

THE STELE OF THOTHMES IV (OF THE EIGHTEENTH DYNASTY)

TRANSLATED BY D. MALLET

THIS stele had been buried for ages, under the sand which again and again has covered the body of the Sphinx, when it was disinterred in 1818 by an Englishman, Captain Caviglia. Salt, who had taken part in his friend's excavations, gave a detailed account of the disinterment, and his narrative, preserved in MS. at the British Museum, has been published by Col. Vyse in the appendix to his work on the *Operations carried on at the Pyramids of Gizeh* (8vo, London 1842, vol. iii. pp. 107 *sqq.*) After uncovering all the hinder portion of the Sphinx, Caviglia found at the end of the long passage which lay between the paws, a small temple, ten feet in length by five in breadth, immediately below the chin of the figure. The extremity of it was occupied by a block of granite, fourteen feet in height, covered with sculptures and hieroglyphics recording the name of Thothmes IV; this block is the stele of which we are about to give a translation.

It was set up against the breast of the Sphinx,

without, however, actually touching it. The two walls, built along the paws at right angles to that at the end of the shrine, had been adorned with two other stelæ of smaller size and of limestone; one of them, containing the name of Ramses II, was still *in situ*; the other had fallen into the interior of the chapel among other masses of rubbish, in which fragments of the beard once attached to the chin of the figure, as in the case of all Egyptian figures of gods or kings, could still be recognised. A door opened between the two walls of lesser elevation which enclosed the shrine on the eastern side. Before the temple, a sort of paved court extended about three-fourths of the length of the paws, and was also enclosed by two walls separated from one another by a roofless opening before which was erected a square altar of granite.

Caviglia succeeded in uncovering the Sphinx as far as the base, over an area of more than one hundred feet. Unfortunately the sand of the desert soon recommenced its work, and later Lepsius, and subsequently the Duc de Luynes, had again to undertake the task of removing it at great expense in order to reach the curious stele of Thothmes IV. In 1880 Mariette undertook new and important excavations on the same spot. Like Caviglia, he brought to light the huge staircase of two stages which descends from the plateau of the desert and led the curious and the devout to the extremity of the shrine, where the colossal image of the god

Harmakhis, as embodied in the Sphinx, rises from the ground; and he recognised the remains of buildings, the existence of which had already been noticed by his predecessor. Prof. Maspero, Mariette's successor as Director-General of excavations in Egypt, was anxious to push the work of exploration yet further. Ancient authors, Pliny among others, had stated that the body of the Sphinx contained a royal tomb, and Arab writers had recounted all sorts of marvellous legends on the subject. Certain Egyptian monuments, moreover, represented the Sphinx as lying on a lofty pedestal and adorned with those prismatic grooves of which the architects of the Old Empire were so fond.¹ This pedestal might enclose the tomb of which Pliny speaks, and might have been buried in the sand as far back as the age of Khafri (Khephren) of the fourth dynasty. To solve the problem it was necessary to lower the level of the soil as far as the rocky platform on which the monument stands, and thus to restore it to the condition in which it was towards the commencement of the second century of our era. Then soundings would have to be taken in order to see whether the supposed tomb existed or not. A sum of 15,000 francs, collected by subscription by the *Journal des Débats*, allowed the work of clearing away the sand to begin in the winter of 1885-6 and to be followed

¹ See the picture which precedes that of our stele in Lepsius, *Denkmäler*, iii. pl. 68. Cf. also ii. pll. 16, 17, where a similar decoration is to be seen in the tomb of Nofri-t-keu, daughter of Snefru of the third dynasty.

up with great activity.¹ After the departure of Prof. Maspero from Egypt, however, the work was interrupted, and the question accordingly has not yet been settled.

The stele of Thothmes IV is of peculiar importance for the history of the Sphinx. It furnishes, in fact, two landmarks for periods very distant from one another. Towards the middle of it, mention is made of Khafri, the third king of the fourth dynasty, in terms which the state of the stone unfortunately does not permit us to determine quite exactly. They have been held by some to imply that the monument was constructed by that king. It is probable, however, that it is much more ancient, mounting back, perhaps, to the ages preceding Menes. To Khafri would have fallen the task of clearing away for the first time during the historical period the masses of sand which had already almost covered it. Towards the fifteenth century B.C. the work had to be done again, and Thothmes IV, in consequence of a dream, undertook in his turn to disclose the image of the god to the veneration of its worshippers. The work was doubtless difficult, and once achieved he determined to preserve the memory of it. He accordingly caused a stele to be made, and inscribed upon it an account of his vision and of the labours which had been the result of it. However, he did not go to any great expense in

¹ Maspero, *Rapport sur les fouilles de 1885-6* in the *Bulletin de l'Institut égyptien*, 1886.

searching for stone; instead of transporting a new block from Syene "he took one of the architraves of the neighbouring temple, now called the temple of the Sphinx, and engraved upon it his inscription, without troubling himself even to smooth the reverse."¹

As for the text, it had been copied by Salt in 1818, and his copy is at present in the British Museum among the papers which have been alluded to above. It was published by Young in his *Hieroglyphics* (London, 1820, pl. 80), and afterwards reproduced more imperfectly in Vyse's work on the *Pyramids of Gizeh* (London, 1842, iii. Appendix, pl. 6). Lepsius gave a new and more correct copy of it in his *Denkmäler* (iii. pl. 68), but the copy was less complete in certain parts, the monument having suffered during the interval of time which had separated his journey from that of Caviglia and Salt.

Birch explained some fragments of the inscription in the work of Vyse in 1842. The historical portion has been translated into German by Brugsch (*Zeitschrift für Aegyptische Sprache*, 1876, pp. 89 *sqq.*), and this translation has been reproduced in the German and English editions of his *History of Egypt*.

Birch gave the first complete translation of it in the twelfth volume of the former series of *Records of the Past*. It has been further explained word by

¹ Maspero, *Rapport*, p. 47.

word and commented on by M. Pierret in his lectures at the École du Louvre 1885-6. Prof. Maspero, finally, has analysed the whole and translated several lines of the text in his *Rapport à l'Institut égyptien sur les fouilles de 1885-6* (in the *Bulletin de l'Institut égyptien*, 1886).

At the head of the stele the solar disk, with its two uræi serpents and two great wings, commands the two scenes which occupy the first compartment. On the left the king, in a wig crowned by the uræus, presents in his two uplifted hands a large-bodied vase to the divine sphinx with human head, who reclines on a lofty pedestal. Above is an inscription which occupies all the length of the scene: "The King of the South and of the North, Men-khopiru-Ri Thothmos Khakeu who grants life stable and pure." And the god replies: "I have given life stable and pure to the master of the two lands Thothmos Khakeu." In front of the king is a short legend, much injured, which contained the words: "Homage of the vase Nemast."

On the right the king, in a helmet, with the left hand presents the sphinx, reclined on a pedestal similar to the other but turned in the opposite direction, with incense which smokes in a vase, and with the right hand offers a libation which he pours over an altar of very elongated form. Above the head of the king is the same formula as before: "The King of the South and of the North, Men-khopiru-Ri Thothmos Khakeu." And Harmakhis

replies: "I have given the sword to the master of the two lands, Thothmos Khakeu."

Between the two scenes, below the disk, is a vertical inscription, which occupies all the upper part of the first compartment and passes between the two figures of the sphinxes, which lie back to back. It runs thus: "I have caused Men-khopiru-Ri to rise on the throne of SEB, Thothmos Khakeu in the function of TUM."

The pedestals on which the two sphinxes recline consist of three horizontal platforms, and of a wall which is ornamented alternately with incised squares and rectangles, interrupted towards the extremities by four designs, symmetrically arranged and somewhat resembling the leaves of trefoil. It is this decoration which has already been noted above, and which is found on monuments of the Old Empire.

An irregular fracture, which commences towards the twelfth line of the inscription, runs from right to left, leaving intact only a part of the two following lines. The measurements taken by Lepsius (*Denkmäler*, iii. pl. 68) allow us to determine the extent of the text which has been destroyed. The monument was originally 7 ft. 2 in. in length and 11 ft. 10 in. in height. Now the hieroglyphics have been destroyed to a height of nearly 4 ft. on the left side, of 4 ft. 4 in. in the middle, and of 5 ft. 4 in. on the right side. Taking no notice of the double tableau, which forms the upper compartment

of the stele, we see that nearly one half of the inscription has become illegible.

The conclusion must have contained the answer of Thothmos to the words of the god, and then a recital of the works which were executed in accordance with his commands. It ended, doubtless, with a dithyramb in honour of the monarch, Harmakhis assuring to him a glorious reign as a reward for his piety. As a matter of fact, Thothmos had hardly ascended the throne before he commenced the work and erected the stele. Then the sand of the desert recommenced to rise little by little, and probably as far back as the fourteenth or thirteenth century B.C. the Sphinx was already enshrouded by it again. In the Greek and Roman epochs it was once more removed several times. The staircase was constructed which gave access to the temple, and numerous tourists were able to engrave their names on the wall of the temple and the paws of the Sphinx. In spite of much trouble and expense, the savans of the nineteenth century have not yet succeeded in completely disinterring this unique monument of primeval Egypt or in discovering its hidden secret.

THE STELE OF THOTHMES IV

1. The first year, the third month of the inundation (Athyr), the 19th day, under the Majesty of the HORUS, the strong bull who produces the risings (of the sun), the master of diadems, whose royalty is stable as [that of] TUM, the golden hawk, prevailing with the glaive, the vanquisher of the nine bows,¹ king of the South and of the North, Men-khopiru-Ri, the son of the Sun, Thothmos Khakeu, beloved of AMON-RA, king of the gods, giver of life serene, like RA, eternally.
2. The good god lives, the son of TUM, who lays claim on HARMAKHIS² the sphinx, the life of the universal lord; the omnipotent² who creates the beneficent flesh of KHOPRI, beautiful of face like the chief his father. As soon as he issues forth, he is furnished with his forms,³ [and the diadems] of HORUS are on his head; king of the South and of the North, delight of the divine ennead, who purifies ON,⁴
3. who reigns⁵ in the abode of PTAH, offering the truth to TUM, presenting⁶ it to the master of the southern wall,⁷ making endowments of daily offerings⁸ to the god, accomplishing all that [now] exists and seeking [new] honours for the gods of the South and of the North, constructing their temples of white stone and confirming all their substance,⁹ legitimate¹⁰ son of TUM, Thothmos Khakeu, like unto RA;

¹ That is, of the barbarians.

² *Ur sep*, properly, "he whose vicissitudes are great."

³ This word appears only in Young, *Hieroglyphics*, pl. 80.

⁴ Or "restores On" (Heliopolis).

⁵ Literally, "who wields the sceptre of the abode of PTAH," *i.e.* Memphis.

⁶ Literally, "making it ascend (to the nostrils) of the god," as so often depicted on the monuments.

⁷ Ptab. The southern wall was the part of Memphis where the temple of the god stood.

⁸ *Ameni-t-u*.

⁹ Or "their existences," *pat-u*.

¹⁰ Literally "of his loins."

4. heir of HORUS,¹ master of his throne, Men-khopiru-ri, who gives life. Now, when his Majesty was a child,² in the character of HORUS in KHEB,³ his beauty [was] like that of [the god] who avenges his father (OSIRIS); it was regarded like that of the god himself; the soldiers raised shouts of joy because of him, the Royal sons and all the nobles submitting themselves to his valour⁴ because of his exploits;
5. for he has renewed the circle of his victories, even as the son of NUT.⁵ At that time he hunted⁶ on the mountains of the Memphite nome, taking his pleasure,⁷ along the roads of the South and of the North,⁸ shooting at the target⁹ with darts¹⁰ of bronze, chasing the lions and the gazelles of the desert, advancing on his chariot with horses swifter
6. than the wind, together with only one of his servants,¹¹ without being recognised by any one. Then came his time for allowing repose to his servants, at the

¹ Or "flesh of Horus."

² *Anub*, with the determinative of "infant," is used in the sense of "child," "youth," especially when reference is made to the royal family. See Brugsch, *Dict.* p. 92. Here the word signifies "hereditary prince."

³ *I.e.* in the north of Egypt, where Horus had passed his early years under the charge of his mother Isis. The young prince is likened to Horus.

⁴ Literally, "being under his double solar power" (of North and South).

⁵ Here the god Set.

⁶ The word *sam*, which is without a determinative, may not signify "to hunt" here. Brugsch (*Zeitschrift*, 1876, p. 93) thinks that the *sokheti-u* (or perhaps *sam-ti-u*), sometimes represented as holding a lance, were warriors or huntsmen. They were more probably shepherds, who when leading their flocks to the "fields" (*sokhet*, *sam*) were armed in order to defend their flocks and themselves.

⁷ Literally, "rejoicing his face."

⁸ Going from south to north.

⁹ *Heb*, with the determinative of a piece of wood on a base and transfixing by featherless arrows.

¹⁰ *Khomt* means merely objects of bronze. If the determinative of *heb* is exactly represented in the copy the objects would be darts.

¹¹ *Uā*, "one," is repeated twice in the copies and hitherto the translation has been "one and one," *i.e.* "two." I know no other example of such an expression, however, and believe the second *uā* to be the result of error. No doubt in the next sentence the servants are spoken of in the plural (*shes-u*), but the prince was evidently followed by an escort. Here reference is made only to his companion in the chariot.

*sopet*¹ of HARMAKHIS and² of SOKARIS in the necropolis, of RANNUTI³ with the male and female deities,⁴ of the mother who engenders the gods of the North,⁵ the mistress of the wall of the South,

7. SEKHEH who reigns in XOIS and in the domain of SET the great magician,⁶—that sacred place of the creation,⁷ [which goes back] to the days⁸ of the masters of KHER,⁹ the sacred path of the gods towards the western horizon of ON; for the sphinx of KHOPRI, the very mighty, resides in this place, the greatest of the spirits, the most august of those who are venerated, when the shadow rests upon him.¹⁰
- The temples of MEMPHIS and of all the districts which are on both sides [advance] towards him, with the two arms extended to adore his face,
8. with magnificent offerings for his double (*ka*). On one of these days, the royal son, Thothmos, being arrived, while walking at midday and seating himself under the shadow of this mighty god, was overcome by slumber and slept¹¹ at the very moment when RA is at the summit (of heaven).
9. He found that the Majesty of this august god spoke to

¹ *Sopt* has hitherto been rendered "to make offerings," but the word which has no determinative, denotes, I believe, a locality consecrated to the gods in question. Here perhaps it signifies a quarry or trench running, as is afterwards stated, in the direction of Heliopolis.

² Literally, "by the side of."

³ The divine nurse.

⁴ This sense of the words has been suggested by Prof. Maspero.

⁵ Young's copy here contains more characters than that of Lepsius.

⁶ The names of the divinities honoured in the locality mentioned seem to me to be inserted in order to determine the place with more precision; perhaps reference is made to the gorge which leads to the Sphinx. The sentence is continued, not by *heka-ur* but by *as-t zaser ten*, in apposition to what precedes. *Ur-u* appears to be in the plural and thus to refer to Sekhet and Set.

⁷ Literally, "of the first time," an expression generally used of the creation.

⁸ Or perhaps, "which extends to the domains of the masters of Kher."

⁹ An old name of the Egyptian Babylon, now Old Cairo. The road mentioned here appears to be different from that followed by Piankhi when going from Memphis to Babylon.

¹⁰ Literally, "the time when the shadow rests upon him."

¹¹ Or "a dream which sleep produces took him."

- him with his own mouth, as a father speaks to his son, saying: Look upon me, contemplate me, O my son Thothmos; I am thy father, HARMAKHIS-KHOPRI-RA-TUM; I bestow upon thee the sovereignty
10. over my domain, the supremacy¹ over the living; thou shalt wear its white crown and its red crown² on the throne of SEB the hereditary chief.³ May the earth be thine in all its length and breadth; may the splendour of the universal master illumine (thee); may there come unto thee the abundance⁴ that is in the double land, the riches brought from every country and the long duration of years. Thine is my face, thine is my heart; thy heart is mine.⁵
11. Behold my actual condition that thou mayest protect all my perfect limbs.⁶ The sand of the desert whereon I am laid has covered me. Save me,⁷ causing all that is in my heart⁸ to be executed. For I know that thou art my son, my avenger . . . *approach* (?), behold I am with thee. I am [thy father] . . .
12. . . . Afterwards [the prince awakened]; he understood the word of this god and kept silence in his heart . . . The temples of the district consecrate offerings to this god⁹ . . .
13. . . . Khafri,¹⁰ image made for TUM-HARMAKHIS . . .
14. . . . at the festivals . . .
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¹ The last words are found only in Young's copy.

² The crowns of Upper and Lower Egypt. The feminine pronoun is suffixed to the words.

³ Common title of Seb, indicating the antiquity of his cult. The title (*erpa*) dates from a period when as yet there was no *suten* or "king," and recalls an age of primitive feudalism. Amon, who became the supreme deity in the time of the Theban dynasties, is *suten* or "king" of the gods, as first pointed out by Professor Maspero. ⁴ Literally, "provisions."

⁵ The two copies differ here; I supply *ab* ("heart") before *k-n-a*.

⁶ Restored from Young's copy: "behold for thee my destiny, as being in protection of my limbs." ⁷ Literally, "heal me."

⁸ That is, what my heart desires.

⁹ Brugsch conjecturally restores the passage thus: "[Without thinking of freeing from sand the work of king] Khafra, the image he had made for the god Tum-Harmakhis." If we consider the Sphinx as really older than Khafri, the latter part of the proposed translation must be abandoned.

¹⁰ Khéphren of the fourth dynasty.

END OF SAMPLE TEXT



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