

THE GREAT TABLET OF RAMESES II.
AT ABU-SIMBEL.

TRANSLATED BY
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I N the great temple of Abu-Simbel, between two pillars of the first hall, there is a large tablet which has been added, evidently, a long time after the completion of the temple. This tablet, which is the object of the present translation, is covered with a text of 37 lines, containing a speech of the god Ptah

Totunen to the king Rameses II., and the answer of the king.

It was very likely considered by the kings of Egypt to be a remarkable piece of literature, as it has been repeated, with slight alterations, on the pylons of the temple of Medinet-Habu, built by Rameses III., The tablet, which is decaying rapidly, has been published three times; first, by Burton, in the *Excerpta Hieroglyphica*, pl. 60; then from the copies of Champollion, in the *Monuments de l'Égypte et de la Nubie*, I., pl. 38.; and, finally, by Lepsius, *Denkmäler* III., pl. 193. The inscription of Medinet-Habu has been copied and published by M. Duemichen, in his *Historische Inschriften* I., pl. 7-10., and by M. Jacques de Rougé, in his *Inscriptions recueillies en Égypte*, II., pl. 131-8.

I am not aware that any complete translation of this long text has been made. The first part has

been translated into German by Mr. Duemichen (*Die Flotte einer Ägyptischen Königin. Einleitung*), from the text at Medinet-Habu ; a portion of it is also to be found in Brugsch, *Ägyptische Geschichte*, p. 538. The present translation I have made from the tablet, which, being more ancient than the inscription, is very likely to be the original. It contains an interesting allusion to the marriage of Rameses with a daughter of the king of the Kheta. The inscription at Medinet-Habu, which is written more carefully than the tablet, and with less abbreviations, has given me a clue to several obscure passages of the ancient text.

The tablet is surmounted by a cornice, with the winged disk. Underneath, the god Totunen is seen standing, and before him Rameses, who strikes with his mace a group of enemies whom he holds by the hair. Behind the god are the ovals of six foreign nations, most likely Asiatics: *Auentem, Hebuu, Tensu Temuu, Hetau, Emtebebu.*

The inscription above the god is as follows :

Said by PTAH-TOTUNEN, with the high plumes, armed with horns, who generates the gods every day: (I am) thy father, I have begotten thee like a god, to be a king in my stead. I have transmitted to thee all the lands which I have created; their chiefs bring thee their tribute, they come bearing their presents because of their great fear; all foreign nations are united under thy feet, they are to thee eternally; thy eye is fixed on their heads for ever.



TABLET OF RAMESES II.

1 The 35th year, the 13th of the month Tybi, under the reign of RA-HAREMAKHU, the strong bull, beloved of truth, the Lord of the Thirty Years, like his father PTAH, TOTUNEN, the Lord of Diadems, the protector of Egypt, the chastiser of foreign lands, RA, the father of the gods, who possesses Egypt, the golden hawk, the Master of Years, the most mighty sovereign of Upper and Lower Egypt.

2 RA-USERMA-SOTEP-EN-RA, the son of RA, the issue of TOTUNEN, the child of the Queen SEKHET, RAMESES, beloved of AMEN, ever living.

Thus speaks PTAH-TOTUNEN with the high plumes, armed with horns, the father of the gods, to his son who loves him,

3 the first-born of his loins, the god who is young again, the prince of the gods, the master of the thirty years, like TOTUNEN, King RAMESES.¹ I am thy father, I have begotten thee like a god; all thy limbs are divine. I took the form of the ram of

4 Mendes, and I went to thy noble mother. I have thought of thee, I have fashioned thee to be the joy of my person, I have brought thee forth like the rising sun, I have raised thee among the gods, King RAMESES. NUM

5 and PTAH have nourished thy childhood, they leap with joy when they see thee made after my likeness, noble,

¹ The name of the King is everywhere written in full, with the two cartouches.

great, exalted.¹ The great princesses of the house of
PTAH and the HATHORS of the temple of TEM are
6 in festival, their hearts are full of gladness, their hands
take the drum with joy, when they see thy person beautiful
and lovely like my Majesty.

The gods and goddesses exalt thy beauties, they
celebrate thee
7 when they give to me their praises, saying: "Thou art
our father who has caused us to be born; there is a god
like thee, the King RAMESES.

I look at thee, and my heart is joyful; I embrace thee
with my golden arms, and I surround thee with life, purity
and duration. I provide thee
8 with permanent happiness. I have fixed in thee joy,
enjoyment, pleasure, gladness, and delight. I grant thee
that thy heart may be young again like mine. I have
elected thee, I have chosen thee, I have perfected thee;
thy heart is excellent and thy words are exquisite; there
is absolutely nothing

9 which thou ignorest, up to this day, since the time of
old; thou vivifiest the inhabitants of the earth through
thy command, King RAMESES.

I have made thee an eternal king, a prince who lasts
for ever. I have fashioned thy
10 limbs in electrum, thy bones in brass and thy arms in
iron. I have bestowed on thee the dignity of the divine
crown; thou governest the two countries as a legitimate
sovereign; I have given thee a high Nile, and it fills
Egypt for thee with the abundance of riches and wealth;
there is
11 plenty in all places where thou walkest; I have given

¹ Here and in other places a gap in the tablet has been filled up by the corresponding sentence in the inscription of Medinet Habou.

thee wheat in profusion to enrich the two countries in all times ; their corn is like the sand of the shore, the granaries reach the sky, and the heaps are like mountains. Thou rejoicest and thou art praised

- 12 when thou seest the plentiful fishing, and the mass of fishes which is before thy feet. All Egypt is thankful towards thee.

I give thee the sky and all that it contains. SEB shows forth for thee what is within him ;¹ the birds hasten to thee, the pigeons of HORSEKHA

- 13 bring to thee their offerings, which are the first-fruits of those of RA. THOTH has put them on all sides.

Thou openest thy mouth to strengthen whoever thou wishest, for thou art NUM ; thy royalty is living in strength and might like RA, since he governs the two countries.

- 14 King RAMESES, I grant thee to cut the mountains into statues immense, gigantic, everlasting ; I grant that foreign lands find for thee precious stone to inscribe (?) the monuments with thy name.

- 15 I give thee to succeed in all the works which thou hast done. (I give thee) all kinds of workmen, all that goes on two and four feet, all that flies and all that has wings. I have put in the heart of all nations to offer thee what they have done ; themselves, princes great and small, with one

- 16 heart seek to please thee, King RAMESES.

Thou hast built a great residence to fortify the boundary of the land, the city of RAMESES ; it is established on the earth like the four pillars

- 17 of the sky ; thou hast constructed within a royal palace, where festivals are celebrated to thee as is done for me

¹ The plants.

END OF SAMPLE TEXT



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