as follows: "Now it befell that the land of Egypt was in dire affliction, and there was no Sovereign as king of the time. And it happened that king Seqenenre was Ruler of the Southern City (i.e. Thebes) While the chieftain Apophis was in Avaris and the entire land paid tribute to him in full, as well as with all good things of Timuris (a name of Egypt). Then king Apophis took Seth to himself as lord, and served not any god which was in the entire land except Set. And he built a temple of faire and everlasting work by the side of the house of king Apophis, and he arose every day to make the daily sacrifice to Seth, and the officials of His Majesty bore garlands of flowers exactly as is done in the temple of pre-Harakhti."⁴¹

The story goes on to tell that the Hyksos ruler wished to bring an accusation against Seqenenre and trumped up the absurd charge that the hippopotamuses at Thebes were making such a din at night that he was unable to sleep. The sequel is lost, but certainly the conflict ended in a victory for Seqenenre, though not one of a military kind⁴².

2- Historical Political Literature.

a) Papyrus of Ipuwer: - Preserved on a single Ramesside copy, Papyrus Leiden I 344, incomplete at beginning and end. A man named Ipuwer laments the condition of Egypt, prey to social disorder and reversal of classes, and to uncontrolled incursions by foreigners⁴³; he is speaking to

⁴⁰ O'Connor, David, "The Hyksos Period in Egypt," in *The Hyksos: New Historical and Archaeological Perspectives*, ed. Eliezer D. Oren (Philadelphia: The University Museum, University of Pennsylvania, 1997), 52. D.B.Redford, *The Hyksos Invasion in History and Tradition*. *Orientalia*, 39 no. 1 (1970): pp.1ff.

⁴¹ Gardiner, loc.cit. id; E.Ph, p.136. ANET, p.231.

⁴² Gardiner, op.cit, pp.136ff. N.Grimal, *A History of Ancient Egypt*, Translated by I.Shaw, Oxford 1993, pp.190f.

⁴³ Pap. Leiden 1, 344 rt. Hieroglyphic transcription with English translation and commentary: Alan H. Gardiner, *The Admonitions of an Egyptian Sage from a Hieratic Papyrus in Leiden* (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1909). Lichtheim, AEL, I, pp.149ff. R. O. John A. Wilson, "The Admonitions of Ipu-Wer," ANET, pp.441ff. R.O.Faulkner, "The Admonitions of an Egyptian Sage," LAE, pp.210ff. id, "The Admonitions of an Egyptian Sage," JEA 51 (1965), pp.53ff.

the Lord of All (a term used for the king and for the creator god)⁴⁴. The dating of this papyrus is in dispute; some modern scholars have argued strongly that the Admonitions were in fact composed in the First Intermediate Period—a position which can be supported by parallels with other works datable to that same era⁴⁵. Others, however, have attempted to situate Ipuwer within the upheavals of the Second Intermediate Period⁴⁶. It may well be that both views are correct in their own way, because literary and metrical analyses seem to show that Ipuwer as we have it consists of two separate works, initially composed during the First Intermediate Period, which were subsequently wedded together and augmented by a Thirteenth Dynasty editor⁴⁷.

Such a philosopher and political thinker cites the interior and exterior causes for the downfall of nations and governments such as the collapse of the Egyptian monarchy and the order in his own days. Disrespect of the political stability and the frailty of the economic, military⁴⁸, security and legislative power of the state are among these causes. For example, he says about collapse of monarchy: "*Indeed, the land turns around as does a potter's wheel.*"⁴⁹ He goes on: "*Indeed, that has perished which yesterday was seen, and the land is left over to its weakness like the cutting of flax.*"⁵⁰ He goes on: "*The storehouse is empty and its keeper is stretched on the ground*"⁵¹. And he says: "*Indeed, public offices are opened and their*

⁴⁴ "nb-r-dr", Literally 'Lord to the Limit', implying sovereign power over all creation to the boundary between created matter and the anti-matter beyond. See; WB, II, 230. D.Lorton, Terms of Coregency in the Middle kingdom, in; VA 2(1986), pp.115f. S.Schott, Bücher und Bibliotheken im alten Ägypten, Wiesbaden 1990, passim.

⁴⁵ Williams, "The Sage in Egyptian Literature, p.4. Redford, op.cit, pp.63, 66f.

⁴⁶ J. van Seters, "A Date for the 'Admonitions' in the Second Intermediate Period," JEA 50 (1964), 13-23. S.Wachsmann, Aegeans in the Theban Tombs, in; OLA, 20 (1987), p.123, n; 77.

⁴⁷ Williams, The Sage in Egyptian Literature,SIANE, p.20. Erman has placed Ipuwer firmly between the Dispute of a "Man with his Ba" and "the Instruction of Amenemhat, see; A.Erman, The Literature of the Ancient Egyptians, translated by A.M.Blackman, New York: E.P.Dutton 1927, p.93. Lichtheim has argued that it is pointless to seek the events described in Ipuwer in any particular historical period, because Ipuwer is simply a timeless work of philosophical speculation—"the last, fullest, most exaggerated and hence least successful, composition on the theme 'order versus chaos.see; Lichtheim, AEL, I, p.150.

⁴⁸ Redford, op.cit, p.63, 66f.

⁴⁹ Lichtheim, AEL, I, p.151.

⁵⁰ Ibid, p.154.

⁵¹ Ibid, p.155.

*inventories are taken away*⁵². He adds: "Behold, he who was buried as a falcon is devoid] of biers, and what the pyramid concealed has become empty. Behold, it has befallen that the land has been deprived of the kingship by a few lawless men⁵³. He continues: "Behold, the secret of the land whose limits were unknown is divulged, and the Residence is thrown down in a moment.⁵⁴" Lately, he says: "Behold, the strong men of the land, the condition of the people is not reported [to them]. All is ruin!⁵⁵."

As for the **deterioration of the economic factor**, he tells: "Gold is lacking [. . .] and materials for every kind of craft have come to an end.⁵⁶" He goes on: "Lacking are grain, charcoal, irtyw-fruit, m'w-wood, nwt-wood, and brushwood. The work of craftsmen and [. . .] are the profit of the palace. To what purpose is a treasury without its revenues? Happy indeed is the heart of the king when truth comes to him! And every foreign land [comes]! That is our fate and that is our happiness! What can we do about it? All is ruin!⁵⁷" Also, he says: "Behold, Egypt is fallen to pouring of water, and he who poured water (i.e.; wealth) on the ground has carried off the strong man in misery.⁵⁸"

About the **weakness of the country military forces** that encourages foreigners' infiltrates and attacks, he says: "Indeed, the desert is throughout the land, the nomes are laid waste, and Asiatics from abroad have come to Egypt.⁵⁹" He goes on: "How comes it that every man kills his brother? The troops whom we marshaled for ourselves have turned into foreigners and have taken to ravaging. What has come to pass through it is informing the Asiatics of the state of the land; all the desert folk are possessed with the fear of it.⁶⁰ Also, he says: "the tribes of the desert have become Egyptians everywhere.⁶¹"

⁵² Ibid, p.155.

⁵³ Ibid, p.156.

⁵⁴ Ibid, p.156.

⁵⁵ Ibid, p.185.

⁵⁶ Ibid, p.152.

⁵⁷ Ibid, p.152.

⁵⁸ Lichtheim, op.cit, p.156.

⁵⁹ Ibid, p.152.

⁶⁰ Ibid, p.161.

⁶¹ Ibid, p.150.

As regards the lack of safety and security which makes murder, robbery and fear spread among people, he says: "the land is full of gangs⁶²." He adds: "Indeed, the plunderer [. . .] everywhere and the servant takes what he finds."⁶³ He goes on: "Indeed, [hearts] are violent, pestilence is throughout the land, blood is everywhere, death is not lacking."⁶⁴ He goes on: "Indeed, the river is blood, yet men drink of it. Men shrink from human beings and thirst after water⁶⁵." Also, he says: "If three men travel on the road, they are found to be only two, for the many kill the few."⁶⁶

Then he comments on disrespect of justice and law, saying: "Indeed, the laws of the council chamber are thrown out; indeed, men walk on them in public places, and poor men break them up in the streets, Beggars tear them in the streets."⁶⁷ He adds: "Indeed, the great council-chamber is invaded, Beggars come and go in the great mansions⁶⁸." He goes on: "Behold, the judges of the land are driven out throughout the land⁶⁹" Also, he says: "Indeed, [Right] pervades the land in name, but what men do in trusting to it is wrong."⁷⁰

Actually the philosopher and political thinker Ipuwer was not confined to citing evils and defects; on the contrary, he offered the historical remedy necessary to avoid the fall of any nation at any time. Such a solution is the responsibility of thinkers and wise men who are supposed to guide rulers and citizens to discern their roles, and to figure out a clear picture of the righteous ruler who sincerely works for the welfare and progress of his nation and only depends on the competent in getting jobs⁷¹.

b) Tale of The Eloquent Peasant: - After the collapse of the Old Kingdom, two major changes were taking place: The first is the disruption of the state of union: the Two Lands were ruled by two kings! The divine order was broken. Pharaoh, Lord of the Two Lands, was no longer and so justice, truth & the good could no longer be projected outwardly upon the

⁶² Ibid, p.150.

⁶³ Ibid, p.151.

⁶⁴ Ibid, p.151.

⁶⁵ Ibid, p.151.

⁶⁶ Ibid, p.160.

⁶⁷ Ibid, p.155.

⁶⁸ Lichtheim, op.cit, p.155.

⁶⁹ Ibid, p.156.

⁷⁰ Ibid, p.154.

⁷¹ عبد العزيز صالح ، حضارة مصر القديمة وأثارها، القاهرة ١٩٨٠، ص ٣٩٨ وما بعدها.

institutions (a central "great house" and the temple services of the nomes, the functionaries of Pharaoh). Social unrest, famine, provincial anarchy, internal division, strife & the downfall of a central economy ensued. The second change is the rise of the urban class: at first local potentates, the former rulers of the nomes, go for self-help. Raids on neighboring nomes are common. The law of the strongest prevailed. Over time, the residences of the nomarchs were walled and an urban middle class was formed, focused on the accumulation of private wealth. Two major nomes ruled, in Upper Egypt, Thebes, and in the Delta, Heracleopolis⁷²

This tale is a **significant historical literary source of the Heracleopolitan Period**. It preserved on four late Middle Kingdom papyrus manuscripts, which between them give a complete version: Papyri Berlin 3023, 3025, and 10499 (the latter from the Ramesseum Papyri), and Papyrus British Museum ESA 10274 (also known as Papyrus Butler, after an early modern owner of the manuscript)⁷³. The Eloquent Peasant is set in the reign of King Nebkaure Khety of the First Intermediate Period, but it was actually composed somewhat later, during the early Middle Kingdom⁷⁴. It has a number of affinities with Dispute and Merikare, and it has even been suggested that all three works came from the same hand⁷⁵. The Eloquent Peasant falls into the "Dialogues" category

⁷² W.S.Smith. CAH, 1/2, pp.197ff, 464ff.; Gardiner, E.Ph, pp.170ff; N.Grimal, History, pp.138ff.

⁷³ Facsimile and hieroglyphic transcription with German translation and commentary: F. Vogelsang and A.H.Gardiner, Die Klagen des Bauern, Literarische Texte des Mittleren Reiches 4 (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1908). Hieroglyphic transcription with English introduction and apparatus: R. B. Parkinson, The Tale of the Eloquent Peasant (Oxford: Griffith Institute and Ashmolean Museum, 1991). English translations and commentaries: Lichtheim, AEL, I, pp.169ff; Breasted, The Dawn of Conscience, New York 1933, pp. 182ff. Erman, Literature, pp.116ff. A. H. Gardiner, "Notes on the Story of the Eloquent Peasant," PSBA 35 (1913), 264-276; Alan H. Gardiner, "Notes on the Story of the Eloquent Peasant," PSBA 36 (1914), pp.15ff, 69ff; id; "The Eloquent Peasant," JEA 9 (1923), pp.5ff. R. O. Faulkner, "The Tale of the Eloquent Peasant," LAE, pp.31ff. J.A. Wilson, "The Protests of the Eloquent Peasant," ANET, pp.407ff. N.Shupak, "The Eloquent Peasant," COS, I, pp.98ff. R. B. Parkinson, "Literary Form and the Tale of the Eloquent Peasant," JEA 78 (1992), pp.163ff. H. Goedicke, "Comments Concerning the 'Story of the Eloquent Peasant'," ZÄS 125 (1998), pp.109ff.

⁷⁴ Recent scholarship has focussed on a date in the mid- to late-Twelfth Dynasty; see W. K. Simpson, "The Political Background of the Eloquent Peasant," GM 120 (1991), 95-99. Parkinson, The date of the 'Tale of the Eloquent Peasant', Revue d'Egyptologie 42 (1991), pp.171ff.

⁷⁵ Goedicke, The Report about the Dispute with his Ba: Papyrus Berlin 3024 (Baltimore: of a Man Johns Hopkins Press, 1970)pp.3ff.

It consists of 430 lines of verse, telling the story of a man named *Khunanup* from the Oasis of Salt (Wadi Natrun), who travels down the Nile valley to sell his wares and buy supplies, and falls into the hands of a ruffian who gives him a severe beating and robs him of all his belongings. *Khunanup* appeals to the local ruler for satisfaction, and by his nine eloquent pleas he not only wins compensation but attracts the attention of the king *Nebkaure Khety II* himself. The nine pleas (nine – 3 by 3 - was a magic number for the Egyptians)⁷⁶ are moralistic and philosophical in tone, one example being 'Justice is for eternity and descends into the grave with him who puts himself at its service'⁷⁷.

The Eloquent Peasant not only formed all **principles vital for social⁷⁸, political and legal system⁷⁹** in ancient Egypt which others of his time longed for, but also presented a poor man's view of **rulers' duties** and his search for **justice** from high officials and the king himself in an age when administrative, **social and legislative corruption prevail**. It is clearly a bill of rights of ordinary citizens and the responsibility of state officials towards the poor and powerless⁸⁰. The tale regards the ruler as a father to the orphan, husband to the widow, brother to she who is divorced, a garment to the motherless, a just ruler who comes to the voice of those who call him⁸¹.

⁷⁶ G.Fecht, *Bauerngeschichte*, LÄ, I, 639.

⁷⁷ Posener, *Littérature et politique*, pp.57f; J.Foster, *Literature*, OEAE, 2: pp. 300f. Fecht, *op.cit*, 638ff.

⁷⁸ See; A.Loprieno, «Literature as Mirror of Social Institutions: The Case of The Eloquent Peasant», *LingAeg*, Göttingen, n°8; (2000), pp. 183ff.

⁷⁹ Shupak thinks that the composition obviously has a strong legal background. The message and unique style of the composition cannot be understood without examining the ancient Egyptian judicial system. The text should therefore be added to the list of basic sources which provide information about the structure and function of this system. Furthermore, understanding the main event around which the plot of the story turns, the robbery of the peasant's goods, as a symbolic legal act, casts new light on the composition and opens the door to the study of a new aspect of the law in ancient Egypt, that of legal symbolism. Author. See; N.Shupak, *A New Source for the Study of the Judiciary and Law of Ancient Egypt: "The Tale of the Eloquent Peasant,"* *JNES* 51 (1992), 1-18. And see; M.Bontty, «Images of Law and the Disputing Process in The Tale of the Eloquent Peasant», *LingAeg*, Göttingen n°8 (2000), pp. 93ff, ; M.A.Light., «The Power of Law: Procedure as Justice in The Eloquent Peasant», *LingAeg*, Göttingen; n°8 (2000), pp. 109-124, ,

⁸⁰ Simpson, , *GM* 120 (1991), pp. 95ff. Posener, *loc.cit*.

⁸¹ Lichtheim, *AEL*, I, pp.172.

3- The Royal Instructions.

The Royal Instructions are historically essential that they have valuable historical facts and information on the Ancient Egyptian history. In this Royal Instructions, kingly authors instruct their sons in state craft. The Instruction for Merikare and the Instruction of Amenemhat fall into this category⁸².

a) Instruction of King Khety: - The Teaching for king Merikare preserved on Papyrus Hermitage 1116A, late Dynasty 18, Papyrus Moscow Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts 4658, late Dynasty 18 and Papyrus Carlsberg 6, late Dynasty 18⁸³. King Khety, who ruled at Herakleopolis during the First Intermediate Period and allegedly composed a politically oriented Instruction for his son and successor Merikare. Since several kings during this period went by the name of Khety and the order of their succession is unclear, it is not certain which Khety was thought to be the author of the Instruction for Merikare. Some think it may have been Nebkaure Khety, in whose reign the fictional Tale of the Eloquent Peasant takes place⁸⁴; others believe he was Wahkaure Khety, also known as Khety III⁸⁵. The genuineness of the attribution to any King Khety is also disputed, with

⁸² Lichtheim, "Didactic Literature," 243. Egyptian education was primarily based on the Instructions, seldom on exemplary human models (Egyptian *bi3*) or their counterparts. The latter can be found in biographies and didactic literature. The king, the teacher or father are presented or present themselves as such. Negative models are rare, but i.a. Amenemhat I portrays himself as one who has misjudged in his instruction. In the Instruction for Merikare the king blames himself for a sacrilege committed by his soldiers. See; H.Brunner, Vorbild und Gegenbild in Biographien, Lehren und Anweisungen, in: Studies in Pharaonic Religion and Society for Gwyn Griffiths,(edited by A.B. Lloyd, London 1992), pp. 164ff.

⁸³ Hieroglyphic transcription with German translation and commentary: W.Helck, Die Lehre für König Merikare, Kleine ägyptische Texte (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1977). J.F.Quack, Studien zur Lehre für Merikare, Wiesbaden, Otto Harrassowitz, 1992, English translations and commentaries: Lichtheim, AEL, I, pp.97ff; Breasted, Dawn, pp.153ff. Erman, Literature, pp.75ff. Parkinson, Voices from Ancient Egypt, pp.52ff. R. O. Faulkner, "The Teaching of Merikare," LAE, 1pp.80ff. J. A. Wilson, "The Instruction for King Meri-Ka-Re," ANET, pp.414ff. M.Lichtheim, "Merikare," COS 1, pp.61ff. T. W. Thacker, "The Instruction for King Merika-re," DOTT, pp.155ff.

⁸⁴ Lichtheim, AEL, I, p.97. Parkinson, op.cit, 52.

⁸⁵ R. David and A. E. David. A Biographical Dictionary of Ancient Egypt (London: Seaby, 1992), 1, pp.75ff. M. Rice, Who's Who in Ancient Egypt (London: Routledge, 1999), pp. 6ff, 113.

This teaching similarly tall of such **migrant Nomads** who made use of the unstable political condition at the end of the Old Kingdom and settled in the Delta. They tried to make Egypt their home, adopted Egyptian customs, and kept their local names along with Egyptian ones. Nonetheless, king Khety fought them and tried to pursue them out of the country⁸⁸. He says: " *I arose as lord of the city, whose heart was sad because of the Delta*"⁸⁹. He adds: " *Speak thus concerning the barbarian: As for the wretched Asiatic, unpleasant is the place where he is (with) trouble from water, difficulty from many trees, and the roads thereof awkward by reason of mountains. He does not dwell in one place, being driven hither and yon through want, going about [the desert] on foot. He has been fighting since the time of Horus; he never conquers, yet he is not conquered, and he does not announce a day of fighting, like a thief whom a community has driven out. But I lived, / and while I existed the barbarians were as though in the walls of a fortress; [my troops] broke open [...]. I caused the Delta to smite them, I carried off their people, I took away their cattle, until the detestation of the Asiatics was against Egypt. Do not worry about him, for the Asiatic is a crocodile on his riverbank; he snatches a lonely serf, but he will never rob in the vicinity of a populous town.*"⁹⁰

In respect of Khety's **fighting against Asiatic nomads**, he depended on inciting the military spirit throughout the country, taking care of young soldiers and establishing fortified cities on borders to avoid the nomads' invasions and those who slip into the Delta⁹¹. He says: " *Raise up your young troops, that the Residence may love you. Multiply your partisans as neighbors; see, your towns are full of newly settled folk. It is for twenty years that the rising generation is happy in following its desire, and neighbors come forth again; he who is caused to enter goes in for himself by means of children [...]. Ancient times have fought for us, / and I raised (troops) from them at my accession*"⁹². He adds: " *See, the mooring post which I have made in the east is driven in from the limits of Hebnu to Road-*

⁸⁸ Redford, Egypt, Canaan and Israel, p.63, 66.

⁸⁹ Lichteim, op.cit, p.103.

⁹⁰ Ibid, p. 103f.

⁹¹ E.Rowinska and J.K.Winnickl, Staatsausdehnung (P 67-68) und Massnahmen zur Verstärkung der Nordostgrenze (P 106-109) in der "Lehre für den König Merikare," ZÄS 119 (1992),pp. 131ff.

⁹² Lichteim, op.cit. p.101.

of-Horus, settled with towns and full of people of the pick of the entire land,
to repel / enemies from them.⁹³

b) Instruction of King Amenemhat I: - The text of the Instruction of Amenemhat I was preserved on the so-called Papyrus Millingen of the 18th Dynasty, of which an integral copy was made by Peyron in 1843, but the papyrus was subsequently lost. The manuscript is dated by its handwriting to the second half of the Eighteenth Dynasty. It has been used in Egyptology as the principal manuscript source, because it gives the clearest and longest version for the Teaching. Parts of the work are preserved on three wooden tablets of the 18th Dynasty, papyrus fragments, leather fragments and numerous Ostraca of the New Kingdom⁹⁴. Several features suggest that this composition, although formulated in M.Eg, reflects certain specific Historical problems of the 18th Dynasty, such as the passage of royal power from Tuthmosis I to Hatshepsut or from Tuthmosis II to Tuthmosis III. The reiteration of the Teaching at the early 19th Dynasty corresponds to the period when Seti I and Ramesses II institutionalized the association to the throne as a preliminary step to coregency⁹⁵.

The actual literary composition was written shortly after Amenemhat I had been murdered in a palace coup⁹⁶. This literary-political instruction was

⁹³ Ibid, 103.

⁹⁴ Facsimile with English commentary: E. A. Wallis Budge, Facsimiles of Egyptian Hieratic Papyri in the British Museum, 2nd series (London: British Museum. Dept. of Egyptian and Assyrian Antiquities, 1923), pp. 27ff, pl. lxiii-lxv. Hieroglyphic transcription with German translation and commentary: Wolfgang Helck, Der Text der "Lehre Amenemhets I. für seinen Sohn", Kleine ägyptische Texte (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1969). English translations and commentaries: Lichtheim, AEL, I, pp.135ff; Erman, AEPP, pp.72ff; Parkinson, Voices, pp.48ff; John A. Wilson, "The Instruction of King Amen-em-Hat, ANET pp.418ff; M.Lichtheim, "Amenemhet," COS I, pp.66ff; R. O. Faulkner, "The Teaching of King Ammenemes I to His Son Sesostri," LAE, pp.193ff.

⁹⁵ N.Grimal, Corégence et association au trône: l'Enseignement d'Amenemhat Ier, BIFAO 95 (1995), pp.273ff.

⁹⁶ Thériault rejects that the instruction is as a posthumous political testament of king Amenemhat I composed under his successor Sesostri I to legitimize him, since as propaganda the text fails. The text says that the king was attacked before the coregency of ten years had begun. The highly personal and autobiographical nature of the instruction strongly suggests that Amenemhat was its author. Amenemhat realized that his son's succession would be challenged. Therefore, some time in the coregency he composed the text as a private apologia for Sesostri, and at best, the latter redacted and disseminated it. See; C. Thériault, The Instruction of Amenemhet as Propaganda, JARCE 30 (1993), pp. 151ff.

composed for king Senusret I by one of his scribes named Khety⁹⁷ who was reputed to have composed "*the book of the Instruction of King Sehetepibre*" according to Papyrus Chester Beatty IV⁹⁸. This latter is the *nsw-bity* name of the founder of the Twelfth Dynasty, Amenemhat I, and hence the Instruction ascribed to him is usually called the Instruction of Amenemhat. This work is a powerful and imaginative composition. Three elements are important; **first**, the literary form: the orational style is used, except for the description of the assassination, which is in prose. **Second**, the literary setting: the speaker is the murdered Amenemhat I who communicates to his son Senusret in a "*revelation of truth*". **Third**, the existential tone: kingship is not sweet but bitter, and the instruction involves the castigation of the traitors as well as warnings to his son not to trust anybody⁹⁹.

The instruction have much **historical information** about 12th Dynasty. The **great military efforts** of Amenemhat I to protect the southern and eastern borders against the dangers of Nubians and the Asiatics, is a proper illustration. Additionally, there is the **wise internal policy** which the king adopted to satisfy and comfort his people. It defines **royal obligations** and the **needs of the people**. It states that there are perils awaiting a king that is not alert to those around him. It also states that loneliness and personal sacrifice make for a good king¹⁰⁰.

This instruction also include the **successful plot** conspired in the royal harem to assassinate the king because of the strife for the throne¹⁰¹. The

⁹⁷ It is still unclear whether Khety son of Duauf was the "Khety" who allegedly wrote the Instruction of Amenemhat, although a considerable number of modern authorities believe that they are the same person. Those who assert that the same Khety wrote both Amenemhat and the Satire of the Trades include Posener, *Literature*, in; *Legacy of Egypt*, p.232, Williams *Scribal Training in Ancient Egypt*, *JAOS* 92 (1972), p.217, Parkinson *Voices*, p.72; and Foster, *Ancient Egyptian Literature, An Anthology*, Austin: University of Texas Press, 2001, p. 242. Philippe Derchain, *Auteur et Societe*, in ; A.Loprieno (ed.), *Ancient Egyptian Literature, History and Forms*, Edited by Antonio Loprieno, Leiden - New York - Köln, E.J. Brill, 1996, *Probleme der Ägyptologie*, 10 (1996), pp.83f. J.Assmann, *Kulturelle und Literarische Texte*. In A.Loprieno (ed.), *Ancient Egyptian Literature, History and Forms*, (1996), pp.75f.

⁹⁸ A.H.Gardiner, *Hieratic Papyri in British Museum*, II, London 1935, pl.20, verso 6; 11.14. ANET, p.418.

⁹⁹ Lichtheim, *AEL*, I, pp.135ff.

¹⁰⁰ Posener, *Littérature*, pp.78ff. *BAR*, §469ff. *LR*, I, p.254.

¹⁰¹ A.De Buck, *The Instruction of Amenemmes*, in; *Mélanges Maspero*, I, le Caire 1935-1938, pp.849ff. H.Goedicke, *The Beginning of the Instruction of King Amenemhet*, in; *JARCE*, 7(1968), pp.15ff. J. L. Foster, "The Conclusion to the Testament of

conspirators benefited from the absence of his son and coregent Senusret who was leading the Egyptian army against the Libyans¹⁰². He says: " *It was after the meal, night had fallen. I took an hour of rest. I lay on my bed, for I had grown weary. My heart began to follow sleep. Suddenly weapons of counsel were turned against me. I was like a snake of the desert. I awoke to my bodyguard. I found it was a body blow by a soldier. If I had swiftly taken weapons in my hand, I would have turned the wretch back in confusion, but there is no night champion, no-one who can fight alone. There can be no success without a protector. See, the attack happened when I was without you, before the court had heard I would hand over to you, before I had sat with you, to make your position. For I had not feared it, I had not envisaged it. My hear had not borne the failure of servants. Had women ever raised troops? Had rebels ever been nurtured within the home? Had water ever been opened up, while the canals were being dug, and with locals at their tanks? No disaster had come up behind me since my birth. Never had the like happened - my moment was that of doer of valiant deeds.*"¹⁰³

c- Prophecy of Neferti¹⁰⁴ :- Principal sources of prophecy of Neferti are Papyrus Hermitage 1116B, Writing board Cairo CG 25224 and Writing board British Museum EA 5647. All these manuscripts are dated to the 18th Dynasty. This Prophecy belongs to the literature of the political prophecies, for it relates to the justification of the king Amenemhat I ascendancy over the throne. Although dating to the end of the 11th / beginning of the 12th Dynasties, this story is set in the Fourth Dynasty and concerns a sage Neferti who is summoned to the court to entertain King Snefru. Instead of telling

Amenemes, King of Egypt," JEA 67 (1981). Cf; F.LL.Griffith, The Millingen Papyrus (Teaching of Amenemhat), in; ZÄS, 34(1896), pp.38ff. A.Erman, The Literature, p.72.R. Anthes, "The Legal Aspect of the Instruction of Amenemhet," JNES 16 (1957), 176-190.) Amenemhat's assassination also provides the occasion for the famous Tale of Sinuhe, see; ANET, pp.18f. Posener, Littérature, p.68.

¹⁰² Posener, op.cit, p.80.P. Gardiner, E.Ph, pp.481f. Vernus et J.Yoytte, Les pharaons, Paris 1988, p.44.

¹⁰³ Helck, op.cit, pp.39ff. BAR,I, § 480. lichtheim, op.cit, p.137.

¹⁰⁴ Hieroglyphic transcription and German commentary: W.Helck, Die Prophezeiung des Nfr.tj. Kleine ägyptische Texte (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1970). English translation and commentary: H. Goedicke, The Protocol of Neferyt (The Prophecy of Neferti) (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977). Other English translations: Lichtheim, AEL, I, pp.139ff; Breasted, Dawn, pp.200ff; Erman, Literature, pp.110ff; R. O. Faulkner, "The Prophecies of Neferti," LAE,pp.234ff; J. A. Wilson, "The Prophecy of Neferti," ANET,pp. 444ff; N.Shupak, "The Prophecies of Neferti," COS 1,pp106ff. Parkinson, Voices, pp.34ff. Foster, Ancient Egyptian Literature, pp.76ff.

stories of Egypt past he tells of the future - a prophecy of Egypt's decline and of a state of chaos in the land, but he does name the saviour: Ameny (well-authenticated abbreviation of the name Amenemhe, founder of the 12th Dynasty), a king who re-unite the land and turn back the evil forces. The historical setting is a literary device familiar from other Middle Egyptian works, such as the Tales at the court of king Khufu (preserved on one manuscript only, Papyrus Westcar). The dramatic juxtaposition of chaos and restored order is another literary device recurrent in Middle Egyptian literature, notably in the genre of Lamentations, such as the Lamentations of Ipuwer¹⁰⁵.

In spite of being **political propaganda** for the previous king, the prophecy contains, meanwhile, **historical signals** closely connected to the historical events at the intermediary period between the end of the 11th Dynast and the beginning of the 12th Dynasty.

The First of these historical signals is the description of the state of political and security vacuum in Egypt before the succession of Amenemhat I to the throne. This vacuum resulted in civil wars and the spread of chaos and poverty¹⁰⁶.

The second signal is the coming of savior Ameny (Amenemhat I) to rescue Egypt from catastrophes and to lead the Egyptians to unity, safety and prosperity¹⁰⁷. This Prophecy was not only prophetic but historical, as can be seen in this expert describing the unification of upper and lower Egypt by the "Unifier of the Two Lands" or the savior like Menes.

The third signal is the confession of the writer of this prophecy of the non-royal origin of king Amenemhat. Here the non-royal descent of Amenemhat I is clearly enough indicated, for the phrase 'son of Someone' was a common way of designating a man of good, though not princely, birth. Ta-Sti is the name of the first nome of Upper Egypt,

¹⁰⁵ Helck, loc.cit. Lichtheim, loc.cit. Shupak, loc.cit.

¹⁰⁶ Posener, Littérature et politique, pp.21ff,145ff. Hayes, CAH, 1/2, pp.200f, 529,532f. E.Blumenthal, Die Prophezeiung des Neferti, ZÄS 109 (1982), pp.1ff.

¹⁰⁷ Helck, loc.cit. Wilson, ANET, pp.444ff. Gardiner, E.Ph., pp.125f.

II- The Indirect Literary Sources

1) Religious Historical Myths.

The ancient Egyptian religious myths have their historical implications. For example, the myths relating to gods: Osiris¹¹⁴, Horus, Seth (*the Contendings of Horus and Seth in the Ramesside Pap. Chester Beatty*¹¹⁵) and Isis (*The Laments of Isis and Nephthys in Berlin Pap. 1425*¹¹⁶ and *Isis and the Name of Re in Papyrus Turin 1993 and Papyrus Chester Beatty 11*¹¹⁷). These famous ancient Egyptian myths, refer to **several historical issues**. On the one side, the god Osiris played the role of the righteous king¹¹⁸ who ruled Egypt¹¹⁹ and worked for the benefit of his nation to the extent that his people loved him¹²⁰. The myths claims that Osiris was the first deified human being to rule Egypt, being depicted in artistic works as a king wearing a double crown combining both the crown of Upper Egypt and the two feathers he inherited from the god Andjety. Above all, Osiris's

¹¹⁴ Budge, Book of the Dead, III, pp.61ff.

¹¹⁵ J. G. Griffiths, The Conflict of Horus and Seth. Liverpool University Press. Liverpool, 1960. Lichtheim, AEL, II, pp.214ff.

¹¹⁶ J.T.Dennis, The Burden of Isis, London 1918.pp.20ff.

¹¹⁷ A.MacDowell. Village life in ancient Egypt : laundry lists and love songs, Oxford and New York 1999, pp. 118ff, no.88

¹¹⁸ According to Diodore and Plutarch, king Osiris made the Egyptians to adopt a regime of civilized life and gave them the laws; see; P. Bertrac, Y. Vernière, Diodore, Bibliothèque historique, Book I, Les Belles Lettres, 1993, I, p.17; Chr. Froidefond, Plutarch. Œuvres moral V/2, Ises and Osiris, Ed. "Les Belles Lettres", Paris, 1988, p.13. In the words of Ptahhotep: " Great is Maat, lasting in effect, Unchallenged since the time of Osiris."See; Lichtheim, AEL, I, p.64.

¹¹⁹ The gods were the earliest rulers of Egypt is a belief presented in the Royal Canon of Turin and in the divine dynasties of Manetho. Among these gods is Osiris. See; J.G.Griffiths, Osiris, LÄ, IV, 627.

¹²⁰ Such as touching the invention of agriculture which confirmed by a great number of Egyptian sources, to start with the personal declaration of Osiris in the Ramesside tale of *Horus and Seth*: "It is I who created the barley and wheat to make the gods live and, after the gods, the herd of man!" (P. Chester Beatty I,= =recto 14, 12). in the same way, a stela of the XVIIIth Dynasty, previous to the time of Amarna, particularly instructive on Osirian theology, names the god: "The one who established *ma'at* on the Two Banks" (Louvre C 256, line 9). See; A. Moret, "La légende d'Osiris à l'époque thébaine d'après l'hymne à Osiris du Louvre", BIFAO 30, 1931, pp..725ff and pl.III.

name is translated as "eye-ball", which is similar to humans' names, indicating that he was a human being before he become a god¹²¹.

As considers the **historical role** of the god Seth in the myths, he played the role of evil as he illegally usurped the throne from the legitimate heir Horus¹²². It is the very role of illegitimate kings in the Egyptian kingship. In fact, Osiris symbolizes national unity throughout the ancient Egyptian history, as it is obvious in Set's murder of him¹²³. When Seth discovered his hiding place, he torn him into forty-two or fourteen pieces, scattering each in a place. Such scattering refers to the disintegration of the country and its division into several territories whether in the first stages of unifying Egypt or in the periods of Egypt's weakness in the intermediate periods¹²⁴. As a result of the ancient Egyptians' recognition of Osiris's personification of the unity and power of Egypt, they related foreign invaders like Hyksos¹²⁵ and Persians and their usurpation of Egypt personified as the soul and body of Osiris to Set's plot against him. The fact that Hyksos during their rule of Egypt did not worship any of the Egyptian gods but Seth is due to their hatred of Osiris who indicates historical national unity¹²⁶.

When Horus was a young man, he and his uncle Seth quarrelled over who was the legitimate divinely appointed ruler of Egypt. A tribunal of the gods was held to settle the dispute. It was decided that Horus should rule over Lower Egypt and Seth should rule over Upper Egypt. This was later

¹²¹ K. Sethe, *Urgeschichte und älteste Religion der Ägypter*, Leipzig 1930, §79,102,103. H. Kees, *Der Götterglaube im alten Ägypten*, Leipzig 1941, pp.256f. Of the different forms and interpretations of Osiris's name, see; Griffiths, *Osiris*, LÄ, IV, 623ff.

¹²² See: H. Veide, *Te. Seth, God of Confusion. A Study of his Role in Egyptian Mythology and Religion*, E.J. Brill, Leiden, 1967.

¹²³ W. Barta, *Die Bedeutung der Pyramidentexte für den Verstorbenen König*, MÄS 30(1981), pp.81f. Of the passage in P.T. Spell 477 (P.T. 957a-959e) relating an episode in the process against Seth for his killing Osiris held before the divine tribunal of Heliopolis, see; B.Mathieu, *Un épisode du procès de Seth au tribunal d'Héliopolis* (*Sprach 477, Pyr. § 957a-959e*), GM 164 (1998), pp.71ff. (Fig.).

¹²⁴ Sethe, *loc.cit.* Grimal, *History*, pp.34f.

¹²⁵ The departure of the Hyksos from Egypt apparently became part of Egyptian mythology as well. See, Griffiths, J. Gwyn, "The Interpretation of the Horus-Myth of Edfu" *JEA* 44 (1958), pp. 75ff, on the expulsion of the Hyksos as the = =historical- political basis for the myth of the battle between Horus and Seth commemorated in the in the Horus myth of Edfu. The Hyksos are the key people to understanding so much of what happened and what was remembered.

¹²⁶ Griffiths, LÄ, IV, 626f. Redford, *op.cit.*, p.117.

considered unworkable, so Horus was made king of the Two Lands of Egypt, and Seth took on the role of defender of Re by standing at the prow of the solar bark. Horus became the **god of kingship**, and the ancient Egyptian kings traced their lineage to him, the god who triumphed over evil. Each king was the human form of Horus. Upon his death, he became one with Osiris and reigned supreme in the next life, while his heir ruled on earth as the new incarnation of the great falcon-god. The simplicity of such a common myths would be conducive to a unification of both kingdoms¹²⁷.

The myths reveal that Isis, in search of her murdered husband, followed the path of her deceased husband's casket until she arrived at Byblos, on the coast of Syria and Phoenicia. Once she finally found the remains of Osiris in Phoenicia, Isis took the tree trunk which had shielded the casket of her husband Osiris on the shores of Syria, she then ceremoniously erected it , wrapped it in pure white linen bands, in the Temple of Byblos¹²⁸. This ancient association of Osiris with Byblos has led to **historical consideration**. The myth was meant to symbolize a close trade relationship between Egypt and Byblos in earliest times. Moreover, the cult of Osiris may be originated in Byblos¹²⁹.

On the other hand, the role of goddess Isis in the myths is that of the **chief wives of kings**. Each royal wife, like Isis, has to do her duty concerning her husband and her legitimate son, the same as Isis did¹³⁰. Another source suggests a possible influence of the history of the New Kingdom on the development of the myth of the terrestrial royalty of Isis. A stela from the Louvre Museum describes the assignments of the sister and wife of Osiris. Thus: "His sister assured his protection, she repelled the enemies, who undoes the actions of the troublemakers by the formulas of her utterances, whose words are complete, the infallible speeches, and the final orders" (Louvre C 256, l. 13-14). The second part of the text, which makes allusion to the search of the dismembered body and to the childhood of

¹²⁷ F.Servajean, Un episode des Aventures d'Horus et de Seth (P. Chester Beatty I R^o, 11, 1-13,1), Revue d'Égyptologie, 55 Issue: 1 (2004), pp.125ff. V.A.Tobin, Divine Conflict in the Pyramid Texts, JARCE 30 (1993), pp.93ff.

¹²⁸ pyr. 581a-b,588a,1007a-1008a, 1258c 1628a-c,1260b. N.L.Goodrich, Ancient Myths, New York 1960, pp.30ff.

¹²⁹ Cf; R.Weill, Phoenicia and western Asia, London 1940. J.G.Griffith, The Origins of Osiris and His Cult, London 1980, p.29.

¹³⁰ L.Troy, Patterns of Queenship in Ancient Egypt Myth and History, Uppsala 1986, pp.36ff.

Horus, suggests that this first part doesn't describe the magic protection assured by Isis after her spouse's death, but certainly her function as queen in the absence of the Pharaoh¹³¹. The queens Neithhotep¹³², Meritneith¹³³ and Ankhesenpepi II¹³⁴ became regent until their children, who represent the infant Horus, were old enough to reign.

Moreover, the devolved **sovereignty** in Isis is not an echo of the eminent political role that several queens of the New Kingdom played. Not to mention, for example, the hymn to Ahhotep, the mother of Ahmosis, founder of the Dynasty, on a stela found in Karnak, where the king invites Egypt to honour his mother, who exercised the reality of power when he was occupied repulsing the Hyksos into Palestine: "Make praise to the mistress of the country, the sovereign of the borders of the Haunebut, whose name is raised in all foreign regions, who governed the population, wife of king, sister of sovereign, sister of king, august mother of king, who knows the affairs of state, who united Egypt, gathered his nobles, united them, brought back his fugitives, regrouped his dissidents, pacified Upper Egypt and pushed back its rebels, the royal wife, Ahhotep !" (Cairo CG 34001)¹³⁵. Like Ahhotep, the historic figures of Ahmes-Nefertary¹³⁶, the divine wife of Amenhotep I, of Tiy¹³⁷, the wife of Amenhotep III, without forgetting Hatshepsut¹³⁸, who of course decided to become Pharaoh, certainly contributed to forge the mythical picture of this sovereign Isis.

2- Irreligious Historical Myths:-

a) The Story of the Two Brothers (Pap. d'Orbiney):- It seems that the author of the Two Brothers Mythical story¹³⁹ may have been affected by the

¹³¹ A. Moret, "La légende d'Osiris à l'époque thébaine d'après l'hymne à Osiris du Louvre", BIFAO 30, 1931, pp.725ff and pl.III.

¹³² Troy, op.cit, p.106. W.Helck, Neith-hotep, LÄ, IV, 394f.

¹³³ Troy, loc.cit. J.v.Beckerath, Mert-Neith, LÄ, IV, 93.

¹³⁴ Troy, op.cit., p.155;6.7. W.Seipel, Anchnesmerire I. u. II, LÄ, I, 263f.

¹³⁵ Utk. IV, 21. Troy, op.cit, p.161;18.2.

¹³⁶ Troy, op.cit, passim.

¹³⁷ Ibid, passim.

¹³⁸ Ibid, passim.

¹³⁹ Wettengel argues that this story is a parable of the course of the sun during day and night, or a parable of the changes of the seasons. The transformations of Bata can be compared with the transformations of the sun-god during his course. See; W.Wettengel; Zur Rubrengliederung der Erzählung von den zwei Brüdern, GM 126 (1992), pp.97ff. Of Anubis's Mortuary Functions in the "Tale of the Two Brothers"

political and social life in the Ancient Egypt¹⁴⁰. Obviously, his description of the conditions of the royal couple in this allegorical mythical story is typically similar to the actual life of the royal king and queen in Amarna, especially in their appearance together in the royal palace balcony, their riding of the royal chariot and the queen's pouring of wine into the king's cup. Moreover, the author transferred the character of king Akhenaton's secondary wife, Kia, to the depiction of Bata's wife. The latter became a queen of Egypt after her marriage to the Egyptian king who was so seduced by her beauty that he was easily influenced and induced by her to kill Bata¹⁴¹.

What makes the personalities of Kia and Bata's wife appear in agreement is their typical titles as " *ỉ3 špst* ", being similarly foreign in origin as they are both from Minor Asia, their ascendancy to the position of the royal wife, being the object of the king's love care and finally the terrible end of their lives both¹⁴². Because the historical background of this mythical story does not seem to rely on the events of the Amarna period, perhaps it refers to the reign of king Merenpetah (19th Dynasty). The fact that the story was dated back to this given period and that Merenpetah's wife had the same former rare title affirms this suggestion¹⁴³.

b) Myths of The King's Divine Birth (Papyrus Westcar): The pretensions of the divine birth of some ancient Egyptian kings are mere attempts of those kings and their supporters to justify their accession to the throne ascribing the legitimacy of their reign to an old divine will and a holy origin. Thus, their means is propaganda suitable for the religious dogma of its period.

There is an earlier informal version in a literary narrative cycle preserved in one copy on a papyrus (Papyrus Westcar, now in the Egyptian

and his traditional role: mortuary god with a special relation to the king, a king-maker to become king himself, see; S.T.Hollis, Anubis's Mortuary Functions in the "Tale of the Two Brothers", in: *Hermes Aegyptiacus. Studies Stricker*, Edited by Terence DuQuesne, Oxford, DE Publications 1995, pp.87ff.

¹⁴⁰ R.Park, A Tale of Two Brothers and the Pomegranate, DE 42 (1998), pp.121ff. Lichtheim. AEL, II, pp.203ff.

¹⁴¹ L.Manniche, The Wife of Bata, GM 18(1975), pp.33f. I.I.Perepelkin, The Secret of the Gold Coffin, Moscow 1978, pp.117ff.

¹⁴² Manniche, loc.cit. Perepelkin, loc.cit.

¹⁴³ S.T.Hollis, The Ancient Egyptian " Tale of Two Brothers ", the Oldest Fairy Tale in the World, Oklahoma 1990, p.114.

Museum, Berlin). The copy dates to the Second Intermediate Period (about 1800 BC); the composition is in a late form of the Middle Egyptian phase of the language, indicating a date of composition in the late Middle Kingdom (about 2025-1700 BC) or Second Intermediate Period (1850-1600 BC)¹⁴⁴. The tale relates the birth of three Fifth Dynasty kings to a woman named *Hotefneferet*, wife of a priest of Re in Lower Egypt, during the reign of the Fourth Dynasty king *Khufu*. This Cycle of Divine Birth shows the creator-god Re taking the form of the husband to impregnate the wife chosen to give birth to the future kings: she is the human vessel within which the purely divine seed of the creator can grow. The birth is assisted by the goddesses *Isis*, *Nephtyis* and *Heqet*, with the god *Khnum* as their porter¹⁴⁵.

The Historical implications of this mythical narrative are:-

First; it indicates the political circumstances at the end of the 4th Dynasty to terminate the reign of its kings, and describes the usurpation of the sun priests, who were not closely related to the royal family, of the throne. Thereupon, they made up this myth to claim that they were not ordinary humans like their ancestors; however, they are far much better because they are the sons of the creator-god Re¹⁴⁶.

Second; it also explains the major role of the sun worship in the 5th Dynasty and describes the faithfulness of its kings to Re who backed them in their accession to the throne as well as to his priesthoods who stood by them in their reign¹⁴⁷.

¹⁴⁴ Goedicke denies to date Pap. Westcar to the Middle Kingdom or the 2nd Intermediate period, and prefers to associate the contents of the Pap. Westcar with the events which shaped the very beginning of the Theban ascendancy marking the beginning of the N.E. Sec; H.Goedicke, Thoughts about the Papyrus Westcar, ZÄS 120 (1993), pp.23ff. But Jenni dates it to the beginning= =of the Middle Kingdom, see; H.Jenni, Der Papyrus Westcar, SAK 25 (1998), pp.113ff.

¹⁴⁵ A.W.Blackman, The Story of King Kheops and the Magicians: Transcribed from Papyrus Westcar (Berlin Papyrus 3033) (edited by W.V.Davies; Reading J.V.Books, 1988), pp.15ff. Parkinson, The Tale of Sinuhe and Other Ancient Egyptian Poems, pp.106,109. Lichtheim, AEL, I, pp.215ff.

¹⁴⁶ Parkinson, loc.cit.

¹⁴⁷ Gardner, E.Ph, pp.84ff. Smith, CAH, 1/2, pp.179ff.

Third; the king is the same substance as the creator - he is not human, but divine and there is no such thing as 'royal blood' or a royal family, there is only the direct descent from the sun-god¹⁴⁸.

Fifth; human women are not easily 'sons of Re' - the sun-god is male, and so his offspring is most naturally also male; nevertheless, there are several cases in Egyptian history where a woman claimed kingship, most notably Hatshepsut, but also Sobekneferu in the Twelfth Dynasty and Tausret in the Nineteenth Dynasty¹⁴⁹.

Sixth; although the king is regularly male, all others in close connection with kingship are female - it is human women who come into direct physical contact with the sun-god to produce the next king, and with the reigning king as his wife; therefore 'king's mother'¹⁵⁰ and 'king's wife'¹⁵¹ are all-important religious positions in court, higher than 'king's daughter'¹⁵² and 'king's son'¹⁵³.

¹⁴⁸ H.Brunner, König-Gott-Verhältnis, LÄ, III, 461 ff.

¹⁴⁹ Troy, op.cit, pp.53ff, 102ff.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid, 68,107,192;C1/1. M.A.Nur-El-Din, Some Remarks on the Title *Mwt-Nsw*, *Orientalia Lovaniensia*, 2, Leuven 1980, pp.91ff.

¹⁵¹ Troy,op.cit, pp. 68,106,107,108,193;C2/2.

¹⁵² Ibid, 64,106,107,108,120,194;C4/1.

¹⁵³ Ibid,68.