

THE GREAT MENDES STELE.

XXXIInd DYNASTY.

 TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN VERSION OF

BRUGSCH-BEY.

THE following inscription is upon a tablet at present in the Museum at Boulaq, discovered by Brugsch-Bey in 1871, amidst the ruins of Tmai-el-Amidid. The tablet is rounded above, and has twenty-eight horizontal lines of hieroglyphs, six of which are destroyed and seven are in part wanting. Above is the Hut or winged disk with the following inscription :

“HUT, the great god, Lord of the heaven, the giver of beams, who comes out of the horizon on the side of Upper Egypt, and gives a pure life !”

And on the other side is mentioned instead,

“The coming out of Lower Egypt.”

The snakes are called “Neheb of Eileithyia” and “Uati of Buto.” In the area are represented a ram wearing a disk and horns and covering on a pedestal, and the following inscription :

“The sacred Ram-god, the Great God, the Life of RA, the Generative Ram, the Prince of young women, the beloved of the King’s daughter and King’s sister, and Regent of the land, ARSINOE the ever-living.”

and on the other side,

“The life, the Lord of the land, the Lord of might, MER-AMEN, the Son of RA of his loins who loves him, the Lord of diadems, PTOLEMAIOS the Ever-living,”

that is Ptolemy II. Philadelphos. The legend referring to the ram is :

“The King, the RAM, the Life of RA, the RAM, the Life of SHU, the RAM, the Life of SEB, the RAM, the Life of OSIRIS, the RAM of Rams, the Prince of Princes, the heir in the town of Tanen,”

or Mendes. Behind the ram is a small figure of Harpocrates seated on a throne, with the following inscription :

“HARPACHRUT, the Great God of Mendes, on his throne in Mendes, to whom the world and all that belongs to it is handed over.”

After him is the god Mendes in his human form wearing the *atef* crown.

“BA-NEB-TAT the great god the life of RA, the Generative Ram, the Prince of young women, Lord of Heaven, King of the Gods, the Giver of Life for to-day and ever.”

He says :

“I let before thee the kings of all lands bow themselves in respect.”

A goddess wearing on her head the fish standard, emblem of the Mendesian nome, follows Mendes. She is called

“HAEMEHETI, the mighty of Mendes, the wife of the god in the temple of the RAM, the Eye of the Sun, the Lady of heaven, the Ruler of all gods.”

She says :

“I give to thee the love in the heart of the god, annihilated is the intention of thy enemies.”

The Queen Arsinoe ends the row of figures, she is called :

“The Daughter, Sister, Great wife of a King, who loves him, the god-like PHILADELPHOS ARSINOE.”

The tablet has been published by Mariette-Bey, *Monumens Divers*, fo., Paris, 1875, pl. 43, 44, and the whole has been described and translated by Brugsch-

Bey, *Die grosse Mendes-Stele aus der Zeit des Zweiten Ptolemaers*, in the *Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache und Alterthumskunde*, 1875, S. 33, and foll. This description has been drawn up from Brugsch-Bey's article, and the text of the tablet translated by Mr. Drach from the German translation.

S. BIRCH.





THE GREAT MENDES STELE.

1 Long live the SUN-HORUS, the strong youth, the Lord of the diadems, the glorious, the golden HORUS, who has crowned his father, the King of Upper and Lower Egypt, the Lord of the country, the friend of AMEN, to whom the SUN has granted victory, the Son of the Sun, the Lord of the diadems, PTOLEMAIOS, who loves the RAM, who is the Lord of the city of Mendes, the Great God, the Life of RA, the Generator, the Prince of young women, the Only God, the Original male power of gods and men, who reveals himself in the region of light with four heads, (that re-
 2 present him as) the illuminator of heaven and earth by his solar splendour, as the one coming in the Nile-stream, as the one granting life to the terrestrial world, and as the air for all men: whom the gods praise, whom the goddesses praise in his form of the Living RAM, who is rich in male power, who is the Prince of the Deities.

This excellent god¹ the image of the divine RAM, the living portrait of him, who dwells in the region of light, the divine efflux of the prolific RAM, the generator of² (was anxious)

3 to preserve the temples, and to adorn the sacred landscapes with edifices, he the eldest son of the RAM, the creator of that which exists, who is enthroned on the seat of the Prince of the gods, the splendid symbol of the divine throne-heir of the nomes, who was received³ through him.

¹ The King.

² Lacuna.

³ Conceived.

to become Lord and King, the son of a King, born of a Queen, to whom was given the royal dignity over the land, when still in the maternal womb. Before he was born he had already become possessed (of the rule).

4 On the day of his election he became King, resting on the breast of the beautiful and amiable Mistress.¹ His father's manly power, of the holy RAM in the meadows of Mendes, was equal to that of the King. For he is victorious, a master of strength, strong of hand. When he takes his (sword), he combats in the open field, strong amidst the battle fray. With victorious hand he conquers his adversaries. He is of shrewd spirit, of virtuous heart, repelling repulsive things, full of truthfulness, and a friend of legal order. Thoughtful of (bringing back)

5 quietude to Egypt, he protects the holy houses and is an iron protector of her natives. Powerful in virility, universally adored and feared in all lands, (adoration is granted to him) and all men shout at his appearance; he being their (protector) loving (to execute) his (good intents) for their welfare. All sanctuaries are filled with his gifts, and both parts (of the

6 country rejoice in his special kindnesses. This King therefore turned (his cares to)

7 the holy RAM, the Lord of the city of Mendes, since he knew it is this god that is invoked for the kingdom, which is in his hands. On account of his predilection for the royal holy rams, there should be elevated to the throne a (new appearing) live ram, as it occurred from the beginning of his royal accession. The holy animal was to be elevated on his seat and his accession solemnized in the way as for former Kings.

8 Thus began the (festival) of accession. His Majesty occupied the fore part of the Ram-boat of this god,

¹ His mother.

descending the great stream, and upwards on the canal Aken,¹ just as his royal predecessors did, to complete all things customary in the accession, as it is prescribed. On arriving in the city of Mendes and in Anep,² His Majesty ordered him³ to be led forth to his throne chamber. And behold, he was behind this god, thus showing his love to his Lord (Thus did they arrive at)

9 the holy place Ap-Nuterui,⁴ the seat of his enthronement from oldest time. His Majesty visited the edifice of the holy rams, finding the ram-temple still building as His Majesty had ordered. Excluding the foreign workmen His Majesty ordered the edifice, for eternal use, to be completed (speedily). His Majesty (besides) inspected the inmost dwelling chamber of the splendid RAM, which was also to be renewed. And he ordered one (of the superior Officers of his retinue to execute all the work in the best manner)

10 for the Holy RAM in Anep, where he is enthroned on his seat. His Holiness⁵ then went through all the prescribed customs in the temple, desiring to show in every form honour to the holy Rams, corresponding (to the ceremonies as ordered) by the god THOTH. This being finished, His Holiness⁵ went to his residence, and his heart was overjoyed on all that he had done for his father the royal the dignified the living Rams of Anep; may they grant him a long life and a joyous reign. When His Majesty (returned home, he wished

11 to unite) the first of his (consorts) NETEF-ANKH with the goddess BA-ABET. And he gave her the following title of honour "The amiable Princess, the beauteous, loveliest, fairest, the crowned one, who has received the double diadem, whose glory fills the palace, the friend of the holy

¹ Of the Mendesian nome. ² The Ram-quarter. ³ The Ram.

⁴ Undetermined site of the Mendesian nome. ⁵ The king Ptolemy

- RAM and (of the name of his Priestess) UTA-BA, sister of the King and wife of the King, who loveth him, the Princess of the country, ARSINOË. In the year 15, month Pachons (the 10th day was appointed
- 12 for the Queen's holy consecration and her introduction into) the temple after the divine Lady had received the holy anointing, during an interval of four days, she re-appeared as a consecrated soul, and there were rejoicings for her in Anep,¹ when her festival was solemnized, to enliven her holy soul at the place of the living Rams, as was always customary to the Rams of all gods from ancient times unto this day. (Thereupon another ceremony was performed
- 13 in honour of the Queen, in the form granted) to all goddesses, who there received life a second time, scattering the fumes of incense over her and each first day of the ten-day week. His Majesty (further) commanded that her Ram-image should be placed in all temples. This was very pleasing to her Prophets, that she should be found like the deities on account of her benevolent thoughts for all mankind. And (she) was crowned (in the presence of the assembled crowd,
- 14 and rejoicing in her) were the women who were amongst them, and she received the name of "The Beloved of the Holy RAM, Goddess, The Beloved of her royal brother (PHILADELPHUS) ARSINOË." As for His Majesty, he chose out of his suite the fairest youths amongst the children of the Egyptian guards, (but chose) their Captains from the children (of the warrior caste) of the Mendesian nome.
- 15 Further the King showed his favour to the same nome after this manner (as regards namely) the navigation-toll of all Egypt, which they had to pay to the royal house: His Majesty ordered, that no ship-toll should be

¹ The city-quarter.

- demande on the vessels of the Mendesian meadow in its entire extent, since they (its dwellers) had spoken before His Majesty, that they had never paid the toll from the times (of the god to the accession
- 16 of His Majesty. Further) corresponding to what had been done by his father, the Divine King, in former times as regards the apportionment of bread of all the cities to be sent as tribute to the royal house, His Majesty ordered that no bread-tribute should be paid as regards the Ram-temple and its district, nor in its name, just as was done by THOTH (the model) of the Kings. And see, they had spoken (fuller to the King regarding the revenues of
- 17 the temple of MENDES, serving to pay for) the sacred offerings to extend the district of its sanctuary, and to complete all that was needed for its temple. If there was a deficiency in its products for a long time, sorrow prevailed amongst the people: if there was plenty of provision, joy prevailed amongst them. For the entire wealth of the soil rests on the inundation of the Nile that brings its products (therefore His Majesty ordered, that the inhabitants of the Mendesian
- 18 ian nome should not pay more than) 70,000 (pieces of money)¹ at the beginning of each year, to be their tax to the royal house for ever afterwards. Such a thing never happened in the time of any of the Kings who lived before him. The whole country rejoiced unto heaven, and burst into hymns of thanks at the royal name of His Majesty. And another proof (of his favourable care for the temple of the Mendesian
- 19 deity was exhibited by His Majesty in this deed. Namely) in the year 21,² it was announced to His Majesty, "The temple of thy father, of the Holy RAM, of the Lord of Mendes, is

¹ Drachms.² B.C. 264.

completed in all its edifices. It is much fairer, than it ever was before, in compliance with the orders of Thy Majesty. The inscriptions were chiselled in thy name, in the name of thy father and in that of the Divine Lady PHILADELPHOS ARSINOE. (May it please Thy Majesty, to execute the solemnity of consecrating the sanctuary to the god.)”

20 In the year 10¹ of the month 4 of the 10th day occurred the festival in the temple till the 16th day. Then did heaven and earth rejoice. The holy royal RAM was led into his temple, to be enthroned in his place of honour. And all the other (deities) assembled in their chambers in their Ram-shapes, for the whole country had for each town its Ram-deity, and every vale had its ram-headed hawk shape² Thus was the command ordered by His

21 Majesty. And the rest of the festival was solemnized in the presence of the officials) of His Majesty. When the temple was thus most solemnly handed over to its divine possessor, and when they³ had left for the royal residence, to rejoice the heart of His Majesty, and in their suite the Prophets, who carried flowers pleasing to His Majesty, then His Majesty presented to the temple much native gold, wheat, robes (and with all other good things, to dignify the god and his sanctuary.)

22 In year 10 and month 4 it was announced to His Majesty in these words: “Please to let the Living Holy RAM be brought from the field in the West of the city of Mendes. The place where it was found, is in the neighbourhood of the pylons, lying near the place⁴ that Thy Majesty may place it on its throne. Let the sacred scribes of the temple approach (from certain places of the country that they

23 may examine the holy animal. And there assembled)

¹ B.C. 275.

² Lacuna,

³ The officials.

⁴ Unknown site.

five *Kem-sep*¹ from their cities. After the sacred scribes of the temple had inspected the animal, they acknowledged its symbolical meaning, after the rules of the divine prescriptions, and it received the following title: "The RAM, the Life of RA, the RAM, the Life of SHU, the RAM, the Life of SET, (the RAM, the Life of

24 OSIRIS." After this was done, His Majesty's officials came, to tell him that) "Given to him are his holy titles by Thy Majesty's scribes of the temple, his dwelling is entirely completed according to Thy Majesty's orders. May Thy Majesty order the Holy RAM to be placed on its throne." Then did His Majesty think like the god THOTH. He thought over by himself of a plan regarding the King of royal animals (and came to this decision. There should be placed next to the divine Ram-images a portrait of the
25 Queen) ARSINOE, holding in her hand an ear of corn, and the holy animals should be known thereby, by the symbol of life on their necks for the Lords of the country. And His Majesty commanded, that these deities should be led in procession to the city of Mendes by the hand of the Prophets who had devoted themselves to them. And the Captains of the warriors Nefami² of His Majesty were to be in their suit (and complete all prescribed customs)
26 just as His Majesty would do from the moment, when he would embrace the animal, as soon as it had taken its place on its father's throne. It was on the 16th of the month Mechir, when these deities entered the city Mendes: the consecrated Prophets, His Majesty's grandees, and the Captains of the Nefami² warriors were in their suite, and they fulfilled all the customs (prescribed in the sanctuary of

27 the Holy RAM. After this occurrence) happened on the 18th of the month Mechir, the fête of the transference

¹ Experts.

² Unknown kind of troops.

(of the edifice) took place in his temple and they remained united there with him for four days. And the city of Mendes solemnized her new birth and Anep was in festive adornment. Its inhabitants were jubilant, and all hearts were overflowing with song, the Mendes-mead was full of ecstasy, and jubilant were (all its inhabitants, they

- 28 crying out :) "The city Mendes is born again, may the Holy RAM of all Gods recompence what His Majesty has done, by prolonging his years as King for a long period. May the Divine HORUS improve alway the kingdom which is placed under his name, may his son take the throne to all eternity, may destruction never find an entrance thither, since (the King has on the God) believed."



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