

ANCIENT EGYPT.

ORIGIN OF THE GREAT HYPOSTYLE HALL AT KARNAK.

There seems to be a good deal of uncertainty in the text and guide books as to the name of the founder of the Great Hypostyle Hall at Karnak. One authority says that Ramesses I set up one column, Seti I, 79, and Ramesses II, 54; another says that it was founded by Haremhab and so far finished in the time of Ramesses I that he was able to put his name on one column;¹ a third merely states that Seti I used the pylon ("No. III") of Amenophis III as the back to his Hall of Columns.

Though future excavation and possibly fresh documentary matter may settle the attribution once and for all, we have already two pieces of evidence which, to my mind, throw a great deal of light on it. Up to the present, I have not seen them brought forward together.

In the inscription of Amenophis III on the east face of Pylon III at Karnak, shewn in Fig. 1, he tells how magnificently he decorated it. The inscription is very imperfect as the pylon is in ruins, only the ends of each of its 71 columns of inscription being left. After a long speech of praise to Amen-Rê', followed by an account in general terms of his gifts to the god, the king describes the decoration of the pylon. Columns 53-57 are as follows (BREASTED, *Ancient Records, II*, p. 368).

- (53) ————— great doorway of electrum.
- (54) ————— of the land that sees it, every land [—————].
- (55) ————— as leader of them in
- (56) ————— of new cedar of the royal domain.
- (57) ————— august — of electrum, obelisks
- (58) —————

Fig. 2, at A, shews the lines containing the word for obelisks, , *thn*. The determinative and dual sign were at the beginning of the next line, and therefore missing, but the word is quite certain. There is no reason to believe that these

¹ I have vainly hunted for hours for the cartouche, or other name, of Ramesses I, armed with the names of all the Ramessides arranged in tabular form. In the superimposed cartouches, I am convinced that it does not occur. M. Munier, of the Cairo Museum Library, has kindly enquired into this matter for me, and finds that the original statement comes from Mariette Pasha, in his *Karnak, texte*, p. 24, where he remarks, "Ramsès Ier a commencé la décoration du pylône, dont il avait déjà conçu le plan. Bien plus, le travail de la Salle Hypostyle était commencé et une colonne au moins était debout quand Ramsès Ier mourut." It is possible we have here a slavish copying by subsequent writers without verification.

obelisks were the miniature ones which were placed on the barge of Amûn, since they would necessarily follow a description of such a barge (*cf.* Breasted, *Ancient Records*, p. 359). Prof. J. H. Breasted, in his translation of the inscription of Pylon III, appends the following footnote on the subject of the destination of these obelisks, which no longer stand before the pylon:—"These obelisks probably stood in front of this pylon (III); they must have been removed to build the great hypostyle; the only obelisks of Amenhotep III now known at Karnak are in the northern temple, but only fragments have survived (Lepsius, *Denkmäler*, Text III, 2). Perhaps they stood on the two bases referred to in Baedeker's *Egypt*, 1902, 253." (Fig. 3.)

The second piece of evidence is in the colonnade of Luxor Temple where Tut'ankhamûn, in the celebrated reliefs of the procession (probably representing the rejoicings at the return to the old worship of Amûn after the 25 years' heresy),



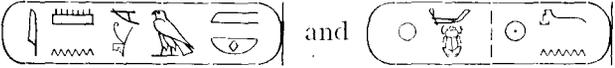
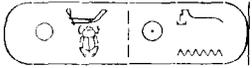
I.—INSCRIPTION OF AMENHOTEP III, EAST FACE PYLON III, LUXOR.

gives two views of the main pylon at Karnak, which at that time was Pylon III, with great detail as regards the gateway and the eight flagstaves with their clamps; but no obelisks are shewn. A photograph of this part of the relief is shewn in Fig. 4, frontispiece.

During the heresy, there was certainly no work done in the temple of Amûn, yet the obelisks once there—if we are to believe the pylon inscription quoted—have disappeared. There is no reason to believe that they were thrown down by Akhenaten, as the others were left standing and were not tampered with except in removing the name of Amûn.

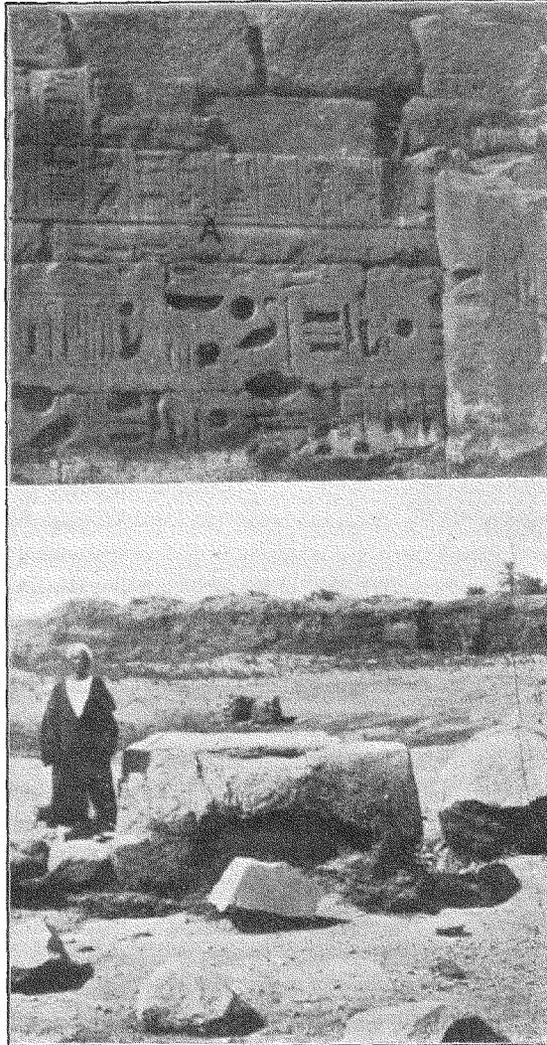
I think that it is generally admitted that the sculptures on the walls of the Great Colonnade in Luxor Temple are the work of Tut'ankhamûn

and not of Haremhab, but Fig. 5 which was taken at the moment the sun touched the cartouches of the king, and which shows Haremhab's names,

 and , superimposed on Tut'ankh-

amun's   leaves no doubt on this

attribution. The two 's and the  at the bottom of the left-hand cartouche are still clearly visible.



2.—INSCRIPTION, PART OF FIG. 1.

3.—BASE OF OBELISK, KARNAK.

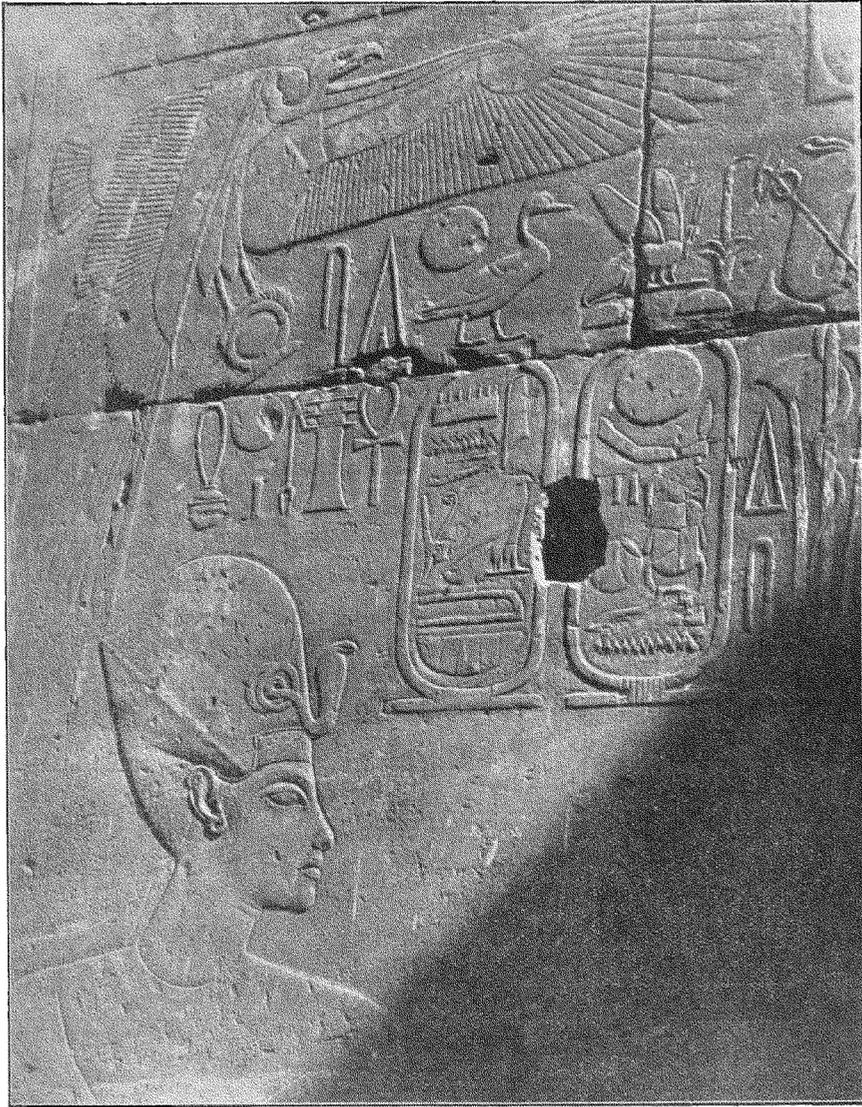
The only reasonable conclusion we can come to is that Amenophis III took down his own obelisks from before Pylon III at Karnak. We will defer for a little the discussion on the destination of these obelisks, confining ourselves to the possible reason for the king's action. The only reason which, to my mind, would lead the king to remove a pair of obelisks from the premier position in Upper Egypt would be that he had a further building in his mind in front of the pylon.

This could be no other than the Great Hypostyle Hall, or at least its two axial lines of columns, a piece of work far more in keeping with this king's character, than that of Haremhab, since the latter's building activities were small. We do not know that he even built a mortuary temple, and all that he seems to have done at Karnak is to have converted a solar temple of Akhenaten into his southern pylon, and to have restored the southern gateway. Backed by the evidence already brought forward, the attribution becomes almost a certainty when we remember that the Great Colonnade at Luxor Temple was at least begun by Amenophis III. Again, I believe that this is a generally accepted fact, since there is nothing known about Tut'ankhamûn which would lead us to suppose that he would undertake and complete such a gigantic piece of work.

Assuming, then, that Amenophis III, at his death, had made considerable progress in what is now the Great Colonnade at Luxor, and had at least laid the foundations of his new building in front of Pylon III at Karnak, it might be well to speculate whether the new buildings in *both temples* were intended for colonnades like that at Luxor or hypostyle halls as at Karnak. Excavation in the floor of them may throw some light on this point, especially outside the screen-walls of Luxor Colonnade. It has been supposed by some that the original idea of Amenophis III at Luxor was for a hypostyle hall similar to that of Karnak, and that Tut'ankhamûn rather than complete such a gigantic piece of work, finished it quickly by putting screen walls on either side of the central lines of columns which he had completed. It seems more likely to me that the inverse is the case, and that the original idea in both temples was for a simple colonnade with screen walls and that Seti I at Karnak transformed an either complete, or partially complete, replica of the Luxor Colonnade into the Great Hypostyle Hall as we now see it. In Karnak, where each successive king built additions irrespective of whether they were suitable or not, any form of building might be expected, but at Luxor the case seems to be different. Here the temple up to the time of the heresy was of one date, being entirely built by Amenophis III, though possibly on the foundations or plan of an earlier temple. I doubt very much whether King Amenophis III would have added a broad, dark, impressive hall in front of the open forecourt of his own temple; a colonnade merely connecting two gateways, however, is not so unlikely. It is, however, rather unwise to reason on the tastes of a people who painted in gaudy colours statues and the most exquisite sculptures, and even gold-plated the rough flagstaves which stood in front of the pylons. A further indication that colonnades was intended is gained by considering the method by which a series of columns were erected. It is generally believed that the corresponding drums of all the columns required were laid simultaneously and that earth was filled round them, with a ramp leading up to the new level, and a further series of drums added to each, continuing the process of filling until the roof-level was reached. Had Tut'ankhamûn found a hypostyle hall in process of construction at Luxor, all the columns would have been at the same level, and it would have been a very big undertaking indeed to transform it into a walled colonnade. To complete a simple colonnade would be a piece of work more likely to have been done by him, especially if Amenophis III left it nearly finished. Although Haremhab and Ramesses I are, to my knowledge, not mentioned in connection with the building of the Hypostyle Hall at Karnak, I think it is fairly sure that they did carry on the work, since Haremhab at any rate—a fervent devotee of Amûn—would not have left an unfinished building at the main gate of Karnak, while he built a pylon and restored the great southern gateway. It seems likely that, at the death of

Rameses I, the colonnade was practically complete. I admit that my belief, that colonnades and not hypostyle halls were intended, is based on rather slender foundations, and that it may be disproved by those who have more leisure and opportunity than I to give the problem a detailed study.

Returning to the destination of Amenophis III's obelisks at Karnak ; we can at once rule out the possibility that they were transferred to the temple of Amenophis III dedicated to the god Monthu, which lies in a separate enclosure to the



5.—HEAD OF TUTONKHAMEN, CARTOUCHES USURPED BY HOREMHEB.

north of the main temple there. The bases of these obelisks, one of which is given in Fig. 3, shew that the obelisks themselves were not more than some 55 feet high—that is, smaller than the pair of Tuthmôsis I *behind* Amenophis III's pylon. Not only would they have been too small for such a large pylon, but the tendency of successive kings seems to have been to erect obelisks larger than their predecessors unless there was a good reason to the contrary. It is very unlikely that a king

like Amenophis III would have put smaller obelisks than those of Tuthmōsis I and III at the main entrance to Karnak temple. If he had taken them down and left them lying before the pylon now known as Pylon II, Seti I would certainly have erected them, and even if Seti I had died before they could be erected, Ramesses II would have usurped them and left them there with his colossi; it is very unlikely that Ramesses II would have removed them from here to his addition to Amenophis III's temple at Luxor. There are, of course, such possibilities as the destruction of these obelisks, or their removal to other towns, but there are two contemporary records which, at least, offer material for consideration. The black granite stele now known as the "Israel Stele,"—which was removed from the temple of Amenophis III behind the colossi by Merneptah, describes the decoration of both Pylons of the Colossi Temple and of Pylon III at Karnak, but no obelisks are mentioned in connection with either. The only indication as to its date is that it is after Amenophis III's first victorious campaign into the land of Kush, which occurred in the fifth year of his 36-year reign. Another stele of sandstone, of gigantic size, now lying broken behind the Colossi, describes the mortuary temple of Amenophis III which once stood there. In this, unlike the Israel Stele, it is distinctly stated that the pylon of this temple on the *west* bank was furnished with obelisks. It appears that this stone is later than the Israel stele since in the latter the colossi are not mentioned¹ (Breasted, *Ancient Records*, II, p. 356), whereas in the sandstone stele they are very much praised, and are described as "statues of a mountain of gritstone. When they are seen in their places, there is great rejoicing because of their size." (B.A.R., II, pp. 369-370.)

A conclusion that meets all the observed facts is that Amenophis III, after having begun on the foundations of the new building in front of Pylon III at Karnak, took his obelisks over to his mortuary temple on the west bank, having possibly ordered a new pair to be cut for the new main pylon or gateway, which was either finished or converted by I-Iaremhab, Ramesses I and Seti I, and is now Pylon II. The sequents of events in the three temples may have been somewhat as follows, though I give my proposal with a good deal of diffidence :—

- (1) Amenophis III completes his mortuary temple and the third Karnak pylon not long after the fifth year of his reign.
- (2) The stele, now known as the Israel stele, is set up in the mortuary temple before the colossi on the west bank or the obelisks of Pylon III had been erected.
- (3) The obelisks of Pylon III are set up.
- (4) The inscription of Pylon III is cut.
- (5) An interval of some 20 years elapses, during which period the Luxor temple is built and the Colossi erected.
- (6) The colonnade of Luxor Temple is begun.
- (7) The obelisks from Pylon III are taken down and sent over to the mortuary temple behind the Colossi.
- (8) The great Sandstone stele is set up in the above temple.
- (9) The foundations, at least, of a colonnade in front of Pylon III are laid.
- (10) Amenophis III dies, the Luxor Colonnade being nearly finished.

¹ To me it is incredible that such monuments could be included in the description "It is numerous in royal statues of Elephantine granite and of *costly gritstone*, established as everlasting works."

- (11) 25 years' heresy, during which no works are done for the temples of Amûn.
- (12) Tut'ankhamûn finds the Luxor Colonnade almost complete and inscribes it with the procession scenes.
- (13) Iâremhab usurps Tut'ankhamûn's cartouches in the above reliefs.
- (14) ⁴Iâremhab and Ramesses I carry on the colonnade begun in front of Pylon III ; it is not clear how far they finished it.
- (15) Seti I and Ramesses II convert the finished or unfinished colonnade of Amenophis III into the Great Hypostyle Hall.

As to the final destination of the two obelisks which had been removed to the west bank, they may now lie, in fragments, below the fields behind the Colossi, and future excavation may reveal them. Another possibility is that Ramesses II may have removed them back to the east bank and placed them in front of the Pylon which he added to the Luxor temple, having re-cut the faces and omitted to mention whose they originally were. Since Ramesses II's son, Merneptah, used the blocks from the Colossi Temple to build his own mortuary temple it is not unlikely that the temple of Amenophis III had already fallen into ruins during the later years of Ramesses II's long reign. The differences in height (7 feet) between the pair that once stood at Luxor may be due to the vicissitudes of handling the obelisks. Beknekhonsu, who was responsible for the work of Ramesses II at Luxor, says on his statue that he erected the obelisks for Ramesses II, but he does not mention anything about their quarrying or transport. All this, however, is pure supposition.

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[*Later note*].—The temple at Soleb was built by Amenophis III with a colonnade, and I believe the flanking walls are bonded into the pylon. This is another reason for considering that colonnades, and not hypostyle halls, were intended at Luxor and Karnak. It has been deduced that a hypostyle hall was intended at Luxor from the fact that half-drums of columns were found in the walls of Tut'ankhamûn. The fact that these are more or less shaped has been taken as proof that they had once been erected. To me this does not seem likely, as there are not sufficient of them to have constructed more than a column or so.

As to the flanking walls at Luxor it seems possible that the solid portion is the work of Amenophis, and the hollow part above that of Tut'ankhamûn. It must have been left (if this is so) at a height of about three metres. I suggest that the drums Tut'ankhamûn built into the walls were surplus sent from the quarries to allow for breakages.

¹ If the cartouche of Ramesses I really ever existed on one of the columns other than the central double line, it follows that it was he who changed the scheme of a colonnade into a hypostyle hall, and not Seti I.