

## The Abydene door jamb of Djau in Cairo Museum

Mahmoud El-Khadragy

(Pls. 1-2; fig. 1)

### *Abstract*

A republication and study of the door jamb belonging to some monument erected in the temple of Khentimentiu at Abydos by the Sixth Dynasty Vizier Djau. It is now in The Egyptian Museum, Cairo bearing no. CG1431. A facsimile of the door jamb is produced here.

### *Introduction*

The object of this article is the monolithic slab of red granite belonging to the Sixth Dynasty Vizier Djau.\* Originally, the slab stood as a jamb of some monument's door in the temple of Khentimentiu at Abydos,<sup>1</sup> but later, it was reused in the lining of a well, where Mariette found it.<sup>2</sup> It is now in The Egyptian Museum, Cairo bearing no. CG 1431. Dealing with the powerful family of Djau, which played an important role in the provincial administration during the reigns of Pepy I, Mernere and Pepy II, the door jamb still needed more analytical study for the content of its decoration, although it was published several times before.<sup>3</sup>

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\*I am very much obliged to Dr. Mohamed Saleh, the former Director General of The Egyptian Museum, Cairo, for his permission to republish this slab.

<sup>1</sup> Fischer, *Egyptian Studies I: Varia*, MMA, 1976, 75. However, Mariette thinks that this jamb was removed from a tomb: *Catalogue général des Monuments d'Abydos découverts pendant les fouilles de cette ville*, Paris, 1880, 84-5, no. 523.

<sup>2</sup> Loc. cit.; PM 5, 95.

<sup>3</sup> de Rougé, *Recherches sur les monuments qu'on peut attribuer aux six premières dynasties de Manéthon*, Paris, 1866, 129-84; Mariette, *Abydos I*, pl. 2a; CG 1431; *Urk. I*, 117:8-119:13; Fischer, *Egyptian Studies II: The Orientation of Hieroglyphs 1: Reversals*, MMA, 1977, 141-143, figs. 58-59. For the translation see: *BAR I*, §§ 345-49; Roccati, *La littérature historique sous l'Ancien Empire égyptien*, Paris, 1982, §§217-22. For comments see: Stock, *Erste Zwischenzeit*, 2-13; Goedicke. In: *JAOS* 75, 1955, 180-83; Baer, *Rank and Title*, 61-2 (73A), 109-10 (366), 156-57 (591); Fischer, *Egyptian Studies I*, 74-75; Martin-Pardey, *Untersuchungen zur ägyptischen Provinzialverwaltung bis zum Ende des Alten Reiches*, Hildesheim, 1976, 143-47; Kanawati, *Governmental Reforms in Old Kingdom Egypt*, Warminster, 1980, 31-33, 62-64, 75-76; idem, in: *CdE* 56, 1981, 209-13; Strudwick, *The Administration of Egypt in the Old Kingdom*, London, 1985, 63-64; Callender, in: *SAK* 18, 1991, 91-92, 94-96, 98-99, 102; Eyre, in: *The*

### *Description*

The remaining part of the slab measures 245 cm. in max. height, 33 cm. in max. breadth, and 22.5-24.5 in thickness. Its surface and both of its sides are generally smooth and even. Its upper left corner and the lower right one are broken away, and both of its left and right edges have some missing chips. The decorated surface is well preserved, and was prepared with incised borderline. The text and representations were executed in sunk relief with a minimum of internal details. There are no traces of colour.

### *Representation and Text*

Using an incised dividing line, the decoration of the jamb is divided into two unequal parts. The topmost one is the smaller. It is decorated with figures of Djau and his two queen sisters. At the right, a standing female figure is represented, facing right. Her left hand rests on her breast, while her right arm hangs by her side in an attitude of respect.<sup>4</sup> She wears a tight-fitting dress and a vulture headdress. The text identifying her is written in two vertical columns before and above her figure, it reads:

(1) *hmt nswt Mn-nfr-Mrjrr<sup>c</sup> jm3t wrt hzt wrt ht wr<sup>5</sup> smrt Hr jst Hr<sup>6</sup>*  
(2) *mwt nswt-bjt H<sup>c</sup>-nfr-Mrnr<sup>c</sup> nh-n.s-Mrjrr<sup>c</sup>* “(1) King’s wife belonging to the pyramid of Pepy I, the very charming lady, the very favoured one, attendant of the great one, companion of Horus, dignitary of Horus. (2) Mother of the king of Upper and Lower Egypt belonging to the pyramid of Mernere, Ankhenesmeryre.”

Behind her stands a second female, facing right too. She is similarly dressed and represented in a similar attitude. The label identifying her is written before and above her figure as follows:

(1) *hmt nswt Mn-nfr-Mrjrr<sup>c</sup> jm3t wrt hzt wrt z3t-ntr ht wr smrt Hr*

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Unbroken Reed, Studies in the Culture and Heritage of Ancient Egypt in honour of A. F. Shore, Occasional Publications 11, EES, 1994, 112-13, 118;

<sup>4</sup> For this attitude see: Dominicus, Gesten und Gebärden in Darstellungen des Alten und Mittleren Reiches, SAGA 10, 1994, 5-9 (no. 7), fig. 1 (7:l).

<sup>5</sup> For this title see: Wb III, 344:7; Fischer, Egyptian Studies II, 142 (c).

<sup>6</sup> This reading is suggested by Junker (Giza II, 189-91). For the other suggested reading *tjst Hr* see: Wb V, 243:11.

*jst Hr* (2) *mwt nswt-bjt Mn-<sup>c</sup>nh-Nfrk<sup>3</sup>r<sup>c</sup> <sup>c</sup>nh-n.s-Mrj<sup>r</sup>c<sup>7</sup>* “(1) King’s wife belonging to the pyramid of Pepy I, the very charming lady, the very favoured one, daughter of the god, attendant of the great one, companion of Horus, dignitary of Horus. (2) Mother of the king of Upper and Lower Egypt belonging to the pyramid of Pepy II, Ankhemesmerire.”

Behind the two queens, their brother Djau stands, facing the same direction. He has a close-cropped hair, and wears a short kilt and a leopard-skin dress,<sup>8</sup> the details of which are not visible. He is adorned with a broad collar. His two arms hang by his side in an attitude of respect.<sup>9</sup> Above his head is one column of inscription identifying him as follows:  
*sn.sn t<sup>3</sup>tj z<sup>3</sup>b t<sup>3</sup>tj<sup>10</sup> D<sup>c</sup>w* “Their brother, he of the curtain, judge and vizier, Djau.”

At the bottom of the lower part of the slab, Djau is represented standing, facing right. He is clad in shoulder-length wig, a broad collar, a bracelet on each wrist, and a short kilt provided with a belt around the waist. His two arms hang by his side. Before him is a short vertical line of inscription oriented towards the right as follows: *jrj-p<sup>c</sup>t t<sup>3</sup>tj z<sup>3</sup>b t<sup>3</sup>tj...* “The hereditary prince, he of the curtain, judge and vizier...” The remaining space above and before Djau’s figure is occupied by a reversed dedicatory text of five vertical columns reading left to right, despite the right orientation of its signs.<sup>11</sup> This dedicatory text is introduced by an enumeration of Djau’s five brothers and rounded off by an appeal to the living as follows:<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> For the suggestion that the two similarly named queens might be named for Pepy I on marriage, and for some examples of renaming see: Eyre, in: *The Unbroken Reed*, 113, 122, n. 69.

<sup>8</sup> For the different types of leopard-skin dress see: Staehelin, *Tracht*, 36ff.

<sup>9</sup> For the significance of this attitude see: Dominicus, *Gesten und Gebärden*, 5-9 (no. 1), fig. 1 (1:a).

<sup>10</sup> For a study of this office see: Strudwick, *The Administration of Egypt in the Old Kingdom*, 300ff.

<sup>11</sup> For such vocative reversals, including the retrograded sequence of some Old Kingdom texts see: Fischer, *Egyptian Studies II*, 49-62.

<sup>12</sup> The appeal of the living was a part of the integrated Sixth Dynasty presentation of a person: Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Autobiographies Chiefly of the Middle Kingdom*, OBO 84, 1988, 5ff.

(1) jrj-p<sup>c</sup>t D<sup>c</sup>w sm<sup>3</sup> Jnpw<sup>13</sup> D<sup>c</sup>w jrj nfr-h<sup>3</sup>t D<sup>c</sup>w smr w<sup>c</sup>tj n(j) mrwt  
D<sup>c</sup>w hrp wrw Šm<sup>c</sup>w T<sup>3</sup>-mhw sš md<sup>3</sup>t ntr hrp j<sup>3</sup>t nbt ntr sm<sup>3</sup> Hr ht<sup>14</sup>  
Mnw jm<sup>3</sup>hw D<sup>c</sup>w (2) sn.sn jrj-p<sup>c</sup>t m<sup>3</sup>c<sup>15</sup> h<sup>3</sup>tj-<sup>c</sup> jmj-r njwt mr t<sup>3</sup>tj z<sup>3</sup>b  
t<sup>3</sup>tj jmj-r zš(w) <sup>c</sup> nswt hm b<sup>3</sup>w P hm b<sup>3</sup>w Nhn<sup>16</sup> hrj-hbt hrj-tp sm  
hrp šndt nb(t) sd<sup>3</sup>wtj-bjtj wt Jnpw d<sup>3</sup>jj Nwt (?)<sup>17</sup> jm<sup>3</sup>hw hr Wsjr  
D<sup>c</sup>w (3) jr.n(j) nw m <sup>3</sup>b<sup>3</sup>d<sup>3</sup>w T<sup>3</sup>-wr m jm<sup>3</sup>hw hr hm n nswt bjt Nfr-  
k<sup>3</sup>-R<sup>c</sup> n<sup>h</sup> dt hr hm n<sup>18</sup> nswt bjt Mrjj-R<sup>c</sup> nswt bjt Mr-n-R<sup>c</sup> n mrwt  
sp<sup>3</sup>t msj.t(j) w(j) jm.s jn h<sup>3</sup>kr<sup>t</sup> nswt Nbt (4) n jt(j) jrj-p<sup>c</sup>t h<sup>3</sup>tj-<sup>c</sup> mrjj  
ntr jm<sup>3</sup>hw hr ntr <sup>c</sup>3 Hwj j <sup>c</sup>n<sup>h</sup>w tpjw t<sup>3</sup> jmj-r hm(w)-ntr nb hm-ntr  
nb šsmt d<sup>3</sup> nb n hwt-ntr nt hm n nb(j) Hntj-jmntjw (5) <sup>c</sup>n<sup>h</sup> n.tn  
nswt jw.tn n šdt n(j) prt-hrw m wdb-rd<sup>19</sup> n hwt-ntr<sup>20</sup> tn m jrt.n(j) n  
wd m jrt.tn n(j) ds.tn dr m<sup>3</sup>3.tn j<sup>3</sup>wt(j) hr nswt n špss(j) hr hm n  
nb(j) r s<sup>c</sup>h[.f nb r sr.f nb r b<sup>3</sup>k.f nb]<sup>21</sup>

“(1) The hereditary prince, Djau, the stolist of Anubis, Djau, the keeper of the head ornament, Djau, the sole companion and possessor of love, Djau, the director of the magnates of Upper and Lower Egypt, the scribe of the sacred book(s), the director of every divine office, the stolist of Horus, the attendant of Min, the honoured one, Djau. (2) Their brother, the true hereditary prince, the count, the overseer of the pyramid town, he of the curtain, judge and vizier, the overseer of scribes of the king's documents, servant of the souls of Buto, servant of the souls of Nekhen, chief

<sup>13</sup> For ht see: Grdseloff, in: ASAE 43, 1943, 357-66.

<sup>14</sup> For the significance of the title see: Helck, Beamtentitel, 47ff.

<sup>15</sup> According to Kanawati, m<sup>3</sup>c was particularly common after titles in the reign of Mernere and the earlier part of that of Pepy II, although it is by no means restricted to a specific period: The Rock Tombs of El-Hawawish III, Sydney, 1982, 13 (16).

<sup>16</sup> For both of these two titles attached to the souls of Buto and Nekhen see: Helck, Beamtentitel, 54.

<sup>17</sup> No such title is known to me, but the ḏ sign may be an abbreviated form of the Middle Kingdom title ḏ<sup>3</sup>jj priest”, of which see: Ward, Index of the Egyptian Administrative and Religious Titles of the Middle Kingdom, Beirut, 1982, 186 (1606).

<sup>18</sup> The genitival adjective ḏ is missing in Sethe's copy: Urk. I, 118:16.

<sup>19</sup> Despite the unusual arrangement of the signs here, I prefer to read it as wdb-rd rather than the suggested reading dbw: Wb V, 553:4. For the meaning of wdb-rd see: Clere, in: JEA 25, 1939, 215f.

<sup>20</sup> For the temples as a source for the funerary offerings during the Old Kingdom see: Lapp, Die Opferformel des Alten Reiches, SDAIK 21, 1986, §189.

<sup>21</sup> This reconstruction depends on Sethe's publication: Urk. I, 119:12-13.

lector priest, sem-priest, director of every kilt, treasurer of the king of Lower Egypt, embalmer of Anubis, priest of Nut (?), the honoured one before Osiris, Djau: (3) I made this in Abydos of the Thinite Nome as a honoured one before the majesty of the king of Upper and Lower Egypt, Neferkare, living forever, and before the majesty of the king of Upper and Lower Egypt, Meryre and the king of Upper and Lower Egypt, Mernere, out of love for the nome in which I was born by the royal ornament, Nebet (4) to my father, the hereditary prince, count and beloved of the god, the honoured one before the great god, Khui. O you living people, who are upon earth, every overseer of priests, every priest, every *šsmt*-priest and *d3*-priest of the temple of the majesty of my lord, Khentiaementiu; (5) as the king lives for you, you shall withdraw<sup>22</sup> for me funerary offerings from the reversion-offerings of this temple, which I have conveyed by a decree, and from that which you convey to me yourselves when you see my offices under the king, because I was well-esteemed by the majesty of my king beyond [any] noble [of his, beyond any official of his, and beyond any servant of his].

*General commentary*

Commemorating his sisters and brothers, the vizier Djau erected some monument in the temple of Khentiaementiu at Abydos. On its remaining jamb, Djau is depicted with his two sisters, each of whom bore the name Ankhemesmeryre, and five brothers bearing the name Djau. Their parents Khui and Nebet are also mentioned in the jamb's inscription. However, some ambiguous points concerning the members of this family still need more investigation.

According to the jamb's inscription, Djau's father is the *jrj-p<sup>c</sup>t h3tj-c Hwj* "the hereditary prince, the count, Khui," and his mother is the *hkrt nswt Nbt* "the royal ornament, Nebet." Many scholars identify Djau's parents with the owners of CG 1578, and the parents of the vizier Idi, the owner of CG 1575.<sup>23</sup> In accordance with Baer,<sup>24</sup> the completely different titles of both husband and wife on CG 1578, on the one hand, and on both Djau's jamb and

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<sup>22</sup> For this translation see: Fischer, *Egyptian Studies* II, 143 (p).

<sup>23</sup> de Rougé, *Recherches sur les monuments qu'on peut attribuer aux six premières dynasties de Manéthon*, 130-34; Kees, in: *NAWG*, 1940, 42; Helck, in: *Or.* 19, 1950, 421-22; Fischer, *Egyptian Studies* I, 75.

<sup>24</sup> Baer, *Rank and Title*, 109-10 (366).

the stela CG 1575 on the other provide evidence against such identification. The totally different names mentioned for the sons of Khui and Nebet on CG 1578 and those mentioned on Djau's jamb do not support such presumed identification. Accordingly, Khui and Nebet mentioned on Djau's door jamb are believed not to be identical with the owners of CG 1578. As for CG 1575, the few honorific titles mentioned for the parents of the vizier, Idi, do not permit any reliable conclusion.

Goedicke, who suggests that the vizier Djau had only one sister named Ankhensmeryre, raises another problem concerning this family.<sup>25</sup> He argues that this sister was the "physical mother" of Pepy II, and the "dynastic mother" of Mernere, whom he suggests to be the son of the disgraced queen of Pepy I. The trial of this disgraced queen is referred to in the biographical inscription of Weni.<sup>26</sup> In fact, as Fischer<sup>27</sup> rightly points out, the existence of two sisters of Djau is attested by the jamb's inscription, where Djau describes himself as *sn.sn* "their brother," and is also confirmed by the statues of each of them in the temple of Khentiamenti at Abydos.<sup>28</sup> Rejecting Goedicke's suggestion, Kanawati refers to Weni's biographical inscription, which was most probably composed during the reign of Mernere,<sup>29</sup> and suggests that Mernere would not have permitted Weni to mention the Queen's trial in his inscription, if the disgraced queen had been his real mother.<sup>30</sup> Believing that Djau had two sisters each of whom bore the name Ankhensmeryre, the systematic description of one of them as *s3t-ntr*<sup>31</sup> "daughter of the god" needs some explanation. According to Fischer, these two queens might be

<sup>25</sup> Goedicke, in: JAOS 75, 1955, 180-83.

<sup>26</sup> Urk. I, 100:13-17. For more details dealing with the Queen's trial as a result of some conspiracy against Pepy I see: Kanawati, in: CdE, 56, 1981, 209ff; Eyre, in: The Unbroken Reed, 112; el-Fikey, The tomb of the Vizier Rē<sup>c</sup>-wer at Saqqara, Warminster, 1980, 45-46; Strudwick, The Administration of Egypt in the Old Kingdom, 115.

<sup>27</sup> Fischer, Egyptian Studies I, 75, n. 40.

<sup>28</sup> Petrie, Abydos II, pl. 19.

<sup>29</sup> Mernere is the latest royal name mentioned in Weni's biography (Urk. I, 105:11ff). For the death of Weni by the end of Mernere reign see: Eyre, in: The Unbroken Reed, 119.

<sup>30</sup> Kanawati, in: CdE 56, 1981, 209-10.

<sup>31</sup> This title is mentioned here for one of these two sisters, and is inscribed again on a statue showing her with her son, Pepy II: James, Brooklyn Museum I, Brooklyn, 1974, pl. 4, 25, no. 68.

half-sisters, and their father, Khui, having lost his first wife, married a noblewoman who had some claim to royal ancestry, which gave this second daughter the right to hold such a title.<sup>32</sup>

The vizier Djau states in his inscription that Abydos was his birthplace. This statement, according to Kanawati, might imply that Djau's family was not originally from the Thinite Nome, and that Djau, and probably some of his other brothers, were born there, when their mother, whom Kanawati identifies with Nebet of CG 1578, received her appointment as vizier in the Southland.<sup>33</sup> Although such identification of Djau's mother with Nebet of CG 1578 is not accepted here, Kanawati's suggestion concerning the non-Abydene origin of the family might be true. It was already suggested before that most of the provincial nomarchs appointed by Mernere had served at Memphis before receiving their provincial appointments, and that some of these nomarchs were chosen from originally court families,<sup>34</sup> which might support the Memphite origin of Djau's parents.

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<sup>32</sup> Fischer, *Egyptian Studies* I, 75, n. 40.

<sup>33</sup> Kanawati, *Governmental Reforms*, 62-63.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 63; *idem*, in: *CdE* 56, 1981, 213. For some examples see: Kanawati-McFarlane, *Akhmim in the Old Kingdom I*, *ACE: Studies* 2, 1992, 77,83-84, 97-99, 119-20.







(a) The topmost part of  
Djau's door jamb



(b) The middle part of  
Djau's door jamb

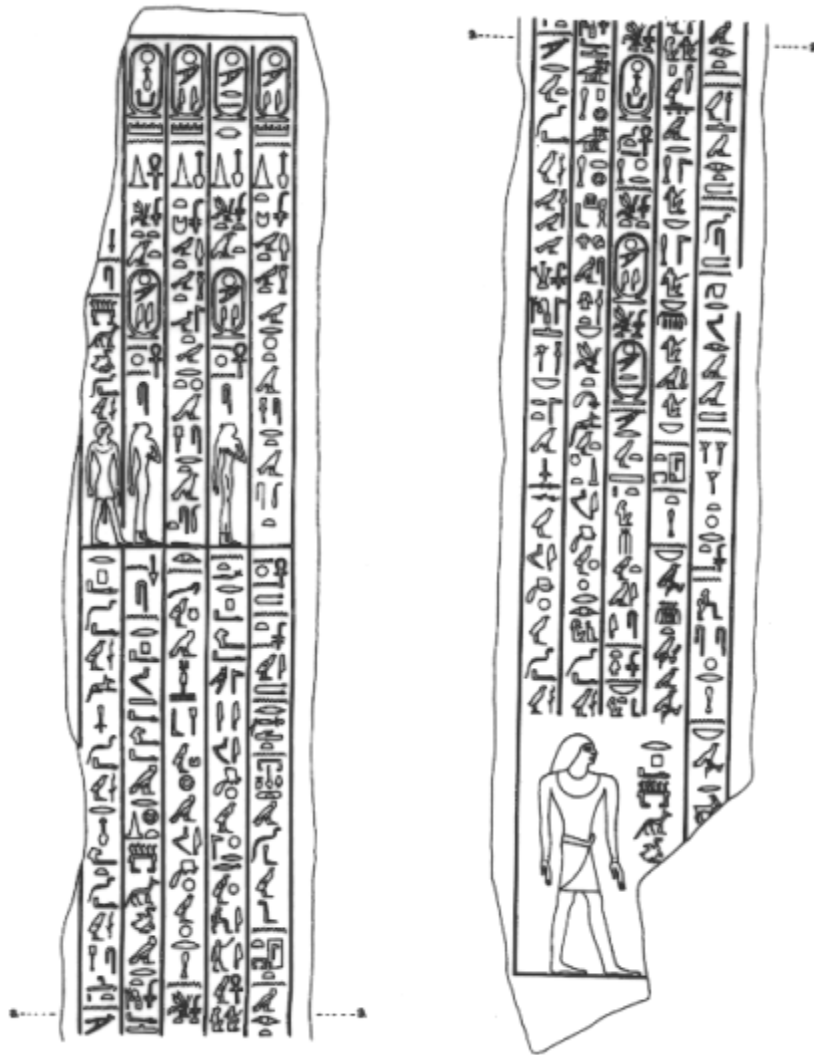
Plate 2



(a) The middle part of Djau's door jamb



(b) The lower part of Djau's door jamb



(a) The upper part

(b) The lower part

Fig. 1. The door jamb of Djau