

Reign of Amenemhat II.: tablet belonging to his time

The great official, who is named Khnum-hotep, receives the foreigners, accompanied by an attendant who carries his sandals and a staff, and who is followed by three dogs. A scribe, named Nefer-hotep, unrolls before his master a strip of papyrus, on which are inscribed the words, "The sixth year of the reign of King Usurtasen Sha-khepr-ra: account rendered of the Amu who in the lifetime of the chief, Khnum-hotep, brought to him the mineral, mastemut, from the country of Pit-shu"they are in all thirty-seven persons."

The mineral mastemut

is thought to be a species of stibium or antimony, used for dyeing the skin around the eyes, and so increasing their beauty. Besides this offering, the head of the tribe, who is entitled khak, or "prince," and named Abusha, presents to Khnum-hotep a magnificent wild-goat, of the kind which at the present day frequents the rocky mountain tract of Sinai. He wears a richer dress than his companions, one which is ornamented with a fringe, and has a wavy border round the neck. The scene has been generally recognized as strikingly illustrating the coming of Jacob's family into Egypt (Gen. xlv. 28-34), and was at one time thought by some to represent that occurrence; but the date of Abusha's coming is long anterior to the arrival in Egypt of Jacob's family, the number is little more than half that of the Hebrew immigrants, the names do not accord; and it is now agreed on all hands, that the interest of the representation is confined to its illustrative force.