

## APPENDIX A

### THE DEBEHEN INSCRIPTION AND THE *HER*-PYRAMID

THE whole of the Debehen inscription turns on the meaning of the words *r gš hr* (*det., pyramid*). This expression has received generally the obvious translation "beside the *Her*-pyramid" and the *Her*-pyramid has been variously identified with that of Mycerinus, one of the small pyramids south of the Third Pyramid, and even with that of Dedefra at Abu Roash. It is now certain that the name of the pyramid of Mycerinus was "Mycerinus-is-divine" and the context of the Debehen inscription has always excluded the pyramid at Abu Roash. The suggestion of Professor Breasted<sup>1</sup> that the *Her*-pyramid was one of the three small pyramids is made nearly impossible by the fact that the ground under them on the north is two to three meters lower than the floor of the pyramid temple of the Third Pyramid. They were far less advanced than the Third Pyramid at the death of Mycerinus, and it would be impossible to see the Debehen tomb under the cliff from the top of any one of them as it stood during the construction of the Third Pyramid. There remains the unfinished pyramid north of the Mycerinus valley temple. This structure would satisfy the requirements of the inscription; but I am of the opinion that the unfinished pyramid was begun by Shepseskaf after the death of Mycerinus. Moreover, the use of the name of a pyramid without including the name of its owner is unusual in the Old Kingdom, and *hr* alone would hardly be the name of a pyramid.

The solution I think lies in the meaning of the word *gš*, which should not be translated "side," but "domain," "estate," "administration," or something similar, as in the phrases *gš pr* and *gšw pr*. In the inscription of Werekhwuw,<sup>2</sup> a priest of Mycerinus who lived in Dynasty V, the title *imy-r} gš imy-wrt hr* (*pyramid*) *c}* is claimed by this man. This same expression *gš imy-wrt* occurs repeatedly in the quarry marks on the granite casing in the Mycerinus pyramid temple, parallel to *gš ntr* (?), *gš tr* (?) *nšwt*, and accompanied in all three cases by the words *hmwt smyt*. There seems to me no reason to doubt that the *gš imy-wrt* was the name of a domain or administration which along with other domains supplied craftsmen for the work on the pyramid and in the quarries, and probably provided their rations. Now the Debehen inscription makes it clear that Mycerinus was going to the site of the Third Pyramid. The conclusion is obvious that the preposition *r* in the phrase *r gš hr mr* (?) should be translated "to," "towards"; and the place referred to was the site of the Third Pyramid. The word *gš* seems to mean the central working administration, almost the modern expression "works"; and *hr*, simply "the pyramid-cemetery" which included at the time the large pyramid and the three small pyramids. The word *hr* is probably related to *hry-t* "cemetery," "tomb." The name *gš imy-wrt* probably continued in use to designate a department of works, and the expression *hr* might also have been applied to another pyramid cemetery after Mycerinus; but the priest Werekhwuw, who served the Third Pyramid, and was buried not far from the valley temple, may easily have been alive in the reign of Mycerinus and served as the overseer of the *gš imy-wrt*, while it was employed on the building of the Third Pyramid.

The text of the Debehen inscription is very imperfectly preserved, but is best given by Professor Sethe.<sup>3</sup> With the interpretation proposed above, the translation becomes:

- Line 2. "As for this tomb, the king of Upper and Lower Egypt, Mycerinus [living forever] caused it to be made, when [His Majesty was upon] the road to the works of the pyramid cemetery in order to see the work of making the pyramid "Mycerinus-is-divine."
- " 3. [His Majesty commanded to come] the director of [transport] together with the great-master-of-stone-workers (High-priest of Memphis?) and the stone-workers.
- " 4. They were standing before it (the Debehen tomb) in order to see the work of making [this tomb], [and His Majesty] assigned 50 men to work on it every day; and decreed to (?) them the completion of the *wa'bat* (i.e., a part of the tomb).
- " 5. His Majesty ordered that [no man should be taken] for any forced labor, other than working on it, until it was finished.
- " 6. His Majesty ordered moreover the clearing of the site.....this tomb.
- " 7. His Majesty ordered.....in order to clear the site.....  
[His Majesty ordered] to come the two treasurers of the god; His Majesty said.....
- " 8. (Illegible except the words: that which they gave)
- " 9. (First half illegible).....  
His Majesty decided (?) that he would go round the works decreed (or, that he should go around, as Breasted translates).
- " 10. ....in bringing (?) it, the bringing of stone from Turah in order to case therewith the chapel, together with two false doors for this tomb.
- " 11. By the master of transport, together with the great-master-of-stone-workers (high-priest of Memphis?) together with the royal mason, it was come
- " 12. ....the bringing of a statue for me, living and very great

<sup>1</sup> Breasted, *Ancient Records I*, p. 94, note c.

<sup>2</sup> Sethe, *Urkunden I*, p. 47.

<sup>3</sup> Sethe, *Urkunden I*, pp. 18-21. See also Professor Breasted's translation in *Ancient Records I*, p. 94.

- " 13. ....as a daily ration.  
To-day it is finished on its mountain together with its *wa'bat*.
- " 14. ....(half a line).  
together with two statues of the assistant, of which one
- " 15. was of.....(and the other of).....feast of Apis in the temple
- " 16. ....(half a line)  
[He made] these that he might be honored before his lord.
- " 17. ....(half a line) for my father and mother.  
They built.
- " 18. (half a line gone) green cosmetic, black cosmetic.....
- " 19. (incomprehensible)
- " 20. An order of the king was made to the overseer of.....to make a tomb [100?] ells in length,
- " 21. 50 ells in width, and .....ells [in height].....more than made my father while he was alive.  
His Majesty gave moreover.....(end of inscription, as far as executed).

The tomb mentioned in lines 20 and 21, is much larger than the Debehen tomb and must be a mastaba built for Debehen by his son who appears to have prepared the inscription. This mastaba may have stood on the cliff above the rock-cut tomb. Unfortunately the name of Debehen's son has not been preserved.