

Women of the wretched chief of Libya	[12 Libyan] ^a women
¹⁷ ———— the fallen of Libya, total number	9,300 [+x] ^b
¹⁸ ————	5,224 [+x] ^c
Bows, — — —	2,000 [+x]
¹⁹ ———— gold ———.	

IV. HYMN ON THE VICTORY OVER THE LIBYANS^d (ISRAEL STELA)

602. This composition is one of a class common in the Nineteenth Dynasty. It is a poetic encomium in celebration of the great victory of Merneptah over the Libyans in the fifth year of his reign. It adds nothing to the facts furnished by the Karnak inscription (§§ 572-92) concerning this victory, except the picturesque description of the joy and relief among the Egyptians (ll. 21-26, § 616). Without the Karnak inscription little could have been gathered from this document of the importance of Merneptah's victory, or the gravity of the danger from which it brought relief; for, as Spiegelberg has remarked, it never even mentions the northern allies of the Libyans. Many of the descriptive passages too, are so figurative and highly colored as to be unintelligible.

^aKarnak (§ 588, l. 57).

^bKarnak (§ 588, l. 58) has 9,376.

^cThis numeral refers to the weapons, etc., beginning in l. 58 (Karnak, § 589).

^dOn a stela discovered by Petrie in the ruins of Merneptah's mortuary temple at Thebes, in 1896. The inscription occupies the back of the stela of Amenhotep III, taken from his mortuary temple by Merneptah (see II, § 878). It was first published by Spiegelberg (*Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache*, 34, 1 ff.), and again by him (*Six Temples*, Pls. XIII, XIV). I had also photographs, kindly sent me by E. Brugsch-Bey, made by him on a large scale from a squeeze. There is a duplicate original in Karnak, of which only a fragment has survived. It is published by Dümichen (*Historische Inschriften*, I, 1), and by Erman (*Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache*, 34). I have collated it for the accompanying translation. A considerable literature on the Israel passage has arisen, which will be found on p. 257, note. On the elucidation of the text in general, besides Spiegelberg's commentary (with his publication of the text), see: Piehl, *Sphinx*, IV, 125; Müller, *Recueil*, XX, 31, 32; Griffith, *Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archaeology*, XIX, 1897, 293-300.

603. The monument has attracted wide attention, because of the reference to Israel in the last section. This is the earliest mention of Israel known to us in literature, not excluding the Hebrew Scriptures themselves. It occurs in a clear-cut strophe (§ 617) of twelve lines, which forms the conclusion of the composition. This strophe opens and closes with a couplet containing a universal statement of the subjugation of foreign peoples in general, while the eight lines between are a rapid list of certain of the defeated foreigners, among whom is Israel. The assertion of the defeat of Israel is so brief and bald that little can be drawn from it. Moreover, it is made up of conventional phrases, applied also to other peoples. Much has been made of the second phrase, "*his seed (pr't) is not.*" It has been applied to the seed^a of Israel and referred to the slaying of the male children of the Israelites by the Egyptians! But this phrase is

^aThe treatment which this phrase has received by some biblical scholars furnishes another curious example of the totally misleading use of such evidence, where it is received at second hand. Thus in the *Expositor* (March, 1897, 161, note) we find the statement that Spiegelberg renders this phrase ("*his seed is not*") thus: "*without fear*" (!). An examination shows that Spiegelberg, translating into German, quite properly rendered the phrase: "ohne Frucht" ("without fruit"). The German "Frucht" was then misread by the writer in the *Expositor* as "Furcht" = "fear"! From the *Expositor* this absurdity then passed into other articles and gained currency. Some of the essays on the passage are therefore to be used with the greatest caution; but see: Hommel, *Neue Kirchliche Zeitschrift*, VII, 581-86; Müller, *Independent*, July 9, 1896, 940; Sellin, *Neue Kirchliche Zeitschrift*, VII, 502-14; Molandre, *Revue des religions*, September-October, 1897, Steindorff, *Zeitschrift für alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*, XVI, 1896, 330-33; and *Mittheilungen des Deutschen Palästinischen Vereins*, 1896, 45, 46; Marshall, *Expositor*, July, 1896; Petrie, *Contemporary Review*, May, 1896, 617-27; and *Century Magazine*, August, 1896; Spiegelberg, *Sitzungsberichte der Preussischen Akademie*, 1896, 593 ff.; Naville, *Recueil*, XX, 32-37; Brandt, *Theologische Tijdschrift*, 1896, 505-12; Fries, *Sphinx*, I, 208 ff.; Daressy, *Revue archéologique*, XXXIII, 263 ff.; Wiedemann, *Le Muséon*, XVII, 89-107; Halévy, *Revue sémitique*, 1896, 285 ff. Breasted, *Biblical World*, January, 1897, 62-68. A useful presentation of the various views on the passage is given by Moore, *Presbyterian Quarterly*, January, 1898.

found five times^a elsewhere in the inscriptions referring to a number of other peoples as follows:

604. 1. "*Those who reached my border are desolated, their seed is not*" (referring to northern invaders).^b

2. "*The Libyans and the Seped are wasted, their seed is not.*"^c

3. "*The fire has penetrated us, our seed is not*" (words of defeated Libyans).^d

4. "*Their cities are made ashes, wasted, desolated; their seed is not*" (referring to the Meshwesh).^e

5. "[Gored] is the chief of [Amor], his seed is not."^f

605. The words, "*his (their, our) seed is not,*" are, therefore, a conventional phrase applicable to any defeated and plundered people, and cannot possibly designate an incident peculiar to the history of Israel, like the slaying of the male children(!). Israel, clearly located among Palestinian peoples by the inscription, was defeated and plundered by Merneptah. This inscription is not the only evidence of a campaign by him in Palestine, although the fact seems to have been entirely overlooked in the discussion of the Israel passage. Merneptah was in Asia in his third year, as the journal of a border commandant shows (§ 633, VI. 9; § 635, V, 5).

606. An invasion of Palestine by Merneptah is further

^aSee Breasted, *Biblical World*, January, 1897, 66. Three of these examples were quoted also by Spiegelberg (*Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache*, 34, 23). I have there rendered *pr' t* as "*grain,*" but further study of the parallel texts has led me to modify that rendering.

^bWar of Ramses III's eighth year against sea-peoples (IV, 66, l. 23).

^cDümichen, *Historische Inschriften*, I, XXXIV, l. 36.

^dLibyan war of Ramses III's fifth year (IV, 43, l. 47).

^eDümichen, *Historische Inschriften*, I, XX, l. 2.

^fLibyan war of Ramses III's fifth year (IV, 39, ll. 13, 14).

evident from the epithet assumed by him among his titles: “*Binder of Gezer* (k^{3} - d^{3} - r^{3}),^a which town he must have captured and punished after revolt, as indicated also in our Hymn of Victory (l. 27). For the mention of a specific town, or even nation, in such an epithet, in a titulary must refer to some definite occurrence. In the same way Ramses III called himself in his titulary “*Conqueror of the Meshwesh* (IV, 84), and had the records of his defeat of the Meshwesh perished, we should still be justified in concluding that he had overthrown them.^b It is certain, therefore, that Merneptah campaigned in Palestine, and there can be no doubt that Israel there suffered defeat and pillage at his hands.

Date and Introduction

607. Year 5, third month of the third season (eleventh month), third day, under the majesty of Horus: Mighty Bull, Rejoicing^c in Truth; King of Upper and Lower Egypt: Binre-Meriamon, Son of Re: Merneptah-Hotephirma, magnifying might, exalting the victorious sword of Horus, mighty Bull, smiter of the Nine Bows, whose name is given forever and ever.

The Great Deliverance

608. His victories are published in all lands, to cause that every land together may see, to cause the glory of his conquests to appear; King Merneptah,^d the Bull, lord of strength, who slays his foes, beautiful upon the field of victory, when his onset^e occurs; the Sun,^f driving

^aFrom an inscription of thirteen lines in the temple of Amâda, published by Bouriant (*Recueil*, 18, 159, 160). It records a revolt in Wawat, which Merneptah subdued, “*seeking out the enemy in this entire land, to prevent their [—] to revolt a second time*” (l. 10). The publication is so inaccurate that a translation of the whole is quite impossible.

^bSee a similar epithet applied to Thutmose IV (II, 822).

^cThe sign is k^{3} (“*be high*”), but, as Piehl has remarked (*Sphinx*, IV, 126), the variants show that h^{c} y , “*rejoice*,” is to be read.

^dThe double name in the text is from here on abbreviated as above.

^eA word (*hnd*) used especially of the charge of a bull. (See Piehl, *Sphinx*, IV, 128.)

^fText has “*Shu*,” a sun-god. See Piehl, *ibid.*, 127.

away ³the storm which was over Egypt, allowing Egypt to see the rays of the sun, removing the mountain of copper from the neck of the people so that he might give breath to the people who were smothered. He gratified the heart of Memphis on their foes, making Tatenen rejoice over his enemies. He opened the gates of the walled city^a which were stopped up, and caused ⁴his temples to receive their food (even), King Merneptah, the unique one, who establishes the hearts of hundreds of thousands of myriads, so that breath enters into their nostrils at the sight of him. He has penetrated the land of Temeh in his lifetime, and put eternal fear ⁵in the heart of the Meshwesh. He has turned back Libya, who invaded Egypt, and great fear of Egypt is in their hearts

The Rout of the Libyans

609. Their advanced columns^b they left behind them, their feet made no stand, but fled. Their archers threw down their bows, and the heart of their fleet ones was weary ⁶with marching. They loosed their water skins^c and threw them to the ground, their ~~l—~~^d were taken and thrown out.

The Fall of the Libyan Chief

610. The wretched, fallen chief of Libya, fled by favor of night alone,^e with no plume upon his head, his two feet ^ffailed^g. His women were taken ⁷before his face, the grain of his supplies was plundered, and he had no water in the skin to keep him alive. The face of his brothers was hostile to slay him, one fought another among his leaders.^f Their camp was burned and made a roast,^g all his possessions were food ⁸for the troops. When he arrived in his country, he was the complaint of every one in his land. ^hAshamed^h, he bowed himself^h down, an evil

^aMemphis.

^bLit., "their marchers forward."

^cNot "tents" (Müller, *Recueil*, XX, 31), which is a masculine noun (see Harkhuf, I, 353, l. 20, and Karnak, § 589, l. 62), while *hn' t*, "water skin," above, is feminine. Tents were not borne by the troops on the march.

^dSpiegelberg has: "ihre Säcke (?) wurden genommen und ausgeschüttet (?)."

^eCf. Karnak, § 586, l. 41.

^fCompare Karnak, l. 44.

^gThe figure is that of a snared bird in Karnak (l. 67), where the same phrase occurs (see also Rosellini, *Monumenti Storici*, 139, l. 4, for the same phrase). The figure is continued above in the next parallel phrase.

^hRead *šsp' j ksw*, as in Sinuhe (ll. 17, 18, I, 493).

fate removed (his) plume. They all spoke against him, among the inhabitants of his city: "He is in the power of the gods, the lords of Memphis; the lord of Egypt has cursed his name, Meryey (*m-w-r²-y²-y*), the abomination of Memphis, from son to son of his family, forever. Binre-Meriamon is in pursuit of his children; Merneptah-Hotephirma is appointed to be his fate."

Merneptah's Fame in Libya

611. He has become a ¹⁰proverb^a for Libya (*R²-bw*); the youth say to youth, concerning his victories: "It has not been done to us before³ since the time of Re," say they.^b Every old man says to his son: "Alas for Libya!" They have ceased to live in the pleasant fashion of walking in the field; their going about is stopped in a single ¹¹day. The Tehenu are consumed in a single year. Sutekh has turned his back upon their chief; their settlements are desolated with his consent¹. There is no work of carrying [—]^c in these days. Concealment is good; there is safety in the cavern.^d The great lord of Egypt, possessor of might ¹²and victory! Who will fight, knowing his stride? The fool, the witless is he who receives him;^e he shall not know the morrow, who transgresses his boundary.

Divine Protection of Egypt

612. Since the time of the gods, say they, Egypt has been the only daughter of Re; his son is he who ¹³sits upon the throne of Shu. No one can make a design to invade her people, for the eye of every god is behind him who would violate her; it (the eye)^f captures the rear of her foes. [—]^g ¹⁴A great wonder has happened for Egypt, ^hthe

^aLit., "he has become the striking of a proverb (*sḏd't*);" compare the Arabic ضرب مثلا.

^bIt is the Libyan youth who speak, in spite of their reference to Re. The Puntites are also made to refer to Re in Hatshepsut's reliefs.

^cSpiegelberg suggests "Körbe."

^dSee Müller, *Recueil*, XX, 31.

^eMeaning his onset in battle.

^fThe feminine pronoun (*nt*, "she") above translated "it," might refer to Egypt, but the parallelism shows that it must refer to "eye," which is feminine.

^gThis phrase, to the end of l. 13, is corrupt.

^hLit., "the hand of which."

power of which has made her invader a living prisoner. The divine king [exults] over his enemies, in the presence of Re. Meryey (*M-r³-y³-y*), the evil-doer, whom the god, the lord who is in Memphis, has overthrown, he has been judged ¹⁵with him in Heliopolis, and the divine ennead declared him guilty of his crimes.

Merneptah Divinely Appointed

613. The All-Lord has said: "Give the sword to my son, the upright of heart, the good and kindly Merneptah, the [champion] on behalf of Memphis, the advocate of ¹⁶Heliopolis, who opens the towns that were closed up. Let him set free multitudes who are bound in every district, let him give offerings to the temples, let him send in incense before the god, let him cause the princes to [recover] their possessions, let him cause the poor to [re-enter] their cities."

Heliopolis Praises Merneptah

614. They say among the lords of Heliopolis ¹⁷regarding their son, Merneptah: "Give to him duration like Re, let him be advocate of him who is oppressed in every country. Egypt has been assigned to him as the portion of [him who has gained it] for himself forever. His strength is its people. Lo, when one dwells in the time of this hero, the breath ¹⁸of life^a comes immediately. so they say.

The Gods Delivered Meryey to Merneptah

615. Meryey (*M-w-r³-wy-y*), ¹⁹the wretched, vanquished chief of Libya, came to invade the "Walls-of-the-Sovereign" (Memphis), [who is its lord,] whose son shines on his throne, the King Merneptah. Ptah^b said concerning the vanquished (chief)^c of Libya: "All his crimes shall be gathered ²⁰and returned upon his (own) head. Deliver him into the hand of Merneptah, that he may make him disgorge what he has swallowed, like a crocodile. Behold, the swift is the captor of the swift; and the king shall snare him, (though) his strength be known; for Amon shall bind him in his hand and shall deliver him to his ka ²¹in Hermonthis, (to him) the King Merneptah."

^aIt is regularly the king who furnishes his people with the breath of life; cf. also l. 4.

^bThe Karnak fragment has "Amon."

^cKarnak fragment has: "concerning him of Libya (*p-n-Rbw*)."

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