

Fragments of a hieratic papyrus from the museum of Turin

Ippolito Rosellini

I MONUMENTI

DELL'

EGITTO E DELLA NUBIA

DISSEGNIATI DALLA SPEDIZIONE SCIENTIFICO-LETTERARIA
TOSCANA IN EGITTO; DISTRIBUITI IN ORDINE DI MATERIE,
INTERPRETATI ED ILLUSTRATI

DAL DOTTOR

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PARTE PRIMA

Monumenti Storici

TOMO I.

PISA
PRESSO NICCOLÒ CAPURRO & C.
COI CARATTERI NUOVI DI DIDOT
1832.

Rosellini 1832

Abstract

This article was very influential in casting doubt on the validity of Seyffarth's reconstruction of the canon.

English translation of the Italian original.

Source

Rosellini, Ippolito. 1832. *I monumenti dell'Egitto e della Nubia*. Vol. 1.1 Pisa: Caprurro. p.145–149

§. 6. Fragments of a hieratic papyrus from the Royal museum of Turin, which contain a list of names of kings.

Next, let us proceed to the exposition of other royal names, which may more determinedly be placed by the authority of the monuments, which begin to become less rare. I consider it convenient for my purpose, to mention a document, although I can not make use of it, could despite being produced by others, perhaps be used with much profit of the question so far agitated.

In the beautiful collection of Egyptian antiquities purchased by the King of Piedmont, to form the Royal Egyptian Museum of Turin, there was a large quantity of small fragments of papyrus, written in different scriptures, relating to several different subjects. When the illustrious Champollion made study of those monuments, of waves and of the many beautiful discoveries to increase these then rising doctrines, he saw a part of those fragments, and he obtained the beautiful hieratic signs published by him in the second letter to the Duke of Blacas, to reconstruct the series of Egyptian dynasties.

However, he did not see a large part of those fragments, or could not see. Some time later, after the very studious German scholar Seyffarth examined and laboriously preserved those fragments, and separating from others those that presented the writing itself, discovered that many of these belonged to a list of royal names, with dates written in hieratic characters. The hardworking and learned German assembled and recomposed all these fragments in their original order, and so formed a long list of many royal names, and then made a copy, which he politely communicated to those whom wanted to see it, and showed it to me in Paris, some five years ago. I remember that the order of the names of some kings, the succession already known from other monuments, corresponded well with the order re-established in this manuscript.

Certainly, just judging by the number, it was clear that many of the kings of the ancient dynasties has yet to be understood. I will not remain silent about the doubt that was born to me since then, and that still makes a great obstacle, namely, whether the order in which these fragments were recomposed is the same order that existed in the manuscript when it was whole. It is known that the precious papyrus itself was reduced to such minute pieces that I do not have a clue as to the order in which they were originally arranged.

As most, a single isolated name was readable on each fragment, and to compose a single name, often need several fragments; and sometimes, not rarely, gaps necessarily arose from the deformity of the parts that he wanted to reunite.

It remains therefore to examine, if the rejoining of the breaks and the connection of the characters, could have served as a guide, and consequently gave authority to re-establish the pieces in that order, rather than in another. Which, in such an important matter, should be rigorously demonstrated, so that the reconstructed manuscript could acquire the invaluable price of which it should be capable. Until this is proven, we will have a series of names of kings for that papyrus, but no authority to restore the order of successions. Because that small part, where the names succeed in this way, which corresponds well to the order that is known to us from other monuments, does not acquire faith in all the others, we do not know what guide and by what authority the learned German followed in the reconstruction.

Truly a similar document, when it was whole, or restored in a certain order, would be a great price to us, as much as it would give to one of those books, in which, according to Herodotus the Egyptian priests read the names and the succession of their kings.

Whatever this manuscript may have been, it cannot be relied upon in the investigation of the kings, of whom the first fifteen dynasties were composed (which I have from other monuments no less authoritative and safer means of reassembling). This is for two reasons: firstly, that I have no copy of the papyrus so reconnected as it was from Seyffarth; and secondly, that I cannot trust the reconstruction, without it being shown to evidence that it neither could nor should have been arranged otherwise.

I would nevertheless like to be able to validate comfortably to publish that important papyrus, whoever has the power and the office to illustrate the beautiful monuments of the museum of Turin; and I do not doubt that if the famous Academy of Sciences tried to do so openly, it would be a good service to historical studies. In any case, it could make known with what authority all those fragments were recomposed, and consequently it would be established what faith should lend itself to that manuscript, regarding the order of succession of the kings of Egypt.