

THE GREEK INSCRIPTION
ON
THE ROSETTA STONE.

THE FRENCH TRANSLATION OF
M. LETRONNE.

By S. BIRCH, LL.D.

THIS inscription in the Egyptian hieroglyphic, and enchorial or demotic, and in Greek, being a trilingual version of a synodical act of the priesthood assembled at Memphis in honour of Ptolemy V, or B.C. 198, is engraved on a fragment of a tablet of black granite at present in the British Museum. About one third of the hieroglyphic text and nearly all the demotic and Greek texts are complete. It was discovered at Rosetta the ancient Bolbitane, in 1799, and a facsimile of the inscription published by the Society of Antiquaries of London in 1802. Besides the publications of Heyne and Beck, that of Ameilhon, *Eclaircissements sur l'inscription grecque trouvée à*

Rosette, Paris, 1803, of Porson, *Tracts and Miscellaneous Criticisms* edited by Kidd 1812, of Drumann, *Commentationes*, Königsberg 1822, *die Inschrift von Rosette*, Königsberg 1823, of Lenormant, *le texte grec de l'inscription de Rosette*, 1841, and of Letronne, *Fragmenta historicorum græcorum*, 1841, and *Recueil des Inscriptions*, 1842, and of Franz in Böckh, *Corpus Inscriptionum græcarum*, Vol. III. 1853, p. 334 and foll. are the most remarkable. The hieroglyphic text has been translated by Brugsch, *Inscriptio Rosettana*, 4to., Berlin, 1851,* Chabas, *L'Inscription hieroglyphique de Rosette*, 8vo, Paris, 1867, and Sharpe, *The Rosetta Stone in hieroglyphics and Greek*, 8vo, London, 1871. The first attempt to translate the whole of the demotic version is that of Young, *Hieroglyphics*, Pl. X and foll. Brugsch, *die Inschrift von Rosette*, 1850. As the hieroglyphic text is too imperfect and the demotic as yet untranslated, the translation here given is from the Greek, of which a translation from the amended text of Letronne, has already been given by Birch in Arundale and Bonomi, *Gallery of Antiquities*, p. 114.



THE ROSETTA STONE.

- 1 UNDER the reign of YOUTH, and immediate successor of his father, Lord of the diadems, very glorious ; having established order in Egypt ;
- 2 pious towards the gods ; superior to his adversaries ; having ameliorated the life of men ; Master of the festivals of thirty years, like HEPHAISTOS the Great ; like the Sun
- 3 great King of the Upper and Lower regions ; born of the gods PHILOPATORES approved by HEPHAISTOS ; to whom the sun has given victory ; living image of ZEUS ; Son of Sun, PTOLEMY,
- 4 always living, beloved of PHTHAS, the ninth year ; Aetes son of Aetes, being Priest of ALEXANDER and of the gods SOTERES, and of the gods ADELPHOI, and of the gods EVERGETAI, and of the gods PHILOPATORES, and
- 5 of the god EPIPHANES, EUCHARISTES, PYRRHA, daughter of PHILINOS, being the Athlophoros¹ of BERENICE EVERGETES, ARIA daughter of DIOGENES : being the Kanephoros of ARSINOE PHILADELPHOS
- 6 EIRENE, daughter of PTOLEMY : being Priestess of ARSINOE PHILOPATOR on the 4th of the month XANDIKOS ; and the 18th of the month of the Egyptians, MECHIR²

A DECREE.

The High Priests and Prophets, and those who go into the sanctuary for the clothing of the

7 gods, and Pterophoroi³ and Hierogrammateis,⁴ and

¹ A kind of standard-bearer.

² The month of March.

³ Feather bearers, as appears from the decree of Canopus, a kind of sacred scribe. They wore feathers on the head.

⁴ Sacred scribes.

all the other Priests, who from the temples of the country, had assembled at Memphis, before the King, at the festival of the reception of the

8 crown, of PTOLEMY, ever living, beloved of PHTHAS,¹ the god EPIPHANES, EUCHARISTES, which he received direct from his father, assembled in the temple at Memphis, this same day, have said:

- 9 Inasmuch as King PTOLEMY, ever living, beloved of PHTHAS, god EPIPHANES, EUCHARISTES, issue of the King PTOLEMY and of the Queen ARSINOE, gods PHILOPATOIRES, has filled the temples with benefactions and
10 those therein dwelling, and all those who are placed under his dominion, being god, born of a god and a goddess, like HORUS, the son of ISIS and OSIRIS, who has avenged his father OSIRIS; towards the gods,
11 full of generous piety, has consecrated to the temples revenues of money and provisions; and has supported great expenses in order to bring tranquillity to Egypt, and to establish order in all that concerns sacred affairs
12 has manifested with all his own power his sentiments of humanity; and of the public revenues and imposts collected in Egypt, he has finally suppressed some, and lightened others, so that the people and all the others
13 may have plenty under his reign; the sums due to the treasury by the inhabitants of Egypt, and those of the rest of his kingdom, which were very considerable, he has generally remitted; and those
14 imprisoned and those against whom law suits had commenced long since, he has freed them from all claims; he has moreover ordered that the revenues of the temples,

¹ Phthas is the Egyptian Ptah or Vulcan, called in the Greek protocol l. 3, Hephaistos.

- and the contributions which had been granted them yearly, whether in
- 15 provisions or money, as also the proper portions assigned to the gods, as the vineyards, gardens, and other lands, that belonged to the gods under the reign of his father,
- 16 should remain on the same footing. As to the Priests, he has also commanded that they should pay nothing more to the appointment¹ fund than what they had been taxed to the first year under his father; he has further remitted to those amongst the
- 17 sacred body² annual voyage to Alexandria, he has likewise ordered that there should no longer be levied the contribution for the navy; of the byssus³ delivered in the temples to the royal treasury
- 18 he has remitted two thirds; and all that had been previously neglected, he has re-established in proper order, taking all care that which it had been customary to perform for the gods should be executed as
- 19 it ought to be; at the same time he has distributed justice to all like HERMES, the twice great⁴; he has moreover ordered, that the returned emigrants, both of the soldiers and all others who
- 20 had shown opposition in time of troubles, should keep the property in the possession of which they had re-entered: he has provided also that of cavalry and infantry forces and ships should be sent against those who had advanced
- 21 against Egypt, whether by land or sea, supporting great expenses in money and provisions, so that the temples and all the inhabitants of Egypt should be in safety.

¹ *Telestikon*, a payment on promotion.

² The *ethnos* of the priests, the tribes were the *phylai*.

³ A kind of fine linen.

⁴ Lit., "The great and great." At a latter period Hermes was called *Trismegist* or "Thrice great."

- 22 Having gone to Lycopolis which is in Busirite nome, a city which had been seized and fortified against a siege, by great depôts of arms and every other kind of munitions, the spirit of revolt having strengthened itself there for
- 23 a long time, among the impious are who assembled in it, had done much mischief to the temples and inhabitants of Egypt: and having laid siege to
- 24 *this place*, he surrounded it with entrenchments, ditches and strong walls. The Nile having made a great flood in the eighth year, and as it usually does, inundating the
- 25 plains, the King has restrained it, in many places, by dyking the mouths of the rivers, for which works he has spent no small sum: after having established both cavalry and infantry troops to watch
- 26 them, he took in a short time the city by storm, and destroyed all the impious ones *found* there, like HERMES and HORUS, *sons* of ISIS and OSIRIS had mastered in these same
- 27 localities, the former revolters: as to the ringleaders of the rebels, under his father, and who had vexed the country without respecting the temples, he having come to Memphis to avenge
- 28 his father and his own crown, he has punished them all as they deserved, at the time when he came to celebrate the ceremonies prescribed on receiving his crown he further remitted from
- 29 the temples that which was due to the royal treasury up to the eighth year, amounting, in provisions and money, to no small matter: similarly he remitted the value of the cloth of the byssus which had not been furnished to the royal treasury
- 30 as also the expenses of verification for those which had been so, up to the same period: he has freed the

- temples from the tax of an *artabe*¹ per *aroura*² of sacred land : also
- 31 of the *Keramion*³ per *aroura* of vineyard : he made many donations to the APIS, to the MNEVIS, and to the other sacred animals in Egypt, taking far more care than the Kings his predecessors of what relates to
- 32 these animals in every circumstance : and what was necessary to their burial, he has given largely and nobly, as well as the sums granted for their special worship, *comprising* therein the sacrifices, panegyries and other prescribed ceremonies :
- 33 the privileges of the temples of Egypt, he has maintained them on the same footing, conformably to the laws, he has embellished the Apeion⁴ with magnificent work, having spent for this *temple* in gold, silver,
- 34 and precious stones, a no small quantity : he has founded temples, shrines and altars : he has restored in turn those that required repairs, having for all that concerns
- 35 the divinity, the zeal of a beneficent god : after new information, he has repaired the chief honoured temples under his reign as is fit, in reward of which, the gods have given him health, victory, might, and all other good things,
- 36 the crown to remain with him and his children for all time.

TO GOOD FORTUNE. It has seemed fit to the Priests of all the temples in the country that all the honours bestowed

¹ The *artabe* was equal to 50 litres, or 10 gallons.

² The *aroura* was the acre of the Egyptians, 100 square cubits.

³ The *Keramion* was either the measure called the amphora equal to 7 gallons 1 pint, or else an unknown Egyptian quantity, "a vat."

⁴ The Apeium attached to the Serapeum at Memphis where the Apis was kept.

- 37 to the ever-living King PTOLEMY, beloved of PHTHAS, the god EPIPHANES, EUCHARISTES, as well as those of his parents, gods PHILAPATORES, and those of his grandparents, gods EVERGETAI, and those
- 38 of the gods ADELPHI, and those of the gods SOTERES, should be *newly* greatly increased; and to raise to the ever-living King PTOLEMY god EPIPHANES, EUCHARISTES an image in each temple, in the most visible part
- 39 which should bear the name of PTOLEMY, the avenger of Egypt: that close by should be placed standing the principal god of the temple, presenting him a weapon of victory, the whole disposed in the Egyptian fashion
- 40 that the Priests should perform thrice daily religious services at the images, and place sacred decorations on them: and they should execute the other prescribed ceremonies, as for the other gods in the pangyries celebrated in Egypt
- 41 that they should raise to King PTOLEMY, god EPIPHANES, EUCHARISTES, born of the King PTOLEMY and the Queen ARSINOE, the gods PHILOPATORES, a statue of wood and gilt shrine, in each of the
- 42 temples: that they should place them in the sanctuaries with the other shrines; and that at the great panegyries when the shrines are taken out, that of the god EPIPHANES, EUCHARISTES,
- 43 should be taken out at the same time: in order that his shrine should be distinguished from the others, now and hereafter, it should be surmounted with the ten gold diadems of the King, before which should be placed an asp, as with all the diadems
- 44 which bear asps on the other shrines: that amidst them should be placed the headdress called Pschent,¹ wherewith

¹ Consisting of the upper white crown *hut* and the lower red crown *teser*, with a serpent in front.

- the King was covered when he entered the temple at Memphis, there to
- 45 accomplish the ceremonies prescribed when taking possession of the throne: that should be placed on the square face¹ of the headdresses to the aforesaid royal ornament, ten golden phylacteries, whereon shall be written
- 46 that it is that of the King who has rendered illustrious the Upper Country and the Lower Country: and since the thirtieth of Messori, when the King's birthday is celebrated as also the seventeenth of Mechir
- 47 when he received the crown from his father (the Priests) have recognized them as eponymous in the temples, which days are really cause of many good things for all men: that they should be celebrated in honour of him by a panegyry in the temples
- 48 of Egypt, monthly that they should perform in them sacrifices, libations and all *other things* appointed, as in the other panegyries, as well as the
- 49 in the temples: that they should celebrate a feast and a panegyry for the ever-living and beloved of PHTHAS, King PTOLEMY, god EPIPHANES, EUCHARISTES yearly in all the temples of the
- 50 country, from the first of Thoth,² during five days, wherein they should also bear crowns, performing the sacrifices and libations and all that is proper: that the Priests of the other gods should receive the name of
- 51 Priests of the god EPIPHANES, EUCHARISTES besides the other names of the gods of whom they are the Priests: and that they should mention, in all the decrees and declarations that be written by them, the
- 52 Priesthood of the King, that every individual may be

¹ Probably the shrine for the image of the king.

² The 1st month of the Egyptian year.

- permitted to celebrate the fete, to set up the aforesaid shrine, and to have it by him, accomplishing all the ceremonies prescribed in the festivals monthly
- 53 and annually, so that it may be known that the Egyptians *increase* the honours and honour the god EPIPHANES, EUCHARISTES the King, as it is legal to do: finally that this decree be engraved on a tablet of
- 54 hard stone, in hieroglyphic, enchorial,[†] and Greek characters: and place it in every temple of the first, second, and third class near the image of the ever-living King.

[†] Also called demotic. The cursive or written characters of the period.



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