

## A STELE OF KING SMENDES

(Twenty-first Dynasty)

TRANSLATED BY PROFESSOR MASPERO

KING SMENDES, the founder of the twenty-first Tanite Dynasty, has long eluded the researches of the Egyptologists. It is only three years ago that M. Daressy, assistant-conservator of the Museum of Cairo, had the good fortune to discover a monument belonging to him. He at once published the text and a translation of it under the title of "Les Carrières de Gébéléin et le roi Smendès," in the *Recueil de Travaux relatifs à la Philologie et à l'Archéologie égyptiennes et assyriennes*, x. pp. 133-138.

It was at Dababieh, opposite to Gebelein, some miles above Thebes, and on the right bank of the Nile, that he made the discovery. Quarries exist there of considerable size and of very hard limestone, which is as serviceable to the sculptor as to the builder; some of the quarries are open to the sky, others consist of large chambers excavated in the rock. In one place, on a column of the rock which has been left at the entrance of the quarry, is a

tablet in which Seti I. declares that he had sent workmen to the city of Hathor, that is to say, to Gebelein, in order to extract the stone in large quantities for "the temple of Millions of Years of Menmârî (otherwise, of himself), which is on the west of Thebes." This temple is that of Qurnah, and the inscription thus allows us to determine the spot from which a portion of the materials used in its construction had been brought. The quarry continued to be worked in Græco-Roman times, as is proved by the *graffiti* copied in it by A. H. Sayce, and published by him under the title of "Inscriptions grecques d'Égypte," in the *Revue des Études Grecques*, iv. pp. 46-48.<sup>1</sup>

In the quarry situated about 30 yards to the south of that in which the tablet of Seti is found, the inscription of Smendes is engraved in beautifully formed characters on a large stele. The stele occupies the northern face of a column at the entrance of the quarry. About a third of the text at the commencement and about half of it towards the end has been destroyed by searchers for treasure. What remains is similar in appearance to the stele of Shishak I. and Aputi at Gebel-Silsileh. Above the stele the solar disk expands its wings, flanked on the right by a vertical band which contains the

<sup>1</sup> [The Greek *graffiti* are four in number. One of them is dated in the reign of Antoninus Severus Caracalla, another in the "first year" of the joint reign of Elagabalus and Alexander Severus (A.D. 221), a third in the "11th year" of Alexander Severus (A.D. 332). The latter is dedicated to "Priôtos, the greatest god, and Oregebthis and Isis Resakemis and the greatest gods with them."—ED.]

words: "The good god, master of the two worlds, master of all action, Uzkhopirri Sotpuniri, son of the Sun, master of diadems, Nsbindidi Miamun." The band on the left, which has disappeared, probably contained the same legend.

Under the winged disk is a double scene of adoration. On the right the king Nsbindidi Miamun makes an offering to Amonra, "the god from whom is derived the Ennead of the two Egypts, the god who was at the moment of creation," as well as to Khonsu the master of Truth. On the left the offering was made to Amon the lord of Karnak, and to a divinity now destroyed, who was probably Mut.

The inscription comprises 17 lines written from right to left. The two first contain the full protocol of the king, which it is needless to translate here; the important part of the text begins in the third line.

## STELE OF KING SMENDES

3. Now his majesty being in the city of HĀIKUPHTAH,<sup>1</sup> his august residence, victorious and strong as RĀ, [in order to perform his devotion to PHTAH]
4. the master of ANKHTOUI,<sup>2</sup> to SOKHIT, the great beloved one of PTAH, [to TUMU-KHOPRI], to MONTU, and to the circle of nine gods who reside in HĀIT-SARU,<sup>3</sup> while his majesty was seated in his audience-chamber [a messenger came to declare before]
5. his majesty: "It is the arm of southern<sup>4</sup> water, situated on the border of the APIT of the South,<sup>5</sup> dug by king Thothmes III., which proceeds [to ruin, for it is being drained away, and]
6. forming a great torrent which deeply channels (the ground) as far as the great opisthodomā of the temple extends to the back [of the building."<sup>6</sup> His majesty said]

<sup>1</sup> The sacred name of Memphis, from which the name of Egypt (Greek *Aiguptos*) is probably derived.

<sup>2</sup> "Life of the two Egypts," the name of the quarter of Memphis in which the principal temples of the city were situated.

<sup>3</sup> "The castle of the prince," the most ancient temple of Rā at Heliopolis, considered as having been the castle (*hâit*) or residence of Rā, when he was king of Egypt at the beginning of time.

<sup>4</sup> I read *risinti* in place of *Anti* given by M. Daressy; a confusion between the signs *ris* and *a* is very easy.

<sup>5</sup> Thebes, on the eastern side of the Nile.

<sup>6</sup> The word *hii* seems to me connected with the Coptic *hioi*, *hoi* "canalis," "rivus." The phrase is literally "Being in the condition of a great torrent which cuts (*aguhu*) greatly behind it (*m*-[*sa*]-[*f*])." The word *Sautu âit*, with the determinative of "house," is a compound of *sautu*, "wall," and the adjective *âa*. Hence the rendering "opisthodomā."

7. to them: "These words which you utter before me, there has been nothing in my time which has happened like them without my being informed of them [and without my having]
8. remedied the mischief which they describe.<sup>1</sup> If then this arm of water which nourishes the quarter<sup>2</sup> during the (proper) season of the year [has done this mischief, it has happened]
9. without my knowledge, and all this has taken place apart from the sovereign." His majesty then caused [workmen to be summoned]
10. (and) with them 3000 men selected from the serfs of his majesty,<sup>3</sup> and his majesty gave commandment before them that they should hasten to the [country of the south, to look for a quarry in the]
11. mountain.<sup>4</sup> Now the workmen of his majesty, from among those who are always at his feet,<sup>5</sup> despatched a number of [persons who knew the country, in order to]
12. examine [the mountain. Now no one had] worked in this quarry since the time of long-past generations, until the present period of ANITI.<sup>6</sup> [So they remained there, and restored?]
13. the chapel of the goddess Monit, the lady of ZORITI;<sup>7</sup> then they executed that command which his majesty had established [about replacing those whom the work had]
14. worn out in the limbs, each month. When the orders

<sup>1</sup> Literally "[not] reconstructing that violence."

<sup>2</sup> Literally "which pays tribute during the season of the year to the quarter (?)."

<sup>3</sup> The word translated "serfs" is *rohau*, of which Dr. Bergmann (*Recueil*, T. x. p. 57, note 2) and myself have already given examples (*Etudes égyptiennes*, II. pp. 82 sqq.) I think it can be defined more closely than we have done, and shown to signify the "king's men," from whom compulsory labour was exacted in all departments of agricultural service, tillage, irrigation, cleaning out canals, etc.

<sup>4</sup> We must read [*kha*]sit.

<sup>5</sup> That is, who are always at his disposal.

<sup>6</sup> "The two mountains." The present name of the locality, Gebelein, is the Arabic translation of the Egyptian word.

<sup>7</sup> The ancient name of the town of Taud, 8 miles south of Luxor.

- of the king arrived urging the prosecution of the works which he had commanded [the people of the country assembled without limitation]
15. of number, even the infants on the breast of their mother ran to cut [the stone for the buildings of his majesty. Never]
16. had anything happened like it in the time of (our) ancestors. Then his majesty came in his turn, like THOTH [who benefits by his acts, and gave rewards to the workmen]
17. for their cleverness, by way of recompense for their energy and courage, lifting himself up on the throne of the HORUS [of the living, even he king Nsbindidi who gives life like RÂ for ever].

The lacunæ at the end of each line have not allowed me to translate all parts of this remarkable document with an equal amount of certainty. I have filled them up in the simplest manner I could, and have tried rather to find a probable meaning than to restore the context in its entirety; but I believe I have sufficiently grasped the sense of the narrative to make it clear to the reader. King Smendes was at Memphis when the events recorded took place; he occupied himself with matters which concerned Thebes, and gave orders to open a quarry at Gebelein. His power therefore extended over the whole of Egypt, or at all events from the First Cataract to the Mediterranean. There is nothing in the inscription which permits us to determine whether he was identical or not with the Hrihor Siamon of the Theban monuments; for my own part I am inclined to separate them, without, how-

ever, having as yet any definitive evidence on the subject.

The matter about which the inscription treats relates to the restoration of the buildings of the temple of Amon at Thebes. It seems that the piece of water and the canal made by Thothmes III., to which there seems to be a reference in the mutilated stele of that prince which is now in the museum of Gizeh,<sup>1</sup> were partly destroyed; the water had drained off from them and excavated a channel in the soil which extended from the front to the back of the principal edifice, thus endangering the safety of the latter. The king declares that he is constantly occupied in remedying all the disasters which have happened in his time, and that he will be able to remedy this fresh one. The measures which he takes to ensure the rapid execution of the work are very interesting; unfortunately the lacunæ do not allow us to learn them all. I think I can see that he employed compulsory labour by means of relays of men changed each month, in which all the population of the districts around Gebelein had to take part. The passage in which it is said that "even the infants on the breast of their mother ran to cut [the stone]," is less hyperbolic than we should be tempted to believe. Even to-day, when a *corvée* has been ordered for the repair of a canal, the women who are employed in carrying the earth in baskets come with their children at the breast,

<sup>1</sup> It has been published by Mariette : *Karnak*, pl. 12.

and since the suckling of infants is prolonged to a late period in Egypt, infants (*nekhinu*) may be seen playing and babbling in groups by the side of the labourers.

The stele, intended to commemorate the opening of the quarry, is silent on the works which were undertaken at Thebes. But the restoration took place and must have left traces behind it. It would perhaps be useful to make excavations in the neighbourhood of the lake of Thothmes III. We should have a chance of discovering there, it may be, an inscription which will complete the text of Dababieh, it may be a cartouche which will allow us to determine indubitably what parts of the building were attacked by the water and subsequently consolidated by king Nsbindidi or Smendes.



# END OF SAMPLE TEXT



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