

## HISTORICAL INSCRIPTIONS OF RAMESES III.

TRANSLATED BY PROFESSOR AUGUST EISENLOHR

THE First Series of the *Records of the Past* contained in vol. vi. and vol. viii. three texts of the reign of Ramesses III., firstly (vol. vi. 17 ff.), the address of the god Amon Ra to the king and the names of the vanquished nations, who are fettered with cords grasped by the hand of the god and his companion, the local goddess of Thebes, taken from the 1st pylon of Medinet Habu (left side); secondly, the great Papyrus Harris, of whose 79 leaves the five last (vol. viii. p. 45 ff.) are of the highest importance for the age of Rameses III., as they teach us that his father, Seti-nekht, made an end of a state of political and religious anarchy, and that Rameses himself, after having defeated the Daanauna, the Zakaru, the Pulsata, the Shardana, and Uashash on the sea coast, subdued the tribes of the Bedouin and repulsed the Libyan populations on the west side, bringing the land to a state of tranquillity and welfare: the third article (vol. viii. p. 53 ff.) gave the

translation, by Mr. Le P. Renouf, of a criminal proceeding in a case of a harem conspiracy under Rameses III.

The time of this remarkable king, whose mummy was found at Dêr el-bahri, enclosed in the coffin of Queen Nofretari, whose sarcophagus of rose granite is at the Louvre, the broken lid at Cambridge, appeared to be fixed by the mention, in a calendar on the southern wall at Medînet Habu, of the (heliacal) rising of the star Sirius on the first day of the month Thoth, so giving as the date of the calendar the year 1318 B.C. Nevertheless, if the dates of the festivals mentioned in this calendar do not belong to the common vague year, but to the holy or fixed year (so H. Brugsch and Dr. Mahler), and if we have, after Dümichen, in this calendar only the exact copy of a calendar of Rameses the Great, whose fragments are embedded in the north-eastern pylon of Medînet Habu, no conclusion can be drawn from the mention of the rising of Sirius.

If the fragmentary calendar of Elephantine,<sup>1</sup> dating the rising of Sirius on the 28th of Epiphi, really belongs to Thothmes III., giving him the date of 1470 B.C., the probably twelfth year of Rameses III. can hardly be 1318 B.C., as there are between these two monarchs a whole series of kings, several with high ciphers attached to their reigns, as Amenophis III. (38 years), Rameses the Great (67 years), and after them the above mentioned long period of internal

<sup>1</sup> Now in the Louvre.

troubles. The date of 1450 B.C., offered by the Assyro-Babylonian chronology for the contemporaries and correspondents of Amenophis IV., seems just as little compatible with 1318 for Rameses III.

Though we do not deny that the description of the exploits of Rameses III. on stone and papyrus is somewhat exaggerated, it is not to be doubted that in his reign Egypt was still a powerful and formidable nation. As a proof we quote the remarkable passage of the great Harris Papyrus (Pl. ix. 1 ff.), where the king speaks of his building a temple in the land of Kanana, to which the nations of the Retennu came with their tributes for the gods.

As we learn from some hieratic inscriptions at Silsileh (*Denkm.* vi. 23), Rameses III. built in the fifth year of his reign the castle and temple of Medinet Habu, dedicated it to the god Ammon, and called it by the name of the House of Millions of Years, in Am-uart ("great abode") of Thebes. The walls of this building he filled with pictures and inscriptions of his deeds. We shall give in the following pages a short description of these texts, from which we select the most important in their chronological order.

On the eastern front of the palace, beneath two gigantic representations of the king slaughtering his enemies before Harmakhis (right side) and Amon Ra (left side), we see the kneeling figures of the princes of the principal foes of Rameses III., with their arms bound behind the back ; at the right side his Asiatic

enemies—the Kheta, the Amaro, the Zakaru, the Shardana, the Sha[su], the Tuirsha and the Pu[lsata], all with their characteristic faces and headdresses ; and at the left side, in symmetrical arrangement, the African nations ; Kush, [ ], the Libu, the Tursas, the Mashuash, and the Tarau.

At the inner side of the passage, on the left, the king, equipped with bow and quiver, brings to the god Amon two series of fettered prisoners, who exhibit a very strange manner of curling the hair.

Similar representations of vanquished prisoners are inside the doorway, and at the back of that building which some call a pavilion, others a palace.

Much richer in representations as in inscriptions is the temple itself, which is situated some two hundred and sixty feet behind the palace. The first pylon exhibits at both extremities two colossal pictures : on the left (Dümichen, *Hist. Inschr.* i. pl. xi. xii.) the god Amon Ra handling the *shopesh* with a ram's head, and leading six series of prisoners with their names in crenellated shields. They are preceded by the local goddess of Thebes. On the right side we see (Düm. *loc. cit.* xvi. xvii. ; *Denkmäler*, iii. 210, a) similarly the god Amon Ra Harmakhis, with the head of a hawk, handling a hawk-headed *shopesh* and conducting nine series of fettered prisoners. These representations are accompanied by texts, of which the left one has been translated by Birch, *Records of the Past*, First Series, vi. pp. 19, 20. The really poetic text on the right wing is as follows :—

Spoken by AMON RA HARMAKHIS :—My beloved son of my body, lord of both lands, Usermara-mer-amon, lord of the sword over every country, the lands of the ANU KHENT lie down slain under thy feet. I let come to thee the chiefs of the southern countries with their tributes, their children on their backs, all fine offerings of their country. Thou givest breath (according) to thy wish unto them. Thou killest those whom thy heart desires. I turn my face to the *North* and I charm for thee, I present to thee the red land under thy sandals, thou crushest hundreds of thousands to corpses, thou smitest down the HARUSHA by thy valiant sword. I let come to thee the countries which did ignore EGYPT, with their baskets, laden with gold, silver, genuine lapis lazuli, all precious stones, the selection of the divine land before thy beautiful face. I turn my face to the *East* and I charm for thee, I subjugate them to thee, their totality combined in thy fist. I have collected for thee all the things of PUNT, their tributes on gum of balm, precious (and) odoriferous, all woods pleasant of scent for thy face, for thy diadem, being on thy head. I turn my face to the *West* and I charm for thee, I destroy for thee the lands of TEHENNU, they come inclined to thee, imploring, prostrated on their feet, they shout to thee. I turn my face to the *height* and I charm for thee, they are hailing thee, (even) the gods of the horizon of the heaven born at the morning. Thou germinatest like [OSIRIS]; he brings justice. I turn my face to the *earth* and I charm for thee, I procure for thee the victory over all countries, they are rejoicing for thee, (even) the gods in the heaven; HUT giving to thee his arms on a fresh great place as seat of thy face, son of RA, Rameses-hek-An.

Nearer to the doorway on both sides of the pylon are smaller pictures, the king striking the prisoners before Ptah (on the left) and before Amon Ra. Beneath is a row of fettered prisoners, with their names on crenellated shields. Below each series is

a rather long stele, the left one dated in the twelfth year of Rameses III., and, as Dr. Lepsius discovered, an imitation of the stele of Rameses II. at Abu Simbel (*Denkm.* iii. 194), containing a dialogue between the god Ptah and the king. The other stele belongs to the eleventh year. A good copy of both sides is to be found in Dümichen, *Hist. Inschr.* i. pl. vii.-x., and pl. xiii.-xv.; the two stelæ are also in De Rougé, *Inscriptions*, ii. pl. cxxi.-cxxvi. (stele of year xii.), and pl. cxxxi.-cxxxviii. The stele of the year xi. is partly translated by Chabas, *Études sur l'antiq. historique*, 2<sup>ème</sup> édition, p. 237 sq. The contents of the stelæ are mere phrases, except the conclusion of that of the year xi., where the defeat of the army of the Libyan chief *Kapur* is described, as well as the submission of himself and his son.

The back of the first southern pylon contains texts of the eleventh year of King Rameses III., treating of the submission of the Temhu and the Mashuash (a Libyan tribe). The king in his chariot is shooting at his enemies (*Düm. Hist. Inschr.* i. pl. 18, 19; De Rougé, *Inscript.* cxiv.-cxvii.; Banville, *Alb. phot.* pl. 78). Probably the long text of the northern pylon (*Düm. loc. cit.* pl. 20-27) records the events of the same year, together with the register of the booty obtained during it. We shall translate this text under No. III.

Between the first and the second pylon are two colonnades, the left one supported by pillars, the right one by Osiris-caryatides. On the back wall of the

latter is an illustration of the capture of the town of Amaro by the king, who is shooting from his chariot. On the left wall of the second pylon which next follows, the king leads three series of fettered prisoners before Amon Ra. From the inscriptions we infer that these are the Daanauna (the Danaans) and the Pulsata (the Philistines). The whole of the right wall of the pylon is covered with a long inscription of the eighth year, which was cleared and first published by Mr. Greene (*Fouilles à Thèbes*, Paris, 1855), described by E. de Rougé (*Athénæum français*, 1855; *Notice de quelques textes hiéroglyph. récemment publiés par Mr. Greene*), afterwards published in Banville's *Album photographique*, pl. 76, 77, and in many other photographs, and translated by Chabas, *Études sur l'ant. hist.*, 2nd ed. p. 246 sq. We shall give further on (No. II.) a revised translation of this remarkable text.

The peristyle court of the temple of Medinet Habu, which we next enter, exhibits under its colonnade an illustration of two high festivals—the festival of the god Khem on the northern side, and that of the god Sokar on the southern. But besides this, the south-eastern and southern walls contain representations of the wars against the Libyan tribes, especially the Libu themselves, the Mashuash, etc. These representations are well given in the great works of Champollion and Rosellini (Champ. *Monuments*, pl. 208 = Ros. *Mon. reali*, 138; Champ. 207 = Ros. 137; Champ. 205 = Ros. 136; Champ. 206 = Ros.

135). Next to these representations is the long text of 75 lines, whose translation we give under No. I. The outward northern wall of the temple contains again illustrations of the war of the king and of a lion hunt. In his letters from Egypt and Nubia (Paris, 1833) Champollion has given an account of these representations (p. 352 ff.), which we have repeated in Baedeker's *Upper Egypt*, p. 183 ff. Here also the defeat of the Mashuash and the Libu is referred to, and also that of the Shardana and Zakaru, who entered the mouths of the Nile, and were annihilated by the Egyptian fleet and army. The picture of this naval combat is highly remarkable, and illustrates well the events recorded in the inscription of the year 8, l. 24, No. II.

Also, on the western bank of the Nile, at Karnak are memorials of the combats of Rameses III. Besides the scanty remains of a small temple near the sacred lake of Muth (Z on Lepsius's map, U in that in Baedeker's *Upper Egypt*), where the land of Tahi is mentioned and a summing up of the spoil is given, in the first court of the great temple of Amon, at a right angle to the axis of the temple, there is a well-preserved sanctuary, which, according to an inscription, dates from the sixteenth year of the king. Here also the king is slaying his enemies, whom the god conducts in crenellated shields. These representations are given in Lepsius's *Denkm.* Abth. iii. 207.



## HISTORICAL INSCRIPTION

FROM THE FIFTH YEAR OF RAMESES III. (HEK AN)  
IN 75 VERTICAL LINES

AS we said above, the south-west wall and the adjoining part of the south-east wall of the great peristyle court at Medînet Habu contain in their upper register the representation of the festival of Ptah-Sokar-Osiris, while the lower register is filled with battle scenes and offerings of prisoners to the god Amon of Thebes. There are recorded the Temhu and the Mashuash, then the Tchennu and the Libu, whose cut hands and members are counted, by several thousands, by the scribes before the king standing in his chariot. Close to this scene follows an inscription of 75 lines, as far as the west corner; it is written retrograde, that is to say, the characters are not turned towards the beginning, but towards the end of the inscription.

The inscription has been published several times, first by Burton (*Excerpta hieroglyphica*, 1825-30, pl. 43-45), then by Rosellini (*Monumenti reali*, pl. 139-141), Dümichen (*Historische Inschriften*, ii. taf. xlvi.), De Rougé (*Inscriptions hiéroglyphiques*, ii. pl.

cxxxix.-cxlvii.), lastly by H. Brugsch (*Thesaurus*, v. p. 1197 ff.). I myself copied the inscription on my first journey to Egypt in 1869-70, which copy I revised afterwards in 1885 and 1890. According to my copies I translated the text, a part of which exists also in a fine photograph by H. Béchard. Mr. Chabas in his *Études sur l'antiquité historique* (1<sup>ère</sup> edit. 1872, p. 231 sq.; 2<sup>ème</sup> edit. 1873, p. 227 sq., p. 254 sq.), has given a translation of the text in the second edition only of lines 17-75. In the first edition he translated the whole text. He has also treated the different wars of Rameses III. in the above-mentioned work, and in his *Recherches sur la XIX. dynastie*, 1873.

1. Year 5 under the Majesty HOR-RA, the valiant bull, who enlarges KEM,<sup>1</sup> strong with the scymetar,<sup>2</sup> an excellent fighter, he kills the TEHENNU,<sup>3</sup> the king of both countries . . .<sup>4</sup>
2. he smites the TEHENNU to tombstones on their places. The golden hawk, lord of both scymetars, making the frontier at his ease behind his foes . . .
3. his fear, his terror as a shield of EGYPT. The king, the youthful lord, brilliant are his risings, like those of the moon he repeats his birthday . . .
4. the son of RA, Rameses hek An,<sup>5</sup> chief of battles from his rising over EGYPT. Beginning with RA, returning at her setting. Given has the divine circle the lands. . . .

<sup>1</sup> Egypt.

<sup>2</sup> Shopesh in Egyptian, so called from its likeness to the *thigh of an ox*.

<sup>3</sup> Tehennu is a general name for the populations to the west of Egypt, comprising the Temhu, the Mashuash, and the Libu.

<sup>4</sup> The ends of many of the lines are wanting.

<sup>5</sup> Prince of Heliopolis.

5. A warrior, the lord with extended arm, a runner, lord of the symbols like the son of NUT,<sup>1</sup> he makes the whole earth as she has been [in the time of the gods],
6. the king Usermara mer amon, son of RA, Rameses hek An, chief great in love, lord of donations, his image is like RA, on the first morning, his terror [is fixed on the front]
7. of his diadem, established on the throne of RA as king of both lands, the country on the front and on the back in abundance, the nobles (like) the inferior . . .
8. assembled all together in his reign, the king of Upper and Lower EGYPT, Usermara meri amon, son of RA, Rameses hek An, the king valorous, courageous, arranging his affairs, he beholds . . .
9. his protecting fury in love is directed towards EGYPT. With extended arm and stretched feet he strikes each land, considering piously plans, stipulating laws, giving . . .
10. with delight did strike his name the hearts up to the clouds, reaches his formidable magnitude the Uu and Mer,<sup>2</sup> acquired by his valour arrive at once . . .
11. these, who did not know their masters, they come stooping to implore the breath of life which is in EGYPT from HOR-RA, the valiant bull of great royalty, the king of Upper and Lower EGYPT, Usermara mer amon, son of RA, Rameses hek An, the great wall
12. of EGYPT, protecting their limbs, his valour like MENTU stretching down the Nine Bows,<sup>3</sup> a holy child in his origin, like HARMAKHIS he emerges, he is contemplated like TUM when he opens his mouth with
13. the breath of the enlightened in order to vivify both

<sup>1</sup> Osiris.

<sup>2</sup> Designation of the different parts of the country.

<sup>3</sup> The hostile nations, which are considered to have been nine in number.

- countries by his aliments every day, the prudent son, the defender of the circle of gods, yielded are to him the obstinate countries, boiled in their blood,
14. he does not harvest, captured (are) all his men, withdrawn the utensils of every kind in his country, coming in adoration
  15. in order to behold the great sun of EGYPT over themselves, embellished is the disk for them. The great sun rises,
  16. she shines over the earth. The light of EGYPT, which is in the heaven. Words: Raise oh RA! our land . . . we are lost
  17. in . . . daily the clouds. Slaughtered has the king of Upper and Lower Egypt, Usermara mer amon, son of RA, Rameses hek An, the countries of the plain and of the mountains, he has eradicated (them)
  18. and brought to EGYPT as slaves presented wholly to its circle of gods. Oh satiator with food to produce abundance
  19. in both countries! Numerous exultations in this country without sorrow. Established has AMON his son on his place; the whole circuit (of) the sun
  20. united in his fist. The wretched SATI, the TEHENNU the robbers, who
  21. ill treated the beloved land, ransacked the country in decline since the (former) kings. They outraged the gods like the people, there was none daring to
  22. oppose them since they revolted. Behold there was the youth like an impetuous griffin well versed like MEHI (THOTH) in the divine words . . .
  23. they pass like a scheme (?) in . . . all that comes forth from the mouth into [the land is effectuated]. His soldiers are urging, [they do] not [retrocede] . . . they are
  24. like bulls ready [to rush] against goats. His cavalry like hawks prowling (?) against the young birds,
  25. ruddy like a lion full of wild fury. His officers

- impetuous like the god RESHPU view ten thousands as the pupil of the eye ; they were like MENTU
26. the warrior. His name terrifies the lands and the mountains. The TEMHU are coming rallied together : the LIBU, the ANTU (?), the MASHUASH caught in their country
  27. the BURAPA (?), their soldiers confiding in their plans they came full in their hearts : We shall frustrate their designs in their body ; we shall fill our hearts with
  28. outrages. Their plans were perverted, repulsed, broken on the heart of the god. Interceding the chief for them, was impotent in the heart (?) of the god.
  29. The benevolent, knowing the plan. Look ! there has made him this god, the lord of the gods, for the great of EGYPT for eternity. Through his victories he made supplicate the nations, the chiefs (on their bodies),
  30. the mighty king, his majesty intelligent like THOTH. Their hearts and plans were made discernible before him. His majesty took possession of the land TEMHU with their children . . . (the acquisition)
  31. of his double sword. They applied to the chief that they might retain their country. Such has not been heard since there are kings. Behold the heart of his majesty raging with oppression . . . the valiant sword
  32. attacking the hares, holding him like a keen bull, clutching with the claws, kicking with the horns, shaking the mountains by his stalk . . . the gods
  33. their plans made his success. If there were who liked to transgress his frontiers, his majesty was going forth against them like a flame (which propagates) in the thick bushes . . . like birds
  34. in the interior of nets, packed in bunches, made to a roast. Prostrated as knocked down to the earth, the chiefs slain, a heavy defeat,
  35. not to be numbered. Look ! evil is done unto them to the height of heaven, executed their males on the

- spot, the killed are made in piles . . . on their own
36. ground by the valour of the king, vigorous in his limbs, the only lord, powerful like MENTU, the king of Upper and Lower EGYPT, Usermara mer amon, son of RA, Rameses hek An, everything he brought as spoil to EGYPT, hands,
  37. members not to be counted, conducted as prisoners fettered in the prison. The chiefs of nations assembled to contemplate their disgrace. The magistrates of the order of thirty
  38. following the king, their arms raised, they exult to the heaven with loving hearts. AMON-RA, the god, has fixed the victory of the prince. They are coming,
  39. ambassadors of each country; their heart is distressed, taken off, it is no more in their bodies. Their faces looking on the king, as on TUM, bruised is the spine of the TEMHU to terminate. Look, his majesty made their legs
  40. transgressing the frontiers of EGYPT. Their leaders are in fear made into tribes in the battles marked on the great name of his majesty. These who violated (the frontier)
  41. were trembling. Unable was their mouth to recollect the shape of EGYPT. The land of TEMHU, which had come, was made to run away, the MASHUASH (were) suspended
  42. in their country, eradicated their plants, not existing at once, paralysed all their limbs by terror. "Bruised are our spines, and they (are) behind us to the land of MERA.
  43. Its lord has annihilated our souls for ever and eternity." Woe (?!) to them! They behold their dances like their rout. SEKHET is behind them. Terror is
  44. on them. We do not find a road to march on. We step on water throughout. In their battles they do not combat with us fighting. There is drawing near

45. to us the flame. We wish to withdraw ourselves. The flame seizes us, there is no extinguishing for us. Their lord (is) like SET, beloved by RA. There is heard his roaring.
46. Like a griffin he is behind us murdering many (?). He is compassionate ; he let us go back [out of] EGYPT for ever. Dispersed the . . . We sink
47. to the death, made to a flame into which we enter, but issue not. Titi, Mashaknu, Maraiu and the chief of the AMARO
48. carried on the Mara occupied to enter EGYPT through the LIBU with the flame in the front and in the rear. There came the gods to call us to account
49. because we made encroachments on their property, in their territories. We shall praise the great valour of EGYPT saying : RA has given to it the power, the victory, there is beholden the rising like . . .
50. Like RA in his shining on the pious. Let us approach him, let us glorify him, let us touch the ground before the great sword, the vigorous (?) of . . .
51. the king of Upper and Lower EGYPT, Usermara mer amon, the son of RA, Rameses hek An, who has made the northern nations trembling in their members, the PULSATA, the ZAKKARA . . .
52. eradicated their country, departed their soul consumed. They are emigrants to another country in the great ocean. These, who came . . .
53. AMON-RA behind them, killing them. These who entered the æstuaries like birds slipped into the net, made prisoners . . .
54. their arms, their heart agitated, taken away, it is no more in their bodies. Led on, their chiefs killed, stretched down they made as bound together . . .
55. saying : He is treading on the prisoner, holding him fast with his claw, the unique lord, set up over EGYPT, a true warrior, discharging without failing [his aim].
56. The extremities of the great circuit (he) made tremble

# END OF SAMPLE TEXT



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