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William Kelly Simpson

A portrait of Mariette by Théodule Devéria [avec 1 planche].

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A PORTRAIT OF MARIETTE BY THÉODULE DEVÉRIA

William Kelly SIMPSON

In 1930 the late Horace L. Mayer acquired from the heirs of Luigi Vassali (1812-1887) a collection of Egyptian antiquities and a library of Egyptological volumes. Many of the objects from the Vassali collection have been given over the years to the Egyptian Department of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston [1], and the volumes of early publications on ancient Egypt have been lent to the Egyptian Department by Mrs. Horace L. Mayer.

Among the items kindly lent by Mrs. Mayer is a portrait of Mariette in pencil with color by Théodule Devéria (Pl. XVII) [2]. It is inscribed on the lower right, « Devéria Ombos 1859 ». From the extracts of his letters, Devéria probably drew the portrait early in January, 1859. On January 29 he was at Aswan, and on February 1 again at Luxor, having made his voyage in the company of Mariette [3]. At this time Mariette was 37 years of age and Devéria only 27 or 28 years old [4].

In the portrait, on a tan paper, Mariette is shown seated on a chair with a cushion. He wears an Egyptian cap colored light orange with a light blue tassel, trousers with traces of yellow and red on the sash, and a vest with long sleeves and stitching on the edges and a short collar. The hair and mustache are brownish blonde, and there are traces of a light red on the ear and back of the neck.

(1) Dows Dunham, «Ancient Egyptian and Near Eastern Acquisitions and Loans from the Horace L. Mayer Collection », *Boston Museum Bulletin* 70, 1972, p. 14-21.

(2) Dimensions : 36 × 24 cm. MFA Loan No. T.L. 16,041.

(3) Théodule Devéria, *Mémoires et fragments, Bibliothèque Égyptologique* 4-5, Paris, Ernest Leroux, 1896-97; for the events of January-February, see *Bibl. Ég.* 4, p. XII-XIII, by Gabriel Devéria.

(4) Warren R. Dawson and Eric Uphill, *Who Was Who in Egyptology*, 2nd rev. ed., London, The Egypt Exploration Society, 1973, p. 85-86, 194-196.

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A portrait of Mariette by Théodule Devéria [avec 1 planche].
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The expression is thoughtful. The portrait may be compared with the later portrait of Mariette which serves as the frontispiece of *Mélanges Mariette* [1].

Devéria has left an exemplary reputation, although through his illness and early death few of his contributions were published. His biographers record that some 40 volumes of manuscripts and 16 boxes of slips have been deposited at the Louvre. Maspero was required to have Devéria's approval for the publication of Maspero's study of the great inscription of Abydos by his publishers, and Devéria is known to have aided many scholars with his knowledge and notes, often relinquishing projects which he intended to carry out in their favor. His father and uncle were both painters, Achille and Eugène Devéria, and the Devéria household was host to many well known men of the times, including Prisse d'Avennes, Alfred and Paul de Musset, Eugène Delacroix, and Victor Hugo [2].

In the Mayer portrait Devéria has captured the likeness of his beloved mentor and senior soon after the latter's appointment to the directorship of the Service des Antiquités. It is likely that the portrait was done on board Mariette's steamer, the Samannoud [3]. It recalls the friendship of Devéria, Mariette, and Vassali, and provides us with an early likeness of Mariette.

[1] *Bibliothèque d'études*, t. 32.

[2] Gabriel Devéria and G. Maspero in *Bibl. Ég.* 4, p. I-XLVIII.

[3] Lauer, in *Mélanges Mariette*, p. 30-32.

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A Portrait of Mariette by Devéria, 1859.

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