

Inv. A 2006-0030-129

Conférence en anglais sur Abydos sans date ni lieu.

Le manuscrit comprend sept feuillets numérotés par Naville de 1 à 6 (avec deux fois le 6). Ceux-ci furent pliés en quatre. Le texte autographe est tracé à l'encre noire ; quelques notations dans la marge sont inscrites au crayon rouge. Seul le recto des folios est utilisé, sauf pour une ligne écrite tête-bêche sur la sixième feuille bis.

Les fouilles auxquelles Naville réfèrent en général dans ces pages sont celles de l'Osiréion qui s'étendirent de 1911 à 1914, à l'exception de 1913. Il s'agit manifestement d'un résumé des principaux travaux, présenté peu après l'interruption des fouilles en 1914.

Texte retranscrit par Noémie Monbaron, relu par Marie Vandenbeusch et Loriane Bussien.

<1> Before describing the very interesting results of last winter's excavations, allow me to say a few words about Abydos itself, and to remind you of the reasons which induced us to spend there several winters in searching thoroughly that spot, though at the beginning some people thought that the results were not very encouraging.

Abydos, in Egyptian About was a city of Middle Egypt built on the border of the desert. Its site is now occupied by two villages, Arabat el Madfouna and Beni Mansur. These villages are now at a distance of more than six miles from the ~~des~~ river; but it is quite possible that four thousand years ago the Nile was much nearer; for it is well known that the bed of the river has a strong tendency to displace itself towards the East.

Abydos never had a political importance like Thebes or Memphis. It was chiefly a religious city. The capital of the nome or province in which Abydos was situated, was This, eg[yp]tian] Teni the god of which was Anhur¹. But Abydos was the residence of a god venerated throughout the whole of Egypt, Osiris. Osiris is the most interesting god of the Egyptian mythology. He is the most human, and the only one who has a kind of moral character. Before him the deceased are said to appear to have their heart weighed in the balance. The ceremony takes place in a hall in the Abydos of the Netherworld. Osiris who has a human appearance is the president of the court, and passes the sentence.

Abydos always had a sacred character. At the same time it is connected with the early times and even the foundation of the kingdom. According to a legend which ~~is~~ we find in Greek authors,

¹ Onouris.

Menes the first historical king <2> left This the city just mentioned as the capital, at a short distance from Abydos went down the river as far as the origin of the Delta and founded Memphis.

At Abydos itself at about one mile's distance in the desert, near the foot of the mountain which lines the valley, is a mound called by the natives Umm el Gaab, the mother of pots. This mound is of a red colour because of the immense number of potsherds with which it is covered somewhat² like the Testaccio³ at Rome. There M. Amélineau and Prof. Flinders Petrie afterwards have found brick constructions to which the name of tombs has been given. I rather believe that they are sanctuaries devoted to the worship of the kings, like the temples of the Western side at Thebes. There have been discovered a great number of objects of various kinds, among them vases or jars bearing the names of the kings of the three first dynasties. Thus Abydos is a place interesting both because of the worship of Osiris and of the remains of the oldest kings which have been discovered there.

Along the border of the desert are found ruins of constructions of different epochs. The great attraction for travellers is a temple of the XIXth Dynasty raised by king Seti I to Osiris. The greatest part of it has been cleared by⁴ Mariette, many years ago. The agents of the Service are now completing the excavation. It is dedicated to Osiris and is ornamented with sculpture[s] which⁵ certainly are among the most beautiful found in Egypt. Seti's son Ramses II enlarged it, but his work cannot compare with that of his father.

The temple is of a special character. It is like the constructions raised to the memory of a deceased king, and where a worship was celebrated in his honour. It seems rather curious to speak of de cease in reference to a god. But Osiris was a god who died. He was considered as having <3> been killed by his enemy Set who cut his body to pieces and scattered the limbs between the various cities of Egypt. However the body of Osiris was reconstituted by his son Horus. We hear of several tombs of Osiris; the most famous was that of Abydos which was said to contain his head. It was the wish to find this tomb which induced us to excavate at Abydos. Evidently the temple of Seti must have been connected with the tomb of the god, who had perhaps a sanctuary for his ka, his double.

In 1903, Prof. Flinders Petrie began excavations behind the temple towards the desert, along the sacred enclosure the wall of the temenos. Prof. Petrie, or rather his assistant Miss Murray discovered there a passage leading to a hall covered with texts of the Book of the Dead. At the end of the passage towards the South is a chamber ornamented also with texts and figures from the book called the Am Duat, what is in the Netherworld. In the side wall of the hall is a door of which Miss Murray found the lintel and the doorposts covered with inscriptions from the B[ook] of the D[e]ad].

² Mot ajouté dans la marge devant « like » qui commence la ligne.

³ Le mont Testaccio, au sud de Rome (22^e rione), est une colline artificielle formée de tessons de poterie.

⁴ Dans la marge de gauche, à hauteur de ce mot qui commence la ligne, l'indication « entrance » au crayon rouge, précédée d'un point.

⁵ Dans la marge de gauche, à hauteur de ce mot qui commence la ligne, l'indication « colonnade » au crayon rouge, précédée d'un point.

Prof. Petrie considers this⁶ <sic> hall and chamber as being a building for the special worship of Osiris, and also as being Strabo's well⁷. The side door where Miss Murray stopped⁸ would be the entrance for people coming from the temple of Seti.

From the first it appeared to me that this hypogeum was not Strabo's well and that the door discovered by Miss Murray was not the point of arrival but on the contrary the starting point towards a construction which existed ~~either~~ in the space between the hall and the temple, or perhaps towards⁹ some subterranean sanctuary under the temple of Seti.

Therefore in 1912 we went straight to this doorway which had to be cleaned again entirely. Behind it was a passage full of rubbish for the sandstone¹⁰ ceiling had disappeared. It was about 4.5 feet long. The <4> walls¹¹ are covered with texts of the Book of the Dead which are written in¹² a curious way. They begin on the right side, at the end of the passage.

The passage at first slopes gently, then it becomes horizontal again until it stops at two wide side openings which we thought at first to be two separate chambers, one on each side. Pushing further we came upon a big lintel¹³ 15 feet long. This lintel which is threefold is the top of a door built in a wall twelve feet thick. Beyond it we found two angles which might be doors; but the amount of sand in front of us, did not allow us to go ~~further~~ forward. We turned to the right, where the mass of rubbish was not quite so high; we followed the top of the wall of the doorway, and at a distance of about 30 feet we met the sidewall of the construction. We cleared the upper part of that angle, and we recognized already that the ~~de~~ wall consisted of two casings the outer one of limestone, the inner one of enormous blocks of a red material which D^r Hume¹⁴ told us was hard sandstone coming from the neighbourhood of Assuan. The masonry is extremely fine, and reminds one very strongly of the so-called temple of the Sphinx a very ancient building contemporaneous with the pyramids.

Such¹⁵ was the state of the work when we left in March 1912. We had cleared the passage, the lintel the top of the wall joining the enclosure on the South and we had dug to the bottom of what we

⁶ Pour « these ».

⁷ Strabon, *Géographie* XVII, 1.42.

⁸ « where Miss Murray stopped » inscrit en ajout au-dessus de la ligne.

⁹ Inscrit en ajout au-dessus de la ligne.

¹⁰ Dans la marge de gauche, à hauteur de ce mot qui commence la ligne, l'indication « passage » au crayon rouge, précédée d'un point.

¹¹ Dans la marge de gauche, à hauteur de ce mot qui commence la ligne, l'indication « texts » au crayon rouge, précédée d'un point.

¹² Dans la marge de gauche, à hauteur de ce mot qui commence la ligne, l'indication « chess player » au crayon rouge, précédée d'un point.

¹³ Dans la marge de gauche, à hauteur de ce mot qui commence la ligne, l'indication « lintel » au crayon rouge, précédée d'un point.

¹⁴ Peut-être William Fraser Hume (1867-1949), géologue britannique.

¹⁵ Dans la marge de gauche, à hauteur de ce mot qui commence la ligne, l'indication « March. 1912 » au crayon rouge, précédée d'un point.

thought to be the South chamber, to a depth of about 18 feet. On the North side of the lintel we had more than 30 feet of rubbish to clear away; so we stopped for want of money.

Towards the temple at a short distance from the end of our excavations, we were confronted by a most serious and really disheartening obstacle; an enormous mound raised by¹⁶ the excavations of Mariette, who, when he cleared the temple of Seti I many years ago, threw the rubbish as near as possible. <5> Tons of rubbish had been piled up there. We would not go on without clearing away these mounds, a long and expensive work from which absolutely no result was to be expected.

This was one of the reasons why it was thought better not to dig in the year 1913. For attacking¹⁷ Abydos again, it was necessary to have in hand a sufficient sum of money and also that Mariette's mounds should have been cleared away. This was done by the agents of the Service, after an arrangement had been made with Sir Gaston Maspero. When we arrived, the mounds had disappeared and¹⁸ between us and the temple, there was only the natural soil.

We began work on Christmas eve. Our party consisted of four men and two ladies. My three assistants were Prof. Whittemore from Boston, Mr. Wainwright and Mr. Gibson. The two ladies were M^{me} Naville and Mrs. Gibson. On this occasion where I am describing what we have done last winter I feel bound to express to my assistants my sincere gratitude for the very efficient help which they constantly gave me during the eleven weeks of the excavation¹⁹. Of course on the director rests the responsibility of the line to to <sic> be followed, and of the method adopted. At the same time a great part of the success depends on the way this method is carried out, on the unity of views and of purpose between the workers, which was greatly facilitated by the intense interest of the work. Certainly this interest which director and assistants all felt keenly has been a powerful stimulus, and has materially contributed to the successful results which I have the pleasure of describing to this assembly.

We began at once with a large number of workmen more than 400 the two thirds of whom were boys carrying the basket[s]. At the end of the work the number ~~was~~ had risen to 639. It is the largest work which has ever been undertaken by the E[gypt] E[xploration] F[und].

<6> We²⁰ started from the doorway with the big lintels and we pushed forward towards the temple. An excavation on such large proportions has to be conducted with method so as to avoid false

¹⁶ « piled up » inscrit au-dessus de la ligne, par dessus « raised by » qui n'est pas biffé.

¹⁷ Inscrit au-dessus de la ligne, remplaçant « attempting », biffé.

¹⁸ Dans la marge de gauche, à hauteur de ce mot qui commence la ligne, l'indication « mounds carried off » au crayon rouge, précédée d'un point.

¹⁹ Sur cette saison de fouilles, voir Ed. Naville, « Excavations at Abydos. The Great Pool and the Tomb of Osiris », *JEA* 1 (1914), pp. 159-167.

²⁰ Dans la marge de gauche, à hauteur de ce mot qui commence la ligne, l'indication « Beginning » à l'encre précédée d'un petit rond.

moves which may be serious waste of money. The first thing to do is to trace the form²¹ of the building. On the North side which was less advanced in 1912 than the South we searched for the enclosure wall, and we found that it was absolutely symmetrical <sic> on both sides.

After²² four weeks work, this we saw on the North side.

The South side was more advanced, but much more ruined than the North²³, – quarry. – millstones. Going forward according to the same method after eleven weeks digging we had cleared a construction of which I shall first show you the plan. The three naves – enclosure wall. – cells. – pool, réservoir – middle²⁴ platform, an island – pillars.-- chamber of Osiris later robbers hole.

General²⁵ view. The three naves. Ceilings.

" [= General view]²⁶ from the South. The Menephtheum. Gravitation <?> railway wall <?> diminished.

The²⁷ back wall. Ceilings. - ~~Gravitation <?> railway~~

Architraves²⁸. Block of 120 tons.

Pillars²⁹. broken for millstones.

Ceiling³⁰. Ledge. water.

Cells³¹. Knobs for moving the stones. How far does the masonry go.

Stairs³² leading to the waters, basins for washing the feet.

Reconstitution³³ of the building

Question raised

²¹ Dans la marge de gauche, à hauteur de ce mot qui commence la ligne, l'indication « Mound on the North » à l'encre, précédée d'un petit rond.

²² Dans la marge de gauche, à hauteur de ce mot qui commence la ligne, l'indication « North side » au crayon rouge, précédée d'un point.

²³ Dans la marge de gauche, à hauteur de ce mot qui commence la ligne, l'indication « South side » au crayon rouge, précédée d'un point.

²⁴ Dans la marge de gauche, à hauteur de ce mot qui commence la ligne, l'indication « Plan » au crayon rouge, précédée d'un point.

²⁵ Dans la marge de gauche, à hauteur de ce mot qui commence la ligne, l'indication « General view » au crayon rouge, précédée d'un point.

²⁶ Dans la marge de gauche, à hauteur du guillemet qui commence la ligne, l'indication « from the South » au crayon rouge, précédée d'un point.

²⁷ Dans la marge de gauche, à hauteur de ce mot qui commence la ligne, l'indication « Back wall » au crayon rouge, précédée d'un point.

²⁸ Dans la marge de gauche, à hauteur de ce mot qui commence la ligne, l'indication « F. <?> 1. » au crayon rouge, précédée d'un point. « Sculptures » est inscrit au-dessus à l'encre noire; l'inscription est précédée d'un petit rond.

²⁹ Dans la marge de gauche, à hauteur de ce mot qui commence la ligne, l'indication « F. <?> 2. » au crayon rouge, précédée d'un point.

³⁰ Dans la marge de gauche, à hauteur de ce mot qui commence la ligne, l'indication « N. W. corner » au crayon rouge, précédée d'un point.

³¹ Dans la marge de gauche, à hauteur de ce mot qui commence la ligne, l'indication « S. W. corner » au crayon rouge, précédée d'un point.

³² Dans la marge de gauche, à hauteur de ce mot qui commence la ligne, l'indication « Staircase » au crayon rouge, précédée d'un point.

³³ Dans la marge de gauche, à hauteur de ce mot qui commence la ligne, l'indication « Inspection <?> drawing » au crayon rouge.

<7 verso: tête-bêche> We started from the lintel and from the wall where it is

<7>³⁴ The discovery of this construction which I cannot help considering one of the oldest in Egypt raises a great number of questions which perhaps the excavations of next winter will help us to solve.

This very old building is neither a tomb nor a temple. It is a hydraulic construction. Is it likely that such a cyclopean building has been raised merely for infiltration water. Was there a spring in that place, or some communication with the Nile. It seems probable that these old Egyptians knew very well the laws of the rain and the fall of the Nile. They knew also ~~xxx~~³⁵ of the existence of what is called now the subterranean Nile which flows under the desert and the cultivated lands and which the engineers³⁶ try to utilize for the irrigation of the country.

Why was this water stored and sheltered against evaporation by by <sic> those enormous ceilings? Was it supposed to have a curative effect? Did people come to the cells to have their health restored.

Or was this pool connected with the worship of Osiris. Was the sacred boat towed by priest walking on the narrow ledge? Or is the worship of Osiris of a later date than the construction of the pool? It may last some time before these questions are answered. Meanwhile let us complete the excavation of this monument which at present is unique in Egypt, and certainly in spite of its destination one of the most striking examples of the architecture of those remote times.

House³⁷.

³⁴ Folioté « 6 » par Naville.

³⁵ Une à deux lettres raturées.

³⁶ « the engineers » inscrit au-dessus de la ligne, remplaçant « they », biffé.

³⁷ Dans la marge de gauche, à hauteur de ce mot qui commence la ligne, l'indication « House <?> » au crayon rouge.