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المركز المصري الفرنسي
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A SPHINX HEAD OF THUTMOSIS III

Mohammed NASR

Karnak, registration number : 562.

Height : 23,4 cm.

Width : 23,4 cm.

Height of the face (from chin to hair-line) : 9 cm.

Width of the face (at the top of the cheeks) : 10 cm.

Length of the nose : 4,5 cm.

Length of the ears : 4,5 cm.

Width of the lips : 3,4 cm.

Material : alabaster.

Date : XVIIIth dynasty, Thutmosis III.

The head presented in this paper was discovered in november 1987 by the Franco-Egyptian Center of Karnak in the third room, south-west of the festival temple of Thutmosis III (Akhmenu) at Karnak. It was found in three dispersed fragments, which were collected, restored and joined together with polyester resin (com. *Akemi*). The chief restorer of the F.E.C., Mr. Daniel Le Fur, restored and strenghtened the cracks.

The head wears the *nemes*-headdress and the forehead bears a royal uraeus. There is little doubt that the head belongs to a sphinx, due to the patterns on the shoulders, which are typical of this kind of sculpture¹.

Remains of brownish pigments are still to be seen on the sunken parts of certain stripes. Bits of the *nemes* have been chipped and the right nostril of the nose is broken off.

1. The rear part of an alabaster sphinx was discovered in 1984 in the northern-eastern corner of the festival hall of the Akhmenu. Its size could fit with the present fragment (L. Gabolde, D. Le Fur, A.H. Maarouf, « Fragments divers découverts dans l'Akh-menou », *Karnak* VIII, 1987, p. 170, secteur 20/107).

The face is round and shows full cheeks, with well-arched eyebrows. The mouth is delicately carved with smiling lips, the lower one being slightly incurved and contoured with sharp ridges. The nose is large and prominent, with the middle part broken. The chin, without beard, is fat, and the ears of average size.

Thus, the head exhibits many features of Thutmosis III's face, which are known from other statues of the king in the museums of Vienna, Turin, Leyden, Cairo and Luxor. Furthermore, the location where the statue was unearthed, in the Akhmenu, corroborates our dating.

