

## The Obelisks of Thutmose III. and his Building Season in Egypt.

By JAMES HENRY BREASTED.

Hierzu Tafel III.

In celebration of the usual jubilee on the 30th anniversary of his being proclaimed crown prince and on recurrences of the same feast, Thutmose III. erected a series of at least seven obelisks, of which five were in Thebes and two in Heliopolis. The latter now stand face to face on each side of the Atlantic, as they once stood side by side at the portal of a Heliopolis temple. Of the five at Thebes, not one survives in Egypt; all having perished save two, and these are now in Europe: one in the piazza of the Lateran in Rome, the other in Constantinople. We are thus presented with the surprising spectacle of the greatest of the Pharaoh's without a single surviving obelisk in the land he ruled, while the modern world possesses a line of them reaching from Constantinople to New York.

The later history of the two surviving Theban obelisks is tolerably well known. The one in Constantinople was removed thither by the emperor Theodosius<sup>1)</sup>; while that of the Lateran after being set up in the Circus Maximus by Constantius on his visit to Rome in 357, was discovered broken into three pieces in 1587 and erected on its present site in the next year by Pope Sixtus V. But regarding the number and the *earlier* history of the Theban obelisks of Thutmose III., the greatest confusion prevails. This seems to be owing to the fact that the inscriptional material has been very sparingly employed or in some cases not at all; whereas it is impossible to learn the story of such monuments without exhaustive use of the inscriptions.

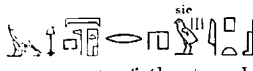
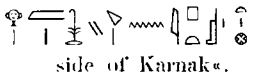


The Lateran obelisk itself tells us much of its earlier history. In the first place, it stood alone and was not one of a pair: for the dedication inscription<sup>2)</sup> (south side, middle column) speaks of "erecting for him (Amon) a single (*u<sup>c</sup>ll*) obelisk . . . . . as the first beginning of erecting a single obelisk<sup>3)</sup> in Thebes".

Hence we have not its fellow to account for. As to its original site, its own inscriptions are rather explicit, referring no less than four times to its location in Thebes:

<sup>1)</sup> WIEDEMANN, *Gesch.* p. 365.

<sup>2)</sup> MARCCHI, *Gli Obelischi Egiziani di Roma*. Tav. I.

<sup>3)</sup> Hence WIEDEMANN'S idea (*Gesch.* 365) that the Lateran obelisk and that of Constantinople belong together, must be given up.

1.  (Dedication of Thutmose III.) »in the fore-court of the temple over against Karnak«.
2.  (When found, it was lying) »on the south side of Karnak«.
3.  »He erected it in Karnak«.
4.  (It was erected) »at the upper portal of Karnak«.

In view of these data there is only one place in the XVIIIth dynasty Karnak temple where the obelisk could have stood. The only »forecourt« which is »in Karnak« and in which an obelisk could be erected »at the upper« portal of Karnak«, is the one before the pylon (No. VIII on BEDEKER'S map) of Thutmose III., on the south side of the temple, where, according to No. 2 above, the obelisk had been found, as left lying by Thutmose III. It was in front of his southern pylon then, between it and the one (IX) erected by his father and Hatshepsut, that Thutmose III.'s greatest of surviving obelisks was set up. Its position when found would indicate that this was furthermore the location intended for it by Thutmose III. himself. The date of its erection is both interesting and important, as is well known: being in the reign of Thutmose IV., after it had »spent 35 years lying upon its side in the hands of the craftsmen«. The beginning of this 35 year period can hardly have been at any other time than the death of Thutmose III., the only event which could conceivably stop the work upon a great monument of so energetic a king. But as the date of the erection in Thutmose IV.'s reign is not stated, the only conclusion furnished by this monument is: that Amenhotep II. and Thutmose IV. reigned at least a total of 35 years.

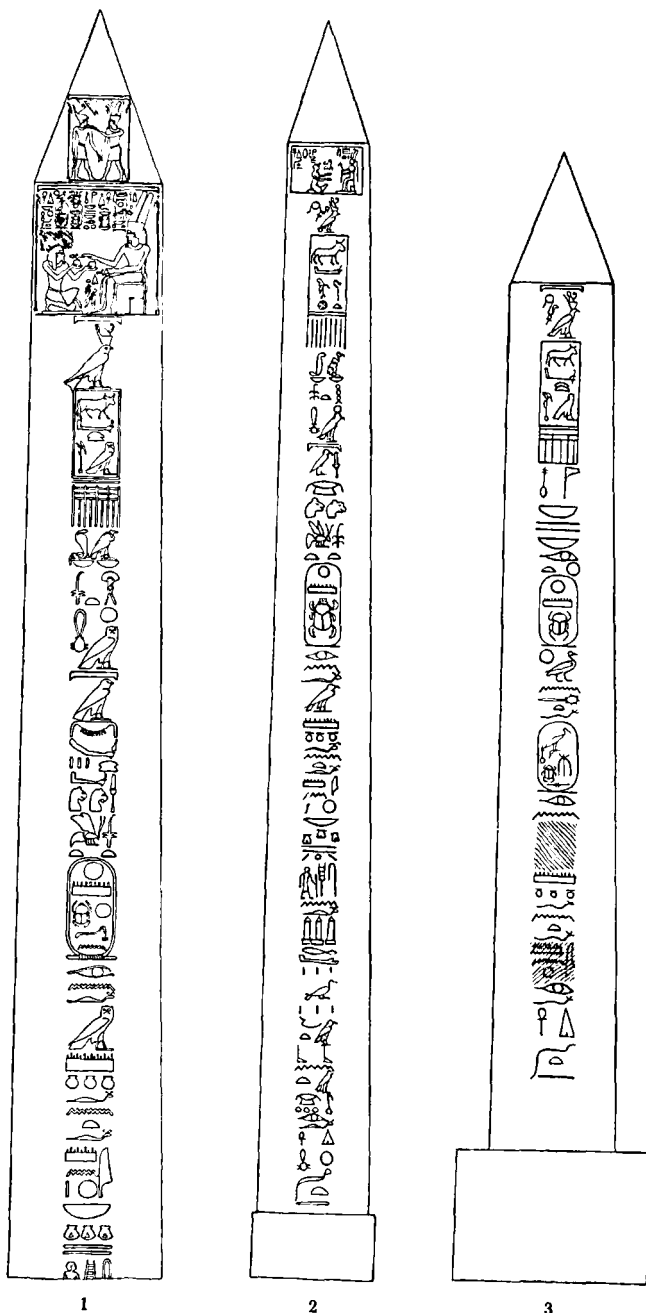
The Constantinople obelisk has been the subject of much discussion. The latest treatment<sup>2)</sup> would identify it with the enormous obelisks some 185 feet high, mentioned on the Northampton Stela<sup>3)</sup>. But with the discovery of the entire stela, it appears that the obelisks mentioned upon it were the work of Hatshepsut<sup>4)</sup>, whereas the inscriptions on the Constantinople obelisk show clearly that it is the work of Thutmose III. Fortunately the Karnak temple still preserves inscriptional evidence for the complete identification of the Con-

<sup>1)</sup> It is true that *hwt* is the usual word for indicating »upper«, with reference to the river, but in connection with the place where the obelisk was found, there can be no question of the meaning here.







<sup>2)</sup> PETRIE, *History*, II 131—133; before the discovery of the whole of the Northampton Stela.

<sup>3)</sup> *Rec.* XXII, 115—125.

<sup>4)</sup> Not her pair of which one still stands in Karnak, for the height, 185 feet whether of each or of both combined, does not coincide with the surviving Karnak obelisk of Hatshepsut. The 185 foot obelisks must be a pair now perished, of which the top of one now stands in the garden of the Gizeh Museum (*SENE* *ÄZ.* 30, 17).



Obelisks of Thutmose III.

stantinople obelisk. On the wall of the Annals is a relief<sup>1)</sup> showing Thutmose III. offering the splendid plunder of his Asiatic wars to Amon. Immediately before him are two obelisks, both bearing essentially the same dedication inscription. A glance at one of these two (pl. III fig. 2)<sup>2)</sup> side by side with the Constantinople obelisk (pl. III fig. 1)<sup>3)</sup> will show that the inscriptions are practically identical. The only differences are  for  and the omission of  in the Golden Horus name on the relief obelisk (fig. 2). These are such trifling variations of common royal epithets as would be made by a scribe in carrying the titulary in rough notes from the obelisk outside the temple door to the wall within the temple. But the most striking evidence of the identity of the two obelisks (fig. 1 and 2) is the ritual scene of the wine offering at the top *below the pyramidion* and occupying the entire width of the obelisk. This is an unique peculiarity among the Theban obelisks of Thutmose III., which in view of the practical identity of the dedication inscriptions, forms conclusive proof that the Constantinople obelisk is none other than the one offered by Thutmose III. to Amon on the wall of the Karnak temple<sup>4)</sup>. This relief (fig. 2) therefore restores to us the lost conclusion of the dedicatory inscription on the Constantinople obelisk. The companion of fig. 2 (in the relief) furnishes two interesting variants:  «two great, large obelisks», in the place of the plural; and the addition (before ) of  «at the double facade of the temple». This last is a common designation for the site of a pair of obelisks, as on the obelisk of Thutmose I. (LD. III. 6) and, referring to the same pair, in the inscription of Imi (Rec. XII. 106 l. 9); hence it is not distinctive enough to locate for us in Karnak the original site of the Constantinople obelisk and its lost fellow. They may have stood at the eastern entrance before the great colonnaded hall which Thutmose III. had added there. As to their date, we shall presently prove that they were erected before the king's 42nd year, a limit which is further narrowed by a reference on the Constantinople obelisk to the crossing of the Euphrates («the great bend of *Xarnu*»), an event which took place on the campaign of the 33rd year. We may place the erection of this pair then, between the years 33 and 42.

<sup>1)</sup> CHAMP. MON. IV 316; partially ROSELL., *Mon. Stor.* Text III 1 p. 125; BURTON, *Exc. Hier.* 29; BRUGSCH., *Thes.* V 1185 ff.

<sup>2)</sup> The drawing (fig. 2) is from CHAMP. MON. which beside minor inaccuracies is incorrect in showing the name of Amon intact; as the other publications prove, it was cut out.

<sup>3)</sup> From LD. III., 60.

<sup>4)</sup> The omission in fig. 2 of the scene *on the pyramidion* of fig. 1 is of no weight in the discussion; for 1: none of our publications is accurate and complete hence it may easily be that the omission is not in the original; 2. but if the omission is really in the original, it is easily accounted for by the fact that it would have been very difficult for the scribe who copied the great obelisk when standing to see this scene; 3. his obelisk in the relief is on a very small scale, and he may therefore have intentionally omitted the scene on the pyramidion, as has been done in fig. 3.

There was still another pair of obelisks erected by Thutmose III. at Thebes. They have both perished without leaving a trace, and it is only from a scene<sup>1)</sup> in the tomb of Pu-em-Re<sup>c</sup>, one of the architects, who assisted in their erection, that we know anything of them. Even here one of them has disappeared leaving only traces of its base. The other (pl. III fig. 3) shows by its inscription that it is not to be identified with any of the obelisks already discussed. It is clearly one of a second pair, the date and site of which in Karnak, must remain uncertain. To recapitulate, we have at Karnak, due to Thutmose III. the following obelisks: the single one now by the Lateran in Rome: and two pair, of which the one now in Constantinople is the sole survivor. This is strikingly corroborated by Thutmose III.'s great list<sup>2)</sup> of feasts and offerings, which forms the continuation of the annals, and in its introduction proceeds with the narrative of the conclusion of his first campaign<sup>3)</sup>. The date of the erection of this table of feasts and offerings is important, as showing to what period its evidence refers. The fact that it continues the annals would indicate that it is one whole with them, and of the same date, viz. the year 42. This conclusion is rendered certain by a casual reference in the list, of foreign captives presented to Amon, which, so says the inscription (l. 7), continues »from the year XXIII until the recording of this inscription (*wꜥ pn*) upon this sanctuary«. This reference would have no meaning unless the date of »the recording of this tablet« had been already indicated, which we find to be the case. After the narration of the last campaign, the annals inscription is summarized as »recording the victories which he (Thutmose III.) won from the year XXII[1] to the year 32 (*sic!*), when this inscription *wꜥ pn* was recorded upon this sanctuary«<sup>4)</sup>. It is clear that *wꜥ pn* refers to the entire record wall around the sanctuary and thus the inscription<sup>5)</sup> of feasts and offerings from the wars is dated as including nothing after the year 42<sup>6)</sup>. Its testimony on the obelisks therefore will refer to those existing in or before that year. Among its offering-lists appear (l. 16):



<sup>1)</sup> LD. III, 39.

<sup>2)</sup> LD. III, 306 Barcsen, Rec. des Mon. I 13—14.

<sup>3)</sup> See my »Length and Season of Thutmose III.'s First Campaign«, *ÄZ.* 37.


<sup>4)</sup> LD. III, 30a l. 20 = Barcsen, Thes. 1184—85 l. 20.

<sup>5)</sup> That a door intervenes in the wall between the last campaign of the annals and the inscription of feasts and offerings, is of no significance; for the annals are themselves interrupted by a door, and a corner of the room round which they turn, but this does not prevent their actually being included by the scribe, in the term *wꜥ pn*.

<sup>6)</sup> »32« has long been recognized as an error for »12«, and it is not necessary to reiterate the proof for it here.



»Divine offerings for 4 great obelisks, which my majesty made a new for my father [Amon]; consisting of 100 various loaves and 4 jars of beer, which are for each one of these obelisks.«

Further on, the inscription again (l. 32) refers to offerings for . Up to the year 42 therefore, Thutmose III. had erected two pair of obelisks at Karnak, and it can hardly be doubted that these are the two pair which we have already found in other sources. There are also other inscriptional references to these obelisks. Menkheperreseneh mentions in his tomb, in a list of works which he erected



»I inspected his majesty's erection of many obelisks and flagstaves for his father, Amon«<sup>2</sup>). The king referred to is Thutmose III. A scarab<sup>3</sup>), also bears the words: »Thutmose III., whose obelisks endure in the house of Amon«. This completes the list of Theban obelisks, erected by Thutmose III., in so far as the sources are known to me<sup>4</sup>); for the obelisk of Thutmose I., appropriated by Thutmose III., was not erected by him, as Thutmose I.'s dedication inscription distinctly states that he erected the two. This is corroborated by the inscription of Inui<sup>5</sup>).

It is of some importance to correlate these Theban obelisks with the pair, which the same king erected at Heliopolis. From the dedication on one of these we know that Thutmose III. celebrated at least 4 *Hb-sd*-jubilees<sup>6</sup>). As the Lateran obelisk was unfinished at his death, it is safe to conclude that it was intended for a still later jubilee. Hence on the basis of the other *Hb-sd* series<sup>7</sup>) known to us we may arrange his obelisks thus:

1) In l. 33 appear among the offerings  or »obelisk-cakes«! Compare the *bmbn*-cakes in the Kahun papyri.

2) Virey, *Miss.V.* 209 l. 15, corrected by a careful copy kindly loaned to me by Mr. NEWBERRY.

3) Berlin, Nr. 3530, *Ausführ. Verz.* p. 117.

4) An obelisk from Elephantine, now in Sion house is mentioned by Buren (*History* p. 102) and a new obelisk of »Thotmes« (not stating which one) is recorded in the *Arch. Report of the Eg. Expl. Fund* 1898—99, p. 22.

5) See my note *PSBA.*, March 1900, p. 90.

6) On the obelisk now on the Thames Embankment in London; in June 1901, I was able to discern three strokes of the numeral, and there seemed to me no room for a 4th; but Garssen read four when the obelisk was prostrate at Alexandria (*Thes.* 1130), and as the stone has since doubtless weathered some in a northern climate, I think his reading is the safer.

7) These are as follows (BRESCIA, *Thes.* 1122—1129):

Amenophis III.:

1st <i>Hb-sd</i> , year	30
2nd       "      "	2
3rd       "      "	36

1st	<i>Hb-sd</i> , year 30 <sup>1)</sup>	Pu-em-Re <sup>c</sup> pair or lost pair <sup>2)</sup> .
2nd	" "	33 Pair on Wall of Annals (one at Constantinople),
3rd	" "	36 Pu-em-Re <sup>c</sup> -pair or lost pair,
4th	" "	40 Heliopolis pair,
5th	" "	42 Lateran obelisk.

While the obelisks offer no hint as to the season or time of year when Thutmose III. was engaged upon them, yet we may here inquire how much and what part of his year was occupied in such enterprises at home. These nine, or at the lowest seven obelisks, all quarried at the first cataract, represent a formidable amount of work, carried on, with the possible exception of the last, while he was still in the thick of his Asiatic wars: during a period of only 12 years. They are but a hint of the character of his occupation, when the yearly rains in Palestine turned his armies home again; for there is ample evidence apart from these obelisks, that the boundless energy of Thutmose III. found full employment in Egypt during the rainy seasons which interrupted his campaigns in Asia. Already before he began his campaigns, he had finished his mortuary temple in Thebes and was able to hold in it, one of his feasts of victory on the return from his first campaign<sup>3)</sup> in the year 23. His coronation inscription<sup>4)</sup> likewise records great works at Karnak, before the opening of his wars. One cannot but wonder, in view of these facts, whether his dangerous energies were thus intentionally kept employed in building enterprises during Hatshepsut's life time, that they might not become troublesome to her in politics. Returning however to the main question, I have already in this journal (vol. 37 p.127, 128) indicated the season of his *campaigning in Asia* and in this connection we may note whether those dates coincide with the season of his *activity in Egypt*. In the great edict of Hammab<sup>5)</sup> it is stated by way of precedent, that king *Mu-hpr-Rc* »made an expedition at the feast of Opet each year« throughout Egypt for the purpose of suppressing official ex-

## Rameses II.:

1st	<i>Hb-sd</i> , year 30
2nd	" " 31
3rd	" " 36
4th	" " 40
5th	" " 42
6th	" " 44

<sup>1)</sup> These dates are not all certain: 33 is fixed by a record of the celebration of the jubilee, on the rocks at El Bersieh (Sharpe, Inscr. II 17; again less accurately II 33); 30 is rendered certain by the fact of a jubilee in year 33; the others rest solely on the other known series in the preceding note. In the placing of the obelisks only those of the second and fourth *Hb-sd*'s are entirely certain, while the fifth is only probable as there may have been more than 5 *Hb-sd*'s.

<sup>2)</sup> Or was Thutmose III. content to appropriate his father, Thutmose I.'s obelisk for his first *Hb-sd*?

<sup>3)</sup> See *ÄZ.* 37, p. 123 l. 3.

<sup>4)</sup> See my »New Chapter«, p. 6.

<sup>5)</sup> Rec. VI, 41 ff. l. 30.

tortion. Now, in the essay above referred to, I have shown that the feast of Opet occurred early in October. Hence we have here clear proof that Thutmose III.'s annual season of work at home began about the first of October, which strikingly corroborates the conclusions of the above essay regarding the season of campaigning in Asia. The employment of these seasons in building began at Karnak before his second campaign. The wealth which Amon gained from the plunder of the first campaign, immediately demanded the enlargement of his temple. Hatshepsut had marred the western entrance of the building by inserting her obelisks behind her father's pylon, unroofing and partially denuding the hall of its columns in order to do so. The inability to restore this hall satisfactorily<sup>1)</sup> and unwillingness to build around his father's obelisks which stood at the western entrance, led him to make his addition at the east end, really the rear of the temple. The plans must have been made very soon after his return from the first campaign in October, for the great granite stela<sup>2)</sup> which records the building states that the foundation ceremonies personally performed by the king, took place on the 30th of Mechir; that is toward the last of February, less than five months after his return from the first campaign, and some two months before his departure on the second. A new light is thus thrown in particular upon his first winter at home after the beginning of his wars; and we see that his personal supervision of his enterprises in Egypt began each season in early October and continued at least till the end of February, when in all probability he went north, to organize his forces for the expedition which would move as early in April as the rains would permit. It is this incessant employment of his great abilities during his winters in Egypt and his summers in Asia, that made the reign of Thutmose III., the greatest in the history of the earlier orient. We may easily credit the words of Reklmire who says of him<sup>3)</sup>:



«Lo, his majesty was one who knew what happened; there was nothing of which he was ignorant; he was Thoth in everything; there was no word which he did not carry out.»

<sup>1)</sup> This is shown by his restoration of the northern half of the colonnade (see my New Chapter, p. 30); and by his failure to undertake the restoration of the southern half, the columns of which were reerected by Amenhotep II.

<sup>2)</sup> MAR., Karn. 12 1.7.

<sup>3)</sup> NEWBERRY, Reklmara VII, ll. 8—9.