I. Inscriptions from Private Tombs

The three tomb inscriptions in this section are major representatives of their kind. The Autobiography of Ahmose son of Abana continues the traditional genre of tomb autobiography. Its special interest is historical, for it furnishes the principal account of the expulsion of the Hyksos. It is a wholly martial autobiography that describes the actions and career of a soldier. As such it is a rarity among Egyptian autobiographies, for most of them came from members of the civilian bureaucracy.

Ahmose began his career as a soldier on board a ship, stepping into the position that his father had held. Having come to the attention of King Ahmose, he was transferred to the north, where he saw action in the decisive battles against the Hyksos, first at Avaris and subsequently at Sharuhen in Palestine. Then he participated in the Nubian campaigns of Kings Amenhotep I and Thutmose I, where he so distinguished himself that he was promoted to the rank of commander of a crew and given substantial landholdings in his home town Nekheb, modern El-Kab. Finally he took part in the Syrian campaign of Thutmose I in which the king reached the Euphrates. Thus risen from the ranks, he was able to bequeath wealth to his descendants and to found a family which reached the upper echelons of the civil service. His son Iturui and his grandson Paheri became tutors of the king’s sons, and Paheri attained the post of mayor of Nekheb and Iunyt. The style of the autobiography is simple, straightforward, and unadorned.

The grandson Paheri, whose career probably began under Thutmose I, built for himself the handsomest of the known tombs of El-Kab. In addition to being mayor of two towns, he was “scribe of the grain accounts” for an area extending north as far as Dendera. The fine reliefs in his tomb show him overseeing the various agricultural activities that were in his charge. His tomb does not contain an autobiographical prose narration. Instead he had the rear wall of the main hall inscribed with elaborate prayers and a recital of his virtues, the whole composition designed to help attain a blessed afterlife envisaged in considerable detail. This vision contains many of the features that were incorporated in the spells of the Book of the Dead.

The highest official of the state was the vizier. His duties were so important and so numerous that he was installed by the king in person, in a public ceremony in which the king gave him a formal charge. The text of this charge was inscribed on a wall of the sumptuous tomb of the Vizier Rekhmire, who served King Thutmose III. The same text with variants appears in two other Theban tombs of viziers of the Eighteenth Dynasty. The king’s speech is composed in the orational style.
THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF AHMOSE SON OF ABANA

In his Tomb at El-Kab

The inscription is carved in two parts: lines 1-31 on the right-hand wall of the hall of the rock-tomb (east wall), and lines 32-40 on the left side of the door wall (south wall). Also on the right-hand wall is the standing relief figure of Ahmose accompanied by the small figure of his grandson Paheri.

A list of Ahmose's landholdings and slaves, not translated here, is inscribed on the right side of the door wall.

Publication: LO III, 12, b-d. V. Loret, L'inscription d'Ahmès fils d'Abana, Bibliothèque d'étude, 3 (Cairo, 1910). Urk. IV, 1-11.


(1) The Crew Commander Ahmose son of Abana,¹ the justified; he says. I speak to you, all people. I let you know what favors came to me. I have been rewarded with gold seven times in the sight of the whole land, with male and female slaves as well. I have been endowed with very many fields. The name of the brave man is in that which he has done; it will not perish in the land forever.²

He speaks as follows. I grew up in the town of Nekheb,³ my father being a soldier of the King of Upper and Lower Egypt, Seqenenre,⁴ the justified. Baba (5) son of Reonet was his name. I became a soldier in his stead on the ship "The Wild Bull" in the time of the Lord of the Two Lands, Nebpehtire,⁵ the justified. I was a youth who had not married; I slept in . . . ⁶

Expulsion of the Hyksos

Now when I had established a household,⁷ I was taken to the ship "Northern," because I was brave. I followed the sovereign on foot when he rode about on his chariot. When the town of Avaris was besieged, I fought bravely on foot in his majesty's presence.⁸ Thereupon I was appointed to the ship "Rising in Memphis." Then there was fighting on the water in "Pjedku" of Avaris. I made a seizure (10) and carried off a hand.⁹ When it was reported to the royal herald the gold of valor was given to me.

Then they fought again in this place; I again made a seizure there and carried off a hand. Then I was given the gold of valor once again.

Then there was fighting in Egypt to the south of this town, and I carried off a man as a living captive. I went down into the water—for he was captured on the city side—and crossed the water carrying him.
When it was reported to the royal herald I was rewarded with gold once more. Then Avaris was despoiled, and I brought spoil from there: one man, three women; total, four persons.\textsuperscript{10} His majesty gave them to me as slaves.

(15) Then Sharuhen was besieged for three years. His majesty despoiled it and I brought spoil from it: two women and a hand. Then the gold of valor was given me, and my captives were given to me as slaves.

\textit{Nubian campaign of King Ahmose}

Now when his majesty had slain the nomads of Asia, he sailed south to Khent-hen-nefer,\textsuperscript{11} to destroy the Nubian Bowmen. His majesty made a great slaughter among them, and I brought spoil from there: two living men and three hands. Then I was rewarded with gold once again, and two female slaves were given to me.\textsuperscript{12} His majesty journeyed north, his heart rejoicing in valor and victory. He had conquered southerners, northerners.

\textit{Destruction of the rebels Aata and Tetian}

Then Aata came to the South.\textsuperscript{13} (20) His fate brought on his doom. The gods of Upper Egypt grasped him. He was found by his majesty at Tent-taa.\textsuperscript{14} His majesty carried him off as a living captive, and all his people as booty. I brought two young warriors\textsuperscript{15} as captives from the ship of Aata. Then I was given five persons and portions of land amounting to five arurae in my town. The same was done for the whole crew.

Then came that foe named Tetian.\textsuperscript{16} He had gathered the malcontents to himself. His majesty slew him; his troop was wiped out. Then I was given three persons and five arurae of land in my town.

\textit{Nubian campaign of King Amenhotep I}

Then I conveyed King Djeserkare,\textsuperscript{17} the justified, when he sailed south to Kush, to enlarge (25) the borders of Egypt. His majesty smote that Nubian Bowman in the midst of his army. They were carried off in fetters, none missing, the fleeing destroyed as if they had never been. Now I was in the van of our troops and I fought really well. His majesty saw my valor. I carried off two hands and presented them to his majesty. Then his people and his cattle were pursued, and I carried off a living captive and presented him to his majesty.

I brought his majesty back to Egypt in two days from “Upper Well,” and was rewarded with gold. I brought back two female slaves as
booty, apart from those that I had presented to his majesty. Then they made me a “Warrior of the Ruler.”

*Nubian campaign of King Thutmose I*

Then I conveyed King Aakheperkare, the justified, when he sailed south to Khent-hen-nefer, (30) to crush rebellion throughout the lands, to repel the intruders from the desert region. I was brave in his presence in the bad water, in the towing of the ship over the cataract. Thereupon I was made crew commander.

Then his majesty [† was informed that the Nubian]----. At this his majesty became enraged like a leopard. His majesty shot, and his first arrow pierced the chest of that foe. Then those [enemies turned to flee], helpless before his Uraeus. A slaughter was made among them; their dependents were carried off as living captives. (35) His majesty journeyed north, all foreign lands in his grasp, and that wretched Nubian Bowman head downward at the bow of his majesty’s ship “Falcon.” They landed at Ipet-sut.

*Syrian campaign of King Thutmose I*

After this (his majesty) proceeded to Retjenu, to vent his wrath throughout the lands. When his majesty reached Naharin, his majesty found that foe marshalling troops. Then his majesty made a great slaughter of them. Countless were the living captives which his majesty brought back from his victories. Now I was in the van of our troops, and his majesty saw my valor. I brought a chariot, its horse, and him who was on it as a living captive. When they were presented to his majesty, I was rewarded with gold once again.

(40) I have grown old; I have reached old age. Favor ed as before, and loved [by my lord], I [rest] in the tomb that I myself made.

*NOTES*

1. The name of his mother, variously transcribed by scholars as Eben, Ibara, Abana, or Abina.
2. A proverb which occurs twice more in inscriptions of Thutmose III (Urk. IV, 684 and 780); see B. Gunn, JEA, 12 (1926), 283.
3. The metropolis of the third nome of Upper Egypt, modern El-Kab.
4. Throne name of King Tao II of the Seventeenth Dynasty.
5. Throne name of King Ahmose, the founder of the Eighteenth Dynasty.
6. The meaning of smt snw is unknown. The rendering “hammock of net” of Gunn and Gardiner, op. cit., p. 49, lacks probability.
7. I.e., had married.
8. Ahmose is a marine rather than a sailor. Whether actual naval engagements took place at that time is doubtful. The ships served primarily to transport troops.
9. The seizure is a slaying, after which a hand of the dead enemy was cut off and brought back as proof of the killing. For bringing back live prisoners other terms are used.

10. Literally, "heads."

11. A name for a portion of Nubia south of the second cataract. See Vandersleyen, _op. cit._, pp. 64-68.

12. All captives were presented to the king and he distributed some of them to his soldiers. In this incident Ahmose presents two men and receives two women as reward.

13. This enemy seems to have been a Nubian. The name Aata, which could be a title rather than a personal name, is discussed by Gunn and Gardiner, _op. cit._, p. 50 n. 3, and Vandersleyen, _op. cit._, pp. 75 ff., who makes it plausible that the attack by this "rebel" takes place during or after the king's return journey, and to the north of the second cataract, i.e. in Egypt proper. The region of Lower Nubia between the first and second cataracts was considered to be Egypt by the Egyptians ever since it had been conquered by the kings of the Twelfth Dynasty, even though it had been lost during the Hyksos period and had only recently been reconquered.

14. Or Tjent-aq; the locality has not been identified, see H. Goedicke, _Kush_, 13 (1965), 104-105, and Vandersleyen, _op. cit._, p. 79.

15. On mg3 "young warrior," see Vandersleyen, _op. cit._, p. 80.

16. This rebel was an Egyptian.

17. Throne name of King Amenhotep I.

18. Throne name of King Thutmose I.

19. The northern part of Thebes, modern Karnak.

20. Literally, "to wash his heart."

THE PRAYERS OF PAHERI

In his Tomb at El-Kab

Paheri's career probably began under Thutmose I and may have lasted through the reign of Queen Hatshepsut. He became a scribe of the treasury and also mayor of the towns of Nekheb and Iunyt (El-Kab and Esna).

The back wall of the main hall of his tomb was given the shape of a round-topped stela with a niche in its center. The niche was filled by three seated statues, and the surface of the stela was inscribed in horizontal lines with a text that begins in the rounded top and continues on the right and left sides of the niche. This is a mortuary text consisting of four parts: (1) the traditional prayer for offerings in a much enlarged version; (2) an elaborate vision of life in the beyond; (3) a recital of Paheri's virtuous conduct as an official; (4) an appeal to the living to recite the prayer for offerings, again much more elaborate than such appeals had been in the past.


_Translation:_ _Urk. deutsch_, pp. 55-61. G. Fecht, _ZÄS_, 92 (1965), 15-23 (lines 5-21). For additional references see also PM V, 177-181.
The prayer for offerings

(1) An offering given by the King (to) Amun,
Lord of Thrones-of-the-Two-Lands,¹
King of eternity, lord of everlastingness,
Ruler, lord of the two great plumes,
Sole one, primordial, eldest,
Primeval, without [equal],
[Creator] of men and gods,
Living flame that came from Nun,
[Maker] of light for mankind;
(And) Nekhbet, the White one of Nekhen,²
Mistress of heaven, lady of the Two Lands;
(And) Osiris Khentamentiu,
Lord of Thinis, great in Abydos;
(And) Hathor, mistress of the desert,
Strong of heart among the gods;
(And) Ptah-Sokar, lord of Shetyt,³
Anubis, lord of Rostau,⁴
(And) the Enneads, great and small.
May they give a thousand of bread, beer, beef and fowl,
A thousand of food-offerings,
A thousand of drink-offerings,
All the plants that sprout from earth,
A thousand of all things good and pure,
That are offered to the eternal lord;
To receive the bread that came before (him),
The milk that came upon the altar,
To drink the water that flows from Yebu.⁵

On the monthly feast, the sixth-day feast,
The half-monthly feast, the great procession,
The rise of Sothis, the wag-feast,
The Thoth-feast, the first-birth feast,
The birth of Isis, the procession of Min,
The procession of the sem-priest,
The evening meal, the rise of the river—
The feasts of heaven on their fixed days,
In accord with daily custom.
You are clothed in the robe of finest linen,
The garments that clad the flesh of the god;
You are anointed with pure oil,
You drink water from the altar's rim;
You partake of its possessions,
As a noble in front of the blessed;
For the *ka* of the Mayor of Nekheb,
The Scribe Paheri, the justified,
(5) The loyal trusty of his lord.

_The life in the beyond_

You come in, you go out,
Your heart in joy at the praise of the lord of gods;
A good burial after revered old age,
After old age has come.
You take your place in the lord-of-life,⁶
You come to the earth in the tomb of the west.
To become indeed a living *ba*,
It shall thrive on bread, water, and air;
To assume the form of phoenix, swallow,
Of falcon or heron, as you wish.
You cross in the ferry without being hindered,
You fare on the water's flowing flood.
You come to life a second time,
Your *ba* shall not forsake your corpse.
Your *ba* is divine among the spirits,
The worthy *ba*'s converse with you.
You join them to receive what is given on earth.
You thrive on water, you breathe air,
You drink as your heart desires.
Your eyes are given you to see,
Your ears to hear what is spoken;
Your mouth speaks, your feet walk,
Your hands, your arms have motion.
Your flesh is firm, your muscles are smooth,
You delight in all your limbs;
You count your members: all there, sound,
There is no fault in what is yours.
Your heart is yours in very truth,
You have your own, your former heart.
You rise to heaven, you open *dat*.⁷
In any shape that you desire.
You are summoned daily to Wennofer's altar,
You receive the bread that comes before (him),
The offering to the lord of the sacred land;
For the *ka* of the Mayor of Nekheb, the Mayor of Iunyt,⁸
Who counts the grain from Iunet⁹ to Nekheb,
The watchful leader, (10) free of fault,
The Scribe Paheri, the justified.

You eat bread beside the god,
At the great terrace of the Ennead’s Lord;
You turn from there to where he is,
In the midst of the leading council.
You walk about among them,
You consort with the Horus-servants;
You go up, you go down, unhindered,
You are not turned back at the gate of dat.
The portals of lightland open for you,
The bolts slide back of themselves;
You reach the Hall of the Two Truths,\(^\text{10}\)
The god who is in it welcomes you.
You settle down in the netherworld,
You stride about in the city (15) of Hapy.\(^\text{11}\)
Your heart rejoices as you plow
In your plot in the Field of Reeds;
You are rewarded with what you have grown,
You gather a harvest rich in grain.
The rope is roped for you in the ferry,
You sail as your heart desires.
You go outdoors each morning,
You return each evening.
The torch is lit for you at night,
Until the sun shines on your breast.
One says to you, “Welcome, welcome,”
In this your house of the living.
You see Re in heaven’s lightland,
You watch (20) Amun as he dawns.
You waken gladly every day,
All afflictions are expelled.
You traverse eternity in joy,
In the favor of the god who is in you.\(^\text{12}\)
Your heart is with you without failing you,
Your provisions remain in their place;
For the \(ka\) of the Scribe Paheri, the justified.

\( \text{Pa} \)\( \text{heri recalls his blameless conduct} \)

He says:
I am a noble who served his lord,
One skilled and free of negligence.
I walked on the road I had explored,
I knew the outcome of life.  
I reckoned the limits in the books,  
The boundaries of the king's concerns,  
All things that pertained to the palace,  
Like Hapy in his course to the (25) sea.\textsuperscript{13}  
My mouth was firm in serving the lord,  
I was fearful of deficiency;  
I did not neglect making payment in full,  
I did not take a slice of the expense.  
I was guided by my own heart  
On the road of those praised by the king.  
My pen of reed made me renowned,  
It gave me right in the council;  
It made my nature, I surpassed\textsuperscript{7} the nobles,  
\hfill  
My good character raised me high,  
I was summoned as one who is blameless.  
(30) Were I to be placed on the scales,  
I would come out complete, whole, sound.  
I came and went with a steady heart,  
I told no lie to anyone.  
I knew the god who dwells in man,  
Knowing him I knew this from that.  
I did the tasks as they were ordered,  
I did not confuse the report with the reporter,  
I did not speak with low-class words,  
I did not talk to worthless (35) people.  
I was a model of kindliness,  
One praised who came praised from the womb.  
The Mayor of Nekheb, Paheri, the justified,  
Son of the tutor of the prince, the scribe Itruri, the justified,  
Born of the Lady Kam, the justified.  

\textit{The appeal to the living}

He says:  
Listen, all who now have being,  
I speak to you without deceit;  
You who live, who have existence,  
Nobles, people, upon earth;  
Servants of god, priests, attendants,  
Every scribe who holds the palette,  
Who is skilled in words of god;\textsuperscript{14}  
Whosoever is good to his subjects,
Whosoever excels in his (40) task:
Re, everlasting, will commend you,
Also Nekhbet, the White one of Nekhen,
And whoever guides your task.\textsuperscript{15}
You will bequeath to your children,
If you say, “An offering, given by the king,”
In the form in which it is written;
“An invocation-offering,” as said by the fathers,
And as it comes from the mouth of god.
Whosoever will bend his arm,
He will be on the path of truth.
To act as befits, as conforms to the rules,
Is to bear witness before this stela.
Your thousand of bread, your thousand of beer,
Your hundred thousand of all good things,
Offered pure to the Osiris,
Mayor of Nekheb, Mayor of Iunyt,
Trusty of the treasurer on the southern journey (45),
The worthy Scribe of the accounts, the justified Paheri.

I say to you, I let you know:
It is a recital without expense.\textsuperscript{16}
It does not make poor, it makes no trouble;
It means no quarrel with another,
It is no coercing one who is needy.
It is a pleasing speech that uplifts,
The heart does not tire to hear it.
The breath of the mouth, it is not eaten,
There is no strain, no fatigue in it.
It is good for you when you do it,
You will find in it [profit] and (50) praise.
While I was in the land of the living,
No sin against god was reproached me.
I have become an equipped [blessed spirit],
I have furnished my place in the graveyard.
I have what I need in all things,
I shall not fail to respond.
The dead is father to him who acts for him,
He forgets not him who libates for him,
It is good for you to listen!
MONUMENTAL INSCRIPTIONS

NOTES

1. The temple of Amun at Karnak.
2. In addition to being the goddess of the town of Nekheb, Nekhbet was closely associated with the town of Nekhen (Hieraconpolis), which faced Nekheb across the river.
3. Name of a sanctuary of Ptah-Sokar.
4. Term for the necropolis, often specifically that of Giza.
5. Elephantine, where the waters of the Nile were thought to emerge from the ground.
6. A metaphor for the coffin.
7. A region of the sky often identified with the netherworld.
8. Modern Esna.
10. The hall in which the judgment of the dead took place as described in chapter 125 of the Book of the Dead.
11. Hapy, the Nile god, dwelled in the netherworld.
12. On the notion of the god who dwells in man see Bonnet, RARG, pp. 225-228.
13. This seems to mean that Paheri observed the proper limits in his administrative activities, just as the Nile stays on course.
14. I.e., in writing. The god Thoth had invented the art of writing.
15. The specific gods who were the patrons of the various professions.
16. I.e., the recitation of the offering formula is a simple and easy task that requires no exertion.

THE INSTALLATION OF THE VIZIER REKHMIRE

In his Tomb at Thebes

The reliefs and texts in this splendid tomb give a many-faceted account of the activities of the vizier Rekhmire, who served under King Thutmose III. The principal texts are: (1) the autobiography; (2) the king's installation speech; (3) the description of the duties of the vizier. Only the second text, the royal installation speech, is translated here. The text is carved in vertical columns on the west wall of the transverse hall. The accompanying relief shows Thutmose III enthroned. The figure of Rekhmire, who stood before the king, has been destroyed.


Legend accompanying the scene

(1) The charge placed upon the vizier Rekhmire. The council is brought into the hall of Pharaoh. The vizier Rekhmire is ushered in, newly appointed.

The speech of Pharaoh

His majesty said to him:
Look to the office of vizier,
(5) Watch over all that is done in it,
Lo, it is the pillar for the whole land.
Lo, being vizier,
Lo, it is not sweet,
Lo, it is bitter as gall.¹
Lo, he is the copper that shields the gold of his master’s house,
Lo, he is not one who bends his face to magistrates and councillors,
Not one who makes of anyone his client.
Lo, what a man does in his master’s house will be his happiness,
Lo, he shall not act [[in the house]] of another.

Lo, petitioners come from the South and the North,
The whole land is eager for [the counsel of the vizier];
See to it that all is done according to law,
That all is done exactly right,
In [giving a man] his vindication.
Lo, the magistrate who judges in public,
Wind and water report all that he does,
Lo, there is none who ignores his deeds.
If he makes [[a mistake in deciding]] his case,
And fails to reveal it through the mouth of the clerk,
It will be known (10) through the mouth of him whom he judged,
Through his telling it to the clerk by saying:
“This is not the decision of my case.”²
If the petitioner is sent ---
------- or magistrate,
One will not ignore what he did.
Lo, the magistrate’s safety is acting by the rule,
In acting on a petitioner’s speech;
Then the judged [cannot say]:
“I was not given my right.”
A proverb in the Book of Memphis says:
“Gracious king, lawful vizier.”³

Avoid what was said of the vizier Akhtoy,
That he denied his own people for the sake of others,
For fear of being falsely called [partial].
If one of them appealed a judgment,
That he had planned to do to him,
He persisted in denying him,
But that is excess of justice.
(15) Do not judge unfairly,
God abhors partiality;
This is an instruction,
Plan to act accordingly.
Regard one you know like one you don’t know,
One near you like one far from you.
The magistrate who acts like this,
He will succeed here in this place.

Do not pass over a petitioner,
Before you have considered his speech.
When a petitioner is about to petition you,
Don’t dismiss what he says as already said.
Deny him after you let him hear
On what account you have denied him.
Lo, it is said:
“A petitioner wants his plea considered
Rather than have his case adjudged.”
Do not scold a man wrongfully,
Scold where scolding is due.
Cast your fear, that you be feared,
The feared magistrate is a magistrate.
A magistrate’s worth is that he does right,
But if a man makes himself feared a million times,
People think something is wrong with him,
And they don’t say of him, “He is a man.”

This too is said:
A magistrate (20) who lies comes out as he deserves.
Lo, you succeed in doing this office by doing justice,
Lo, doing justice is what is wanted in the actions of the vizier,
Lo, the vizier is its true guardian since the time of god.
Lo, what one says of the vizier’s chief scribe:
“Scribe of Justice” one says of him.
As to the hall in which you judge,
It has a room full of [written] decisions.
He who does justice before all people,
He is the vizier.
Lo, a man remains in his office,
If he acts as he is charged,
Innocent is the man who acts as he is told.  
Do not act willfully  
In a case where the law is known;  
For as regards the headstrong man,  
The Lord prefers the timid to the headstrong man.  
Act then in accord with the charge given you.  
Lo, ["it is laid upon you"].

Furthermore, pay attention to the plowlands when they are being confirmed. If you are absent from the inspection, you shall send the chief inspectors and chief controllers to inspect. If anyone has made an inspection before you, you shall question him. May you act according to your charge.  

NOTES

2. The five lines are difficult and the translations differ widely.
4. The same observation occurs in the Instruction of Ptahhotep, lines 268-269.
5. Dmi n, "touching upon," means "as regards"; it is the same evolution of meaning as in Hebrew be-nage'a. The shj-ib is the man who is willful, arrogant, violent, and the like.
6. This final passage is written in prose and fits better with the text called "duties of the vizier" which is carved on the wall opposite the "installation" text.