

POLITE LITERATURE.

I.—*On the Age of the Eighteenth Dynasty of Manetho: By the REV. EDWARD HINCKS, D.D.*

Read December 12, 1842.

IT cannot have escaped the observation of any one who has attended to Egyptian literature, that a strong disposition has manifested itself, among all Continental and many British writers, to ascribe to the monuments and inscriptions which come under their notice as great an antiquity as possible. It is to be feared, that the disgust, which has been excited by these extravagant pretensions, has caused many influential persons to discourage a study which appeared to lead to such conclusions; the opposition between which and the Mosaic history was in many cases quite obvious. It would seem, however, to be a wiser course to encourage persons, who were qualified by their previous studies, and who could be depended on as believers in divine revelation, to pursue this branch of literature; in order that they might serve as a check to the vain fancies of unbelievers. It is not by a general denial of the existence of any knowledge of the language, in which the monumental inscriptions are composed, that intelligent persons will now be led to discredit the conclusions said to be derived from these inscriptions. The main facts respecting the language can no longer be denied with any plausibility. In order to refute in a satisfactory manner any erroneous statement that may be hazarded, these facts must be assumed as established; and the inferences said to be deduced from the monuments must be shown not to be legitimate deductions from them. They must be dealt with precisely in the

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same manner as a numismatist would deal with the false conclusions which another numismatist should pretend to obtain from a newly discovered medal.

This is the course which I have pursued in the papers which the Academy has done me the honour to publish. In that on the Years and Cycles of the ancient Egyptians, I pointed out the fallacy of the arguments derived from the hieroglyphical notation of the months, by which M. Biot had sought to fix the introduction of the wandering year of 365 days at an epoch more than 3000 years anterior to our era ; and I showed, from that very notation, that it could not possibly have been introduced at any other time than the early part of the eighteenth century before Christ. I selected the precise year, 1767, from distinct considerations, which, though not equally forcible, appear to me to carry with them a very high degree of probability.

In my paper on the Stèle, my main object was to direct the student or purchaser of Egyptian antiquities to that class of monuments, which would be most likely to afford historical information ; and to point out criteria, by which the relative antiquity of those which were not dated might be determined. But I was enabled to introduce into the paper some corrections of certain prevailing opinions, the tendency of which was to assign an extravagant antiquity to kings, or successions of kings.

I shewed, in the first place, that no reliance was to be placed on the collection of figures of kings, found in a chamber at Karnac, which had been assumed to be a genealogical tablet, similar to that of Abydos ; and which, having been connected with this, through the Osortasens and Amenemhés, carried up the line of Pharaohs to a very remote epoch from the accession of the eighteenth dynasty. I proved from contemporary monuments that the Osortasen succession, as it really existed, was different from that said to be indicated by the figures in the chamber at Karnac ; and, of course, that the latter could be of no authority. The so called " Tablet of Karnac " is, in fact, a mere collection of figures of kings, who had reigned, or were supposed to have reigned, in the various parts of Egypt, and perhaps in Ethiopia, placed together without any regard to order of succession.

I pointed out also the true period at which these kings reigned, to whom the most remote antiquity had been assigned by MM. L'Hôte and Letronne, on the ground of inscriptions bearing their names being found at Karnac, on the

reverse of blocks of stone, the fronts of which bear the name of king Horus of the eighteenth dynasty. It was assumed by these writers, that these blocks had been overthrown by the Hykshos, at the time of their invasion ; and, of course, that the kings in question reigned previous to it ; and as “ the captives on the sandals ” (which had been heretofore supposed to represent the Hykshos, and to have been first used on the occasion of their expulsion), appear on the monuments of these kings, these French writers have imagined, that they had discovered evidence of another invasion of barbarians, anterior to that of the Hykshos, of which the legend of Typhon was a memorial. The inconsistency of all this with the chronology of the Bible is apparent. In reply to it, I stated, that the kings in question were the immediate predecessors of Horus ; or, to speak more correctly, were rival kings, who held Thebes in opposition to him for a few years, during which the blocks on which their names appear were sculptured. One of them, the king whose tomb is in the western valley at Thebes, and of whom the name has not yet been deciphered in a satisfactory manner, died ; and the other, Amenoph IV., who changed his name to Vach-en-aten, i. e., the Adorer of the Sun’s Disk, was at length subdued by Horus, who defaced all his monuments, as well as those of his predecessor. Thus the interval between the sculpturing of the two faces of these blocks was really a less number of years than the French writers have supposed it to be of centuries ! Of these statements I have not given proofs. The evidence which I have collected appears to me, however, to amount to a complete demonstration of what I have stated ; and, should circumstances permit me to continue my attention to Egyptian literature, I hope to lay it before the public, together with some other observations that I have made respecting the mode of determining the succession of Egyptian kings.

In the same paper on the Stèle, I threw out some other suggestions, tending to depress the chronological epochs of the dynasties. I stated my belief that the kings in the former part of the Tablet of Abydos belonged to the *twelfth* dynasty of Manetho, in place of the sixteenth and seventeenth ; the five intermediate dynasties between that and the eighteenth being contemporary with others, or altogether fictitious. I mentioned it too, as a possible supposition, that some of the dynasties between the eighteenth and the twenty-second were in like manner to be omitted ; and that the epoch of the eighteenth dynasty might, therefore, be much later than it has been calculated to be on the supposition that

all the dynasties, mentioned by Manetho as following it, really reigned in succession for the periods which he states.

What I then mentioned as a possible supposition, I now announce as a positive fact. Since I wrote the paper on the Stèle, I applied myself to collect the evidence respecting the time at which the eighteenth dynasty flourished, which might be found in the recorded dates of facts, that were of such a nature, that they could only have occurred at particular seasons of the solar year. I have been able to obtain three such dates; and they all concur in depressing the era of the accession of this dynasty about 365 years below that assigned by the continental writers; because the three facts stated must all have occurred about three months earlier than they would have done if this era had been correctly assigned.

The first of these facts is the commencement of the expedition of Rameses the Great against the Scythians, which is said to have been in his fifth year, the eleventh month, and ninth day of the month. In the year 1522 B. C., which is about the time that the continental writers suppose that Rameses reigned, the ninth day of the eleventh month would coincide with the 13th July of the proleptic Julian year, some days after the summer solstice. It is extremely improbable that the king would have deferred till so late a season his setting out on a distant expedition to a northern region. The time of the vernal equinox, or some time shortly after it, would probably be that at which he commenced his expedition; and in order that the assigned date of the wandering year should coincide with this, the expedition must have taken place in the former part of the twelfth century before Christ. In 1200 B. C. this date would coincide with the 23rd April, about twenty days after the equinox; and in 1120 B. C. it would coincide with the equinox itself.

The second fact is of a similar nature. In the annals of the reign of Thothmos III., a fragment of which, formerly at Karnac, is now in the Museum at Paris, this king is said to have made his first campaign in the third quaternion of months in his twenty-ninth year (i. e. reckoning from the death of his father; the first year from the death of his sister). According to the French hypothesis, this must have occurred in the beginning of the seventeenth century before Christ, when this quaternion would have extended from the latter end of June to the latter end of October. It is very improbable that the campaign

should have commenced so late in the season as this; and when we take into account that it is not said to have commenced at the beginning of the quaternion, and that it is intimated that it extended beyond the close of it into the thirtieth year of the king, we have, I think, fully sufficient grounds for believing that he reigned somewhat about 360 years after the French date, when the quaternion would have extended from the latter end of March to the latter end of July.

The third of the facts is of a different nature. It is recorded on a scarabæus in the Louvre, which has been figured by Rosellini M. R. XLIV. 2, that in the eleventh year of the reign of Amenothph III., the third month and first day, he gave orders for the digging of an immense basin, 3000 cubits long, and 600 cubits broad; and that on the sixteenth day of the same month he celebrated a great panegyry of the waters, or of the inundation. We know from various Stèles, on which the panegyries observed by the Egyptians are enumerated, that they had twenty-four stated ones, occurring on the first and sixteenth days of their twelve months; and it can scarcely be doubted, that the panegyry of the waters, or the inundation, was that one of this series, which occurred when the inundation was at its height, or when the sun was about the middle of Virgo. The basin was prepared, while the Nile was yet rising, with a view to its being filled by it as it rose; and when it was full it was used for the celebration of the water panegyry. I consider the physical fact of the inundation being at its height about the middle of Athyr, in the eleventh year of Amenothph III., to be decisive as to the point that he reigned in the former half of the thirteenth century before Christ. In the year 1300 B. C., the 16th Athyr would coincide with the 27th September; and this appears to me as late a time as we can suppose that the festival of the inundation could be celebrated. It is more probable that it would be a week or so earlier, which would bring the date down twenty-eight years, or thereabouts. According to the French hypothesis, however, of the chronology of this period, the eleventh year of Amenothph III. would occur in the seventeenth century before Christ, when the month of Athyr would coincide with December, and, of course, the inundation would be at an end.

Now, however contrary to prevailing opinions the conclusion at which I have arrived may be, I would observe that it is quite consistent with the statement of Tacitus, that the appearance of the phoenix (which I shewed in a former paper

took place in 1167 B. C.) was in the reign of Sesostris, or Rameses the Great ; and also with a tradition, if it do not deserve another name, which was current among the Egyptians in the reign of Antoninus, to the effect, that the canicular cycle, then ending, had its commencement in the reign of Thothmos III. ; which must, therefore, have included the year 1323 B. C. The existence of this tradition is evidenced by a number of scarabæi, obviously of Roman workmanship, and referring to the canicular cycle, on which the royal legend of this monarch appears. If it could be proved that a single one of these scarabæi was of the age of Thothmos, it would be decisive as to the point under consideration. I do not, however, think this likely. Indeed, I think it very doubtful, whether the canicular cycle existed at all before the time of the Alexandrian astronomers ; who may have fixed its origin proleptically, as Julius Scaliger did in the case of his cycle. Still it is to be presumed, that authentic historical data existed at that period, from which the name of the monarch who reigned in 1323 could be known ; and it is by no means likely that, in default of such data, the name of a much more ancient king should be assumed arbitrarily, and the origin of the cycle attributed to him.

It will occur to some, that the celebrated astronomical sculptures on the ceiling of the Memnonium, as it is improperly called, at Thebes, are opposed to the opinions which I have advanced. This, however, I by no means admit. It is clear, that in the principal part of these sculptures, there was no intention of describing the physical characters of the months in the time of Rameses, but their original characters in the old fixed year ; or, as those would express it, who dissent from my conclusions on that subject, their *normal* characters. This will be acknowledged by all parties. The question is whether there be any subordinate part of the sculptures from which the date of the erection can be inferred ; and, if so, what that part is ? Mr. Cullimore says, that he has data, from which the year 1138 B. C. may be inferred to be that of the erection ; but I have not been able to learn what these data are. This, however, would be in perfect correspondence with my views. M. Biot has fixed upon 1500 B. C., as the probable time of the erection ; but on grounds which appear to me very unsubstantial. He assumes that the position of the vernal equinox was intended to be pointed out by the position of a pair of royal cartouches which stand under the names of the months. It appears to me, that I would have an equal right to assume that

these cartouches were intended to mark the place of any other phenomenon, suppose the winter solstice; and that I might thus bring down the date about 365 years from that fixed by M. Biot, so as to agree with the other evidence. Arguments of this kind are, however, of no value; and I should have considered this as unworthy of any attention, if it were not for the great name of M. Biot, and the weight which his opinion on any subject of a strictly astronomical character must necessarily have. This makes it important that I should point out the nature of the arguments which he uses, shewing that they are not founded on astronomical data.

The theories of M. Biot and Mr. Cullimore are, however, not the only ones respecting the date of these sculptures. The Bishop of Gibraltar has argued, in a very plausible manner, for the intermediate date of 1323 B.C. His lordship quotes a passage in one of the columns of hieroglyphics at the side of the ceiling, in which mention is made of "the manifestation of Sothis on the third of the celestial days." From this he infers, that at the time when the sculptures were executed, the heliacal rising of Sirius, or Sothis, was on the third of the Epagomenæ; and, as it took place on the 1st of Thoth, at the epoch of the canicular cycle in 1323 B.C., the date of the ceiling could not have much differed from that. To this, however, it was replied by Mr. Cullimore (to whom, by the way, I am also indebted for the observation respecting the scarabæi of Thothmos III., alluding to the canicular cycle), that this passage did not refer to the rising of Sirius, but to the birth of the goddess Isis, or Sothis; which took place on the third of the Epagomenæ, according to a legend recorded by Plutarch, and to which allusion is made in at least one other existing hieroglyphical monument. This is certainly a *possible* way of explaining the passage referred to by the Bishop; and consequently that passage cannot be relied on, in opposition to such plain indications of a more recent date, for the reign of Rameses the Great, as I have adduced in this paper.

I will only add, that from a comparison of various passages on obelisks, and in particular on the great obelisks at Karnac, combined with the statements of Manetho, I have been led to fix the death of Thothmos II. in 1355 B. C., or within a year or so of it. From this epoch the years of the joint sovereigns, queen Amuneth and king Thothmos III., are reckoned. The former died about the middle of their twenty-ninth year; and from her death, the twelve years and

nine months assigned by Manetho to Thothmos III., whom he calls Mephres, are to be counted. They extended a short way into his forty-second year of nominal sovereignty. His son, Amenothph II. reigned about 1314 B. C. His son, Thothmos IV., the Thmosis of Manetho, commenced his reign about 1288 B. C. ; and his sons, Amenothph III. and Amuntuonkh, reigned about 1279 B. C. The former of these died about 1248 B. C., and then commenced that struggle between the rival worships of Amun and of the Sun's Disk, which convulsed Upper Egypt for several years, and occasioned the loss of almost the whole of the foreign conquests of the preceding monarchs.

I have not yet been able to ascertain the interval between the death of Amenothph III. and the accession of Rameses the Great ; nor am I prepared to give the proof of the statements which I have last made ; as they partly depend on some general propositions, which I have established by induction from a number of passages on monuments. Before making these propositions public, I am desirous not only of making the inductive proof as complete as possible, but also of collecting together as many of the corollaries from them as I can.