

ed or engraved on their monuments; explanations founded only on the hieroglyphics, conceived like those which have been transmitted to us in any general terms,(1) and which, passing from mouth to mouth, were altered as to details according to the fancy of those who communicated them to strangers, and consequently it is impossible to rest any proposition relative to the antiquity of the present continents on the fragments of these traditions, so incomplete even in their own times, and rendered utterly unintelligible by the pens of those who have handed them down to us.

If this assertion needed farther proof, it might be found in the list of the sacred work of Hermes, which the Egyptian priests carried in their solemn procession. Clemens Alexandrinus(2) enumerates them, in number forty-two; and there is not amongst them, as with the Brahmans, one epic, or one book which has the pretension of being a narrative, or of fixing in any way any great action or any event.

The learned researches of M. Champollion, junior, and his astonishing discoveries concerning the language of hieroglyphics(3) confirm rather than destroy these surmises. This ingenious antiquary has read in a series of hieroglyphical pictures of the temple of Abydos(4) the prænomina of a certain number of kings placed in order, one after the other; and a portion of these prænomina (the ten last)

(1) That of Rhamestes in Ammian. loc. cit.

(2) Stromat. lib. vi. p. 633.

(3) See the 'Précis du Système Hieroglyphic des anciens Egyptiens,' par M. Champollion le jeune, page 245; and his 'Lettre à M. le Duc de Blacas,' p. 15 et seq.

(4) This important bas-relief is engraved in the 'Voyage à Meroë,' by M. Caillaud, v. 2, plate xxxii.