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Labib Habachi

The Military Posts of Ramesses II on the Coastal Road and the Western Part of the Delta [with 3 plates].

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THE MILITARY POSTS OF RAMESSES II

ON THE COASTAL ROAD AND THE WESTERN PART OF THE DELTA

Labib HABACHI

Few are the ancient sites in the Delta, which still have important remains. It may be said, however, that the majority of these are found in the East, few in the Middle, and hardly anything of importance in the West. Such being the case, the remains of military posts unearthed in this latter part may be considered of particular importance, especially as most of them stood in places far removed from the Nile Valley.

Discovery of a Temple Fortress in Zawyet Umm El-Rakham.

In 1946 a certain Sheikh Fayez Awad of the village of Zawyet Umm El-Rakham, about 300 km. to the West of Alexandria and nearly 25 km. to the West of Mersa Matruh, reported to the authorities the discovery of some inscribed blocks, while he was preparing a piece of land for cultivation. The place of discovery proved to be about 2 km. north of his village, and 1 km. to the south of Agiba, known for its beautiful scenery on the Mediterranean. Alan Rowe, at that time Director of the Graeco-Roman Museum, Alexandria, as well as being in charge of the Western Desert, was soon informed of the discovery. In two visits to Zawyet Umm El-Rakham, Rowe was able to trace two walls, nearly 16 m. apart with a third in the middle. Of these he made a sketch pointing out the positions of three door-jambs, found by Sheikh Fayez, which were later added to the collection of the Graeco-Roman Museum, Alexandria JE Nos. 10382-4.

We are reproducing here the sketch made by Alan Rowe (fig. 1), and will describe the three door-jambs [1]. The block given No. 10384, 80 cm. high (No. 1 by Alan Rowe), has the following inscription : « ... (*Ptah,*

[1] Alan Rowe, *A History of Ancient Cyrenaica : New Light of Aegypto-Cyrenaen Relations* ... (*CASAE* 12), 1958. For the plan, see fig. 5, page 10, for the inscriptions on the door-jambs, N°s 2, 3, see p. 4 f., for N° 1 and the position of the blocks on plan, see p. 77. See also PM, VII, p. 368.

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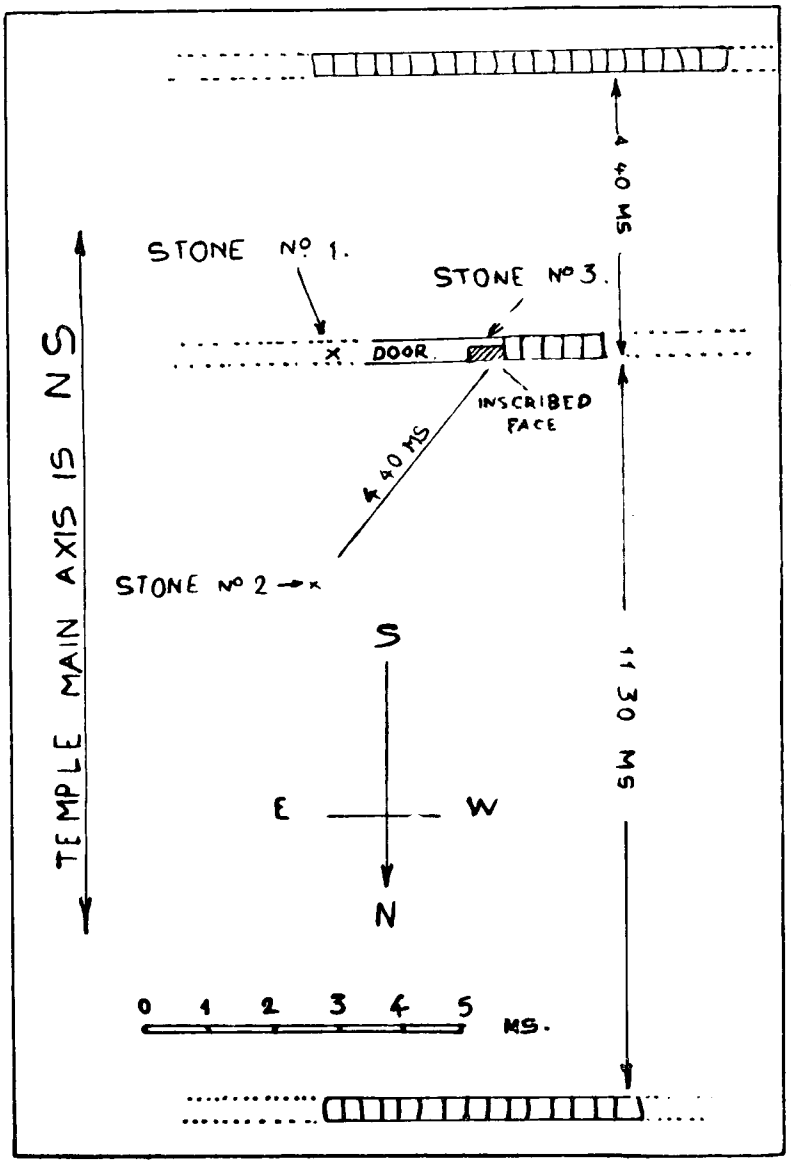

Fig. 1. — Sketch of the building as seen by A. Rowe.

lord of) *Ankhtaui, beautiful of face and who is on his Great Seat, may he give a beautiful position full of joy* ... ». Blocks 10382, 86 cm. high, and 10383, 65 cm. high (given Nos. 2 and 3 by Alan Rowe) have similar inscriptions and represent the lower parts of one and the same door; the more complete one

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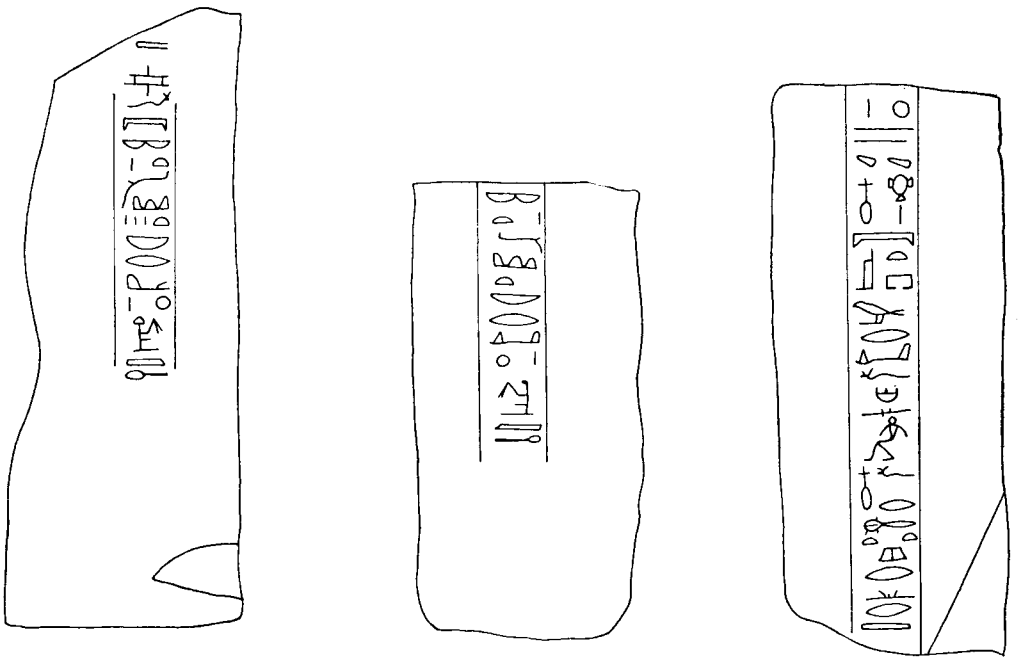

J.E. 10382 J.E. 10383 J.E. 10384

Fig. 2. — Inscriptions of the three blocks found by A. Rowe.

(No. 10382), has the following inscription : «... *the real* (*royal scribe*), *his beloved, the chief of the troops, and overseer of the Foreign Lands, Nebre, justified*» (fig. 2). Quite probably Block 10384 forms the upper part of that given 10383, and thus the three may have formed parts of the same door-jambs.

Attracted by the discovery, I visited the site in 1949, where I saw more of the foundations sketched by Rowe, some proved to be inscribed with the names of Ramesses II. It seems that rains, which sometimes fall in torrents in this area, had revealed parts of the buildings, some of which happened to be inscribed. Such being the case, I was convinced that clearance round these foundations would result in the discovery of more details of the building and more finds.

Requesting approval of the Department, along with the necessary funds, I was able to work there for one week in 1952, four in 1954 and two in 1955 [1]. At this

[1] On the discoveries of Alan Rowe and my own work on the first two seasons, I wrote a short report : « Découverte d'un Temple-Forteresse de Ramses II », in the special number of *La Revue du Caire*, for « Les grandes découvertes archéologiques de 1954 », given N° 175, vol. XXXIII, 1955, pp. 62 ff.

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time I was in charge of the Upper Egyptian Inspectorate and unfortunately my obligations and even problems enabled me to stay in Zawyet Umm El-Rakham for only short periods.

Our work there, though relatively short and carried out with but a few workmen, ended with the clearance of the main parts of the building and the discovery of many stelae and objects, all of which gave a clear idea of the reason for the erection of the building in this faraway place. We are here reproducing the plan kindly made for us by our colleagues G. Haeny and J. Jacquet, who were generously delegated by Dr. H. Ricke, at that time Director of the Swiss Institute, Cairo (fig. 3).

From this plan, it can be seen that the excavated building about 80 by 100 m., is rectangular in shape, having an entrance to the south in the shape of a passage in the south-eastern corner. This passage (A) leads to a second passage (B) running east-west, which in turn leads to a small temple (D). The temple begins in the south by a courtyard, having pillars on all the sides; to the north, it opens into a sort of vestibule, then a traversal room in which there are open doors to three sanctuaries.

Of the walls and pillars of the temple, only about a metre still survives; these have no inscriptions at all, except for one side of a pillar, where one of the names of Ramesses II can be seen. On the front and the backs of the two passages, however, the names of the same king are carved in some places, and sometimes texts describing of his prowess. In places in the middle of these passages, are traces of scenes showing the king getting out of his chariot to smite his enemies.

More important are the objects found to the west of the temple; some of these represent parts of doors, perhaps forming entrance to some chapels, and some depicting people of military career or simply referring to the victory of the king over the Libyans. Of these we are reproducing some referring briefly to their contents, in order to give an idea about the kind of buildings in this area and the people who were stationed there.

1) This is the upper part of a door-jamb, 80 cm. high, of a chapel, enumerating the names of the king and speaking of him as : *destroying Libya* (Pl. V, A).

2) This stela, 95 cm. high, has two cartouches of the king, flanked by his Horus-name. Underneath these are two chiefs of Libyans, stretched flat over their bellies, head to feet (Pl. V, B).

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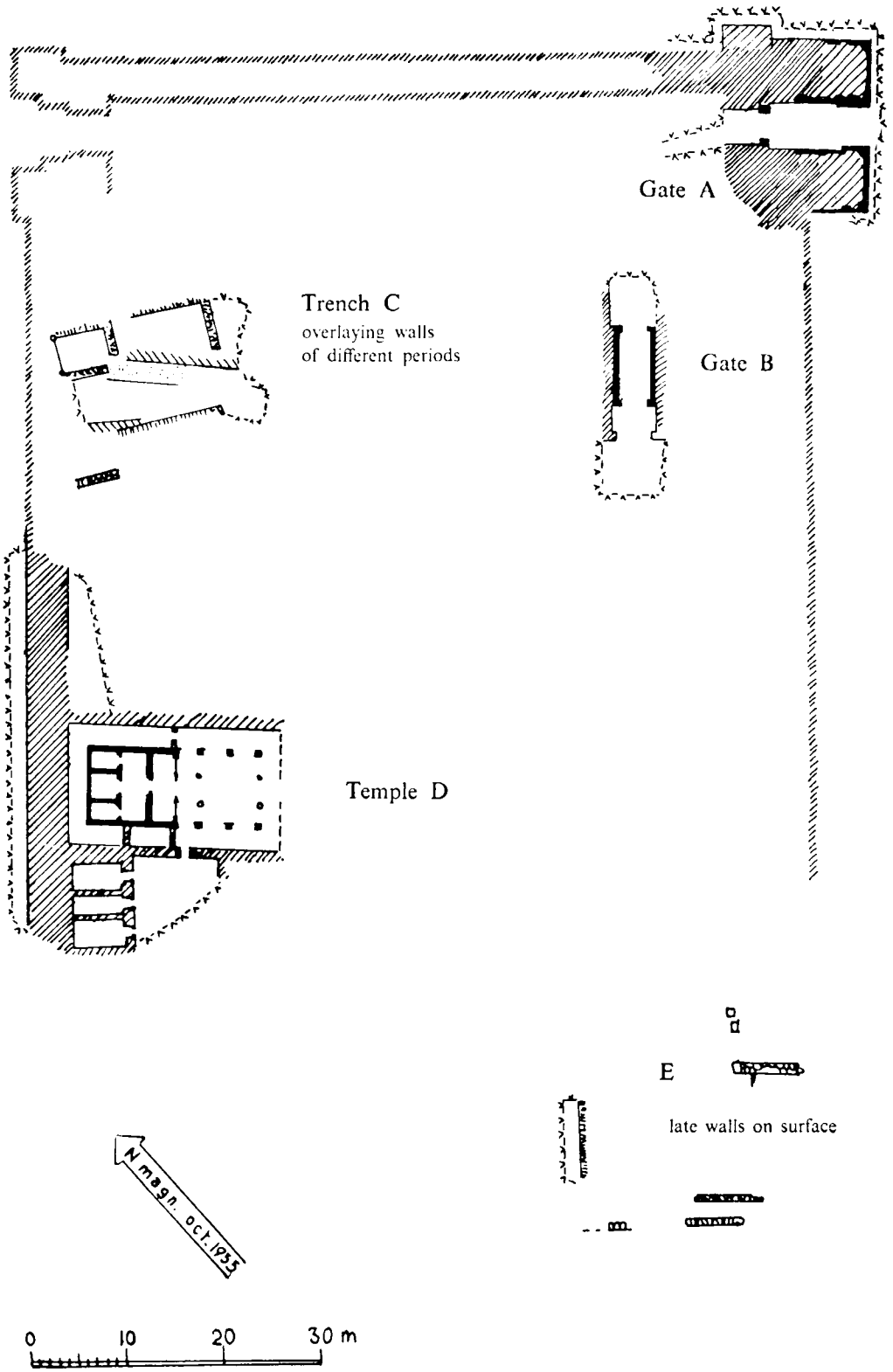

Fig. 3. — Plan of the building after clearance.

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3) This is a stela, 125 cm. high, showing in the upper register Ramesses II, holding a prisoner with a cachesex, and undoubtedly a Libyan. He seems to have been holding his hair and about to smite him; Amenre in front offering him the scimitar. Below, in the lower register, are two lines of inscriptions giving the names of the king, with seven columns below. The owner, shown kneeling and holding a standard, is described as : *The standard-bearer* [1], *Amenmessu* (Pl. VI, A).

4) This stela, 120 cm. high, has in the upper register the king offering a bouquet of flowers to the lioness-headed Sekhmet. In the lower register is the owner shown kneeling with uplifted arms. In front of him is an inscription in which he adores the goddess and wishes for the king numerous jubilees; this inscription ends with the titles and name of the owner as : *the royal scribe and the great chief of the army Panehsi* (Pl. VI, B).

Rowe says that the name of the district in which the temple stood was *Ḥwt-Hapi* and that the building itself was erected by Nebre or his father in honour of Ptah [2]. He was undoubtedly depending on the door-jambs which were the only objects having the name of a person and that of a god. Now with the discovery of the names of Ramesses elsewhere, there is no doubt that the building was erected in his name. To have the name of Ptah mentioned in a prayer cannot mean that the building was dedicated to him.

But seeing that the district was called after Apis and that a lioness-headed goddess is shown more than once on objects, sometimes refered to as Sekhmet, it is probable that the temple was dedicated to the Memphite triad [3]. Still, it has to be remembered, that the other divinities, such as Amenre and Shu, were encountered in Zawyet Umm El-Rakham, and in other places in the Western Delta.

It remains to note that the temple-fortress of Ramesses II is not the only building in the area. Not far to the north-east of our temple we cleared a part of a building

[1] Many were the bearers of military standards who contributed stelae in this temple, for a study on that title, see R. Faulkner, « Egyptian Military Standards », *JEA* 27, 1941, pp. 12 ff.

[2] *Op. cit.*, p. 4 f., and footnote 1. There Rowe, depending on classical geographers, said that this place-name cannot be Taposiris, as Daressy said, publishing a list of the place-names of the Libyan Nome, *ASAE* 16, 1916, p. 241. This last place is known as *Pr-Wsir*. Noteworthy is that *Ḥwt*-Apis appears in that list as producing wine.

[3] We shall see below how on the limestone stela of El-Alamein, Ramesses II is offering to Ptah or Ptah-Tenen.

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with some rooms; this proved to have no inscriptions at all. Judging from its style, however, it can be said to be quite late, perhaps dating to the Graeco-Roman period. To this period date some tombs carved in the cliffs to the south-west of the temple. Nothing was found in them except a few potsherds [1].

Discoveries in El-Alamein.

The discoveries of monuments in Zawyet Umm El-Rakham attracted my attention to other buildings and monuments erected by Ramesses II in the Western Desert and on the edge of the Delta. As a matter of fact, I had the opportunity to visit most of these while working as Inspector of the Western Delta in 1941-2 and stationed in Alexandria. Later I decided to make more visits to these places, for the purpose of examining their monuments in the light of the new discoveries. In 1978 I went with Mohamed Mursi to see the monuments discovered almost 25 years before in Alamein and in 1979 I went again with Guenter Dreyer; some of the discovered blocks proved to have been transported for safety to the courtyard of the Rest-House of Judge Brinton, near the Police Station of Burg El-Arab (N°s 1, 2 below). The only blocks left *in situ* were a huge block in red granite (N° 3), and one side of the upper part of a stela in limestone (N° 4). The former block was considered to bear an effaced inscription, while the latter was in a rather bad condition and liable to come in pieces, if it were moved from its original place.

Judge J. Brinton was the first person to be told about the discovery of these blocks and was the only one to report about them. In his article ' Some Recent Discoveries at El-Alamein ', he gave a general idea of the discovery, reproducing views of most of the discovered pieces and other objects found in the Western Desert. Aided by Rowe, he published also an Addendum to his article, giving facsimile and a brief commentary on inscriptions of a few of them [2]. Here we are giving a description of each, with our observations.

[1] That building, as well as the tombs, need to be well cleared and studied. It cannot be said that the temple-fortress was examined inside and all around; the short time taken in its clearance and the limited sum of money approved made it impossible to do the necessary examination of such important religious and military foundation.

[2] See *Bulletin de la Société royale d'archéologie*, vol. XI (N° 35), 1942, pp. 78 ff. and pp. 163 ff. See also PM, VII, p. 368.

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1) This is the upper part, 70 cm. high, of a red granite stela, which seems to have been decorated on the four sides. But of its decoration, we have a small part of those engraved on the front and back. On the back, there are left only the cartouches of the king and some epithets of him and those of a god, whose name is not present on the surviving part of the stela.

On the front is seen the figure of the king as leaning forward, holding the scimitar in the right hand, and seizing with the other the hair of one or more prisoners. Opposite was the figure of a god referred to as : *Shu, the son of Re and the great god,* $\frac{2}{1}$ *he gives all* (*life*), (Pl. VII, A) [1]. The king has above him the words : « Horus, strong of arm » and his cartouches preceded by the usual epithets and followed by the traditional wishes. On the other side, there are just some names and epithets of the king and unknown god [2].

2) This part, 90 cm. high, seems to have formed the bottom of the same stela. On the shorter side, still surviving, the king was described as beloved of two deities, whose names were on the missing part of the stela. On the back, there are parts of five lines, praising the power of the king [3]. The inscription on the front is quite important, unfortunately it is quite fragmentary, but enough is left to give us an idea of its contents; there we read : « ... *the son of Reʿ Ramessu-meramen'* ... *the enemies and* (*their*) *families* (?) [4] *he overthrew* ... (*like Monthu*), *when his right arm fights, king of Upper and Lower Egypt ' Usermare-setpenre ', son of Re..., he captured the Libyans in the moment of his full power* [5], *making...* » (Pl. VII, B and fig. 4). On this text, we shall comment at the end of our study.

3) This is a large red granite block of rectangular shape about 1 m. high. Brinton gave a view of it and described it as : « Defaced granite block — the largest of those found at El-Alamein — but with inscription too defaced to be decipherable » [6].

[1] *Ibid.*, see fig. 3 on pl. XIX. It is to be noted that he did not read the second line.

[2] Brinton gives the inscription on that side on p. 164, fig. 14, but did not refer to any scene above; perhaps that was effaced as happened with some of the hieroglyphics in the lower register.

[3] For the front, see *ibid.*, pl. XXI, fig. 6, for the back, see fig. 12 in p. 163 and for the inscription on one of the sides, see fig. 13 in p. 164.

[4] This is a very difficult part of the stela, may be that the enemies were accompanied by their families.

[5] Rendered incorrectly as *snw·f*, *ibid.*, fig. 12 on p. 163.

[6] *Ibid.*, pl. XXI, fig. 7.

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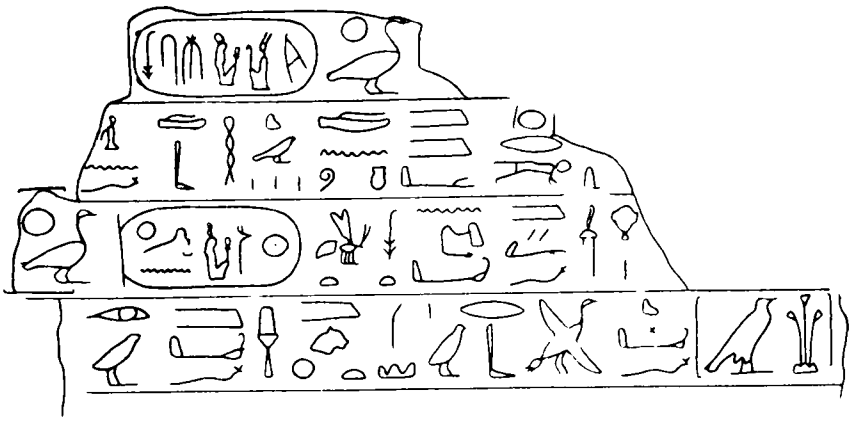

Fig. 4. — Block still in Alamein.

Looking attentively at its sides, we were able to observe on the side facing the north the beginning of inscriptions containing the names of Ramesses II. These inscriptions seem to have been continued on the remaining three sides.

This being the case, it is sure that this huge block was used as the pedestal of a stela inscribed on the four sides. We have seen how the bottom of the stela described here under No. 2 has inscriptions on three sides; the fourth side is destroyed, while the upper part of stela described under No. 1 has inscriptions on two sides, the others also destroyed. This would lead us to believe that the part referred to as No. 1 formed the upper part of this stela, block No. 2 its bottom, and No. 3 the pedestal, thus the three blocks formed one and the same stela, which was undoubtedly a free-standing one.

4) Upper part, 80 cm. high, of a stela, of which the right side is missing. A facsimile of its decoration is given by Rowe in the following words : El-Alamein (the pharaonic deity was called *'Imy-mit*, doubtless «He who is in the Highway» [1]. Brinton on the other hand gives two views of this stela, speaking of the same divinity as : « goddess apparently unknown elsewhere, who is designated as *'Imit-mit*, and is described as presenting « thirty-year festivals » to the King. This interesting goddess carries on her head the solar disk and two ostrich plumes surmounted on a ram's horn » [2].

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 4, where it is enlisted under N° VI among the sites occupied by the Tehenu; for a facsimile, see fig. 4 in p. 7.

[2] *Op. cit.*, pl. XXI, figs. 4, 5 and captions.

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To show the importance of this stela and the real name of the deity, taken once as a god and once more as a goddess, we are reproducing here the facsimile of its decoration as given by Alan Rowe (fig. 5). There the orientation of the

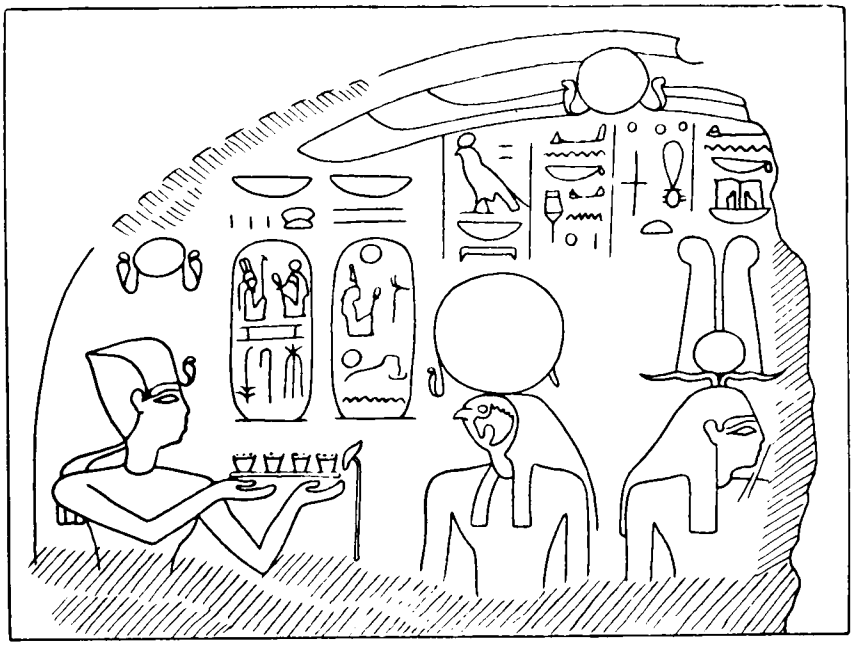

Fig. 5. — Stela now in Burg el-Arab.

sign *rdi* on the right side is reversed. On the left-hand side, Ramesses II is shown offering four vases to Harakhti, while above the king are his cartouches and above the god are the words : « $\frac{1}{|}$ *Harakhti, lord of heaven,* $\frac{2}{|}$ *I give to thee the lifetime of Reᶜ* ».

On the other side, Ramesses must have been shown, most probably making an offering to keep the symmetry of which the Ancient Egyptians were keen. The god in front is undoubtedly Ptah or rather Ptah-tenen, often represented with the atef-crown, with which he is here shown, was concerned with jubilees, especially in the Ramesside period. This would lead us to read the inscription above as : $\frac{3}{|}$ (*Ptah-tenen*), $\frac{4}{|}$ *I give to thee jubilees* $\frac{5}{|}$ *like those in me'* (fig. 5). Ptah-tenen himself had jubilees and was celebrating his with the reigning king. That

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is the reason why he promises to give here Ramesses II jubilees like those which he himself has [1].

Bill Murnane was kind enough to point out to me two examples of the use of *mi-imit*. One of these is found in a scene where Ramesses III is shown purified by Horus and Thoth. Thoth is addressing the king with the words : « *Thy name shall be enduring as the sky, and thy lifetime like Him-who-is-in-it* » (i.e. *Re*) [2]. In the second scene the king is shown in front of Osiris, to whom the king is addressing these words : « *Utterance by the king ... 'I exist in it like (the god) who is in it '* » [3]. In this text Osiris, spoken of in the Field of Offerings in which the god is living, is meant.

Only this face of the stela is visible, but most probably the other side was also decorated with a similar scene. On the round side still existing of this stela are the cartouches of the king, showing that this stela, as well as the granite one, was free standing, decorated on all the sides. Still, with the surviving parts of these stelae, it can be seen that Harakhti, Ptah-tenen and Shu are represented. Brinton says in his report on the finds of El-Alamein : « That these discoveries should have come to light on the eve of a new military campaign against invaders from foreign lands, fought 3500 years later on the identical site of their recovery, is a fact of moving interest today » [4].

Places with Monuments Erected by Ramesses II in the Western Part of the Delta.

During the years 1940-1, while stationed in Alexandria as Inspector of the Western Part of the Delta, I had the opportunity to make more than one visit to places with remains of buildings of Ramesses II. Among these was El-Gharbaniyat, at about 50 km. to the east of El-Alamein and nearly 4 km. to the south-west of Burg El-Arab. Recently I visited it again in company of G. Dreyer.

[1] For Ptah and the Sed Festival, see Maj Sandman Holmberg, *The God Ptah*, 1946, pp. 87 ff. There are enumerated texts showing how he was the god granting several jubilees. Noteworthy, the Horus-name of Ramesses II is sometimes occurring as : « The Strong-Bull Beloved-of-Maét, lord of the jubilees like his father Ptah-Tenen (Text 103, p. 90). For jubilees of Ptah-Tenen, see p. 90 f., also text 99 in p. 89.

[2] See *Medinet Habu*, V, 1957, pl. 296.

[3] *Ibid.*, VI, 1963, pl. 463.

[4] *Op. cit.*, p. 80.

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The only person who spoke about the Pharaonic remains in this place was Antony De Cosson. In his book of *Mareotis,* he says about it : « Here are traces of an ancient Egyptian mud-brick building, and the place of an immense granite column finely inscribed with the cartouches of Ramses II (1292-1225 B.C.), and various figures including the effigy of the Pharaoh himself. Unfortunately the column is broken and has never been properly examined, described or catalogued » [1]. In his report on El-Alamein, Brinton reproduced two scenes of the column spoken of by De Cosson [2].

During my early visits to the site, I saw this column broken into three fragments *in situ,* with foundations of sundried brick walls of a building around. The site has never been examined, and though its clearance may not end with important discoveries, it could reveal to us the reasons for its erection there. It is improbable that only one column was standing there, but no traces of any other, or even any other blocks, can be seen in the area around it.

On my last visit to the place, I noticed that only the small fragment, forming its bottom was left *in situ,* the two upper ones were transported to the square in front of the Police Station of Burg El-Arab, where they were erected, some 10 m. apart. Undoubtedly, however, the three fragments form one and the same column. The upper part has an abacus, where the cartouche with the prenomen is inscribed on opposite sides, and that with the nomen on the two others.

On the column, 3.50 m. high, two vertical lines are engraved with similar inscriptions. These begin with the Horus-name, followed by the prenomen, then the nomen, each preceded by the usual epithets. The whole inscription ends with the words : «*beloved of Horoun* » (fig. 6).

[1] The subtitle is : *Being a Short Account of the History and Ancient Monuments of the North-Eastern Desert and of Lake Mareotis,* 1935, p. 127 f.; for the situation of El-Gharabinyat, see map at the end of the book, see also PM, VII, p. 369.

[2] *Op. cit.,* pl. XXII, figs. 9, 10.

Fig. 6. — Column of inscription in Gharbaniyat. Traces of the words : « (*be*)*loved of Horoun* (*like*) *Re* » can be seen at the end.

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In between the two columns of inscriptions, there are three registers, with two scenes, each showing the king offering to a divinity. Of the six divinities shown in these scenes, the ones on the upper register are Harakhti and Atum, in the middle one there is Shu, and perhaps Monthu, but in the lower one, much destroyed, the figures of the divinities can be hardly seen. Most probable, however, we had the god Horoun, to whom the inscription on the two vertical lines are dedicated. Such a god is liable to be shown as hawk-headed, as usual.

Monseigneur Kaufmann, the famous discoverer of St. Menas area, said that this column was removed from Taposiris in the time of Justinian, without telling the reason for this statement. As De Cosson himself said, the discovery of the column inside the sun-dried brick building proves that it was encountered in its original place [1]. Again nothing of the Ramesside period has been ever discovered in Taposiris.

On the border of the desert in some other places in the Western Delta, monuments of Ramesses II have been also revealed. The first of these is called Karm Abu-Girg or ' The Vineyard of St. Georges ', nearly 50 kms. to the south-east of Gahrbainyat, and about 20 kms. to the south of Alexandria. There a monastery named after that saint seems to have been standing. Breccia made some excavations there, where he found a church with paintings, perhaps really the remains of this monastery. Not far from it he found fragments with a few hieroglyphics and the bottom of an obelisk inscribed with the names of Ramesses II [2]. It is improbable that this king erected a temple with the obelisk at such a faraway place as Karm Abu Girg. It is probable, however, that the obelisk and other blocks of the Pharaonic period were brought here from another place to be reused as building material in the Christian foundation.

More important is the mound called Tell El-Abqa'in, 5 km. to the south-east of Hosh Isa. Daressy, visiting it on September 19, 1903, came upon two blocks, which were later taken to the Graeco-Roman Museum of Alexandria (J.E. No. 21009); there they proved to fit to each other forming a part of the left-hand door-jamb of a building. In 1941, I visited the place and spotted a part of the

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 128.

[2] De Cosson states that according to the municipal report on the work in the Graeco-Roman Museum, Breccia reports on the church, as well as the discovery on the obelisk and other stones with fragmentary inscriptions, *ibid.*, p. 147 f. Brinton reproduced a view of the obelisk, see *op. cit.*, pl. XXII, fig. 11.

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other jamb of the same door. On the jamb found by Daressy, Ramesses is described as beloved of Harakhti, and that found by me styled the king as beloved of Shu; deities known to have been worshipped in the Western Desert, as we have seen above. According to Daressy, a building 12 m. every side was standing there [1]. But we observed there a building of which the facade was some 80 m. in length.

About 80 m. to the west of the discovered parts of the door, we found two wells, showing that the place was far from any source of water and deep wells were dug for the needed water by those who were occupying the place. Interesting is the fact that one of these wells proved to be decorated with 19 cartouches all round the well. The prenomen of Ramesses II was so arranged that it alternated with his nomen. The place looks very poor, even with potsherds [2]. Since no monument of any other king was found there, it may be assumed that it was also occupied for a short time by military people during the reign of, Ramesses II.

Further south-east lie two ancient sites, not far from each other. One is Tod, marking the ancient site of *Imet;* capital of the third nome of Lower Egypt, with the remains of a temple which was built or added to by Ramesses II. In it two statues dedicated to Hathor, the local goddess, a third to Ptah and a fourth with Pare styled as beloved of the king, were unearthed. With the discovery of these statues, it is certain that he was active there also [3]. In Kom Firin, the pedestals of two columns, each having two inscriptions giving the names of that king were unearthed a long time ago. Recently excavations were carried out in this kom, ending with indications of more activities of this king [4]. Undoubtedly he added to the monuments of that place also.

[1] G. Daressy, « Rapport sur Kom El-Abqa'ain », in *ASAE* 5, 1904, p. 129 f. He states that at his time there were two mounds, and it was in the eastern mound that the blocks were found.

[2] I spoke about the ruins of El-Abqa'in, treating the monuments of Khata'na-Qantir in general and those of Sama'na in particular. In this last place we found a well inscribed with the names of Ramesses II, and on this occasion, I spoke of El-Abqa'in and its wells and inscribed blocks, see *ASAE* 52, 1954, pp. 443 ff., cf. 479 ff.

[3] For these statues, see Griffith in Gardner, *Naukratis* II, 1888, p. 77 f. and pl. XXIV.

[4] For these pedestals and their inscriptions, see Edgar in *ASAE* 11, p. 277 f. It is considered as one of the largest sites in the Western Part of the Delta. Recently work was going on in excavating its necropolis, see Hamada et alii, in *ASAE* 46, 1947, pp. 101 ff. and pp. 195 ff., and *ASAE* 48, 1948, pp. 299 ff. and *ASAE* 50, 1950, pp. 376 ff.

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SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS.

Apart from Karm Abu Girg, it is clear that in all the places spoken of here, Ramesses II left monuments, and in most cases these were standing in buildings erected by him. De Cosson, writing in 1935 on the column of El-Gharbaniyat, says : « The inscriptions seem to imply that this column was perhaps part of a fortress erected by R. II that he can smite the army of the Libyans » [1]. Having the names of Harakhti and Shu, divinities depicted on monuments of El-Alamein, may stress the idea of De Cosson; we shall see how El-Alamein was a place erected for military purposes.

Brinton, commenting on blocks found at El-Alamein, El-Gharbaniyat and Karm Abu Girg, says : « these discoveries suggest the existence on the Pharaonic times, of a line of stations probably both for defence and water along the main northern Libyan highway, one of which was selected by the king as the site for a monument recording his early triumphs » [2].

Thus, even before the discovery of the temple-fortress and the numerous finds at Zawyet Umm El-Rakham, the few discoveries at El-Gharbaniyat and El-Alamein were taken as proofs of their being military posts. As a matter of fact the unique strategic position and the few finds of El-Alamein were sufficient to show it to have been erected for the same purpose.

We may now comment on the text with the mention of Libya on the bottom of the fragmentary stela found at this site. Comparing it with some phrases on the Stela given No. 11 by J. Yoyotte in his publication of the stelae of Tanis, we find that they have something in common. Here we are reproducing the passage (fig. 7), where we read : « *He who captured the country of the West, which was transformed into an army to be in his suite, since he is like Seth in the moment of his full power, and as Monthu when his right arm fights* (?) » (Ll. 12-13).

Many metaphorical phrases speaking of the king are here repeated on the stela of El-Alamein, while the capture of Libya is mentioned. This country is referred to on the Tanis stela as that of the West. All these points may lead us to conclude

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 128.

[2] As we said before, Karm Abu Girg ruins seems not to mark an important pharaonic site.

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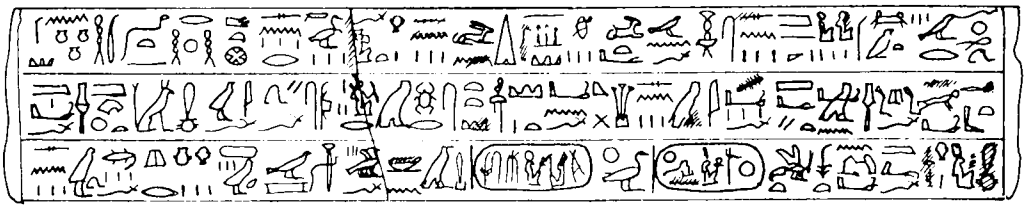

Fig. 7. — Stela of Tanis.

that the stela of El-Alamein was inspired by it. On the former stela is a passage showing how the Sardinians were threatening Egypt, and how they surveyed the shores of the sea to attack it (Ll. 14-15). This is the reason why this stela was named that of the Sardinians [1]. It is quite probable, therefore, that on the missing parts of the stela of El-Alamein, inspired by the stela of Tanis, there was also the mention of the Sardinians and how they were threatening Egypt. It is in such strategic place, close to the Sea, that a record of that event is effected.

Unluckily the inscriptions on the various parts of the temple-fortress of Zawyet Umm El-Rakham, as well as the numerous objets unearthed there, were found in very bad condition. Nevertheless it can be still seen that many of these mention the various tribes of Libya, while in the upper register of the stelae, the king is shown smiting one or more of their chiefs. We shall see, when giving a detailed description of the temple and its finds, how more knowledge is revealed about Egypt's relations with the Libyans and the people of the Sea in the reign of Ramesses II and it will be possible then to speak too about the people occupying the chief posts of the army stationed at this remote spot.

R. Stadelmann spoke of ' Die Abwehr der Seevolker unter Ramses III ', speaking also of the Sardinians in the reign of Ramesses II [2]. The only naval battle fought by the Ancient Egyptians was that of Ramesses III, which is commemorated on the outer side of the north wall of Medinet Habu Temple. It is

[1] « Les stèles de Ramsès II à Tanis », in *Kêmi* 10, 1949, pp. 58 ff. For stela N° 11 inscribed on the two faces, see for the more complete face referred to by the letter A, pp. 60 ff. and pl. VI. There he quotes our example *Mnṯw ḥr wnmy·f n 3ḥ3*, p. 66.

[2] *Saeculum* 19, 1968, p. 157 f. and footnotes 9-12.

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improbable that a similar battle took place in the reign of Ramesses II [1], but more likely some tribes of the Sea People in small numbers tried to infiltrate Egypt and were stopped [2]. Noteworthy is that Ramesses III spoke of three fortresses on the western coast, the names of which are known, but of which the positions are unknown [3]. Here we have at least three posts erected by Ramesses II, of which the positions are known, but the names are as yet unknown. As Lanny Bell suggested, however, these may be the same mentioned by Ramesses III, two of which were given his name instead of his predecessor.

The divinities well attested at these posts were those of the main religious centres of Egypt, such as Harakhti, Atum, Shu, Ptah and Sekhmet. The first two deities, as well as others, occur on stelae discovered in Tanis [4], but which were certainly standing in Piramesse; some of these spoke of the prowess of the king and how he defeated his enemies. Horoun has a distinguished position on the column of El-Gharbaniyat; the king is described on the two columns of inscriptions as beloved by him. The reason for his presence in such an important context may be due to the fact that a garrison from the Eastern part of the Delta, or even from Palestine was stationed there; it was the policy of Ramesses II to place at the military posts on the frontier, soldiers brought from distant countries. In the scene depicted in the lower register of the southern wall in the Great Hall of the Great Temple of Abu Simbel, Ramesses II is shown trampling on one Libyan and spearing another; this scene is copied from a similar one on the outside of the northern wall of the Hypostyle Hall in Karnak. The accompanying inscription, after speaking of the prowess of the king, says about him : « *Who put the Nubians in the Land of the North, the nomads in Nubia, who placed the Shasu in the Land of the West and who established the Libyans in the cliffs* » [5].

[1] PM II², pp. 518 ff. (188-189).

[2] Yoyotte, speaking of the Tanis stela, is also of the idea that it would not refer to a certain battle, *op. cit.*, p. 68. If Ramesses II waged such a battle, he would not fail to mention it more than once, or even illustrate it on one of his monuments.

[3] For these towns or fortresses, see A.H. Gardiner, « The Delta Residence of the Ramessides », in *JEA* 5, 1918, p. 134 f. see also Edgerton-Wilson, *Historical Records of Ramses III*, 1936, p. 71 f. (Medinet Habu, I, pls. 70, 72).

[4] Yoyotte, *op. cit.*, p. 7 f. (6).

[5] For the scene in Abu Simbel, see PM VII, p. 103 (second scene). For the translation of this text, see Yoyotte, *op. cit*, p. 65.

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Now it may be asked, in view of the fact that between El-Alamein and Tod were buildings of Ramesses II about 50 km. apart, were there other places, yet unknown, with other buildings between Zawyet Umm El-Rakham and El-Alamein, nearly 200 km. apart, or between Tod and Memphis, nearly 100 km. apart? This is quite probable, since in the desert many remains are buried beneath the sand, and near the cultivated lands, encroachments on ancient sites are liable to efface the old remains. It is hoped, however, that air-photographs may reveal the presence of some of these places.

Meanwhile it can be said with our present state of knowledge, that Ramesses II was the first to be aware of the danger threatening Egypt from the strong Sea People, and that he erected on the margin of the cultivated land and on the coastal road in the west a line of temple-fortresses to defend the country, or at least to announce any danger coming from the Sea. Libyans were often tempted to attack Egypt, but they were always defeated; there was no need therefore, for any fortification to be erected in the West before the appearance of the Sea People.

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A. — Jamb with the mention of Libyans.

B. — Stela with cartouches.

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A. — Stela of Amenmessu.

B. — Stela of Panehsi.

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A. — Scene of king smiting a prisoner with Shu.

B. — Inscription on the lower part of the previous stela.

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