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Francis Ll. Griffith

Four granite stands at Philæ.

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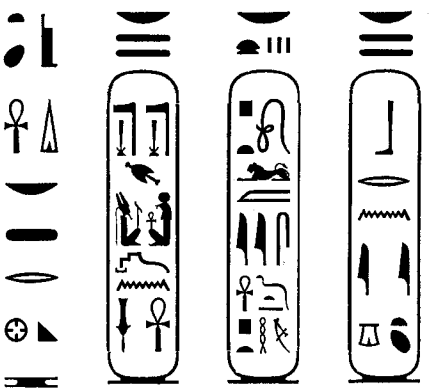
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FOUR GRANITE STANDS AT PHILÆ

BY

F. LL. GRIFFITH.

On the floor in the middle of the sanctuary of the great temple of Isis at Philæ there stands a shrine-shaped block of red granite crowned with cavetto cornice. It is evidently in its original position, probably as support for the processional bark of the goddess. In the curve of the cornice on the front facing the entrance of the sanctuary is a disk with two uræi, in relief, and on the face below are engraved the cartouches of Ptolemy Euergetes I and that of his queen Berenice. On the left of these is a fourth column of hieroglyphs facing to the right, describing the king as "beloved of Isis the giver of life, Mistress of Philæ".



A similar stand, after having the cornice roughly trimmed away, was placed as an altar before the apsidal niche in the east wall of the Hypostyle. No doubt it was done in the reign of Justinian about the middle of the sixth century when various graffiti tell us that Bishop Theodore performed "the good work" of converting part of the ancient home of paganism into a place of Christian worship[1]. The inscription has been erased, but when Mrs. Griffith and I examined it from all points at night with an electric torch, we made out that it was certainly of Euergetes and Berenice and that it seemed

[1] I should venture to suggest that the two Byzantine granite lions before the First Pylon may have been presented on the same occasion, possibly by the Emperor himself, to adorn the approach to the church; an ancient church at Ancona is similarly guarded, if I remember right.

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to have agreed in all respects with the before-mentioned inscription. This stand may very likely have been taken from the sanctuary of the Birth House.

It is well known that Euergetes I continued the work of his father Philadelphus at Philæ. A third stand is of greater interest, though perhaps of



somewhat doubtful provenance. It is placed irregularly by the end of the colonnade in the south-east corner of the Court between the First and Second Pylons. The cavetto cornice is plain on all sides, but, in a square compartment on one face is an inscription of Tirhaqa[1] "beloved of Amūn of Taqempso — *T'qmps*". Ammon was the principal god of Tirhaqa's great kingdom, but there seems to be no other trace on Philæ either of the worship

[1] Referred to in Weigall, *Description of the Antiquities of Lower Nubia*, p. 49.

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of that deity or of Tirhaqa's piety. If the stand belonged originally to Philæ it must have been dedicated to Ammon before the building of a temple to Isis was contemplated. The presence here of the remarkable name Taqempso is enough to revive Sethe's theory (in his *Dodekaschoinos*) that the island Ταχομψω Tachompso in Herodotus II 29, is Philæ. The evidence is clear in inscriptions of Ptolemaic and Roman date and in the geographical work of Ptolemy that Kemso, Takemso, Μεταχομψω, was in the neighbourhood of Maharraqa; its temple lies 113 kilometres above Philæ on the western mainland, dedicated to Isis and forming the southern boundary of the Dodecaschoenus. Its name, probably non-Egyptian, is essentially the same as that on the Tirhaqa monument, although the phonetic renderings of it[1] are very different.

Probably then in Tirhaqa's time Philæ was Takempso. Herodotus virtually puts Tachempso at the head both of the First Cataract and of the Twelve Schoeni, in two contradictory situations. Thus it would seem that the name had already moved southward by 450 B. C., perhaps under Persian influence, but the tradition of its earlier position still survived to confuse the old historian and through him the lexicographers.

All three of the above-mentioned stands are in red granite. A fourth of the same material was for a different purpose, namely to serve as the support for a group of three statues, respectively of Ptolemy Philometor, Cleopatra II and their young son Ptolemy[2]. It was placed in its present position by Mr. Weigall[3] at the small western entrance to the Great Temple behind the Second Pylon, but was found long ago by Professor Sayce[4] at the north end of the Island of El Hēse (where the priests of Philæ were buried). The Greek inscription upon it seems to imply that Isis and Horus, the gods of the place, themselves caused the statues of the royal family to be set up, a most unusual proceeding on the part of deities. But it was observed by Professor Sayce

[1] Sethe, *Dodekaschoinos*, p. 6.

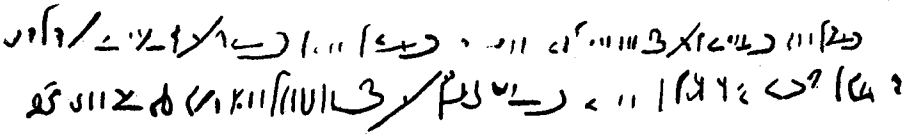
[2] The hollow receptacles for the several bases from proper left to right measure 0.60 × 0.30, 0.40 × 0.20 and 0.50 × 0.28. Thus the queen stood on the right of the king and the child between his parents.

[3] Weigall, *op. cit.*, p. 56.

[4] See Dittenberger, *O. G. I. S.*, No. 121. Professor Sayce has kindly shown me the record of it in his notebook of 1894-5. He described the monument in a letter to the *Academy*, March 1895, p. 261.

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that after the first two lines three (?) others had been erased, and the names Isis and Horus substituted in a different style [1]. These were followed by a rather indistinct line of demotic which reads :



Pr-ˁo Ptwlmys erme t Pr-ˁo·t Glwptre n ntr·w mr mwtw erme Ptwlmys pe-w šr ʾS erme Ḥr.

King Ptolemy and the Queen Cleopatra, the mother-loving gods, and Ptolemy their son : Isis and Horus [2].

Unfortunately there is no light whatever to be gained from this, which is just a literal translation of the Greek with no apparent construction for 'Isis and Horus'; and again there may have been a second line erased. Dr. Edwyn Bevan has already explained that "the dedicator was, no doubt, some official who, as a partisan of Philometor, had fallen into disgrace under Euergetes II" [3].

F. Ll. Griffith.

[1] The letters are larger, and the O which occupies only half the height of the line in the original inscription is here of equal height with the other letters.

[2] Professor Sayce had already deciphered this.

[3] *History of Egypt. The Ptolemaic Dynasty*, p. 293.

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