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BIFAO 86 (1987), p. 184-185

Saïd Gohary

A Lintel of Penherishef, Chief Agent of Amun's Leading Priests [avec 1 planche].

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A LINTEL OF PENHERISHEF, CHIEF AGENT OF AMUN'S LEADING PRIESTS

Saïd GOHARY

This sandstone lintel is at present in the Sheikh Labib store at Karnak. Nothing is known about its precise provenance or when and by whom it was discovered. However, this block is very likely to have been found in the precinct of Amun at Karnak.

Although the lintel is split into two pieces, it is otherwise in a good state of preservation, apart from a small portion which is missing from the bottom centre of the scene and other less important fragments.

The scene on the lintel shows an official called Penherishef kneeling in adoration before the god Amon-Re. Above the scene is a thick torus surmounted by a cornice which still retains some of the original painted stripes.

The texts on the stone can be almost completely deciphered, despite their poor cutting, typical of the late New Kingdom.

TRANSLATION

Centre : « *A boon which the king gives* (*to*) *Amon-Re, Lord of the Thrones of the Two Lands, Chief in Karnak, Lord of Heaven, King of the Gods, Chief over the Great Ennead.*

Right half : 1, 2 : *Amon-Re, Primeval God of the Two Lands, Father of the Gods.* 3-11 : *Adoring Amon-Re, King of the Gods, magnifying his beauty, according as he is greater than any* (*other*) *god, that he may grant a happy life, enjoying* (lit. « *under* ») *strength daily,* (*my*) *mouth being sound and* (*my*) *step in its* (*proper*) *place, without* (*any*) *one bringing* (*up*), *a*(*ny*) *misdeed of mine, for the* ka *of one greatly praised by* (lit. « *of* ») *the Lords of Thebes Amun, Mut and Khons, the great confidant* (lit. « *trusted one* ») *of his lord/master, Chief Agent of the Second Prophet of Amon-Re, King of the Gods, Pen-herishef, justified.*

Left half : 1, 2 : *Amon-Re Har-akhti-Atum, Lord of Karnak.* 3-11 : *Adoring Amon-Re, King of the Gods, Primeval God, Great One from the beginning, August God and Well-beloved, at seeing whom everyone lives; that he may grant life, prosperity and health, gladness daily and .... on/from his ...., for the* ka *of the uniquely excellent one, the truly reliable one, who praises* (*his*) *god who magnifies his plans, one who relies upon* (lit. « *rests himself on* ») *his* (i.e. *the god's*) *every word, the greatly favoured one* (?), *Chief Agent of the General, Pen-herishef, justi*[*fied*] ».

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A Lintel of Penherishef, Chief Agent of Amun's Leading Priests [avec 1 planche].
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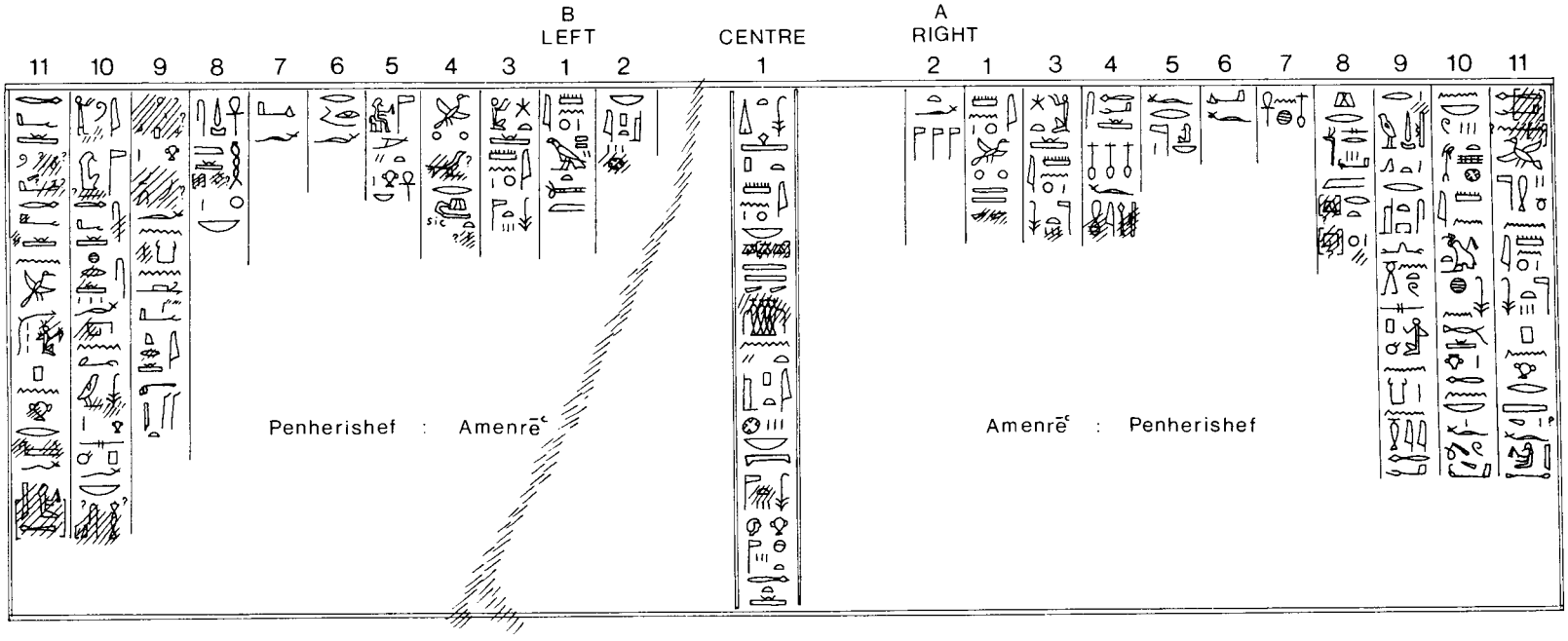


Fig. 1.

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COMMENTARY

The texts on this lintel follow familiar traditional forms. The only words which cannot be deciphered are the two in column 9 of the left half and fortunately they have no bearing on the importance and interpretation of this monument. However, the owner of the lintel is known from one other source which makes it possible to date it precisely and makes it of great interest for its period. In his book Ranke [1] cites just one example of the name, *P(ꜣ)n-ḥri-šfjt* from a Turin Papyrus [2]. Reference to this entry in Helck and Westendorf [3] shows that this mention of a Pen-herishef actually occurs in one of the Late Ramesside Letters [4]. This document is a twin letter from Heqanefer, Second Prophet of Amun and his Servant, Pen-herishef, to the well-known Royal Tomb Scribe, Thutmose/Tjuroy, and was apparently written while Piankh (Heqanefer's father) was actually High Priest of Amun in Years 7-10 of the « Renaissance Era » (*wḥm-mswt*), Years 25-28 at the end of the reign of Ramesses XI [5]. It seems clear that Piankh replaced the former Second Prophet, Nesamun, by his own son Heqanefer, within Years 8-10 of the Era, i.e. within about 1075/1070 B.C. [6].

On the Karnak lintel with which we are concerned, Pen-herishef has two distinctive titles : Chief Agent of the Second Prophet of Amon-Re and Chief Agent of the General. By referring to the letter mentioned above [7], we can learn who were the men alluded to as Pen-herishef's superiors, i.e. the General and the Second Prophet. Piankh was known very commonly as « the General » at this time [8] and the Second Prophet, Heqanefer, was his son. Thus Pen-herishef served both father and son and this lintel clearly dates to within the four or five years (1075/1070 B.C.) that Piankh was High Priest and General.

As the formulae in the texts are for blessings in this life and the lintel was evidently found at Karnak, it most probably comes from a doorway of a house of Pen-herishef within the temple precincts. Priests and their officers had houses within the wider precincts of temples as is especially evident at Medinet Habu [9]. In addition, recent excavations at Karnak have produced evidence of dwellings in the precinct area at various periods.

[1] Ranke, *PN* I, p. 110, 9.

[2] Pleyte and Rossi, *Papyrus de Turin*, pl. 114 a.

[3] *LdÄ* IV, col. 743 and 740.

[4] Černý, *Late Ramesside Letters*, p. 39-40, No. 24, specifically on p. 39, 14, (lines 8-9 of the original). The passage was later translated by Wente, *Late Ramesside Letters*, SAOC 33, p. 56.

[5] Cf. Wente, *o.c.*, p. 7-8.

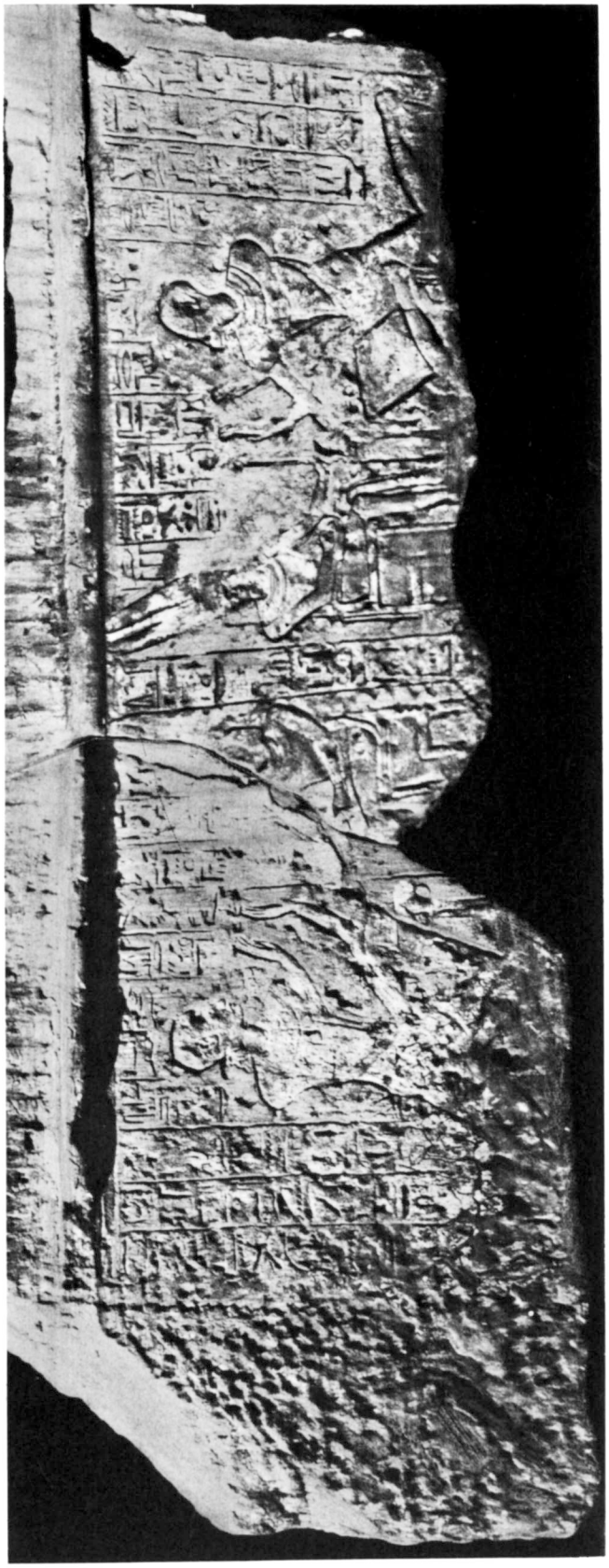
[6] Cf. dates, Kitchen, *Third Intermediate Period in Egypt*, p. 465.

[7] See n. 4.

[8] Cf. Kitchen, *o.c.*, p. 19 and n. 84, references.

[9] The Epigraphic Survey, *Medinet Habu* V, 1957.

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Lintel of Penherishef.

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