



# The Third Translation: A Novel

*Matt Bondurant*

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## **The Third Translation: A Novel** Matt Bondurant

This is the latest novel trying to capitalize on the amazing success of *The Da Vinci Code* by positing an ancient mystery, contemporary scholars, rare documents, greedy collectors, and a quasi-academic protagonist. In this case he's an American Egyptologist living in London who's got less than a week to unlock the secrets of the Stela of Paser, a funerary stone whose references to a "third way" of deciphering the hieroglyphics inscribed on the stone have teased, tempted and eluded would-be translators for centuries. Walter Rothschild has sacrificed a wife, a child, and many of the other things that make life worth living to pursue a passion cultivated in childhood and encouraged by his own father. Less than a week before his grant runs out and the Stela of Paser returns to its dusty basement in the British Museum, Walter is seduced and drugged by a mysterious young woman who steals a precious document from the Museum; in search of her and the papyrus scroll, Rothschild encounters a cult of would-be mystics who will stop at nothing to get him to decipher the Stela and reveal its secrets--especially those that promise a "third way" between life and death,"the endless quest of the ancient kings." While Walter's efforts are admirable, he is basically a boring, fretful, and regretful man who fails to engage the reader. That's too bad, for otherwise this is a beautifully written, thoroughly researched, and finely detailed novel based somewhat on the author's own obsession with the Stela. But if you share his passion for Egyptology, and want a more learned discourse on its arcana than the Amelia Peabody mysteries provide, *The Third Translation* is well worth reading. --Jane Adams

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