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Babylonia, And Assyria In The Light Of Recent Discovery, by L.W. King and H.R. Hall

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HISTORY OF EGYPT

CHALDEA, SYRIA, BABYLONIA, AND ASSYRIA

IN THE LIGHT OF RECENT DISCOVERY

BY L. W. KING and H. R. HALL

Department of Egyptian and Assyrian Antiquities, British Museum

Containing over 1200 colored plates and illustrations.

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[Illustration: Frontispiece1]

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PUBLISHERS’ NOTE

It should be noted that many of the monuments and sites of excavations

in Egypt, Mesopotamia, Persia, and Kurdistan described in this volume

have been visited by the authors in connection with their own work in

those countries. The greater number of the photographs here published

were taken by the authors themselves. Their thanks are due to M. Ernest

Leroux, of Paris, for his kind permission to reproduce a certain number

of plates from the works of M. de Morgan, illustrating his recent

discoveries in Egypt and Persia, and to Messrs. W. A. Mansell & Co., of

London, for kindly allowing them to make use of a number of photographs

issued by them.

PREFACE

The present volume contains an account of the most important additions

which have been made to our knowledge of the ancient history of Egypt

and Western Asia during the few years which have elapsed since the

publication of Prof. Maspero’s \_Histoire Ancienne des Peuples de

l’Orient Classique\_, and includes short descriptions of the excavations

from which these results have been obtained. It is in no sense a

connected and continuous history of these countries, for that has

already been written by Prof. Maspero, but is rather intended as an

appendix or addendum to his work, briefly recapitulating and describing

the discoveries made since its appearance. On this account we

have followed a geographical rather than a chronological system of

arrangement, but at the same time the attempt has been made to suggest

to the mind of the reader the historical sequence of events.

At no period have excavations been pursued with more energy and

activity, both in Egypt and Western Asia, than at the present time, and

every season’s work obliges us to modify former theories, and extends

our knowledge of periods of history which even ten years ago were

unknown to the historian. For instance, a whole chapter has been added

to Egyptian history by the discovery of the Neolithic culture of the

primitive Egyptians, while the recent excavations at Susa are revealing

a hitherto totally unsuspected epoch of proto-Elamite civilization.

Further than this, we have discovered the relics of the oldest

historical kings of Egypt, and we are now enabled to reconstitute from

material as yet unpublished the inter-relations of the early dynasties

of Babylon. Important discoveries have also been made with regard to

isolated points in the later historical periods. We have therefore

attempted to include the most important of these in our survey of recent

excavations and their results. We would again remind the reader that

Prof. Maspero’s great work must be consulted for the complete history of

the period, the present volume being, not a connected history of Egypt

and Western Asia, but a description and discussion of the manner in

which recent discovery and research have added to and modified our

conceptions of ancient Egyptian and Mesopotamian civilization.

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EGYPT AND MESOPOTAMIA

\_In the Light of Recent Excavation and Research\_

CHAPTER I--THE DISCOVERY OF PREHISTORIC EGYPT

During the last ten years our conception of the beginnings of Egyptian

antiquity has profoundly altered. When Prof. Maspero published the

first volume of his great \_Histoire Ancienne des Peuples des l’Orient

Classique\_, in 1895, Egyptian history, properly so called, still began

with the Pyramid-builders, Sne-feru, Khufu, and Khafra (Cheops and

Chephren), and the legendary lists of earlier kings preserved at Abydos

and Sakkara were still quoted as the only source of knowledge of the

time before the IVth Dynasty. Of a prehistoric Egypt nothing was known,

beyond a few flint flakes gathered here and there upon the desert

plateaus, which might or might not tell of an age when the ancestors

of the Pyramid-builders knew only the stone tools and weapons of the

primeval savage.

Now, however, the veil which has hidden the beginnings of Egyptian

civilization from us has been lifted, and we see things, more or less,

as they actually were, unobscured by the traditions of a later day.

Until the last few years nothing of the real beginnings of history in

either Egypt or Mesopotamia had been found; legend supplied the only

material for the reconstruction of the earliest history of the oldest

civilized nations of the globe. Nor was it seriously supposed that any

relics of prehistoric Egypt or Mesopotamia ever would be found. The

antiquity of the known history of these countries already appeared

so great that nobody took into consideration the possibility of our

discovering a prehistoric Egypt or Mesopotamia; the idea was too remote

from practical work. And further, civilization in these countries had

lasted so long that it seemed more than probable that all traces

of their prehistoric age had long since been swept away. Yet the

possibility, which seemed hardly worth a moment’s consideration in 1895,

is in 1905 an assured reality, at least as far as Egypt is concerned.

Prehistoric Babylonia has yet to be discovered. It is true, for example,

that at Mukay-yar, the site of ancient Ur of the Chaldees, burials

in earthenware coffins, in which the skeletons lie in the doubled-up

position characteristic of Neolithic interments, have been found; but

there is no doubt whatever that these are burials of a much later date,

belonging, quite possibly, to the Parthian period. Nothing that may

rightfully be termed prehistoric has yet been found in the Euphrates

valley, whereas in Egypt prehistoric antiquities are now almost as well

known and as well represented in our museums as are the prehistoric

antiquities of Europe and America.

With the exception of a few palasoliths from the surface of the Syrian

desert, near the Euphrates valley, not a single implement of the Age

of Stone has yet been found in Southern Mesopotamia, whereas Egypt

has yielded to us the most perfect examples of the flint-knapper’s

art known, flint tools and weapons more beautiful than the finest that

Europe and America can show. The reason is not far to seek. Southern

Mesopotamia is an alluvial country, and the ancient cities, which

doubtless mark the sites of the oldest settlements in the land, are

situated in the alluvial marshy plain between the Tigris and the

Euphrates; so that all traces of the Neolithic culture of the country

would seem to have disappeared, buried deep beneath city-mounds, clay

and marsh. It is the same in the Egyptian Delta, a similar country; and

here no traces of the prehistoric culture of Egypt have been found. The

attempt to find them was made last year at Buto, which is known to be

one of the most antique centres of civilization, and probably was one of

the earliest settlements in Egypt, but without success. The infiltration

of water had made excavation impossible and had no doubt destroyed

everything belonging to the most ancient settlement. It is not going too

far to predict that exactly the same thing will be found by any explorer

who tries to discover a Neolithic stratum beneath a city-mound of

Babylonia. There is little hope that prehistoric Chaldæa will ever be

known to us. But in Egypt the conditions are different. The Delta is

like Babylonia, it is true; but in the Upper Nile valley the river flows

down with but a thin border of alluvial land on either side, through the

rocky and hilly desert, the dry Sahara, where rain falls but once in two

or three years. Antiquities buried in this soil in the most remote

ages are preserved intact as they were first interred, until the modern

investigator comes along to look for them. And it is on the desert

margin of the valley that the remains of prehistoric Egypt have been

found. That is the reason for their perfect preservation till our own

day, and why we know prehistoric Egypt so well.

The chief work of Egyptian civilization was the proper irrigation of

the alluvial soil, the turning of marsh into cultivated fields, and the

reclamation of land from the desert for the purposes of agriculture.

Owing to the rainless character of the country, the only means

of obtaining water for the crops is by irrigation, and where the

fertilizing Nile water cannot be taken by means of canals, there

cultivation ends and the desert begins. Before Egyptian civilization,

properly so called, began, the valley was a great marsh through which

the Nile found its way north to the sea. The half-savage, stone-using

ancestors of the civilized Egyptians hunted wild fowl, crocodiles,

and hippopotami in the marshy valley; but except in a few isolated

settlements on convenient mounds here and there (the forerunners of the

later villages), they did not live there. Their settlements were on

the dry desert margin, and it was here, upon low tongues of desert hill

jutting out into the plain, that they buried their dead. Their simple

shallow graves were safe from the flood, and, but for the depredations

of jackals and hyenas, here they have remained intact till our own

day, and have yielded up to us the facts from which we have derived our

knowledge of prehistoric Egypt. Thus it is that we know so much of the

Egyptians of the Stone Age, while of their contemporaries in Mesopotamia

we know nothing, nor is anything further likely to be discovered.

But these desert cemeteries, with their crowds of oval shallow graves,

covered by only a few inches of surface soil, in which the Neolithic

Egyptians lie crouched up with their flint implements and polished

pottery beside them, are but monuments of the later age of prehistoric

Egypt. Long before the Neolithic Egyptian hunted his game in the

marshes, and here and there essayed the work of reclamation for the

purposes of an incipient agriculture, a far older race inhabited the

valley of the Nile. The written records of Egyptian civilization go back

four thousand years before Christ, or earlier, and the Neolithic Age of

Egypt must go back to a period several thousand years before that. But

we can now go back much further still, to the Palaeolithic Age of Egypt.

At a time when Europe was still covered by the ice and snows of the

Glacial Period, and man fought as an equal, hardly yet as a superior,

with cave-bear and mammoth, the Palaeolithic Egyptians lived on the

banks of the Nile. Their habitat was doubtless the desert slopes, often,

too, the plateaus themselves; but that they lived entirely upon the

plateaus, high up above the Nile marsh, is improbable. There, it is

true, we find their flint implements, the great pear-shaped weapons of

the types of Chelles, St. Acheul, and Le Moustier, types well known

to all who are acquainted with the flint implements of the “Drift” in

Europe. And it is there that the theory, generally accepted hitherto,

has placed the habitat of the makers and users of these implements.

The idea was that in Palaeolithic days, contemporary with the Glacial

Age of Northern Europe and America, the climate of Egypt was entirely

different from that of later times and of to-day. Instead of dry desert,

the mountain plateaus bordering the Nile valley were supposed to have

been then covered with forest, through which flowed countless streams

to feed the river below. It was suggested that remains of these streams

were to be seen in the side ravines, or wadis, of the Nile valley, which

run up from the low desert on the river level into the hills on either

hand. These wadis undoubtedly show extensive traces of strong water

action; they curve and twist as the streams found their easiest way

to the level through the softer strata, they are heaped up with great

water-worn boulders, they are hollowed out where waterfalls once fell.

They have the appearance of dry watercourses, exactly what any mountain

burns would be were the water-supply suddenly cut off for ever, the

climate altered from rainy to eternal sun-glare, and every plant and

tree blasted, never to grow again. Acting on the supposition that this

idea was a correct one, most observers have concluded that the climate

of Egypt in remote periods was very different from the dry, rainless one

now obtaining. To provide the water for the wadi streams, heavy

rainfall and forests are desiderated. They were easily supplied, on the

hypothesis. Forests clothed the mountain plateaus, heavy rains fell, and

the water rushed down to the Nile, carving out the great watercourses

which remain to this day, bearing testimony to the truth. And the

flints, which the Palaeolithic inhabitants of the plateau-forests made

and used, still lie on the now treeless and sun-baked desert surface.

[Illustration: 007.jpg THE BED OF AN ANCIENT WATERCOURSE IN THE WADIYÊN,

THEBES.]

This is certainly a very weak conclusion. In fact, it seriously damages

the whole argument, the water-courses to the contrary notwithstanding.

The palæoliths are there. They can be picked up by any visitor. There

they lie, great flints of the Drift types, just like those found in the

gravel-beds of England and Belgium, on the desert surface where they

were made. Undoubtedly where they were made, for the places where

they lie are the actual ancient flint workshops, where the flints were

chipped. Everywhere around are innumerable flint chips and perfect

weapons, burnt black and patinated by ages of sunlight. We are taking

one particular spot in the hills of Western Thebes as an example, but

there are plenty of others, such as the Wadi esh-Shêkh on the right bank

of the Nile opposite Maghagha, whence Mr. H. Seton-Karr has brought

back specimens of flint tools of all ages from the Palaeolithic to the

Neolithic periods.

The Palæolithic flint workshops on the Theban hills have been visited of

late years by Mr. Seton-Karr, by Prof. Schweinfurth, Mr. Allen Sturge,

and Dr. Blanckenhorn, by Mr. Portch, Mr. Ayrton, and Mr. Hall. The

weapons illustrated here were found by Messrs. Hall and Ayrton, and are

now preserved in the British Museum. Among these flints shown we notice

two fine specimens of the pear-shaped type of St. Acheul, with curious

adze-shaped implements of primitive type to left and right. Below, to

the right, is a very primitive instrument of Chellean type, being merely

a sharpened pebble. Above, to left and right, are two specimens of the

curious half-moon-shaped instruments which are characteristic of

the Theban flint field and are hardly known elsewhere. All have the

beautiful brown patina, which only ages of sunburn can give. The

“poignard” type to the left, at the bottom of the plate, is broken off

short.

[Illustration: 008.jpg Palaeolithic Implements of the Quaternary Period.

From the desert plateau and slopes west of Thebes.]

In the smaller illustration we see some remarkable types: two scrapers

or knives with strongly marked “bulb of percussion” (the spot where the

flint-knapper struck and from which the flakes flew off), a very regular

\_coup-de-poing\_ which looks almost like a large arrowhead, and on the

right a much weathered and patinated scraper which must be of immemorial

age.

[Illustration: 009.jpg (right): PALAEOLITHIC IMPLEMENTS. From Man,

March, 1905.]

This came from the top plateau, not from the slopes (or subsidiary

plateaus at the head of the \_wadis\_), as did the great St. Acheulian

weapons. The circular object is very remarkable: it is the half of the

ring of a “morpholith “(a round flinty accretion often found in the

Theban limestone) which has been split, and the split (flat) side

carefully bevelled. Several of these interesting objects have been

found in conjunction with Palæolithic implements at Thebes. No doubt the

flints lie on the actual surface where they were made. No later water

action has swept them away and covered them with gravel, no later human

habitation has hidden them with successive deposits of soil, no gradual

deposit of dust and rubbish has buried them deep. They lie as they were

left in the far-away Palæolithic Age, and they have lain there till

taken away by the modern explorer.

But this is not the case with all the Palæolithic flints of Thebes. In

the year 1882 Maj.-Gen. Pitt-Rivers discovered Palæolithic flints in the

deposit of diluvial detritus which lies between the cultivation and the

mountains on the west bank of the Nile opposite Luxor. Many of these are

of the same type as those found on the surface of the mountain plateau

which lies at the head of the great \_wadi\_ of the Tombs of the Kings,

while the diluvial deposit is at its mouth. The stuff of which the

detritus is composed evidently came originally from the high plateau,

and was washed down, with the flints, in ancient times.

This is quite conceivable, but how is it that the flints left behind

on the plateau remain on the original ancient surface? How is it

conceivable that if (on the old theory) these plateaus were in

Palæolithic days clothed with forest, the Palæolithic flints could even

in a single instance remain undisturbed from Palæolithic times to the

present day, when the forest in which they were made and the forest soil

on which they reposed have entirely disappeared? If there were woods and

forests On the heights, it would seem impossible that we should find,

as we do, Palæolithic implements lying in situ on the desert surface,

around the actual manufactories where they were made. Yet if the

constant rainfall and the vegetation of the Libyan desert area in

Palæolithic days is all a myth (as it most probably is), how came the

embedded palaeoliths, found by Gen. Pitt-Rivers, in the bed of diluvial

detritus which is apparently \_débris\_ from the plateau brought down by

the Palæolithic \_wadi\_ streams?

Water erosion has certainly formed the Theban \_wadis\_. But this water

erosion was probably not that which would be the result of perennial

streams flowing down from wooded heights, but of torrents like those

of to-day, which fill the \_wadis\_ once in three years or so after heavy

rain, but repeated at much closer intervals. We may in fact suppose

just so much difference in meteorological conditions as would make it

possible for sudden rain-storms to occur over the desert at far more

frequent intervals than at present. That would account for the detritus

bed at the mouth of the \_wadi\_, and its embedded flints, and at the

same time maintain the general probability of the idea that the desert

plateaus were desert in Palæolithic days as now, and that early man only

knapped his flints up there because he found the flint there. He himself

lived on the slopes and nearer the marsh.

This new view seems to be much sounder and more probable than the old

one, maintained by Flinders Petrie and Blanckenhorn, according to which

the high plateau was the home of man in Palæolithic times, when the

rainfall, as shown by the valley erosion and waterfalls, must have

caused an abundant vegetation on the plateau, where man could live and

hunt his game. [\*Petrie, Nagada and Ballas, p. 49.] Were this so, it

is patent that the Palæolithic flints could not have been found on the

desert surface as they are. Mr. H. J. L. Beadnell, of the Geological

Survey of Egypt, to whom we are indebted for the promulgation of the

more modern and probable view, says: “Is it certain that the high

plateau was then clothed with forests? What evidence is there to show

that it differed in any important respect from its present aspect? And

if, as I suggest, desert conditions obtained then as now, and man merely

worked his flints along the edges of the plateaus overlooking the

Nile valley, I see no reason why flint implements, dating even from

Palæolithic times should not in favourable cases still be found in

the spots where they were left, surrounded by the flakes struck off in

manufacture. On the flat plateaus the occasional rains which fall--once

in three or four years--can effect but little transport of material, and

merely lower the general level by dissolving the underlying limestone,

so that the plateau surface is left with a coating of nodules and blocks

of insoluble flint and chert. Flint implements might thus be expected

to remain in many localities for indefinite periods, but they would

certainly become more or less ‘patinated,’ pitted on the surface, and

rounded at the angles after long exposure to heat, cold, and blown

sand.” This is exactly the case of the Palæolithic flint tools from the

desert plateau.

[Illustration: 012.jpg UPPER DESERT PLATEAU, WHERE PALEOLITHIC

IMPLEMENTS ARE FOUND, Thebes: 1,400 leet above the Nile.]

We do not know whether Palæolithic man in Egypt was contemporary with

the cave-man of Europe. We have no means of gauging the age of the

Palæolithic Egyptian weapons, as we have for the Neolithic period.

The historical (dynastic) period of Egyptian annals began with the

unification of the kingdom under one head somewhere about 4500 B.C. At

that time copper as well as stone weapons were used, so that we may say

that at the beginning of the historical age the Egyptians were living

in the “Chalcolithic” period. We can trace the use of copper back for

a considerable period anterior to the beginning of the Ist Dynasty,

so that we shall probably not be far wrong if we do not bring down the

close of the purely Neolithic Age in Egypt--the close of the Age of

Stone, properly so called--later than +5000 B.C. How far back in the

remote ages the transition period between the Palæolithic and Neolithic

Ages should be placed, it is utterly impossible to say. The use of stone

for weapons and implements continued in Egypt as late as the time of

the XIIth Dynasty, about 2500-2000 B.C. But these XIIth Dynasty stone

implements show by their forms how late they are in the history of the

Stone Age. The axe heads, for instance, are in form imitations of

the copper and bronze axe heads usual at that period; they are stone

imitations of metal, instead of the originals on whose model the metal

weapons were formed. The flint implements of the XIIth Dynasty were

a curious survival from long past ages. After the time of the XIIth

Dynasty stone was no longer used for tools or weapons, except for the

sacred rite of making the first incision in the dead bodies before

beginning the operations of embalming; for this purpose, as Herodotus

tells us, an “Ethiopian stone” was used. This was no doubt a knife of

flint or chert, like those of the Neolithic ancestors of the Egyptians,

and the continued use of a stone knife for this one purpose only is a

very interesting instance of a ceremonial survival. We may compare the

wigs of British judges.

[Illustration: 014.jpg FLINT KNIFE]

We have no specimen of a flint knife which can definitely be asserted to

have belonged to an embalmer, but of the archaistic flint weapons of the

XIIth Dynasty we have several specimens. They were found by Prof. Petrie

at the place named by him “Kahun,” the site of a XIIth Dynasty town

built near the pyramid of King Usertsen (or Senusret) II at Illahun,

at the mouth of the canal leading from the Nile valley into the

oasis-province of the Payyum. These Kahun flints, and others of probably

the same period found by Mr. Seton-Karr at the very ancient flint

works in the Wadi esh-Shêkh, are of very coarse and poor workmanship

as compared with the stone-knapping triumphs of the late Neolithic and

early Chalcolithic periods. The delicacy of the art had all been lost.

But the best flint knives of the early period--dating to just a little

before the time of the Ist Dynasty, when flint-working had attained its

apogee, and copper had just begun to be used--are undoubtedly the most

remarkable stone weapons ever made in the world. The grace and utility

of the form, the delicacy of the fluted chipping on the side, and

the minute care with which the tiny serrations of the cutting edge,

serrations so small that often they can hardly be seen with the naked

eye, are made, can certainly not be parallelled elsewhere. The art

of flint-knapping reached its zenith in Ancient Egypt. The specimen

illustrated has a handle covered with gold decorated with incised

designs representing animals.

The prehistoric Egyptians may also fairly be said to have attained

greater perfection than other peoples in the Neolithic stage of culture,

in other arts besides the making of stone tools and weapons. Their

pottery is of remarkable perfection. Now that the sites of the Egyptian

prehistoric settlements have been so thoroughly explored by competent

archæologists (and, unhappily, as thoroughly pillaged by incompetent

natives), this prehistoric Egyptian pottery has become extremely well

known. In fact, it is so common that good specimens may be bought

anywhere in Egypt for a few piastres. Most museums possess sets of this

pottery, of which great quantities have been brought back from Egypt

by Prof. Petrie and other explorers. It is of very great interest,

artistically as well as historically. The potter’s wheel was not yet

invented, and all the vases, even those of the most perfect shape, were

built up by hand. The perfection of form attained without the aid of the

wheel is truly marvellous.

The commonest type of this pottery is a red polished ware vase with

black top, due to its having been baked mouth downward in a fire, the

ashes of which, according to Prof. Petrie, deoxidized the hæmatite

burnishing, and so turned the red colour to black. “In good examples

the hæmatite has not only been reduced to black magnetic oxide, but

the black has the highest polish, as seen on fine Greek vases. This is

probably due to the formation of carbonyl gas in the smothered fire.

This gas acts as a solvent of magnetic oxide, and hence allows it to

assume a new surface, like the glassy surface of some marbles subjected

to solution in water.” This black and red ware appears to be the most

ancient prehistoric Egyptian pottery known. Later in date are a red

ware and a black ware with rude geometrical incised designs, imitating

basketwork, and with the incised lines filled in with white. Later again

is a buff ware, either plain or decorated with wavy lines, concentric

circles, and elaborate drawings of boats sailing on the Nile, ostriches,

fish, men and women, and so on.

[Illustration: 017.jpg (right) BUFF WARE VASE, Predynastic period,

before 4000 B.C.]

These designs are in deep red. With this elaborate pottery the Neolithic

ceramic art of Egypt reached its highest point; in the succeeding period

(the beginning of the historic age) there was a decline in workmanship,

exhibiting clumsy forms and bad colour, and it is not until the time of

the IVth Dynasty that good pottery (a fine polished red) is once more

found. Meanwhile the invention of glazed pottery, which was unknown to

the prehistoric Egyptians, had been made (before the beginning of the

Ist Dynasty). The unglazed ware of the first three dynasties was bad,

but the new invention of light blue glazed faience (not porcelain

properly so called) seems to have made great progress, and we possess

fine specimens at the beginning of the Ist Dynasty. The prehistoric

Egyptians were also proficient in other arts. They carved ivory and they

worked gold, which is known to have been almost the first metal worked

by man; certainly in Egypt it was utilized for ornament even before

copper was used for work. We may refer to the illustration of a flint

knife with gold handle, already given. [\* See illustration.]

The date of the actual introduction of copper for tools and weapons into

Egypt is uncertain, but it seems probable that copper was occasionally

used at a very early period. Copper weapons have been found in

pre-dynastic graves beside the finest buff pottery with elaborate red

designs, so that we may say that when the flint-working and pottery of

the Neolithic Egyptians had reached its zenith, the use of copper was

already known, and copper weapons were occasionally employed. We can

thus speak of the “Chalcolithic” period in Egypt as having already begun

at that time, no doubt several centuries before the beginning of the

historical or dynastic age. Strictly speaking, the Egyptians remained

in the “Chalcolithic” period till the end of the XIIth Dynasty, but in

practice it is best to speak of this period, when the word is used, as

extending from the time of the finest flint weapons and pottery of the

prehistoric age (when the “Neolithic” period may be said to close) till

about the IId or IIId Dynasty. By that time the “Bronze,” or, rather,

“Copper,” Age of Egypt had well begun, and already stone was not in

common use.

The prehistoric pottery is of the greatest value to the archæologist,

for with its help some idea may be obtained of the succession of periods

within the late Neolithic-Chalcolithic Age. The enormous number of

prehistoric graves which have been examined enables us to make an

exhaustive comparison of the different kinds of pottery found in

them, so that we can arrange them in order according to pottery they

contained. By this means we obtain an idea of the development of

different types of pottery, and the sequence of the types. Thus it is

that we can say with some degree of confidence that the black and red

ware is the most ancient form, and that the buff with red designs is one

of the latest forms of prehistoric pottery. Other objects found in the

graves can be classified as they occur with different pottery types.

With the help of the pottery we can thus gain a more or less reliable

conspectus of the development of the late “Neolithic” culture of Egypt.

This system of “sequence-dating” was introduced by Prof. Petrie, and is

certainly very useful. It must not, however, be pressed too far or be

regarded as an iron-bound system, with which all subsequent discoveries

must be made to fit in by force. It is not to be supposed that all

prehistoric pottery developed its series of types in an absolutely

orderly manner without deviations or throws-back. The work of man’s

hands is variable and eccentric, and does not develop or evolve in an

undeviating course as the work of nature does. It is a mistake, very

often made by anthropologists and archæologists, who forget this

elementary fact, to assume “curves of development,” and so forth, or

semi-savage culture, on absolutely even and regular lines. Human culture

has not developed either evenly or regularly, as a matter of fact.

Therefore we cannot always be sure that, because the Egyptian black and

red pottery does not occur in graves with buff and red, it is for

this reason absolutely earlier in date than the latter. Some of the

development-sequences may in reality be contemporary with others instead

of earlier, and allowance must always be made for aberrations and

reversions to earlier types.

This caveat having been entered, however, we may provisionally

accept Prof. Petrie’s system of sequence-dating as giving the best

classification of the prehistoric antiquities according to development.

So it may fairly be said that, as far as we know, the black and red

pottery (“sequence-date 30--“) is the most ancient Neolithic Egyptian

ware known; that the buff and red did not begin to be used till about

“sequence-date 45;” that bone and ivory carvings were commonest in the

earlier period (“sequence-dates 30-50”); that copper was almost unknown

till “sequence-date 50,” and so on. The arbitrary numbers used range

from 30 to 80, in order to allow for possible earlier and later

additions, which may be rendered necessary by the progress of discovery.

The numbers are of course as purely arbitrary and relative as those

of the different thermometrical systems, but they afford a convenient

system of arrangement. The products of the prehistoric Egyptians are, so

to speak, distributed on a conventional plan over a scale numbered from

30 to 80, 30 representing the beginning and 80 the close of the term,

so far as its close has as yet been ascertained. It is probable that

“sequence-date 80” more or less accurately marks the beginning of the

dynastic or historical period.

This hypothetically chronological classification is, as has been said,

due to Prof. Petrie, and has been adopted by Mr. Randall-Maclver and

other students of prehistoric Egypt in their work. [\*\_El Amra and

Abydos\_, Egypt Exploration Fund, 1902.] To Prof. Petrie then is due the

credit of systematizing the study of Egyptian prehistoric antiquities;

but the further credit of having \_discovered\_ these antiquities

themselves and settled their date belongs not to him but to the

distinguished French archæologist, M. J. de Morgan, who was for several

years director of the museum at Giza, and is now chief of the French

archæological delegation in Persia, which has made of late years so many

important discoveries. The proof of the prehistoric date of this class

of antiquities was given, not by Prof. Petrie after his excavations at

Dendera in 1897-8, but by M. de Morgan in his volume, \_Recherches sur

les Origines de l’Égypte: l’Âge de la Pierre et les Métaux\_, published

in 1895-6. In this book the true chronological position of the

prehistoric antiquities was pointed out, and the existence of an

Egyptian Stone Age finally decided. M. de Morgan’s work was based on

careful study of the results of excavations carried on for several years

by the Egyptian government in various parts of Egypt, in the course

of which a large number of cemeteries of the primitive type had been

discovered. It was soon evident to M. de Morgan that these primitive

graves, with their unusual pottery and flint implements, could be

nothing less than the tombs of the prehistoric Egyptians, the Egyptians

of the Stone Age.

Objects of the prehistoric period had been known to the museums for many

years previously, but owing to the uncertainty of their provenance and

the absence of knowledge of the existence of the primitive cemeteries,

no scientific conclusions had been arrived at with regard to them; and

it was not till the publication of M. de Morgan’s book that they were

recognized and classified as prehistoric. The necropoles investigated

by M. de Morgan and his assistants extended from Kawâmil in the north,

about twenty miles north of Abydos, to Edfu in the south. The chief

cemeteries between these two points were those of Bât Allam, Saghel

el-Baglieh, el-’Amra, Nakâda, Tûkh, and Gebelên. All the burials were

of simple type, analogous to those of the Neolithic races in the rest

of the world. In a shallow, oval grave, excavated often but a few inches

below the surface of the soil, lay the body, cramped up with the knees

to the chin, sometimes in a rough box of pottery, more often with only

a mat to cover it. Ready to the hand of the dead man were his flint

weapons and tools, and the usual red and black, or buff and red, pots

lay beside him; originally, no doubt, they had been filled with the

funeral meats, to sustain the ghost in the next world. Occasionally a

simple copper weapon was found. With the body were also buried slate

palettes for grinding the green eye-paint which the Egyptians loved even

at this early period. These are often carved to suggest the forms of

animals, such as birds, bats, tortoises, goats, etc.; on others are

fantastic creatures with two heads. Combs of bone, too, are found,

ornamented in a similar way with birds’ or goats’ heads, often double.

And most interesting of all are the small bone and ivory figures of men

and women which are also found. These usually have little blue beads for

eyes, and are of the quaintest and naivest appearance conceivable. Here

we have an elderly man with a long pointed beard, there two women with

inane smiles upon their countenances, here another woman, of better work

this time, with a child slung across her shoulder. This figure, which

is in the British Museum, must be very late, as prehistoric Egyptian

antiquities go. It is almost as good in style as the early Ist Dynasty

objects. Such were the objects which the simple piety of the early

Egyptian prompted him to bury with the bodies of his dead, in order that

they might find solace and contentment in the other world.

All the prehistoric cemeteries are of this type, with the graves pressed

closely together, so that they often impinge upon one another. The

nearness of the graves to the surface is due to the exposed positions,

at the entrances to \_wadis\_, in which the primitive cemeteries are

usually found. The result is that they are always swept by the winds,

which prevent the desert sand from accumulating over them, and so have

preserved the original level of the ground. From their proximity to

the surface they are often found disturbed, more often by the agency of

jackals than that of man.

Contemporaneously with M. de Morgan’s explorations, Prof. Flinders

Petrie and Mr. J. Quibell had, in the winter of 1894-5, excavated in

the districts of Tukh and Nakada, on the west bank of the Nile opposite

Koptos, a series of extensive cemeteries of the primitive type, from

which they obtained a large number of antiquities, published in their

volume Nagada and Dallas. The plates giving representations of the

antiquities found were of the highest interest, but the scientific value

of the letter-press is vitiated by the fact that the true historical

position of the antiquities was not perceived by their discoverers, who

came to the conclusion that these remains were those of a “New Pace” of

Libyan invaders. This race, they supposed, had entered Egypt after the

close of the flourishing period of the “Old Kingdom” at the end of the

VIth Dynasty, and had occupied part of the Nile valley from that time

till the period of the Xth Dynasty.

This conclusion was proved erroneous by M. de Morgan almost as soon

as made, and the French archæologist’s identification of the primitive

remains as pre-dynastic was at once generally accepted. It was obvious

that a hypothesis of the settlement of a stone-using barbaric race in

the midst of Egypt at so late a date as the period immediately preceding

the XIIth Dynasty, a race which mixed in no way with the native

Egyptians themselves, and left no trace of their influence upon the

later Egyptians, was one which demanded greater faith than the simple

explanation of M. de Morgan.

The error of the British explorers was at once admitted by Mr. Quibell,

in his volume on the excavations of 1897 at el-Kab, published in 1898.\*

Mr. Quibell at once found full and adequate confirmation of M. de

Morgan’s discovery in his diggings at el-Kab. Prof. Petrie admitted

the correctness of M. de Morgan’s views in the preface to his volume

Diospolis Parva, published three years later in 1901.\*\* The preface to

the first volume of M. de Morgan’s book contained a generous recognition

of the method and general accuracy of Prof. Petrie’s excavations, which

contrasted favourably, according to M. de Morgan, with the excavations

of others, generally carried on without scientific control, and with

the sole aim of obtaining antiquities or literary texts.\*\*\* That M. de

Morgan’s own work was carried out as scientifically and as carefully

is evident from the fact that his conclusions as to the chronological

position of the prehistoric antiquities have been shown to be correct.

To describe M. de Morgan’s discovery as a “happy guess,” as has been

done, is therefore beside the mark.

\* El-Kab. Egyptian Research Account, 1897, p. 11.

\*\* Diospolis Parva. Egypt Exploration Fund, 1901, p. 2.

\*\*\* Recherches: Age de la Pierre, p. xiii.

Another most important British excavation was that carried on by

Messrs. Randall-Maclver and Wilkin at el-’Amra. The imposing lion-headed

promontory of el-’Amra stands out into the plain on the west bank of the

Nile about five miles south of Abydos. At the foot of this hill M. de

Morgan found a very extensive prehistoric necropolis, which he examined,

but did not excavate to any great extent, and the work of thoroughly

excavating it was performed by Messrs. Randall-MacIver and Wilkin for

the Egypt Exploration Fund. The results have thrown very great light

upon the prehistoric culture of Egypt, and burials of all prehistoric

types, some of them previously unobserved, were found. Among the most

interesting are burials in pots, which have also been found by Mr.

Garstang in a predynastic necropolis at Ragagna, north of Abydos. One

of the more remarkable observations made at el-’Amra was the progressive

development of the tombs from the simplest pot-burial to a small brick

chamber, the embryo of the brick tombs of the Ist Dynasty. Among the

objects recovered from this site may be mentioned a pottery model of

oxen, a box in the shape of a model hut, and a slate “palette” with what

is perhaps the oldest Egyptian hieroglyph known, a representation of the

fetish-sign of the god Min, in relief. All these are preserved in the

British Museum. The skulls of the bodies found were carefully preserved

for craniometric examination.

In 1901 an extensive prehistoric cemetery was being excavated by Messrs.

Reisner and Lythgoe at Nag’ed-Dêr, opposite Girga, and at el-Ahaiwa,

further north, another prehistoric necropolis has been excavated by

these gentlemen, working for the University of California.

[Illustration: 027.jpg CAMP OF THE EXPEDITION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF

CALIFORNIA AT NAG’ ED-DÊR, 1901.]

The cemetery of Nag’ed-Dêr is of the usual prehistoric type, with its

multitudes of small oval graves, excavated just a little way below the

surface. Graves of this kind are the most primitive of all. Those at

el-’Amra are usually more developed, often, as has been noted, rising to

the height of regular brick tombs. They are evidently later, nearer to

the time of the Ist Dynasty. The position of the Nag’ed-Dêr cemetery is

also characteristic. It lies on the usual low ridge at the entrance to a

desert \_wadi\_, which is itself one of the most picturesque in this

part of Egypt, with its chaos of great boulders and fallen rocks. An

illustration of the camp of Mr. Reisner’s expedition at Nag’ed-Dêr is

given above. The excavations of the University of California are carried

out with the greatest possible care and are financed with the greatest

possible liberality. Mr. Reisner has therefore been able to keep an

absolutely complete photographic record of everything, even down to

the successive stages in the opening of a tomb, which will be of the

greatest use to science when published.

For a detailed study of the antiquities of the prehistoric period the

publications of Prof. Petrie, Mr. Quibell, and Mr. Randall-Maclver are

more useful than that of M. de Morgan, who does not give enough details.

Every atom of evidence is given in the publications of the British

explorers, whereas it is a characteristic of French work to give

brilliant conclusions, beautifully illustrated, without much of the

evidence on which the conclusions are based. This kind of work does not

appeal to the Anglo-Saxon mind, which takes nothing on trust, even

from the most renowned experts, and always wants to know the why and

wherefore. The complete publication of evidence which marks the British

work will no doubt be met with, if possible in even more complete

detail, in the American work of Messrs. Reisner, Lythgoe, and Mace (the

last-named is an Englishman) for the University of California, when

published. The question of speedy versus delayed publication is a very

vexing one. Prof. Petrie prefers to publish as speedily as possible; six

months after the season’s work in Egypt is done, the full publication

with photographs of everything appears. Mr. Reisner and the French

explorers prefer to publish nothing until they have exhaustively studied

the whole of the evidence, and can extract nothing more from it. This

would be admirable if the French published their discoveries fully, but

they do not. Even M. de Morgan has not approached the fulness of

detail which characterizes British work and which will characterize Mr.

Reisner’s publication when it appears. The only drawback to this method

is that general interest in the particular excavations described tends

to pass away before the full description appears.

Prof. Petrie has explored other prehistoric sites at Abadiya, and Mr.

Quibell at el-Kab. M. de Morgan and his assistants have examined a large

number of sites, ranging from the Delta to el-Kab. Further research has

shown that some of the sites identified by M. de Morgan as prehistoric

are in reality of much later date, for example, Kahun, where the late

flints of XIIth Dynasty date were found. He notes that “large numbers

of Neolithic flint weapons are found in the desert on the borders of

the Fayyum, and at Helwan, south of Cairo,” and that all the important

necropoles and kitchen-middens of the predynastic people are to be found

in the districts of Abydos and Thebes, from el-Kawamil in the North to

el-Kab in the South. It is of course too soon to assert with confidence

that there are no prehistoric remains in any other part of Egypt,

especially in the long tract between the Fayyûm and the district of

Abydos, but up to the present time none have been found in this region.

This geographical distribution of the prehistoric remains fits in

curiously with the ancient legend concerning the origin of the ancestors

of the Egyptians in Upper Egypt, and supports the much discussed theory

that they came originally to the Nile valley from the shores of the Red

Sea by way of the Wadi Hammamat, which debouches on to the Nile in the

vicinity of Koptos and Kus, opposite Ballas and Tûkh. The supposition

seems a very probable one, and it may well be that the earliest

Egyptians entered the valley of the Nile by the route suggested and

then spread northwards and southwards in the valley. The fact that their

remains are not found north of el-Kawâmil nor south of el-Kab might

perhaps be explained by the supposition that, when they had extended

thus far north and south from their original place of arrival, they

passed from the primitive Neolithic condition to the more highly

developed copper-using culture of the period which immediately preceded

the establishment of the monarchy. The Neolithic weapons of the Fayyûm

and Hel-wân would then be the remains of a different people, which

inhabited the Delta and Middle Egypt in very early times. This people

may have been of Mediterranean stock, akin to the primitive inhabitants

of Palestine, Greece, Italy, and Spain; and they no doubt were identical

with the inhabitants of Lower Egypt who were overthrown and conquered by

Kha-sekhem and the other Southern founders of the monarchy (who belonged

to the race which had come from the Red Sea by the Wadi Hammamat), and

so were the ancestors of the later natives of Lower Egypt. Whether the

Southerners, whose primitive remains we find from el-Kawâmil to el-Kab,

were of the same race as the Northerners whom they conquered, cannot

be decided. The skull-form of the Southerners agrees with that of the

Mediterranean races. But we have no nécropoles of the Northerners to

tell us much of their peculiarities. We have nothing but their flint

arrowheads.

But it should be observed that, in spite of the present absence of all

primitive remains (whether mere flints, or actual graves with bodies and

relics) of the primeval population between the Fayyûm and el-Kawâmil,

there is no proof that the primitive race of Upper Egypt was not

coterminous and identical with that of the lower country. It

might therefore be urged that the whole Neolithic population was

“Mediterranean” by its skull-form and body-structure, and specifically

“Nilotic” (indigenous Egyptian) in its culture-type. This is quite

possible, but we have again to account for the legends of distant origin

on the Red Sea coast, the probability that one element of the Egyptian

population was of extraneous origin and came from the east into the Nile

valley near Koptos, and finally the historical fact of an advance of the

early dynastic Egyptians from the South to the conquest of the North.

The latter fact might of course be explained as a civil war analogous

to that between Thebes and Asyût in the time of the IXth Dynasty, but

against this explanation is to be set the fact that the contemporary

monuments of the Southerners exhibit the men of the North as of foreign

and non-Egyptian ethnic type, resembling Libyans. It is possible that

they were akin to the Libyans; and this would square very well with the

first theory, but it may also be made to fit in with a development of

the second, which has been generally accepted.

According to this view, the whole primitive Neolithic population of

North and South was Miotic, indigenous in origin, and akin to the

“Mediterraneans “of Prof. Sergi and the other ethnologists. It was not

this population, the stone-users whose nécropoles have been found by

Messrs. de Morgan, Pétrie, and Maclver, that entered the Nile valley by

the Wadi Hammamat. This was another race of different ethnic origin,

which came from the Red Sea toward the end of the Neolithic period,

and, being of higher civilization than the native Nilotes, assumed the

lordship over them, gave a great impetus to the development of their

culture, and started at once the institution of monarchy, the knowledge

of letters, and the use of metals. The chiefs of this superior tribe

founded the monarchy, conquered the North, unified the kingdom, and

began Egyptian history. From many indications it would seem probable

that these conquerors were of Babylonian origin, or that the culture

they brought with them (possibly from Arabia) was ultimately of

Babylonian origin. They themselves would seem to have been Semites,

or rather proto-Semites, who came from Arabia to Africa by way of

the straits of Bab el-Mandeb, and proceeded up the coast to about the

neighbourhood of Kusêr, whence the Wadi Hammamat offered them an open

road to the valley of the Nile. By this route they may have entered

Egypt, bringing with them a civilization, which, like that of the other

Semites, had been profoundly influenced and modified by that of the

Sumerian inhabitants of Babylonia. This Semitic-Sumerian culture,

mingling with that of the Nilotes themselves, produced the civilization

of Ancient Egypt as we know it.

This is a very plausible hypothesis, and has a great deal of evidence in

its favour. It seems certain that in the early dynastic period two

races lived in Egypt, which differed considerably in type, and also,

apparently, in burial customs. The later Egyptians always buried the

dead lying on their backs, extended at full length. During the period of

the Middle Kingdom (XIth-XIIIth Dynasties) the head was usually turned

over on to the left side, in order that the dead man might look through

the two great eyes painted on that side of the coffin. Afterward the

rigidly extended position was always adopted. The Neolithic Egyptians,

however, buried the dead lying wholly on the left side and in a

contracted position, with the knees drawn up to the chin. The bodies

were not embalmed, and the extended position and mummification were

never used. Under the IVth Dynasty we find in the necropolis of Mêdûm

(north of the Payyûm) the two positions used simultaneously, and the

extended bodies are mummified. The contracted bodies are skeletons, as

in the case of most of the predynastic bodies. When these are found with

flesh, skin, and hair intact, their preservation is due to the dryness

of the soil and the preservative salts it contains, not to intentional

embalming, which was evidently introduced by those who employed the

extended position in burial. The contracted position is found as late as

the Vth Dynasty at Dashasha, south of the Eayyûm, but after that date it

is no longer found.

The conclusion is obvious that the contracted position without

mummification, which the Neolithic people used, was supplanted in the

early dynastic period by the extended position with mummification, and

by the time of the VIth Dynasty it was entirely superseded. This points

to the supersession of the burial customs of the indigenous Neolithic

race by those of another race which conquered and dominated the

indigenes. And, since the extended burials of the IVth Dynasty are

evidently those of the higher nobles, while the contracted ones are

those of inferior people, it is probable that the customs of extended

burial and embalming were introduced by a foreign race which founded the

Egyptian monarchical state, with its hierarchy of nobles and officials,

and in fact started Egyptian civilization on its way. The conquerors of

the North were thus not the descendants of the Neolithic people of the

South, but their conquerors; in fact, they dominated the indigenes both

of North and South, who will then appear (since we find the custom of

contracted burial in the North at Dashasha and Mêdûm) to have originally

belonged to the same race.

The conquering race is that which is supposed to have been of Semitic or

proto-Semitic origin, and to have brought elements of Sumerian culture

to savage Egypt. The reasons advanced for this supposition are the

following:--

(1) Just as the Egyptian race was evidently compounded of two elements,

of conquered “Mediterraneans” and conquering x, so the Egyptian language

is evidently compounded of two elements, the one Nilotic, perhaps

related in some degree to the Berber dialects of North Africa, the other

not x, but evidently Semitic.

(2) Certain elements of the early dynastic civilization, which do not

appear in that of the earlier pre-dynastic period, resemble well-known

elements of the civilization of Babylonia. We may instance the use of

the cylinder-seal, which died out in Egypt in the time of the XVIIIth

Dynasty, but was always used in Babylonia from the earliest to the

latest times. The early Egyptian mace-head is of exactly the same

type as the early Babylonian one. In the British Museum is an Egyptian

mace-head of red breccia, which is identical in shape and size with

one from Babylonia (also in the museum) bearing the name of

Shargani-shar-ali (i.e. Sargon, King of Agade), one of the earliest

Chaldæan monarchs, who must have lived about the same time as the

Egyptian kings of the IId-IIId Dynasties, to which period the Egyptian

mace-head may also be approximately assigned. The Egyptian art of the

earliest dynasties bears again a remarkable resemblance to that of early

Babylonia. It is not till the time of the IId Dynasty that Egyptian art

begins to take upon itself the regular form which we know so well, and

not till that of the IVth that this form was finally crystallized. Under

the 1st Dynasty we find the figure of man or, to take other instances,

that of a lion, or a hawk, or a snake, often treated in a style very

different from that in which we are accustomed to see a man, a lion, a

hawk, or a snake depicted in works of the later period. And the striking

thing is that these early representations, which differ so much from

what we find in later Egyptian art, curiously resemble the works of

early Babylonian art, of the time of the patesis of Shirpurla or the

Kings Shargani-shar-ali and Narâm-Sin. One of the best known relics

of the early art of Babylonia is the famous “Stele of Vultures” now in

Paris. On this we see the enemies of Eannadu, one of the early rulers

of Shirpurla, cast out to be devoured by the vultures. On an Egyptian

relief of slate, evidently originally dedicated in a temple record of

some historical event, and dating from the beginning of the Ist Dynasty

(practically contemporary, according to our latest knowledge, with

Eannadu), we have an almost exactly similar scene of captives being cast

out into the desert, and devoured by lions and vultures. The two reliefs

are curiously alike in their clumsy, naïve style of art. A further

point is that the official represented on the stele, who appears to be

thrusting one of the bound captives out to die, wears a long fringed

garment of Babylonish cut, quite different from the clothes of the later

Egyptians.

(3) There are evidently two distinct and different main strata in the

fabric of Egyptian religion. On the one hand we find a mass of myth and

religious belief of very primitive, almost savage, cast, combining

a worship of the actual dead in their tombs--which were supposed

to communicate and thus form a veritable “underworld,” or, rather,

“under-Egypt”--with veneration of magic animals, such as jackals, cats,

hawks, and crocodiles. On the other hand, we have a sun and sky worship

of a more elevated nature, which does not seem to have amalgamated with

the earlier fetishism and corpse-worship until a comparatively late

period. The main seats of the sun-worship were at Heliopolis in the

Delta and at Edfu in Upper Egypt. Heliopolis seems always to have been

a centre of light and leading in Egypt, and it is, as is well known,

the On of the Bible, at whose university the Jewish lawgiver Moses is

related to have been educated “in all the wisdom of the Egyptians.” The

philosophical theories of the priests of the Sun-gods, Râ-Harmachis and

Turn, at Heliopolis seem to have been the source from which sprang the

monotheistic heresy of the Disk-Worshippers (in the time of the XVIIIth

Dynasty), who, under the guidance of the reforming King Akhunaten,

worshipped only the disk of the sun as the source of all life, the door

in heaven, so to speak, through which the hidden One Deity poured

forth heat and light, the origin of life upon the earth. Very early

in Egyptian history the Heliopolitans gained the upper hand, and the

Râ-worship (under the Vth Dynasty, the apogee of the Old Kingdom) came

to the front, and for the first time the kings took the afterwards

time-honoured royal title of “Son of the Sun.” It appears then as a

more or less foreign importation into the Nile valley, and bears most

undoubtedly a Semitic impress. Its two chief seats were situated, the

one, Heliopolis, in the North on the eastern edge of the Delta,--just

where an early Semitic settlement from over the desert might be expected

to be found,--the other, Edfu, in the Upper Egyptian territory south

of the Thebaïd, Koptos, and the Wadi Ham-mamat, and close to the chief

settlement of the earliest kings and the most ancient capital of Upper

Egypt.

(4) The custom of burying at full length was evidently introduced into

Egypt by the second, or x race. The Neolithic Egyptians buried in the

cramped position. The early Babylonians buried at full length, as far

as we know. On the same “Stele of Vultures,” which has already been

mentioned, we see the burying at full length of dead warriors. [\* See

illustration.] There is no trace of any \_early\_ burial in Babylonia in

the cramped position. The tombs at Warka (Erech) with cramped bodies

in pottery coffins are of very late date. A further point arises with

regard to embalming. The Neolithic Egyptians did not embalm the dead.

Usually their cramped bodies are found as skeletons. When they are

mummified, it is merely owing to the preservative action of the salt

in the soil, not to any process of embalming. The second, or x race,

however, evidently introduced the custom of embalming as well as that

of burial at full length and the use of coffins. The Neolithic Egyptian

used no box or coffin, the nearest approach to this being a pot, which

was inverted over the coiled up body. Usually only a mat was put over

the body.

[Illustration: 038.jpg Portion of the “Stele of Vultures” Found at

Telloh]

[Illustration: 038-text.jpg]

Now it is evident that Babylonians and Assyrians, who buried the dead at

full length in chests, had some knowledge of embalming. An Assyrian king

tells us how he buried his royal father:--

“Within the grave, the secret place,

In kingly oil, I gently laid him.

The grave-stone marketh his resting-place.

With mighty bronze I sealed its entrance,

And I protected it with an incantation.”

The “kingly oil” was evidently used with the idea of preserving the body

from decay. Salt also was used to preserve the dead, and Herodotus

says that the Babylonians buried in honey, which was also used by the

Egyptians. No doubt the Babylonian method was less perfect than the

Egyptian, but the comparison is an interesting one, when taken in

connection with the other points of resemblance mentioned above.

We find, then, that an analysis of the Egyptian language reveals a

Semitic element in it; that the early dynastic culture had certain

characteristics which were unknown to the Neolithic Egyptians but are

closely parallelled in early Babylonia; that there were two elements in

the Egyptian religion, one of which seems to have originally belonged to

the Neolithic people, while the other has a Semitic appearance; and that

there were two sets of burial customs in early Egypt, one, that of the

Neolithic people, the other evidently that of a conquering race, which

eventually prevailed over the former; these later rites were analogous

to those of the Babylonians and Assyrians, though differing from them

in points of detail. The conclusion is that the x or conquering race

was Semitic and brought to Egypt the Semitic elements in the Egyptian

religion and a culture originally derived from that of the Sumerian

inhabitants of Babylonia, the non-Semitic parent of all Semitic

civilizations.

The question now arises, how did this Semitic people reach Egypt? We

have the choice of two points of entry: First, Heliopolis in the North,

where the Semitic sun-worship took root, and, second, the Wadi Hamma-mat

in the South, north of Edfu, the southern centre of sun-worship, and

Hierakonpolis (Nekheb-Nekhen), the capital of the Upper Egyptian kingdom

which existed before the foundation of the monarchy. The legends which

seem to bring the ancestors of the Egyptians from the Red Sea coast have

already been mentioned. They are closely connected with the worship

of the Sky and Sun god Horus of Edfu. Hathor, his nurse, the “House of

Horus,” the centre of whose worship was at Dendera, immediately opposite

the mouth of the Wadi Hammamat, was said to have come from Ta-neter,

“The Holy Land,” i.e. Abyssinia or the Red Sea coast, with the company

or \_paut\_ of the gods. Now the Egyptians always seem to have had some

idea that they were connected racially with the inhabitants of the Land

of Punt or Puenet, the modern Abyssinia and Somaliland. In the time of

the XVIIIth Dynasty they depicted the inhabitants of Punt as greatly

resembling themselves in form, feature, and dress, and as wearing the

little turned-up beard which was worn by the Egyptians of the earliest

times, but even as early as the IVth Dynasty was reserved for the

gods. Further, the word \_Punt\_ is always written without the hieroglyph

determinative of a foreign country, thus showing that the Egyptians did

not regard the Punites as foreigners. This certainly looks as if the

Punites were a portion of the great migration from Arabia, left behind

on the African shore when the rest of the wandering people pressed on

northwards to the Wadi Hammamat and the Nile. It may be that the modern

Gallas and Abyssinians are descendants of these Punites.

Now the Sky-god of Edfu is in legend a conquering hero who advances down

the Nile valley, with his \_Mesniu\_, or “Smiths,” to overthrow the people

of the North, whom he defeats in a great battle near Dendera. This may

be a reminiscence of the first fights of the invaders with the Neolithic

inhabitants. The other form of Horus, “Horus, son of Isis,” has also a

body of retainers, the \_Shemsu-Heru\_, or “Followers of Horns,” who are

spoken of in late texts as the rulers of Egypt before the monarchy. They

evidently correspond to the dynasties of \_Manes\_,

[Illustration: 041greek.jpg]

or “Ghosts,” of Manetho, and are probably intended for the early kings

of Hierakonpolis.

The mention of the Followers of Horus as “Smiths” is very interesting,

for it would appear to show that the Semitic conquerors were notable

as metal-users, that, in fact, their conquest was that old story in the

dawn of the world’s history, the utter overthrow and subjection of the

stone-users by the metal-users, the primeval tragedy of the supersession

of flint by copper. This may be, but if the “Smiths” were the Semitic

conquerors who founded the kingdom, it would appear that the use of

copper was known in Egypt to some extent before their arrival, for we

find it in the graves of the late Neolithic Egyptians, very sparsely

from “sequence-date 30” to “45,” but afterwards more commonly. It was

evidently becoming known. The supposition, however, that the “Smiths”

were the Semitic conquerors, and that they won their way by the aid of

their superior weapons of metal, may be provisionally accepted.

In favour of the view which would bring the conquerors by way of the

Wadi Hammamat, an interesting discovery may be quoted. Immediately

opposite Den-dera, where, according to the legend, the battle between

the \_Mesniu\_ and the aborigines took place, lies Koptos, at the mouth of

the Wadi Hammamat. Here, in 1894, underneath the pavement of the ancient

temple, Prof. Petrie found remains which he then diagnosed as belonging

to the most ancient epoch of Egyptian history. Among them were some

extremely archaic statues of the god Min, on which were curious

scratched drawings of bears, \_crioceras-shells\_, elephants walking over

hills, etc., of the most primitive description. With them were lions’

heads and birds of a style then unknown, but which we now know to belong

to the period of the beginning of the Ist Dynasty. But the statues of

Min are older. The \_crioceras-shells\_ belong to the Red Sea. Are we to

see in these statues the holy images of the conquerors from the Red Sea

who reached the Nile valley by way of the Wadi Hammamat, and set up the

first memorials of their presence at Koptos? It may be so, or the Min

statues may be older than the conquerors, and belong to the Neolithic

race, since Min and his fetish (which we find on the slate palette from

el-’Amra, already mentioned) seem to belong to the indigenous Nilotes.

In any case we have in these statues, two of which are in the Ashmolean

Museum at Oxford, probably the most ancient cult-images in the world:

This theory, which would make all the Neolithic inhabitants of Egypt

one people, who were conquered by a Semitic race, bringing a culture of

Sumerian origin to Egypt by way of the Wadi Hammamat, is that generally

accepted at the present time. It may, however, eventually prove

necessary to modify it. For reasons given above, it may well be that the

Neolithic population was itself not indigenous, and that it reached the

Nile valley by way of the Wadi Hammamat, spreading north and south

from the mouth of the \_wadi\_. It may also be considered probable that

a Semitic wave invaded Egypt by way of the Isthmus of Suez, where

the early sun-cultus of Heliopolis probably marks a primeval Semitic

settlement. In that case it would seem that the \_Mesniu\_ or “Smiths,”

who introduced the use of metal, would have to be referred to the

originally Neolithic pre-Semitic people, who certainly were acquainted

with the use of copper, though not to any great extent. But this is not

a necessary supposition. The \_Mesniu\_ are closely connected with the

Sky-god Horus, who was possibly of Semitic origin, and another Semitic

wave, quite distinct from that which entered Egypt by way of the

Isthmus, may very well also have reached Egypt by the Wadi Hammamat, or,

equally possibly, from the far south, coming down to the Nile from the

Abyssinian mountains. The legend of the coming of Hathor from Ta-neter

may refer to some such wandering, and we know that the Egyptians of the

Old Kingdom communicated with the Land of Punt, not by way of the Red

Sea coast as Hatshepsut did, but by way of the Upper Nile. This would

tally well with the march of the \_Mesniu\_ northwards from Edfu to their

battle with the forces of Set at Dendera.

In any case, at the dawn of connected Egyptian history, we find two main

centres of civilization in Egypt, Heliopolis and Buto in the Delta

in the North, and Edfu and Hierakonpolis in the South. Here were

established at the beginning of the Chalcolithic stage of culture, we

may say, two kingdoms, of Lower and Upper Egypt, which were eventually

united by the superior arms of the kings of Upper Egypt, who imposed

their rule upon the North but at the same time removed their capital

thither. The dualism of Buto and Hierakonpolis really lasted throughout

Egyptian history. The king was always called “Lord of the Two Lands,”

and wore the crowns of Upper and Lower Egypt; the snakes of Buto and

Nekhebet (the goddess of Nekheb, opposite Nekhen or Hierakonpolis)

always typified the united kingdom. This dualism of course often led to

actual division and reversion to the predynastic order of things, as,

for instance, in the time of the XXIst Dynasty.

It might well seem that both the impulses to culture development in the

North and South came from Semitic inspiration, and that it was to

the Semitic invaders in North and South that the founding of the two

kingdoms was due. This may be true to some extent, but it is at the same

time very probable that the first development of political culture at

Hierakonpolis was really of pre-Semitic origin. The kingdom of Buto,

since its capital is situated so near to the seacoast, may have owed

its origin to oversea Mediterranean connections. There is much in

the political constitution of later Egypt which seems to have been of

indigenous and pre-Semitic origin. Especially does this seem to be so in

the case of the division and organization of the country into nomes. It

is obvious that so soon as agriculture began to be practised on a large

scale, boundaries would be formed, and in the unique conditions of

Egypt, where all boundaries disappear beneath the inundation every

year, it is evident that the fixing of division-lines as permanently as

possible by means of landmarks was early essayed. We can therefore with

confidence assign the formation of the nomes to very early times. Now

the names of the nomes and the symbols or emblems by which they were

distinguished are of very great interest in this connection. They are

nearly all figures of the magic animals of the primitive religion, and

fetish-emblems of the older deities. The names are, in fact, those of

the territories of the Neolithic Egyptian tribes, and their emblems are

those of the protecting tribal demons. The political divisions of the

country seem, then, to be of extremely ancient origin, and if the nomes

go back to a time before the Semitic invasions, so may also the kingdoms

of the South and North.

Of these predynastic kingdoms we know very little, except from legendary

sources. The Northerners who were conquered by Aha, Narmer, and

Khâsekhehiui do not look very much like Egyptians, but rather resemble

Semites or Libyans. On the “Stele of Palermo,” a chronicle of early

kings inscribed in the period of the Vth Dynasty, we have a list of

early kings of the North,--Seka, Desau, Tiu, Tesh, Nihab, Uatjântj,

Mekhe. The names are primitive in form. We know nothing more about them.

Last year Mr. C. T. Currelly attempted to excavate at Buto, in order to

find traces of the predynastic kingdom, but owing to the infiltration of

water his efforts were unsuccessful. It is improbable that anything is

now left of the most ancient period at that site, as the conditions in

the Delta are so very different from those obtaining in Upper Egypt.

There, at Hierakonpolis, and at el-Kab on the opposite bank of the Nile,

the sites of the ancient cities Nekhen and Nekheb, the excavators have

been very successful. The work was carried out by Messrs. Quibell and

Green, in the years 1891-9. Prehistoric burials were found on the hills

near by, but the larger portion of the antiquities were recovered from

the temple-ruins, and date back to the beginning of the 1st Dynasty,

exactly the time when the kings of Hierakonpolis first conquered the

kingdom of Buto and founded the united Egyptian monarchy.

The ancient temple, which was probably one of the earliest seats of

Egyptian civilization, was situated on a mound, now known as \_el-Kom

el-ahmar\_, “the Red Hill,” from its colour. The chief feature of the

most ancient temple seems to have been a circular mound, revetted by a

wall of sandstone blocks, which was apparently erected about the end of

the predynastic period. Upon this a shrine was probably erected. This

was the ancient shrine of Nekhen, the cradle of the Egyptian monarchy.

Close by it were found some of the most valuable relics of the earliest

Pharaonic age, the great ceremonial mace-heads and vases of Narmer and

“the Scorpion,” the shields or “palettes” of the same Narmer, the vases

and stelas of Khâsekhemui, and, of later date, the splendid copper

colossal group of King Pepi I and his son, which is now at Cairo. Most

of the 1st Dynasty objects are preserved in the Ashmo-lean Museum at

Oxford, which is one of the best centres for the study of early Egyptian

antiquities. Narmer and Khâsekhemui are, as we shall see, two of the

first monarchs of all Egypt. These sculptured and inscribed mace-heads,

shields, etc., are monuments dedicated by them in the ancestral shrine

at Hierakonpolis as records of their deeds. Both kings seem to have

waged war against the Northerners, the \_Anu\_ of Heliopolis and the

Delta, and on these votive monuments from Hierakonpolis we find

hieroglyphed records of the defeat of the \_Anu\_, who have very

definitely Semitic physiognomies.

On one shield or palette we see Narmer clubbing a man of Semitic

appearance, who is called the “Only One of the Marsh” (Delta), while

below two other Semites fly, seeking “fortress-protection.” Above is a

figure of a hawk, symbolizing the Upper Egyptian king, holding a rope

which is passed through the nose of a Semitic head, while behind is a

sign which may be read as “the North,” so that the whole symbolizes the

leading away of the North into captivity by the king of the South. It

is significant, in view of what has been said above with regard to the

probable Semitic origin of the Heliopolitan Northerners, to find the

people typical of the North-land represented by the Southerners as

Semites. Equally Semitic is the overthrown Northerner on the other

side of this well-known monument which we are describing; he is being

trampled under the hoofs and gored by the horns of a bull, who, like the

hawk, symbolizes the king. The royal bull has broken down the wall of a

fortified enclosure, in which is the hut or tent of the Semite, and the

bricks lie about promiscuously.

In connection with the Semitic origin of the Northerners, the form of

the fortified enclosures on both sides of this monument (that to whose

protection the two Semites on one side fly, and that out of which the

kingly bull has dragged the chief on the other) is noticeable. As usual

in Egyptian writing, the hieroglyph of these buildings takes the form of

a plan. The plan shows a crenelated enclosure, resembling the walls of

a great Babylonian palace or temple, such as have been found at Telloh,

Warka, or Mukayyar. The same design is found in Egypt at the Shuret

ez-Zebib, an Old Kingdom fortress at Abydos, in the tomb of King Aha at

Nakâda, and in many walls of mastaba-tombs of the early time. This is

another argument in favour of an early connection between Egypt and

Babylonia. We illustrate a fragment of another votive shield or palette

of the same kind, now in the museum of the Louvre, which probably came

originally from Hierakonpolis. It is of exactly similar workmanship to

that of Narmer, and is no doubt a fragment of another monument of that

king. On it we see the same subject of the overthrowing of a Northerner

(of Semitic aspect) by the royal bull. On one side, below, is a

fortified enclosure with crenelated walls of the type we have described,

and within it a lion and a vase; below this another fort, and a bird

within it. These signs may express the names of the two forts, but,

owing to the fact that at this early period Egyptian orthography was

not yet fixed, we cannot read them. On the other side we see a row of

animated nome-standards of Upper Egypt, with the symbols of the god Min

of Koptos, the hawk of Horus of Edfu, the ibis of Thot of Eshmunên, and

the jackals of Anubis of Abydos, which drag a rope; had we the rest

of the monument, we should see, bound at the end of the rope, some

prisoner, king, or animal symbolic of the North. On another slate

shield, which we also reproduce, we see a symbolical representation of

the capture of seven Northern cities, whose names seem to mean the “Two

Men,” the “Heron,” the “Owl,” the “Palm,” and the “Ghost” Cities.

“Ghost City” is attacked by a lion, “Owl City” by a hawk, “Palm City” by

two hawk nome-standards, and another, whose name we cannot guess at, is

being opened up by a scorpion.

[Illustration: 050.jpg (left) OBVERSE OF A SLATE RELIEF.]

The operating animals evidently represent nomes and tribes of the Upper

Egyptians. Here again we see the same crenelated walls of the Northern

towns, and there is no doubt that this slate fragment also, which is

preserved in the Cairo Museum, is a monument of the conquests of Narmer.

It is executed in the same archaic style as those from Hierakonpolis.

The animals on the other side no doubt represent part of the spoil of

the North.

Returning to the great shield or palette found by Mr. Quibell, we see

the king coming out, followed by his sandal-bearer, the \_Hen-neter\_ or

“God’s Servant,” \* to view the dead bodies of the slain Northerners which

lie arranged in rows, decapitated, and with their heads between their

feet. The king is preceded by a procession of nome-standards.

[Illustration: 051.jpg (right)]

Above the dead men are symbolic representations of a hawk perched on a

harpoon over a boat, and a hawk and a door, which doubtless again refer

to the fights of the royal hawk of Upper Egypt on the Nile and at the

gate of the North. The designs on the mace-heads refer to the same

conquest of the North.

\* In his commentary (Hierakonpolis, i. p. 9) on this scene,

Prof. Petrie supposes that the seven-pointed star sign means

“king,” and compares the eight-pointed star “used for king

in Babylonia.” The eight-pointed star of the cuneiform

script does not mean “king,” but “god.” The star then ought

to mean “god,” and the title “servant of a god,” and this

supposition may be correct. \_Hen-neter\_, “god’s servant,”

was the appellation of a peculiar kind of priest in later

days, and was then spelt with the ordinary sign for a god,

the picture of an axe. But in the archaic period, with which

we are dealing, a star like the Babylonian sign may very

well have been used for “god,” and the title of Narmer’s

sandal-bearer may read \_Hen-neter\_. He was the slave of the

living god Narmer. All Egyptian kings were regarded as

deities, more or less.

The monuments Khâsekhemui, a king, show us that he conquered the North

also and slew 47,209 “Northern Enemies.” The contorted attitudes of the

dead Northerners were greatly admired and sketched at the time, and were

reproduced on the pedestal of the king’s statue found by Mr. Quibell,

which is now at Oxford. It was an age of cheerful savage energy, like

most times when kingdoms and peoples are in the making. About 4000 B.C.

is the date of these various monuments.

[Illustration: 052.jpg OBVERSE OP A SLATE RELIEF.]

Khâsekhemui probably lived later than Narmer, and we may suppose that

his conquest was in reality a re-conquest. He may have lived as late

as the time of the IId Dynasty, whereas Narmer must be placed at the

beginning of the Ist, and his conquest was probably that which first

united the two kingdoms of the South and North. As we shall see in

the next chapter, he is probably one of the originals of the legendary

“Mena,” who was regarded from the time of the XVIIIth Dynasty onwards

as the founder of the kingdom, and was first made known to Europe by

Herodotus, under the name of “Menés.”

[Illustration: 053.jpg REVERSE OF A SLATE RELIEF, REPRESENTING ANIMALS.]

Narmer is therefore the last of the ancient kings of Hierakonpolis, the

last of Manetho’s “Spirits.” We may possibly have recovered the names of

one or two of the kings anterior to Narmer in the excavations at Abydos

(see Chapter II), but this is uncertain. To all intents and purposes we

have only legendary knowledge of the Southern kingdom until its close,

when Narmer the mighty went forth to strike down the Anu of the North,

an exploit which he recorded in votive monuments at Hierakonpolis, and

which was commemorated henceforward throughout Egyptian history in the

yearly “Feast of the Smiting of the Anu.” Then was Egypt for the first

time united, and the fortress of the “White Wall,” the “Good Abode” of

Memphis, was built to dominate the lower country. The Ist Dynasty was

founded and Egyptian history began.

[Illustration: 054.jpg ]

CHAPTER II--ABYDOS AND THE FIRST THREE DYNASTIES

Until the recent discoveries had been made, which have thrown so much

light upon the early history of Egypt, the traditional order and names

of the kings of the first three Egyptian dynasties were, in default of

more accurate information, retained by all writers on the history of the

period. The names were taken from the official lists of kings at Abydos

and elsewhere, and were divided into dynasties according to the system

of Manetho, whose names agree more or less with those of the lists and

were evidently derived from them ultimately. With regard to the fourth

and later dynasties it was clear that the king-lists were correct, as

their evidence agreed entirely with that of the contemporary monuments.

But no means existed of checking the lists of the first three dynasties,

as no contemporary monuments other than a IVth Dynasty mention of a IId

Dynasty king, Send, had been found. The lists dated from the time of

the XVIIIth and XIXth Dynasties, so that it was very possible that with

regard to the earliest dynasties they might not be very correct. This

conclusion gained additional weight from the fact that no monuments of

these earliest kings were ever discovered; it therefore seemed probable

that they were purely legendary figures, in whose time (if they ever did

exist) Egypt was still a semi-barbarous nation. The jejune stories told

about them by Manetho seemed to confirm this idea. Mena, the reputed

founder of the monarchy, was generally regarded as a historical figure,

owing to the persistence of his name in all ancient literary accounts

of the beginnings of Egyptian history; for it was but natural to suppose

that the name of the man who unified Egypt and founded Memphis would

endure in the mouths of the people. But with regard to his successors

no such supposition seemed probable, until the time of Sneferu and the

pyramid-builders.

This was the critical view. Another school of historians accepted all

the kings of the lists as historical \_en bloc\_, simply because the

Egyptians had registered their names as kings. To them Teta, Ateth, and

Ata were as historical as Mena.

Modern discovery has altered our view, and truth is seen to lie between

the opposing schools, as usual. The kings after Mena do not seem to be

such entirely unhistorical figures as the extreme critics thought;

the names of several of them, e.g. Merpeba, of the Ist Dynasty, are

correctly given in the later lists, and those of others were simply

misread, e. g. that of Semti of the same dynasty, misread “Hesepti” by

the list-makers. On the other hand, Mena himself has become a somewhat

doubtful quantity. The real names of most of the early monarchs of Egypt

have been recovered for us by the latest excavations, and we can now see

when the list-makers of the XIXth Dynasty were right and when they were

wrong, and can distinguish what is legendary in their work from what is

really historical. It is true that they very often appear to have been

wrong, but, on the other hand, they were sometimes unexpectedly near

the mark, and the general number and arrangement of their kings

seems correct; so that we can still go to them for assistance in the

arrangement of the names which are communicated to us by the newly

discovered monuments. Manetho’s help, too, need never be despised

because he was a copyist of copyists; we can still use him to direct our

investigations, and his arrangement of dynasties must still remain the

framework of our chronological scheme, though he does not seem to have

been always correct as to the places in which the dynasties originated.

More than the names of the kings have the new discoveries communicated

to us. They have shed a flood of light on the beginnings of Egyptian

civilization and art, supplementing the recently ascertained facts

concerning the prehistoric age which have been described in the

preceding chapter. The impulse to these discoveries was given by the

work of M. de Morgan, who excavated sites of the early dynastic as

well as of the predynastic age. Among these was a great mastaba-tomb at

Nakâda, which proved to be that of a very early king who bore the name

of Aha, “the Fighter.” The walls of this tomb are crenelated like

those of the early Babylonian palaces and the forts of the Northerners,

already referred to. M. de Morgan early perceived the difference between

the Neolithic antiquities and those of the later archaic period of

Egyptian civilization, to which the tomb at Nakâda belonged. In the

second volume of his great work on the primitive antiquities of Egypt

\_(L’Age des Métaux et lé Tombeau Royale de Négadeh)\_, he described

the antiquities of the Ist Dynasty which had been found at the time he

wrote. Antiquities of the same primitive period and even of an earlier

date had been discovered by Prof. Flinders Petrie, as has already been

said, at Koptos, at the mouth of the Wadi Hammamat. But though Prof.

Petrie correctly diagnosed the age of the great statues of the god

Min which he found, he was led, by his misdating of the “New Race”

antiquities from Ballas and Tûkh, also to misdate several of the

primitive antiquities,--the lions and hawks, for instance, found at

Koptos, he placed in the period between the VIIth and Xth Dynasties;

whereas they can now, in the light of further discoveries at Abydos, be

seen to date to the earlier part of the Ist Dynasty, the time of Narmer

and Aha.

It is these discoveries at Abydos, coupled with those (already

described) of Mr. Quibell at Hierakonpolis, which have told us most of

what we know with regard to the history of the first three dynasties.

At Abydos Prof. Petrie was not himself the first in the field, the site

having already been partially explored by a French Egyptologist, M.

Amélineau. The excavations of M. Amélineau were, however, perhaps

not conducted strictly on scientific lines, and his results have been

insufficiently published with very few photographs, so that with the

best will in the world we are unable to give M. Amélineau the full

credit which is, no doubt, due to him for his work. The system of Prof.

Petrie’s publications has been often, and with justice, criticized, but

he at least tells us every year what he has been doing, and gives us

photographs of everything he has found. For this reason the epoch-making

discoveries at Abydos have been coupled chiefly with the name of Prof.

Petrie, while that of M. Amélineau is rarely heard in connection with

them. As a matter of fact, however, M. Amélineau first excavated the

necropolis of the early kings at Abydos, and discovered most of the

tombs afterwards worked over by Prof. Petrie and Mr. Mace. Yet most of

the important scientific results are due to the later explorers, who

were the first to attempt a classification of them, though we must

add that this classification has not been entirely accepted by the

scientific world.

The necropolis of the earliest kings of Egypt is situated in the great

bay in the hills which lies behind Abydos, to the southwest of the main

necropolis. Here, at holy Abydos, where every pious Egyptian wished to

rest after death, the bodies of the most ancient kings were buried. It

is said by Manetho that the original seat of their dominion was This,

a town in the vicinity of Abydos, now represented by the modern Grîrga,

which lies a few miles distant from its site (el-Birba). This may be a

fact, but we have as yet obtained no confirmation of it. It may well be

that the attribution of a Thinite origin to the Ist and IId Dynasties

was due simply to the fact that the kings of these dynasties were buried

at Abydos, which lay within the Thinite nome. Manetho knew that they

were buried at Abydos, and so jumped to the conclusion that they lived

there also, and called them “Thinites.”

[Illustration: 060.jpg PROF. PETRIE’S CAMP AT ABYDOS, 1901.]

Their real place of origin must have been Hierakonpolis, where the

pre-dynastic kingdom of the South had its seat. The Hid Dynasty was no

doubt of Memphite origin, as Manetho says. It is certain that the

seat of the government of the IVth Dynasty was at Memphis, where the

pyramid-building kings were buried, and we know that the sepulchres

of two Hid Dynasty kings, at least, were situated in the necropolis of

Memphis (Sakkâra-Mêdûm). So that probably the seat of government was

transferred from Hierakonpolis to Memphis by the first king of the Hid

Dynasty. Thenceforward the kings were buried in the Memphite necropolis.

The two great nécropoles of Memphis and Abydos were originally the

seats of the worship of the two Egyptian gods of the dead, Seker and

Khentamenti, both of whom were afterwards identified with the Busirite

god Osiris. Abydos was also the centre of the worship of Anubis, an

animal-deity of the dead, the jackal who prowls round the tombs at

night. Anubis and Osiris-Khentamenti, “He who is in the West,” were

associated in the minds of the Egyptians as the protecting deities of

Abydos. The worship of these gods as the chief Southern deities of the

dead, and the preeminence of the necropolis of Abydos in the South, no

doubt date back before the time of the Ist Dynasty, so that it would

not surprise us were burials of kings of the predynastic Hierakonpolite

kingdom discovered at Abydos. Prof. Petrie indeed claims to have

discovered actual royal relics of that period at Abydos, but this seems

to be one of the least certain of his conclusions. We cannot definitely

state that the names “Ro,” “Ka,” and “Sma” (if they are names at all,

which is doubtful) belong to early kings of Hierakonpolis who were

buried at Abydos. It may be so, but further confirmation is desirable

before we accept it as a fact; and as yet such confirmation has not been

forthcoming. The oldest kings, who were certainly buried at Abydos, seem

to have been the first rulers of the united kingdom of the North and

South, Aha and his successors. N’armer is not represented. It may

be that he was not buried at Abydos, but in the necropolis of

Hierakonpolis. This would point to the kings of the South not having

been buried at Abydos until after the unification of the kingdom.

That Aha possessed a tomb at Abydos as well as another at Nakâda seems

peculiar, but it is a phenomenon not unknown in Egypt. Several kings,

whose bodies were actually buried elsewhere, had second tombs at Abydos,

in order that they might \_possess\_ last resting-places near the tomb

of Osiris, although they might not prefer to \_use\_ them. Usertsen (or

Senusret) III is a case in point. He was really buried in a pyramid at

Illahun, up in the North, but he had a great rock tomb cut for him in

the cliffs at Abydos, which he never occupied, and probably had never

intended to occupy. We find exactly the same thing far back at the

beginning of Egyptian history, when Aha possessed not only a great

mastaba-tomb at Nakâda, but also a tomb-chamber in the great necropolis

of Abydos. It may be that other kings of the earliest period also had

second sepulchres elsewhere. It is noteworthy that in none of the early

tombs at Abydos were found any bodies which might be considered those

of the kings themselves. M. Amélineau discovered bodies of attendants

or slaves (who were in all probability purposely strangled and buried

around the royal chamber in order that they should attend the king

in the next world), but no royalties. Prof. Petrie found the arm of a

female mummy, who may have been of royal blood, though there is nothing

to show that she was. And the quaint plait and fringe of false hair,

which were also found, need not have belonged to a royal mummy. It is

therefore quite possible that these tombs at Abydos were not the actual

last resting-places of the earliest kings, who may really have been

buried at Hierakonpolis or elsewhere, as Aha was. Messrs. Newberry

and Gtarstang, in their \_Short History of Egypt\_, suppose that Aha was

actually buried at Abydos, and that the great tomb with objects bearing

his name, found by M. de Morgan at Nakâda, is really not his, but

belonged to a royal princess named Neit-hetep, whose name is found in

conjunction with his at Abydos and Nakâda. But the argument is equally

valid turned round the other way: the Nakâda tomb might just as well be

Aha’s and the Abydos one Neit-hetep’s. Neit-hetep, who is supposed by

Messrs. Newberry and Garstang to have been Narmer’s daughter and Aha’s

wife, was evidently closely connected with Aha, and she may have been

buried with him at Nakâda and commemorated with him at Abydos.\* It is

probable that the XIXth Dynasty list-makers and Manetho considered the

Abydos tombs to have been the real graves of the kings, but it is by no

means impossible that they were wrong.

\* A princess named Bener-ab (“Sweet-heart”), who may have

been Aha’s daughter, was actually buried beside his tomb at

Abydos.

This view of the royal tombs at Abydos tallies to a great extent with

that of M. Naville, who has energetically maintained the view that M.

Amélineau and Prof. Petrie have not discovered the real tombs of the

early kings, but only their contemporary commemorative “tombs” at

Abydos. The only real tomb of the Ist Dynasty, therefore, as yet

discovered is that of Aha at Nakâda, found by M. de Morgan. The fact

that attendant slaves were buried around the Abydos tombs is no bar to

the view that the tombs were only the monuments, not the real graves,

of the kings. The royal ghosts would naturally visit their commemorative

chambers at Abydos, in order to be in the company of the great Osiris,

and ghostly servants would be as necessary to their Majesties at Abydos

as elsewhere.

It must not be thought that this revised opinion of the Abydos tombs

detracts in the slightest degree from the importance of the discovery of

M. Amélineau and its subsequent and more detailed investigation by Prof.

Petrie. These monuments are as valuable for historical purposes as

the real tombs themselves. The actual bodies of these primeval kings

themselves we are never likely to find. The tomb of Aha at Nakâda had

been completely rifled in ancient times.

The commemorative tombs of the kings of the Ist and IId Dynasties at

Abydos lie southwest of the great necropolis, far within the bay in the

hills. Their present aspect is that of a wilderness of sand hillocks,

covered with masses of fragments of red pottery, from which the site has

obtained the modern Arab name of \_Umm el-Ga’ab\_, “Mother of Pots.” It

is impossible to move a step in any direction without crushing some

of these potsherds under the heel. They are chiefly the remains of the

countless little vases of rough red pottery, which were dedicated here

as \_ex-votos\_ by the pious, between the XIXth and XXVIth Dynasties, to

the memory of the ancient kings and of the great god Osiris, whose tomb,

as we shall see, was supposed to have been situated here also.

[Illustration: 065.jpg (right) THE TOMB OF KING DEN AT ABYDOS. About

4000 B.C.]

Intermingled with these later fragments are pieces of the original

Ist Dynasty vases, which were filled with wine and provisions and were

placed in the tombs, for the refreshment and delectation of the royal

ghosts when they should visit their houses at Abydos. These were thrown

out and broken when the tombs were violated. Here and there one sees a

dip in the sand, out of which rise four walls of great bricks, forming

a rectangular chamber, half-filled with sand. This is one of the royal

tomb-chambers of the Ist Dynasty. That of King Den is illustrated above.

A straight staircase descends into it from the ground-level above. In

several of the tombs the original flooring of wooden beams is still

preserved. Den’s is the most magnificent of all, for it has a floor of

granite blocks; we know of no other instance of stone being used for

building in this early age. Almost every tomb has been burnt at some

period unknown. The brick walls are burnt red, and many of the alabaster

vases are almost calcined. This was probably the work of some unknown

enemy.

The wide complicated tombs have around the main chamber a series of

smaller rooms, which were used to store what was considered necessary

for the use of the royal ghost. Of these necessaries the most

interesting to us are the slaves, who were, as there is little reason to

doubt, purposely killed and buried round the royal chamber so that their

spirits should be on the spot when the dead king came to Abydos; thus

they would be always ready to serve him with the food and other things

which had been stored in the tomb with them and placed under their

charge. There were stacks of great vases of wine, corn, and other food;

these were covered up with masses of fat to preserve the contents,

and they were corked with a pottery stopper, which was protected by

a conical clay sealing, stamped with the impress of the royal

cylinder-seal. There were bins of corn, joints of oxen, pottery dishes,

copper pans, and other things which might be useful for the ghostly

cuisine of the tomb. There were numberless small objects, used, no

doubt, by the dead monarch during life, which he would be pleased to see

again in the next world,--carved ivory boxes, little slabs for grinding

eye-paint, golden buttons, model tools, model vases with gold tops,

ivory and pottery figurines, and other \_objets d’art\_; the golden royal

seal of judgment of King Den in its ivory casket, and so forth. There

were memorials of the royal victories in peace and war, little ivory

plaques with inscriptions commemorating the founding of new buildings,

the institution of new religious festivals in honour of the gods, the

bringing of the captives of the royal bow and spear to the palace, the

discomfiture of the peoples of the North-land.

[Illustration: 067.jpg CONICAL VASE-STOPPERS. From Abydos. 1st Dynasty:

about 4000 B.C.]

All these things, which have done so much to reconstitute for us the

history of the earliest period of the Egyptian monarchy, were placed

under the care of the dead slaves whose bodies were buried round the

empty tomb-chamber of their royal master in Abydos.

The killing and entombment of the royal servants is of the highest

anthropological interest, for it throws a vivid light upon the manners

of the time. It shows the primeval Egyptians as a semi-barbaric people

of childishly simple ways of thought. The king was dead. For all his

kingship he was a man, and no man was immortal in this world. But yet

how could one really die? Shadows, dreams, all kinds of phenomena which

the primitive mind could not explain, induced the belief that, though

the outer man might rot, there was an inner man which could not die

and still lived on. The idea of total death was unthinkable. And where

should this inner man still live on but in the tomb to which the outer

man was consigned? And here, doubtless it was believed, in the house to

which the body was consigned, the ghost lived on. And as each ghost had

his house with the body, so no doubt all ghosts could communicate with

one another from tomb to tomb; and so there grew up the belief in a

tomb-world, a subterranean Egypt of tombs, in which the dead Egyptians

still lived and had their being. Later on the boat of the sun, in which

the god of light crossed the heavens by day, was thought to pass through

this dead world between his setting and his rising, accompanied by the

souls of the righteous. But of this belief we find no trace yet in the

ideas of the Ist Dynasty. All we can see is that the \_sahus\_, or bodies

of the dead, were supposed to reside in awful majesty in the tomb,

while the ghosts could pass from tomb to tomb through the mazes of

the underworld. Over this dread realm of dead men presided a dead god,

Osiris of Abydos; and so the necropolis of Abydos was the necropolis of

the underworld, to which all ghosts who were not its rightful citizens

would come from afar to pay their court to their ruler. Thus the man

of substance would have a monumental tablet put up to himself in this

necropolis as a sort of \_pied-à-terre\_, even if he could not be buried

there; for the king, who, for reasons chiefly connected with local

patriotism, was buried near the city of his earthly abode, a second tomb

would be erected, a stately mansion in the city of Osiris, in which his

ghost could reside when it pleased him to come to Abydos.

Now none could live without food, and men living under the earth needed

it as much as men living on the earth. The royal tomb was thus provided

with an enormous amount of earthly food for the use of the royal ghost,

and with other things as well, as we have seen. The same provision had

also to be made for the royal resting-place at Abydos. And in both cases

royal slaves were needed to take care of all this provision, and to

serve the ghost of the king, whether in his real tomb at Nakâda, or

elsewhere, or in his second tomb at Abydos. Ghosts only could serve

ghosts, so that of the slaves ghosts had to be made. That was easily

done; they died when their master died and followed him to the tomb.

No doubt it seemed perfectly natural to all concerned, to the slaves as

much as to anybody else. But it shows the child’s idea of the value of

life. An animate thing was hardly distinguished at this period from an

inanimate thing. The most ancient Egyptians buried slaves with their

kings as naturally as they buried jars of wine and bins of corn with

them. Both were buried with a definite object. The slaves had to die

before they were buried, but then so had the king himself. They all had

to die sometime or other. And the actual killing of them was no worse

than killing a dog, no worse even than “killing” golden buttons and

ivory boxes. For, when the buttons and boxes were buried with the king,

they were just as much dead as the slaves. Of the sanctity of \_human\_

life as distinct from other life, there was probably no idea at all. The

royal ghost needed ghostly servants, and they were provided as a matter

of course.

But as civilization progressed, the ideas of the Egyptians changed

on these points, and in the later ages of the ancient world they were

probably the most humane of the peoples, far more so than the Greeks,

in fact. The cultured Hellenes murdered their prisoners of war without

hesitation. Who has not been troubled in mind by the execution of Mkias

and Demosthenes after the surrender of the Athenian army at Syracuse?

When we compare this with Grant’s refusal even to take Lee’s sword

at Appomattox, we see how we have progressed in these matters; while

Gylippus and the Syracusans were as much children as the Ist Dynasty

Egyptians. But the Egyptians of Gylippus’s time had probably advanced

much further than the Greeks in the direction of rational manhood. When

Amasis had his rival Apries in his power, he did not put him to death,

but kept him as his coadjutor on the throne. Apries fled from him,

allied himself with Greek pirates, and advanced against his generous

rival. After his defeat and murder at Momemphis, Amasis gave him a

splendid burial. When we compare this generosity to a beaten foe with

the savagery of the Assyrians, for instance, we see how far the later

Egyptians had progressed in the paths of humanity.

The ancient custom of killing slaves was first discontinued at the death

of the lesser chieftains, but we find a possible survival of it in the

case of a king, even as late as the time of the XIth Dynasty; for at

Thebes, in the precinct of the funerary temple of King Neb-hapet-Râ

Mentuhetep and round the central pyramid which commemorated his memory,

were buried a number of the ladies of his \_harîm\_. They were all buried

at one and the same time, and there can be little doubt that they were

all killed and buried round the king, in order to be with him in the

next world. Now with each of these ladies, who had been turned into

ghosts, was buried a little waxen human figure placed in a little model

coffin. This was to replace her own slave. She who went to accompany

the king in the next world had to have her own attendant also. But, not

being royal, a real slave was not killed for her; she only took with her

a waxen figure, which by means of charms and incantations would, when

she called upon it, turn into a real slave, and say, “Here am I,” and do

whatever work might be required of her. The actual killing and burial

of the slaves had in all cases except that of the king been long

“commuted,” so to speak, into a burial with the dead person of

\_ushabtis\_, or “Answerers,” little figures like those described above,

made more usually of stone, and inscribed with the name of the deceased.

They were called “Answerers” because they answered the call of their

dead master or mistress, and by magic power became ghostly servants.

Later on they were made of wood and glazed \_faïence\_, as well as stone.

By this means the greater humanity of a later age sought a relief from

the primitive disregard of the death of others.

Anthropologically interesting as are the results of the excavations at

Umm el-Gra’ab, they are no less historically important. There is no need

here to weary the reader with the details of scientific controversy; it

will suffice to set before him as succinctly and clearly as possible the

net results of the work which has been done.

Messrs. Amélineau and Petrie have found the secondary tombs and have

identified the names of the following primeval kings of Egypt. We

arrange them in their apparent historical order.

1. Aha Men (?).

2. Narmer (or Betjumer) Sma (?).

3. Tjer (or Khent). Besh.

4. Tja Ati.

5. Den Semti.

6. Atjab Merpeba.

7. Semerkha Nekht.

8. Qâ Sen.

9. Khâsekhem (Khâsekhemui)

10. Hetepsekhemui.

11. Räneb.

12. Neneter.

13. Sekhemab Perabsen.

Two or three other names are ascribed by Prof. Petrie to the

Hierakonpolite dynasty of Upper Egypt, which, as it occurs before the

time of Mena and the Ist Dynasty, he calls “Dynasty 0.” Dynasty 0,

however, is no dynasty, and in any case we should prefer to call the

“predynastic” dynasty “Dynasty I.” The names of “Dynasty minus One,”

however, remain problematical, and for the present it would seem safer

to suspend judgment as to the place of the supposed royal names “Ro” and

“Ka”(Men-kaf), which Prof. Petrie supposes to have been those of two

of the kings of Upper Egypt who reigned before Mena. The king

“Sma”(“Uniter”) is possibly identical with Aha or Narmer, more

probably the latter. It is not necessary to detail the process by which

Egyptologists have sought to identify these thirteen kings with the

successors of Mena in the lists of kings and the Ist and IId Dynasties

of Manetho. The work has been very successful, though not perhaps quite

so completely accomplished as Prof. Petrie himself inclines to believe.

The first identification was made by Prof. Sethe, of Gottingen, who

pointed out that the names Semti and Merpeba on a vase-fragment found

by M. Amélineau were in reality those of the kings Hesepti and Merbap

of the lists, the Ousaphaïs and Miebis of Manetho. The perfectly certain

identifications are these:--

5. Den Semti = Hesepti, \_Ousaphaïs\_, Ist Dynasty.

6. Atjab Merpeba = Merbap, \_Miebis\_, Ist Dynasty.

7. Semerkha Nekht= Shemsu or Semsem (?), \_Semempres\_, Ist Dynasty.

8. Qâ Sen = Qebh, \_Bienehhes\_, Ist Dynasty.

9. Khâsekhemui Besh = Betju-mer (?), \_Boethos\_, IId Dynasty.

10. Neneter = Bineneter, \_Binothris\_, IId Dynasty.

Six of the Abydos kings have thus been identified with names in the

lists and in Manetho; that is to say, we now know the real names of six

of the earliest Egyptian monarchs, whose appellations are given us

under mutilated forms by the later list-makers. Prof. Petrie further

identifies (4) Tja Ati with Ateth, (3) Tjer with Teta, and (1) Aha with

Mena. Mena, Teta, Ateth, Ata, Hesepti, Merbap, Shemsu (?), and Qebh are

the names of the 1st Dynasty as given in the lists. The equivalent of

Ata Prof. Petrie finds in the name “Merneit,” which is found at Umm

el-Ga’ab. But there is no proof whatever that Merneit was a king; he

was much more probably a prince or other great personage of the reign

of Den, who was buried with the kings. Prof. Petrie accepts the

identification of the personal name of Aha as “Men,” and so makes him

the only equivalent of Mena. But this reading of the name is still

doubtful. Arguing that Aha must be Mena, and having all the rest of the

kings of the Ist Dynasty identified with the names in the lists, Prof.

Petrie is compelled to exclude Narmer from the dynasty, and to relegate

him to “Dynasty 0,” before the time of Mena. It is quite possible,

however, that Narmer was the successor, not the predecessor, of Mena.

He was certainly either the one or the other, as the style of art in his

time was exactly the same as that in the time of Aha. The “Scorpion,”

too, whose name is found at Hierakonpolis, certainly dates to the same

time as Narmer and Aha, for the style of his work is the same. And it

may well be that he is not to be counted as a separate king, belonging

to “Dynasty 0 “(or “Dynasty -I”) at all, but as identical with Narmer,

just as “Sma” may also be. We thus find that the two kings who left the

most developed remains at Hierakonpolis are the two whose monuments at

Abydos are the oldest of all on that site. That is to say, the kings

whose monuments record the conquest of the North belong to the period

of transition from the old Hierakonpolite dominion of Upper Egypt to the

new kingdom of all Egypt. They, in fact, represent the “Mena” or Menés

of tradition. It may be that Aha bore the personal name of \_Men\_, which

would thus be the original of Mena, but this is uncertain. In any case

both Aha and Narmer must be assigned to the Ist Dynasty, with the result

that we know of more kings belonging to the dynasty than appear in the

lists.

Nor is this improbable. Manetho’s list is evidently based upon old

Egyptian lists derived from the authorities upon which the king-lists of

Abydos and Sakkâra were based. These old lists were made under the

XIXth Dynasty, when an interest in the oldest kings seems to have been

awakened, and the ruling monarchs erected temples at Abydos in their

honour. This phenomenon can only have been due to a discovery of Umm

el-Ga’ab and its treasures, the tombs of which were recognized as

the burial-places (real or secondary) of the kings before the

pyramid-builders. Seti I. and his son Ramses then worshipped the kings

of Umm el-Ga’ab, with their names set before them in the order, number,

and spelling in which the scribes considered they ought to be inscribed.

It is highly probable that the number known at that time was not quite

correct. We know that the spelling of the names was very much garbled

(to take one example only, the signs for \_Sen\_ were read as one sign

\_Qebh\_), so that one or two kings may have been omitted or displaced.

This may be the case with Narmer, or, as his name ought possibly to be

read, \_Betjumer\_. His monuments show by their style that he belongs to

the very beginning of the Ist Dynasty. No name in the Ist Dynasty list

corresponds to his. But one of the lists gives for the first king of the

IId Dynasty (the successor of “Qebh” = Sen) a name which may also be read

Betjumer, spelt syllabically this time, not ideographically. On this

account Prof. Naville wishes to regard the Hierakonpolite monuments of

Narmer as belonging to the IId Dynasty, but, as we have seen, they are

among the most archaic known, and certainly must belong to the beginning

of the Ist Dynasty. It is therefore probable that Khasekhemui Besh

and Narmer (Betjumer?) were confused by this list-maker, and the

name Betjumer was given to the first king of the IId Dynasty, who was

probably in reality Khasekhemui. The resemblance of \_Betju\_ to \_Besh\_

may have contributed to this confusion.

So Narmer (or Betjumer) found his way out of his proper place at the

beginning of the 1st Dynasty. Whether Aha was also called “Men” or not,

it seems evident that he and Narmer were jointly the originals of the

legendary Mena. Narmer, who possibly also bore the name of Sma, “the

Uniter,” conquered the North. Aha, “the Fighter,” also ruled both South

and North at the same period. Khasekhemui, too, conquered the North, but

the style of his monuments shows such an advance upon that of the days

of Aha and Narmer that it seems best to make him the successor of Sen

(or “Qebh “), and, explaining the transference of the name Betjumer

to the beginning of the IId Dynasty as due to a confusion with

Khasekhemui’s personal name Besh, to make Khasekhemui the founder of the

IId Dynasty. The beginning of a new dynasty may well have been marked

by a reassertion of the new royal power over Lower Egypt, which may have

lapsed somewhat under the rule of the later kings of the Ist Dynasty.

Semti is certainly the “Hesepti” of the lists, and Tja Ati is probably

“Ateth.” “Ata” is thus unidentified. Prof. Petrie makes him = Merneit,

but, as has already been said, there is no proof that the tomb of

Merneit is that of a king. “Teta” may be Tjer or Khent, but of this

there is no proof. It is most probable that the names “Teta,” “Ateth,”

and “Ata” are all founded on Ati, the personal name of Tja. The king

Tjer is then not represented in the lists, and “Mena” is a compound of

the two oldest Abydos kings, Narmer (Betjumer) Sma (?) and Aha Men (?).

These are the bare historical results that have been attained with

regard to the names, identity, and order of the kings. The smaller

memorials that have been found with them, especially the ivory plaques,

have told us of events that took place during their reigns; but, with

the exception of the constantly recurring references to the conquest of

the North, there is little that can be considered of historical interest

or importance. We will take one as an example. This is the tablet No.

32,650 of the British Museum, illustrated by Prof. Petrie, \_Royal Tombs\_

i (Egypt Exploration Fund), pi. xi, 14, xv, 16. This is the record of

a single year, the first in the reign of Semti, King of Upper and Lower

Egypt. On it we see a picture of a king performing a religious dance

before the god Osiris, who is seated in a shrine placed on a dais. This

religious dance was performed by all the kings in later times. Below we

find hieroglyphic (ideographic) records of a river expedition to fight

the Northerners and of the capture of a fortified town called An. The

capture of the town is indicated by a broken line of fortification,

half-encircling the name, and the hoe with which the emblematic hawks

on the slate reliefs already described are armed; this signifies the

opening and breaking down of the wall.

On the other half of the tablet we find the viceroy of Lower Egypt,

Hemaka, mentioned; also “the Hawk (i. e. the king) seizes the seat of

the Libyans,” and some unintelligible record of a jeweller of the palace

and a king’s carpenter. On a similar tablet (of Sen) we find the words

“the king’s carpenter made this record.” All these little tablets are

then the records of single years of a king’s life, and others like them,

preserved no doubt in royal archives, formed the base of regular annals,

which were occasionally carved upon stone. We have an example of one of

these in the “Stele of Palermo,” a fragment of black granite, inscribed

with the annals of the kings up to the time of the Vth Dynasty, when

the monument itself was made. It is a matter for intense regret that the

greater portion of this priceless historical monument has disappeared,

leaving us but a piece out of the centre, with part of the records

of only six kings before Snefru. Of these six the name of only one,

Neneter, of the lid Dynasty, whose name is also found at Abydos, is

mentioned. The only important historical event of Neneter’s reign seems

to have occurred in his thirteenth year, when the towns or palaces of

\_Ha\_ (“North”) and Shem-Râ (“The Sun proceeds”) were founded. Nothing

but the institution and celebration of religious festivals is recorded

in the sixteen yearly entries preserved to us out of a reign of

thirty-five years. The annual height of the Nile is given, and the

occasions of numbering the people are recorded (every second year):

nothing else. Manetho tells us that in the reign of Binothris, who

is Neneter, it was decreed that women could hold royal honours and

privileges. This first concession of women’s rights is not mentioned on

the strictly official “Palermo Stele.”

More regrettable than aught else is the absence from the “Palermo Stele”

of that part of the original monument which gave the annals of the

earliest kings. At any rate, in the lines of annals which still exist

above that which contains the chronicle of the reign of Neneter no

entry can be definitely identified as belonging to the reigns of Aha

or Narmer. In a line below there is a mention of the “birth of

Khâsekhemui,” apparently a festival in honour of the birth of that king

celebrated in the same way as the reputed birthday of a god. This shows

the great honour in which Khâsekhemui was held, and perhaps it was he

who really finally settled the question of the unification of North and

South and consolidated the work of the earlier kings.

As far as we can tell, then, Aha and Narmer were the first conquerors

of the North, the unifiers of the kingdom, and the originals of the

legendary Mena. In their time the kingdom’s centre of gravity was still

in the South, and Narmer (who is probably identical with “the Scorpion”)

dedicated the memorials of his deeds in the temple of Hierakonpolis. It

may be that the legend of the founding of Memphis in the time of “Menés”

is nearly correct (as we shall see, historically, the foundation may

have been due to Merpeba), but we have the authority of Manetho for

the fact that the first two dynasties were “Thinite” (that is, Upper

Egyptian), and that Memphis did not become the capital till the time of

the Hid Dynasty. With this statement the evidence of the monuments fully

agrees. The earliest royal tombs in the pyramid-field of Memphis date

from the time of the Hid Dynasty, so that it is evident that the kings

had then taken up their abode in the Northern capital. We find that soon

after the time of Khâsekhemui the king Perabsen was especially connected

with Lower Egypt. His personal name is unknown to us (though he may

be the “Uatjnes” of the lists), but we do know that he had two

banner-names, Sekhem-ab and Perabsen. The first is his hawk or

Horus-name, the second his Set-name; that is to say, while he bore the

first name as King of Upper Egypt under the special patronage of Horus,

the hawk-god of the Upper Country, he bore the second as King of Lower

Egypt, under the patronage of Set, the deity of the Delta, whose fetish

animal appears above this name instead of the hawk. This shows how

definitely Perabsen wished to appear as legitimate King of Lower as well

as Upper Egypt. In later times the Theban kings of the XIIth Dynasty,

when they devoted themselves to winning the allegiance of the

Northerners by living near Memphis rather than at Thebes, seem to have

been imitating the successors of Khâsekhemui.

Moreover, we now find various evidences of increasing connection with

the North. A princess named Ne-maat-hap, who seems to have been the

mother of Sa-nekht, the first king of the Hid Dynasty, bears the name of

the sacred Apis of Memphis, her name signifying “Possessing the right of

Apis.” According to Manetho, the kings of the Hid Dynasty are the first

Memphites, and this seems to be quite correct. With Ne-maat-hap the

royal right seems to have been transferred to a Memphite house. But the

Memphites still had associations with Upper Egypt: two of them, Tjeser

Khet-neter and Sa-nekht, were buried near Abydos, in the desert at Bêt

Khallâf, where their tombs were discovered and excavated by Mr. Garstang

in 1900. The tomb of Tjeser is a great brick-built mastaba, forty feet

high and measuring 300 feet by 150 feet. The actual tomb-chambers are

excavated in the rock, twenty feet below the ground-level and sixty feet

below the top of the mastaba. They had been violated in ancient times,

but a number of clay jar-sealings, alabaster vases, and bowls belonging

to the tomb furniture were found by the discoverer. Sa-nekht’s tomb is

similar. In it was found the preserved skeleton of its owner, who was a

giant seven feet high.

[Illustration: 082.jpg THE TOMB OF KING TJESER AT BÊT KHALLÂF. About

3700 B.C.]

It is remarkable that Manetho chronicles among the kings of the early

period a king named Sesokhris, who was five cubits high. This may have

been Sa-nekht.

Tjeser had two tombs, one, the above-mentioned, near Abydos, the

other at Sakkâra, in the Memphite pyramid-field. This is the famous

Step-Pyramid. Since Sa-nekht seems really to have been buried at Bêt

Khal-laf, probably Tjeser was, too, and the Step-Pyramid may have been

his secondary or sham tomb, erected in the necropolis of Memphis as a

compliment to Seker, the Northern god of the dead, just as Aha had his

secondary tomb at Abydos in compliment to Khentamenti. Sne-feru, also,

the last king of the Hid Dynasty, seems to have had two tombs. One of

these was the great Pyramid of Mêdûm, which was explored by Prof. Petrie

in 1891, the other was at Dashûr. Near by was the interesting necropolis

already mentioned, in which was discovered evidence of the continuance

of the cramped position of burial and of the absence of mummification

among a certain section of the population even as late as the time of

the IVth Dynasty. This has been taken to imply that the fusion of the

primitive Neolithic and invading sub-Semitic races had not been effected

at that time.

With the IVth Dynasty the connection of the royal house with the South

seems to have finally ceased. The governmental centre of gravity was

finally transferred to Memphis, and the kings were thenceforth for

several centuries buried in the great pyramids which still stand in

serried order along the western desert border of Egypt, from the Delta

to the province of the Fayyum. With the latest discoveries in this

Memphite pyramid-field we shall deal in the next chapter.

The transference of the royal power to Memphis under the Hid Dynasty

naturally led to a great increase of Egyptian activity in the Northern

lands. We read in Manetho of a great Libyan war in the reign of

Neche-rophes, and both Sa-nekht and Tjeser seem to have finally

established Egyptian authority in the Sinaitic peninsula, where their

rock-inscriptions have been found.

In 1904 Prof. Petrie was despatched to Sinai by the Egypt Exploration

Fund, in order finally to record the inscriptions of the early kings

in the Wadi Maghara, which had been lately very much damaged by the

operations of the turquoise-miners. It seems almost incredible that

ignorance and vandalism should still be so rampant in the twentieth

century that the most important historical monuments are not safe from

desecration in order to obtain a few turquoises, but it is so. Prof.

Petrie’s expedition did not start a day too soon, and at the suggestion

of Sir William Garstin, the adviser to the Ministry of the Interior, the

majority of the inscriptions have been removed to the Cairo Museum for

safety and preservation. Among the new inscriptions discovered is one of

Sa-nekht, which is now in the British Museum. Tjeser and Sa-nekht were

not the first Egyptian kings to visit Sinai. Already, in the days of the

1st Dynasty, Semerkha had entered that land and inscribed his name upon

the rocks. But the regular annexation, so to speak, of Sinai to Egypt

took place under the Memphites of the Hid Dynasty.

With the Hid Dynasty we have reached the age of the pyramid-builders.

The most typical pyramids are those of the three great kings of the IVth

Dynasty, Khufu, Khafra, and Menkaura, at Giza near Cairo. But, as

we have seen, the last king of the Hid Dynasty, Snefru, also had one

pyramid, if not two; and the most ancient of these buildings known to

us, the Step-Pyramid of Sakkâra, was erected by Tjeser at the beginning

of that dynasty. The evolution of the royal tombs from the time of the

1st Dynasty to that of the IVth is very interesting to trace. At the

period of transition from the predynastic to the dynastic age we have

the great mastaba of Aha at Nakâda, and the simplest chamber-tombs

at Abydos. All these were of brick; no stone was used in their

construction. Then we find the chamber-tomb of Den Semti at Abydos

with a granite floor, the walls being still of brick. Above each of the

Abydos tombs was probably a low mound, and in front a small chapel, from

which a flight of steps descended into the simple chamber. On one of the

little plaques already mentioned, which were found in these tombs, we

have an archaic inscription, entirely written in ideographs, which

seems to read, “The Big-Heads (i. e. the chiefs) come to the tomb.” The

ideograph for “tomb” seems to be a rude picture of the funerary chapel,

but from it we can derive little information as to its construction.

Towards the end of the Ist Dynasty, and during the lid, the royal tombs

became much more complicated, being surrounded with numerous chambers

for the dead slaves, etc. Khâsekhemui’s tomb has thirty-three such

chambers, and there is one large chamber of stone. We know of no other

instance of the use of stone work for building at this period except in

the royal tombs. No doubt the mason’s art was still so difficult that it

was reserved for royal use only.

Under the Hid Dynasty we find the last brick mastabas built for royalty,

at Bêt Khallâf, and the first pyramids, in the Memphite necropolis.

In the mastaba of Tjeser at Bêt Khallâf stone was used for the great

portcullises which were intended to bar the way to possible plunderers

through the passages of the tomb. The Step-Pyramid at Sakkâra is, so to

speak, a series of mastabas of stone, imposed one above the other; it

never had the continuous casing of stone which is the mark of a true

pyramid. The pyramid of Snefru at Mêdûm is more developed. It also

originated in a mastaba, enlarged, and with another mastaba-like

erection on the top of it; but it was given a continuous sloping casing

of fine limestone from bottom to top, and so is a true pyramid. A

discussion of recent theories as to the building of the later pyramids

of the IVth Dynasty will be found in the next chapter.

In the time of the Ist Dynasty the royal tomb was known by the name of

“Protection-around-the-Hawk, i.e. the king”(\_Sa-ha-heru\_); but under

the Hid and IVth Dynasties regular names, such as “the Firm,” “the

Glorious,” “the Appearing,” etc., were given to each pyramid.

[Illustration: 086.jpg FALSE DOOR OF THE TOMB OF TETA, about 3600 B.C.]

We must not omit to note an interesting point in connection with the

royal tombs at Abydos, In that of King Khent or Tjer (the reading of

the ideograph is doubtful) M. Amélineau found a large bed or bier of

granite, with a figure of the god Osiris lying in state sculptured in

high relief upon it. This led him to jump to the conclusion that he

had found the tomb of the god Osiris himself, and that a skull he found

close by was the veritable cranium of the primeval folk-hero, who,

according to the euhemerist theory, was the deified original of the god.

The true explanation is given by Dr. Wallis Budge in his \_History of

Egypt\_, i, p. 19. It is a fact that the tomb of Tjer was regarded by

the Egyptians of the XIXth Dynasty as the veritable tomb of Osiris.

They thought they had discovered it, just as M. Amélineau did. When the

ancient royal tombs of Umm el-Ga’ab were rediscovered and identified at

the beginning of the XIXth Dynasty, and Seti I built the great temple of

Abydos to the divine ancestors in honour of the discovery, embellishing

it with a relief of himself and his son Ramses making offerings to the

names of his predecessors (the “Tablet of Abydos “), the name of King

Khent or Tjer (which is perhaps the really correct original form) was

read by the royal scribes as “Khent” and hastily identified with the

first part of the name of the god \_Khent-amenti\_ Osiris, the lord of

Abydos. The tomb was thus regarded as the tomb of Osiris himself, and

it was furnished with a great stone figure of the god lying on his bier,

attended by the two hawks of Isis and Nephthys; ever after the site was

visited by crowds of pilgrims, who left at Umm el-Ga’ab the thousands of

little votive vases whose fragments have given the place its name of the

“Mother of Pots.” This is the explanation of the discovery of the “Tomb

of Osiris.” We have not found what M. Amélineau seems rather naively to

have thought possible, a confirmation of the ancient view that Osiris

was originally a man who ruled over Egypt and was deified after his

death; but we have found that the Egyptians themselves were more or less

euhemerists, and did think so.

It may seem remarkable that all this new knowledge of ancient Egypt is

derived from tombs and has to do with the resting-places of the kings

when dead, rather than with their palaces or temples when living. Of

temples at this early period we have no trace. The oldest temple in

Egypt is perhaps the little chapel in front of the pyramid of Snefru at

Mêdûm. We first hear of temples to the gods under the IVth Dynasty, but

of the actual buildings of that period we have recovered nothing but one

or two inscribed blocks of stone. Prof. Petrie has traced out the plan

of the oldest temple of Osiris at Abydos, which may be of the time of

Khufu, from scanty evidences which give us but little information. It is

certain, however, that this temple, which is clearly one of the oldest

in Egypt, goes back at least to his time. Its site is the mound

called Kom es-Sultan, “The Mound of the King,” close to the village of

el-Kherba, and on the borders of the cultivation northeast of the royal

tombs at Umm el-Oa’ab.

Of royal palaces we have more definite information. North of the Kom

es-Sultan are two great fortress-enclosures of brick: the one is known

as \_Sûnet es-Zebîb\_, “the Storehouse of Dried Orapes;” the other is

occupied by the Coptic monastery of Dêr Anba Musâs. Both are certainly

fortress-palaces of the earliest period of the Egyptian monarchy. We

know from the small record-plaques of this period that the kings were

constantly founding or repairing places of this kind, which were always

great rectangular enclosures with crenelated brick walls like those of

early Babylonian buildings.

We have seen that the Northern Egyptian possessed similar

fortress-cities which were captured by Narmer. These were the seats of

the royal residence in various parts of the country. Behind their walls

was the king’s house, and no doubt also a town of nobles and retainers,

while the peasants lived on the arable land without.

[Illustration: 089.jpg THE SHUNET EZ-ZEBIB: THE FORTRESS-TOWN, About

3900 B.C.]

The Shûnet ez-Zebîb and its companion fortress were evidently the royal

cities of the 1st and IId Dynasties at Abydos. The former has been

excavated by Mr. E. R. Ayrton for the Egypt Exploration Fund, under the

supervision of Prof. Petrie. He found jar-sealings of Khâsekhemui and

Perabsen. In later times the place was utilized as a burial-place for

ibis-mummies (it had already been abandoned as a city before the time of

the XIIth Dynasty), and from this fact it received the name of \_Shenet

deb-hib\_, or “Storehouse of Ibis Burials.” The Arab invaders adapted

this name to their own language in the nearest form which would have

any meaning, as \_Shûnet ez-Zebïb\_, “the Storehouse of Dried Grapes.”

The Arab word \_shûna\_ (“Barn” or “Storehouse”) was, it should be noted,

taken over from the Coptic \_sheune,\_ which is the old-Egyptian \_shenet\_.

The identity of \_sheune\_ or \_shûna\_ with the German “Scheune” is a

quaint and curious coincidence. In the illustration of the Shûnet

ez-Zebib the curved line of crenelated wall, following the contour of

the hill, should be noted, as it is a remarkable example of the building

of this early period.

It will have been seen from the foregoing description of what

far-reaching importance the discoveries at Abydos have been. A new

chapter of the history of the human race has been opened, which contains

information previously undreamt of, information which Egyptologists

had never dared to hope would be recovered. The sand of Egypt indeed

conceals inexhaustible treasures, and no one knows what the morrow’s

work may bring forth.

\_Ex Africa semper aliquid novi!\_

CHAPTER III--MEMPHIS AND THE PYRAMIDS

Memphis, the “beautiful abode,” the “City of the White Wall,” is said

to have been founded by the legendary Menés, who in order to build it

diverted the stream of the Nile by means of a great dyke constructed

near the modern village of Koshêsh, south of the village of Mitrahêna,

which marks the central point of the ancient metropolis of Northern

Egypt. It may be that the city was founded by Aha or Narmer, the

historical originals of Mena or Menés; but we have another theory with

regard to its foundation, that it was originally built by King Merpeba

Atjab, whose tomb was also discovered at Abydos near those of Aha and

Narmer. Merpeba is the oldest king whose name is absolutely identified

with one occurring in the XIXth Dynasty king-lists and in Manetho. He

is certainly the “Merbap” or “Merbepa” (“Merbapen”) of the lists and the

\_Miebis\_ of Manetho. In both the lists and in Manetho he stands fifth in

order from Mena, and he was therefore the sixth king of the Ist Dynasty.

The lists, Manetho, and the small monuments in his own tomb agree in

making him the immediate successor of Semti Den (Ousaphaïs), and from

the style of these latter it is evident that he comes after Tja, Tjer,

Narmer, and Aha. That is to say, the contemporary evidence makes him the

fifth king from Aha, the first original of “Menés.”

Now after the piety of Seti I had led him to erect a great temple at

Abydos in memory of the ancient kings, whose sepulchres had probably

been brought to light shortly before, and to compile and set up in the

temple a list of his predecessors, a certain pious snobbery or snobbish

piety impelled a worthy named Tunure, who lived at Memphis, to put up in

his own tomb at Sakkâra a tablet of kings like the royal one at Abydos.

If Osiris-Khentamenti at Abydos had his tablet of kings, so should

Osiris-Seker at Sakkâra. But Tunure does not begin his list with Mena;

his initial king is Merpeba. For him Merpeba was the first monarch to be

commemorated at Sakkâra. Does not this look very much as if the strictly

historical Merpeba, not the rather legendary and confused Mena, was

regarded as the first Memphite king? It may well be that it was in

the reign of Merpeba, not in that of Aha or Narmer, that Memphis was

founded.

The XIXth Dynasty lists of course say nothing about Mena or Merpeba

having founded Memphis; they only give the names of the kings, nothing

more. The earliest authority for the ascription of Memphis to “Menés”,

is Herodotus, who was followed in this ascription, as in many other

matters, by Manetho; but it must be remembered that Manetho was writing

for the edification of a Greek king (Ptolemy Philadelphus) and his Greek

court at Alexandria, and had therefore to evince a respect for the great

Greek classic which he may not always have really felt. Herodotus is

not, of course, accused of any wilful misstatement in this or in any

other matter in which his accuracy is suspected. He merely wrote

down what he was told by the Egyptians themselves, and Merpeba was

sufficiently near in time to Aha to be easily confounded with him by

the scribes of the Persian period, who no doubt ascribed everything

to “Mena” that was done by the kings of the Ist and IId Dynasties.

Therefore it may be considered quite probable that the “Menés” who

founded Memphis was Merpeba, the fifth or sixth king of the Ist Dynasty,

whom Tunure, a thousand years before the time of Herodotus and his

informants, placed at the head of the Memphite “List of Sakkâra.”

The reconquest of the North by Khâsekhemui doubtless led to a further

strengthening of Memphis; and it is quite possible that the deeds of

this king also contributed to make up the sum total of those ascribed to

the Herodotean and Manethonian Menés.

It may be that a town of the Northerners existed here before the time of

the Southern Conquest, for Phtah, the local god of Memphis, has a very

marked character of his own, quite different from that of Khen-tamenti,

the Osiris of Abydos. He is always represented as a little bow-legged

hydrocephalous dwarf very like the Phoenician \_Kabeiroi\_. It may be

that here is another connection between the Northern Egyptians and the

Semites. The name “Phtah,” the “Opener,” is definitely Semitic. We may

then regard the dwarf Phtah as originally a non-Egyptian god of the

Northerners, probably Semitic in origin, and his town also as antedating

the conquest. But it evidently was to the Southerners that Memphis owed

its importance and its eventual promotion to the position of capital of

the united kingdom. Then the dwarf Phtah saw himself rivalled by another

Phtah of Southern Egyptian origin, who had been installed at Memphis by

the Southerners. This Phtah was a sort of modified edition of Osiris, in

mummy-form and holding crook and whip, but with a refined edition of

the Kabeiric head of the indigenous Phtah. The actual god of “the White

Wall” was undoubtedly confused vith the dead god of the necropolis,

whose name was Seker or Sekri (Sokari), “the Coffined.” The original

form of this deity was a mummied hawk upon a coffin, and it is very

probable that he was imported from the South, like the second Phtah, at

the time of the conquest, when the great Northern necropolis began

to grow up as a duplicate of that at Abydos. Later on we find Seker

confused with the ancient dwarf-god, and it is the latter who was

afterwards chiefly revered as Phtah-Socharis-Osiris, the protector of

the necropolis, the mummied Phtah being the generally recognized ruler

of the City of the White Wall.

It is from the name of Seker that the modern Sak-kâra takes its title.

Sakkâra marks the central point of the great Memphite necropolis, as it

is the nearest point of the western desert to Memphis. Northwards the

necropolis extended to Griza and Abu Roâsh, southwards, to Daslmr;

even the nécropoles of Lisht and Mêdûm may be regarded as appanages of

Sakkâra. At Sakkâra itself Tjeser of the IIId Dynasty had a pyramid,

which, as we have seen, was probably not his real tomb (which was

the great mastaba at Bêt Khallâf), but a secondary or sham tomb

corresponding to the “tombs” of the earliest kings at Umm el-Ga’ab in

the necropolis of Abydos. Many later kings, however, especially of the

Vith Dynasty, were actually buried at Sakkâra. Their tombs have all been

thoroughly described by their discoverer, Prof. Maspero, in his history.

The last king of the Hid Dynasty, Snefru, was buried away down south at

Mêdûm, in splendid isolation, but he may also have had a second pyramid

at Sakkâra or Abu Roash.

The kings of the IVth Dynasty were the greatest of the pyramid builders,

and to them belong the huge edifices of Griza. The Vth Dynasty favoured

Abusîr, between Cîza and Sakkâra; the Vith, as we have said, preferred

Sakkâra itself. With them the end of the Old Kingdom and of Memphite

dominion was reached; the sceptre fell from the hands of the Memphite

kings and was taken up by the princes of Herakleopolis (Ahnasyet

el-Medina, near Béni Suêf, south of the Eayyûm) and Thebes. Where the

Herakleopolite kings were buried we do not know; probably somewhere in

the local necropolis of the Gebel es-Sedment, between Ahnasya and the

Fayyûm. The first Thebans (the XIth Dynasty) were certainly buried at

Thebes, but when the Herakleopolites had finally disappeared, and all

Egypt was again united under one strong sceptre, the Theban kings seem

to have been drawn northwards. They removed to the seat of the dominion

of those whom they had supplanted, and they settled in the neighbourhood

of Herakleopolis, near the fertile province of the Fayyûm, and between

it and Memphis. Here, in the royal fortress-palace of Itht-taui,

“Controlling the Two Lands,” the kings of the XIIth Dynasty lived,

and they were buried in the nécropoles of Dashûr, Lisht, and Illahun

(Hawara), in pyramids like those of the old Memphite kings. These facts,

of the situation of Itht-taui, of their burial in the southern an ex of

the old necropolis of Memphis, and of the fori of their tombs (the

true Upper Egyptian and Thebian form was a rock-cut gallery and chamber

driven deep into the hill), show how solicitous were the Amenemhats

and Senusrets of the suffrages of Lower Egypt, how anxious they were to

conciliate the ancient royal pride of Memphis.

Where the kings of the XIIIth Dynasty and the Hyksos or “Shepherds” were

buried, we do not know. The kings of the restored Theban empire were

all interred at Thebes. There are, in fact, no known royal sepulchres

between the Fayyûm and Abydos. The great kings were mostly buried in

the neighbourhood of Memphis, Abydos, and Thebes. The sepulchres of the

“Middle Empire”--the XIth to XIIIth Dynasties--in the neighbourhood

of the Fayyûm may fairly be grouped with those of the same period at

Dashûr, which belongs to the necropolis of Memphis, since it is only a

mile or two south of Sakkâra.

It is chiefly with regard to the sepulchres of the kings that the most

momentous discoveries of recent years have been made at Thebes, and at

Sakkâra, Abusîr, Dashûr, and Lisht, as at Abydos. For this reason we

deal in succession with the finds in the nécropoles of Abydos, Memphis,

and Thebes respectively. And with the sepulchres of the “Old Kingdom,”

in the Memphite necropolis proper, we have naturally grouped those of

the “Middle Kingdom” at Dashûr, Lisht, Illahun, and Hawara.

Some of these modern discoveries have been commented on and illustrated

by Prof. Maspero in his great history. But the discoveries that have

been made since this publication have been very important,--those at

Abusîr, indeed, of first-rate importance, though not so momentous as

those of the tombs of the Ist and IId Dynasties at Abydos, already

described. At Abu Roash and at Gîza, at the northern end of the Memphite

necropolis, several expeditions have had considerable success, notably

those of the American Dr. Reisner, assisted by Mr. Mace, who excavated

the royal tombs at Umm el-Ga’ab for Prof. Petrie, those of the

German Drs. Steindorff and Borchardt,--the latter working for the

\_Beutsch-Orient Gesellschaft\_,--and those of other American excavators.

Until the full publication of the results of these excavations appears,

very little can be said about them. Many mastaba-tombs have, it is

understood, been found, with interesting remains. Nothing of great

historical importance seems to have been discovered, however. It is

otherwise when we come to the discoveries of Messrs. Borchardt and

Schâfer at Abusîr, south of Gîza and north of Sakkâra. At this place

results of first-rate historical importance have been attained.

The main group of pyramids at Abusir consists of the tombs of the kings

Sahurà, Neferarikarâ, and Ne-user-Râ, of the Vth Dynasty. The pyramids

themselves are smaller than those of Gîza, but larger than those of

Sakkâra. In general appearance and effect they resemble those of Gîza,

but they are not so imposing, as the desert here is low. Those of Gîza,

Sakkâra, and Dashûr owe much of their impressiveness to the fact that

they are placed at some height above the cultivated land. The excavation

and planning of these pyramids were carried out by Messrs. Borchardt and

Schâfer at the expense of Baron von Bissing, the well-known Egyptologist

of Munich, and of the \_Deutsch-Orient Gesell-schaft\_ of Berlin. The

antiquities found have been divided between the museums of Berlin and

Cairo.

One of the most noteworthy discoveries was that of the funerary temple

of Ne-user-Râ, which stood at the base of his pyramid. The plan is

interesting, and the granite lotus-bud columns found are the most

ancient yet discovered in Egypt. Much of the paving and the wainscoting

of the walls was of fine black marble, beautifully polished. An

interesting find was a basin and drain with lion’s-head mouth, to

carry away the blood of the sacrifices. Some sculptures in relief were

discovered, including a gigantic representation of the king and the

goddess Isis, which shows that in the early days of the Vth Dynasty the

king and the gods were already depicted in exactly the same costume as

they wore in the days of the Ramses and the Ptolemies. The hieratic art

of Egypt had, in fact, now taken on itself the final outward appearance

which it retained to the very end. There is no more of the archaism

and absence of conventionality, which marks the art of the earliest

dynasties.

We can trace by successive steps the swift development of Egyptian art

from the rude archaism of the Ist Dynasty to its final consummation

under the Vth, when the conventions became fixed. In the time of

Khäsekhemui, at the beginning of the IId Dynasty, the archaic character

of the art has already begun to wear off. Under the same dynasty we

still have styles of unconventional naïveté, such as the famous Statue

“No. 1” of the Cairo Museum, bearing the names of Kings Hetepahaui,

Neb-râ, and Neneter. But with the IVth Dynasty we no longer look for

unconventionality. Prof. Petrie discovered at Abydos a small ivory

statuette of Khufu or Cheops, the builder of the Great Pyramid of Gîza.

The portrait is a good one and carefully executed. It was not till

the time of the XVIIIth Dynasty, indeed, that the Egyptians ceased

to portray their kings as they really were, and gave them a purely

conventional type of face. This convention, against which the heretical

King Amenhetep IV (Akhunaten) rebelled, in order to have himself

portrayed in all his real ungainliness and ugliness, did not exist till

long after the time of the IVth and Vth Dynasties.

[Illustration: 100.jpg STATUE NO. 1 OF THE CAIRO MUSEUM, About 3900

B.C.]

The kings of the XIIth Dynasty especially were most careful that their

statues should be accurate portraits; indeed, the portraits of Usertsen

(Senusret) III vary from a young face to an old one, showing that the

king was faithfully depicted at different periods of his life.

But the general conventions of dress and deportment were finally fixed

under the Vth Dynasty. After this time we no longer have such absolutely

faithful and original presentments as the other little ivory statuette

found by Prof. Petrie at Abydos (now in the British Museum), which shows

us an aged monarch of the Ist Dynasty. It is obvious that the features

are absolutely true to life, and the figure wears an unconventionally

party-coloured and bordered robe of a kind which kings of a later day

may have worn in actual life, but which they would assuredly never be

depicted as wearing by the artists of their day. To the end of Egyptian

history, the kings, even the Roman emperors, were represented on the

monuments clothed in the official costume of their ancestors of the IVth

and Vth Dynasties, in the same manner as we see Khufu wearing his robe

in the little figure from Abydos, and Ne-user-Rà on the great

relief from Abusîr. There are one or two exceptions, such as the

representations of the original genius Akhunaten at Tell el-Amarna and

the beautiful statue of Ramses II at Turin, in which we see these kings

wearing the real costume of their time, but such exceptions are very

rare.

The art of Abusîr is therefore of great interest, since it marks the end

of the development of the priestly art. Secular art might develop as it

liked, though the crystallizing influence of the ecclesiastical canon is

always evident here also. But henceforward it was an impiety, which only

an Akhunaten could commit, to depict a king or a god on the walls of a

temple otherwise (except so far as, the portrait was concerned) than as

he had been depicted in the time of the Vth Dynasty.

Other buildings have been excavated by the Germans at Abusîr, notably

the usual town of mastaba-tombs belonging to the chief dignitaries of

the reign, which is always found at the foot of a royal pyramid of this

period. Another building of the highest interest, belonging to the same

age, was also excavated, and its true character was determined. This is

a building at a place called er-Rîgha or Abû Ghuraib, “Father of Crows,”

between Abusîr and Gîza. It was formerly supposed to be a pyramid, but

the German excavations have shown that it is really a temple of the

Sun-god Râ of Heliopolis, specially venerated by the kings of the Vth

Dynasty, who were of Heliopolitan origin. The great pyramid-builders of

the IVth Dynasty seem to have been the last true Memphites. At the end

of the reign of Shepseskaf, the last monarch of the dynasty, the sceptre

passed to a Heliopolitan family. The following VIth Dynasty may again

have been Memphite, but this is uncertain. The capital continued to be

Memphis, and from the beginning of the Hid Dynasty to the end of the Old

Kingdom and the rise of Herakle-opolis and Thebes, Memphis remained the

chief city of Egypt.

The Heliopolitans were naturally the servants of the Sun-god above all

other gods, and they were the first to call themselves “Sons of the

Sun,” a title retained by the Pharaohs throughout all subsequent

history. It was Ne-user-Râ who built the Sun-temple of Abu Ghuraib,

on the edge of the desert, north of his pyramid and those of his two

immediate predecessors at Abusir. As now laid bare by the excavations of

1900, it is seen to consist of an artificial mound, with a great court

in front to the eastward. On the mound was erected a truncated obelisk,

the stone emblem of the Sun-god. The worshippers in the court below

looked towards the Sun’s stone erected upon its mound in the west,

the quarter of the sun’s setting; for the Sun-god of Heliopolis was

primarily the setting sun, Tum-Râ, not Râ Harmachis, the rising sun,

whose emblem is the Great Sphinx at Gîza, which looks towards the east.

The sacred emblem of the Heliopolitan Sun-god reminds us forcibly of the

Semitic \_bethels\_ or \_baetyli\_, the sacred stones of Palestine, and may

give yet another hint of the Semitic origin of the Heliopolitan cult.

In the court of the temple is a huge circular altar of fine alabaster,

several feet across, on which slain oxen were offered to the Sun, and

behind this, at the eastern end of the court, are six great basins of

the same stone, over which the beasts were slain, with drains running

out of them by which their blood was carried away. This temple is a most

interesting monument of the civilization of the “Old Kingdom” at the time

of the Vth Dynasty.

At Sakkâra itself, which lies a short distance south of Abusir, no new

royal tombs have, as has been said, been discovered of late years. But a

great deal of work has been done among the private mastaba-tombs by the

officers of the \_Service des Antiquités\_, which reserves to itself the

right of excavation here and at Dashûr. The mastaba of the sage and

writer Kagernna (or rather Gemnika, “I-have-found-a-ghost,” which

sounds very like an American Indian appellation) is very fine.

“I-have-found-a-ghost” lived in the reign of the king Tatkarâ Assa, the

“Tancheres” of Manetho, and he wrote maxims like his great contemporary

Phtahhetep (“Offered to Phtah”), who was also buried at Sakkâra. The

officials of the \_Service des Antiquités\_ who cleaned the tomb unluckily

misread his name Ka-bi-n (an impossible form which could only mean,

literally translated, “Ghost-soul-of” or “Ghost-soul-to-me”), and they

have placed it in this form over the entrance to his tomb. This mastaba,

like those, already known, of Mereruka (sometimes misnamed “Mera”)

and the famous Ti, both also at Sakkâra, contains a large number of

chambers, ornamented with reliefs. In the vicinity M. Grébaut, then

Director of the Service of Antiquities, discovered a very interesting

Street of Tombs, a regular Via Sacra, with rows of tombs of the

dignitaries of the VIth Dynasty on either side of it. They are generally

very much like one another; the workmanship of the reliefs is fine, and

the portrait of the owner of the tomb is always in evidence.

Several of the smaller mastabas have lately been disposed of to the

various museums, as they are liable to damage if they remain where they

stand; moreover, they are not of great value to the Museum of Cairo,

but are of considerable value to various museums which do not already

possess complete specimens of this class of tombs. A fine one, belonging

to the chief Uerarina, is now exhibited in the Assyrian Basement of the

British Museum; another is in the Museum of Leyden; a third at Berlin,

and so on. Most of these are simple tombs of one chamber. In the centre

of the rear wall we always see the \_stele\_ or gravestone proper,

built into the fabric of the tomb. Before this stood the low table

of offerings with a bowl for oblations, and on either side a tall

incense-altar. From the altar the divine smoke (\_senetr\_) arose when

the \_hen-ka\_, or priest of the ghost (literally, “Ghost’s Servant”),

performed his duty of venerating the spirits of the deceased, while the

\_Kher-heb\_, or cantor, enveloped in the mystic folds of the leopard-skin

and with bronze incense-burner in hand, sang the holy litanies and

spells which should propitiate the ghost and enable him to win his way

to ultimate perfection in the next world.

The stele is always in the form of a door with pyloni-form cornice. On

either side is a figure of the deceased, and at the sides are carved

prayers to Anubis, and at a later date to Osiris, who are implored to

give the funerary meats and “everything good and pure on which the god

there (as the dead man in the tomb has been constituted) lives;” often

we find that the biography and list of honorary titles and dignities of

the deceased have been added.

Sakkâra was used as a place of burial in the latest as well as in the

earliest time. The Egyptians of the XXVIth Dynasty, wearied of the long

decadence and devastating wars which had followed the glorious epoch of

the conquering Pharaohs of the XVIIIth and XIXth Dynasties, turned for

a new and refreshing inspiration to the works of the most ancient kings,

when Egypt was a simple self-contained country, holding no intercourse

with outside lands, bearing no outside burdens for the sake of pomp and

glory, and knowing nothing of the decay and decadence which follows in

the train of earthly power and grandeur. They deliberately turned their

backs on the worn-out and discredited imperial trappings of the Thothmes

and Ramses, and they took the supposed primitive simplicity of the

Snefrus, the Khufus, and the Ne-user-Râs for a model and ensampler to

their lives. It was an age of conscious and intended archaism, and in

pursuit of the archaistic ideal the Mem-phites of the Saïte age had

themselves buried in the ancient necropolis of Sakkâra, side by side

with their ancestors of the time of the Vth and VIth Dynasties. Several

of these tombs have lately been discovered and opened, and fitted with

modern improvements. One or two of them, of the Persian period, have

wells (leading to the sepulchral chamber) of enormous depth, down which

the modern tourist is enabled to descend by a spiral iron staircase. The

Serapeum itself is lit with electricity, and in the Tombs of the Kings

at Thebes nothing disturbs the silence but the steady thumping pulsation

of the dynamo-engine which lights the ancient sepulchres of the

Pharaohs. Thus do modern ideas and inventions help us to see and so to

understand better the works of ancient Egypt. But it is perhaps a little

too much like the Yankee at the Court of King Arthur. The interiors of

the later tombs are often decorated with reliefs which imitate those of

the early period, but with a kind of delicate grace which at once marks

them for what they are, so that it is impossible to confound them with

the genuine ancient originals from which they were adapted.

Riding from Sakkâra southwards to Dashûr, we pass on the way the

gigantic stone mastaba known as the \_Mastabat el-Fara’ûn\_, “Pharaoh’s

Bench.” This was considered to be the tomb of the Vth Dynasty king,

Unas, until his pyramid was found by Prof. Maspero at Sakkâra. From its

form it might be thought to belong to a monarch of the Hid Dynasty, but

the great size of the stone blocks of which it is built seems to point

rather to the XIIth. All attempts to penetrate its secret by actual

excavation have been unavailing.

Further south across the desert we see from the Mastabat el-Fara’ûn

four distinct pyramids, symmetrically arranged in two lines, two in each

line. The two to the right are great stone erections of the usual

type, like those of Gîza and Abusîr, and the southernmost of them has a

peculiar broken-backed appearance, due to the alteration of the angle

of inclination of its sides during construction. Further, it is covered

almost to the ground by the original casing of polished white limestone

blocks, so that it gives a very good idea of the original appearance

of the other pyramids, which have lost their casing. These two

pyramids very probably belong to kings of the Hid Dynasty, as does the

Step-Pyramid of Sakkâra. They strongly resemble the Gîza type, and

the northernmost of the two looks very like an understudy of the Great

Pyramid. It seems to mark the step in the development of the royal

pyramid which was immediately followed by the Great Pyramid. But no

excavations have yet proved the accuracy of this view. Both pyramids

have been entered, but nothing has been found in them. It is very

probable that one of them is the second pyramid of Snefru.

The other two pyramids, those nearest the cultivation, are of very

different appearance. They are half-ruined, they are black in colour,

and their whole effect is quite different from that of the stone

pyramids. For they are built of brick, not of stone. They are pyramids,

it is true, but of a different material and of a different date from

those which we have been describing. They are built above the sepulchres

of kings of the XIIth Dynasty, the Theban house which transferred

its residence northwards to the neighbourhood of the ancient Northern

capital. We have, in fact, reached the end of the Old Kingdom at

Sakkâra; at Dashûr begin the sepulchres of the Middle Kingdom. Pyramids

are still built, but they are not always of stone; brick is used,

usually with stone in the interior. The general effect of these brick

pyramids, when new, must have been indistinguishable from that of the

stone ones, and even now, when it has become half-ruined, such a great

brick pyramid as that of Usertsen (Senusret) III at Dashûr is not

without impressiveness. After all, there is no reason why a brick

building should be less admirable than a stone one. And in its own way

the construction of such colossal masses of bricks as the two eastern

pyramids of Dashûr must have been as arduous, even as difficult, as that

of building a moderate-sized stone pyramid. The photograph of the brick

pyramids of Dashûr on this page shows well the great size of these

masses of brickwork, which are as impressive as any of the great brick

structures of Babylonia and Assyria.

[Illustration: 109.jpg EXTERIOR OF THE SOUTHERN BRICK PYRAMID OF DASHUR]

XIITH DYNASTY. Excavated by M. de Morgan, 1895. This is the

secondary tomb of Amenemhat III; about 2200 B.C.

The XIIth Dynasty use of brick for the royal tombs was a return to the

custom of earlier days, for from the time of Aha to that Tjeser, from

the 1st Dynasty to the Hid, brick had been used for the building of the

royal mastaba-tombs, out of which the pyramids had developed.

At this point, where we take leave of the great pyramids of the Old

Kingdom, we may notice the latest theory as to the building of these

monuments, which has of late years been enunciated by Dr. Borchardt, and

is now generally accepted. The great Prussian explorer Lepsius, when he

examined the pyramids in the ‘forties, came to the conclusion that each

king, when he ascended the throne, planned a small pyramid for himself.

This was built in a few years’ time, and if his reign were short, or if

he were unable to enlarge the pyramid for other reasons, it sufficed for

his tomb. If, however, his reign seemed likely to be one of some length,

after the first plan was completed he enlarged his pyramid by building

another and a larger one around it and over it. Then again, when this

addition was finished, and the king still reigned and was in possession

of great resources, yet another coating, so to speak, was put on to the

pyramid, and so on till colossal structures like the First and Second

Pyramid of Giza, which, we know, belonged to kings who were unusually

long-lived, were completed. And finally the aged monarch died, and was

buried in the huge tomb which his long life and his great power had

enabled him to erect. This view appeared eminently reasonable at the

time, and it seemed almost as though we ought to be able to tell whether

a king had reigned long or not by the size of his pyramid, and even

to obtain a rough idea of the length of his reign by counting the

successive coats or accretions which it had received, much as we tell

the age of a tree by the rings in its bole. A pyramid seemed to have

been constructed something after the manner of an onion or a Chinese

puzzle-box.

Prof. Pétrie, however, who examined the Griza pyramids in 1881, and

carefully measured them all up and finally settled their trigonometrical

relation, came to the conclusion that Lepsius’s theory was entirely

erroneous, and that every pyramid was built and now stands as it was

originally planned. Dr.

[Illustration: 111.jpg THE PYRAMIDS OF GIZA DURING THE INUNDATION.]

Borchardt, however, who is an architect by profession, has examined

the pyramids again, and has come to the conclusion that Prof. Pétrie’s

statement is not correct, and that there is an element of truth in

Lepsius’s hypothesis. He has shown that several of the pyramids, notably

the First and Second at Giza, show unmistakable signs of a modified,

altered, and enlarged plan; in fact, long-lived kings like Khufu seem

to have added considerably to their pyramids and even to have entirely

remodelled them on a larger scale. This has certainly been the case with

the Great Pyramid. We can, then, accept Lepsius’s theory as modified by

Dr. Borchardt.

Another interesting point has arisen in connection with the Great

Pyramid. Considerable difference of opinion has always existed between

Egyptologists and the professors of European archaeology with regard

to the antiquity of the knowledge of iron in Egypt. The majority of

the Egyptologists have always maintained, on the authority of the

inscriptions, that iron was known to the ancient Egyptians from the

earliest period. They argued that the word for a certain metal in old

Egyptian was the same as the Coptic word for “iron.” They stated that in

the most ancient religious texts the Egyptians spoke of the firmament

of heaven as made of this metal, and they came to the conclusion that it

was because this metal was blue in colour, the hue of iron or steel; and

they further pointed out that some of the weapons in the tomb-paintings

were painted blue and others red, some being of iron, that is to

say, others of copper or bronze. Finally they brought forward as

incontrovertible evidence an actual fragment of worked iron, which had

been found between two of the inner blocks, down one of the air-shafts,

in the Great Pyramid. Here was an actual piece of iron of the time of

the IVth Dynasty, about 3500 B.C.

This conclusion was never accepted by the students of the development of

the use of metal in prehistoric Europe, when they came to know of it.

No doubt their incredulity was partly due to want of appreciation of the

Egyptological evidence, partly to disinclination to accept a conclusion

which did not at all agree with the knowledge they had derived from

their own study of prehistoric Europe. In Southern Europe it was quite

certain that iron did not come into use till about 1000 B.C.; in Central

Europe, where the discoveries at Hallstatt in the Salzkammergut exhibit

the transition from the Age of Bronze to that of Iron, about 800 B.C.

The exclusively Iron Age culture of La Tène cannot be dated earlier than

the eighth century, if as early as that. How then was it possible that,

if iron had been known to the Egyptians as early as 3500 B.C., its

knowledge should not have been communicated to the Europeans until over

two thousand years later? No; iron could not have been really known to

the Egyptians much before 1000 B.C. and the Egyptological evidence was

all wrong. This line of argument was taken by the distinguished

Swedish archaeologist, Prof. Oscar Montelius, of Upsala, whose previous

experience in dealing with the antiquities of Northern Europe, great as

it was, was hardly sufficient to enable him to pronounce with authority

on a point affecting far-away African Egypt. And when dealing with Greek

prehistoric antiquities Prof. Montelius’s views have hardly met with

that ready agreement which all acknowledge to be his due when he is

giving us the results of his ripe knowledge of Northern antiquities. He

has, in fact, forgotten, as most “prehistoric” archaeologists do forget,

that the antiquities of Scandinavia, Greece, Egypt, the Semites,

the bronze-workers of Benin, the miners of Zimbabwe, and the Ohio

mound-builders are not to be treated all together as a whole, and that

hard and fast lines of development cannot be laid down for them, based

on the experience of Scandinavia.

We may perhaps trace this misleading habit of thought to the influence

of the professors of natural science over the students of Stone Age and

Bronze Age antiquities. Because nature moves by steady progression and

develops on even lines--\_nihil facit per sal-tum\_--it seems to have been

assumed that the works of man’s hands have developed in the same way,

in a regular and even scheme all over the world. On this supposition it

would be impossible for the great discovery of the use of iron to have

been known in Egypt as early as 3500 B.C. for this knowledge to have

remained dormant there for two thousand years, and then to have

been suddenly communicated about 1000 B.C. to Greece, spreading with

lightning-like rapidity over Europe and displacing the use of bronze

everywhere. Yet, as a matter of fact, the work of man does develop

in exactly this haphazard way, by fits and starts and sudden leaps of

progress after millennia of stagnation. Throwsback to barbarism are just

as frequent. The analogy of natural evolution is completely inapplicable

and misleading.

Prof. Montelius, however, following the “evolutionary” line of thought,

believed that because iron was not known in Europe till about 1000 B.C.

it could not have been known in Egypt much earlier; and in an important

article which appeared in the Swedish ethnological journal \_Ymer\_ in

1883, entitled \_Bronsaldrn i Egypten\_ (“The Bronze Age in Egypt”), he

essayed to prove the contrary arguments of the Egyptologists wrong. His

main points were that the colour of the weapons in the frescoes was of

no importance, as it was purely conventional and arbitrary, and that the

evidence of the piece of iron from the Great Pyramid was insufficiently

authenticated, and therefore valueless, in the absence of other definite

archaeological evidence in the shape of iron of supposed early date. To

this article the Swedish Egyptologist, Dr. Piehl, replied in the same

periodical, in an article entitled \_Bronsaldem i Egypten\_, in which he

traversed Prof. Montelius’s conclusions from the Egyptological point of

view, and adduced other instances of the use of iron in Egypt, all,

it is true, later than the time of the IVth Dynasty. But this protest

received little notice, owing to the fact that it remained buried in

a Swedish periodical, while Prof. Montelius’s original article was

translated into French, and so became well-known.

For the time Prof. Montelius’s conclusions were generally accepted, and

when the discoveries of the prehistoric antiquities were made by M. de

Morgan, it seemed more probable than ever that Egypt had gone through a

regular progressive development from the Age of Stone through those of

copper and bronze to that of iron, which was reached about 1100 or 1000

B.C. The evidence of the iron fragment from the Great Pyramid was put on

one side, in spite of the circumstantial account of its discovery

which had been given by its finders. Even Prof. Pétrie, who in 1881

had accepted the pyramid fragment as undoubtedly contemporary with that

building, and had gone so far as to adduce additional evidence for its

authenticity, gave way, and accepted Montelius’s view, which held its

own until in 1902 it was directly controverted by a discovery of Prof.

Pétrie at Abydos. This discovery consisted of an undoubted fragment of

iron found in conjunction with bronze tools of VIth Dynasty date; and it

settled the matter.\* The VIth Dynasty date of this piece of iron, which

was more probably worked than not (since it was buried with tools), was

held to be undoubted by its discoverer and by everybody else, and, if

this were undoubted, the IVth Dynasty date of the Great Pyramid fragment

was also fully established. The discoverers of the earlier fragment had

no doubt whatever as to its being contemporary with the pyramid, and

were supported in this by Prof. Pétrie in 1881. Therefore it is now

known to be the fact that iron was used by the Egyptians as early as

3500 B.C.\*\*

\* See H. R. Hall’s note on “The Early Use of Iron in Egypt,”

in \_Man\_ (the organ of the Anthropological Society of

London), iii (1903), No. 86.

\*\* Prof. Montelius objected to these conclusions in a review

of the British Museum “Guide to the Antiquities of the

Bronze Age,” which was published in Man, 1005 (Jan.), No 7.

For an answer to these objections, see Hall, ibid., No. 40.

It would thus appear that though the Egyptians cannot be said to have

used iron generally and so to have entered the “Iron Age” before about

1300 B.C. (reign of Ramses II), yet iron was well known to them and had

been used more than occasionally by them for tools and building purposes

as early as the time of the IVth Dynasty, about 3500 B.C. Certainly

dated examples of its use occur under the IVth, VIth, and XIIIth

Dynasties. Why this knowledge was not communicated to Europe before

about 1000 B.C. we cannot say, nor are Egyptologists called upon to find

the reason. So the Great Pyramid has played an interesting part in the

settlement of a very important question.

It was supposed by Prof. Pétrie that the piece of iron from the Great

Pyramid had been part of some arrangement employed for raising the

stones into position. Herodotus speaks of the machines, which were used

to raise the stones, as made of little pieces of wood. The generally

accepted explanation of his meaning used to be that a small crane or

similar wooden machine was used for hoisting the stone by means

of pulley and rope; but M. Legrain, the director of the works of

restoration in the Great Temple of Karnak, has explained it differently.

Among the “foundation deposits” of the XVIIIth Dynasty at Dêr el-Bahari

and elsewhere, beside the little plaques with the king’s name and the

model hoes and vases, was usually found an enigmatic wooden object like

a small cradle, with two sides made of semicircular pieces of wood,

joined along the curved portion by round wooden bars. M. Legrain has now

explained this as a model of the machine used to raise heavy stones from

tier to tier of a pyramid or other building, and illustrations of

the method of its use may be found in Choisy’s \_Art de Bâtir chez les

anciens Egyptiens\_. There is little doubt that this primitive machine

is that to which Herodotus refers as having been used in the erection of

the pyramids.

The later historian, Diodorus, also tells us that great mounds or ramps

of earth were used as well, and that the stones were dragged up these

to the requisite height. There is no doubt that this statement also is

correct. We know that the Egyptians did build in this very way, and

the system has been revived by M. Legrain for his work at Karnak, where

still exist the remains of the actual mounds and ramps by which the

great western pylon was erected in Ptolemaïc times. Work carried on

in this way is slow and expensive, but it is eminently suited to the

country and understood by the people. If they wish to put a great stone

architrave weighing many tons across the top of two columns, they do not

hoist it up into position; they rear a great ramp or embankment of earth

against the two pillars, half-burying them in the process, then drag

the architrave up the ramp by means of ropes and men, and put it into

position. Then the ramp is cleared away. This is the ancient system

which is now followed at Karnak, and it is the system by which, with the

further aid of the wooden machines, the Great Pyramid and its compeers

were erected in the days of the IVth Dynasty. \_Plus cela change, plus

c’est la même chose\_.

The brick pyramids of the XIIth Dynasty were erected in the same way,

for the Egyptians had no knowledge of the modern combination of wooden

scaffolding and ladders. There was originally a small stone pyramid of

the same dynasty at Dashûr, half-way between the two brick ones, but

this has now almost disappeared. It belonged to the king Amenemhat II,

while the others belonged, the northern to Usertsen (Sen-usret) III, the

southern to Amenemhat III. Both these latter monarchs had other tombs

elsewhere, Usertsen a great rock-cut gallery and chamber in the cliff at

Abydos, Amenemhat a pyramid not very far to the south, at Hawara, close

to the Fayyûm. It is uncertain whether the Hawara pyramid or that of

Dashûr was the real burial-place of the king, as at neither place is his

name found alone. At Hawara it is found in conjunction with that of his

daughter, the queen-regnant Se-bekneferurâ (Skemiophris), at Dashûr with

that of a king Auabrâ Hor, who was buried in a small tomb near that of

the king, and adjoining the tombs of the king’s children. Who King Hor

was we do not quite know. His name is not given in the lists, and was

unknown until M. de Morgan’s discoveries at Dashûr. It is most probable

that he was a prince who was given royal honours during the lifetime of

Amenemhat III, whom he predeceased.\* In the beautiful wooden statue

of him found in his tomb, which is now in the Cairo Museum, he is

represented as quite a youth. Amenemhat III was certainly succeeded by

Amenemhat IV, and it is impossible to intercalate Hor between them.

\* See below, p. 121. Possibly he was a son of Amenemhat III.

The identification of the owners of the three western pyramids of Dashûr

is due to M. de Morgan and his assistants, Messrs. Legrain and Jéquier,

who excavated them from 1894 till 1896. The northern pyramid, that of

Usertsen (Senusret) III, is not so well preserved as the southern. It is

more worn away, and does not present so imposing an appearance. In

both pyramids the outer casing of white stone has entirely disappeared,

leaving only the bare black bricks. Each stood in the midst of a great

necropolis of dignitaries of the period, as was usually the case.

Many of the mastabas were excavated by M. de Morgan. Some are of older

periods than the XIIth Dynasty, one belonging to a priest of King

Snefru, Aha-f-ka (“Ghost-fighter”), who bore the additional titles of

“director of prophets and general of infantry.” There were pluralists

even in those days. And the distinction between the privy councillor

(Geheimrat) and real privy councillor (Wirk-licher-Greheimrat) was quite

familiar; for we find it actually made, many an old Egyptian officially

priding himself in his tomb on having been a real privy councillor! The

Egyptian bureaucracy was already ancient and had its survivals and its

anomalies even as early as the time of the pyramid-builders.

In front of the pyramid of Usertsen (Senusret) III at one time stood the

usual funerary temple, but it has been totally destroyed. By the side of

the pyramid were buried some of the princesses of the royal family, in

a series of tombs opening out of a subterranean gallery, and in this

gallery were found the wonderful jewels of the princesses Sit-hathor and

Merit, which are among the greatest treasures of the Cairo Museum. Those

who have not seen them can obtain a perfect idea of their appearance

from the beautiful water-colour paintings of them by M. Legrain, which

are published in M. de Morgan’s work on the “Fouilles à Dahchour”

(Vienna, 1895). Altogether one hundred and seven objects were recovered,

consisting of all kinds of jewelry in gold and coloured stones. Among

the most beautiful are the great “pectorals,” or breast-ornaments, in

the shape of pylons, with the names of Usertsen II, Usertsen III, and

Amenemhat III; the names are surrounded by hawks standing on the sign

for gold, gryphons, figures of the king striking down enemies, etc., all

in \_cloisonné\_ work, with beautiful stones such as lapis lazuli, green

felspar, and carnelian taking the place of coloured enamels. The massive

chains of golden beads and cowries are also very remarkable. These

treasures had been buried in boxes in the floor of the subterranean

gallery, and had luckily escaped the notice of plunderers, and so by a

fortunate chance have survived to tell us what the Egyptian jewellers

could do in the days of the XIIth Dynasty. Here also were found two

great Nile barges, full-sized boats, with their oars and other gear

complete. They also may be seen in the Museum of Cairo. It can only be

supposed that they had served as the biers of the royal mummies, and had

been brought up in state on sledges. The actual royal chamber was not

found, although a subterranean gallery was driven beneath the centre of

the pyramid.

The southern brick pyramid was constructed in the same way as the

northern one. At the side of it were also found the tombs of members of

the royal house, including that of the king Hor, already mentioned, with

its interesting contents. The remains of the mummy of this ephemeral

monarch, known only from his tomb, were also found. The entrails of the

king were placed in the usual “canopic jars,” which were sealed with the

seal of Amenemhat III; it is thus that we know that Hor died before him.

In many of the inscriptions of this king, on his coffin and stelo, a

peculiarly affected manner of writing the hieroglyphs is found,--the

birds are without their legs, the snake has no tail, the bee no head.

Birds are found without their legs in other inscriptions of this period;

it was a temporary fashion and soon discarded.

In the tomb of a princess named Nubhetep, near at hand, were found more

jewels of the same style as those of Sit-hathor and Merit. The pyramid

itself contained the usual passages and chambers, which were reached

with much difficulty and considerable tunnelling by M. de Morgan. In

fact, the search for the royal death-chambers lasted from December 5,

1894, till March 17, 1895, when the excavators’ gallery finally struck

one of the ancient passages, which were found to be unusually extensive,

contrasting in this respect with the northern pyramid. The royal

tomb-chamber had, of course, been emptied of what it contained. It must

be remembered that, in any case, it is probable that the king was not

actually buried here, but in the pyramid of Hawara.

The pyramid of Amenemhat II, which lies between the two brick pyramids,

was built entirely of stone. Nothing of it remains above ground, but the

investigation of the subterranean portions showed that it was remarkable

for the massiveness of its stones and the care with which the masonry

was executed. The same characteristics are found in the dependent tombs

of the princesses Ha and Khnumet, in which more jewelry was found. This

splendid stonework is characteristic of the Middle Kingdom; we find it

also in the temple of Mentuhetep III at Thebes.

Some distance south of Dashûr is Mêdûm, where the pyramid of Sneferu

reigns in solitude, and beyond this again is Lisht, where in the

years 1894-6 MM. Gautier and Jéquier excavated the pyramid of Usertsen

(Sen-usret) I. The most remarkable find was a cache of the seated

statues of the king in white limestone, in absolutely perfect condition.

They were found lying on their sides, just as they had been hidden. Six

figures of the king in the form of Osiris, with the face painted red,

were also found. Such figures seem to have been regularly set up in

front of a royal sepulchre; several were found in front of the funerary

temple of Mentu-hetep III, Thebes, which we shall describe later. A

fine altar of gray granite, with representations in relief of the nomes

bringing offerings, was also recovered. The pyramid of Lisht itself is

not built of bricks, like those of Dashûr, but of stone. It was not,

however, erected in so solid a fashion as those of earlier days at Gîza

or Abusîr, and nothing is left of it now but a heap of débris. The XIIth

Dynasty architects built walls of magnificent masonry, as we have

seen, and there is no doubt that the stone casing of their pyramids

was originally very fine, but the interior is of brick or rubble; the

wonderful system of building employed by kings of the IVth Dynasty at

Giza was not practised.

South of Lisht is Illahun, and at the entrance to the province of the

Fayyûm, and west of this, nearer the Fayyûm, is Hawara, where Prof.

Petrie excavated the pyramids of Usertsen (Senusret) II and Amenem-hat

III. His discoveries have already been described by Prof. Maspero in his

history, so that it will suffice here merely to compare them with the

results of M. de Morgan’s later work at Dashûr and that of MM. Gautier

and Jéquier at Lisht, to note recent conclusions in connection with

them, and to describe the newest discoveries in the same region.

Both pyramids are of brick, lined with stone, like those of Dashûr, with

some differences of internal construction, since stone walls exist in

the interior. The central chambers and passages leading to them were

discovered; and in both cases the passages are peculiarly complex, with

dumb chambers, great stone portcullises, etc., in order to mislead

and block the way to possible plunderers. The extraordinary sepulchral

chamber of the Hawara pyramid, which, though it is over twenty-two feet

long by ten feet wide over all, is hewn out of one solid block of hard

yellow quartzite, gives some idea of the remarkable facility of dealing

with huge stones and the love of utilizing them which is especially

characteristic of the XIIth Dynasty. The pyramid of Hawara was provided

with a funerary temple the like of which had never been known in Egypt

before and was never known afterwards. It was a huge building far larger

than the pyramid itself, and built of fine limestone and crystalline

white quartzite, in a style eminently characteristic of the XIIth

Dynasty. In actual superficies this temple covered an extent of ground

within which the temples of Karnak, Luxor, and the Ramesseum, at Thebes,

could have stood, but has now almost entirely disappeared, having been

used as a quarry for two thousand years. In Roman times this destroying

process had already begun, but even then the building was still

magnificent, and had been noted with wonder by all the Greek visitors to

Egypt from the time of Herodotus downwards. Even before his day it

had received the name of the “Labyrinth,” on account of its supposed

resemblance to the original labyrinth in Crete.

That the Hawara temple was the Egyptian labyrinth was pointed out by

Lepsius in the ‘forties of the last century. Within the last two or

three years attention has again been drawn to it by Mr. Arthur Evans’s

discovery of the Cretan labyrinth itself in the shape of the Minoan

or early Mycenæan palace of Knossos, near Candia in Crete. It is

impossible to enter here into all the arguments by which it has been

proved that the Knossian palace is the veritable labyrinth of the

Minotaur legend, nor would it be strictly germane to our subject were we

to do so; but it may suffice to say here that the word

[Illustration: 125.jpg (Greek word)]

has been proved to be of Greek-or rather of pre-Hellenic-origin, and

would mean in Karian “Place of the Double-Axe,” like La-braunda in

Karia, where Zeus was depicted with a double axe (labrys) in his hand.

The non-Aryan, “Asianic,” group of languages, to which certainly Lycian

and probably Karian belong, has been shown by the German philologer

Kretschmer to have spread over Greece into Italy in the period before

the Aryan Greeks entered Hellas, and to have left undoubted traces of

its presence in Greek place-names and in the Greek language itself.

Before the true Hellenes reached Crete, an Asianic dialect must have

been spoken there, and to this language the word “labyrinth” must

originally have belonged. The classical labyrinth was “in the Knossian

territory.” The palace of Knossos was emphatically the chief seat of the

worship of a god whose emblem was the double-axe; it was the Knossian

“Place of the Double-Axe,” the Cretan “Labyrinth.”

It used to be supposed that the Cretan labyrinth had taken its name from

the Egyptian one, and the, word itself was supposed to be of Egyptian

origin. An Egyptian etymology was found for it as “\_Ro-pi-ro-henet\_,”

“Temple-mouth-canal,” which might be interpreted, with some violence to

Egyptian construction, as “The temple at the mouth of the canal,” i.e.

the Bahr Yusuf, which enters the Fayyûm at Hawara. But unluckily this

word would have been pronounced by the natives of the vicinity as

“Elphilahune,” which is not very much like

[Illustration: 126.jpg (Greek word)]

“\_Ro-pi-ro-henet\_” is, in fact, a mere figment of the philological

imagination, and cannot be proved ever to have existed. The element

\_Ro-henet\_, “canal-mouth” (according to the local pronunciation of the

Fayyûm and Middle Egypt, called \_La-hunè\_), is genuine; it is the

origin of the modern Illahun (\_el-Lahun\_), which is situated at the

“canal-mouth.” However, now that we know that the word labyrinth can be

explained satisfactorily with the help of Karian, as evidently of Greek

(pre-Aryan) origin, and as evidently the original name of the Knossian

labyrinth, it is obvious that there is no need to seek a far-fetched

explanation of the word in Egypt, and to suppose that the Greeks called

the Cretan labyrinth after the Egyptian one.

The contrary is evidently the case. Greek visitors to Egypt found a

resemblance between the great Egyptian building, with its numerous halls

and corridors, vast in extent, and the Knossian palace. Even if very

little of the latter was visible in the classical period, as seems

possible, yet the site seems always to have been kept holy and free from

later building till Roman times, and we know that the tradition of the

mazy halls and corridors of the labyrinth was always clear, and was

evidently based on a vivid reminiscence. Actually, one of the most

prominent characteristics of the Knossian palace is its mazy and

labyrinthine system of passages and chambers. The parallel between the

two buildings, which originally caused the Greek visitors to give the

pyramid-temple of Hawara the name of “labyrinth,” has been traced still

further. The white limestone walls and the shining portals of “Parian

marble,” described by Strabo as characteristic of the Egyptian

labyrinth, have been compared with the shining white selenite or gypsum

used at Knossos, and certain general resemblances between the Greek

architecture of the Minoan age and the almost contemporary Egyptian

architecture of the XIIth Dynasty have been pointed out.\* Such

resemblances may go to swell the amount of evidence already known, which

tells us that there was a close connection between Egyptian and Minoan

art and civilization, established at least as early as 2500 B.C.

\* See H. R. Hall, Journal of Hellenic Studies, 1905 (Pt.

ii). The Temple of the Sphinx at Gîza may also be compared

with those of Hawara and Knossos. It seems most probable

that the Temple of the Sphinx is a XIIth Dynasty building.

For it must be remembered that within the last few years we have learned

from the excavations in Crete a new chapter of ancient history, which,

it might almost seem, shows us Greece and Egypt in regular communication

from nearly the beginnings of Egyptian history. As the excavations which

have told us this were carried on in Crete, not in Egypt, to describe

them does not lie within the scope of this book, though a short sketch

of their results, so far as they affect Egyptian history in later days,

is given in Chapter VII. Here it may suffice to say that, as far as

the early period is concerned, Egypt and Crete were certainly in

communication in the time of the XIIth Dynasty, and quite possibly in

that of the VIth or still earlier. We have IIId Dynasty Egyptian vases

from Knossos, which were certainly not imported in later days, for no

ancient nation had antiquarian tastes till the time of the Saïtes in

Egypt and of the Romans still later. In fact, this communication seems

to go so far back in time that we are gradually being led to perceive

the possibility that the Minoan culture of Greece was in its origin an

offshoot from that of primeval Egypt, probably in early Neolithic times.

That is to say, the Neolithic Greeks and Neolithic Egyptians were both

members of the same “Mediterranean” stock, which quite possibly may have

had its origin in Africa, and a portion of which may have crossed the

sea to Europe in very early times, taking with it the seeds of culture

which in Egypt developed in the Egyptian way, in Greece in the Greek

way. Actual communication and connection may not have been maintained

at first, and probably they were not. Prof. Petrie thinks otherwise, and

would see in the boats painted on the predynastic Egyptian vases (see

Chapter I) the identical galleys by which, in late Neolithic

times, commerce between Crete and Egypt was carried on across the

Mediterranean. It is certain, however, that these boats are ordinary

little river craft, the usual Nile \_felûkas\_ and \_gyassas\_ of the time;

they are depicted together with emblems of the desert and cultivated

land,-ostriches, antelopes, hills, and palm-trees,-and the thoroughly

inland and Upper Egyptian character of the whole design springs to the

eye. There can be no doubt whatever that the predynastic boats were not

seagoing galleys.

It was probably not till the time of the pyramid-builders that

connection between the Greek Mediterraneans and the Nilotes was

re-established. Thence-forward it increased, and in the time of the

XIIth Dynasty, when the labyrinth of Amenemhat III was built, there

seems to have been some kind of more or less regular communication

between the two countries.

It is certain that artistic ideas were exchanged between them at this

period. How communication was carried on we do not know, but it was

probably rather by way of Cyprus and the Syrian coast than directly

across the open sea. We shall revert to this point when we come to

describe the connection between Crete and Egypt in the time of the

XVIIIth Dynasty, when Cretan ambassadors visited the Egyptian court and

were depicted in tomb paintings at Thebes. Between the time of the XIIth

Dynasty and that of the XVIIIth this connection seems to have been very

considerably strengthened; for at Knossos have been found an Egyptian

statuette of an Egyptian named Abnub, who from his name must have lived

about the end of the XIIIth Dynasty, and the top of an alabastron with

the royal name of Khian, one of the Hyksos kings.

Quite close to Hawara, at Illahun, in the ruins of the town which was

built by Usertsen’s workmen when they were building his pyramid, Prof.

Petrie found fragments of pottery of types which we now know well from

excavations in Crete and Cyprus, though they were then unknown. They are

fragments of the polychrome Cretan ware called, after the name of the

place where it was first found in Crete, Kamares ware, and of a black

ware ornamented with small punctures, which are often filled up with

white. This latter ware has been found elsewhere associated with XIIIth

Dynasty antiquities. The former is known to belong in Crete to the

“early Minoan” period, long anterior to the “late Minoan” or “Palace”

period, which was contemporary with the Egyptian XVIIIth Dynasty.

We have here another interesting proof of a connection between XIIth

Dynasty Egypt and early Minoan Crete. The later connection, under the

XVIIIth and following dynasties, is also illustrated in the same reign

by Prof. Petrie’s finds of late Mycenaean objects and foreign graves at

Medinet Gurob.\*

\* One man who was buried here bore the name An-Tursha,

“Pillar of the Tursha.” The Tursha were a people of the

Mediterranean, possibly Tylissians of Crete.

These excavations at Hawara, Illahun, Kahun, and Gurob were carried out

in the years 1887-9. Since then Prof. Petrie and his co-workers have

revisited the same district, and Gurob has been re-examined (in 1904)

by Messrs. Loat and Ayrton, who discovered there a shrine devoted to

the worship of fish. This work was carried on at the same time as Prof.

Petrie’s main excavation for the Egypt Exploration Fund at Annas, or

Ahnas-yet el-Medina, the site of the ancient Henensu, the Herakleopolis

of the Greeks. Prof. Naville had excavated there for the Egypt

Exploration Fund in 1892, but had not completely cleared the temple.

This work was now taken up by Prof. Petrie, who laid the whole building

bare. It is dedicated to Hershefi, the local deity of Herakleopolis.

This god, who was called Ar-saphes by the Greeks, and identified with

Herakles, was in fact a form of Horus with the head of a ram; his name

means “Terrible-Face.” The greater part of the temple dates to the time

of the XIXth Dynasty, and nothing of the early period is left. We know,

however, that the Middle Kingdom was the flourishing period of the

city of Hershefi. For a comparatively brief period, between the age of

Memphite hegemony and that of Theban dominion, Herakleopolis was the

capital city of Egypt. The kings of the IXth and Xth Dynasties were

Herakleopolites, though we know little of them. One, Kheti, is said to

have been a great tyrant. Another, Nebkaurâ, is known only as a figure

in the “Legend of the Eloquent Peasant,” a classical story much in vogue

in later days. Another, Merikarâ, is a more real personage, for we have

contemporary records of his days in the inscriptions of the tombs at

Asyût, from which we see that the princes of Thebes were already wearing

down the Northerners, in spite of the resistance of the adherents of

Herakleopolis, among whom the most valiant were the chiefs of Asyût. The

civil war eventuated in favour of Thebes, and the Theban XIth Dynasty

assumed the double crown. The sceptre passed from Memphis and the North,

and Thebes enters upon the scene of Egyptian history.

With this event the Nile-land also entered upon a new era of

development. The metropolis of the kingdom was once more shifted to the

South, and, although the kings of the XIIth Dynasty actually resided

in the North, their Theban origin was never forgotten, and Thebes

was regarded as the chief city of the country. The XIth Dynasty kings

actually reigned at Thebes, and there the later kings of the XIIIth

Dynasty retired after the conquest of the Hyksos. The fact that with

Thebes were associated all the heroic traditions of the struggle against

the Hyksos ensured the final stability of the capital there when the

hated Semites were finally driven out, and the national kingdom

was re-established in its full extent from north to south. But for

occasional intervals, as when Akhunaten held his court at Tell el-Amarna

and Ramses II at Tanis, Thebes remained the national capital for six

hundred years, till the time of the XXIId Dynasty.

Another great change which differentiates the Middle Kingdom

(XIth-XIIIth Dynasties) from the Old Kingdom was caused by Egypt’s

coming into contact with other outside nations at this period. During

the whole history of the Old Kingdom, Egyptian relations with the outer

world had been nil. We have some inkling of occasional connection

with the Mediterranean peoples, the \_Ha-nebu\_ or Northerners; we have

accounts of wars with the people of Sinai and other Bedawin and negroes;

and expeditions were also sent to the land of Punt (Somaliland) by way

of the Upper Nile. But we have not the slightest hint of any connection

with, or even knowledge of, the great nations of the Euphrates valley

or the peoples of Palestine. The Babylonian king Narâm-Sin invaded the

Sinaitic peninsula (the land of Magan) as early as 3750 b. c, about

the time of the IIId Egyptian Dynasty. The great King Tjeser, of that

dynasty, also invaded Sinai, and so did Snefru, the last king of the

dynasty. But we have no hint of any collision between Babylonians and

Egyptians at that time, nor do either of them betray the slightest

knowledge of one another’s existence. It can hardly be that the two

civilized peoples of the world in those days were really absolutely

ignorant of each other, but we have no trace of any connection between

them, other than the possible one before the founding of the Egyptian

monarchy.

This early connection, however, is very problematical. We have seen that

there seems to be in early Egyptian civilization an element ultimately

of Babylonian origin, and that there are two theories as to how it

reached Egypt. One supposes that it was brought by a Semitic people of

Arab affinities (represented by the modern Grallas), who crossed the

Straits of Bab el-Man-deb and reached Egypt either by way of the Wadi

Hammamat or by the Upper Nile. The other would bring it across the

Isthmus of Suez to the Delta, where, at Heliopolis, there certainly

seems to have been a settlement of a Semitic type of very ancient

culture. In both cases we should have Semites bringing Babylonian

culture to Egypt. This, as we may remind the reader, was not itself of

Semitic origin, but was a development due to a non-Semitic people,

the Sumerians as they are called, who, so far as we know, were the

aboriginal inhabitants of Babylonia. The Sumerian language was of

agglutinative type, radically distinct both from the pure Semitic idioms

and from Egyptian. The Babylonian elements of culture which the early

Semitic invaders brought with them to Egypt were, then, ultimately of

Sumerian origin. Sumerian civilization had profoundly influenced the

Semitic tribes for centuries before the Semitic conquest of Babylonia,

and when the Sumerians became more and more a conquered race, finally

amalgamating with their conquerors and losing their racial and

linguistic individuality, they were conquered by an alien race but not

by an alien culture. For the culture of the Semites was Sumerian, the

Semitic races owing their civilization to the Sumerians. That is as

much as to say that a great deal of what we call Semitic culture is

fundamentally non-Semitic.

In the earliest days, then, Egypt received elements of Sumerian culture

through a Semitic medium, which introduced Semitic elements into the

language of the people, and a Semitic racial strain. It is possible.

that both theories as to the routes of these primeval conquerors are

true, and that two waves of Semites entered the Nile valley towards

the close of the Neolithic period, one by way of the Upper Nile or Wadi

Hammamat, the other by way of Heliopolis.

After the reconsolidation of the Egyptian people, with perhaps an

autocratic class of Semitic origin and a populace of indigenous Nilotic

race, we have no trace of further connection with the far-away centre of

Semitic culture in Babylonia till the time of the Theban hegemony.

Under the XIIth Dynasty we see Egyptians in friendly relations with the

Bedawin of Idumsea and Southern Palestine. Thus Sanehat, the younger son

of Amenemhat I, when the death of his royal father was announced, fled

from the new king Usertsen (Senusret) into Palestine, and there married

the daughter of the chief Ammuanshi and became a Syrian chief himself,

only finally returning to Egypt as an old man on the assurance of the

royal pardon and favour. We have in the reign of Usertsen (Senusret) II

the famous visit of the Arab chief Abisha (Abêshu’) with his following

to the court of Khnumhetep, the prince of the Oryx nome in Middle Egypt,

as we see it depicted on the walls of Khnumhetep’s tomb at Beni Hasan.

We see Usertsen (Senusret) III invading Palestine to chastise the land

of Sekmem and the vile Syrians.\*

\* We know of this campaign from the interesting historical

stele of the general Sebek-khu (who took part in it), which

was found during Mr. Garstang’s excavations at Abydos, not

previously referred to above. They were carried out in 1900,

and resulted in the complete clearance of a part of the

great cemetery which had been created during the XIIth

Dynasty. The group of objects from the tombs of this

cemetery, and those of XVIIIth Dynasty tombs also found, is

especially valuable as showing the styles of objects in use

at these two periods (see Garstang, el-Ardbah, 1901).

The arm of Egypt was growing longer, and its weight was being felt in

regions where it had previously been entirely unknown. Eventually the

collision came. Egypt collided with an Asiatic power, and got the worst

of the encounter. So much the worse that the Theban monarchy of the

Middle Kingdom was overthrown, and Northern Egypt was actually conquered

by the Asiatic foreigners and ruled by a foreign house for several

centuries. Who these conquering Hyksos, or Shepherd Kings, were no

recent discovery has told us. An old idea was that they were Mongols. It

was supposed that the remarkable faces of the sphinxes of Tanis, now

in the Cairo Museum, which bore the names of Hyksos kings, were of

Mongolian type, as also those of two colossal royal heads discovered

by M. Naville at Bubastis. But M. Golénischeff has now shown that these

heads are really those of XIIth Dynasty kings, and not of Hyksos at all.

Messrs. Newberry and Garstang have lately endeavoured to show that this

type was foreign, and probably connected with that of the Kheta, or

Hittites, of Northern Syria, who came into prominence as enemies of

Egypt at a later period. They think that the type was introduced into

the Egyptian royal family by Nefret, the queen of Usertsen (Senusret)

II, whom they suppose to have been a Hittite princess. At the same time

they think it probable that the type was also that of the Hyksos, whom

they consider to have been practically Hittites. They therefore revive

the theory of de Cara, which connects the Hyksos with the Hittites and

these with the Pelasgi and Tyrseni.

This is a very interesting theory, which, when carried out to its

logical conclusion, would connect the Hyksos and Hittites racially with

the pre-Hellenic “Minoan” Mycenseans of Greece, as well as with the

Etruscans of Italy. But there is little of certainty in it. It is by no

means impossible that we may eventually come to know that the Hittites

(\_Kheta\_, the \_Khatte\_ of the Assyrians) and other tribes of Asia

Minor were racially akin to the “Minoans” of Greece, but the connection

between the Hyksos and the Hittites is to seek. The countenances of the

Kheta on the Egyptian monuments of Ramses II’s time have an angular

cast, and so have those of the Tanis sphinxes, of Queen Nefret, of

the Bubastis statues, and the statues of Usertsen (Senusret) III

and Amenemhat III. We might then suppose, with Messrs. Newberry and

Garstang, that Nefret was a Kheta princess, who gave her peculiar racial

traits to her son Usertsen (Senusret) III and his son Amenem-hat, were

it not far more probable that the resemblance between this peculiar

XIIth Dynasty type and the Kheta face is purely fortuitous.

There is really no reason to suppose that the type of face presented by

Nefret, Usertsen, and Amenemhat is not purely Egyptian. It may be seen

in many a modern fellah, and the truth probably is that the sculptors

have in the case of these rulers very faithfully and carefully depicted

their portraits, and that their faces happen to have been of a rather

hard and forbidding type. But, if we grant the contention of Messrs.

Newberry and Garstang for the moment, where is the connection between

these XIIth Dynasty kings and the Hyksos? All the Tanite monuments with

this peculiar facial type which would be considered Hyksos are certainly

of the XIIth Dynasty. The only statue of a Hyksos king, which was

undoubtedly originally made for him and is not one of the XIIth Dynasty

usurped, is the small one of Khian at Cairo, discovered by M. Naville at

Bubastis, and this has no head. So that we have not the slightest idea

of what a Hyksos looked like. Moreover, the evidence of the Hyksos names

which are known to us points in quite a different direction. The Kheta,

or Hittites, were certainly not Semites, yet the Hyksos names are

definitely Semitic. In fact it is most probable that the Hyksos, or

Shepherd Kings, were, as the classical authorities say they were, and as

their name (\_hiku-semut\_ or \_hihu-shasu\_,) “princes of the deserts” or

(“princes of the Bedawîn”) also testifies, purely and simply Arabs.

Now it is not a little curious that almost at the same time that a nomad

Arab race conquered Lower Egypt and settled in it as rulers (just as

‘Amr and the followers of Islam did over two thousand years later),

another Arab race may have imposed its rule upon Babylonia. Yet this

may have been the case; for the First Dynasty of Babylon, to which the

famous Hammurabi belonged, was very probably of Arab origin, to judge by

the forms of some of the royal names. It is by no means impossible that

there was some connection between these two conquests, and that both

Babylonia and Egypt fell, in the period before the year 2000 B.C. before

some great migratory movement from Arabia, which overran Babylonia,

Palestine, and even the Egyptian Delta.

In this manner Egypt and Babylonia may have been brought together

in common subjection to the Arab. We do not know whether any regular

communication between Egypt, under Semitic rule, and Babylonia was now

established; but we do know that during the Hyksos period there were

considerable relations between Egypt and over-sea Crete, and relations

with Mesopotamia may possibly have been established. At any rate, when

the war of liberation, which was directed by the princes of Thebes, was

finally brought to a successful conclusion and the Arabs were expelled,

we find the Egyptians a much changed nation. They had adopted for war

the use of horse and chariot, which they learnt from their Semitic

conquerors, whose victory was in all probability largely gained by their

use, and, generally speaking, they had become much more like the Western

Asiatic nations. Egypt was no longer isolated, for she had been forcibly

brought into contact with the foreign world, and had learned much.

She was no longer self-contained within her own borders. If the Semites

could conquer her, so could she conquer the Semites. Armed with horse

and chariot, the Egyptians went forth to battle, and their revenge was

complete. All Palestine and Syria were Egyptian domains for five hundred

years after the conquest by Thothmes I and III, and Ashur and Babel sent

tribute to the Pharaoh of Egypt.

The reaction came, and Egypt was thrown prostrate beneath the feet of

Assyria; but her claim to dominion over the Western Asiatics was never

abandoned, and was revived in all its pomp by Ptolemy Euergetes, who

brought back in triumph to Egypt the images of the gods which had been

removed by Assyrians and Babylonians centuries before. This claim was

never allowed by the Asiatics, it is true, and their kings wrote to the

proudest Pharaoh as to an absolute equal. Even the King of Cyprus calls

the King of Egypt his brother. But Palestine was admitted to be

an Egyptian possession, and the Phoenicians were always energetic

supporters of the Egyptian régime against the lawless Bedawîn tribes,

who were constantly intriguing with the Kheta or Hittite power to the

north against Egypt.

The existence of this extra-Egyptian imperial possession meant that the

eyes of the Egyptians were now permanently turned in the direction of

Western Asia, with which they were henceforth in constant and intimate

communication. The first Theban period and the Hyksos invasion,

therefore, mark a turning-point in Egyptian history, at which we may

fitly leave it for a time in order to turn our attention to those

peoples of Western Asia with whom the Egyptians had now come into

permanent contact.

Just as new discoveries have been made in Egypt, which have modified our

previous conception of her history, so also have the excavators of

the ancient sites in the Mesopotamian valley made, during the last few

years, far-reaching discoveries, which have enabled us to add to and

revise much of our knowledge of the history of Babylonia and Assyria. In

Palestine and the Sinaitic peninsula also the spade has been used with

effect, but a detailed account of work in Sinai and Palestine falls

within the limits of a description of Biblical discoveries rather than

of this book. The following chapters will therefore deal chiefly with

modern discoveries which have told us new facts with regard to the

history of the ancient Sumerians themselves, and of the Babylonians,

Elamites, Kassites, and Assyrians, the inheritors of the ancient

Sumerian civilization, which was older than that of Egypt, and which, as

we have seen, probably contributed somewhat to its formation. These

were the two primal civilizations of the ancient world. For two thousand

years each marched upon a solitary road, without meeting the other.

Eventually the two roads converged. We have hitherto dealt with the road

of the Egyptians; we now describe that of the Mesopotamians, up to the

point of convergence.

CHAPTER IV--RECENT EXCAVATIONS IN WESTERN ASIA AND THE DAWN OF CHALDÆAN HISTORY

In the preceding pages it has been shown how recent excavations in Egypt

have revealed an entirely new chapter in the history of that country,

and how, in consequence, our theories with regard to the origin of

Egyptian civilization have been entirely remodelled. Excavations have

been and are being carried out in Mesopotamia and the adjacent countries

with no less enthusiasm and energy than in Egypt itself, and, although

it cannot be said that they have resulted in any sweeping modification

of our conceptions with regard to the origin and kinship of the early

races of Western Asia, yet they have lately added considerably to our

knowledge of the ancient history of the countries in that region of the

world. This is particularly the case in respect of the Sumerians, who,

so far as we know at present, were the earliest inhabitants of the

fertile plains of Mesopotamia. The beginnings of this ancient people

stretch back into the remote past, and their origin is still shrouded in

the mists of antiquity. When first we come across them they have already

attained a high level of civilization. They have built temples and

palaces and houses of burnt and unburnt brick, and they have reduced

their system of agriculture to a science, intersecting their country

with canals for purposes of irrigation and to ensure a good supply of

water to their cities. Their sculpture and pottery furnish abundant

evidence that they have already attained a comparatively high level in

the practice of the arts, and finally they have evolved a complicated

system of writing which originally had its origin in picture-characters,

but afterwards had been developed along phonetic lines. To have attained

to this pitch of culture argues long periods of previous development,

and we must conclude that they had been settled in Southern Babylonia

many centuries before the period to which we must assign the earliest of

their remains at present discovered.

That this people were not indigenous to Babylonia is highly probable,

but we have little data by which to determine the region from which

they originally came. Prom the fact that they built their ziggurats, or

temple towers, of huge masses of unburnt brick which rose high above

the surrounding plain, and that their ideal was to make each “like a

mountain,” it has been argued that they were a mountain race, and the

home from which they sprang has been sought in Central Asia. Other

scholars have detected signs of their origin in their language and

system of writing, and, from the fact that they spoke an agglutinative

tongue and at the earliest period arranged the characters of their

script in vertical lines like the Chinese, it has been urged that

they were of Mongol extraction. Though a case may be made out for this

hypothesis, it would be rash to dogmatize for or against it, and it is

wiser to await the discovery of further material on which a more certain

decision may be based. But whatever their origin, it is certain that the

Sumerians exercised an extraordinary influence on all races with

which, either directly or indirectly, they came in contact. The ancient

inhabitants of Elam at a very early period adopted in principle

their method of writing, and afterwards, living in isolation in the

mountainous districts of Persia, developed it on lines of their own. [\*

See Chap. V, and note.] On their invasion of Babylonia the Semites

fell absolutely under Sumerian influence, and, although they eventually

conquered and absorbed the Sumerians, their civilization remained

Sumerian to the core. Moreover, by means of the Semitic inhabitants of

Babylonia Sumerian culture continued to exert its influence on other

and more distant races. We have already seen how a Babylonian element

probably enters into Egyptian civilization through Semitic infiltration

across the Straits of Bab el-Mandeb or by way of the Isthmus of Suez,

and it was Sumerian culture which these Semites brought with them.

In like manner, through the Semitic Babylonians, the Assyrians, the

Kassites, and the inhabitants of Palestine and Syria, and of some

parts of Asia Minor, Armenia, and Kurdistan, all in turn experienced

indirectly the influence of Sumerian civilization and continued in a

greater or less degree to reproduce elements of this early culture.

It will be seen that the influence of the Sumerians furnishes us with

a key to much that would otherwise prove puzzling in the history of the

early races of Western Asia. It is therefore all the more striking to

recall the fact that but a few years ago the very existence of this

ancient people was called in question. At that time the excavations in

Mesopotamia had not revealed many traces of the race itself, and its

previous existence had been mainly inferred from a number of Sumerian

compositions inscribed upon Assyrian tablets found in the library

of Ashur-bani-pal at Nineveh. These compositions were furnished with

Assyrian translations upon the tablets on which they were inscribed,

and it was correctly argued by the late Sir Henry Rawlinson, the late M.

Oppert, Prof. Schrader, Prof. Sayce, and other scholars that they were

written in the language of the earlier inhabitants of the country whom

the Semitic Babylonians had displaced. But M. Halévy started a theory to

the effect that Sumerian was not a language at all, in the proper sense

of the term, but was a cabalistic method of writing invented by the

Semitic Babylonian priests.

[Illustration: 147.jpg LIST OF ARCHAIC CUNEIFORM SIGNS.

Drawn up by an Assyrian scribe to assist him in his studies

of early texts. Photograph by Messrs. Mansell & Co.

The argument on which the upholders of this theory mainly relied was

that many of the phonetic values of the Sumerian signs were obviously

derived from Semitic equivalents, and they hastily jumped to the

conclusion that the whole language was similarly derived from Semitic

Babylonian, and was, in fact, a purely arbitrary invention of the

Babylonian priests. This theory ignored all questions of inherent

probability, and did not attempt to explain why the Babylonian priests

should have troubled themselves to make such an invention and afterwards

have stultified themselves by carefully appending Assyrian translations

to the majority of the Sumerian compositions which they copied out.

Moreover, the nature of these compositions is not such as we should

expect to find recorded in a cabalistic method of writing. They contain

no secret lore of the Babylonian priests, but are merely hymns and

prayers and religious compositions similar to those employed by the

Babylonians and Assyrians themselves.

But in spite of its inherent improbabilities, M. Halévy succeeded in

making many converts to his theory, including Prof. Friedrich Delitzsch

and a number of the younger school of German Assyriologists. More

conservative scholars, such as Sir Henry Rawlinson, M. Oppert, and Prof.

Schrader, stoutly opposed the theory, maintaining that Sumerian was a

real language and had been spoken by an earlier race whom the Semitic

Babylonians had conquered; and they explained the resemblance of some of

the Sumerian values to Semitic roots by supposing that Sumerian had

not been suddenly superseded by the language of the Semitic invaders

of Babylonia, but that the two tongues had been spoken for long periods

side by side and that each had been strongly influenced by the other.

This very probable and sane explanation has been fully corroborated

by subsequent excavations, particularly those that were carried out at

Telloh in Southern Babylonia by the late M. de Sarzec. In these mounds,

which mark the site of the ancient Sumerian city of Shirpurla, were

found thousands of clay tablets inscribed in archaic characters and in

the Sumerian language, proving that it had actually been the language of

the early inhabitants of Babylonia; while the examples of their art and

the representations of their form and features, which were also afforded

by the diggings at Telloh, proved once for all that the Sumerians were

a race of strongly marked characteristics and could not be ascribed to a

Semitic stock.

The system of writing invented by the ancient Sumerians was adopted by

the Semitic Babylonians, who modified it to suit their own language.

Moreover, the archaic forms of the characters, many of which under the

Sumerians still retained resemblances to the pictures of objects from

which they were descended, were considerably changed. The lines, of

which they were originally composed, gave way to wedges, and the number

of the wedges of which each sign consisted was gradually diminished, so

that in the time of the Assyrians and the later Babylonians many of the

characters bore small resemblance to the ancient Sumerian forms

from which they had been derived. The reading of Sumerian and early

Babylonian inscriptions by the late Assyrian scribes was therefore an

accomplishment only to be acquired as the result of long study, and it

is interesting to note that as an assistance to the reading of these

early texts the scribes compiled lists of archaic signs. Sometimes

opposite each archaic character they drew a picture of the object from

which they imagined it was derived. This fact is significant as proving

that the Assyrian scribes recognized the pictorial origin of cuneiform

writing, but the pictures they drew opposite the signs are rather

fanciful, and it cannot be said that their guesses were very successful.

That we are able to criticize the theories of the Assyrians as to the

origin and forms of the early characters is in the main due to M. de

Sarzec’s labours, from whose excavations many thousands of inscriptions

of the Sumerians have been recovered.

The main results of M. de Sarzec’s diggings at Telloh have already been

described by M. Maspero in his history, and therefore we need not go

over them again, but will here confine ourselves to the results which

have been obtained from recent excavations at Telloh and at other sites

in Western Asia. With the death of M. de Sarzec, which occurred in his

sixty-fifth year, on May 31, 1901, the wonderfully successful series of

excavations which he had carried out at Telloh was brought to an end. In

consequence it was feared at the time that the French diggings on this

site might be interrupted for a considerable period. Such an event would

have been regretted by all those who are interested in the early history

of the East, for, in spite of the treasures found by M. de Sarzec in the

course of his various campaigns, it was obvious that the site was far

from being exhausted, and that the tells as yet unexplored contained

inscriptions and antiquities extending back to the very earliest periods

of Sumerian history.

[Illustration: 150.jpg FRAGMENT OF A LIST OF ARCHAIC CUNEIFORM SIGNS.]

Opposite each the scribe has drawn a picture of the object

from which he imagined it was derived. Photograph by Messrs.

Mansell & Co.

The announcement which was made in 1902, that the French government had

appointed Capt. Gaston Cros as the late M. de Sarzec’s successor, was

therefore received with general satisfaction. The fact that Capt. Cros

had already successfully carried out several difficult topographical

missions in the region of the Sahara was a sufficient guarantee that the

new diggings would be conducted on a systematic and exhaustive scale.

The new director of the French mission in Chaldæa arrived at Telloh in

January, 1903, and one of his first acts was to shift the site of the

mission’s settlement from the bank of the Shatt el-Hai, where it had

always been established in the time of M. de Sarzec, to the mounds where

the actual digging took place. The Shatt el-Hai had been previously

chosen as the site of the settlement to ensure a constant supply of

water, and as it was more easily protected against attack by night.

But the fact that it was an hour’s ride from the diggings caused an

unnecessary loss of time, and rendered the strict supervision of the

diggers a matter of considerable difficulty. During the first season’s

work rough huts of reeds, surrounded by a wall of earth and a ditch,

served the new expedition for its encampment among the mounds of Telloh,

but last year these makeshift arrangements were superseded by a regular

house built out of the burnt bricks which are found in abundance on the

site. A reservoir has also been built, and caravans of asses bring water

in skins from the Shatt el-Hai to keep it filled with a constant supply

of water, while the excellent relations which Capt. Cros has established

with the Karagul Arabs, who occupy Telloh and its neighbourhood, have

proved to be the best kind of protection for the mission engaged in

scientific work upon the site.

The group of mounds and hillocks, known as Telloh, which marks the site

of the ancient Sumerian city of Shirpurla, is easily distinguished from

the flat surrounding desert. The mounds extend in a rough oval formation

running north and south, about two and a half miles long and one and a

quarter broad. In the early spring, when the desert is covered with a

light green verdure, the ruins are clearly marked out as a yellow spot

in the surrounding green, for vegetation does not grow upon them. In the

centre of this oval, which approximately marks the limits of the ancient

city and its suburbs, are four large tells or mounds running, roughly,

north and south, their sides descending steeply on the east, but with

their western slopes rising by easier undulations from the plain. These

four principal tells are known as the “Palace Tell,” the “Tell of the

Fruit-house,” the “Tell of the Tablets,” and the “Great Tell,” and,

rising as they do in the centre of the site, they mark the position of

the temples and the other principal buildings of the city.

An indication of the richness of the site in antiquities was afforded

to the new mission before it had started regular excavation and while

it was yet engaged in levelling its encampment and surrounding it with a

wall and ditch. The spot selected for the camp was a small mound to the

south of the site of Telloh, and here, in the course of preparing the

site for the encampment and digging the ditch, objects were found at

a depth of less than a foot beneath the surface of the soil. These

included daggers, copper vases, seal-cylinders, rings of lapis and

cornelian, and pottery. M. de Sarzec had carried out his latest

diggings in the Tell of the Tablets, and here Capt. Cros continued

the excavations and came upon the remains of buildings and recovered

numerous objects, dating principally from the period of Gudea and

the kings of Ur. The finds included small terra-cotta figures, a

boundary-stone of Gamil-Sin, and a new statue of Gudea, to which we will

refer again presently.

In the Tell of the Fruit-house M. de Sarzec had already discovered

numbers of monuments dating from the earlier periods of Sumerian history

before the conquest and consolidation of Babylonia under Sargon of

Agade, and had excavated a primitive terrace built by the early king

Ur-Ninâ. Both on and around this large mound Capt. Cros cut an extensive

series of trenches, and in digging to the north of the mound he found a

number of objects, including an alabaster tablet of Ente-mena which had

been blackened by fire. At the foot of the tell he found a copper helmet

like those represented on the famous Stele of Vultures discovered by

M. de Sarzec, and among the tablets here recovered was one with an

inscription of the time of Urukagina, which records the complete

destruction of the city of Shirpurla during his reign, and will be

described in greater detail later on in this chapter. On the mound

itself a considerable area was uncovered with remains of buildings

still in place, the use of which appears to have been of an industrial

character. They included flights of steps, canals with raised banks,

and basins for storing water. Not far off are the previously discovered

wells of Bannadu, so that it is legitimate to suppose that Capt. Cros

has here come upon part of the works which were erected at a very early

period of Sumerian history for the distribution of water to this portion

of the city.

[Illustration: 154.jpg Obelisk of Manishtusu.]

An early Semitic king of the city of Kish in Babylonia. The

photograph is taken from M. de Morgan’s Delegation en Perse,

M’em., t. i, pi. ix.

In the Palace Tell Capt. Cros has sunk a series of deep shafts to

determine precisely the relations which the buildings of Ur-Bau and

Gudea, found already on this part of the site, bear to each other, and

to the building of Adad-nadin-akhê, which had been erected there at

a much later period. Prom this slight sketch of the work carried out

during the last two years at Telloh it will have been seen that the

Prench mission in Chaldæa is at present engaged in excavations of a

most important character, which are being conducted in a regular and

scientific manner. As the area of the excavations marks the site of the

chief city of the Sumerians, the diggings there have yielded and

are yielding material of the greatest interest and value for the

reconstruction of the early history of Chaldæa. After briefly describing

the character and results of other recent excavations in Mesopotamia and

the neighbouring lands, we will return to the discoveries at Telloh and

sketch the new information they supply on the history of the earliest

inhabitants of the country.

Another French mission that is carrying out work of the very greatest

interest to the student of early Babylonian history is that which is

excavating at Susa in Persia, under the direction of M. J. de Morgan,

whose work on the prehistoric and early dynastic sites in Egypt has

already been described. M. de Morgan’s first season’s digging at Susa

was carried out in the years 1897-8, and the success with which he met

from the very first, when cutting trenches in the mound which marks

the acropolis of the ancient city, has led him to concentrate his main

efforts in this part of the ruins ever since. Provisional trenches cut

in the part of the ruins called “the Royal City,” and in others of the

mounds at Susa, indicate that many remains may eventually be found there

dating from the period of the Achæmenian Kings of Persia. But it is in

the mound of the acropolis at Susa that M. de Morgan has found monuments

of the greatest historical interest and value, not only in the history

of ancient Elam, but also in that of the earliest rulers of Chaldæa.

In the diggings carried out during the first season’s work on the site,

an obelisk was found inscribed on four sides with a long text of some

sixty-nine columns, written in Semitic Babylonian by the orders

of Manishtusu, a very early Semitic king of the city of Kish in

Babylonia.[\* See illustration.] The text records the purchase by the

King of Kish of immense tracts of land situated at Kish and in

its neighbourhood, and its length is explained by the fact that it

enumerates full details of the size and position of each estate, and the

numbers and some of the names of the dwellers on the estates who were

engaged in their cultivation. After details have been given of a number

of estates situated in the same neighbourhood, a summary is appended

referring to the whole neighbourhood, and the fact is recorded that the

district dealt with in the preceding catalogue and summary had been duly

acquired by purchase by Manishtusu, King of Kish. The long text upon

the obelisk is entirely taken up with details of the purchase of the

territory, and therefore its subject has not any great historical value.

Mention is made in it of two personages, one of whom may possibly

be identified with a Babylonian ruler whose name is known from other

sources. If the proposed identification t should prove to be correct,

it would enable us to assign a more precise date to Manishtusu than has

hitherto been possible. One of the personages in question was a certain

Urukagina, the son of Engilsa, patesi of Shirpurla, and it has been

suggested that he is the same Urukagina who is known to have occupied

the throne of Shirpurla, though this identification would bring

Manishtusu down somewhat later than is probable from the general

character of his inscriptions. The other personage mentioned in the text

is the son of Manishtusu, named Mesalim, and there is more to be said

for the identification of this prince with Mesilim, the early King of

Kish, who reigned at a period anterior to that of Eannadu, patesi of

Shirpurla.

The mere fact of so large and important an obelisk, inscribed with a

Semitic text by an early Babylonian king, being found at Susa was

an indication that other monuments of even greater interest might be

forthcoming from the same spot; and this impression was intensified when

a stele of victory was found bearing an inscription of Naram-Sin, the

early Semitic King of Agade, who reigned about 3750 B.C. One face of

this stele is sculptured with a representation of the king conquering

his enemies in a mountainous country. [\* See illustration.] The king

himself wears a helmet adorned with the horns of a bull, and he carries

his battle-axe and his bow and an arrow. He is nearly at the summit of

a high mountain, and up its steep sides, along paths through the

trees which clothe the mountain, climb his allies and warriors bearing

standards and weapons. The king’s enemies are represented suing for

mercy as they turn to fly before him. One grasps a broken spear, while

another, crouching before the king, has been smitten in the throat by an

arrow from the king’s bow. On the plain surface of the stele above the

king’s head may be seen traces of an inscription of Narâm-Sin engraved

in three columns in the archaic characters of his period. From the few

signs of the text that remain, we gather that Narâm-Sin had conducted

a campaign with the assistance of certain allied princes, including the

Princes of Sidur, Saluni, and Lulubi, and it is not improbable that

they are to be identified with the warriors represented on the stele as

climbing the mountain behind Narâm-Sin.

In reference to this most interesting stele of Narâm-Sin we may here

mention another inscription of this king, found quite recently at

Susa and published only this year, which throws additional light on

Narâm-Sin’s allies and on the empire which he and his father Sargon

founded. The new inscription was engraved on the base of a diorite

statue, which had been broken to pieces so that only the base with

a portion of the text remained. From this inscription we learn that

Narâm-Sin was the head of a confederation of nine chief allies, or

vassal princes, and waged war on his enemies with their assistance.

Among these nine allies of course the Princes of Sidur, Saluni, and

Lulubi are to be included. The new text further records that Narâm-Sin

made an expedition against Magan (the Sinaitic peninsula), and defeated

Manium, the lord of that region, and that he cut blocks of stone in the

mountains there and transported them to his city of Agade, where

from one of them he made the statue on the base of which the text was

inscribed. It was already known from the so-called “Omens of Sargon

and Narâm-Sin” (a text inscribed on a clay tablet from Ashur-bani-pal’s

library at Nineveh which associates the deeds of these two early rulers

with certain augural phenomena) that Narâm-Sin had made an expedition

to Sinai in the course of his reign and had conquered the king of the

country. The new text gives contemporary confirmation of this assertion

and furnishes us with additional information with regard to the name of

the conquered ruler of Sinai and other details of the campaign.

That monuments of such great interest to the early history of Chaldæa

should have been found at Susa in Persia was sufficiently startling,

but an easy explanation was at first forthcoming from the fact that

Narâm-Sin’s stele of victory had been used by the later Elamite king,

Shutruk-Nakhkhunte, for an inscription of his own; this he had engraved

in seven long lines along the great cone in front of Narâm-Sin, which is

probably intended to represent the peak of the mountain. From the fact

that it had been used in this way by Shutruk-Nakhkhunte, it seemed

permissible to infer that it had been captured in the course of a

campaign and brought to Susa as a trophy of war. But we shall see later

on that the existence of early Babylonian inscriptions and monuments in

the mound of the acropolis at Susa is not to be explained in this way,

but was due to the wide extension of both Sumerian and Semitic influence

throughout Western Asia from the very earliest periods. This subject

will be treated more fully in the chapter dealing with the early history

of Blam.

The upper surface of the tell of the acropolis at Susa for a depth of

nearly two metres contains remains of the buildings and antiquities

of the Achæmenian kings and others of both later and earlier dates.

In these upper strata of the mound are found remains of the

Arab, Sassanian, Parthian, Seleucian, and Persian periods, mixed

indiscriminately with one another and with Elamite objects and materials

of all ages, from that of the earliest patesis down to that of the

Susian kings of the seventh century B.C.

[Illustration: 160.jpg BABIL.]

The most northern of the mounds which now mark the site of

the ancient city of Babylon; used for centuries as a quarry

for building materials.

The reason of this mixture of the remains of many races and periods is

that the later builders on the mound made use of the earlier building

materials which they found preserved within it. Along the skirts of the

mound may still be seen the foundations of the wall which formed the

principal defence of the acropolis in the time of Xerxes, and in many

places not only are the foundations preserved but large pieces of the

wall itself still rise above the surface of the soil.

[Illustration: 160a.jpg “STELE OF VICTORY”]

[Illustration: 160a-text.jpg TEXT FOR “STELE OF VICTORY”]

Stele of Narâm-Sin, an early Semitic King of Agade in

Babylonia, who reigned about B. C. 3750. From the photograph

by Messrs. Mansell & Co.

The plan of the wall is quite irregular, following the contours of the

mound, and, though it is probable that the wall was strengthened and

defended at intervals by towers, no trace of these now remains. The

wall is very thick and built of unburnt bricks, and the system of

fortification seems to have been extremely simple at this period.

[Illustration: 161.jpg ROUGHLY HEWN SCULPTURE OF A LION STANDING OVER A

FALLEN MAN, FOUND AT BABYLON.]

The group probably represents Babylon or the Babylonian king

triumphing over the country’s enemies. The Arabs regard the

figure as an evil spirit, and it is pitted with the marks of

bullets shot at it. They also smear it with filth when they

can do so unobserved; in the photograph some newly smeared

filth may be seen adhering to the side of the lion.

The earlier citadel or fortress of the city of Susa was built at the top

of the mound and must have been a more formidable stronghold than that

of the Achæmenian kings, for, besides its walls, it had the additional

protection of the steep slopes of the mound.

Below the depth of two metres from the surface of the mound are found

strata in which Elamite objects and materials are, no longer mixed with

the remains of later ages, but here the latest Elamite remains are found

mingled with objects and materials dating from the earliest periods of

Elam’s history. The use of un-burnt bricks as the principal material

for buildings erected on the mound in all ages has been another cause

of this mixture of materials, for it has little power of resistance to

water, and a considerable rain-storm will wash away large portions

of the surface and cause the remains of different strata to be mixed

indiscriminately with one another. In proportion as the trenches were

cut deeper into the mound the strata which were laid bare showed remains

of earlier ages than those in the upper layers, though here also remains

of different periods are considerably mixed. The only building that has

hitherto been discovered at Susa by M. de Morgan, the ground plan of

which was in a comparatively good state of preservation, was a small

temple of the god Shu-shinak, and this owed its preservation to the

fact that it was not built of unburnt brick, but was largely composed of

burnt brick and plaques and tiles of enamelled terra-cotta.

But although the diggings of M. de Morgan at Susa have so far afforded

little information on the subject of Elamite architecture, the separate

objects found have enabled us to gain considerable knowledge of the

artistic achievements of the race during the different periods of

its existence. Moreover, the stelæ and stone records that have been

recovered present a wealth of material for the study of the long history

of Elam and of the kings who ruled in Babylonia during the earliest

ages.

[Illustration: 163.jpg GENERAL VIEW OF THE EXCAVATIONS ON THE KASR AT

BABYLON.]

Showing the depth in the mound to which the diggings are

carried.

The most famous of M. de Morgan’s recent finds is the long code of

laws drawn up by Hammurabi, the greatest king of the First Dynasty of

Babylon.\* This was engraved upon a huge block of black diorite, and

was found in the tell of the acropolis in the winter of 1901-2. This

document in itself has entirely revolutionized current theories as to

the growth and origin of the principal ancient legal codes. It proves

that Babylonia was the fountainhead from which many later races borrowed

portions of their legislative systems. Moreover, the subjects dealt

with in this code of laws embrace most of the different classes of the

Babylonian people, and it regulates their duties and their relations

to one another in their ordinary occupations and pursuits. It therefore

throws much light upon early Babylonian life and customs, and we shall

return to it in the chapter dealing with these subjects.

\* It will be noted that the Babylonian dynasties are

referred to throughout this volume as “First Dynasty,”

“Second Dynasty,” “Third Dynasty,” etc. They are thus

distinguished from the Egyptian dynasties, the order of

which is indicated by Roman numerals, e.g. “Ist Dynasty,”

“IId Dynasty,” “IIId Dynasty.”

The American excavators at Nippur, under the direction of Mr. Haynes,

have done much in the past to increase our knowledge of Sumerian and

early Babylonian history, but the work has not been continued in

recent years, and, unfortunately, little progress has been made in the

publication of the material already accumulated. In fact, the leadership

in American excavation has passed from the University of Pennsylvania to

that of Chicago. This progressive university has sent out an expedition,

under the general direction of Prof. R. F. Harper (with Dr. E. J. Banks

as director of excavations), which is doing excellent work at Bismya,

and, although it is too early yet to expect detailed accounts of their

achievements, it is clear that they have already met with considerable

success. One of their recent finds consists of a white marble statue of

an early Sumerian king named Daudu, which was set up in the temple of

E-shar in the city of Udnun, of which he was ruler. From its archaic

style of workmanship it may be placed in the earliest period of Sumerian

history, and may be regarded as an earnest of what may be expected to

follow from the future labours of Prof. Harper’s expedition.

[Illustration: 165.jpg WITHIN THE PALACE OF NEBUCHADNEZZAR II.]

At Fâra and at Abû Hatab in Babylonia, the Deutsch-Orient Gesellschaft,

under Dr. Koldewey’s direction, has excavated Sumerian and Babylonian

remains of the early period. At the former site they unearthed the

remains of many private houses and found some Sumerian tablets of

accounts and commercial documents, but little of historical interest;

and an inscription, which seems to have come from Abu Hatab, probably

proves that the Sumerian name of the city whose site it marks was

Kishurra. But the main centre of German activity in Babylonia is the

city of Babylon itself, where for the last seven years Dr. Koldewey has

conducted excavations, unearthing the palaces of Nebuchadnezzar II on

the mound termed the Kasr, identifying the temple of E-sagila under the

mound called Tell Amran ibn-Ali, tracing the course of the sacred way

between E-sagila and the palace-mound, and excavating temples dedicated

to the goddess Ninmakh and the god Ninib.

[Illustration: 166.jpg EXCAVATIONS IN THE TEMPLE OP NINIB AT BABYLON.]

In the middle distance may be seen the metal trucks running

on light rails which are employed on the work for the

removal of the débris from the diggings.

Dr. Andrae, Dr. Koldewey’s assistant, has also completed the excavation

of the temple dedicated to Nabû at Birs Nimrud. On the principal mound

at this spot, which marks the site of the ancient city of Borsippa,

traces of the ziggurat, or temple tower, may still be seen rising from

the soil, the temple of Nabû lying at a lower level below the steep

slope of the mound, which is mainly made up of débris from the

ziggurat. Dr. Andrae has recently left Babylonia for Assyria, where

his excavations at Sher-ghat, the site of the ancient Assyrian city of

Ashur, are confidently expected to throw considerable light on the early

history of that country and the customs of the people, and already he

has made numerous finds of considerable interest.

[Illustration: 167.jpg THE PRINCIPAL MOUND OF BIRS NIMRUD, WHICH MARKS

THE SITE OP THE ANCIENT CITY OP BORSIPPA.]

Since the early spring of 1903 excavations have been conducted at

Kuyunjik, the site of the city of Nineveh, by Messrs. L. W. King and R.

C. Thompson on behalf of the Trustees of the British Museum, and have

resulted in the discovery of many early remains in the lower strata of

the mound, in addition to the finding of new portions of the two palaces

already known and partly excavated, the identification of a third

palace, and the finding of an ancient temple dedicated to Nabû, whose

existence had already been inferred from a study of the Assyrian

inscriptions.\* All these diggings at Babylon, at Ashur, and at Nineveh

throw more light upon the history of the country during the Assyrian and

Neo-Babylonian periods, and will be referred to later in the volume.

\* It may be noted that excavations are also being actively

carried on in Palestine at the present time. Mr. Macalister

has for some years been working for the Palestine

Exploration Fund at Gezer; Dr. Schumacher is digging at

Megiddo for the German Palestine Society; and Prof. Sellin

is at present excavating at Taanach (Ta’annak) and will

shortly start work at Dothan. Good work on remains of later

historical periods is also being carried on under the

auspices of the Deutsch-Orient Gesellschaft at Ba’albek and

in Galilee. It would be tempting to include here a summary

of the very interesting results that have recently been

achieved in this fruitful field of archaeological research,

for it is true that these excavations may strictly be said

to bear on the history of a portion of Western Asia. But the

problems which they raise would more naturally be discussed

in a work dealing with recent excavation and research in

relation to the Bible, and to have summarized them

adequately would have increased the size of the present

volume considerably beyond its natural limits. They have

therefore not been included within the scope of the present

work.

[Illustration: 168.jpg THE PRINCIPAL MOUND AT SHEKGHAT, WHICH MARKS THE

SITE OF ASHUK, THE ANCIENT CAPITAL OF THE ASSYRIANS.]

Meanwhile, we will return to the diggings described at the beginning

of this chapter, as affording new information concerning the earliest

periods of Chaldæan history.

A most interesting inscription has recently been discovered by Capt.

Cros at Telloh, which throws considerable light on the rivalry which

existed between the cities of Shirpurla and Gishkhu, and at the same

time furnishes valuable material for settling the chronology of the

earliest rulers whose inscriptions have been found at Mppur and their

relations to contemporary rulers in Shirpurla.

[Illustration: 169.jpg THE MOUND OF KUYUNJIK, WHICH FORMED ONE OF THE

PALACE MOUNDS OF THE ANCIENT ASSYRIAN CITY OF NINEVEH.]

The cities of Gishkhu and Shirpurla were probably situated not far from

one another, and their rivalry is typical of the history of the early

city-states of Babylonia. The site of the latter city, as has already

been said, is marked by the mounds of Telloh on the east bank of the

Shatt el-Hai, the natural stream joining the Tigris and Euphrates, which

has been improved and canalized by the dwellers in Southern Babylonia

from the earliest period.

[Illustration: 170.jpg WINGED BULL IN THE PALACE OF SENNACHERIB ON

KUYUNJIK, THE PRINCIPAL MOUND MARKING THE SITE OF NINEVEH.]

The site of Gishkhu may be set with considerable probability not far to

the north of Telloh on the opposite bank of the Shatt el-Hai. These

two cities, situated so close to one another, exercised considerable

political influence, and though less is known of Gishkhu than of

the more famous Babylonian cities such as Ur, Brech, and Larsam, her

proximity to Shirpurla gave her an importance which she might not

otherwise have possessed. The earliest knowledge we possess of the

relations existing between Gishkhu and Shirpurla refers to the reign of

Mesilim, King of Kish, the period of whose rule may be provisionally set

before that of Sargon of Agade, i.e, about 4000 B.C.

At this period there was rivalry between the two cities, in consequence

of which Mesilim, King of Kish, was called in as arbitrator. A record of

the treaty of delimitation that was drawn up on this occasion has been

preserved upon the recently discovered cone of Entemena. This document

tells us that at the command of the god Enlil, described as “the king

of the countries,” Ningirsu, the chief god of Shirpurla, and the god of

Gishkhu decided to draw up a line of division between their respective

territories, and that Mesilim, King of Kish, acting under the direction

of his own god Kadi, marked out the frontier and set up a stele between

the two territories to commemorate the fixing of the boundary.

This policy of fixing the boundary by arbitration seems to have been

successful, and to have secured peace between Shirpurla and Gishkhu

for some generations. But after a period which cannot be accurately

determined a certain patesi of Gishkhu, named Ush, was filled with

ambition to extend his territory at the expense of Shirpurla. He

therefore removed the stele which Mesilim had set up, and, invading the

plain of Shirpurla, succeeded in conquering and holding a district named

Gu-edin. But Ush’s successful raid was not of any permanent benefit to

his city, for he was in his turn defeated by the forces of Shirpurla,

and his successor upon the throne, a patesi named Enakalli, abandoned a

policy of aggression, and concluded with Eannadu, patesi of Shirpurla, a

solemn treaty concerning the boundary between their realms, the text of

which has been preserved to us upon the famous Stele of Vultures in the

Louvre.\*

\* A fragment of this stele is also preserved in the British

Museum. It is published in Cuneiform Texts in the British

Museum, Pt. vii.

According to this treaty Gu-edin was restored to Shirpurla, and a deep

ditch was dug between the two territories which should permanently

indicate the line of demarcation. The stele of Mesilim was restored to

its place, and a second stele was inscribed and set up as a memorial

of the new treaty. Enakalli did not negotiate the treaty on equal terms

with Eannadu, for he only secured its ratification by consenting to pay

heavy tribute in grain for the supply of the great temples of Nin-girsu

and Ninâ in Shirpurla. It would appear that under Eannadu the power

and influence of Shirpurla were extended over the whole of Southern

Babylonia, and reached even to the borders of Elam. At any rate, it is

clear that during his lifetime the city of Gishkhu was content to remain

in a state of subjection to its more powerful neighbour. But it was

always ready to seize any opportunity of asserting itself and of

attempting to regain its independence.

[Illustration: 172.jpg CLAY MEMORIAL-TABLET OF EANNADU.]

The characters of the inscription well illustrate the

pictorial origin of the Sumerian system of writing.

Photograph by Messrs. Mansell & Co.

Accordingly, after Eannadu’s death the men of Gishkhu again took the

offensive. At this time Urlumma, the son and successor of Enakalli, was

on the throne of Gishkhu, and he organized the forces of the city

and led them out to battle. His first act was to destroy the frontier

ditches named after Ningirsu and Ninâ, the principal god and goddess of

Shirpurla, which Eannadu, the powerful foe of Gishkhu, had caused to be

dug. He then tore down the stele on which the terms of Eannadu’s treaty

had been engraved and broke it into pieces by casting it into the fire,

and the shrines which Eannadu had built near the frontier, and had

consecrated to the gods of Shirpurla, he razed to the ground. But

again Shirpurla in the end proved too strong for Gishkhu. The ruler

in Shirpurla at this time was Enannadu, who had succeeded his brother

Eannadu upon the throne. He marched out to meet the invading forces

of the men of Gishkhu, and a battle was fought in the territory of

Shirpurla. According to one account, the forces of Shirpurla were

victorious, while on the cone of Ente-mena no mention is made of

the issue of the combat. The result may not have been decisive, but

Enannadu’s action at least checked Urlumma’s encroachments for the time.

It would appear that the death of the reigning patesi in Shirpurla was

always the signal for an attack upon that city by the men of Gishkhu.

They may have hoped that the new ruler would prove a less successful

leader than the last, or that the accession of a new monarch might give

rise to internal dissensions in the city which would weaken Shirpurla’s

power of resisting a sudden attack. As Eannadu’s death had encouraged

Urlumma to lead out the men of Gishkhu, so the death of Enannadu seemed

to him a good opportunity to make another bid for victory. But this time

the result of the battle was not indecisive. Entemena had succeeded his

father Enannadu, and he led out to victory the forces of Shir-purla. The

battle was fought near the canal Lumma-girnun-ta, and when the men of

Gishkhu were put to flight they left sixty of their fellows lying dead

upon the banks of the canal. Entemena tells us that the bones of these

warriors were left to bleach in the open plain, but he seems to have

buried those of the men of Gishkhu who fell in the pursuit, for he

records that in five separate places he piled up burial-mounds in which

the bodies of the slain were interred. Entemena was not content with

merely inflicting a defeat upon the army of Gishkhu and driving it back

within its own borders, for he followed up his initial advantage and

captured the capital itself. He deposed and imprisoned Urlumma, and

chose one of his own adherents to rule as patesi of Gishkhu in his

stead. The man he appointed for this high office was named Hi, and he

had up to that time been priest in Ninâb. Entemena summoned him to his

presence, and, after marching in a triumphal procession from Girsu

in the neighbourhood of Shirpurla to the conquered city, proceeded to

invest him with the office of patesi of Gishkhu.

Entemena also repaired the frontier ditches named after Ningirsu and

Ninâ, which had been employed for purposes of irrigation as well as for

marking the frontier; and he gave instructions to Hi to employ the men

dwelling in the district of Karkar on this work, as a punishment for

the active part they had taken in the recent raid into the territory of

Shirpurla. Entemena also restored and extended the system of canals

in the region between the Tigris and the Euphrates, lining one of the

principal channels with stone.

[Illustration: 175.jpg MARBLE GATE]

Socket Bearing An Inscription Of Entemena, A Powerful

Patesi, Or Viceroy, Of Shirpurla. In the photograph the

gate-socket is resting on its side so as to show the

inscription, but when in use it was set flat upon the ground

and partly buried below the level of the pavement of the

building in which it was used. It was fixed at the side of a

gateway and the pivot of the heavy gate revolved in the

shallow hole or depression in its centre. As stone is not

found in the alluvial soil of Babylonia, the blocks for

gate-sockets had to be brought from great distances and they

were consequently highly prized. The kings and patesis who

used them in their buildings generally had their names and

titles engraved upon them, and they thus form a valuable

class of inscriptions for the study of the early history.

Photograph by Messrs. Man-sell & Co.

He thus added greatly to the wealth of Shirpurla by increasing the area

of territory under cultivation, and he continued to exercise authority

in Gishkhu by means of officers appointed by himself. A record of his

victory over Gishkhu was inscribed by Entemena upon a number of clay

cones, that the fame of it might be preserved in future days to the

honour of Ningirsu and the goddess Ninâ. He ends this record with a

prayer for the preservation of the frontier. If ever in time to come the

men of Gishkhu should break out across the frontier-ditch of Ningirsu,

or the frontier-ditch of Ninâ, in order to seize or lay waste the lands

of Shirpurla, whether they be men of the city of Gishkhu itself or men

of the mountains, he prays that Enlil may destroy them and that Ningirsu

may lay his curse upon them; and if ever the warriors of his own city

should be called upon to defend it, he prays that they may be full of

courage and ardour for their task.

The greater part of this information with regard to the struggles

between Gishkhu and Shirpurla, between the period of Mesilim, King of

Kish, and that of Entemena, is supplied by the inscription of the latter

ruler which has been found written around a small cone of clay. There is

little doubt that the text was also engraved by the orders of Entemena

upon a stone stele which was set up, like those of Mesilim and Eannadu,

upon the frontier. Other copies of the inscription were probably

engraved and erected in the cities of Gishkhu and Shirpurla, and to

ensure the preservation of the record Entemena probably had numerous

copies of it made upon small cones of clay which were preserved and

possibly buried in the structure of the temples of Shirpurla. Entemena’s

foresight in this matter has been justified by results, for, while his

great memorials of stone have perished, the preservation of one of his

small cones has sufficed to make known to later ages his own and his

forefathers’ prowess in their continual contests with their ancient rival

Gishkhu.

After the reign of Entemena we have little information with regard to

the relations between Gishkhu and Shirpurla, though it is probable that

the effects of his decisive victory continued to exercise a moderating

influence on Gishkhu’s desire for expansion and secured a period

of peaceful development for Shirpurla without the continual fear of

encroachments on the part of her turbulent neighbour. We may assume that

this period of tranquillity continued during the reigns of Enannadu II,

Enlitarzi, and Lugal-anda, but, when in the reign of Urukagina the men

of Gishkhu once more emerge from their temporary obscurity, they appear

as the authors of deeds of rapine and bloodshed committed on a scale

that was rare even in that primitive age.

In the earlier stages of their rivalry Gishkhu had always been defeated,

or at any rate checked, in her actual conflicts with Shirpurla. When

taking the aggressive the men of Gishkhu seem generally to have confined

themselves to the seizure of territory, such as the district of Gu-edin,

which was situated on the western bank of the Shaft el-Hai and divided

from their own lands only by the frontier-ditch. If they ever actually

crossed the Shaft el-Hai and raided the lands on its eastern bank, they

never ventured to attack the city of Shirpurla itself. And, although

their raids were attended with some success in their initial stages, the

ruling patesis of Shirpurla were always strong enough to check them; and

on most occasions they carried the war into the territory of Gishkhu,

with the result that they readjusted the boundary on their own terms.

But it would appear that all these primitive Chalæan cities were subject

to alternate periods of expansion and defeat, and Shirpurla was not an

exception to the rule. It was probably not due so much to Urukagina’s

personal qualities or defects as a leader that Shirpurla suffered

the greatest reverse in her history during his reign, but rather to

Gishkhu’s gradual increase in power at a time when Shirpurla herself

remained inactive, possibly lulled into a false sense of security by the

memory of her victories in the past. Whatever may have been the cause of

Gishkhu’s final triumph, it is certain that it took place in Urukagina’s

reign, and that for many years afterwards the hegemony of Southern

Babylonia remained in her hands, while Shirpurla for a long period

passed completely out of existence as an independent or semi-independent

state.

The evidence of the catastrophe that befell Shirpurla at this period is

furnished by a small clay tablet recently found at Telloh during Captain

Cros’s excavations on that site. The document on which the facts in

question are recorded had no official character, and in all probability

it had not been stored in any library or record chamber. The actual spot

at Telloh where it was found was to the north of the mound in which

the most ancient buildings have been recovered, and at the depth of two

metres below the surface. No other tablets appear to have been found

near it, but that fact in itself would not be sufficient evidence on

which to base any theory as to its not having originally formed part of

the archives of the city. Its unofficial character is attested by the

form of the tablet and the manner in which the information upon it is

arranged. In shape there is little to distinguish the document from the

tablets of accounts inscribed in the reign of Urukagina, great numbers

of which have been found recently at Telloh. Roughly square in shape,

its edges are slightly convex, and the text is inscribed in a series of

narrow columns upon both the obverse and the reverse. The text itself

is not a carefully arranged composition, such as are the votive and

historical inscriptions of early Sumerian rulers. It consists of a

series of short sentences enumerating briefly and without detail the

separate deeds of violence and sacrilege performed by the men of Gishkhu

after their capture of the city. It is little more than a catalogue or

list of the shrines and temples destroyed during the sack of the city,

or defiled by the blood of the men of Shirpurla who were slain therein.

No mention is made in the list of the palace of the Urukagina, or of any

secular building, or of the dwellings of the citizens themselves. There

is little doubt that these also were despoiled and destroyed by the

victorious enemy, but the writer of the tablet is not concerned for the

moment with the fate of his city or his fellow citizens. He appears to

be overcome with the thought of the deeds of sacrilege committed against

his gods; his mind is entirely taken up with the magnitude of the

insult offered to the god Ningirsu, the city-god of Shirpurla. His bare

enumeration of the deeds of sacrilege and violence loses little by its

brevity, and, when he has ended the list of his accusations against the

men of Gishkhu, he curses the goddess to whose influence he attributes

their success.

No composition at all like this document has yet been recovered, and as

it is not very long we may here give a translation of the text. It will

be seen that the writer plunges at once into the subject of his

charges against the men of Gishkhu. No historical \_résumé\_ prefaces

his accusations, and he gives no hint of the circumstances that have

rendered their delivery possible. The temples of his city have been

profaned and destroyed, and his indignation finds vent in a mere

enumeration of their titles. To his mind the facts need no comment,

for to him it is barely conceivable that such sacred places of ancient

worship should have been defiled. He launches his indictment against

Gishkhu in the following terms: “The men of Gishkhu have set fire to the

temple of E-ki [... ], they have set fire to Antashura, and they have

carried away the silver and the precious stones therefrom! They have

shed blood in the palace of Tirash, they have shed blood in Abzubanda,

they have shed blood in the shrine of Enlil and in the shrine of the

Sun-god, they have shed blood in Akhush, and they have carried away the

silver and the precious stones therefrom! They have shed blood in the

Gikana of the sacred grove of the goddess Ninmakh, and they have carried

away the silver and the precious stones therefrom! They have shed blood

in Baga, and they have carried away the silver and the precious stones

therefrom! They have shed blood in Abzu-ega, they have set fire to

the temple of Gatumdug, and they have carried away the silver and the

precious stones therefrom, and have destroyed her statue! They have set

fire to the.... of the temple E-anna of the goddess Ninni, and they

have carried away the silver and the precious stones therefrom, and have

destroyed her statue! They have shed blood in Shapada, and they have

carried away the silver and precious stones therefrom! They have....

in Khenda, they have shed blood in the temple of Nindar in the town

of Kiab, and they have carried away the silver and the precious stones

therefrom! They have set fire to the temple of Dumuzi-abzu in the town

of Kinunir, and they have carried away the silver and the precious

stones therefrom! They have set fire to the temple of Lugaluru, and they

have carried away the silver and the precious stones therefrom! They

have shed blood in E-engura, the temple of the goddess Ninâ, and they

have carried away the silver and the precious stones therefrom! They

have shed blood in Sag..., the temple of Amageshtin, and the silver

and the precious stones of Amageshtin have they carried away! They have

removed the grain from Ginarbaniru, the field of the god Ningirsu,

so much of it as was under cultivation! The men of Gishkhu, by the

despoiling of Shirpurla, have committed a transgression against the god

Ningirsu! The power that is come unto them, from them shall be taken

away! Of transgression on the part of Urukagina, King of Girsu, there

is none. As for Lugalzaggisi, patesi of Gishkhu, may his goddess Ni-daba

bear on her head (the weight of) this transgression!”

Such is the account, which has come down to us from the rough tablet of

some unknown scribe, of the greatest misfortune experienced by Shirpurla

during the long course of her history. Many of the great temples

mentioned in the text as among those which were burnt down and despoiled

of their treasures are referred to more than once in the votive and

historical inscriptions of earlier rulers of Shirpurla, who occupied the

throne before the ill-fated Urukagina. The names of some of them, too,

are to be found in the texts of the later pate-sis of that city, so

that it may be concluded that in course of time they were rebuilt and

restored to their former splendour. But there is no doubt that the

despoiling and partial destruction of Shirpurla in the reign of

Urukagina had a lasting effect upon the fortunes of that city, and

effectively curtailed her influence among the greater cities of Southern

Babylonia.

We may now turn our attention to the leader of the men of Gishkhu, under

whose direction they achieved their final triumph over their ancient,

and for long years more powerful, rival Shirpurla. The writer of our

tablet mentions his name in the closing words of his text when he curses

him and his goddess for the destruction and sacrilege that they have

wrought. “As for Lugalzaggisi,” he says, “patesi of Gishkhu, may his

goddess Nidaba bear on her head (the weight of ) this transgression!”

Now the name of Lugalzaggisi has been found upon a number of fragments

of vases made of white calcite stalagmite which were discovered by Mr.

Haynes during his excavations at Nippur. All the vases were engraved

with the same inscription, so that it was possible by piecing the

fragments of text together to obtain a more or less complete copy of

the records which were originally engraved upon each of them. From

these records we learned for the first time, not only the name of

Lugalzaggisi, but the fact that he founded a powerful coalition of

cities in Babylonia at what was obviously a very early period in the

history of the country. In the text he describes himself as “King of

Erech, king of the world, the priest of Ana, the hero of Nidaba, the

son of Ukush, patesi of Gishkhu, the hero of Nidaba, the man who was

favourably regarded by the sure eye of the King of the Lands (i.e.

the god Enlil), the great patesi of Enlil, unto whom understanding was

granted by Enki, the chosen of the Sun-god, the exalted minister of

Enzu, endowed with strength by the Sun-god, the worshipper of Ninni, the

son who was conceived by Nidaba, who was nourished by Ninkharsag with

the milk of life, the attendant of Umu, priestess of Erech, the servant

who was trained by Ninâgidkhadu, the mistress of Erech, the great

minister of the gods.” Lugalzaggisi then goes on to describe the extent

of his dominion, and he says: “When the god Enlil, the lord of the

countries, bestowed upon Lugalzaggisi the kingdom of the world, and

granted unto him success in the sight of the world, when he filled the

lands with his power, and conquered them from the rising of the sun unto

the setting of the same, at that time he made straight his path from the

Lower Sea of the Tigris and Euphrates unto the Upper Sea, and he granted

him dominion over all from the rising of the sun unto the setting of the

same, so that he caused the lands to dwell in peace.”

Now when first the text of this inscription was published there existed

only vague indications of the date to be assigned to Lugalzaggisi and

the kingdom that he founded. It was clear from the titles which he bore,

that, though Gishkhu was his native place, he had extended his authority

far beyond that city and had chosen Erech as his capital. Moreover,

he claimed an empire extending from “the Lower Sea of the Tigris and

Euphrates unto the Upper Sea.” There is no doubt that the Lower Sea here

mentioned is the Persian Gulf, and it has been suggested that the Upper

Sea may be taken to be the Mediterranean, though it may possibly have

been Lake Van or Lake Urmi. But whichever of these views might be

adopted, it was clear that Lugalzaggisi was a great conqueror, and had

achieved the right to assume the high-sounding title of lugal halama,

“king of the world.” In these circumstances it was of the first

importance for the study of primitive Chaldæan history and chronology

to ascertain approximately the period at which Lugalzaggisi reigned.

The evidence on which such a question could be provisionally settled was

of the vaguest and most uncertain character, but such as it was it

had to suffice, in the absence of more reliable data. In settling all

problems connected with early Chaldæan chronology, the starting-point

was, and in fact still is, the period of Sargon I, King of Agade,

inasmuch as the date of his reign is settled, according to the reckoning

of the scribes of Nabonidus, as about 3800 B.C. It is true that this

date has been called in question, and ingenious suggestions for amending

it have been made by some writers, while others have rejected it

altogether, holding that it merely represented a guess on the part of

the late Babylonians and could be safely ignored in the chronological

schemes which they brought forward. But nearly every fresh discovery

made in the last few years has tended to confirm some point in the

traditions current among the later Babylonians with regard to the

earlier history of their country. Consequently, reliance may be placed

with increased confidence on the truth of such traditions as a

whole, and we may continue to accept those statements which yet await

confirmation from documents more nearly contemporary with the early

period to which they refer. It is true that such a date as that assigned

by Nabonidus to Sargon is not to be regarded as absolutely fixed, for

Nabonidus is obviously speaking in round numbers, and we may allow for

some minor inaccuracies in the calculations of his scribes. But it is

certain that the later Babylonian priests and scribes had a wealth of

historical material at their disposal which has not come down to us. We

may therefore accept the date given by Nabonidus for Sargon of Agade

and his son Narâm-Sin as approximately accurate, and this is also the

opinion of the majority of writers on early Babylonian history.

The diggings at Nippur furnished indications that certain inscriptions

found on that site and written in a very archaic form of script were

to be assigned to a period earlier than that of Sargon. One class of

evidence was obtained from a careful study of the different levels at

which the inscriptions and the remains of buildings were found. At a

comparatively deep level in the mound inscriptions of Sargon himself

were recovered, along with bricks stamped with the name of Narâm-Sin,

his son. It was, therefore, a reasonable conclusion roughly to date the

particular stratum in which these objects were found to the period of

the empire established by Sargon, with its centre at Agade. Later on

excavations were carried to a lower level, and remains of buildings

were discovered which appeared to belong to a still earlier period

of civilization. An altar was found standing in a small enclosure

surrounded by a kind of curb. Near by were two immense clay vases which

appeared to have been placed on a ramp or inclined plane leading up to

the altar, and remains were also found of a massive brick building in

which was an arch of brick. No inscriptions were actually found at this

level, but in the upper level assigned to Sargon were a number of texts

which might very probably be assigned to the pre-Sargonic period. None

of these were complete, and they had the appearance of having been

intentionally broken into small fragments. There was therefore something

to be said for the theory that they might have been inscribed by the

builders of the construction in the lowest levels of the mound, and that

they were destroyed and scattered by some conqueror who had laid their

city in ruins.

But all such evidence derived from noting the levels at which

inscriptions are found is in its nature extremely uncertain and liable

to many different interpretations, especially if the strata show signs

of having been disturbed. Where a pavement or building is still intact,

with the inscribed bricks of the builder remaining in their original

positions, conclusions may be confidently drawn with regard to the age

of the building and its relative antiquity to the strata above and below

it. But the strata in the lowest levels at Nippur, as we have seen, were

not in this condition, and such evidence as they furnished could only be

accepted if confirmed by independent data. Such confirmation was to be

found by examination of the early inscriptions themselves.

It has been remarked that most of them were broken into small pieces,

as though by some invader of the country; but this was not the case with

certain gate-sockets and great blocks of diorite which were too hard

and big to be easily broken. Moreover, any conqueror of a city would be

unlikely to spend time and labour in destroying materials which might

be usefully employed in the construction of other buildings which he

himself might erect. Stone could not be obtained in the alluvial plains

of Babylonia and had to be quarried in the mountains and brought great

distances.

[Illustration: 188.jpg STONE GATE]

Socket Bearing An Inscription of Uk-Engur, An Early King

of The City Of Ur. Photograph by Messrs. Mansell & Co.

From any building of his predecessors which he razed to the ground, an

invader would therefore remove the gate-sockets and blocks of stone for

his own use, supposing he contemplated building on the site. If he left

the city in ruins and returned to his own country, some subsequent king,

when clearing the ruined site for building operations, might come across

the stones, and he would not leave them buried, but would use them for

his own construction. And this is what actually did happen in the case

of some of the building materials of one of these early kings, from the

lower strata of Nippur. Certain of the blocks which bore the name of

Lugalkigubnidudu had been used again by Sargon, King of Agade, who

engraved his own name upon them without obliterating the name of the

former king.

It followed that Lugalkigubnidudu belonged to the pre-Sargonic period,

and, although the same conclusive evidence was not forthcoming in the

case of Lugalzag-gisi, he also without much hesitation was set in

this early period, mainly on the strength of the archaic forms of the

characters employed in his inscriptions. In fact, they were held to be

so archaic that, not only was he said to have reigned before Sargon of

Agade, but he was set in the very earliest period of Chaldæan history,

and his empire was supposed to have been contemporaneous with the very

earliest rulers of Shirpurla. The new inscription found by Captain

Cros will cause this opinion to be considerably modified. While it

corroborates the view that Lugalzaggisi is to be set in the pre-Sargonic

period, it proves that he lived and reigned very shortly before him. As

we have already seen, he was the contemporary of Urukagina, who belongs

to the middle period of the history of Shirpurla. Lugalzaggisi’s capture

and sack of the city of Shirpurla was only one of a number of conquests

which he achieved. His father Ukush had been merely patesi of the city

of Gish-khu, but he himself was not content with the restricted sphere

of authority which such a position implied, and he eventually succeeded

in enforcing his authority over the greater part of Babylonia. From

the fact that he styles himself King of Erech, we may conclude that

he removed his capital from Ukush to that city, after having probably

secured its submission by force of arms. In fact, his title of “king of

the world” can only have been won as the result of many victories, and

Captain Cros’s tablet gives us a glimpse of the methods by which he

managed to secure himself against the competition of any rival. The

capture of Shirpurla must have been one of his earliest achievements,

for its proximity to Gish-khu rendered its reduction a necessary

prelude to any more extensive plan of conquest. But the kingdom which

Lugalzaggisi founded cannot have endured long.

Under Sargon of Agade, the Semites gained the upper hand in Babylonia,

and Erech, Grishkhu, and Shirpurla, as well as the other ancient cities

in the land, fell in turn under his domination and formed part of the

extensive empire which he ruled.

Concerning the later rulers of city-states of Babylonia which succeeded

the disruption of the empire founded by Sargon of Agade and consolidated

by Narâm-Sin, his son, the excavations have little to tell us which has

not already been made use of by Prof. Maspero in his history of this

period.\*

\* The tablets found at Telloh by the late M. de Sarzec, and

published during his lifetime, fall into two main classes,

which date from different periods in early Chaldæan

history. The great majority belong to the period when the

city of Ur held pre-eminence among the cities of Southern

Babylonia, and they are dated in the reigns of Dungi, Bur-

Sin, Gamil-Sin, and Ine-Sin. The other and smaller

collection belongs to the earlier period of Sargon and

Narâm-Sin; while many of the tablets found in M. de Sarzec’s

last diggings, which were published after his death, are to

be set in the great gap between these two periods. Some of

those recently discovered, which belong to the period of

Dungi, contain memoranda concerning the supply of food for

the maintenance of officials stopping at Shirpurla in the

course of journeys in Babylonia and Elam, and they throw an

interesting light on the close and constant communication

which took place at this time between the great cities of

Mesopotamia and the neighbouring countries.

[Illustration: 190.jpg STATUE OF GUDEA.]

The most famous of the later patesis, or viceroys, of

Shirpurla, the Sumerian city in Southern Babylonia now

marked by the mounds of Telloh. Photograph by Messrs.

Mansell & Co.

Ur, Isin, and,Larsam succeeded one another in the position of leading

city in Babylonia, holding Mppur, Eridu, Erech, Shirpurla, and the other

chief cities in a condition of semi-dependence upon themselves. We may

note that the true reading of the name of the founder of the dynasty

of Ur has now been ascertained from a syllabary to be Ur-Engur; and an

unpublished chronicle in the British Museum relates that his son Dungi

cared greatly for the city of Eridu, but sacked Babylon and carried off

its spoil, together with the treasures from E-sagila, the great temple

of Marduk. Such episodes must have been common at this period when each

city was striving for hegemony. Meanwhile, Shirpurla remained the centre

of Sumerian influence in Babylonia, and her patesis were content to owe

allegiance to so powerful a ruler as Dungi, King of Ur, while at all

times exercising complete authority within their own jurisdiction.

During the most recent diggings that have been carried out at Telloh a

find of considerable value to the history of Sumerian art has been

made. The find is also of great general interest, since it enables us

to identify a portrait of Gudea, the most famous of the later Sumerian

patesis. In the course of excavating the Tell of Tablets Captain Cros

found a little seated statue made of diorite. It was not found in place,

but upside down, and appeared to have been thrown with other débris

scattered in that portion of the mound. On lifting it from the trench it

was seen that the head of the statue was broken off, as is the case

with all the other statues of Gudea found at Telloh. The statue bore an

inscription of Gudea, carefully executed and well preserved, but it

was smaller than other statues of the same ruler that had been

already recovered, and the absence of the head thus robbed it of any

extraordinary interest. On its arrival at the Louvre, M. Léon Heuzey was

struck by its general resemblance to a Sumerian head of diorite formerly

discovered by M. de Sarzec at Telloh, which has been preserved in the

Louvre for many years. On applying the head to the newly found statue,

it was found to fit it exactly, and to complete the monument, and we

are thus enabled to identify the features of Gudea. Prom a photographic

reproduction of this statue, it is seen that the head is larger than

it should be, in proportion to the body, a characteristic which is also

apparent in a small Sumerian statue preserved in the British Museum.

[Illustration: 192.jpg TABLET INSCRIBED IN SUMERIAN WITH DETAILS OF A

SURVEY OF CERTAIN PROPERTY.]

Probably situated in the neighbourhood of Telloh. The

circular shape is very unusual, and appears to have been

used only for survey-tablets. Photograph by Messrs. Mansell

& Co.

Gudea caused many statues of himself to be made out of the hard diorite

which he brought for that purpose from the Sinaitic peninsula, and from

the inscriptions preserved upon them it is possible to ascertain the

buildings in which they were originally placed. Thus one of the statues

previously found was set up in the temple of Ninkharsag, two others in

E-ninnû, the temple of the god Ningirsu, three more in the temple of the

goddess Bau, one in E-anna, the temple of the goddess Ninni, and another

in the temple of Gatumdug. The newly found statue of the king was made

to be set up in the temple erected by Gudea at Girsu in honour of the

god Ningishzida, as is recorded in the inscription engraved on the front

of the king’s robe, which reads as follows:

“In the day when the god Ningirsu, the strong warrior of Enlil, granted

unto the god Ningishzida, the son of Ninâzu, the beloved of the gods,

(the guardianship of) the foundation of the city and of the hills and

valleys, on that day Gudea, patesi of Shirpurla, the just man who

loveth his god, who for his master Ningirsu hath constructed his temple

E-ninnu, called the shining Imgig, and his temple E-pa, the temple

of-the seven zones of heaven, and for the goddess Ninâ, the queen, his

lady, hath constructed the temple Sirara-shum, which riseth higher than

(all) the temples in the world, and hath constructed their temples for

the great gods of Lagash, built for his god Ningishzida his temple in

Girsu. Whosoever shall proclaim the god Ningirsu as his god, even as

I proclaim him, may he do no harm unto the temple of my god! May he

proclaim the name of this temple! May that man be my friend, and may he

proclaim my name! Gudea hath made the statue, and ‘Unto - Gudea - the

- builder - of - the - temple - hath life-been-given hath he called its

name, and he hath brought it into the temple.”

The long name which Gudea gave to the statue, “Unto - Gudea - the -

builder - of - the - temple - hath - life-been-given,” is characteristic

of the practice of the Sumerian patesis, who always gave long and

symbolical names to statues, stelae, and sacred objects dedicated and

set up in their temples. The occasion on which the temple was built, and

this statue erected within it, seems to have been the investiture of

the god Ningishzida with special and peculiar powers, and it possibly

inaugurated his introduction into the pantheon of Shirpurla. Ningishzida

is called in the inscription the son of Ninazu, who was the husband of

the Queen of the Underworld.

In one of his aspects he was therefore probably a god of the underworld

himself, and it is in this character that he was appointed by Ningirsu

as guardian of the city’s foundations. But “the hills and valleys”

(i.e. the open country) were also put under his jurisdiction, so that

in another aspect he was a god of vegetation. It is therefore not

improbable that, like the god Dumuzi, or Tammuz, he was supposed to

descend into the underworld in winter, ascending to the surface of the

earth with the earliest green shoots of vegetation in the spring.\*

\* Cf. Thureau-Dangin, Rev. d’Assyr., vol. vi. (1904), p. 24.

A most valuable contribution has recently been made to our knowledge of

Sumerian religion and of the light in which these early rulers regarded

the cult and worship of their gods, by the complete interpretation of

the long texts inscribed upon the famous cylinders of Gudea, the patesi

of Shirpurla, which have been preserved for many years in the Louvre.

These two great cylinders of baked clay were discovered by the late M.

de Sarzec so long ago as the year 1877, during the first period of his

diggings at Telloh, and, although the general nature of their contents

has long been recognized, no complete translation of the texts inscribed

upon them had been published until a few months ago. M. Thureau-Dangin,

who has made the early Sumerian texts his special study, has devoted

himself to their interpretation for some years past, and he has just

issued the first part of his monograph upon them. In view of the

importance of the texts and of the light they throw upon the religious

beliefs and practices of the early Sumerians, a somewhat detailed

account of their contents may here be given.

The occasion on which the cylinders were made was the rebuilding by

Gudea of E-ninnû, the great temple of the god Ningirsu, in the city of

Shirpurla. The two cylinders supplement one another, one of them having

been inscribed while the work of construction was still in progress, the

other after the completion of the temple, when the god Ningirsu had been

installed within his shrine with due pomp and ceremony. It would appear

that Southern Babylonia had been suffering from a prolonged drought, and

that the water in the rivers and canals had fallen, so that the crops

had suffered and the country was threatened with famine. Gudea was at a

loss to know by what means he might restore prosperity to his country,

when one night he had a dream, and it was in consequence of this dream

that he eventually erected one of the most sumptuously appointed of

Sumerian temples. By this means he secured the return of Ningirsu’s

favour and that of the other gods, and his country once more enjoyed the

blessings of peace and prosperity.

In the opening words of the first of his cylinders Gudea describes how

the great gods themselves took counsel and decreed that he should build

the temple of E-ninnû and thereby restore to his city the supply of

water it had formerly enjoyed. He records that on the day on which the

destinies were fixed in heaven and upon earth, Enlil, the chief of the

gods, and Ningirsu, the city-god of Shirpurla, held converse. And Enlil,

turning to Ningirsu, said: “In my city that which is fitting is not

done. The stream doth not rise. The stream of Enlil doth not rise. The

high waters shine not, neither do they show their splendour. The stream

of Enlil bringeth not good water like the Tigris. Let the King (i.e.

Ningirsu) therefore proclaim the temple. Let the decrees of the temple

E-ninnû be made illustrious in heaven and upon earth!” The great gods

did not communicate their orders directly to Gudea, but conveyed their

wishes to him by means of a dream. And while the patesi slept a vision

of the night came to him, and he beheld a man whose stature was so great

that it equalled the heavens and the earth. And by the crown he wore

upon his head Gudea knew that the figure must be a god. And by his side

was the divine eagle, the emblem of Shirpurla, and his feet rested upon

the whirlwind, and a lion was crouching upon his right hand and upon his

left. And the figure spoke to the patesi, but he did not understand the

meaning of the words. Then it seemed to Gudea that the sun rose from

the earth and he beheld a woman holding in her hand a pure reed, and she

carried also a tablet on which was a star of the heavens, and she seemed

to take counsel with herself. And while Gudea was gazing he seemed to

see a second man who was like a warrior; and he carried a slab of lapis

lazuli and on it he drew out the plan of a temple. And before the patesi

himself it seemed that a fair cushion was placed, and upon the cushion

was set a mould, and within the mould was a brick, the brick of destiny.

And on the right hand the patesi beheld an ass which lay upon the

ground.

Such was the dream which Gudea beheld in a vision of the night, and he

was troubled because he could not interpret it. So he decided to go

to the goddess Ninâ, who could divine all mysteries of the gods, and

beseech her to tell him the meaning of the vision. But before applying

to the goddess for her help, he thought it best to secure the mediation

of the god Ningirsu and the goddess Gatumdug, in order that they should

use their influence with Ninâ to induce her to reveal the interpretation

of the dream. So the patesi set out to the temple of Ningirsu, and,

having offered a sacrifice and poured out fresh water, he prayed to the

god that his sister, Ninâ, the child of Eridu, might be prevailed upon

to give him help. And the god hearkened to his prayer. Then Gudea made

offerings, and before the sleeping-chamber of the goddess Gatumdug he

offered a sacrifice and poured out fresh water. And he prayed to the

goddess, calling her his queen and the child of the pure heaven, who

gave life to the countries and befriended and preserved the people or

the man on whom she looked with favour.

“I have no mother,” cried Gudea, “but thou art my mother! I have no

father, but thou art a father to me!” And the goddess Gatumdug gave

ear to the patesi’s prayer. Thus encouraged by her favour and that of

Ningirsu, Gudea set out for the temple of the goddess Ninâ.

On his arrival at the temple, the patesi offered a sacrifice and poured

out fresh water, as he had already done when approaching the presence of

Ningirsu and Gatumdug. And he prayed to Ninâ, as the goddess who divines

the secrets of the gods, beseeching her to interpret the vision that had

been sent to him; and he then recounted to her the details of his dream.

When the patesi had finished his story, the goddess addressed him and

told him that she would explain the meaning of his dream to him. And

this was the interpretation of the dream. The man whose stature was so

great that it equalled the heavens and the earth, whose head was that

of a god, at whose side was the divine eagle, whose feet rested on the

whirlwind, while a lion couched on his right hand and on his left, was

her brother, the god Ningirsu. And the words which he uttered were an

order to the patesi that he should build the temple E-ninnû. And the sun

which rose from the earth before the patesi was the god Ningishzida,

for like the sun he goes forth from the earth. And the maiden who held

a pure reed in her hand, and carried the tablet with the star, was her

sister, the goddess Nidaba: the star was the pure star of the temple’s

construction, which she proclaimed. And the second man, who was like a

warrior and carried the slab of lapis lazuli, was the god Nindub, and the

plan of the temple which he drew was the plan of E-ninnû. And the brick

which rested in its mould upon the cushion was the sacred brick of

E-ninnû. And as for the ass which lay upon the ground, that, the goddess

said, was the patesi himself.

Having interpreted the meaning of the dream, the goddess Ninâ proceeded

to give Gudea instruction as to how he should go to work to build the

temple. She told him first of all to go to his treasure-house and bring

forth his treasures from their sealed cases, and out of these to make

certain offerings which he was to place near the god Ningirsu, in the

temple in which he was dwelling at that time. The offerings were to

consist of a chariot, adorned with pure metal and precious stones;

bright arrows in a quiver; the weapon of the god, his sacred emblem, on

which Gudea was to inscribe his own name; and finally a lyre, the music

of which was wont to soothe the god when he took counsel with himself.

Ninâ added that if the patesi carried out her instructions and made the

offerings she had specified, Ningirsu would reveal to him the plan on

which the temple was to be built, and would also bless him. Gudea bowed

himself down in token of his submission to the commands of the goddess,

and proceeded to execute them forthwith. He brought out his treasures,

and from the precious woods and metals which he possessed his craftsmen

fashioned the objects he was to present, and he set them in Ningirsu’s

temple near to the god. He worked day and night, and, having prepared a

suitable spot in the precincts of the temple at the place of judgment,

he spread out upon it as offerings a fat sheep and a kid and the skin of

a young female kid. Then he built a fire of cypress and cedar and other

aromatic woods, to make a sweet savour, and, entering the inner chamber

of the temple, he offered a prayer to Ningirsu. He said that he wished

to build the temple, but he had received no sign that this was the will

of the god, and he prayed for a sign.

While he prayed the patesi was stretched out upon the ground, and the

god, standing near his head, then answered him. He said that he who

should build his temple was none other than Gudea, and that he would

give him the sign for which he asked. But first he described the plan

on which the temple was to be built, naming its various shrines and

chambers and describing the manner in which they were to be fashioned

and adorned. And the god promised that when Gudea should build the

temple, the land would once more enjoy abundance, for Ningirsu would

send a wind which should proclaim to the heavens the return of the

waters. And on that day the waters would fall from the heavens, the

water in the ditches and canals would rise, and water would gush out

from the dry clefts in the ground. And the great fields would once

more produce their crops, and oil would be poured out plenteously in

Sumer[sp.] and wool would again be weighed in great abundance. In that

day the god would go to the mountain where dwelt the whirlwind, and he

would himself direct the wind which should give the land the breath of

life. Gudea must therefore work day and night at the task of building

the temple. One company of men was to relieve another at its toil, and

during the night the men were to kindle lights so that the plain should

be as bright as day. Thus the builders would build continuously. Men

were also to be sent to the mountains to cut down cedars and pines and

other trees and bring their trunks to the city, while masons were to go

to the mountains and were to cut and transport huge blocks of stone to

be used in the construction of the temple. Finally the god gave Gudea

the sign for which he asked. The sign was that he should feel his side

touched as by a flame, and thereby he should know that he was the man

chosen by Ningirsu to carry out his commands.

Gudea bowed his head in submission, and his first act was to consult the

omens, and the omens were favourable. He then proceeded to purify the

city by special rites, so that the mother when angered did not chide her

son, and the master did not strike his servant’s head, and the mistress,

though provoked by her handmaid, did not smite her face. And Gudea drove

all the evil wizards and sorcerers from the city, and he purified and

sanctified the city completely. Then he kindled a great fire of cedar

and other aromatic woods, to make a sweet savour for the gods, and

prayers were offered day and night; and the patesi addressed a prayer

to the Anun-naki, or Spirits of the Earth, who dwelt in Shirpurla,

and assigned a place to them in the temple. Then, having completed

his purification of the city itself, he consecrated its immediate

surroundings. Thus he consecrated the district of Gu-edin, whence the

revenues of Ningirsu were derived, and the lands of the goddess Ninâ

with their populous villages. And he consecrated the wild and savage

bulls which no man could turn aside, and the cedars which were sacred

to Ningirsu, and the cattle of the plains. And he consecrated the armed

men, and the famous warriors, and the warriors of the Sun-god. And the

emblems of the god Ningirsu, and of the two great goddesses, Ninâ and

Ninni, he installed before them in their shrines.

Then Gudea sent far and wide to fetch materials for the construction of

the temple. And the Elamite came from Elani, and men of Susa came from

Susa, and men brought wood from the mountains of Sinai and Melukh-kha.

And into the mountain of cedars, where no man before had penetrated,

the patesi cut a road, and he brought cedars and beams of other precious

woods in great quantities to the city. And he also made a road into the

mountain where stone was quarried, into places where no man before had

penetrated. And he carried great blocks of stone down from the mountain

and loaded them into barges and brought them to the city. And the barges

brought bitumen and plaster, and they were loaded as though they were

carrying grain, and all manner of great things were brought to the

city. Copper ore was brought from the mountain of copper in the land of

Kimash, and gold was brought in powder from the mountains, and silver

was brought from the mountains and porphyry from the land of Melukhkha,

and marble from the mountain of marble. And the patesi installed

goldsmiths and silversmiths, who wrought in these precious metals, for

the adornment of the temple; and he brought smiths who worked in copper

and lead, who were priests of Nin-tu-kalama. In his search for fitting

materials for the building of the temple, Gudea journeyed from the lower

country to the upper country, and from the upper country to the lower

country he returned.

The only other materials now wanting for the construction of the temple

were the sun-dried bricks of clay, of which the temple platform and

the structure of the temple itself were in the main composed. Their

manufacture was now inaugurated by a symbolical ceremony carried out by

the patesi in person. At dawn he performed an ablution with the fitting

rites that accompanied it, and when the day was more advanced he slew

a bull and a kid as sacrifices, and he then entered the temple of

Ningirsu, where he prostrated himself. And he took the sacred mould

and the fair cushion on which it rested in the temple, and he poured a

libation into the mould. Afterwards, having made offerings of honey and

butter, and having burnt incense, he placed the cushion and the mould

upon his head and carried it to the appointed place. There he placed

clay in the mould, shaping it into a brick, and he left the brick in its

mould within the temple. And last of all he sprinkled oil of cedar-wood

around.

The next day at dawn Gudea broke the mould and set the brick in the sun.

And the Sun-god was rejoiced at the brick that he had fashioned. And

Gudea took the brick and raised it on high towards the heavens, and he

carried the brick to his people. In this way the patesi inaugurated the

manufacture of the sun-dried bricks for the temple, the sacred brick

which he had made being the symbol and pattern of the innumerable bricks

to be used in its construction. He then marked out the plan of the

temple, and the text states that he devoted himself to the building of

the temple like a young man who has begun building a house and allows

no pleasure to interfere with his task. And he chose out skilled workmen

and employed them on the building, and he was filled with joy. The gods,

too, are stated to have helped with the building, for Enki fixed the

temennu of the temple, and the goddess Ninâ looked after its oracles,

and Gatumdug, the mother of Shir-purla, fashioned bricks for it morning

and evening, while the goddess Bau sprinkled aromatic oil of cedar-wood.

Gudea himself laid its foundations, and as he did so he blessed the

temple seven times, comparing it to the sacred brick, to the holy

libation-vase, to the divine eagle of Shirpurla, to a terrible couching

panther, to the beautiful heavens, to the day of offerings, and to the

morning light which brightens the land. He caused the temple to rise

towards heaven like a mountain, or like a cedar growing in the desert.

He built it of bricks of Sumer, and the timbers which he set in place

were as strong as the dragon of the deep.

While he was engaged on the building Gudea took counsel of the god Enki,

and he built a fountain for the gods, where they might drink. With the

great stones which he had brought and fashioned he built a reservoir

and a basin for the temple. And seven of the great stones he set up as

stelæ, and he gave them favourable names. The text then recounts

the various parts and shrines of the temple, and it describes their

splendours in similes drawn from the heavens and the earth and the

abyss, or deep, beneath the earth. The temple itself is described as,

being like the crescent of the new moon, or like the sun in the midst

of the stars, or like a mountain of lapis lazuli, or like a mountain of

shining marble. Parts of it are said to have been terrible and strong as

a savage bull, or a lion, or the antelope of the abyss, or the monster

Lakhamu who dwells in the abyss, or the sacred leopard that inspires

terror. One of the doors of the temple was guarded by a figure of the

hero who slew the monster with six heads, and at another door was a good

dragon, and at another a lion; opposite the city were set figures of

the seven heroes, and facing the rising sun was fixed the emblem of the

Sun-god. Figures of other heroes and favourable monsters were set up as

guardians of other portions of the temple. The fastenings of the main

entrance were decorated with dragons shooting out their tongues, and the

bolt of the great door was fashioned like a raging hound.

After this description of the construction and adornment of the

temple the text goes on to narrate how Gudea arranged for its material

endowment. He stalled oxen and sheep, for sacrifice and feasting, in the

outhouses and pens within the temple precincts, and he heaped up grain

in its granaries. Its storehouses he filled with spices so that

they were like the Tigris when its waters are in flood, and in its

treasure-chambers he piled up precious stones, and silver, and lead in

abundance. Within the temple precincts he planted a sacred garden which

was like a mountain covered with vines; and on the terrace he built

a great reservoir, or tank, lined with lead, in addition to the great

stone reservoir within the temple itself. He constructed a special

dwelling-place for the sacred doves, and among the flowers of the temple

garden and under the shade of the great trees the birds of heaven flew

about unmolested.

The first of the two great cylinders of Gudea ends at this point in the

description of the temple, and it is evident that its text was composed

while the work of building was still in progress. Moreover, the writing

of the cylinder was finished before the actual work of building the

temple was completed, for the last column of the text concludes with a

prayer to Ningirsu to make it glorious during the progress of the work,

the prayer ending with the words, “O Ningirsu, glorify it! Glorify the

temple of Ningirsu during its construction!” The text of the second of

the two great cylinders is shorter than that of the first, consisting

of twenty-four instead of thirty columns of writing, and it was composed

and written after the temple was completed. Like the first of the

cylinders, it concludes with a prayer to Ningirsu on behalf of the

temple, ending with the similar refrain, “O Ningirsu, glorify it!

Glorify the temple of Ningirsu after its construction!” The first

cylinder, as we have seen, records how it came about that Gudea decided

to rebuild the temple E-ninnû in honour of Ningirsu. It describes how,

when the land was suffering from drought and famine, Gudea had a dream,

how Ninâ interpreted the dream to mean that he must rebuild the temple,

and how Ningirsu himself promised that this act of piety would restore

abundance and prosperity to the land. Its text ends with the long

description of the sumptuous manner in which the patesi carried out the

work, the most striking points of which we have just summarized. The

narrative of the second cylinder begins at the moment when the building

of the temple was finished, and when all was ready for the great god

Nin-girsu to be installed therein, and its text is taken up with a

description of the ceremonies and rites with which this solemn function

was carried out. It presents us with a picture, drawn from life, of the

worship and cult of the ancient Sumerians in actual operation. In view

of its importance from the point of view of the study and comparison of

the Sumerian and Babylonian religious systems, its contents also may be

summarized. We will afterwards discuss briefly the information furnished

by both the cylinders on the Sumerian origin of many of the religious

beliefs and practices which were current among the later Semitic

inhabitants of Babylonia and Assyria.

When Gudea had finished building the new temple of E-ninnû, and had

completed the decoration and adornment of its shrines, and had planted

its gardens and stocked its treasure-chambers and storehouses, he

applied himself to the preliminary ceremonies and religious preparations

which necessarily preceded the actual function of transferring the

statue of the god Ningirsu from his old temple to his new one. Gudea’s

first act was to install the Anunnaki, or Spirits of the Earth, in the

new temple, and when he had done this, and had supplied additional

sheep for their sacrifices and food in abundance for their offerings, he

prayed to them to give him their assistance and to pronounce a prayer at

his side when he should lead Ningirsu into his new dwelling-place.

The text then describes how Gudea went to the old temple of Ningirsu,

accompanied by his protecting spirits who walked before him and behind

him. Into the old temple he carried sumptuous offerings, and when he

had set them before the god, he addressed him in prayer and said: “O

my King, Ningirsu! O Lord, who curbest the raging waters! O Lord, whose

word surpasseth all others! O Son of Enlil, O warrior, what commands

shall I faithfully carry out? O Ningirsu, I have built thy temple, and

with joy would I lead thee therein, and my goddess Bau would install at

thy side.” We are told that the god accepted Gudea’s prayer, and thereby

he gave his consent to be removed from the old temple of E-ninnû to his

new one which bore the same name.

But the ceremony of the god’s removal was not carried out at once, for

the due time had not arrived. The year ended, and the new year came,

and then “the month of the temple” began. The third day of the month

was that appointed for the installation of Ningirsu. Gudea meanwhile had

sprinkled the ground with oil, and set out offerings of honey and butter

and wine, and grain mixed with milk, and dates, and food untouched

by fire, to serve as food for the gods; and the gods themselves had

assisted in the preparations for the reception of Ningirsu. The god

Asaru made ready the temple itself, and Ninmada performed the ceremony

of purification. The god Enki issued oracles, and the god Nindub, the

supreme priest of Eridu, brought incense. Ninâ performed chants within

the temple, and brought black sheep and holy cows to its folds and

stalls. This record of the help given by the other gods we may interpret

as meaning that the priests attached to the other great Sumerian

temples took part in the preparation of the new temple, and added their

offerings to the temple stores. To many of the gods, also, special

shrines within the temple were assigned.

When the purification of E-ninnû was completed and the way between

the old temple and the new made ready, all the inhabitants of the city

prostrated themselves on the ground. “The city,” says Gudea, “was like

the mother of a sick man who prepareth a potion for him, or like the

cattle of the plain which lie down together, or like the fierce lion,

the master of the plain, when he coucheth.” During the day and the night

before the ceremony of removal, prayers and supplications were uttered,

and at the first light of dawn on the appointed day the god Ningirsu

went into his new temple “like a whirlwind,” the goddess Bau entering

at his side “like the sun rising over Shirpurla.” She entered beside his

couch, like a faithful wife, whose cares are for her own household, and

she dwelt beside his ear and bestowed abundance upon Shirpurla.

As the day began to brighten and the sun rose, Gudea set out as

offerings in the temple a fat ox and a fat sheep, and he brought a vase

of lead and filled it with wine, which he poured out as a libation, and

he performed incantations. Then, having duly established Ningirsu and

Bau in the chief shrine, he turned his attention to the lesser gods and

installed them in their appointed places in the temple, where they would

be always ready to assist Ningirsu in the temple ceremonies and in the

issue of his decrees for the welfare of the city and its inhabitants.

Thus he established the god Galalim, the son of Ningirsu, in a chosen

spot in the great court in front of the temple, where, under the orders

of his father, he should direct the just and curb the evil-doer; he

would also by his presence strengthen and preserve the temple, while

his special duty was to guard the throne of destiny and, on behalf of

Ningirsu, to place the sceptre in the hands of the reigning patesi.

Near to Ningirsu and under his orders Gudea also established the god

Dunshaga, whose function it was to sanctify the temple and to look after

its libations and offerings, and to see to the due performance of the

ceremonies of ablution. This god would offer water to Ningirsu with a

pure hand, he would pour out libations of wine and strong drink, and

would tend the oxen, sheep, kids, and other offerings which were brought

to the temple night and day. To the god Lugalkurdub, who was also

installed in the temple, was assigned the privilege of holding in his

hand the mace with the seven heads, and it was his duty to open the door

of the Gate of Combat. He guarded the sacred weapons of Ningirsu and

destroyed the countries of his enemies. He was Ningirsu’s chief leader

in battle, and another god with lesser powers was associated with him as

his second leader.

Ningirsu’s counsellor was the god Lugalsisa, and he also had his

appointed place in E-ninnû. It was his duty to receive the prayers

of Shirpurla and render them propitious; he superintended and blessed

Ningirsu’s journey when he visited Eridu or returned from that city,

and he made special intercessions for the life of Gudea. The minister of

Ningirsu’s harîm was the god Shakanshabar, and he was installed near to

Nin-girsu that he might issue his commands, both great and small. The

keeper of the harîm was the god Urizu, and it was his duty to purify the

water and sanctify the grain, and he tended Ningirsu’s sleeping-chamber

and saw that all was arranged therein as was fitting. The driver of

Ningirsu’s chariot was the god Ensignun; it was his duty to keep the

sacred chariot as bright as the stars of heaven, and morning and evening

to tend and feed Ningirsu’s sacred ass, called Ug-kash, and the ass

of Eridu. The shepherd of Ningirsu’s kids was the god Enlulim, and he

tended the sacred she-goat who suckled the kids, and he guarded her so

that the serpent should not steal her milk. This god also looked

after the oil and the strong drink of E-ninnû, and saw that its store

increased.

Ningirsu’s beloved musician was the god Ushum-gabkalama, and he was

installed in E-ninnû that he might take his flute and fill the temple

court with joy. It was his privilege to play to Ningirsu as he listened

in his harîm, and to render the life of the god pleasant in E-ninnû.

Ningirsu’s singer was the god Lugaligi-khusham, and he had his appointed

place in E-ninnû, for he could appease the heart and soften anger; he

could stop the tears which flowed from weeping eyes, and could lessen

sorrow in the sighing heart. Gudea also installed in E-ninnû the seven

twin-daughters of the goddess Bau, all virgins, whom Ningirsu had

begotten. Their names were Zarzaru, Impaë, Urenuntaëa, Khegir-nuna,

Kheshaga, Gurmu, and Zarmu. Gudea installed them near their father that

they might offer favourable prayers.

The cultivator of the district of Gu-edin was the god Gishbare, and he

was installed in the temple that he might cause the great fields to be

fertile, and might make the wheat glisten in Gu-edin, the plain assigned

to Ningirsu for his revenues. It was this god’s duty also to tend the

machines for irrigation, and to raise the water into the canals and

ditches of Shirpurla, and thus to keep the city’s granaries well filled.

The god Kal was the guardian of the fishing in Gu-edin, and his chief

duty was to place fish in the sacred pools. The steward of Gu-edin was

the god Dimgalabzu, whose duty it was to keep the plain in good order,

so that the birds might abound there and the beasts might raise their

young in peace; he also guarded the special privilege, which the plain

enjoyed, of freedom from any tax levied upon the increase of the

cattle pastured there. Last of all Gudea installed in E-ninnû the god

Lugalenurua-zagakam, who looked after the construction of houses in the

city and the building of fortresses upon the city wall; in the temple it

was his privilege to raise on high a battle-axe made of cedar.

All these lesser deities, having close relations to the god Ningirsu,

were installed by Gudea in his temple in close proximity to him, that

they might be always ready to perform their special functions. But the

greater deities also had their share in the inauguration of the temple,

and of these Gudea specially mentions Ana, Enlil, Ninkharsag, Enki, and

Enzu, who all assisted in rendering the temple’s lot propitious. For at

least three of the greater gods (Ana, Enlil, and the goddess Nin-makh)

Gudea erected shrines near one another and probably within the temple’s

precincts, and, as the passage which records this fact is broken, it is

possible that the missing portion of the text recorded the building of

shrines to other deities. In any case, it is clear that the composer

of the text represents all the great gods as beholding the erection and

inauguration of Ningirsu’s new temple with favour.

After the account of the installation of Ningirsu, and his spouse Bau,

and his attendant deities, the text records the sumptuous offerings

which Gudea placed within Ningirsu’s shrine. These included another

chariot drawn by an ass, a seven-headed battle-axe, a sword with nine

emblems, a bow with terrible arrows and a quiver decorated with wild

beasts and dragons shooting out their tongues, and a bed which was

set within the god’s sleeping-chamber. On the couch in the shrine the

goddess Bau reclined beside her lord Ningirsu, and ate of the great

victims which were sacrificed in their honour.

When the ceremony of installation had been successfully performed, Gudea

rested, and for seven days he feasted with his people. During this time

the maid was the equal of her mistress, and master and servant consorted

together as friends. The powerful and the humble man lay down side by

side, and in place of evil speech only propitious words were heard. The

rich man did not wrong the orphan and the strong man did not oppress the

widow. The laws of Ninâ and Ningirsu were observed, justice was bright

in the sunlight, and the Sun-god trampled iniquity under foot. The

building of the temple also restored material prosperity to the land,

for the canals became full of water and fish swarmed in the pools, the

granaries were filled with grain and the flocks and herds brought forth

their increase. The city of Shirpurla was satiated with abundance.

Such is a summary of the account which Gudea has left us of his

rebuilding of the temple E-ninnû, of the reasons which led him to

undertake the work, and of the results which followed its completion. It

has often been said that the inscriptions of the ancient Sumerians are

without much intrinsic value, that they mainly consist of dull votive

formulæ, and that for general interest the best of them cannot be

compared with the later inscriptions of the Semitic inhabitants

of Mesopotamia. This reproach, for which until recently there was

considerable justification, has been finally removed by the working

out of the texts upon Gudea’s cylinders. For picturesque narrative, for

wealth of detail, and for striking similes, it would be hard to find

their superior in Babylonian and Assyrian literature. They are, in fact,

very remarkable compositions, and in themselves justify the claim that

the Sumerians were possessed of a literature in the proper sense of the

term.

But that is not their only value, for they give a vivid picture of

ancient Sumerian life and of the ideals and aims which actuated the

people and their rulers. The Sumerians were essentially an unmilitary

race. That they could maintain a stubborn fight for their territory is

proved by the prolonged struggle maintained by Shirpurla against her

rival Gishkhu, but neither ruler nor people was inflamed by love of

conquest for its own sake. They were settled in a rich and fertile

country, which supplied their own wants in abundance, and they were

content to lead a peaceful life therein, engaged in agricultural and

industrial pursuits, and devoted wholly to the worship of their gods.

Gudea’s inscriptions enable us to realize with what fervour they carried

out the rebuilding of a temple, and how the whole resources of the

nation were devoted to the successful completion of the work. It is true

that the rebuilding of E-ninnû was undertaken in a critical period when

the land was threatened with famine, and the peculiar magnificence with

which the work was carried out may be partly explained as due to the

belief that such devotion would ensure a return of material prosperity.

But the existence of such a belief is in itself an index to the people’s

character, and we may take it that the record faithfully represents the

relations of the Sumerians to their gods, and the important place which

worship and ritual occupied in the national life.

Moreover, the inscriptions of Gudea furnish much valuable information

with regard to the details of Sumerian worship and the elaborate

organization of the temples. From them we can reconstruct a picture of

one of these immense buildings, with its numerous shrines and courts,

surrounded by sacred gardens and raising its ziggurat, or temple tower,

high above the surrounding city. Within its dark chambers were the

mysterious figures of the gods, and what little light could enter would

have been reflected in the tanks of sacred water sunk to the level of

the pavement. The air within the shrines must have been heavy with the

smell of incense and of aromatic woods, while the deep silence would

have been broken only by the chanting of the priests and the feet of

those that bore offerings. Outside in the sunlight cedars and other rare

trees cast a pleasant shade, and birds flew about among the flowers and

bushes in the outer courts and on the garden terraces. The area covered

by the temple buildings must have been enormous, for they included the

dwellings of the priests, stables and pens for the cattle, sheep, and

kids employed for sacrifice, and treasure-chambers and storehouses and

granaries for the produce from the temple lands.

We also get much information with regard to the nature of the offerings

and the character of the ceremonies which were performed. We may mention

as of peculiar interest Gudea’s symbolical rite which preceded the

making of the sun-dried bricks, and the ceremony of the installation of

Ningirsu in the presence of the prostrate city. The texts also throw

an interesting light on the truly Oriental manner in which, when

approaching one deity for help, the cooperation and assistance of other

deities were first secured. Thus Gudea solicited the intercession of

Ningirsu and Gatumdug before applying to the goddess Ninâ to interpret

his dream. The extremely human character of the gods themselves is also

well illustrated. Thus we gather from the texts that Ningirsu’s temple

was arranged like the palace of a Sumerian ruler and that he was

surrounded by gods who took the place of the attendants and ministers

of his human counterpart. His son was installed in a place of honour and

shared with him the responsibility of government. Another god was his

personal attendant and cupbearer, who offered him fair water and looked

after the ablutions. Two more were his generals, who secured his country

against the attacks of foes. Another was his counsellor, who received

and presented petitions from his subjects and superintended his

journeys. Another was the head of his harîm, a position of great

trust and responsibility, while a keeper of the harîm looked after the

practical details. Another god was the driver of his chariot, and it

is interesting to note that the chariot was drawn by an ass, for horses

were not introduced into Western Asia until a much later period. Other

gods performed the functions of head shepherd, chief musician, chief

singer, head cultivator and inspector of irrigation, inspector of the

fishing, land steward, and architect. His household also included his

wife and his seven virgin daughters. In addition to the account of the

various functions performed by these lesser deities, the texts also

furnish valuable facts with regard to the characters and attributes

of the greater gods and goddesses, such as the attributes of Ningirsu

himself, and the character of Ninâ as the goddess who divined and

interpreted the secrets of the gods.

But perhaps the most interesting conclusions to be drawn from the texts

relate to the influence exerted by the ancient Sumerians upon Semitic

beliefs and practices. It has, of course, long been recognized that the

later Semitic inhabitants of Babylonia and Assyria drew most of their

culture from the Sumerians, whom they displaced and absorbed. Their

system of writing, the general structure of their temples, the ritual of

their worship, the majority of their religious compositions, and many of

their gods themselves are to be traced to a Sumerian origin, and much of

the information obtained from the cylinders of Gudea merely confirms

or illustrates the conclusions already deduced from other sources. As

instances we may mention the belief in spirits, which is illustrated by

the importance attached to the placating of the Anunnaki, or Spirits of

the Earth, to whom a special place and special offerings were assigned

in E-ninnû. The Sumerian origin of ceremonies of purification is

confirmed by Gudea’s purification of the city before beginning the

building of the temple, and again before the transference of the god

from his old temple to the new one. The consultation of omens, which was

so marked a feature of Babylonian and Assyrian life, is seen in actual

operation under the Sumerians; for, even after Gudea had received direct

instructions from Ningirsu to begin building his temple, he did not

proceed to carry them out until he had consulted the omens and found

that they were favourable. Moreover, the references to mythological

beings, such as the seven heroes, the dragon of the deep, and the god

who slew the dragon, confirm the opinion that the creation legends and

other mythological compositions of the Babylonians were derived by them

from Sumerian sources. But there are two incidents in the narrative

which are on a rather different plane and are more startling in their

novelty. One is the story of Gudea’s dream, and the other the sign

which he sought from his god. The former is distinctly apocalyptic in

character, and both may be parallelled in what is regarded as purely

Semitic literature. That such conceptions existed among the Sumerians is

a most interesting fact, and although the theory of independent origin

is possible, their existence may well have influenced later Semitic

beliefs.

CHAPTER V--ELAM AND BABYLON, THE COUNTRY OF THE SEA AND THE KASSITES

Up to five years ago our knowledge of Elam and of the part she played in

the ancient world was derived, in the main, from a few allusions to the

country to be found in the records of Babylonian and Assyrian kings. It

is true that a few inscriptions of the native rulers had been found in

Persia, but they belonged to the late periods of her history, and the

majority consisted of short dedicatory formulae and did not supply us

with much historical information. But the excavations carried on since

then by M. de Morgan at Susa have revealed an entirely new chapter of

ancient Oriental history, and have thrown a flood of light upon the

position occupied by Elam among the early races of the East.

Lying to the north of the Persian Gulf and to the east of the Tigris,

and rising from the broad plains nearer the coast to the mountainous

districts within its borders on the east and north, Elam was one of the

nearest neighbours of Chaldæa. A few facts concerning her relations with

Babylonia during certain periods of her history have long been known,

and her struggles with the later kings of Assyria are known in some

detail; but for her history during the earliest periods we have had to

trust mainly to conjecture. That in the earlier as in the later periods

she should have been in constant antagonism with Babylonia might

legitimately be suspected, and it is not surprising that we should find

an echo of her early struggles with Chaldæa in the legends which were

current in the later periods of Babylonian history. In the fourth and

fifth tablets, or sections, of the great Babylonian epic which describes

the exploits of the Babylonian hero Gilgamesh, a story is told of an

expedition undertaken by Gilgamesh and his friend Ba-bani against an

Elamite despot named Khum-baba. It is related in the poem that Khumbaba

was feared by all who dwelt near him, for his roaring was like the

storm, and any man perished who was rash enough to enter the cedar-wood

in which he dwelt. But Gilgamesh, encouraged by a dream sent him by

Sha-mash, the Sun-god, pressed on with his friend, and, having entered

the wood, succeeded in slaying Khumbaba and in cutting off his head.

This legend is doubtless based on episodes in early Babylonian and

Elamite history. Khumbaba may not have been an actual historical ruler,

but at least he represents or personifies the power of Elam, and the

success of Gilgamesh no doubt reflects the aspirations with which many a

Babylonian expedition set out for the Elamite frontier.

Incidentally it may be noted that the legend possibly had a still closer

historical parallel, for the name of Khumbaba occurs as a component in

a proper name upon one of the Elamite contracts found recently by M. de

Morgan at Mai-Amir. The name in question is written \_Khumbaba-arad-ili\_,

“Khumbaba, the servant of God,” and it proves that at the date at which

the contract was written (about 1300-1000 B.C.) the name of Khumbaba was

still held in remembrance, possibly as that of an early historical ruler

of the country.

In her struggles with Chaldæa, Elam was not successful during the

earliest historical period of which we have obtained information; and,

so far as we can tell at present, her princes long continued to own

allegiance to the Semitic rulers whose influence was predominant from

time to time in the plains of Lower Mesopotamia. Tradition relates that

two of the earliest Semitic rulers whose names are known to us, Sargon

and Narâm-Sin, kings of Agade, held sway in Elam, for in the “Omens”

which were current in a later period concerning them, the former is

credited with the conquest of the whole country, while of the latter it

is related that he conquered Apirak, an Elamite district, and captured

its king. Some doubts were formerly cast upon these traditions inasmuch

as they were found in a text containing omens or forecasts, but these

doubts were removed by the discovery of contemporary documents by which

the later traditions were confirmed. Sargon’s conquest of Elam, for

instance, was proved to be historical by a reference to the event in a

date-formula upon tablets belonging to his reign. Moreover, the event

has received further confirmation from an unpublished tablet in the

British Museum, containing a copy of the original chronicle from which

the historical extracts in the “Omens” were derived. The portion of

the composition inscribed upon this tablet does not contain the lines

referring to Sargon’s conquest of Elam, for these occurred in an earlier

section of the composition; but the recovery of the tablet puts beyond

a doubt the historical character of the traditions preserved upon the

omen-tablet as a whole, and the conquest of Elam is thus confirmed

by inference. The new text does recount the expedition undertaken by

Narâm-Sin, the son of Sargon, against Apirak, and so furnishes a direct

confirmation of this event.

Another early conqueror of Elam, who was probably of Semitic origin,

was Alu-usharshid, king of the city of Kish, for, from a number of his

inscriptions found near those of Sargon at Nippur in Babylonia, we learn

that he subdued Elam and Para’se, the district in which the city of Susa

was probably situated. From a small mace-head preserved in the British

Museum we know of another conquest of Elam by a Semitic ruler of this

early period. The mace-head was made and engraved by the orders of

Mutabil, an early governor of the city of Dûr-ilu, to commemorate his

own valour as the man “who smote the head of the hosts” of Elam. Mutabil

was not himself an independent ruler, and his conquest of Elam must have

been undertaken on behalf of the suzerain to whom he owed allegiance,

and thus his victory cannot be classed in the same category as those of

his predecessors. A similar remark applies to the success against

the city of Anshan in Elam, achieved by Grudea, the Sumerian ruler

of Shirpurla, inasmuch as he was a patesi, or viceroy, and not an

independent king. Of greater duration was the influence exercised over

Elam by the kings of Ur, for bricks and contract-tablets have been found

at Susa proving that Dungi, one of the most powerful kings of Ur, and

Bur-Sin, Ine-Sin, and Oamil-Sin, kings of the second dynasty in that

city, all in turn included Elam within the limits of their empire.

Such are the main facts which until recently had been ascertained

with regard to the influence of early Babylonian rulers in Elam. The

information is obtained mainly from Babylonian sources, and until

recently we have been unable to fill in any details of the picture

from the Elamite side. But this inability has now been removed by M.

de Morgan’s discoveries. From the inscribed bricks, cones, stelæ, and

statues that have been brought to light in the course of his excavations

at Susa, we have recovered the name of a succession of native Elamite

rulers. All those who are to be assigned to this early period, during

which Elam owed allegiance to the kings of Babylonia, ascribe to

themselves the title of \_patesi\_, or viceroy, of Susa, in acknowledgment

of their dependence. Their records consist principally of building

inscriptions and foundation memorials, and they commemorate the

construction or repair of temples, the cutting of canals, and the like.

They do not, therefore, throw much light upon the problems connected

with the external history of Elam during this early period, but we

obtain from them a glimpse of the internal administration of the

country. We see a nation without ambition to extend its boundaries, and

content, at any rate for the time, to owe allegiance to foreign rulers,

while the energies of its native princes are devoted exclusively to the

cultivation of the worship of the gods and to the amelioration of the

conditions of the life of the people in their charge.

A difficult but interesting problem presents itself for solution at the

outset of our inquiry into the history of this people as revealed by

their lately recovered inscriptions,--the problem of their race and

origin. Found at Susa in Elam, and inscribed by princes bearing purely

Elamite names, we should expect these votive and memorial texts to be

written entirely in the Elamite language. But such is not the case,

for many of them are written in good Semitic Babylonian. While some

are entirely composed in the tongue which we term Elamite or Anzanite,

others, so far as their language and style is concerned, might have been

written by any early Semitic king ruling in Babylonia. Why did early

princes of Susa make this use of the Babylonian tongue?

At first sight it might seem possible to trace a parallel in the use of

the Babylonian language by kings and officials in Egypt and Syria

during the fifteenth century B.C., as revealed in the letters from

Tell el-Amarna. But a moment’s thought will show that the cases are not

similar. The Egyptian or Syrian scribe employed Babylonian as a medium

for his official foreign correspondence because Babylonian at that

period was the \_lingua franca\_ of the East. But the object of the

early Elamite rulers was totally different. Their inscribed bricks and

memorial stelæ were not intended for the eyes of foreigners, but for

those of their own descendants. Built into the structure of a temple,

or buried beneath the edifice, one of their principal objects was to

preserve the name and deeds of the writer from oblivion. Like similar

documents found on the sites of Assyrian and Babylonian cities, they

sometimes include curses upon any impious man, who, on finding the

inscription after the temple shall have fallen into ruins, should in

any way injure the inscription or deface the writer’s name. It will be

obvious that the writers of these inscriptions intended that they should

be intelligible to those who might come across them in the future. If,

therefore, they employed the Babylonian as well as the Elamite language,

it is clear that they expected that their future readers might be either

Babylonian or Elamite; and this belief can only be explained on the

supposition that their own subjects were of mixed race.

It is therefore certain that at this early period of Elamite history

Semitic Babylonians and Elamites dwelt side by side in Susa and retained

their separate languages. The problem therefore resolves itself into the

inquiry: which of these two peoples occupied the country first? Were the

Semites at first in sole possession, which was afterwards disputed by

the incursion of Elamite tribes from the north and east? Or were the

Elamites the original inhabitants of the land, into which the Semites

subsequently pressed from Babylonia?

A similar mixture of races is met with in Babylonia itself in the

early period of the history of that country. There the early Sumerian

inhabitants were gradually dispossessed by the invading Semite, who

adopted the civilization of the conquered race, and took over the system

of cuneiform writing, which he modified to suit his own language. In

Babylonia the Semites eventually predominated and the Sumerians as a

race disappeared, but during the process of absorption the two languages

were employed indiscriminately. The kings of the First Babylonian

Dynasty wrote their votive inscriptions sometimes in Sumerian, sometimes

in Semitic Babylonian; at other times they employed both languages

for the same text, writing the record first in Sumerian and afterwards

appending a Semitic translation by the side; and in the legal and

commercial documents of the period the old Sumerian legal forms and

phrases were retained intact. In Elam we may suppose that the use of the

Sumerian and Semitic languages was the same.

It may be surmised, however, that the first Semitic incursions into Elam

took place at a much later period than those into Babylonia, and under

very different conditions. When overrunning the plains and cities of the

Sumerians, the Semites were comparatively uncivilized, and, so far as we

know, without a system of writing of their own. The incursions into

Elam must have taken place under the great Semitic conquerors, such as

Sar-gon and Narâm-Sin and Alu-usharshid. At this period they had fully

adopted and modified the Sumerian characters to express their own

Semitic tongue, and on their invasion of Elam they brought their system

of writing with them. The native princes of Elam, whom they conquered,

adopted it in turn for many of their votive texts and inscribed

monuments when they wished to write them in the Babylonian language.

Such is the most probable explanation of the occurrence in Elam of

inscriptions in the Old Babylonian language, written by native princes

concerning purely domestic matters. But a further question now suggests

itself. Assuming that this was the order in which events took place,

are we to suppose that the first Semitic invaders of Elam found there a

native population in a totally undeveloped stage of civilization? Or did

they find a population enjoying a comparatively high state of culture,

different from their own, which they proceeded to modify and transform!

Luckily, we have not to fall back on conjecture for an answer to these

questions, for a recent discovery at Susa has furnished material from

which it is possible to reconstruct in outline the state of culture of

these early Elamites.

This interesting discovery consists of a number of clay tablets

inscribed in the proto-Elamite system of writing, a system which was

probably the only one in use in the country during the period before the

Semitic invasion. The documents in question are small, roughly formed

tablets of clay very similar to those employed in the early periods of

Babylonian history, but the signs and characters impressed upon them

offer the greatest contrast to the Sumerian and early Babylonian

characters with which we are familiar. Although they cannot be fully

deciphered at present, it is probable that they are tablets of accounts,

the signs upon them consisting of lists of figures and what are

probably ideographs for things. Some of the ideographs, such as that for

“tablet,” with which many of the texts begin, are very similar to the

Sumerian or Babylonian signs for the same objects; but the majority are

entirely different and have been formed and developed upon a system of

their own.

[Illustration: 230.jpg CLAY TABLET, FOUND AT SUSA, BEARING AN

INSCRIPTION IN THE EARLY PROTO-ELAMITE CHARACTER.]

The photograph is taken from M. de Morgan’s \_Délégation en

Perse, Mem.\_, t. vi, pi. 23.

On these tablets, in fact, we have a new class of cuneiform writing in

an early stage of its development, when the hieroglyphic or pictorial

character of the ideographs was still prominent.

[Illustration: 231.jpg CLAY TABLET, RECENTLY FOUND AT SUSA, BEARING AN

INSCRIPTION IN THE EARLY PROTO-ELAMITE CHARACTER.]

The photograph is reproduced from M. de Morgan’s \_Délégation

en Perse, Mém.\_, t. vi, pi. 22.

Although the meaning of the majority of these ideographs has not yet

been identified, Père Scheil, who has edited the texts, has succeeded

in making out the system of numeration. He has identified the signs for

unity, 10, 100, and 1,000, and for certain fractions, and the signs for

these figures are quite different from those employed by the Sumerians.

[Illustration: 231a.jpg Fractions]

The system, too, is different, for it is a decimal, and not a

sexagesimal, system of numeration.

That in its origin this form of writing had some connection with that

employed and, so far as we know, invented by the ancient Sumerians

is possible.\* But it shows small trace of Sumerian influence, and the

disparity in the two systems of numeration is a clear indication that,

at any rate, it broke off and was isolated from the latter at a very

early period. Having once been adopted by the early Elamites, it

continued to be used by them for long periods with but small change or

modification. Employed far from the centre of Sumerian civilization, its

development was slow, and it seems to have remained in its ideographic

state, while the system employed by the Sumerians, and adopted by the

Semitic Babylonians, was developed along syllabic lines.

\* It is, of course, also possible that the system of writing

had no connection in its origin with that of the Sumerians,

and was invented independently of the system employed in

Babylonia. In that case, the signs which resemble certain of

the Sumerian characters must have been adopted in a later

stage of its development. Though it would be rash to

dogmatize on the subject, the view that connects its origin

with the Sumerians appears on the whole to fit in best with

the evidence at present available.

It was without doubt this proto-Elamite system of writing which the

Semites from Babylonia found employed in Elam on their first incursions

into that country. They brought with them their own more convenient form

of writing, and, when the country had once been finally subdued, the

subject Elamite princes adopted the foreign system of writing and

language from their conquerors for memorial and monumental inscriptions.

But the ancient native writing was not entirely ousted, and continued

to be employed by the common people of Elam for the ordinary purposes

of daily life. That this was the case at least until the reign of

Karibu-sha-Shu-shinak, one of the early subject native rulers, is clear

from one of his inscriptions engraved upon a block of limestone to

commemorate the dedication of what were probably some temple furnishings

in honour of the god Shu-shinak.

[Illustration: 233.jpg BLOCK OF LIMESTONE, FOUND AT SUSA, BEARING

INSCRIPTIONS OF KARIBU-SHA-SHUSHINAK.]

The photograph is taken from M. de Morgan’s \_Délégation en

Perse\_, Mém., t. vi, pi. 2.

The main part of the inscription is written in Semitic Babylonian,

and below there is an addition to the text written in proto-Elamite

characters, probably enumerating the offerings which the

Karibu-sha-Shushinak decreed should be made for the future in honour

of the god.\* In course of time this proto-Elamite system of writing by

means of ideographs seems to have died out, and a modified form of the

Babylonian system was adopted by the Elamites for writing their own

language phonetically. It is in this phonetic character that the

so-called “Anzanite” texts of the later Elamite princes were composed.

\*We have assumed that both inscriptions were the work of

Karibu-sha-Shushinak. But it is also possible that the

second one in proto-Elamite characters was added at a later

period. From its position on the stone it is clear that it

was written after and not before Karibu-sha-Shushinak’s

inscription in Semitic Babylonian. See the photographic

reproduction.

Karibu-sha-Shushinak, whose recently discovered bilingual inscription

has been referred to above, was one of the earlier of the subject

princes of Elam, and he probably reigned at Susa not later than B.C.

3000. He styles himself “patesi of Susa, governor of the land of Elam,”

but we do not know at present to what contemporary king in Babylonia

he owed allegiance. The longest of his inscriptions that have been

recovered is engraved upon a stele of limestone and records the building

of the Gate of Shushinak at Susa and the cutting of a canal; it also

recounts the offerings which Karibu-sha-Shushinak dedicated on the

completion of the work. It may here be quoted as an example of the

class of votive inscriptions from which the names of these early Elamite

rulers have been recovered. The inscription runs as follows: “For

the god Shushinak, his lord, Karibu-sha-Shushinak, the son of

Shimbi-ish-khuk, patesi of Susa, governor of the land of Elam,--when

he set the (door) of his Gate in place,... in the Gate of the god

Shushinak, his lord, and when he had opened the canal of Sidur, he set

up in face thereof his canopy, and he set planks of cedar-wood for its

gate. A sheep in the interior thereof, and sheep without, he appointed

(for sacrifice) to him each day. On days of festival he caused the

people to sing songs in the Gate of the god Shushinak. And twenty

measures of fine oil he dedicated to make his gate beautiful. Four

\_magi\_ of silver he dedicated; a censer of silver and gold he dedicated

for a sweet odour; a,sword he dedicated; an axe with four blades

he dedicated, and he dedicated silver in addition for the mounting

thereof.... A righteous judgment he judged in the city! As for the man

who shall transgress his judgment or shall remove his gift, may the

gods Shushinak and Shamash, Bel and Ea, Ninni and Sin, Mnkharsag and

Nati--may all the gods uproot his foundation, and his seed may they

destroy!”

It will be seen that Karibu-sha-Shushinak takes a delight in enumerating

the details of the offerings he has ordained in honour of his city-god

Shushinak, and this religious temper is peculiarly characteristic of the

princes of Elam throughout the whole course of their history. Another

interesting point to notice in the inscription is that, although the

writer invokes Shushinak, his own god, and puts his name at the head

of the list of deities whose vengeance he implores upon the impious, he

also calls upon the gods of the Babylonians. As he wrote the inscription

itself in Babylonian, in the belief that it might be recovered by

some future Semitic inhabitant of his country, so he included in his

imprecations those deities whose names he conceived would be most

reverenced by such a reader. In addition to Karibu-sha-Shushinak the

names of a number of other patesis, or viceroys, have recently

been recovered, such as Khutran-tepti, and Idadu I and his son

Kal-Rukhu-ratir, and his grandson Idadu II. All these probably ruled

after Karibu-sha-Shushinak, and may be set in the early period of

Babylonian supremacy in Elam.

It has been stated above that the allegiance which these early Elamite

princes owed to their overlords in Babylonia was probably reflected in

the titles which they bear upon their inscriptions recently found at

Susa. These titles are “\_patesi\_ of Susa, \_shakkannak\_ of Elam,” which

may be rendered as “viceroy of Susa, governor of Elam.” But inscriptions

have been found on the same site belonging to another series of rulers,

to whom a different title is applied. Instead of referring to themselves

as viceroys of Susa and governors of Elam, they bear the title of

\_sukkal\_ of Elam, of Siparki, and of Susa. Siparki, or Sipar, was

probably the name of an important section of Elamite territory, and

the title \_sukkalu\_, “ruler,” probably carries with it an idea of

independence of foreign control which is absent from the title of

\_patesi\_. It is therefore legitimate to trace this change of title to

a corresponding change in the political condition of Elam; and there is

much to be said for the view that the rulers of Elam who bore the title

of \_sukkalu\_ reigned at a period when Elam herself was independent, and

may possibly have exercised a suzerainty over the neighbouring districts

of Babylonia.

The worker of this change in the political condition of Elam and

the author of her independence was a king named Kutir-Nakhkhunte or

Kutir-Na’khunde, whose name and deeds have been preserved in

later Assyrian records, where he is termed Kudur-Nankhundi and

Kudur-Nakhundu.\* This ruler, according to the Assyrian king

Ashur-bani-pal, was not content with throwing off the yoke under which

his land had laboured for so long, but carried war into the country of

his suzerain and marched through Babylonia devastating and despoiling

the principal cities. This successful Elamite campaign took place,

according to the computation of the later Assyrian scribes, about the

year 2280 B. c, and it is probable that for many years afterwards the

authority of the King of Elam extended over the plains of Babylonia.

It has been suggested that Kutir-Nakh-khunte, after including Babylonia

within his empire, did not remain permanently in Elam, but may have

resided for a part of each year, at least, in Lower Mesopotamia.

His object, no doubt, would have been to superintend in person the

administration of his empire and to check any growing spirit of

independence among his local governors. He may thus have appointed in

Susa itself a local governor who would carry on the business of the

country during his absence, and, under the king himself, would wield

supreme authority. Such governors may have been the sukkali, who, unlike

the patesi, were independent of foreign control, but yet did not enjoy

the full title of “king.”

\* For references to the passages where the name occurs, see

King, \_Letters of Hammurabi\_, vol. i, p. Ivy.

It is possible that the sukkalu who ruled in Elam during the reign of

Kutir-Nakhkhunte was named Temti-agun, for a short inscription of

this ruler has been recovered, in which he records that he built and

dedicated a certain temple with the object of ensuring the preservation

of the life of Kutir-Na’khundi. If we may identify the Kutir-Va’khundi

of this text with the great Elamite conqueror, Kutir-Nakhkhunte, it

follows that Temti-agun, the sukkal of Susa, was his subordinate. The

inscription mentions other names which are possibly those of rulers of

this period, and reads as follows: “Temti-agun, sukkal of Susa, the son

of the sister of Sirukdu’, hath built a temple of bricks at Ishme-karab

for the preservation of the life of Kutir-Na’khundi, and for the

preservation of the life of Lila-irtash, and for the preservation of his

own life, and for the preservation of the life of Temti-khisha-khanesh

and of Pil-kishamma-khashduk.” As Lila-irtash is mentioned immediately

after Kutir-Na’khundi, he was possibly his son, and he may have

succeeded him as ruler of the empire of Elam and Babylonia, though no

confirmation of this view has yet been discovered. Temti-khisha-khanesh

is mentioned immediately after the reference to the preservation of the

life of Temti-agun himself, and it may be conjectured that the name was

that of Temti-agun’s son, or possibly that of his wife, in which event

the last two personages mentioned in the text may have been the sons of

Temti-agun.

This short text affords a good example of one class of votive

inscriptions from which it is possible to recover the names of Elamite

rulers of this period, and it illustrates the uncertainty which at

present attaches to the identification of the names themselves and the

order in which they are to be arranged. Such uncertainty necessarily

exists when only a few texts have been recovered, and it will disappear

with the discovery of additional monuments by which the results already

arrived at may be checked. We need not here enumerate all the names of

the later Elamite rulers which have been found in the numerous votive

inscriptions recovered during the recent excavations at Susa. The order

in which they should be arranged is still a matter of considerable

uncertainty, and the facts recorded by them in such inscriptions as we

possess mainly concern the building and restoration of Elamite temples

and the decoration of shrines, and they are thus of no great historical

interest. These votive texts are well illustrated by a remarkable find

of foundation deposits made last year by M. de Morgan in the temple of

Shushinak at Susa, consisting of figures and jewelry of gold and silver,

and objects of lead, bronze, iron, stone, and ivory, cylinder-seals,

mace-heads, vases, etc. This is the richest foundation deposit that has

been recovered on any ancient site, and its archaeological interest in

connection with the development of Elamite art is great. But in no other

way does the find affect our conception of the history of the country,

and we may therefore pass on to a consideration of such recent

discoveries as throw new light upon the course of history in Western

Asia.

With the advent of the First Dynasty in Babylon Elam found herself

face to face with a power prepared to dispute her claims to exercise a

suzerainty over the plains of Mesopotamia. It is held by many writers

that the First Dynasty of Babylon was of Arab origin, and there is much

to be said for this view. M. Pognon was the first to start the theory

that its kings were not purely Babylonian, but were of either Arab or

Aramaean extraction, and he based his theory on a study of the forms of

the names which some of them bore. The name of Samsu-imna, for instance,

means “the sun is our god,” but the form of the words of which the name

is composed betray foreign influence. Thus in Babylonian the name for

“sun” or the Sun-god would be \_Shamash\_ or \_Shamshu\_, not \_Samsu\_; in

the second half of the name, while \_ilu\_ (“god”) is good Babylonian, the

ending \_na\_, which is the pronominal suffix of the first person plural,

is not Babylonian, but Arabic. We need not here enter into a long

philological discussion, and the instance already cited may suffice to

show in what way many of the names met in the Babylonian inscriptions

of this period betray a foreign, and possibly an Arabic, origin. But

whether we assign the forms of these names to Arabic influence or not,

it may be regarded as certain that, the First Dynasty of Babylon had

its origin in the incursion into Babylonia of a new wave of Semitic

immigration.

[Illustration: 240.jpg BRICK STAMPED WITH AN INSCRIPTION OF

KUDUR-MABURG]

The invading Semites brought with them fresh blood and unexhausted

energy, and, finding many of their own race in scattered cities and

settlements throughout the country, they succeeded in establishing a

purely Semitic dynasty, with its capital at Babylon, and set about the

task of freeing the country from any vestiges of foreign control. Many

centuries earlier Semitic kings had ruled in Babylonian cities, and

Semitic empires had been formed there. Sargon and Narâm-Sin,

having their capital at Agade, had established their control over a

considerable area of Western Asia and had held Elam as a province. But

so far as Elam was concerned Kutir-Nakhkhunte had reversed the balance

and had raised Elam to the position of the predominant power.

Of the struggles and campaigns of the earlier kings of the First Dynasty

of Babylon we know little, for, although we possess a considerable

number of legal and commercial documents of the period, we have

recovered no strictly historical inscriptions. Our main source of

information is the dates upon these documents, which are not dated by

the years of the reigning king, but on a system adopted by the early

Babylonian kings from their Sumerian predecessors. In the later periods

of Babylonian history tablets were dated in the year of the king who was

reigning at the time the document was drawn up, but this simple system

had not been adopted at this early period. In place of this we find that

each year was cited by the event of greatest importance which occurred

in that year. This event might be the cutting of a canal, when the year

in which this took place might be referred to as “the year in which

the canal named Ai-khegallu was cut;” or it might be the building of a

temple, as in the date-formula, “the year in which the great temple of

the Moon-god was built;” or it might be “the conquest of a city, such

as the year in which the city of Kish was destroyed.” Now it will be

obvious that this system of dating had many disadvantages. An event

might be of great importance for one city, while it might never have

been heard of in another district; thus it sometimes happened that the

same event was not adopted throughout the whole country for designating

a particular year, and the result was that different systems of

dating were employed in different parts of Babylonia. Moreover, when a

particular system had been in use for a considerable time, it required

a very good memory to retain the order and period of the various events

referred to in the date-formulae, so as to fix in a moment the date of a

document by its mention of one of them. In order to assist themselves

in their task of fixing dates in this manner, the scribes of the First

Dynasty of Babylon drew up lists of the titles of the years, arranged

in chronological order under the reigns of the kings to which they

referred. Some of these lists have been recovered, and they are of the

greatest assistance in fixing the chronology, while at the same time

they furnish us with considerable information concerning the history of

the period of which we should otherwise have been in ignorance.

From these lists of date-formulæ, and from the dates themselves which

are found upon the legal and commercial tablets of the period, we learn

that Kish, Ka-sallu, and Isin all gave trouble to the earlier kings of

the First Dynasty, and had in turn to be subdued. Elam did not watch the

diminution of her influence in Babylonia without a struggle to retain

it. Under Kudur-mabug, who was prince or governor of the districts lying

along the frontier of Elam, the Elamites struggled hard to maintain

their position in Babylonia, making the city of Ur the centre from which

they sought to check the growing power of Babylon. From bricks that have

been recovered from Mukayyer, the site of the city of Ur, we learn that

Kudur-mabug rebuilt the temple in that city dedicated to the Moon-god,

which is an indication of the firm hold he had obtained upon the city.

It was obvious to the new Semitic dynasty in Babylon that, until Ur and

the neighbouring city of Larsam had been captured, they could entertain

no hope of removing the Elamite yoke from Southern Babylonia. It is

probable that the earlier kings of the dynasty made many attempts to

capture them, with varying success. An echo of one of their struggles in

which they claimed the victory may be seen in the date-formula for the

fourteenth year of the reign of Sin-muballit, Hammurabi’s father and

predecessor on the throne of Babylon. This year was referred to in the

documents of the period as “the year in which the people of Ur were

slain with the sword.” It will be noted that the capture of the city

is not commemorated, so that we may infer that the slaughter of the

Elamites which is recorded did not materially reduce their influence,

as they were left in possession of their principal stronghold. In fact,

Elam was not signally defeated in the reign of Kudur-mabug, but in that

of his son Rim-Sin. From the date-formulæ of Hammurabi’s reign we learn

that the struggle between Elam and Babylon was brought to a climax in

the thirtieth year of his reign, when it is recorded in the formulas

that he defeated the Elamite army and overthrew Rim-Sin, while in the

following year we gather that he added the land of E’mutbal, that is,

the western district of Elam, to his dominions.

An unpublished chronicle in the British Museum gives us further details

of Hammurabi’s victory over the Elamites, and at the same time makes it

clear that the defeat and overthrow of Rim-Sin was not so crushing

as has hitherto been supposed. This chronicle relates that Hammurabi

attacked Rim-Sin, and, after capturing the cities of Ur and Larsam,

carried their spoil to Babylon. Up to the present it has been supposed

that Hammurabi’s victory marked the end of Elamite influence in

Babylonia, and that thenceforward the supremacy of Babylon was

established throughout the whole of the country. But from the

new chronicle we gather that Hammurabi did not succeed in finally

suppressing the attempts of Elam to regain her former position. It is

true that the cities of Ur and Larsam were finally incorporated in the

Babylonian empire, and the letters of Hammurabi to Sin-idinnam, the

governor whom he placed in authority over Larsam, afford abundant

evidence of the stringency of the administrative control which he

established over Southern Babylonia. But Rîm-Sin was only crippled for

the time, and, on being driven from Ur and Larsam, he retired beyond

the Elamite frontier and devoted his energies to the recuperation of his

forces against the time when he should feel himself strong enough again

to make a bid for victory in his struggle against the growing power of

Babylon. It is probable that he made no further attempt to renew the

contest during the life of Hammurabi, but after Samsu-iluna, the son

of Hammurabi, had succeeded to the Babylonian throne, he appeared in

Babylonia at the head of the forces he had collected, and attempted to

regain the cities and territory he had lost.

[Illustration: 245.jpg SEMITIC BABYLONIAN CONTRACT-TABLET]

Inscribed in the reign of Hammurabi with a deed recording

the division of property. The actual tablet is on the right;

that which appears to be another and larger tablet on the

left is the hollow clay case in which the tablet on the

right was originally enclosed. Photograph by Messrs. Mansell

& Co.

The portion of the text of the chronicle relating to the war between

Rîm-Sin and Samsu-iluna is broken so that it is not possible to follow

the campaign in detail, but it appears that Samsu-iluna defeated

Rim-Sin, and possibly captured him or burnt him alive in a palace in

which he had taken refuge.

With the final defeat of Rîm-Sin by Samsu-iluna it is probable that Elam

ceased to be a thorn in the side of the kings of Babylon and that

she made no further attempts to extend her authority beyond her own

frontiers. But no sooner had Samsu-iluna freed his country from all

danger from this quarter than he found himself faced by a new foe,

before whom the dynasty eventually succumbed. This fact we learn from

the unpublished chronicle to which reference has already been made, and

the name of this new foe, as supplied by the chronicle, will render

it necessary to revise all current schemes of Babylonian chronology.

Samsu-iluna’s new foe was no other than Iluma-ilu, the first king of the

Second Dynasty, and, so far from having been regarded as Samsu-iluna’s

contemporary, hitherto it has been imagined that he ascended the throne

of Babylon one hundred and eighteen years after Samsu-iluna’s death.

The new information supplied by the chronicle thus proves two important

facts: first, that the Second Dynasty, instead of immediately succeeding

the First Dynasty, was partly contemporary with it; second, that during

the period in which the two dynasties were contemporary they were at

war with one another, the Second Dynasty gradually encroaching on

the territory of the First Dynasty, until it eventually succeeded in

capturing Babylon and in getting the whole of the country under its

control. We also learn from the new chronicle that this Second Dynasty

at first established itself in “the Country of the Sea,” that is to say,

the districts in the extreme south of Babylonia bordering on the Persian

Gulf, and afterwards extended its borders northward until it gradually

absorbed the whole of Babylonia. Before discussing the other facts

supplied by the new chronicle, with regard to the rise and growth of the

Country of the Sea, whose kings formed the so-called “Second Dynasty,”

it will be well to refer briefly to the sources from which the

information on the period to be found in the current histories is

derived.

All the schemes of Babylonian chronology that have been suggested during

the last twenty years have been based mainly on the great list of kings

which is preserved in the British Museum. This document was drawn up in

the Neo-Babylonian or Persian period, and when complete it gave a list

of the names of all the Babylonian kings from the First Dynasty of

Babylon down to the time in which it was written. The names of the kings

are arranged in dynasties, and details are given as to the length of

their reigns and the total number of years each dynasty lasted. The

beginning of the list which gave the names of the First Dynasty is

wanting, but the missing portion has been restored from a smaller

document which gives a list of the kings of the First and Second

Dynasties only. In the great list of kings the dynasties are arranged

one after the other, and it was obvious that its compiler imagined that

they succeeded one another in the order in which he arranged them.

But when the total number of years the dynasties lasted is learned, we

obtain dates for the first dynasties in the list which are too early to

agree with other chronological information supplied by the historical

inscriptions. The majority of writers have accepted the figures of the

list of kings and have been content to ignore the discrepancies; others

have sought to reconcile the available data by ingenious emendations of

the figures given by the list and the historical inscriptions, or have

omitted the Second Dynasty entirely from their calculations. The new

chronicle, by showing that the First and Second Dynasties were partly

contemporaneous, explains the discrepancies that have hitherto proved so

puzzling.

It would be out of place here to enter into a detailed discussion of

Babylonian chronology, and therefore we will confine ourselves to a

brief description of the sequence of events as revealed by the new

chronicle. According to the list of kings, Iluma-ilu’s reign was a long

one, lasting for sixty years, and the new chronicle gives no indication

as to the period of his reign at which active hostilities with Babylon

broke out. If the war occurred in the latter portion of his reign, it

would follow that he had been for many years organizing the forces of

the new state he had founded in the south of Babylonia before making

serious encroachments in the north; and in that case the incessant

campaigns carried on by Babylon against Blam in the reigns of Hammurabi

and Samsu-iluna would have afforded him the opportunity of establishing

a firm foothold in the Country of the Sea without the risk of Babylonian

interference. If, on the other hand, it was in the earlier part of his

reign that hostilities with Babylon broke out, we may suppose that,

while Samsu-iluna was devoting all his energies to crush Bim-Sin, the

Country of the Sea declared her independence of Babylonian control. In

this case we may imagine Samsu-iluna hurrying south, on the conclusion

of his Elamite campaign, to crush the newly formed state before it had

had time to organize its forces for prolonged resistance.

Whichever of these alternatives eventually may prove to be correct, it

is certain that Samsu-iluna took the initiative in Babylon’s struggle

with the Country of the Sea, and that his action was due either to her

declaration of independence or to some daring act of aggression on the

part of this small state which had hitherto appeared too insignificant

to cause Babylon any serious trouble. The new chronicle tells us that

Samsu-iluna undertook two expeditions against the Country of the Sea,

both of which proved unsuccessful. In the first of these he penetrated

to the very shores of the Persian Gulf, where a battle took place in

which Samsu-iluna was defeated, and the bodies of many of the Babylonian

soldiers were washed away by the sea. In the second campaign Iluma-ilu

did not await Samsu-iluna’s attack, but advanced to meet him, and again

defeated the Babylonian army. In the reign of Abêshu’, Samsu-iluna’s

son and successor, Iluma-ilu appears to have undertaken fresh acts of

aggression against Babylon; and it was probably during one of his raids

in Babylonian territory that Abêshu’ attempted to crush the growing power

of the Country of the Sea by the capture of its daring leader, Iluma-ilu

himself. The new chronicle informs us that, with this object in

view, Abêshu’ dammed the river Tigris, hoping by this means to cut off

Iluma-ilu and his army, but his stratagem did not succeed, and Iluma-ilu

got back to his own territory in safety.

The new chronicle does not supply us with further details of the

struggle between Babylon and the Country of the Sea, but we may conclude

that all similar attempts on the part of the later kings of the First

Dynasty to crush or restrain the power of the new state were useless. It

is probable that from this time forward the kings of the First Dynasty

accepted the independence of the Country of the Sea upon their southern

border as an evil which they were powerless to prevent. They must have

looked back with regret to the good times the country had enjoyed under

the powerful sway of Hammurabi, whose victorious arms even their ancient

foes, the Blamites, had been unable to withstand. But, although the

chronicle does not recount the further successes achieved by the Country

of the Sea, it records a fact which undoubtedly contributed to hasten

the fall of Babylon and bring the First Dynasty to an end. It tells us

that in the reign of Samsu-ditana, the last king of the First Dynasty,

the men of the land of Khattu (the Hittites from Northern Syria) marched

against him in order to conquer the land of Akkad; in other words, they

marched down the Euphrates and invaded Northern Babylonia. The chronicle

does not state how far the invasion was successful, but the appearance

of a new enemy from the northwest must have divided the Babylonian

forces and thus have reduced their power of resisting pressure from the

Country of the Sea. Samsu-ditana may have succeeded in defeating the

Hittites and in driving them from his country; but the fact that he

was the last king of the First Dynasty proves that in his reign Babylon

itself fell into the hands of the king of the Country of the Sea.

The question now arises, To what race did the people of the Country

of the Sea belong? Did they represent an advance-guard of the Kassite

tribes, who eventually succeeded in establishing themselves as the Third

Dynasty in Babylon? Or were they the Elamites who, when driven from Ur

and Larsam, retreated southwards and maintained their independence on

the shores of the Persian Gulf? Or did they represent some fresh wave of

Semitic immigration’? That they were not Kassites is proved by the new

chronicle which relates how the Country of the Sea was conquered by the

Kassites, and how the dynasty founded by Iluma-ilu thus came to an end.

There is nothing to show that they were Elamites, and if the Country of

the Sea had been colonized by fresh Semitic tribes, so far from opposing

their kindred in Babylon, most probably they would have proved to them

a source of additional strength and support. In fact, there are

indications that the people of the Country of the Sea are to be referred

to an older stock than the Elamites, the Semites, or the Kassites. In

the dynasty of the Country of the Sea there is no doubt that we may

trace the last successful struggle of the ancient Sumerians to retain

possession of the land which they had held for so many centuries before

the invading Semites had disputed its possession with them.

Evidence of the Sumerian origin of the kings of the Country of the

Sea may be traced in the names which several of them bear. Ishkibal,

Grulkishar, Peshgal-daramash, A-dara-kalama, Akur-ul-ana, and

Melam-kur-kura, the names of some of them, are all good Sumerian names,

and Shushshi, the brother of Ishkibal, may also be taken as a Sumerian

name. It is true that the first three kings of the dynasty, Iluma-ilu,

Itti-ili-nibi, and Damki-ilishu, and the last king of the dynasty,

Ea-gamil, bear Semitic Babylonian names, but there is evidence that

at least one of these is merely a Semitic rendering of a Sumerian

equivalent. Iluma-ilu, the founder of the dynasty, has left inscriptions

in which his name is written in its correct Sumerian form as

Dingir-a-an, and the fact that he and some of his successors either bore

Semitic names or appear in the late list of kings with their Sumerian

names translated into Babylonian form may be easily explained by

supposing that the population of the Country of the Sea was mixed and

that the Sumerian and Semitic tongues were to a great extent employed

indiscriminately. This supposition is not inconsistent with the

suggestion that the dynasty of the Country of the Sea was Sumerian, and

that under it the Sumerians once more became the predominant race in

Babylonia.

The new chronicle also relates how the dynasty of the Country of the

Sea succumbed in its turn before the incursions of the Kassites. We know

that already under the First Dynasty the Kassite tribes had begun to

make incursions into Babylonia, for the ninth year of Samsu-iluna was

named in the date-formulae after a Kassite invasion, which, as it

was commemorated in this manner by the Babylonians, was probably

successfully repulsed. Such invasions must have taken place from time to

time during the period of supremacy attained by the Country of the Sea,

and it was undoubtedly with a view to stopping such incursions--for the

future that Ea-gamil--the last king of the Second Dynasty, decided to

invade Elam and conquer the mountainous districts in which the Kassite

tribes had built their strongholds. This Elamite campaign of Ea-gamil

is recorded by the new chronicle, which relates how he was defeated and

driven from the country by Ulam-Buriash, the brother of Bitiliash the

Kassite. Ulam-Buriash did not rest content with repelling Ea-gamil’s

invasion of his land, but pursued him across the border and succeeded

in conquering the Country of the Sea and in establishing there his own

administration. The gradual conquest of the whole of Babylonia by the

Kassites no doubt followed the conquest of the Country of the Sea,

for the chronicle relates how the process of subjugation, begun by

Ulam-Buriash, was continued by his nephew Agum, and we know from the

lists of kings that Ea-gamil was the last king of the dynasty founded by

Iluma-ilu. In this fashion the Second Dynasty was brought to an end, and

the Sumerian element in the mixed population of Babylonia did not again

succeed in gaining control of the government of the country.

It will be noticed that the account of the earliest Kassite rulers of

Babylonia which is given by the new chronicle does not exactly tally

with the names of the kings of the Third Dynasty as found upon the

list of kings. On this document the first king of the dynasty is named

Gandash, with whom we may probably identify Ulam-Buriash, the Kassite

conqueror of the Country of the Sea; the second king is Agum, and the

third is Bitiliashi. According to the new chronicle Agum was the son

of Bitiliashi, and it would be improbable that he should have ruled in

Babylonia before his father. But this difficulty is removed by supposing

that the two names were transposed by some copyist. The different

names assigned to the founder of the Kassite dynasty may be due to

the existence of variant traditions, or Ulam-Buriash may have assumed

another name on his conquest of Babylonia, a practice which was usual

with the later kings of Assyria when they occupied the Babylonian

throne.

The information supplied by the new chronicle with regard to the

relations of the first three dynasties to one another is of the greatest

possible interest to the student of early Babylonian history. We see

that the Semitic empire founded at Babylon by Sumu-abu, and consolidated

by Hammurabi, was not established on so firm a basis as has hitherto

been believed. The later kings of the dynasty, after Elam had been

conquered, had to defend their empire from encroachments on the south,

and they eventually succumbed before the onslaught of the Sumerian

element, which still remained in the population of Babylonia and had

rallied in the Country of the Sea. This dynasty in its turn succumbed

before the invasion of the Kassites from the mountains in the western

districts of Elam, and, although the city of Babylon retained her

position as the capital of the country throughout these changes of

government, she was the capital of rulers of different races, who

successively fought for and obtained the control of the fertile plains

of Mesopotamia.

It is probable that the Kassite kings of the Third Dynasty exercised

authority not only over Babylonia but also over the greater part of

Elam, for a number of inscriptions of Kassite kings of Babylonia have

been found by M. de Morgan at Susa. These inscriptions consist of

grants of land written on roughly shaped stone stelæ, a class which the

Babylonians themselves called \_kudurru\_, while they have been frequently

referred to by modern writers as “boundary-stones.” This latter term

is not very happily chosen, for it suggests that the actual monuments

themselves were set up on the limits of a field or estate to mark its

boundary. It is true that the inscription on a kudurru enumerates the

exact position and size of the estate with which it is concerned,

but the kudurru was never actually used to mark the boundary. It was

preserved as a title-deed, in the house of the owner of the estate or

possibly in the temple of his god, and formed his charter or title-deed

to which he could appeal in case of any dispute arising as to his right

of ownership. One of the kudurrus found by M. de Morgan records the

grant of a number of estates near Babylon by Nazimaruttash, a king of

the Third or Kassite Dynasty, to the god Marduk, that is to say they

were assigned by the king to the service of E-sagila, the great temple

of Marduk at Babylon.

[Illustration: 256.jpg A KUDURRU OR “BOUNDARY-STONE.”]

Inscribed with a text of Nazimaruttash, a king of the Third

or Kassite Dynasty, conferring certain estates near Babylon

on the temple of Marduk and on a certain man named Kashakti-

Shugab. The photograph is reproduced from M. de Morgan’s

Delegation en Perse, Mêm., t. ii, pi, 18.

All the crops and produce from the land were granted for the supply of

the temple, which was to enjoy the property without the payment of any

tax or tribute. The text also records the gift of considerable tracts of

land in the same district to a private individual named Kashakti-Shugab,

who was to enjoy a similar freedom from taxation so far as the lands

bestowed upon him were concerned.

This freedom from taxation is specially enacted by the document in

the words: “Whensoever in the days that are to come the ruler of the

country, or one of the governors, or directors, or wardens of these

districts, shall make any claim with regard to these estates, or shall

attempt to impose the payment of a tithe or tax upon them, may all the

great gods whose names are commemorated, or whose arms are portrayed, or

whose dwelling-places are represented, on this stone, curse him with an

evil curse and blot out his name!”

Incidentally, this curse illustrates one of the most striking

characteristics of the kudurrus, or “boundary-stones,” viz. the carved

figures of gods and representations of their emblems, which all of them

bare in addition to the texts inscribed upon them. At one time it was

thought that these symbols were to be connected with the signs of the

zodiac and various constellations and stars, and it was suggested that

they might have been intended to represent the relative positions of the

heavenly bodies at the time the document was drawn up. But this text

of Nazimaruttash and other similar documents that have recently been

discovered prove that the presence of the figures and emblems of the

gods upon the stones is to be explained on another and far more simple

theory. They were placed there as guardians of the property to which the

kudurru referred, and it was believed that the carving of their figures

or emblems upon the stone would ensure their intervention in case of

any attempted infringement of the rights and privileges which it was

the object of the document to commemorate and preserve. A photographic

reproduction of one side of the kudurru of Nazi-maruttash is shown in

the accompanying illustration. There will be seen a representation of

Gula or Bau, the mother of the gods, who is portrayed as seated on

her throne and wearing the four-horned head-dress and a long robe

that reaches to her feet. In the field are emblems of the Sun-god, the

Moon-god, Ishtar, and other deities, and the representation of divine

emblems and dwelling-places is continued on another face of the stone

round the corner towards which Grula is looking. The other two faces of

the document are taken up with the inscription.

An interesting note is appended to the text inscribed upon the stone,

beginning under the throne and feet of Marduk and continuing under the

emblems of the gods upon the other side. This note relates the history

of the document in the following words: “In those days Kashakti-Shugab,

the son of Nusku-na’id, inscribed (this document) upon a memorial

of clay, and he set it before his god. But in the reign of

Marduk-aplu-iddina, king of hosts, the son of Melishikhu, King

of Babylon, the wall fell upon this memorial and crushed it.

Shu-khuli-Shugab, the son of Nibishiku, wrote a copy of the ancient

text upon a new stone stele, and he set it (before the god).” It will be

seen, therefore, that this actual stone that has been recovered was not

the document drawn up in the reign of Nazimaruttash, but a copy made

under Marduk-aplu-iddina, a later king of the Third Dynasty. The

original deed was drawn up to preserve the rights of Kashakti-Shugab,

who shared the grant of land with the temple of Marduk. His share was

less than half that of the temple, but, as both were situated in the

same district, he was careful to enumerate and describe the temple’s

share, to prevent any encroachment on his rights by the Babylonian

priests.

It is probable that such grants of land were made to private individuals

in return for special services which they had rendered to the king. Thus

a broken kudurru among M. de Morgan’s finds records the confirmation of

a man’s claims to certain property by Biti-liash II, the claims being

based on a grant made to the man’s ancestor by Kurigalzu for services

rendered to the king during his war with Assyria. One of the finest

specimens of this class of charters or title-deeds has been found at

Susa, dating from the reign of Melishikhu, a king of the Third Dynasty.

The document in question records a grant of certain property in the

district of Bît-Pir-Shadû-rabû, near the cities Agade and Dûr-Kurigalzu,

made by Melishikhu to Marduk-aplu-iddina, his son, who succeeded him

upon the throne of Babylon. The text first gives details with regard to

the size and situation of the estates included in the grant of land, and

it states the names of the high officials who were entrusted with the

duty of measuring them. The remainder of the text defines and secures

the privileges granted to Marduk-aplu-iddina together with the land,

and, as it throws considerable light upon the system of land tenure at

the period, an extract from it may here be translated:

“To prevent the encroachment on his land,” the inscription runs, “thus

hath he (i.e. the king) established his (Marduk-aplu-iddina’s) charter.

On his land taxes and tithes shall they not impose; ditches, limits, and

boundaries shall they not displace; there shall be no plots, stratagems,

or claims (with regard to his possession); for forced labour or public

work for the prevention of floods, for the maintenance and repair of

the royal canal under the protection of the towns of Bit-Sikkamidu

and Damik-Adad, among the gangs levied in the towns of the district of

Ninâ-Agade, they shall not call out the people of his estate; they are

not liable to forced labour on the sluices of the royal canal, nor

are they liable for building dams, nor for closing the canal, nor for

digging out the bed thereof.”

[Illustration: 260.jpg KUOTTRRU, OR “BOUNDARY-STONE.”]

Inscribed with a text of Melishikhu, one of the kings of the

Third or Kassite Dynasty of Babylon, recording a grant of

certain property to Marduk-aplu-iddina, his son The

photograph is reproduced from M. de Morgan’s Delegation en

Perse, Mem., t. ii, pi. 24.

“A cultivator of his lands, whether hired or belonging to the estate,

and the men who receive his instructions (i.e. his overseers) shall no

governor of Bît-Pir-Shadû-rabû cause to leave his lands, whether by the

order of the king, or by the order of the governor, or by the order of

whosoever may be at Bît-Pir-Shadû-rabû. On wood, grass, straw, corn,

and every other sort of crop, on his carts and yoke, on his ass and

man-servant, shall they make no levy. During the scarcity of water in

the canal running between the Bati-Anzanim canal and the canal of the

royal district, on the waters of his ditch for irrigation shall they

make no levy; from the ditch of his reservoir shall they not draw water,

neither shall they divert (his water for) irrigation, and other land

shall they not irrigate nor water therewith. The grass of his lands

shall they not mow; the beasts belonging to the king or to a governor,

which may be assigned to the district of Bît-Pir-Shadû-rabû, shall they

not drive within his boundary, nor shall they pasture them on his grass.

He shall not be forced to build a road or a bridge, whether for the

king, or for the governor who may be appointed in the district of

Bît-Pir-Shadû-rabû, neither shall he be liable for any new form of

forced labour, which in the days that are to come a king, or a governor

appointed in the district of Bît-Pir-Shadû-rabû, shall institute and

exact, nor for forced labour long fallen into disuse which may be

revived anew. To prevent encroachment on his land the king hath fixed

the privileges of his domain, and that which appertaineth unto it, and

all that he hath granted unto him; and in the presence of Shamash, and

Marduk, and Anunitu, and the great gods of heaven and earth, he hath

inscribed them upon a stone, and he hath left it as an everlasting

memorial with regard to his estate.”

The whole of the text is too long to quote, and it will suffice to note

here that Melishikhu proceeds to appeal to future kings to respect the

land and privileges which he has granted to his son, Marduk-aplu-iddina,

even as he himself has respected similar grants made by his predecessors

on the throne; and the text ends with some very vivid curses against

any one, whatever his station, who should make any encroachments on the

privileges granted to Marduk-aplu-iddina, or should alter or do any harm

to the memorial-stone itself. The emblems of the gods whom Melishikhu

invokes to avenge any infringement of his grant are sculptured upon one

side of the stone, for, as has already been remarked, it was believed

that by carving them upon the memorial-stone their help in guarding the

stone itself and its enactments was assured.

From the portion of the text inscribed upon the stone which has just

been translated it is seen that the owner of land in Babylonia in the

period of the Kassite kings, unless he was granted special exemption,

was liable to furnish forced labour for public works to the state or to

his district, to furnish grazing and pasture for the flocks and herds of

the king or governor, and to pay various taxes and tithes on his land,

his water for irrigation, and his crops. From the numerous documents

of the First Dynasty of Babylon that have been recovered and published

within the last few years we know that similar customs were prevalent at

that period, so that it is clear that the successive conquests to which

the country was subjected, and the establishment of different dynasties

of foreign kings at Babylon, did not to any appreciable extent affect

the life and customs of the inhabitants of the country or even the

general character of its government and administration. Some documents

of a commercial and legal nature, inscribed upon clay tablets during the

reigns of the Kassite kings of Babylon, have been found at Nippur,

but they have not yet been published, and the information we possess

concerning the life of the people in this period is obtained indirectly

from kudurrus or boundary-stones, such as those of Nazimaruttash and

Melishikhu which have been already described. Of documents relating to

the life of the people under the rule of the kings of the Country of the

Sea we have none, and, with the exception of the unpublished chronicle

which has been described earlier in this chapter, our information for

this period is confined to one or two short votive inscriptions. But the

case is very different with regard to the reigns of the Semitic kings of

the First Dynasty of Babylon. Thousands of tablets relating to legal and

commercial transactions during this period have been recovered, and more

recently a most valuable series of royal letters, written by Hammurabi

and other kings of his dynasty, has been brought to light.

[Illustration: 264.jpg Upper Part of the Stele of Hammurabi, King of

Babylon.]

The stele is inscribed with his great code of laws. The Sun-

god is represented as seated on a throne in the form of a

temple façade, and his feet are resting upon the mountains.

Photograph by Messrs. Mansell & Co.

Moreover, the recently discovered code of laws drawn up by Hammurabi

contains information of the greatest interest with regard to the

conditions of life that were prevalent in Babylonia at that period.

From these three sources it is possible to draw up a comparatively full

account of early Babylonian life and customs.

CHAPTER VI--EARLY BABYLONIAN LIFE AND CUSTOMS

In tracing the ancient history of Mesopotamia and the surrounding

countries it is possible to construct a narrative which has the

appearance of being comparatively full and complete. With regard to

Babylonia it may be shown how dynasty succeeded dynasty, and for long

periods together the names of the kings have been recovered and the

order of their succession fixed with certainty. But the number and

importance of the original documents on which this connected narration

is based vary enormously for different periods. Gaps occur in our

knowledge of the sequence of events, which with some ingenuity may be

bridged over by means of the native lists of kings and the genealogies

furnished by the historical inscriptions. On the other hand, as if to

make up for such parsimony, the excavations have yielded a wealth of

material for illustrating the conditions of early Babylonian life which

prevailed in such periods. The most fortunate of these periods, so far

as the recovery of its records is concerned, is undoubtedly the period

of the Semitic kings of the First Dynasty of Babylon, and in particular

the reign of its greatest ruler, Hammurabi. When M. Maspero wrote his

history, thousands of clay tablets, inscribed with legal and commercial

documents and dated in the reigns of these early kings, had already been

recovered, and the information they furnished was duly summarized by

him.\* But since that time two other sources of information have been

made available which have largely increased our knowledge of

the constitution of the early Babylonian state, its system of

administration, and the conditions of life of the various classes of the

population.

\* Most of these tablets are preserved in the British Museum.

The principal?works in which they have been published are

Cuneiform Texts in the British Museum (1896, etc.),

Strassmaier’s Altbabylonischen Vertràge aus Warka, and

Meissner’s Beitràge zum altbabylonischen Privatrecht. A

number of similar tablets of this period, preserved in the

Pennsylvania Museum, will shortly be published by Dr. Ranke.

One of these new sources of information consists of a remarkable series

of royal letters, written by kings of the First Dynasty, which has been

recovered and is now preserved in the British Museum. The letters were

addressed to the governors and high officials of various great cities in

Babylonia, and they contain the king’s orders with regard to details of

the administration of the country which had been brought to his notice.

The range of subjects with which they deal is enormous, and there is

scarcely one of them which does not add to our knowledge of the period.\*

The other new source of information is the great code of laws, drawn up

by Hammurabi for the guidance of his people and defining the duties and

privileges of all classes of his subjects, the discovery of which at

Susa has been described in a previous chapter. The laws are engraved on

a great stele of diorite in no less than forty-nine columns of writing,

of which forty-four are preserved,\* and at the head of the stele is

sculptured a representation of the king receiving them from Shamash, the

Sun-god.

\* See King, Letters and Inscriptions of Hammurabi, 3 vols.

(1898-1900).

This code shows to what an extent the administration of law and justice

had been developed in Babylonia in the time of the First Dynasty. From

the contracts and letters of the period we already knew that regular

judges and duly appointed courts of law were in existence, and the code

itself was evidently intended by the king to give the royal sanction to

a great body of legal decisions and enactments which already possessed

the authority conferred by custom and tradition. The means by which such

a code could have come into existence are illustrated by the system of

procedure adopted in the courts at this period. After a case had been

heard and judgment had been given, a summary of the case and of the

evidence, together with the judgment, was drawn up and written out on

tablets in due legal form and phraseology. A list of the witnesses was

appended, and, after the tablet had been dated and sealed, it was stored

away among the legal archives of the court, where it was ready for

production in the event of any future appeal or case in which the

recorded decision was involved. This procedure represents an advanced

stage in the system of judicial administration, but the care which

was taken for the preservation of the judgments given was evidently

traditional, and would naturally give rise in course of time to the

existence of a recognized code of laws.

Moreover, when once a judgment had been given and had been duly recorded

it was irrevocable, and if any judge attempted to alter such a decision

he was severely punished. For not only was he expelled from his

judgment-seat, and debarred from exercising judicial functions in the

future, but, if his judgment had involved the infliction of a penalty,

he was obliged to pay twelve times the amount to the man he had

condemned. Such an enactment must have occasionally given rise to

hardship or injustice, but at least it must have had the effect

of imbuing the judges with a sense of their responsibility and of

instilling a respect for their decisions in the minds of the people. A

further check upon injustice was provided by the custom of the elders of

the city, who sat with the judge and assisted him in the carrying out

of his duties; and it was always open to a man, if he believed that he

could not get justice enforced, to make an appeal to the king. It is not

our present purpose to give a technical discussion of the legal contents

of the code, but rather to examine it with the object of ascertaining

what light it throws upon ancient Babylonian life and customs, and the

conditions under which the people lived.

The code gives a good deal of information with regard to the family life

of the Babylonians, and, above all, proves the sanctity with which the

marriage-tie was invested. The claims that were involved by marriage

were not lightly undertaken. Any marriage, to be legally binding, had to

be accompanied by a duly executed and attested marriage-contract. If a

man had taken a woman to wife without having carried out this necessary

preliminary, the woman was not regarded as his wife in the legal sense.

On the other hand, when once such a marriage-contract had been drawn up,

its inviolability was stringently secured. A case of proved adultery

on the part of a man’s wife was punished by the drowning of the guilty

parties, though the husband of the woman, if he wished to save his wife,

could do so by an appeal to the king. Similarly, death was the penalty

for a man who ravished another man’s betrothed wife while she was still

living in her father’s house, but in this case the girl’s innocence

and inexperience were taken into account, and no penalty was enforced

against her and she was allowed to go free. Where the adultery of a wife

was not proved, and only depended on the accusation of the husband, the

woman could clear herself by swearing her own innocence; if, however,

the accusation was not brought by the husband himself, but by others,

the woman could clear herself by submitting to the ordeal by water; that

is to say, she would plunge into the Euphrates; if the river carried her

away and she were drowned, it was regarded as proof that the accusation

was well founded; if, on the contrary, she survived and got safely

to the bank, she was considered innocent and was forthwith allowed to

return to her household completely vindicated.

It will have been seen that the duty of chastity on the part of a

married woman was strictly enforced, but the husband’s responsibility to

properly maintain his wife was also recognized, and in the event of

his desertion she could under certain circumstances become the wife of

another man. Thus, if he left his city and fled from it of his own free

will and deserted his wife, he could not reclaim her on his return,

since he had not been forced to leave the city, but had done so because

he hated it. This rule did not apply to the case of a man who was taken

captive in battle. In such circumstances the wife’s action was to be

guided by the condition of her husband’s affairs. If the captive husband

possessed sufficient property on which his wife could be maintained

during his captivity in a strange land, she had no reason nor excuse

for seeking another marriage. If under these circumstances she became

another man’s wife, she was to be prosecuted at law, and, her action

being the equivalent of adultery, she was to be drowned. But the case

was regarded as altered if the captive husband had not sufficient means

for the maintenance of his wife during his absence. The woman would then

be thrown on her own resources, and if she became the wife of another

man she incurred no blame. On the return of the captive he could reclaim

his wife, but the children of the second marriage would remain with

their own father. These regulations for the conduct of a woman, whose

husband was captured in battle, give an intimate picture of the manner

in which the constant wars of this early period affected the lives of

those who took part in them.

Under the Babylonians at the period of the First Dynasty divorce was

strictly regulated, though it was far easier for the man to obtain one

than for the woman. If we may regard the copies of Sumerian laws, which

have come down to us from the late Assyrian period, as parts of the code

in use under the early Sumerians, we must conclude that at this earlier

period the law was still more in favour of the husband, who could

divorce his wife whenever he so desired, merely paying her half a mana

as compensation. Under the Sumerians the wife could not obtain a

divorce at all, and the penalty for denying her husband was death. These

regulations were modified in favour of the woman in Hammurabi’s code;

for under its provisions, if a man divorced his wife or his concubine,

he was obliged to make proper provision for her maintenance. Whether

she were barren or had borne him children, he was obliged to return

her marriage portion; and in the latter case she had the custody of the

children, for whose maintenance and education he was obliged to furnish

the necessary supplies. Moreover, at the man’s death she and her

children would inherit a share of his property. When there had been no

marriage portion, a sum was fixed which the husband was obliged to pay

to his divorced wife, according to his status. In cases where the wife

was proved to have wasted her household and to have entirely failed in

her duty, her husband could divorce her without paying any compensation,

or could make her a slave in his house, and the extreme penalty for

this offence was death. On the other hand, a woman could not be divorced

because she had contracted a permanent disease; and, if she desired to

divorce her husband and could prove that her past life had been seemly,

she could do so, returning to her father’s house and taking her marriage

portion with her.

It is not necessary here to go very minutely into the regulations given

by the code with regard to marriage portions, the rights of widows,

the laws of inheritance, and the laws regulating the adoption and

maintenance of children. The customs that already have been described

with regard to marriage and divorce may serve to indicate the spirit

in which the code is drawn up and the recognized status occupied by the

wife in the Babylonian household. The extremely independent position

enjoyed by women in the early Babylonian days is illustrated by the

existence of a special class of women, to which constant reference is

made in the contracts and letters of the period. When the existence of

this class of women was first recognized from the references to them in

the contract-tablets inscribed at the time of the First Dynasty, they

were regarded as priestesses, but the regulations concerning them which

occur in the code of Hammurabi prove that their duties were not strictly

sacerdotal, but that they occupied the position of votaries. The

majority of those referred to in the inscriptions of this period

were vowed to the service of E-bab-bara, the temple of the Sun-god at

Sippara, and of E-sagila, the great temple of Marduk at Babylon, but

it is probable that all the great temples in the country had classes of

female votaries attached to them. From the evidence at present

available it may be concluded that the functions of these women bore no

resemblance to that of the sacred prostitutes devoted to the service of

the goddess Ishtar in the city of Erech. They seem to have occupied a

position of great influence and independence in the community, and

their duties and privileges were defined and safeguarded by special

legislation.

Generally they lived together in a special building, or convent,

attached to the temple, but they had considerable freedom and could

leave the convent and also contract marriage. Their vows, however,

while securing them special privileges, entailed corresponding

responsibilities. Even when married a votary was still obliged to remain

a virgin, and, should her husband desire to have children, she could not

bear them herself, but must provide him with a maid or concubine. Also

she had to maintain a high standard of moral conduct, for any breach

of which severe penalties were enforced. Thus, if a votary who was not

living in the convent opened a beer-shop, or should enter one for drink,

she ran the risk of being put to death. But the privileges she enjoyed

were also considerable, for even when unmarried she enjoyed the status

of a married woman, and if any man slandered her he incurred the penalty

of branding on the forehead. Moreover, a married votary, though she

could not bear her husband children, was secured in her position as the

permanent head of his household. The concubine she might give to her

husband was always the wife’s inferior, even after bearing him children,

and should the former attempt to put herself on a level of equality with

the votary, the latter might brand her as a slave and put her with the

female slaves. If the concubine proved barren she could be sold. The

votary could also possess property, and on taking her vows was provided

with a portion by her father exactly as though she were being given

in marriage. Her portion was vested in herself and did not become the

property of the order of votaries, nor of the temple to which she

was attached. The proceeds of her property were devoted to her own

maintenance, and on her father’s death her brothers looked after

her interests, or she might farm the property out. Under certain

circumstances she could inherit property and was not obliged to pay

taxes on it, and such property she could bequeath at her own death; but

upon her death her portion returned to her own family unless her father

had assigned her the privilege of bequeathing it. That the social

position enjoyed by a votary was considerable is proved by the fact that

many women of good family, and even members of the royal house, took

vows. The existence of the order and its high repute indicate a

very advanced conception of the position of women among the early

Babylonians.

From the code of Hammurabi we also gather considerable information with

regard to the various classes of which the community was composed and

to their relative social positions. For the purposes of legislation

the community was divided into three main classes or sections, which

corresponded to well-defined strata in the social system. The lowest

of these classes consisted of the slaves, who must have formed a

considerable portion of the population. The class next above them

comprised the large body of free men, who were possessed of a certain

amount of property but were poor and humble, as their name, \_muslikênu\_,

implied. These we may refer to as the middle class. The highest, or

upper class, in the Babylonian community embraced all the officers and

ministers attached to the court, the higher officials and servants

of the state, and the owners of considerable lands and estates. The

differences which divided and marked off from one another the two great

classes of free men in the population of Babylonia is well illustrated

by the scale of payments as compensation for injury which they were

obliged to make or were entitled to receive. Thus, if a member of the

upper class were guilty of stealing an ox, or a sheep, or an ass, or

a pig, or a boat, from a temple or a private house, he had to pay the

owner thirty times its value as compensation, whereas if the thief were

a member of the middle class he only had to pay ten times its price, but

if he had no property and so could not pay compensation he was put to

death. The penalty for manslaughter was less if the assailant was a man

of the middle class, and such a man could also divorce his wife more

cheaply, and was privileged to pay his doctor or surgeon a smaller fee

for a successful operation.

But the privileges enjoyed by a man of the middle class were

counterbalanced by a corresponding diminution of the value at which

his life and limbs were assessed. Thus, if a doctor by carrying out an

operation unskilfully caused the death of a member of the upper class,

or inflicted a serious injury upon him, such as the loss of an eye, the

punishment was the amputation of both hands, but no such penalty seems

to have been exacted if the patient were a member of the middle class.

If, however, the patient were a slave of a member of the middle class,

in the event of death under the operation, the doctor had to give the

owner another slave, and in the event of the slave losing his eye, he

had to pay the owner half the slave’s value. Penalties for assault were

also regulated in accordance with the social position and standing

of the parties to the quarrel. Thus, if one member of the upper class

knocked out the eye or the tooth of one of his equals, his own eye or

his own tooth was knocked out as a punishment, and if he broke the limb

of one of the members of his own class, he had his corresponding limb

broken; but if he knocked out the eye of a member of the middle class,

or broke his limb, he suffered no punishment in his own person, but was

fined one mana of silver, and for knocking out the tooth of such a man

he was fined one-third of a mana. If two members of the same class were

engaged in a quarrel, and one of them made a peculiarly improper assault

upon the other, the assailant was only fined, the fine being larger

if the quarrel was between members of the upper class. But if such an

assault was made by one man upon another who was of higher rank than

himself, the assailant was punished by being publicly beaten in the

presence of the assembly, when he received sixty stripes from a scourge

of ox-hide. These regulations show the privileges and responsibilities

which pertained to the two classes of free men in the Babylonian

community, and they indicate the relative social positions which they

enjoyed.

Both classes of free men could own slaves, though it is obvious that

they were more numerous in the households and on the estates of members

of the upper class. The slave was the absolute property of his master

and could be bought and sold and employed as a deposit for a debt,

but, though slaves as a class had few rights of their own, in certain

circumstances they could acquire them. Thus, if the owner of a female

slave had begotten children by her he could not use her as the payment

for a debt, and in the event of his having done so he was obliged to

ransom her by paying the original amount of the debt in money. It was

also possible for a male slave, whether owned by a member of the upper

or of the middle class, to marry a free woman, and if he did so, his

children were free and did not become the property of his master. Also,

if the free woman whom the slave married brought with her a marriage

portion from her father’s house, this remained her own property on the

slave’s death, and supposing the couple had acquired other property

during the time they lived together as man and wife, the owner of the

slave could only claim half of such property, the other half being

retained by the free woman for her own use and for that of her children.

Generally speaking, the lot of the slave was not a particularly hard

one, for he was a recognized member of his owner’s household, and, as a

valuable piece of property, it was obviously to his owner’s interest to

keep him healthy and in good condition. In fact, the value of the slave

is attested by the severity of the penalty imposed for abducting a male

or female slave from the owner’s house and removing him or her from

the city; for a man guilty of this offence was put to death. The same

penalty was imposed for harbouring and taking possession of a runaway

slave, whereas a fixed reward was paid by the owner to any one by whom

a runaway slave was captured and brought back. Special legislation was

also devised with the object of rendering the theft of slaves difficult

and their detection easy. Thus, if a brander put a mark upon a slave

without the owner’s consent, he was liable to have his hands cut off,

and if he could prove that he did so through being deceived by another

man, that man was put to death. For bad offences slaves were liable to

severe punishments, such as cutting off the ear, which was the penalty

for denying his master, and also for making an aggravated assault on a

member of the upper class of free men. But it is clear that on the whole

the slave was well looked after. He was also not condemned to remain

perpetually a slave, for while still in his master’s service it was

possible for him, under certain conditions, to acquire property of his

own, and if he did so he was able with his master’s consent to purchase

his freedom. If a slave were captured by the enemy and taken to a

foreign land and sold, and were then brought back by his new owner to

his own country, he could claim his liberty without having to pay any

purchase-money to either of his masters.

The code of Hammurabi also contains detailed regulations concerning the

duties of debtors and creditors, and it throws an interesting light

on the commercial life of the Babylonians at this early period. For

instance, it reveals the method by which a wealthy man, or a merchant,

extended his business and obtained large profits by trading with other

towns. This he did by employing agents who were under certain fixed

obligations to him, but acted independently so far as their trading was

concerned. From the merchant these agents would receive money or grain

or wool or oil or any sort of goods wherewith to trade, and in return

they paid a fixed share of their profits, retaining the remainder as

the recompense for their own services. They were thus the earliest of

commercial travellers. In order to prevent fraud between the merchant

and the agent special regulations were framed for the dealings they had

with one another. Thus, when the agent received from the merchant the

money or goods to trade with, it was enacted that he should at the time

of the transaction give a properly executed receipt for the amount he

had received. Similarly, if the agent gave the merchant money in return

for the goods he had received and in token of his good faith, the

merchant had to give a receipt to the agent, and in reckoning their

accounts after the agent’s return from his journey, only such amounts as

were specified in the receipts were to be regarded as legal obligations.

If the agent forgot to obtain his proper receipt he did so at his own

risk.

[Illustration: 280.jpg CLAY CONTRACT TABLET AND ITS OUTER CASE]

Dating from the period of the First Dynasty of Babylon.

Travelling at this period was attended with some risk, as it is in the

East at the present day, and the caravan with which an agent travelled

was liable to attack from brigands, or it might be captured by enemies

of the country from which it set out. It was right that loss from this

cause should not be borne by the agent, who by trading with the goods

was risking his own life, but should fall upon the merchant who had

merely advanced the goods and was safe in his own city. It is plain,

however, that disputes frequently arose in consequence of the loss of

goods through a caravan being attacked and robbed, for the code states

clearly the responsibility of the merchant in the matter. If in the

course of his journey an enemy had forced the agent to give up some of

the goods he was carrying, on his return the agent had to specify the

amount on oath, and he was then acquitted of all responsibility in the

matter. If he attempted to cheat his employer by misappropriating the

money or goods advanced to him, on being convicted of the offence before

the elders of the city, he was obliged to repay the merchant three times

the amount he had taken. On the other hand, if the merchant attempted

to defraud his agent by denying that the due amount had been returned to

him, he was obliged on conviction to pay the agent six times the amount

as compensation. It will thus be seen that the law sought to protect the

agent from the risk of being robbed by his more powerful employer.

The merchant sometimes furnished the agent with goods which he was to

dispose of in the best markets he could find in the cities and towns

along his route, and sometimes he would give the agent money with which

to purchase goods in foreign cities for sale on his return. If the

venture proved successful the merchant and his agent shared the profits

between them, but if the agent made bad bargains he had to refund to the

merchant the value of the goods he had received; if the merchant had not

agreed to risk losing any profit, the amount to be refunded to him was

fixed at double the value of the goods advanced.

[Illustration: 282.jpg A TRACK IN THE DESERT.]

This last enactment gives an indication of the immense profits which

were obtained by both the merchant and the agent from this system of

foreign trade, for it is clear that what was regarded fair profit for

the merchant was double the value of the goods disposed of. The profits

of a successful journey would also include a fair return to the agent

for the trouble and time involved in his undertaking. Many of the

contract tablets of this early period relate to such commercial

journeys, which show that various bargains were made between the

different parties interested, and sometimes such contracts, or

partnerships, were entered into, not for a single journey only, but for

long periods. We may therefore conclude that at the time of the First

Dynasty of Babylon, and probably for long centuries before that period,

the great trade-routes of the East were crowded with traffic. With the

exception that donkeys and asses were employed for beasts of burden and

were not supplemented by horses and camels until a much later period, a

camping-ground in the desert on one of the great trade-routes must have

presented a scene similar to that of a caravan camping in the desert at

the present day.

[Illustration: 283.jpg A CAMPING-GROUND IN THE DESERT, BETWEEN BIREJIK

AND URFA.]

The rough tracks beaten by the feet of men and beasts are the same

to-day as they were in that remote period. We can imagine a body of

these early travellers approaching a walled city at dusk and hastening

their pace to get there before the gates were shut. Such a picture as

that of the approach to the city of Samarra, with its mediaeval walls,

may be taken as having had its counterpart in many a city of the early

Babylonians. The caravan route leads through the desert to the city

gate, and if we substitute two massive temple towers for the domes of

the mosques that rise above the wall, little else in the picture need be

changed.

[Illustration: 284.jpg APPROACH TO THE CITY OF SAMARRA, SITUATED ON THE

LEFT BANK OF THE TIGRIS.]

A small caravan is here seen approaching the city at sunset

before the gates are shut. Samarra was only founded in A. D.

834, by the Khalif el-Motasim, the son of Harûn er-Rashîd,

but customs in the East do not change, and the photograph

may be used to illustrate the approach of an early

Babylonian caravan to a walled city of the period.

The houses, too, at this period must have resembled the structures of

unburnt brick of the present day, with their flat mud tops, on which

the inmates sleep at night during the hot season, supported on poles

and brushwood. The code furnishes evidence that at that time, also, the

houses were not particularly well built and were liable to fall, and,

in the event of their doing so, it very justly fixes the responsibility

upon the builder. It is clear from the penalties for bad workmanship

enforced upon the builder that considerable abuses had existed in the

trade before the time of Hammurabi, and it is not improbable that the

enforcement of the penalties succeeded in stamping them out. Thus, if

a builder built a house for a man, and his work was not sound and the

house fell and crushed the owner so that he died, it was enacted that

the builder himself should be put to death. If the fall of the house

killed the owner’s son, the builder’s own son was to be put to death.

[Illustration: 285.jpg A SMALL CARAVAN IN THE MOUNTAINS OF KURDISTAN.]

If one or more of the owner’s slaves were killed, the builder had to

restore him slave for slave. Any damage which the owner’s goods might

have suffered from the fall of the house was to be made good by the

builder. In addition to these penalties the builder was obliged to

rebuild the house, or any portion of it that had fallen through

not being properly secured, at his own cost. On the other hand, due

provisions were made for the payment of the builder for sound work; and

as the houses of the period rarely, if ever, consisted of more than one

story, the scale of payment was fixed by the area of ground covered by

the building.

[Illustration: 286.jpg THE CITY OF MOSUL.]

Situated on the right bank of the Tigris opposite the mounds

which mark the site of the ancient city of Nineveh. The

flat-roof ednouses which may be distinguished in the

photograph are very similar in form and construction to

those employed by the ancient Assyrians and Babylonians.

From the code of Hammurabi we also gain considerable information with

regard to agricultural pursuits in ancient Babylonia, for elaborate

regulations are given concerning the landowner’s duties and

responsibilities, and his relations to his tenants. The usual practice

in hiring land for cultivation was for the tenant to pay his rent in

kind, by assigning a certain proportion of the crop, generally a third

or a half, to the owner. If a tenant hired certain land for cultivation

he was bound to till it and raise a crop, and should he neglect to do

so he had to pay the owner what was reckoned as the average rent of the

land, and he had also to break up the land and plough it before handing

it back. As the rent of a field was usually reckoned at harvest, and its

amount depended on the size of the crop, it was only fair that damage to

the crop from flood or storm should not be made up by the tenant; thus

it was enacted by the code that any loss from such a cause should be

shared equally by the owner of the field and the farmer, though if the

latter had already paid his rent at the time the damage occurred he

could not make a claim for repayment.

[Illustration: 287.jpg THE VILLAGE OF NEBI YUNUS.]

Built on one of the mounds marking the site of the Assyrian

city of Nineveh. The mosque in the photograph is built over

the traditional site of the prophet Jonah’s tomb. The flat-

roofed houses of the modern dwellers on the mound can be

well seen in the picture.

It is clear from the enactments of the code that disputes were frequent,

not only between farmers and landowners, but also between farmers and

shepherds. It is certain that the latter, in the attempt to find pasture

for the flocks, often allowed their sheep to feed off the farmers’ fields

in the spring. This practice the code set itself to prevent by fixing a

scale of compensation to be paid by any shepherd who caused his sheep to

graze on cultivated land without the owner’s consent. If the offence was

committed in the early spring, when the crop was still small, the farmer

was to harvest the crop and receive a considerable price in kind as

compensation for the shepherd. But if it occurred later on in the

spring, when the sheep had been brought in from the meadows and turned

into the great common field at the city gate, the offence would less

probably be due to accident and the damage to the crop would be greater.

In these circumstances the shepherd had to take over the crop and pay

the farmer very heavily for his loss.

[Illustration: 288.jpg Portrait-sculpture of Hammurabi, King of Babylon]

From a stone slab in the British Museum.

The planting of gardens and orchards was encouraged, and a man was

allowed to use a field for this purpose without paying a yearly rent. He

might plant it and tend it for four years, and in the fifth year of

his tenancy the original owner of the field took half of the garden

in payment, while the other half the planter of the garden kept for

himself. If a bare patch had been left in the garden it was to be

reckoned in the planter’s half. Regulations were framed to ensure the

proper carrying out of the planting, for if the tenant neglected to do

this during the first four years, he was still liable to plant the plot

he had taken without receiving his half, and he had to pay the owner

compensation in addition, which varied in amount according to the

original condition of the land. If a man hired a garden, the rent he

paid to the owner was fixed at two-thirds of its produce. Detailed

regulations are also given in the code concerning the hire of cattle

and asses, and the compensation to be paid to the owner for the loss or

ill-treatment of his beasts. These are framed on the just principle that

the hirer was responsible only for damage or loss which he could have

reasonably prevented. Thus, if a lion killed a hired ox or ass in the

open country, or if an ox was killed by lightning, the loss fell upon

the owner and not on the man who hired the beast. But if the hirer

killed the ox through carelessness or by beating it unmercifully, or if

the beast broke its leg while in his charge, he had to restore another

ox to the owner in place of the one he had hired. For lesser damages to

the beast the hirer had to pay compensation on a fixed scale. Thus, if

the ox had its eye knocked out during the period of its hire, the man

who hired it had to pay to the owner half its value; while for a broken

horn, the loss of the tail, or a torn muzzle, he paid a quarter of the

value of the beast.

Fines were also levied for carelessness in looking after cattle, though

in cases of damage or injury, where carelessness could not be proved,

the owner of a beast was not held responsible. A bull might go wild at

any time and gore a man, however careful and conscientious the owner

might be, and in these circumstances the injured man could not bring an

action against the owner. But if a bull had already gored a man, and,

although it was known to be vicious, the owner had not blunted its horns

or shut it up, in the event of its goring and killing a free man, he had

to pay half a mana of silver. One-third of a mana was the price paid for

a slave who was killed. A landed proprietor who might hire farmers to

cultivate his fields inflicted severe fines for acts of dishonesty with

regard to the cattle, provender, or seed-corn committed to their charge.

If a man stole the provender for the cattle he had to make it good, and

he was also liable to the punishment of having his hands cut off. In

the event of his being convicted of letting out the oxen for hire, or

stealing the seed-corn so that he did not produce a crop, he had to pay

very heavy compensation, and, if he could not pay, he was liable to be

torn to pieces by the oxen in the field he should have cultivated.

In a dry land like Babylonia, where little rain falls and that in only

one season of the year, the irrigation of his fields forms one of the

most important duties of the agriculturist. The farmer leads the water

to his fields along small irrigation-canals or channels above the level

of the soil, their sides being formed of banks of earth. It is clear

that similar methods were employed by the early Babylonians. One such

channel might supply the fields of several farmers, and it was the duty

of each man through whose land the channel flowed to keep its banks on

his land in repair. If he omitted to strengthen his bank or dyke, and

the water forced a breach and flooded his neighbour’s field, he had to

pay compensation in kind for any crop that was ruined; while if he could

not pay, he and his goods were sold, and his neighbours, whose fields

had been damaged through his carelessness, shared the money.

The land of Babylonian farmers was prepared for irrigation before it was

sown by being divided into a number of small square or oblong tracts,

each separated from the others by a low bank of earth, the seed being

afterwards sown within the small squares or patches. Some of the banks

running lengthwise through the field were made into small channels, the

ends of which were carried up to the bank of the nearest main irrigation

canal. No system of gates or sluices was employed, and when the farmer

wished to water one of his fields he simply broke away the bank opposite

one of his small channels and let the water flow into it. He would let

the water run along this small channel until it reached the part of

his land he wished to water. He then blocked the channel with a little

earth, at the same time breaking down its bank so that the water flowed

over one of the small squares and thoroughly soaked it. When this square

was finished he filled up the bank and repeated the process for the

next square, and so on until he had watered the necessary portion of

the field. When this was finished he returned to the main channel and

stopped the flow of the water by blocking up the hole he had made in the

dyke. The whole process was, and to-day still is, extremely simple,

but it needs care and vigilance, especially in the case of extensive

irrigation when water is being carried into several parts of an estate

at once. It will be obvious that any carelessness on the part of the

irrigator in not shutting off the water in time may lead to extensive

damage, not only to his own fields, but to those of his neighbours. In

the early Babylonian period, if a farmer left the water running in his

channel, and it flooded his neighbour’s field and hurt his crop, he had

to pay compensation according to the amount of damage done.

It was stated above that the irrigation-canals and little channels were

made above the level of the soil so that the water could at any point

be tapped and allowed to flow over the surrounding land; and in a flat

country like Babylonia it will be obvious that some means had to be

employed for raising the water from its natural level to the higher

level of the land. As we should expect, reference is made in the

Babylonian inscriptions to irrigation-machines, and, although their

exact form and construction are not described, they must have been very

similar to those employed at the present day. The modern inhabitants of

Mesopotamia employ four sorts of contrivances for raising the water into

their irrigation-channels; three of these are quite primitive, and are

those most commonly employed. The method which gives the least trouble

and which is used wherever the conditions allow is a primitive form of

water-wheel. This can be used only in a river with a good current.

The wheel is formed of rough boughs and branches nailed together, with

spokes joining the outer rims to a roughly hewn axle. A row of rough

earthenware cups or bottles are tied round the outer rim for picking

up the water, and a few rough paddles are fixed so that they stick out

beyond the rim. The wheel is then fixed in place near the bank of the

river, its axle resting in pillars of rough masonry.

[Illustration: 293.jpg A MODERN MACHINE FOR IRRIGATION ON THE

EUPHRATES.]

As the current turns the wheel, the bottles on the rim dip below the

surface and are raised up full. At the top of the wheel is fixed a

trough made by hollowing half the trunk of a date-palm, and into this

the bottles pour their water, which is conducted from the trough by

means of a small aqueduct into the irrigation-channel on the bank.

The convenience of the water-wheel will be obvious, for the water is

raised without the labour of man or beast, and a constant supply is

secured day and night so long as the current is strong enough to turn

the wheel. The water can be cut off by blocking the wheel or tying it

up. These wheels are most common on the Euphrates, and are usually set

up where there is a slight drop in the river bed and the water runs

swiftly over shallows. As the banks are very high, the wheels are

necessarily huge contrivances in order to reach the level of the fields,

and their very rough construction causes them to creak and groan as they

turn with the current. In a convenient place in the river several of

these are sometimes set up side by side, and the noise of their combined

creakings can be heard from a great distance. Some idea of what one of

these machines looks like can be obtained from the illustration. At Hit

on the Euphrates a line of gigantic water-wheels is built across the

river, and the noise they make is extraordinary.

Where there is no current to turn one of these wheels, or where the bank

is too high, the water must be raised by the labour of man or beast. The

commonest method, which is the one employed generally on the Tigris, is

to raise it in skins, which are drawn up by horses, donkeys, or cattle.

A recess with perpendicular sides is cut into the bank, and a wooden

spindle on wooden struts is supported horizontally over the recess. A

rope running over the spindle is fastened to the skin, while the funnel

end of the skin is held up by a second rope, running over a lower

spindle, until its mouth is opposite the trough into which the water

is to be poured. The beasts which are employed for raising the skin

are fastened to the ends of the ropes, and they get a good purchase for

their pull by being driven down a short cutting or inclined plane in the

bank. To get a constant flow of water, two skins are usually employed,

and as one is drawn up full the other is let down empty.

The third primitive method of raising water, which is commoner in Egypt

than in Mesopotamia at the present day, is the \_shadduf\_, and is worked

by hand. It consists of a beam supported in the centre, at one end of

which is tied a rope with a bucket or vessel for raising the water, and

at the other end is fixed a counterweight.\* On an Assyrian bas-relief

found at Kuyunjik are representations of the shadduf in operation,

two of them being used, the one above the other, to raise the water to

successive levels. These were probably the contrivances usually employed

by the early Babylonians for raising the water to the level of their

fields, and the fact that they were light and easily removed must have

made them tempting objects to the dishonest farmer. Hammurabi therefore

fixed a scale of compensation to be paid to the owner by a detected

thief, which varied according to the class and value of the machine

he stole. The rivers and larger canals of Babylonia were used by the

ancient inhabitants not only for the irrigation of their fields, but

also as waterways for the transport of heavy materials. The recently

published letters of Hammurabi and Abêshu’ contain directions for the

transportation of corn, dates, sesame seed, and wood, which were ordered

to be brought in ships to Babylon, and the code of Hammurabi refers to

the transportation by water of wool and oil. It is therefore clear that

at this period considerable use was made of vessels of different size

for conveying supplies in bulk by water. The method by which the size of

such ships and barges was reckoned was based on the amount of grain

they were capable of carrying, and this was measured by the \_gur\_, the

largest measure of capacity. Thus mention is made in the inscriptions of

vessels of five, ten, fifteen, twenty, thirty, forty, fifty, sixty, and

seventy-five gur capacity. A boat-builder’s fee for building a vessel of

sixty gur was fixed at two shekels of silver, and it was proportionately

less for boats of smaller capacity. To ensure that the boat-builder

should not scamp his work, regulations were drawn up to fix on him the

responsibility for unsound work. Thus if a boat-builder were employed to

build a vessel, and he put faulty work into its construction so that it

developed defects within a year of its being launched, he was obliged to

strengthen and rebuild it at his own expense.

\* The fourth class of machine for raising water employed in

Mesopotamia at the present day consists of an endless chain

of iron buckets running over a wheel. This is geared by

means of rough wooden cogs to a horizontal wheel, the

spindle of which has long poles fixed to it, to which horses

or cattle are harnessed. The beasts go round in a circle and

so turn the machine. The contrivance is not so primitive as

the three described above, and the iron buckets are of

European importation.

The hire of a boatman was fixed at six gur of corn to be paid him

yearly, but it is clear that some of the larger vessels carried crews

commanded by a chief boatman, or captain, whose pay was probably on

a larger scale. If a man let his boat to a boatman, the latter was

responsible for losing or sinking it, and he had to replace it. A

boatman was also responsible for the safety of his vessel and of any

goods, such as corn, wool, oil, or dates, which he had been hired to

transport, and if they were sunk through his carelessness he had to make

good the loss. If he succeeded in refloating the boat after it had been

sunk, he was only under obligation to pay the owner half its value in

compensation for the damage it had sustained. In the case of a collision

between two vessels, if one was at anchor at the time, the owner of the

other vessel had to pay compensation for the boat that was sunk and its

cargo, the owner of the latter estimating on oath the value of what

had been sunk. Boats were also employed as ferries, and they must have

resembled the primitive form of ferry-boat in use at the present day,

which is heavily built of huge timbers, and employed for transporting

beasts as well as men across a river.

[Illustration: 297.jpg KAIKS, OR NATIVE BOATS ON THE EUPHRATES AT

BIREJIE.]

Employed for ferrying caravans across the river.

There is evidence that under the Assyrians rafts floated on inflated

skins were employed for the transport of heavy goods, and these have

survived in the keleks of the present day. They are specially adapted

for the transportation of heavy materials, for they are carried down by

the current, and are kept in the course by means of huge sweeps or oars.

Being formed only of logs of wood and skins, they are not costly, for

wood is plentiful in the upper reaches of the rivers. At the end of

their journey, after the goods are landed, they are broken up. The wood

is sold at a profit, and the skins, after being deflated, are packed on

to donkeys to return by caravan.

[Illustration: 298.jpg THE MODERN BRIDGE OF BOATS ACROSS THE TIGRIS

OPPOSITE MOSUL.]

It is not improbable that such rafts were employed on the Tigris and the

Euphrates from the earliest periods of Chaldæan history, though boats

would have been used on the canals and more sluggish waterways.

In the preceding pages we have given a sketch of the more striking

aspects of early Babylonian life, on which light has been thrown by

recently discovered documents belonging to the period of the First

Dynasty of Babylon. We have seen that, in the code of laws drawn up

by Hammurabi, regulations were framed for settling disputes and fixing

responsibilities under almost every condition and circumstance which

might arise among the inhabitants of the country at that time; and the

question naturally arises as to how far the code of laws was in actual

operation.

[Illustration: 299.jpg A SMALL KELEK, OK RAFT, UPON THE TIGRIS AT

BAGHDAD.]

It is conceivable that the king may have held admirable convictions, but

have been possessed of little power to carry them out and to see

that his regulations were enforced. Luckily, we have not to depend on

conjecture for settling the question, for Hammurabi’s own letters which

are now preserved in the British Museum afford abundant evidence of the

active control which the king exercised over every department of his

administration and in every province of his empire. In the earlier

periods of history, when each city lived independently of its neighbours

and had its own system of government, the need for close and frequent

communication between them was not pressing, but this became apparent

as soon as they were welded together and formed parts of an extended

empire. Thus in the time of Sargon of Agade, about 3800 B.C., an

extensive system of royal convoys was established between the principal

cities. At Telloh the late M. de Sarzec came across numbers of lumps of

clay bearing the seal impressions of Sargon and of his son Narâm-Sin,

which had been used as seals and labels upon packages sent from Agade

to Shirpurla. In the time of Dungi, King of Ur, there was a constant

interchange of officials between the various cities of Babylonia and

Elam, and during the more recent diggings at Telloh there have been

found vouchers for the supply of food for their sustenance when stopping

at Shirpurla in the course of their journeys. In the case of Hammurabi

we have recovered some of the actual letters sent by the king himself to

Sin-idinnam, his local governor in the city of Larsam, and from them we

gain considerable insight into the principles which guided him in the

administration of his empire.

The letters themselves, in their general characteristics, resembled the

contract tablets of the period which have been already described. They

were written on small clay tablets oblong in shape, and as they were

only three or four inches long they could easily be carried about the

person of the messenger into whose charge they were delivered. After the

tablet was written it was enclosed in a thin envelope of clay, having

been first powdered with dry clay to prevent its sticking to the

envelope. The name of the person for whom the letter was intended was

written on the outside of the envelope, and both it and the tablet were

baked hard to ensure that they should not be broken on their travels.

The recipient of the letter, on its being delivered to him, broke the

outer envelope by tapping it sharply, and it then fell away in pieces,

leaving the letter and its message exposed. The envelopes were very

similar to those in which the contract tablets of the period were

enclosed, of which illustrations have already been given, their only

difference being that the text of the tablet was not repeated on the

envelope, as was the case with the former class of documents.

The royal letters that have been recovered throw little light on

military affairs and the prosecution of campaigns, for, being addressed

to governors of cities and civil officials, most of them deal with

matters affecting the internal administration of the empire. One letter

indeed contains directions concerning the movements of two hundred

and forty soldiers of “the King’s Company” who had been stationed in

Assyria, and another letter mentions certain troops who were quartered

in the city of Ur. A third deals with the supply of clothing and oil

for a section of the Babylonian army, and troops are also mentioned

as having formed the escort for certain goddesses captured from the

Elamites; while directions are sent to others engaged in a campaign upon

the Elamite frontier. The letter which contains directions for the

safe escort of the captured Elamite goddesses, and the one ordering the

return of these same goddesses to their own shrines, show that

foreign deities, even when captured from an enemy, were treated by the

Babylonians with the same respect and reverence that was shown by them

to their own gods and goddesses. Hammurabi gave directions in the first

letter for the conveyance of the goddesses to Babylon with all due pomp

and ceremony, sheep being supplied for sacrifice upon the journey,

and their usual rites being performed by their own temple-women and

priestesses. The king’s voluntary restoration of the goddesses to their

own country may have been due to the fact that, after their transference

to Babylon, the army of the Babylonians suffered defeat in Elam. This

misfortune would naturally have been ascribed by the king and the

priests to the anger of the Elamite goddesses at being detained in a

foreign land, and Hammurabi probably arrived at his decision that they

should be escorted back in the hope of once more securing victory for

the Babylonian arms.

The care which the king exercised for the due worship of his own gods

and the proper supply of their temples is well illustrated from the

letters that have been recovered, for he superintended the collection

of the temple revenues, and the herdsmen and shepherds attached to the

service of the gods sent their reports directly to him. He also took

care that the observances of religious rites and ceremonies were duly

carried out, and on one occasion he postponed the hearing of a lawsuit

concerning the title to certain property which was in dispute, as it

would have interfered with the proper observance of a festival in

the city of Ur. The plaintiff in the suit was the chief of the temple

bakers, and it was his duty to superintend the preparation of certain

offerings for the occasion. In order that he should not have to leave

his duties, the king put off the hearing of the case until after the

festival had been duly celebrated. The king also exercised a strict

control over the priests themselves, and received reports from the chief

priests concerning their own subordinates, and it is probable that the

royal sanction was obtained for all the principal appointments. The

guild of soothsayers was an important religious class at this time,

and they also were under the king’s direct control. A letter written by

Ammiditana, one of the later kings of the First Dynasty, to three high

officials of the city of Sippar, contains directions with regard to

certain duties to be carried out by the soothsayers attached to the

service of the city, and indicates the nature of their functions.

Ammiditana wrote to the officials in question, stating that there was a

scarcity of corn in the city of Shagga, and he therefore ordered them

to send a supply thither. But before the corn was brought into the city

they were told to consult the soothsayers, who were to divine the future

and ascertain whether the omens were favourable. If they proved to be

so, the corn was to be brought in. We may conjecture that the king took

this precaution, as he feared the scarcity of corn in Shagga was due

to the anger of some local deity or spirit, and that, if this were the

case, the bringing in of the corn would only lead to fresh troubles.

This danger it was the duty of the soothsayers to prevent.

Another class of the priesthood, which we may infer was under the king’s

direct control, was the astrologers, whose duty it probably was to make

reports to the king of the conjunctions of the heavenly bodies, with a

view to ascertaining whether they portended good or evil to the

state. No astrological reports written in this early period have

been recovered, but at a later period under the Assyrian empire the

astrologers reported regularly to the king on such matters, and it is

probable that the practice was one long established. One of Hammurabi’s

letters proves that the king regulated the calendar, and it is

legitimate to suppose that he sought the advice of his astrologers as

to the times when intercalary months were to be inserted. The letter

dealing with the calendar was written to inform Sin-idinnam, the

governor of Larsam, that an intercalary month was to be inserted. “Since

the year (i.e. the calendar) hath a deficiency,” he writes, “let the

month which is now beginning be registered as a second Elul,” and the

king adds that this insertion of an extra month will not justify any

postponement in the payment of the regular tribute due from the city of

Larsam, which had to be paid a month earlier than usual to make up for

the month that was inserted. The intercalation of additional months

was due to the fact that the Babylonian months were lunar, so that the

calendar had to be corrected at intervals to make it correspond to the

solar year.

From the description already given of the code of laws drawn up by

Hammurabi it will have been seen that the king attempted to incorporate

and arrange a set of regulations which should settle any dispute likely

to arise with regard to the duties and privileges of all classes of

his subjects. That this code was not a dead letter, but was actively

administered, is abundantly proved by many of the letters of Hammurabi

which have been recovered. From these we learn that the king took a very

active part in the administration of justice in the country, and that he

exercised a strict supervision, not only over the cases decided in the

capital, but also over those which were tried in the other great cities

and towns of Babylonia. Any private citizen was entitled to make a

direct appeal to the king for justice, if he thought he could not obtain

it in his local court, and it is clear from Hammurabi’s letters that he

always listened to such an appeal and gave it adequate consideration.

The king was anxious to stamp out all corruption on the part of those

who were invested with authority, and he had no mercy on any of his

officers who were convicted of taking bribes. On one occasion when he

had been informed of a case of bribery in the city of Dûr-gurgurri, he

at once ordered the governor of the district in which Dûr-gurgurri lay

to investigate the charge and send to Babylon those who were proved to

be guilty, that they might be punished. He also ordered that the bribe

should be confiscated and despatched to Babylon under seal, a wise

provision which must have tended to discourage those who were inclined

to tamper with the course of justice, while at the same time it enriched

the state. It is probable that the king tried all cases of appeal in

person when it was possible to do so. But if the litigants lived at

a considerable distance from Babylon, he gave directions to his local

officials on the spot to try the case. When he was convinced of

the justice of any claim, he would decide the case himself and send

instructions to the local authorities to see that his decision was duly

carried out. It is certain that many disputes arose at this period in

consequence of the extortions of money-lenders. These men frequently

laid claim in a fraudulent manner to fields and estates which they had

received in pledge as security for seed-corn advanced by them. In

cases where fraud was proved Hammurabi had no mercy, and summoned the

money-lender to Babylon to receive punishment, however wealthy and

powerful he might be.

A subject frequently referred to in Hammurabi’s letters is the

collection of revenues, and it is clear that an elaborate system was in

force throughout the country for the levying and payment of tribute

to the state by the principal cities of Babylonia, as well as for the

collection of rent and revenue from the royal estates and from the lands

which were set apart for the supply of the great temples. Collectors of

both secular and religious tribute sent reports directly to the king,

and if there was any deficit in the supply which was expected from a

collector he had to make it up himself; but the king was always ready

to listen to and investigate a complaint and to enforce the payment of

tribute or taxes so that the loss should not fall upon the collector.

Thus, in one of his letters Hammurabi informs the governor of

Larsam that a collector named Sheb-Sin had reported to him, saying

“Enubi-Marduk hath laid hands upon the money for the temple of

Bît-il-kittim (i.e. the great temple of the Sun-god at Larsam) which is

due from the city of Dûr-gurgurri and from the (region round about the)

Tigris, and he hath not rendered the full sum; and Gimil-Marduk hath

laid hands upon the money for the temple of Bît-il-kittim which is due

from the city.of Rakhabu and from the region round about that city, and

he hath not (paid) the full amount. But the palace hath exacted the full

sum from me.” It is probable that both Enubi-Marduk and Gimil-Marduk

were money-lenders, for we know from another letter that the former had

laid claim to certain property on which he had held a mortgage, although

the mortgage had been redeemed. In the present case they had probably

lent money or seed-corn to certain cultivators of land near Dûr-gurgurri

and Rakhabu and along the Tigris, and in settlement of their claims they

had seized the crops and had, moreover, refused to pay to the king’s

officer the proportion of the crops that was due to the state as

taxes upon the land. The governor of Larsam, the principal city in the

district, had rightly, as the representative of the palace (i.e.

the king), caused the tax-collector to make up the deficiency, but

Hammurabi, on receiving the subordinate officer’s complaint, referred

the matter back to the governor. The end of the letter is wanting, but

we may infer that Hammurabi condemned the defaulting money-lenders to

pay the taxes due, and fined them in addition, or ordered them to be

sent to the capital for punishment.

On another occasion Sheb-Sin himself and a second tax-collector named

Sin-mushtal appear to have been in fault and to have evaded coming to

Babylon when summoned thither by the king. It had been their duty to

collect large quantities of sesame seed as well as taxes paid in money.

When first summoned, they had made the excuse that it was the time of

harvest and they would come after the harvest was over. But as they

did not then make their appearance, Hammurabi wrote an urgent letter

insisting that they should be despatched with the full amount of the

taxes due, in the company of a trustworthy officer who would see that

they duly arrived at the capital.

Tribute on flocks and herds was also levied by the king, and collectors

or assessors of the revenue were stationed in each district, whose duty

it was to report any deficit in the revenue accounts. The owners of

flocks and herds were bound to bring the young cattle and lambs that

were due as tribute to the central city of the district in which they

dwelt, and they were then collected into large bodies and added to the

royal flocks and herds; but, if the owners attempted to hold back any

that were due as tribute, they were afterwards forced to incur the extra

expense and trouble of driving the beasts to Babylon. The flocks and

herds owned by the king and the great temples were probably enormous,

and yielded a considerable revenue in themselves apart from the tribute

and taxes due from private owners. Shepherds and herdsmen were placed in

charge of them, and they were divided into groups under chief shepherds,

who arranged the districts in which the herds and flocks were to be

grazed, distributing them when possible along the banks and in the

neighbourhood of rivers and canals which would afford good pasturage and

a plentiful supply of water. The king received reports from the chief

shepherds and herdsmen, and it was the duty of the governors of the

chief cities and districts of Babylonia to make tours of inspection

and see that due care was taken of the royal flocks and sheep. The

sheep-shearing for all the flocks that were pastured near the capital

took place in Babylon, and the king used to send out summonses to his

chief shepherds to inform them of the day when the shearing would take

place; and it is probable that the governors of the other great cities

sent out similar orders to the shepherds of flocks under their charge.

Royal and priestly flocks were often under the same chief officer, a

fact which shows the very strict control the king exercised over the

temple revenues.

The interests of the agricultural population were strictly looked

after by the king, who secured a proper supply of water for purposes of

irrigation by seeing that the canals and waterways were kept in a proper

state of repair and cleaned out at regular intervals. There is also

evidence that nearly every king of the First Dynasty of Babylon cut new

canals, and extended the system of irrigation and transportation which

had been handed down to him from his fathers. The draining of the

marshes and the proper repair of the canals could only be carried out

by careful and continuous supervision, and it was the duty of the local

governors to see that the inhabitants of villages and owners of land

situated on the banks of a canal should keep it in proper order. When

this duty had been neglected complaints were often sent to the king,

who gave orders to the local governor to remedy the defect. Thus on one

occasion it had been ordered that a canal at Erech which had silted

up should be deepened, but the dredging had not been carried out

thoroughly, so that the bed of the canal soon silted up again and boats

were prevented from entering the city. In these circumstances Hammurabi

gave pressing orders that the obstruction was to be removed and the

canal made navigable within three days.

Damage was often done to the banks of canals by floods which followed

the winter rains, and a letter of Abêshu’ gives an interesting account of

a sudden rise of the water in the Irnina canal so that it overflowed its

banks. The king was building a palace at the city of Kâr-Irnina, which

was supplied by the Irnina canal, and every year it was possible to put

so much work into the building. But one year, when little more than a

third of the year’s work was done, the building operations were stopped

by flood, the canal having overflowed its banks so that the water rose

right up to the wall of the town. In return for the duty of keeping

the canals in order, the villagers along the banks had the privilege of

fishing in its waters in the portion which was in their charge, and

any poaching by other villagers in this part of the stream was strictly

forbidden. On one occasion, in the reign of Samsu-iluna, Hammurabi’s son

and successor, the fishermen of the district of Rabim went down in their

boats to the district of Shakanim and caught fish there contrary to the

law. So the inhabitants of Shakanim complained of this poaching to the

king, who sent a palace official to the authorities of Sippar, near

which city the districts in question lay, with orders to inquire into

the matter and take steps to prevent all such poaching for the future.

The regulation of transportation on the canals was also under the royal

jurisdiction. The method of reckoning the size of ships has already

been described, and there is evidence that the king possessed numerous

vessels of all sizes for the carrying of grain, wool, and dates, as well

as for the wood and stone employed in his building operations. Each ship

seems to have had its own crew, under the command of a captain, and it

is probable that officials who regulated the transportation from the

centres where they were stationed were placed in charge of separate

sections of the rivers and of the canals.

It is obvious, from the account that has been given of the numerous

operations directly controlled and superintended by the king, that

he had need of a very large body of officials, by whose means he was

enabled to carry out successfully the administration of the country.

In the course of the account we have made mention of the judges and

judicial officers, the assessors and collectors of revenue, and the

officials of the palace who were under the king’s direct orders. It is

also obvious that different classes of officers were in charge of all

the departments of the administration. Two classes of officials,

who were placed in charge of the public works and looked after and

controlled the public slaves, and probably also had a good deal to do

with the collection of the revenue, had special privileges assigned

to them, and special legislation was drawn up to protect them in the

enjoyment of the same. As payment for their duties they were each

granted land with a house and garden, they were assigned the use of

certain sheep and cattle with which to stock their land, and in addition

they received a regular salary. They were in a sense personal retainers

of the king and were liable to be sent at any moment on a special

mission to carry out the king’s commands. Disobedience was severely

punished; for, if such an officer, when detailed for a special mission,

did not go but hired a substitute, he was liable to be put to death and

the substitute he had hired could take his office. Sometimes an officer

was sent for long periods some distance from his home to take charge

of a garrison, and when this was done his home duties were performed by

another man, who temporarily occupied his house and land, but gave it

back to the officer on his return. If such an officer had a son old

enough to perform his duty in his father’s absence, he was allowed to

do so and to till his father’s lands; but if the son was too young,

the substitute who took the officer’s place had to pay one-third of

the produce of the land to the child’s mother for his education. Before

departing on his journey to the garrison it was the officer’s duty to

arrange for the proper cultivation of his land and the discharge of his

local duties during his absence. If he omitted to do so and left

his land and duties neglected for more than a year, and another had

meanwhile taken his place, on his return he could not reclaim his land

and office. It will be obvious, therefore, that his position was a

specially favoured one and much sought after, and these regulations

ensured that the duties attaching to the office were not neglected.

In the course of his garrison duty or when on special service, these

officers ran some risk of being captured by the enemy, and in that event

regulations were drawn up for their ransom. If the captured officer was

wealthy and could pay for his own ransom, he was bound to do so, but

if he had not the necessary means his ransom was to be paid out of the

local temple treasury, and, when the funds in the temple treasury

did not suffice, he was to be ransomed by the state. It was specially

enacted that his land and garden and house were in no case to be sold

in order to pay for his ransom. These were inalienably attached to the

office which he held, and he was not allowed to sell them or the sheep

and cattle with which they were stocked. Moreover, he was not allowed

to bequeath any of this property to his wife or daughter, so that his

office would appear to have been hereditary and the property attached to

it to have been entailed on his son if he succeeded him. Such succession

would not, of course, have taken place if the officer by his own neglect

or disobedience had forfeited his office and its privileges during his

lifetime.

It has been suggested with considerable probability that these officials

were originally personal retainers and follows of Sumu-abu, the founder

of the First Dynasty of Babylon. They were probably assigned lands

throughout the country in return for their services to the king, and

their special duties were to preserve order and uphold the authority of

their master. In the course of time their duties were no doubt modified,

but they retained their privileges and they must have continued to be a

very valuable body of officers, on whose personal loyalty the king could

always rely. In the preceding chapter we have already seen how grants of

considerable estates were made by the Kassite kings of the Third Dynasty

to followers who had rendered conspicuous services, and at the same time

they received the privilege of holding such lands free of all liability

to forced labour and the payment of tithes and taxes. We may conclude

that the class of royal officers under the kings of the First Dynasty

had a similar origin.

In the present chapter, from information recently made available, we

have given some account of the system of administration adopted by the

early kings of Babylon, and we have described in some detail the

various classes of the Babylonian population, their occupations, and the

conditions under which they lived. In the two preceding chapters we have

dealt with the political history of Western Asia from the very earliest

period of the Sumerian city-states down to the time of the Kassite

kings. In the course of this account we have seen how Mesopotamia in the

dawn of history was in the sole possession of the Sumerian race and how

afterwards it fell in turn under the dominion of the Semites and the

kings of Elam. The immigration of fresh Semitic tribes at the end of the

third millennium before Christ resulted in the establishment in Babylon

of the Semitic kings who are known as First Dynasty kings; and under the

sway of Hammurabi, the greatest of this group of kings, the empire thus

established in Western Asia had every appearance of permanence. Although

Elam no longer troubled Babylon, a great danger arose from a new and

unexpected quarter. In the Country of the Sea--which comprised the

districts in the extreme south of Babylonia on the shores of the Persian

Gulf--the Sumerians had rallied their forces, and they now declared

themselves independent of Babylonian control. A period of conflict

followed between the kings of the First Dynasty and the kings of the

Country of the Sea, in which the latter more than held their own; and,

when the Hittite tribes of Syria invaded Northern Babylonia in the reign

of Samsu-ditana, Babylon’s power of resistance was so far weakened that

she fell an easy prey to the rulers of the Country of the Sea. But the

reappearance of the Sumerians in the rôle of leading race in Western

Asia was destined not to last long, and was little more than the last

flicker of vitality exhibited by this ancient and exhausted race. Thus

the Second Dynasty fell in its turn before the onslaught of the Kassite

tribes who descended from the mountainous districts in the west of Elam,

and, having overrun the whole of Mesopotamia, established a new dynasty

at Babylon, and adopted Babylonian civilization.

With the advent of the Kassite kings a new chapter opens in the history

of Western Asia. Up to that time Egypt and Babylon, the two chief

centres of ancient civilization, had no doubt indirectly influenced one

another, but they had not come into actual contact. During the period of

the Kassite kings both Babylon and Assyria established direct relations

with Egypt, and from that time forward the influence they exerted upon

one another was continuous and unbroken. We have already traced the

history of Babylon up to this point in the light of recent discoveries,

and a similar task awaits us with regard to Assyria. Before we enter

into a discussion of Assyria’s origin and early history in the light of

recent excavation and research, it is necessary that we should return

once more to Egypt, and describe the course of her history from the

period when Thebes succeeded in displacing Memphis as the capital city.

CHAPTER VII

TEMPLES AND TOMBS OF THEBES

We have seen that it was in the Theban period that Egypt emerged from

her isolation, and for the first time came into contact with Western

Asia. This grand turning-point in Egyptian history seemed to be the

appropriate place at which to pause in the description of our latest

knowledge of Egyptian history, in order to make known the results of

archaeological discovery in Mesopotamia and Western Asia generally. The

description has been carried down past the point of convergence of the

two originally isolated paths of Egyptian and Babylonian civilization,

and what new information the latest discoveries have communicated to us

on this subject has been told in the preceding chapters. We now have to

retrace our steps to the point where we left Egyptian history and resume

the thread of our Egyptian narrative.

The Hyksos conquest and the rise of Thebes are practically

contemporaneous. The conquest took place perhaps three or four hundred

years after the first advancement of Thebes to the position of capital

of Egypt, but it must be remembered that this position was not retained

during the time of the XIIth Dynasty. The kings of that dynasty, though

they were Thebans, did not reign at Thebes. Their royal city was in the

North, in the neighbourhood of Lisht and Mêdûm, where their pyramids

were erected, and their chief care was for the lake province of the

Fayyûm, which was largely the creation of Amenemhat III, the Moeris

of the Greeks. It was not till Thebes became the focus of the

national resistance to the Hyksos that its period of greatness began.

Henceforward it was the undisputed capital of Egypt, enlarged and

embellished by the care and munificence of a hundred kings, enriched by

the tribute of a hundred conquered nations.

But were we to confine ourselves to the consideration only of the latest

discoveries of Theban greatness after the expulsion of the Hyksos, we

should be omitting much that is of interest and importance. For the

Egyptians the first grand climacteric in their history (after the

foundation of the monarchy) was the transference of the royal power from

Memphis and Herakleopolis to a Theban house. The second, which followed

soon after, was the Hyksos invasion. The two are closely connected in

Theban history; it is Thebes that defeated Herakleopolis and conquered

Memphis; it is Theban power that was overthrown by the Hyksos; it is

Thebes that expelled them and initiated the second great period of

Egyptian history. We therefore resume our narrative at a point before

the great increase of Theban power at the time of the expulsion of the

Hyksos, and will trace this power from its rise, which followed

the defeat of Herakleopolis and Memphis. It is upon this epoch--the

beginning of Theban power--that the latest discoveries at Thebes have

thrown some new light.

More than anywhere else in Egypt excavations have been carried on at

Thebes, on the site of the ancient capital of the country. And here, if

anywhere, it might have been supposed that there was nothing more to be

found, no new thing to be exhumed from the soil, no new fact to be added

to our knowledge of Egyptian history. Yet here, no less than at Abydos,

has the archaeological exploration of the last few years been especially

successful, and we have seen that the ancient city of Thebes has a great

deal more to tell us than we had expected.

The most ancient remains at Thebes were discovered by Mr. Newberry in

the shape of two tombs of the VIth Dynasty, cut upon the face of the

well-known hill of Shêkh Abd el-Kûrna, on the west bank of the Nile

opposite Luxor. Every winter traveller to Egypt knows, well the ride

from the sandy shore opposite the Luxor temple, along the narrow pathway

between the gardens and the canal, across the bridges and over the

cultivated land to the Ramesseum, behind which rises Shêkh Abd el-Kûrna,

with its countless tombs, ranged in serried rows along the scarred and

scarped face of the hill. This hill, which is geologically a fragment of

the plateau behind which some gigantic landslip was sent sliding in the

direction of the river, leaving the picturesque gorge and cliffs of Dêr

el-Bahari to mark the place from which it was riven, was evidently the

seat of the oldest Theban necropolis. Here were the tombs of the Theban

chiefs in the period of the Old Kingdom, two of which have been found

by Mr. Newberry. In later times, it would seem, these tombs were largely

occupied and remodelled by the great nobles of the XVIIIth Dynasty, so

that now nearly all the tombs extant on Shêkh Abd el-Kûrna belong to

that dynasty.

Of the Thebes of the IXth and Xth Dynasties, when the Herakleopolites

ruled, we have in the British Museum two very remarkable statues--one of

which is here illustrated--of the steward of the palace, Mera. The tomb

from which they came is not known. Both are very beautiful examples

of the Egyptian sculptor’s art, and are executed in a style eminently

characteristic of the transition period between the work of the Old and

Middle Kingdoms. As specimens of the art of the Hierakonpolite period,

of which we have hardly any examples, they are of the greatest interest.

Mera is represented wearing a different head-dress in each figure; in

one he has a short wig, in the other a skullcap.

[Illustration: 320.jpg STATUE OF MERA]

When the Herakleopolite dominion was finally overthrown, in spite of the

valiant resistance of the princes of Asyût, and the Thebans assumed the

Pharaonic dignity, thus founding the XIth Dynasty, the Theban necropolis

was situated in the great bay in the cliffs, immediately north of Shêkh

Abd el-Kûrna, which is known as Dêr el-Bahari. In this picturesque part

of Western Thebes, in many respects perhaps the most picturesque

place in Egypt, the greatest king of the XIth Dynasty, Neb-hapet-Râ

Mentuhetep, excavated his tomb and built for the worship of his ghost

a funerary temple, which he called \_Akh-aset\_, “Glorious-is-its-

Situation,” a name fully justified by its surroundings. This temple is

an entirely new discovery, made by Prof. Naville and Mr. Hall in 1903.

The results obtained up to date have been of very great importance,

especially with regard to the history of Egyptian art and architecture,

for our sources of information were few and we were previously not very

well informed as to the condition of art in the time of the XIth

Dynasty.

The new temple lies immediately to the south of the great XVIIIth

Dynasty temple at Dêr el-Bahari, which has always been known, and which

was excavated first by Mariette and later by Prof. Naville, for the

Egypt Exploration Fund. To the results of the later excavations we shall

return. When they were finally completed, in the year 1898, the great

XVIIIth Dynasty temple, which was built by Queen Hatshepsu, had been

entirely cleared of débris, and the colonnades had been partially

restored (under the care of Mr. Somers Clarke) in order to make a roof

under which to protect the sculptures on the walls. The whole mass of

débris, consisting largely of fallen \_talus\_ from the cliffs above,

which had almost hidden the temple, was removed; but a large tract lying

to the south of the temple, which was also covered with similar mounds

of débris, was not touched, but remained to await further investigation.

It was here, beneath these heaps of débris, that the new temple was

found when work was resumed by the Egypt Exploration Fund in 1903. The

actual tomb of the king has not yet been revealed, although that of

Neb-hetep Mentuhetep, who may have been his immediate predecessor,

was discovered by Mr. Carter in 1899. It was known, however, and still

uninjured in the reign of Ramses IX of the XXth Dynasty. Then, as we

learn from the report of the inspectors sent to examine the royal tombs,

which is preserved in the Abbott Papyrus, they found the \_pyramid-tomb\_

of King Xeb-hapet-Râ which is in Tjesret (the ancient Egyptian name for

Dêr el-Bahari); it was intact. We know, therefore, that it was intact

about 1000 B.C. The description of it as a pyramid-tomb is interesting,

for in the inscription of Tetu, the priest of Akh-aset, who was buried

at Abydos, Akh-aset is said to have been a pyramid. That the newly

discovered temple was called Akh-aset we know from several inscriptions

found in it. And the most remarkable thing about this temple is that in

its centre there was a pyramid. This must be the pyramid-tomb which was

found intact by the inspectors, so that the tomb itself must be close

by. But it does not seem to have been beneath the pyramid, below which

is only solid rock. It is perhaps a gallery cut in the cliffs at the

back of the temple.

The pyramid was then a dummy, made of rubble within a revetment of heavy

flint nodules, which was faced with fine limestone. It was erected on a

pyloni-form base with heavy cornice of the usual Egyptian pattern. This

central pyramid was surrounded by a roofed hall or ambulatory of small

octagonal pillars, the outside wall of which was decorated with coloured

reliefs, depicting various scenes connected with the \_sed-heb\_ or

jubilee-festival of the king, processions of the warriors and magnates

of the realm, scenes of husbandry, boat-building, and so forth, all of

which were considered appropriate to the chapel of a royal tomb at that

period. Outside this wall was an open colonnade of square pillars.

The whole of this was built upon an artificially squared rectangular

platform of natural rock, about fifteen feet high. To north and south of

this were open courts. The southern is bounded by the hill; the northern

is now bounded by the Great Temple of Hat-shepsu, but, before this was

built, there was evidently a very large open court here. The face of the

rock platform is masked by a wall of large rectangular blocks of fine

white limestone, some of which measure six feet by three feet six

inches. They are beautifully squared and laid in bonded courses of

alternate sizes, and the walls generally may be said to be among the

finest yet found in Egypt. We have already remarked that the architects

of the Middle Kingdom appear to have been specially fond of fine masonry

in white stone. The contrast between these splendid XIth Dynasty walls,

with their great base-stones of sandstone, and the bad rough masonry of

the XVIIIth Dynasty temple close by, is striking. The XVIIIth Dynasty

architects and masons had degenerated considerably from the standard of

the Middle Kingdom.

This rock platform was approached from the east in the centre by an

inclined plane or ramp, of which part of the original pavement of wooden

beams remains \_in situ\_.

[Illustration: 324.jpg XIth DYNASTY WALL: DÊR EL-BAHARI.]

Excavated by Mr. Hall, 1904, for the Egypt Exploration Fund.

To right and left of this ramp are colonnades, each of twenty-two square

pillars, all inscribed with the name and titles of Mentuhetep. The walls

masking the platform in these colonnades were sculptured with various

scenes, chiefly representing boat processions and campaigns against the

Aamu or nomads of the Sinaitic peninsula. The design of the colonnades

is the same as that of the Great Temple, and the whole plan of this

part, with its platform approached by a ramp flanked by colonnades,

is so like that of the Great Temple that we cannot but assume that the

peculiar design of the latter, with its tiers of platforms approached by

ramps flanked by colonnades, is not an original idea, but was directly

copied by the XVIIIth Dynasty architects from the older XIth Dynasty

temple which they found at Dêr el-Bahari when they began their work.

[Illustration: 325.jpg XVIIIth DYNASTY WALL, DBR EL-BAHARI.]

Excavated by M. Naville, 1896; repaired by Mr. Howard

Carter, 1904.

The supposed originality of Hatshepsu’s temple is then non-existent;

it was a copy of the older design, in fact, a magnificent piece of

archaism. But Hatshepsu’s architects copied this feature only; the

actual arrangements \_on\_ the platforms in the two temples are as

different as they can possibly be. In the older we have a central

pyramid with a colonnade round it, in the newer may be found an open

court in front of rock-cave shrines.

[Illustration: 326.jpg EXCAVATION OF THE NORTH LOWER COLONNADE OF THE

XIth DYNASTY TEMPLE, DER EL-BAHARI, 1904.]

Before the XIth Dynasty temple was set up a series of statues of King

Mentuhetep and of a later king, Amenhetep I, in the form of Osiris, like

those of Usertsen (Senusret) I at Lisht already mentioned. One of these

statues is in the British Museum. In the south court were discovered

six statues of King Usertsen (Senusret) III, depicting him at different

periods of his life. Pour of the heads are preserved, and, as the

expression of each differs from that of the other, it is quite evident

that some show him as a young, others as an old, man.

[Illustration: 327.jpg GRANITE THRESHOLD AND OCTAGONAL SANDSTONE

PILLARS]

Of The XIth Dynasty Temple At Dee El-Bahari. About 2500 B.C.

The face is of the well-known hard and lined type which is seen also in

the portraits of Amenemhat III, and was formerly considered to be that

of the Hyksos. Messrs. Newberry and Garstang, as we have seen, consider

it to be so, indirectly, as they regard the type as having been

introduced into the XIIth Dynasty by Queen Nefret, the mother of

Usertsen (Sen-usret) III. This queen, they think, \_was\_ a Hittite

princess, and the Hittites were practically the same thing as the

Hyksos. We have seen, however, that there is very little foundation for

this view, and it is more than probable that this peculiar physiognomy

is of a type purely Egyptian in character.

[Illustration: 328.jpg EXCAVATION OF THE TOMB OF A PRIESTESS,]

On The Platform Of The XIth Dynasty Temple, Der El-Bahari,

1904.

On the platform, around the central pyramid, were buried in small

chamber-tombs a number of priestesses of the goddess Hathor, the

mistress of the desert and special deity of Dêr el-Bahari. They were

all members of the king’s harîm, and they bore the title of “King’s

Favourite.” As told in a previous chapter, all were buried at one

time, before the final completion of the temple, and it is by no means

impossible that they were strangled at the king’s death and buried round

him in order that their ghosts might accompany him in the next world,

just as the slaves were buried around the graves (or secondary graves)

of the 1st Dynasty kings at Aby-dos. They themselves, as also already

related, took with them to the next world little waxen figures which

when called upon could by magic be turned into ghostly slaves. These

images were \_ushabtiu,\_ “answerers,” the predecessors of the little

figures of wood, stone, and pottery which are found buried with the

dead in later times. The priestesses themselves were, so to speak, human

\_ushabtiu,\_ for royal use only, and accompanied the kings to their final

resting-place.

With the priestesses was buried the usual funerary furniture

characteristic of the period. This consisted of little models of

granaries with the peasants bringing in the corn, models of bakers and

brewers at work, boats with their crews, etc., just as we find them

in the XIth and XIIth Dynasty tombs at el-Bersha and Beni Hasan. These

models, too, were supposed to be transformed by magic into actual

workmen who would work for the deceased, heap up grain for her, brew

beer for her, ferry her over the ghostly Nile into the tomb-world, or

perform any other services required.

Some of the stone sarcophagi of the priestesses are very elaborately

decorated with carved and painted reliefs depicting each deceased

receiving offerings from priests, one of whom milks the holy cows of

Hathor to give her milk. The sarcophagi were let down into the tomb in

pieces and there joined together, and they have been removed in the same

way. The finest is a unique example of XIth Dynasty art, and it is now

preserved in the Museum of Cairo.

[Illustration: 330.jpg CASES OF ANTIQUITIES LEAVING DÊR EL-BAHARI FOR

TRANSPORT TO CAIRO.]

In memory of the priestesses there were erected on the platform behind

the pyramid a number of small shrines, which were decorated with the

most delicately coloured carvings in high relief, representing chiefly

the same subjects as those on the sarcophagi. The peculiar style of

these reliefs was previously unknown. In connection with them a most

interesting possibility presents itself.

[Illustration: 331.jpg SHIPPING CASES OF ANTIQUITIES ON BOARD THE NILE

STEAMER AT LUXOR, FOR THE EGYPT EXPLORATION FUND.]

We know the name of the chief artist of Mentuhetep’s reign. He was

called Mertisen, and he thus describes himself on his tombstone from

Abydos, now in the Louvre: “I was an artist skilled in my art. I knew

my art, how to represent the forms of going forth and returning, so that

each limb may be in its proper place. I knew how the figure of a man

should walk and the carriage of a woman, the poising of the arm to

bring the hippopotamus low, the going of the runner. I knew how to make

amulets, which enable us to go without fire burning us and without the

flood washing us away. No man could do this but I, and the eldest son

of my body. Him has the god decreed to excel in art, and I have seen

the perfections of the work of his hands in every kind of rare stone,

in gold and silver, in ivory and ebony.” Now since Mertisen and his son

were the chief artists of their day, it is more than probable that they

were employed to decorate their king’s funerary chapel. So that in all

probability the XIth Dynasty reliefs from Dêr el-Bahari are the work

of Mertisen and his son, and in them we see the actual “forms of going

forth and returning, the poising of the arm to bring the hippopotamus

low, the going of the runner,” to which he refers on his tombstone. This

adds a note of personal interest to the reliefs, an interest which is

often sadly wanting in Egypt, where we rarely know the names of the

great artists whose works we admire so much. We have recovered the names

of the sculptor and painter of Seti I’s temple at Abydos and that of the

sculptor of some of the tombs at Tell el-Amarna, but otherwise very few

names of the artists are directly associated with the temples and tombs

which they decorated, and of the architects we know little more. The

great temple of Dêr el-Bahari was, however, we know, designed by Senmut,

the chief architect to Queen Hatshepsu.

It is noticeable that Mertisen’s art, if it is Mertisen’s, is of a

peculiar character. It is not quite so fully developed as that of the

succeeding XIIth Dynasty. The drawing of the figures is often peculiar,

strange lanky forms taking the place of the perfect proportions of the

IVth-VIth and the XIIth Dynasty styles. Great elaboration is bestowed

upon decoration, which is again of a type rather archaic in character

when compared with that of the XIIth Dynasty. We are often reminded of

the rude sculptures which used to be regarded as typical of the art of

the XIth Dynasty, while at the same time we find work which could not

be surpassed by the best XIIth Dynasty masters. In fact, the art of

Neb-hapet-Râ’s reign was the art of a transitional period. Under the

decadent Memphites of the VIIth and VIIIth Dynasties, Egyptian art

rapidly fell from the high estate which it had attained under the Vth

Dynasty, and, though good work was done under the Hierakonpolites, the

chief characteristic of Egyptian art at the time of the Xth and early

XIth Dynasties is its curious roughness and almost barbaric appearance.

When, however, the kings of the XIth Dynasty reunited the whole land

under one sceptre, and the long reign of Neb-hapet-Râ Mentuhetep enabled

the reconsolidation of the realm to be carried out by one hand, art

began to revive, and, just as to Neb-hapet-Râ must be attributed the

renascence of the Egyptian state under the hegemony of Thebes, so must

the revival of art in his reign be attributed to his great artists,

Mertisen and his son. They carried out in the realm of art what their

king had carried out in the political realm, and to them must be

attributed the origin of the art of the Middle Kingdom which under the

XIIth Dynasty attained so high a pitch of excellence. The sculptures

of the king’s temple at Dêr el-Bahari, then, are monuments of the

renascence of Egyptian art, after the state of decadence into which it

had fallen during the long civil wars between South and North; it is

a reviving art, struggling out of barbarism to regain perfection, and

therefore has much about it that seems archaic, stiff, and curious when

compared with later work. To the XVIIIth Dynasty Egyptian it would no

doubt have seemed hopelessly old-fashioned and even semi-barbarous, and

he had no qualms about sweeping it aside whenever it appeared in the

way of the work of his own time; but to us this very strangeness

gives additional charm and interest, and we can only be thankful that

Mertisen’s work has lasted (in fragments only, it is true) to our own

day, to tell us the story of a little known chapter in the history of

ancient Egyptian art.

From this description it will have been seen that the temple is an

important monument of the Egyptian art and architecture of the Middle

Kingdom. It is the only temple of that period of which considerable

traces have been found, and on that account the study of it will be of

the greatest interest. It is the best preserved of the older temples of

Egypt, and at Thebes it is by far the most ancient building recovered.

Historically it has given us a new king of the XIth Dynasty,

Sekhâhe-tep-Râ Mentuhetep, and the name of the queen of Neb-hapet-Râ

Mentuhetep, Aasheit, who seems to have been an Ethiopian, to judge from

her portrait, which has been discovered. It is interesting to note that

one of the priestesses was a negress.

The name Neb-hapet-Râ may be unfamiliar to those readers who are

acquainted with the lists of the Egyptian kings. It is a correction

of the former reading, “Neb-kheru-Râ,” which is now known from these

excavations to be erroneous. Neb-hapet-Râ (or, as he used to be called,

Neb-kheru-Râ) is Mentuhetep III of Prof. Petrie’s arrangement. Before

him there seem to have come the kings Mentuhetep Neb-hetep (who is also

commemorated in this temple) and Neb-taui-Râ; after him, Sekhâhetep-Râ

Mentuhetep IV and Seânkhkarâ Mentuhetep V, who were followed by an

Antef, bearing the banner or hawk-name Uah-ânkh. This king was followed

by Amenemhat I, the first king of the XIIth Dynasty. Antef Uah-ânkh may

be numbered Antef I, as the prince Antefa, who founded the XIth Dynasty,

did not assume the title of king.

Other kings of the name of Antef also ruled over Egypt, and they used to

be regarded as belonging to the XIth Dynasty; but Prof. Steindorff

has now proved that they really reigned after the XIIIth Dynasty, and

immediately before the Sekenenrâs, who were the fighters of the Hyksos

and predecessors of the XVIIIth Dynasty. The second names of Antef III

(Seshes-Râ-up-maat) and Antef IV (Seshes-Râ-her-her-maat) are exactly

similar to those of the XIIIth Dynasty kings and quite unlike those of

the Mentuheteps; also at Koptos a decree of Antef II (Nub-kheper-Râ) has

been found inscribed on a doorway of Usertsen (Senusret) I; so that

he cannot have preceded him. Prof. Petrie does not yet accept these

conclusions, and classes all the Antefs together with the Mentuheteps in

the XIth Dynasty. He considers that he has evidence from Herakleopolis

that Antef Xub-kheper-Râ (whom he numbers Antef V) preceded the XIIth

Dynasty, and he supposes that the decree of Nub-kheper-Râ at Koptos is

a later copy of the original and was inscribed during the XIIth Dynasty.

But this is a difficult saying. The probabilities are that Prof.

Steindorff is right. Antef Uah-ânkh must, however, have preceded the

XIIth Dynasty, since an official of that period refers to his father’s

father as having lived in Uah-ânkh ‘s time.

The necropolis of Dêr el-Bahari was no doubt used all through the period

of the XIth and XIIth Dynasties, and many tombs of that period have been

found there. A large number of these were obliterated by the building

of the great temple of Queen Hatshepsu, in the northern part of the

cliff-bay. We know of one queen’s tomb of that period which runs right

underneath this temple from the north, and there is another that is

entered at the south side which also runs down underneath it. Several

tombs were likewise found in the court between it and the XIth Dynasty

temple. We know that the XVIIIth Dynasty temple was largely built over

this court, and we can see now the XIth Dynasty mask-wall on the west of

the court running northwards underneath the mass of the XVIIIth Dynasty

temple. In all probability, then, when the temple of Hatshepsu

was built, the larger portion of the Middle Kingdom necropolis (of

chamber-tombs reached by pits), which had filled up the bay to the north

of the Mentuhetep temple, was covered up and obliterated, just as

the older VIth Dynasty gallery tombs of Shêkh Abd el-Kûrna had been

appropriated and altered at the same period.

The kings of the XIIth and XIIIth Dynasties were not buried at Thebes,

as we have seen, but in the North, at Dashûr, Lisht, and near the

Fayymn, with which their royal city at Itht-taui had brought them into

contact. But at the end of the XIIIth Dynasty the great invasion of the

Hyksos probably occurred, and all Northern Egypt fell under the Arab

sway. The native kings were driven south from the Fayymn to Abydos,

Koptos, and Thebes, and at Thebes they were buried, in a new necropolis

to the north of Dêr el-Bahari (probably then full), on the flank of a

long spur of hill which is now called Dra’ Abu-’l-Negga, “Abu-’l-Negga’s

Arm.” Here the Theban kings of the period between the XIIIth and XVIIth

Dynasties, Upuantemsaf, Antef Nub-kheper-Râ, and his descendants, Antefs

III and IV, were buried. In their time the pressure of foreign invasion

seems to have been felt, for, to judge from their coffins, which show

progressive degeneration of style and workmanship, poverty now afflicted

Upper Egypt and art had fallen sadly from the high standard which it had

reached in the days of the XIth and XIIth Dynasties. Probably the later

Antefs and Sebekemsafs were vassals of the Hyksos. Their descendants

of the XVIIth Dynasty were buried in the same necropolis of Dra’

Abu-’l-Negga, and so were the first two kings of the XVIIIth Dynasty,

Aahmes and Amenhetep I. The tombs of the last two have not yet been

found, but we know from the Abbott Papyrus that Amenhetep’s was

here, for, like that of Menttihetep III, it was found intact by the

inspectors. It was a gallery-tomb of very great length, and will be a

most interesting find when it is discovered, as it no doubt eventually

will be. Aahmes had a tomb at Abydos, which was discovered by Mr.

Currelly, working for the Egypt Exploration Fund. This, however, like

the Abydene tomb of Usert-sen (Senusret) III, was in all likelihood a

sham or secondary tomb, the king having most probably been buried at

Thebes, in the Dra’ Abu-’l-Negga. The Abydos tomb is of interesting

construction. The entrance is by a simple pit, from which a gallery

runs round in a curving direction to a great hall supported by eighteen

square pillars, beyond which is a further gallery which was never

finished. Nothing was found in the tomb. On the slope of the mountain,

due west of and in a line with the tomb, Mr. Currelly found a

terrace-temple analogous to those of Dêr el-Bahari, approached not

by means of a ramp but by stairways at the side. It was evidently the

funerary temple of the tomb.

[Illustration: 338.jpg Statue of Queen Teta-shera]

Grandmother of Aahmes, the conqueror of the Hyksos and

founder of the XVIIIth Dynasty. About 1700 B. C. British

Museum. From the photograph by Messrs. Mansell & Co.

The secondary tomb of Usertsen (Senusret) III at Abydos, which has

already been mentioned, was discovered in the preceding year by Mr. A.

E. P. Weigall, and excavated by Mr. Currelly in 1903. It lies north of

the Aahmes temple, between it and the main cemetery of Abydos. It is a

great \_bâb\_ or gallery-tomb, like those of the later kings at Thebes,

with the usual apparatus of granite plugs, barriers, pits, etc., to

defy plunderers. The tomb had been plundered, nevertheless, though it is

probable that the robbers were vastly disappointed with what they

found in it. Mr. Currelly ascribes the absence of all remains to the

plunderers, but the fact is that there probably never was anything in

it but an empty sarcophagus. Near the tomb Mr. Weigall discovered

some dummy mastabas, a find of great interest. Just as the king had a

secondary tomb, so secondary mastabas, mere dummies of rubble like the

XIth Dynasty pyramid at Dêr el-Bahari, were erected beside it to look

like the tombs of his courtiers. Some curious sinuous brick walls which

appear to act as dividing lines form a remarkable feature of this sham

cemetery. In a line with the tomb, on the edge of the cultivation,

is the funerary temple belonging to it, which was found by Mr.

Randall-Maclver in 1900. Nothing remains but the bases of the fluted

limestone columns and some brick walls. A headless statue of Usertsen

was found.

We have an interesting example of the custom of building a secondary

tomb for royalties in these two nécropoles of Dra’ Abu-’l-Negga and

Abydos. Queen Teta-shera, the grandmother of Aahmes, a beautiful

statuette of whom may be seen in the British Museum, had a small pyramid

at Abydos, eastward of and in a line with the temple and secondary tomb

of Aahmes. In 1901 Mr. Mace attempted to find the chamber, but could

not. In the next year Mr. Currelly found between it and the Aahmes

tomb a small chapel, containing a splendid stele, on which Aahmes

commemorates his grandmother, who, he says, was buried at Thebes and had

a \_mer-âhât\_ at Abydos, and he records his determination to build her

also a pyramid at Abydos, out of his love and veneration for her memory.

It thus appeared that the pyramid to the east was simply a dummy,

like Usertsen’s mastabas, or the Mentuhetep pyramid at Dêr el-Bahari.

Teta-shera was actually buried at Dra’ Abu-’l-Negga. Her secondary

pyramid, like that of Aahmes himself, was in the “holy ground” at

Abydos, though it was not an imitation \_bâb\_, but a dummy pyramid of

rubble. This well illustrates the whole custom of the royal primary and

secondary tombs, which, as we have seen, had obtained in the case of

royal personages from the time of the 1st Dynasty, when Aha had two

tombs, one at Nakâda and the other at Abydos. It is probable that all

the 1st Dynasty tombs at Abydos are secondary, the kings being really

buried elsewhere. After their time we know for certain that Tjeser and

Snefru had duplicate tombs, possibly also Unas, and certainly Usertsen

(Senusret) III, Amenemhat III, and Aahmes; while Mentuhetep III and

Queen Teta-shera had dummy pyramids as well as their tombs. Ramses III

also had two tombs, both at Thebes. The reasons for this custom were

two: first, the desire to elude plunderers, and second, the wish to give

the ghost a \_pied-à-terre\_ on the sacred soil of Abydos or Sakkâra.

As the inscription of Aahmes which records the building of the dummy

pyramid of Teta-shera is of considerable interest, it may here be

translated. The text reads: “It came to pass that when his Majesty the

king, even the king of South and North, Neb-pehti-Râ, Son of the Sun,

Aahmes, Giver of Life, was taking his pleasure in the \_tjadu\_-hall,

the hereditary princess greatly favoured and greatly prized, the king’s

daughter, the king’s sister, the god’s wife and great wife of the king,

Nefret-ari-Aahmes, the living, was in the presence of his Majesty. And

the one spake unto the other, seeking to do honour to These There,\*

which consisteth in the pouring of water, the offering upon the altar,

the painting of the stele at the beginning of each season, at the

Festival of the New Moon, at the feast of the month, the feast of the

going-forth of the \_Sem\_-priest, the Ceremonies of the Night, the Feasts

of the Fifth Day of the Month and of the Sixth, the \_Hak\_-festival, the

\_Uag\_-festival, the feast of Thoth, the beginning of every season of

heaven and earth. And his sister spake, answering him: ‘Why hath one

remembered these matters, and wherefore hath this word been said?

Prithee, what hath come into thy heart?’ The king spake, saying: ‘As for

me, I have remembered the mother of my mother, the mother of my father,

the king’s great wife and king’s mother Teta-shera, deceased, whose

tomb-chamber and \_mer-ahât\_ are at this moment upon the soil of Thebes

and Abydos. I have spoken thus unto thee because my Majesty desireth to

cause a pyramid and chapel to be made for her in the Sacred Land, as a

gift of a monument from my Majesty, and that its lake should be dug, its

trees planted, and its offerings prescribed; that it should be provided

with slaves, furnished with lands, and endowed with cattle, with

\_hen-ka\_ priests and \_kher-heb\_ priests performing their duties, each

man knowing what he hath to do.’ Behold! when his Majesty had thus

spoken, these things were immediately carried out. His Majesty did these

things on account of the greatness of the love which he bore her, which

was greater than anything. Never had ancestral kings done the like for

their mothers. Behold! his Majesty extended his arm and bent his hand,

and made for her the king’s offering to Geb, to the Ennead of Gods, to

the lesser Ennead of Gods... [to Anubis] in the God’s Shrine, thousands

of offerings of bread, beer, oxen, geese, cattle... to [the Queen

Teta-shera].” This is one of the most interesting inscriptions

discovered in Egypt in recent years, for the picturesqueness of its

diction is unusual.

\* A polite periphrasis for the dead.

As has already been said, the king Amenhetep I was also buried in the

Dra’ Abu-’l-Negga, but the tomb has not yet been found. Amenhetep I and

his mother, Queen Nefret-ari-Aahmes, who is mentioned in the inscription

translated above, were both venerated as tutelary demons of the Western

Necropolis of Thebes after their deaths, as also was Mentuhetep III. At

Dêr el-Bahari both kings seem to have been worshipped with Hathor, the

Mistress of the Waste. The worship of Amen-Râ in the XVIIIth Dynasty

temple of Dêr el-Bahari was a novelty introduced by the priests of Amen

at that time. But the worship of Hathor went on side by side with that

of Amen in a chapel with a rock-cut shrine at the side of the Great

Temple. Very possibly this was the original cave-shrine of Hathor, long

before Mentuhetep’s time, and was incorporated with the Great Temple and

beautified with the addition of a pillared hall before it, built

over part of the XIth Dynasty north court and wall, by Hatshepsu’s

architects.

The Great Temple, the excavation of which for the Egypt Exploration Fund

was successfully brought to an end by Prof. Naville in 1898, was erected

by Queen Hatshepsu in honour of Amen-Râ, her father Thothmes I, and her

brother-husband Thothmes II, and received a few additions from Thothmes

III, her successor. He, however, did not complete it, and it fell into

disrepair, besides suffering from the iconoclastic zeal of the heretic

Akhunaten, who hammered out some of the beautifully painted scenes upon

its walls. These were badly restored by Ramses II, whose painting is

easily distinguished from the original work by the dulness and badness

of its colour.

The peculiar plan and other remarkable characteristics of this temple

are well known. Its great terraces, with the ramps leading up to them,

flanked by colonnades, which, as we have seen, were imitated from the

design of the old XIth Dynasty temple at its side, are familiar from a

hundred illustrations, and the marvellously preserved colouring of its

delicate reliefs is known to every winter visitor to Egypt, and can be

realized by those who have never been there through the medium of Mr.

Howard Carter’s wonderful coloured reproductions, published in Prof.

Naville’s edition of the temple by the Egypt Exploration Fund. The Great

Temple stands to-day clear of all the débris which used to cover it, a

lasting monument to the work of the greatest of the societies which busy

themselves with the unearthing of the relics of the ancient world.

[Illustration: 334.jpg THE TWO TEMPLES OF DES EL-BAHARI.] Excavated by

Prof. Nayille, 1893-8 and 1903-6, for the Egypt Exploration Fund

The two temples of Dêr el-Bahari will soon stand side by side, as they

originally stood, and will always be associated with the name of the

society which rescued them from oblivion, and gave us the treasures

of the royal tombs at Abydos. The names of the two men whom the Egypt

Exploration Fund commissioned to excavate Dêr el-Bahari and Abydos, and

for whose work it exclusively supplied the funds, Profs. Naville and

Petrie, will live chiefly in connection with their work at Dêr el-Bahari

and Abydos.

The Egyptians called the two temples \_Tjeserti\_, “the two holy places,”

the new building receiving the name of \_Tjeser-tjesru\_, “Holy of

Holies,” and the whole tract of Dêr el-Bahari the appellation \_Tjesret\_,

“the Holy.” The extraordinary beauty of the situation in which they are

placed, with its huge cliffs and rugged hillsides, may be appreciated

from the photograph which is taken from a steep path half-way up the

cliff above the Great Temple. In it we see the Great Temple in the

foreground with the modern roofs of two of its colonnades, devised in

order to protect the sculptures beneath them, the great trilithon gate

leading to the upper court, and the entrance to the cave-shrine of

Amen-Râ, with the niches of the kings on either side, immediately at the

foot of the cliff. In the middle distance is the duller form of the XIth

Dynasty temple, with its rectangular platform, the ramp leading up

to it, and the pyramid in the centre of it, surrounded by pillars,

half-emerging from the great heaps of sand and débris all around. The

background of cliffs and hills, as seen in the photograph, will serve to

give some idea of the beauty of the surroundings,--an arid beauty, it is

true, for all is desert. There is not a blade of vegetation near; all

is salmon-red in colour beneath a sky of ineffable blue, and against the

red cliffs the white temple stands out in vivid contrast.

The second illustration gives a nearer view of the great trilithon

gate in the upper court, at the head of the ramp. The long hill of Dra’

Abu-’l-Negga is seen bending away northward behind the gate.

[Illustration: 346.jpg THE UPPER COURT AND TRILITHON GATE]

Of The Xviiith Dynasty Temple At Dêk El-Bahari. About 1500

B.C.

This is the famous gate on which the jealous Thothmes III chiselled out

Hatshepsu’s name in the royal cartouches and inserted his own in

its place; but he forgot to alter the gender of the pronouns in the

accompanying inscription, which therefore reads “King Thothmes III, she

made this monument to her father Amen.”

Among Prof. Naville’s discoveries here one of the most important is that

of the altar in a small court to the north, which, as the inscription

says, was made in honour of the god Râ-Harmachis “of beautiful white

stone of Anu.” It is of the finest white limestone known. Here also were

found the carved ebony doors of a shrine, now in the Cairo Museum. One

of the most beautiful parts of the temple is the Shrine of Anubis, with

its splendidly preserved paintings and perfect columns and roof of

white limestone. The effect of the pure white stone and simplicity of

architecture is almost Hellenic.

The Shrine of Hathor has been known since the time of Mariette, but in

connection with it some interesting discoveries have been made during

the excavation of the XIth Dynasty temple. In the court between the two

temples were found a large number of small votive offerings, consisting

of scarabs, beads, little figures of cows and women, etc., of blue

glazed \_faïence\_ and rough pottery, bronze and wood, and blue glazed

ware ears, eyes, and plaques with figures of the sacred cow, and other

small objects of the same nature. These are evidently the ex-votos of

the XVIIIth Dynasty fellahîn to the goddess Hathor in the rock-shrine

above the court. When the shrine was full or the little ex-votos broken,

the sacristans threw them over the wall into the court below, which thus

became a kind of dust-heap. Over this heap the sand and débris gradually

collected, and thus they were preserved. The objects found are of

considerable interest to anthropological science.

The Great Temple was built, as we have said, in honour of Thothmes I

and II, and the deities Amen-Râ and Hathor. More especially it was the

funerary chapel of Thothmes I. His tomb was excavated, not in the Dra’

Abu-l-Negga, which was doubtless now too near the capital city and not

in a sufficiently dignified position of aloofness from the common herd,

but at the end of the long valley of the Wadiyên, behind the cliff-hill

above Dêr el-Bahari. Hence the new temple was oriented in the direction

of his tomb. Immediately behind the temple, on the other side of the

hill, is the tomb which was discovered by Lepsius and cleared in 1904

for Mr. Theodore N. Davis by Mr. Howard Carter, then chief inspector of

antiquities at Thebes. Its gallery is of very small dimensions, and it

winds about in the hill in corkscrew fashion like the tomb of Aahmes at

Aby-dos. Owing to its extraordinary length, the heat and foul air in the

depths of the tomb were almost insupportable and caused great difficulty

to the excavators. When the sarcophagus-chamber was at length reached,

it was found to contain the empty sarcophagi of Thothmes I and of

Hatshepsu. The bodies had been removed for safe-keeping in the time of

the XXIst Dynasty, that of Thothmes I having been found with those

of Set! I and Ramses II in the famous pit at Dêr el-Bahari, which was

discovered by M. Maspero in 1881. Thothmes I seems to have had another

and more elaborate tomb (No. 38) in the Valley of the Tombs of the

Kings, which was discovered by M. Loret in 1898. Its frescoes had been

destroyed by the infiltration of water.

The fashion of royal burial in the great valley behind Dêr el-Bahari

was followed during the XVIIIth, XIXth, and XXth Dynasties. Here in the

eastern branch of the Wadiyên, now called the \_Bibân el-Mulûk\_, “the

Tombs of the Kings,” the greater number of the mightiest Theban Pharaohs

were buried. In the western valley rested two of the kings of the

XVIIIth Dynasty, who desired even more remote burial-places, Amenhetep

III and Ai. The former chose for his last home a most kingly site.

Ancient kings had raised great pyramids of artificial stone over their

graves. Amenhetep, perhaps the greatest and most powerful Pharaoh of

them all, chose to have a natural pyramid for his grave, a mountain for

his tumulus. The illustration shows us the tomb of this monarch, opening

out of the side of one of the most imposing hills in the Western Valley.

No other king but Amenhetep rested beneath this hill, which thus marks

his grave and his only.

It is in the Eastern Valley, the Valley of the Tombs of the Kings

properly speaking, that the tombs of Thothmes I and Hatshepsu lie, and

here the most recent discoveries have been made. It is a desolate spot.

As we come over the hill from Dêr el-Bahari we see below us in the

glaring sunshine a rocky canon, with sides sometimes sheer cliff,

sometimes sloped by great falls of rock in past ages. At the bottom

of these slopes the square openings of the many royal tombs can be

descried. [See illustration.] Far below we see the forms of tourists

and the tomb-guards accompanying them, moving in and out of the openings

like ants going in and out of an ants’ nest. Nothing is heard but the

occasional cry of a kite and the ceaseless rhythmical throbbing of the

exhaust-pipe of the electric light engine in the unfinished tomb of

Ramses XI. Above and around are the red desert hills. The Egyptians

called it “The Place of Eternity.”

[Illustration: 350.jpg THE TOMB-MOUNTAIN OF AMENHETEF III, IN THE

WESTERN VALLEY, THEBES.]

In this valley some remarkable discoveries have been made during the

last few years. In 1898 M. Grébaut discovered the tomb of Amenhetep

II, in which was found the mummy of the king, intact, lying in its

sarcophagus in the depths of the tomb. The royal body now lies there

for all to see. The tomb is lighted with electricity, as are all the

principal tombs of the kings. At the head of the sarcophagus is a single

lamp, and, when the party of visitors is collected in silence around the

place of death, all the lights are turned out, and then the single

light is switched on, showing the royal head illuminated against the

surrounding blackness. The effect is indescribably weird and impressive.

The body has only twice been removed from the tomb since its burial, the

second time when it was for a brief space taken up into the sunlight to

be photographed by Mr.. Carter, in January, 1902. The temporary removal

was carefully carried out, the body of his Majesty being borne up

through the passages of the tomb on the shoulders of the Italian

electric light workmen, preceded and followed by impassive Arab

candle-bearers. The workmen were most reverent in their handling of the

body of “\_ il gran ré\_,” as they called him.

In the tomb were found some very interesting objects, including a model

boat (afterwards stolen), across which lay the body of a woman. This

body now lies, with others found close by, in a side chamber of the

tomb. One may be that of Hatshepsu. The walls of the tomb-chamber are

painted to resemble papyrus, and on them are written chapters of the

“Book of What Is in the Underworld,” for the guidance of the royal

ghost.

In 1902-3 Mr. Theodore Davis excavated the tomb of Thothmes IV. It

yielded a rich harvest of antiquities belonging to the funeral state of

the king, including a chariot with sides of embossed and gilded leather,

decorated with representations of the king’s warlike deeds, and much

fine blue pottery, all of which are now in the Cairo Museum. The

tomb-gallery returns upon itself, describing a curve. An interesting

point with regard to it is that it had evidently been violated even in

the short time between the reigns of its owner and Horem-heb, probably

in the period of anarchy which prevailed at Thebes during the reign

of the heretic Akhunaten; for in one of the chambers is a hieratic

inscription recording the repair of the tomb in the eighth year of

Horemheb by Maya, superintendent of works in the Tombs of the Kings. It

reads as follows: “In the eighth year, the third month of summer, under

the Majesty of King Tjeser-khepru-Râ Sotp-n-Râ, Son of the Sun, Horemheb

Meriamen, his Majesty (Life, health, and wealth unto him!) commanded

that orders should be sent unto the Fanbearer on the King’s Left Hand,

the King’s Scribe and Overseer of the Treasury, the Overseer of the

Works in the Place of Eternity, the Leader of the Festivals of Amen

in Karnak, Maya, son of the judge Aui, born of the Lady Ueret, that he

should renew the burial of King Men-khepru-Râ, deceased, in the August

Habitation in Western Thebes.” Men-khepru-Râ was the prenomen or

throne-name of Thothmes IV. Tied round a pillar in the tomb is still a

length of the actual rope used by the thieves for crossing the chasm,

which, as in many of the tombs here, was left open in the gallery to bar

the way to plunderers. The mummy of the king was found in the tomb of

Amenhetep II, and is now at Cairo.

The discovery of the tomb of Thothmes I and Hat-shepsu has already been

described. In 1905 Mr. Davis made his latest find, the tomb of Iuaa

and Tuaa, the father and mother of Queen Tii, the famous consort of

Amenhetep III and mother of Akhunaten the heretic. Readers of Prof.

Maspero’s history will remember that Iuaa and Tuaa are mentioned on one

of the large memorial scarabs of Amenhetep III, which commemorates his

marriage. The tomb has yielded an almost incredible treasure of funerary

furniture, besides the actual mummies of Tii’s parents, including a

chariot overlaid with gold. Gold overlay of great thickness is found on

everything, boxes, chairs, etc. It was no wonder that Egypt seemed the

land of gold to the Asiatics, and that even the King of Babylon begs

this very Pharaoh Amenhetep to send him gold, in one of the letters

found at Tell el-Amarna, “for gold is as water in thy land.” It is

probable that Egypt really attained the height of her material wealth

and prosperity in the reign of Amenhetep III. Certainly her dominion

reached its farthest limits in his time, and his influence was felt from

the Tigris to the Sudan. He hunted lions for his pleasure in Northern

Mesopotamia, and he built temples at Jebel Barkal beyond Dongola. We see

the evidence of lavish wealth in the furniture of the tomb of Iuaa and

Tuaa. Yet, fine as are many of these gold-overlaid and overladen objects

of the XVIIIth Dynasty, they have neither the good taste nor the charm

of the beautiful jewels from the XIIth Dynasty tombs at Dashûr. It is

mere vulgar wealth. There is too much gold thrown about. “For gold is as

water in thy land.” In three hundred years’ time Egypt was to know what

poverty meant, when the poor priest-kings of the XXIst Dynasty could

hardly keep body and soul together and make a comparatively decent show

as Pharaohs of Egypt. Then no doubt the latter-day Thebans sighed for

the good old times of the XVIIIth Dynasty, when their city ruled a

considerable part of Africa and Western Asia and garnered their riches

into her coffers. But the days of the XIIth Dynasty had really been

better still. Then there was not so much wealth, but what there was (and

there was as much gold then, too) was used sparingly, tastefully, and

simply. The XIIth Dynasty, not the XVIIIth, was the real Golden Age of

Egypt.

From the funeral panoply of a tomb like that of Iuaa and Tuaa we can

obtain some idea of the pomp and state of Amenhetep III. But the remains

of his Theban palace, which have been discovered and excavated by Mr. C.

Tytus and Mr. P. E. Newberry, do not bear out this idea of magnificence.

It is quite possible that the palace was merely a pleasure house,

erected very hastily and destined to fall to pieces when its owner tired

of it or died, like the many palaces of the late Khedive Ismail. It

stood on the border of an artificial lake, whereon the Pharaoh and his

consort Tii sailed to take their pleasure in golden barks. This is now

the cultivated rectangular space of land known as the Birket Habû, which

is still surrounded by the remains of the embankment built to retain its

waters, and becomes a lake during the inundation. On the western shore

of this lake Amenhetep erected the “stately pleasure dome,” the

remains of which still cover the sandy tract known as el-Malkata, “the

Salt-pans,” south of the great temple of Medînet Habû. These remains

consist merely of the foundations and lowest wall-courses of a

complicated and rambling building of many chambers, constructed of

common unburnt brick and plastered with white stucco on walls and

floors, on which were painted beautiful frescoes of fighting bulls,

birds of the air, water-fowl, fish-ponds, etc., in much the same style

as the frescoes of Tell el-Amarna executed in the next reign. There

were small pillared halls, the columns of which were of wood, mounted

on bases of white limestone. The majority still remain in position. In

several chambers there are small daïses, and in one the remains of a

throne, built of brick and mud covered with plaster and stucco, upon

which the Pharaoh Amenhetep sat. This is the palace of him whom the

Greeks called Memnon, who ruled Egypt when Israel was in bondage and

when the dynasty of Minos reigned in Crete. Here by the side of his

pleasure-lake the most powerful of Egyptian Pharaohs whiled away his

time during the summer heats. Evidently the building was intended to be

of the lightest construction, and never meant to last; but to our ideas

it seems odd that an Egyptian Pharaoh should live in a mud palace. Such

a building is, however, quite suited to the climate of Egypt, as are the

modern crude brick dwellings of the fellahîn. In the ruins of the

palace were found several small objects of interest, and close by was

an ancient glass manufactory of Amenhetep III’s time, where much of the

characteristic beautifully coloured and variegated opaque glass of the

period was made.

[Illustration: 356.jpg THE TOMB-HILL OF SHEKH ‘ABD EL-KUBNA, THEBES.]

The tombs of the magnates of Amenhetep III’s reign and of the reigns

of his immediate predecessors were excavated, as has been said, on the

eastern slope of the hill of Shêkh ‘Abd el-Kûrna, where was the earliest

Theban necropolis. No doubt many of the early tombs of the time of the

VIth Dynasty were appropriated and remodelled by the XVIIIth Dynasty

magnates. We have an instance of time’s revenge in this matter, in the

case of the tomb of Imadua, a great priestly official of the time of

the XXth Dynasty. This tomb previously belonged to an XVIIIth Dynasty

worthy, but Imadua appropriated it three hundred years later and covered

up all its frescoes with the much begilt decoration fashionable in his

period. Perhaps the XVIIIth Dynasty owner had stolen it from an original

owner of the time of the VIth Dynasty. The tomb has lately been cleared

out by Mr. Newberry.

Much work of the same kind has been done here of late years by Messrs.

Newberry and R. L. Mond, in succession. To both we are indebted for the

excavation of many known tombs, as well as for the discovery of many

others previously unknown. Among the former was that of Sebekhetep,

cleared by Mr. Newberry. Se-bekhetep was an official of the time of

Thothmes III. From his tomb, and from others in the same hill, came many

years ago the fine frescoes shown in the illustration, which are among

the most valued treasures of the Egyptian department of the British

Museum. They are typical specimens of the wall-decoration of an XVIIIth

Dynasty tomb. On one may be seen a bald-headed peasant, with staff in

hand, pulling an ear of corn from the standing crop in order to see if

it is ripe. He is the “Chief Reaper,” and above him is a prayer that the

“great god in heaven” may increase the crop. To the right of him is a

charioteer standing beside a car and reining back a pair of horses, one

black, the other bay. Below is another charioteer with two white

horses. He sits on the floor of the car with his back to them, eating

or resting, while they nibble the branches of a tree close by. Another

scene is that of a scribe keeping tally of offerings brought to the

tomb, while fellahm are bringing flocks of geese and other fowl, some in

crates. The inscription above is apparently addressed by the goose-herd

to the man with the crates. It reads: “Hasten thy feet because of the

geese! Hearken! thou knowest not the next minute what has been said

to thee!” Above, a reïs with a stick bids other peasants squat on the

ground before addressing the scribe, and he is saying to them: “Sit ye

down to talk.” The third scene is in another style; on it may be seen

Semites bringing offerings of vases of gold, silver, and copper to the

royal presence, bowing themselves to the ground and kissing the dust

before the throne. The fidelity and accuracy with which the racial type

of the tribute-bearers is given is most extraordinary; every face

seems a portrait, and each one might be seen any day now in the Jewish

quarters of Whitechapel.

[Illustration: 358.jpg Wall-Painting from a Tomb]

The first two paintings are representative of a very common style of

fresco-pictures in these tombs. The care with which the animals

are depicted is remarkable. Possibly one of the finest Egyptian

representations of an animal is the fresco of a goat in the tomb of

Gen-Amen, discovered by Mr. Mond. There is even an attempt here at

chiaroscuro, which is unknown to Egyptian art generally, except at Tell

el-Amarna. Evidently the Egyptian painters reached the apogee of

their art towards the end of the XVIIIth Dynasty. The third, the

representation of tribute-bearers, is of a type also well known at

this period. In all the chief tombs we have processions of Egyptians,

Westerners, Northerners, Easterners, and Southerners, bringing tribute

to the Pharaoh. The North is represented by the Semites, the East by the

Punites (when they occur), the South by negroes, the West by the Keftiu

or people of Crete and Cyprus. The representations of the last-named

people have become of the very highest interest during the last few

years, on account of the discoveries in Crete, which have revealed to

us the state and civilization of these very Keftiu. Messrs. Evans

and Halbherr have discovered at Knossos and Phaistos the cities and

palace-temples of the king who sent forth their ambassadors to far-away

Egypt with gifts for the mighty Pharaoh; these ambassadors were painted

in the tombs of their hosts as representative of the quarter of the

world from which they came.

The two chief Egyptian representations of these people, who since they

lived in Greece may be called Greeks, though their more proper title

would be “Pe-lasgians,” are to be found in the tombs of Rekhmarâ and

Senmut, the former a vizier under Thothmes III, the latter the

architect of Hatshepsu’s temple at Dêr el-Bahari. Senmut’s tomb is a

new rediscovery. It was known, as Rekhmarâ’s was, in the early days of

Egyptological science, and Prisse d’Avennes copied its paintings. It was

afterwards lost sight of until rediscovered by Mr. Newberry and Prof.

Steindorff.

[Illustration: 360.jpg FRESCO IN THE TOMB OF SENMUT AT THEBES.] About

1500 B.C.

The tomb of Rekhmarâ (No. 35) is well known to every visitor to Thebes,

but it is difficult to get at that of Senmut (No. 110); it lies at the

top of the hill round to the left and overlooking Dêr el-Bahari,

an appropriate place for it, by the way. In some ways Senmut’s

representations are more interesting than Rekhmarâ’s. They are more

easily seen, since they are now in the open air, the fore hall of the

tomb having been ruined; and they are better preserved, since they have

not been subjected to a century of inspection with naked candles and

pawing with greasy hands, as have Rekhmarâ’s frescoes. Further, there

is no possibility of mistaking what they represent. From right to

left, walking in procession, we see the Minoan gift-bearers from Crete,

carrying in their hands and on their shoulders great cups of gold and

silver, in shape like the famous gold cups found at Vaphio in Lakonia,

but much larger, also a ewer of gold and silver exactly like one of

bronze discovered by Mr. Evans two years ago at Knossos, and a huge

copper jug with four ring-handles round the sides. All these vases are

specifically and definitely Mycenaean, or rather, following the new

terminology, Minoan. They are of Greek manufacture and are carried on

the shoulders of Pelasgian Greeks. The bearers wear the usual Mycenaean

costume, high boots and a gaily ornamented kilt, and little else, just

as we see it depicted in the fresco of the Cupbearer at Knossos and

in other Greek representations. The coiffure, possibly the most

characteristic thing about the Mycenaean Greeks, is faithfully

represented by the Egyptians both here and in Rekhmarâ’s tomb. The

Mycenaean men allowed their hair to grow to its full natural length,

like women, and wore it partly hanging down the back, partly tied up

in a knot or plait (the \_kepas\_ of the dandy Paris in the Iliad) on the

crown of the head. This was the universal fashion, and the Keftiu are

consistently depicted by the XVIIIth Dynasty Egyptians as following it.

The faces in the Senmut fresco are not so well portrayed as those in the

Rekhmarâ fresco. There it is evident that the first three ambassadors

are faithfully depicted, as the portraits are marked. The procession

advances from left to right. The first man, “the Great Chief of the

Kefti and the Isles of the Green Sea,” is young, and has a remarkably

small mouth with an amiable expression. His complexion is fair rather

than dark, but his hair is dark brown. His lieutenant, the next in

order, is of a different type,--elderly, with a most forbidding visage,

Roman nose, and nutcracker jaws. Most of the others are very much

alike,--young, dark in complexion, and with long black hair hanging

below their waists and twisted up into fantastic knots and curls on the

tops of their heads. One, carrying on his shoulder a great silver vase

with curving handles and in one hand a dagger of early European Bronze

Age type, is looking back to hear some remark of his next companion.

Any one of these gift-bearers might have sat for the portrait of

the Knossian Cupbearer, the fresco discovered by Mr. Evans in the

palace-temple of Minos; he has the same ruddy brown complexion, the same

long black hair dressed in the same fashion, the same parti-coloured

kilt, and he bears his vase in much the same way. We have only to allow

for the difference of Egyptian and Mycenaean ways of drawing. There is

no doubt whatever that these Keftiu of the Egyptians were Cretans of the

Minoan Age. They used to be considered Phoenicians, but this view was

long ago exploded. They are not Semites, and that is quite enough.

Neither are they Asiatics of any kind. They are purely and simply

Mycenaean, or rather Minoan, Greeks of the pre-Hellenic period--Pelasgi,

that is to say.

Probably no discovery of more far-reaching importance to our knowledge

of the history of the world generally and of our own culture especially

has ever been made than the finding of Mycenæ by Schliemann, and

the further finds that have resulted therefrom, culminating in the

discoveries of Mr. Arthur Evans at Knossos. Naturally, these discoveries

are of extraordinary interest to us, for they have revealed the

beginnings and first bloom of the European civilization of to-day. For

our culture-ancestors are neither the Egyptians, nor the Assyrians, nor

the Hebrews, but the Hellenes, and they, the Aryan-Greeks, derived most

of their civilization from the pre-Hellenic people whom they found in

the land before them, the Pelasgi or “Mycenæan” Greeks, “Minoans,” as we

now call them, the Keftiu of the Egyptians. These are the ancient Greeks

of the Heroic Age, to which the legends of the Hellenes refer; in their

day were fought the wars of Troy and of the Seven against Thebes, in

their day the tragedy of the Atridse was played out to its end, in their

day the wise Minos ruled Knossos and the \_Ægean\_. And of all the events

which are at the back of these legends we know nothing. The hiéroglyphed

tablets of the pre-Hellenic Greeks lie before us, but we cannot read

them; we can only see that the Minoan writing in many ways resembled

the Egyptian, thus again confirming our impression of the original early

connection of the two cultures.

In view of this connection, and the known close relations between Crete

and Egypt, from the end of the XIIth Dynasty to the end of the XVIIIth,

we might have hoped to recover at Knossos a bilingual inscription in

Cretan and Egyptian hieroglyphs which would give us the key to the

Minoan script and tell us what we so dearly wish to know. But this hope

has not yet been realized. Two Egyptian inscriptions have been found at

Knossos, but no bilingual one. A list of Keftian names is preserved in

the British Museum upon an Egyptian writing-board from Thebes with what

is perhaps a copy of a single Cretan hieroglyph, a vase; but again,

nothing bilingual. A list of “Keftian words” occurs at the head of a

papyrus, also in the British Museum, but they appear to be nonsense,

a mere imitation of the sounds of a strange tongue. Still we need

not despair of finding the much desired Cretan-Egyptian bilingual

inscription yet. Perhaps the double text of a treaty between Crete and

Egypt, like that of Ramses II with the Hittites, may come to light.

Meanwhile we can only do our best with the means at our hand to trace

out the history of the relations of the oldest European culture with

the ancient civilization of Egypt. The tomb-paintings at Thebes are very

important material. Eor it is due to them that the voice of the doubter

has finally ceased to be heard, and that now no archaeologist questions

that the Egyptians were in direct communication with the Cretan

Mycenæans in the time of the XVIIIth Dynasty, some fifteen hundred years

before Christ, for no one doubts that the pictures of the Keftiu are

pictures of Mycenaeans.

As we have seen, we know that this connection was far older than the

time of the XVIIIth Dynasty, but it is during that time and the Hyksos

period that we have the clearest documentary proof of its existence,

from the statuette of Abnub and the alabastron lid of King Khian,

found at Knossos, down to the Mycenaean pottery fragments found at Tell

el-Amarna, a site which has been utterly abandoned since the time of

the heretic Akhunaten (B.C. 1430), so that there is no possibility of

anything found there being later than his time. That the connection

existed as late as the time of the XXth Dynasty we know from the

representations of golden \_Bügelkannen\_ or false-necked vases of

Mycenaean form in the tomb of Ramses III in the Bibân el-Mulûk, and of

golden cups of Vaphio type in the tomb of Imadua, already mentioned.

This brings the connection down to about 1050 B.C.

After that date we cannot hope to find any certain evidence of

connection, for by that time the Mycenaean civilization had probably

come to an end. In the days of the XIIth and XVIIIth Dynasties a great

and splendid power evidently existed in Crete, and sent its peaceful

ambassadors, the Keftiu who are represented in the Theban tombs, to

Egypt. But with the XIXth Dynasty the name of the Keftiu disappears from

Egyptian records, and their place is taken by a congeries of warring

seafaring tribes, whose names as given by the Egyptians seem to be forms

of tribal and place names well known to us in the Greece of later days.

We find the Akaivasha (\_Axaifol\_, Achaians), Shakalsha (Sagalassians of

Pisidia), Tursha (Tylissians of Crete?), and Shardana (Sardians) allied

with the Libyans and Mashauash (Maxyes) in a land attack upon Egypt in

the days of Meneptah, the successor of Ramses II--just as in the later

days of the XXVIth Dynasty the Northern pirates visited the African

shore of the Mediterranean, and in alliance with the predatory Libyans

attacked Egypt.

Prof. Petrie has lately [History of Egypt, iii, pp. Ill, I12.] proffered

an alternative view, which would make all these tribes Tunisians and

Algerians, thus disposing of the identification of the Akaivasha with

the Achaians, and making them the ancient representatives of the town

of el-Aghwat (Roman Agbia) in Tunis. But several difficulties might be

pointed out which are in the way of an acceptance of this view, and it

is probable that the older identifications with Greek tribes must still

be retained, so that Meneptah’s Akaivasha are evidently the ancient

representatives of the Achai(v)ans, the Achivi of the Roman poets. The

terminations \_sha\_ and \_na\_, which appear in these names, are merely

ethnic and locative affixes belonging to the Asianic language system

spoken by these tribes at that time, to which the language of the Minoan

Cretans (which is written in the Knossian hieroglyphs) belonged. They

existed in ancient Lycian in the forms \_azzi\_ and \_nna\_, and we find

them enshrined in the Asia Minor place-names terminating in \_assos\_

and \_nda\_, as Halikarnassos, Sagalassos (Shakalasha in Meneptah’s

inscription), Oroanda, and Labraunda (which, as we have seen, is the

same as the [Greek word], a word of pre-Hellenic origin, both meaning

“Place of the Double Axe”) The identification of these \_sha\_ and \_nal\_

terminations in the Egyptian transliterations of the foreign names, with

the Lycian affixes referred to, was made some five years ago,\* and is

now generally accepted. We have, then, to find the equivalents of

these names, to strike off the final termination, as in the case of

Akaiva-sha, where Akaiva only is the real name, and this seems to be

the Egyptian equivalent of \_Axaifol\_, Achivi. It is strange to meet with

this great name on an Egyptian monument of the thirteenth century B.C.

But yet not so strange, when we recollect that it is precisely to that

period that Greek legend refers the war of Troy, which was an attack

by Greek tribes from all parts of the Ægean upon the Asianic city

at Hissarlik in the Troad, exactly parallel to the attacks of the

Northerners on Egypt. And Homer preserves many a reminiscence of early

Greek visits, peaceful and the reverse, to the coast of Egypt at this

period. The reader will have noticed that one no longer treats the siege

of Troy as a myth. To do so would be to exhibit a most uncritical mind;

even the legends of King Arthur have a historic foundation, and those of

the Nibelungen are still more probable.

\* See Hall, Oldest Civilization of Greece, p. 178/.

[Illustration: 368.jpg Page Image to display Greek words]

[Illustration: 369.jpg Page Image to display Greek words]

In the eighth year of Ramses III the second Northern attack was made,

by the Pulesta (\_Pelishtim\_, Philistines), Tjakaray, Shakalasha

(Sagalassians), Vashasha, and Danauna or Daanau, in alliance with North

Syrian tribes. The Danauna are evidently the ancient representatives of

the \_Aavaoî\_, the Danaans who formed the bulk of the Greek army against

Troy under the leadership of the long-haired Achaians, [Greek words]

(like the Keftiu). The Vashasha have been identified by the writer with

the Axians, the [Greek word] of Crete. Prof. Petrie compares the name

of the Tjakaray with that of the (modern) place Zakro in Crete.

Identifications with modern place-names are of doubtful value;

for instance, we cannot but hold that Prof. Petrie errs greatly in

identifying the name of the Pidasa (another tribe mentioned in Ramses

II’s time) with that of the river Pidias in Cyprus. “Pidias” is a purely

modern corruption of the ancient Pediseus, which means the “plain-river”

(because it flows through the central plain of the island), from the

Greek [Greek word]. If, then, we make the Pidasa Cypriotes we assume

that pure Greek was spoken in Cyprus as early as 1100 b. c, which is

highly improbable. The Pidasa were probably Le-leges (Pedasians); the

name of Pisidia may be the same, by metathesis. Pedasos is a name always

connected with the much wandering tribe of the Leleges, where-ever they

are found in Lakonia or in Asia Minor. We believe them to have been

known to the Egyptians as Pidasa. The identification of the Tjakaray

with Zakro is very tempting. The name was formerly identified with

that of the Teukrians, but the v in the word Tewpot lias always been a

stumbling-block in the way. Perhaps Zakro is neither more nor less than

the Tetkpoc-name, since the legendary Teucer, the archer, was connected

with the eastern or Eteokretan end of Crete, where Zakro lies. In

Mycenæan times Zakro was an important place, so that the Tjakaray may

be the Teukroi, after all, and Zakro may preserve the name. At any rate,

this identification is most alluring and, taken in conjunction with

the other cumulative identifications, is very probable; but the

identification of the Pidæa with the river Pediæus in Cyprus is

neither alluring nor probable.

In the time of Ramses II some of these Asia Minor tribes had marched

against Egypt as allies of the Hittites. We find among them the Luka or

Lycians, the Dardenui (Dardanians, who may possibly have been at that

time in the Troad, or elsewhere, for all these tribes were certainly

migratory), and the Masa (perhaps the Mysians). With the Cretans of

Ramses Ill’s time must be reckoned the Pulesta, who are certainly the

Philistines, then most probably in course of their traditional migration

from Crete to Palestine. In Philistia recent excavations by Mr. Welch

have disclosed the unmistakable presence of a late Mycenæan culture,

and we can only ascribe this to the Philistines, who were of Cretan

origin.

Thus we see that all these Northern tribal names hold together with

remarkable persistence, and in fact refuse to be identified with any

tribes but those of Asia Minor and the Ægean. In them we see the broken

remnants of the old Minoan (Keftian) power, driven hither and thither

across the seas by intestinal feuds, and “winding the skein of grievous

wars till every man of them perished,” as Homer says of the heroes after

the siege of Troy. These were in fact the wanderings of the heroes, the

period of \_Sturm und Drang\_ which succeeded the great civilized epoch of

Minos and his thalassocracy, of Knossos, Phaistos, and the Keftius.

On the walls of the temple of Medînet Habû, Ramses III depicted the

portraits of the conquered heroes who had fallen before the Egyptian

onslaught, and he called them heroes, \_tuher\_ in Egyptian, fully

recognizing their Berserker gallantry. Above all in interest are the

portraits of the Philistines, those Greeks who at this very time seized

part of Palestine (which takes its name from them), and continued to

exist there as a separate people (like the Normans in France) for at

least two centuries. Goliath the giant was, then, a Greek; certainly he

was of Cretan descent, and so a Pelasgian.

Such are the conclusions to which modern discovery in Crete has impelled

us with regard to the pictures of the Keftiu at Shêkh ‘Abd el-Kûrna. It

is indeed a new chapter in the history of the relations of ancient Egypt

with the outside world that Dr. Arthur Evans has opened for us. And in

this connection some American work must not be overlooked. An expedition

sent out by the University of Pennsylvania, under Miss Harriet Boyd,

has discovered much of importance to Mycenæan study in the ruins of an

ancient town at Gournia in Crete, east of Knossos. Here, however, little

has been found that will bear directly on the question of relations

between Mycenaean Greece and Egypt.

The Theban nécropoles of the New Empire are by no means exhausted by a

description of the Tombs of the Kings and Shêkh ‘Abd el-Kûrna; but few

new discoveries have been made anywhere except in the picturesque valley

of the Tombs of the Queens, south of Shêkh ‘Abd el-Kûrna. Here the

Italian Egyptologist, Prof. Schiaparelli, has lately discovered and

excavated some very fine tombs of the XIXth and XXth Dynasties. The best

is that of Queen Nefertari, one of the wives of Ramses II. The colouring

of the reliefs upon these walls is extraordinarily bright, and the

portraits of the queen, who has a very beautiful face, with aquiline

nose, are wonderfully preserved. She was of the dark type, while another

queen, Titi by name, who was buried close by, was fair, and had a

retroussé nose. Prof. Schiaparelli also discovered here the tombs of

some princes of the XXth Dynasty, who died young. All the tombs are

much alike, with a single short gallery, on the walls of which are

mythological scenes, figures of the prince and of his father, the king,

etc., painted in a crude style, which shows a great degeneration from

that of the XVIIIth Dynasty tombs.

We now leave the great necropolis and turn to the later temples of the

Western Bank at Thebes. These were of a funerary character, like those

of Dêr el-Bahari, already described. The most imposing of all in some

respects is the Ramesseum, where lies the huge granite colossus of

Ramses II, prostrate and broken, which Diodorus knew as the statue of

Osymandyas. This name is a late corruption of Ramses II’s throne-name,

User-maat-Rà, pronounced Ûsimare. The temple has been cleared by

Mr. Howard Carter for the Egyptian government, and the small town of

priests’ houses, magazines, and cellars, to the west of it, has been

excavated by him. This is quite a little Pompeii, with its small

streets, its houses with the stucco still clinging to the walls, its

public altar, its market colonnade, and its gallery of statues. The

statues are only of brick like the walls, and roughly shaped and

plastered, but they were portraits, undoubtedly, of celebrities of

the time, though we do not know of whom. On either side are the long

magazines in which were kept the possessions of the priests of the

Ramesseum, the grain from the lands with which they were endowed, and

everything meet to be offered to the ghost of the king whom they served.

The plan of the place had evidently been altered after the time of

Ramses II, as remains of overbuilding were found here and there. The

magazines were first investigated in 1896 by Prof. Petrie, who also

found in the neighbourhood the remains of a number of small royal

funerary temples of the XVIIIth Dynasty, all looking in the direction of

the hill, beyond which lay the tombs of the kings.

[Illustration: 372.jpg THE VALLEY OF THE TOMBS OF THE QUEENS AT THEBES.]

In which Prof. Schiaparelli discovered the tomb of Ramses

II’s wife (1904).

We may now turn to Luxor, where immediately above the landing-place of

the steamers and dahabiyas rise the stately coloured colonnades of the

Temple of Luxor. Unfortunately, modern excavations have not been

allowed to pursue their course to completion here, as in the first great

colonnaded court, which was added by Ramses II to the original building

of Amenhetep III, Tutankhamen, and Horemheb, there still remains

the Mohammedan Mosque of Abu-’l-Haggâg, which may not be removed.

Abu-’l-Haggâg, “the Father of Pilgrims” (so called on account of the

number of pilgrims to his shrine), was a very holy shêkh, and his memory

is held in the greatest reverence by the Luksuris. It is unlucky that

this mosque was built within the court of the Great Temple, and it

cannot be removed till Moslem religious prejudices become at least

partially ameliorated, and then the work of completely excavating the

Temple of Luxor may be carried out.

Between Luxor and Karnak lay the temple of the goddess Mut, consort of

Amen and protectress of Thebes. It stood in the part of the city known

as Asheru. This building was cleared in 1895 at the expense and under

the supervision of two English ladies, Miss Benson and Miss Gourlay.

[Illustration: 374.jpg THE NILE-BANK AT LUXOR]

With A Dahabîya And A Steamer Of The Anglo-American Nile

Company.

The temple had always been remarkable on account of the prodigious

number of seated figures of the lioness-headed goddess Sekhemet, or

Pakhet, which it contains, dedicated by Amenhetep III and Sheshenk I;

most of those in the British Museum were brought from this temple.

The excavators found many more of them, and also some very interesting

portrait-statues of the late period which had been dedicated there.

The most important of these was the head and shoulders of a statue of

Mentuemhat, governor of Thebes at the time of the sack of the city by

Ashur-bani-pal of Assyria in 668 B.C. In Miss Benson’s interesting book,

\_The Temple of Mut in Asher\_, it is suggested, on the authority of Prof.

Petrie, that his facial type is Cypriote, but this speculation is a

dangerous one, as is also the similar speculation that the wonderful

portrait-head of an old man found by Miss Benson [\* Plate vii of her

book.] is of Philistine type. We have only to look at the faces of

elderly Egyptians to-day to see that the types presented by Mentuemhat

and Miss Benson’s “Philistine” need be nothing but pure Egyptian. The

whole work of the clearing was most efficiently carried out, and the

Cairo Museum obtained from it some valuable specimens of Egyptian

sculpture.

The Great Temple of Karnak is one of the chief cares of the Egyptian

Department of Antiquities. Its paramount importance, so to speak, as the

cathedral temple of Egypt, renders its preservation and exploration a

work of constant necessity, and its great extent makes this work one

which is always going on and which probably will be going on for many

years to come. The Temple of Karnak has cost the Egyptian government

much money, yet not a piastre of this can be grudged. For several years

past the works have been under the charge of M. Georges Legrain, the

well-known engineer and draughtsman who was associated with M. de

Morgan in the work at Dashûr. His task is to clear out the whole temple

thoroughly, to discover in it what previous investigators have left

undiscovered, and to restore to its original position what has fallen.

[Illustration: 376.jpg THE GREAT TEMPLE OP KAKNAK.]

The left-hand obelisk is the highest in Egypt, and was

erected by Hatshepsu; the right-hand obelisk was put up by

Thothmes III. No general work of restoration is

contemplated, nor would this be in the slightest degree

desirable. Up to the present M. Legrain has certainly

carried out all three branches of his task with great

success. An unforeseen event has, however, considerably

complicated and retarded the work.

In October, 1899, one of the columns of the side aisles of the great

Hypostyle Hall fell, bringing down with it several others. The whole

place was a chaotic ruin, and for a moment it seemed as though the whole

of the Great Hall, one of the wonders of the world, would collapse.

The disaster was due to the gradual infiltration of water from the Nile

beneath the structure, whose foundations, as is usual in Egypt, were of

the flimsiest description. Even the most imposing Egyptian temples

have jerry-built foundations; usually they are built on the top of the

wall-stumps of earlier buildings of different plan, filled in with a

confused mass of earlier slabs and weak rubbish of all kinds. Had the

Egyptian buildings been built on sure foundations, they would have been

preserved to a much greater extent even than they are. In such a climate

as that of Egypt a stone building well built should last for ever.

M. Legrain has for the last five years been busy repairing the damage.

All the fallen columns are now restored to the perpendicular, and the

capitals and architraves are in process of being hoisted into their

original positions. The process by which M. Legrain carries out this

work has been already described. He works in the old Egyptian fashion,

building great inclines or ramps of earth up which the pillar-drums,

the capitals, and the architrave-blocks are hauled by manual labour, and

then swung into position. This is the way in which the Egyptians built

Karnak, and in this way, too, M. Le-grain is rebuilding it. It is a slow

process, but a sure one, and now it will not be long before we shall

see the hall, except its roof, in much the same condition as it was when

Seti built it. Lovers of the picturesque will, however, miss the famous

leaning column, hanging poised across the hall, which has been a main

feature in so many pictures and photographs of Karnak. This fell in the

catastrophe of 1899, and naturally it has not been possible to restore

it to its picturesque, but dangerous, position.

The work at Karnak has been distinguished during the last two years by

two remarkable discoveries. Outside the main temple, to the north of

the Hypostyle Hall, M. Legrain found a series of private sanctuaries or

shrines, built of brick by personages of the XVIIIth Dynasty and later,

in order to testify their devotion to Amen. In these small cells were

found some remarkable statues, one of which is illustrated. It is one of

the most perfect of its kind. A great dignitary of the XVIIIth Dynasty

is seen seated with his wife, their daughter standing between them.

Round his neck are four chains of golden rings, with which he had been

decorated by the Pharaoh for his services. It is a remarkable group,

interesting for its style and workmanship as well as for its subject. As

an example of the formal hieratic type of portraiture it is very fine.

The other and more important discovery of the two was made by M. Legrain

on the south side of the Hypo-style Hall.

[Illustration: 379.jpg THE GREAT TEMPLE OP KAKNAK.]

The left-hand obelisk is the highest in Egypt, and was erected by

Hatshepsu; the right-hand obelisk was put up by Thothmes III.

M. de Morgan in the work at Dashûr. His task is to clear out the whole

temple thoroughly, to discover in it what previous investigators have

left undiscovered, and to restore to its original position what has

fallen. Tentative excavations, begun in an unoccupied tract under the

wall of the hall, resulted in the discovery of parts of statues; the

place was then regularly excavated, and the result has been amazing.

The ground was full of statues, large and small, at some unknown period

buried pell-mell, one on the top of another. Some are broken, but the

majority are perfect, which is in itself unusual, and is due very much

to the soft, muddy soil in which they have lain. Statues found on dry

desert land are often terribly cracked, especially when they are of

black granite, the crystals of which seem to have a greater tendency to

disintegration than have those of the red syenite. The Karnak statues

are figures of pious persons, who had dedicated portraits of themselves

in the temple of Amen, together with those of great men whom the king

had honoured by ordering their statues placed in the temple during their

lives.

Of this number was the great sage Amenhetep, son of Hapi, the founder of

the little desert temple of Dêr el-Medîna, near Dêr el-Bahari, who was

a sort of prime minister under Amenhetep III, and was venerated in later

days as a demigod. His statue was found with the others by M. Legrain.

Among them is a figure made entirely of green felspar, an unusual

material for so large a statuette. A fine portrait of Thothmes III was

also found. The illustration shows this wonderfully fruitful excavation

in progress, with the diggers at work in the black mud soil, in the

foreground the basket-boys carrying away the rubbish on their shoulders,

and the massive granite walls of the Great Hypostyle Hall of Seti in the

background. The huge size of the roof-blocks is noticeable. These are

not the actual uppermost roof-blocks, but only the architraves from

pillar to pillar; the original roof consisted of similar blocks laid

across in the transverse direction from architrave to architrave. An

Egyptian granite temple was in fact built upon the plan of a child’s box

of bricks; it was but a modified and beautified Stonehenge.

[Illustration: 381.jpg PORTRAIT-GROUP OF A GREAT NOBLE AND HIS WIFE]

Of The Time Of The Xviiith Dynasty. Discovered by M. Legrain

at Karnak.

Other important discoveries have been made by M. Legrain in the course

of his work.

[Illustration: 382.jpg A TOMB PITTED UP AS AN EXPLORER’S RESIDENCE.]

The Tomb of Pentu (No. 5) at Tell el-Amarna, inhabited by

Mr. de G. Davies during his work for the Archaeological

Survey of Egypt (Egypt Exploration Fund). About 1400 B.C.

Among them are statues of the late Middle Kingdom, including one of King

Usertsen (Senusret) IV of the XIIIth Dynasty. There are also reliefs of

the reign of Amenhetep I, which are remarkable for the delicacy of their

workmanship and the sureness of their technique.

We know that the temple was built as early as the time of TJsertsen,

for in it have been found one or two of his blocks; and no doubt the

original shrine, which was rebuilt in the time of Philip Arrhidseus, was

of the same period, but hitherto no remains of the centuries between his

time and that of Hatshepsu had been found. With M. Legrain’s work in the

greatest temple of Thebes we finish our account of the new discoveries

in the chief city of ancient Egypt, as we began it with the work of M.

Naville in the oldest temple there.

One of the most interesting questions connected with the archaeology

of Thebes is that which asks whether the heretical disk-worshipper

Akhunaten (Amenhetep IV) erected buildings there, and whether any

trace of them has ever been discovered. To those who are interested in

Egyptian history and religion the transitory episode of the disk-worship

heresy is already familiar. The precise character of the heretical

dogma, which Amenhetep IV proclaimed and desired his subjects to.

accept, has lately been well explained by Mr. de Garis Davies in his

volumes, published by the “Archaeological Survey of Egypt” branch of

the Egypt Exploration Fund, on the tombs of el-Amarna. He shows that the

heretical doctrine was a monotheism of a very high order. Amenhetep IV

(or as he preferred to call himself, Akhunaten, “Glory of the Disk”) did

not, as has usually been supposed, merely worship the Sun-disk itself

as the giver of life, and nothing more. He venerated the glowing disk

merely as the visible emanation of the deity behind it, who dispensed

heat and life to all living things through its medium. The disk was, so

to speak, the window in heaven through which the unknown God, the “Lord

of the Disk,” shed a portion of his radiance on the world. Now, given

an ignorance of the true astronomical character of the sun, we see how

eminently rational a religion this was. In effect, the sun is the source

of all life upon this earth, and so Akhunaten caused its rays to be

depicted each with a hand holding out the sign of life to the earth. The

monotheistic worship of the sun alone is certainly the highest form of

pagan religion, but Akhunaten saw further than this. His doctrine was

that there was a deity behind the sun, whose glory shone through it and

gave us life. This deity was unnamed and unnamable; he was “the Lord

of the Disk.” We see in his heresy, therefore, the highest attitude

to which religious ideas had attained before the days of the Hebrew

prophets.

This religion seems to have been developed out of the philosophical

speculations of the priests of the Sun at Heliopolis. Akhunaten with

unwise iconoclastic zeal endeavoured to root out the worship of the

ancient gods of Egypt, and especially that of Amen-Bà, the ruler of the

Egyptian pantheon, whose primacy in the hearts of the people made him

the most redoubtable rival of the new doctrine. But the name of the

old Sun-god Bà-Harmaehis was spared, and it is evident that Akhunaten

regarded him as more or less identical with his god.

It has been supposed by Prof. Petrie that Queen Tii, the mother of

Akhunaten, was of Mitannian (Armenian) origin, and that she brought the

Aten religion to Egypt from her native land, and taught it to her son.

Certainly it seems as though the new doctrine had made some headway

before the death of Amenhetep III, but we have no reason to attribute it

to Tii, or to suppose that she brought it with her from abroad. There is

no proof whatever that she was not a native Egyptian, and the mummies of

her parents, Iuaa and Tuaa, are purely Egyptian in facial type. It

seems undoubted that the Aten cult was a development of pure Egyptian

religious thought.

At first Akhunaten tried to establish his religion at Thebes alongside

that of Amen and his attendant pantheon. He seems to have built a temple

to the Aten there, and we see that his courtiers began to make tombs for

themselves in the new realistic style of sculptural art, which the king,

heretical in art as in religion, had introduced. The tomb of Barnes at

Shêkh ‘Abd el-Kûrna has on one side of the door a representation of

the king in the old regular style, and on the other side one in the new

realistic style, which depicts him in all the native ugliness in which

this strange truth-loving man seems to have positively gloried. We

find, too, that he caused a temple to the Aten to be erected in far-away

Napata, the capital of Nubia, by Jebel Barkal in the Sudan. The facts

as to the Theban and Napata temples have been pointed out by Prof.

Breasted, of Chicago.

But the opposition of the Theban priesthood was too strong. Akhunaten

shook the dust of the capital off his feet and retired to the isolated

city of Akhet-aten, “the Glory of the Disk,” at the modern Tell

el-Amarna, where he could philosophize in peace, while his kingdom was

left to take care of itself. He and his wife Nefret-iti, who seems to

have been a faithful sharer of his views, reigned over a select court

of Aten-worship-ping nobles, priests, and artists. The artists had under

Akhunaten an unrivalled opportunity for development, of which they had

already begun to take considerable advantage before the end of his reign

and the restoration of the old order of ideas. Their style takes on

itself an almost bizarre freedom, which reminds us strongly of the

similar characteristic in Mycenaean art. There is a strange little

relief in the Berlin Museum of the king standing cross-legged, leaning

on a staff, and languidly smelling a flower, while the queen stands

by with her garments blown about by the wind. The artistic monarch’s

graceful attitude is probably a faithful transcript of a characteristic

pose.

We see from this what an Egyptian artist could do when his shackles were

removed, but unluckily Egypt never produced another king who was at the

same time an original genius, an artist, and a thinker. When Akhunaten

died, the Egyptian artists’ shackles were riveted tighter than ever.

The reaction was strong. The kingdom had fallen into anarchy, and the

foreign empire which his predecessors had built up had practically

been thrown to the winds by Akhunaten. The whole is an example of the

confusion and disorganization which ensue when a philosopher rules. Not

long after the heretic’s death the old religion was fully restored, the

cult of the disk was blotted out, and the Egyptians returned joyfully

to the worship of their myriad deities. Akhunaten’s ideals were too high

for them. The débris of the foreign empire was, as usual in such

cases, put together again, and customary law and order restored by

the conservative reactionaries who succeeded him. Henceforth Egyptian

civilization runs an uninspired and undeveloping course till the days

of the Saïtes and the Ptolemies. This point in the history of Egypt,

therefore, forms a convenient stopping-place at which to pause, while

we turn once more to Western Asia, and ascertain to what extent recent

excavations and research have thrown new light upon the problems

connected with the rise and history of the Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian

Empires.

[Illustration: 387.jpg]

CHAPTER VIII--THE ASSYRIAN AND NEO-BABYLONIAN EMPIRES IN THE LIGHT OF

RECENT RESEARCH

The early history of Assyria has long been a subject on which historians

were obliged to trust largely to conjecture, in their attempts to

reconstruct the stages by which its early rulers obtained their

independence and laid the foundations of the mighty empire over which

their successors ruled. That the land was colonized from Babylonia and

was at first ruled as a dependency of the southern kingdom have long

been regarded as established facts, but until recently little was known

of its early rulers and governors, and still less of the condition of

the country and its capital during the early periods of their existence.

Since the excavations carried out by the British Museum at Kala

Sherghat, on the western bank of the Tigris, it has been known that

the mounds at that spot mark the site of the city of Ashur, the first

capital of the Assyrians, and the monuments and records recovered

during those excavations have hitherto formed our principal source of

information for the early history of the country.\* Some of the oldest

records found in the course of these excavations were short votive texts

inscribed by rulers who bore the title of \_ishshakku\_, corresponding to

the Sumerian and early Babylonian title of patesi, and with some such

meaning as “viceroy.” It was rightly conjectured from the title which

they bore that these early rulers owed allegiance to the kings of

Babylon and were their nominees, or at any rate their tributaries. The

names of a few of these early viceroys were recovered from their votive

inscriptions and from notices in later historical texts, but it was

obvious that our knowledge of early Assyrian history would remain very

fragmentary until systematic excavations in Assyria were resumed. Three

years ago (1902) the British Museum resumed excavations at Kuyunjik, the

site of Nineveh. The work was begun and carried out under the direction

of Mr. L. W. King, but since last summer has been continued by Mr. R. C.

Thompson. Last year, too, excavations were reopened at Sherghat by

the Deutsch-Orient Ge-sellschaft, at first under the direction of Dr.

Koldewey, and afterwards under that of Dr. Andrae, by whom they are

at present being carried on. This renewed activity on the sites of the

ancient cities of Assyria is already producing results of considerable

interest, and the veil which has so long concealed the earlier periods

in the history of that country is being lifted.

\* For the texts and translations of these documents, see

Budge and King, Annals of the Kings of Assyria, pp. iff.

Shortly before these excavations in Assyria were set on foot an

indication was obtained from an early Babylonian text that the history

of Assyria as a dependent state or province of Babylon must be pushed

back to a far more remote period than had hitherto been supposed. In one

of Hammurabi’s letters to Sin-idinnam, governor of the city of Larsam,

to which reference has already been made, directions are given for

the despatch to the king of “two hundred and forty men of ‘the King’s

Company’ under the command of Nannar-iddina... who have left the country

of Ashur and the district of Shitullum.” From this most interesting

reference it followed that the country to the north of Babylonia was

known as Assyria at the time of the kings of the First Dynasty of

Babylon, and the fact that Babylonian troops were stationed there

by Hammurabi proved that the country formed an integral part of the

Babylonian empire.

These conclusions were soon after strikingly confirmed by two passages

in the introductory sections of Hammurabi’s code of laws which was

discovered at Susa. Here Hammurabi records that he “restored his (i.e.

the god Ashur’s) protecting image unto the city of Ashur,” and a few

lines farther on he describes himself as the king “who hath made

the names of Ishtar glorious in the city of Nineveh in the temple of

E-mish-mish.” That Ashur should be referred to at this period is what we

might expect, inasmuch as it was known to have been the earliest capital

of Assyria; more striking is the reference to Nineveh, proving as it

does that it was a flourishing city in Hammurabi’s time and that the

temple of Ishtar there had already been long established. It is true

that Gudea, the Sumerian patesi of Shirpurla, records that he rebuilt

the temple of the goddess Ninni (Ishtar) at a place called Nina. Now

Nina may very probably be identified with Nineveh, but many writers have

taken it to be a place in Southern Babylonia and possibly a district of

Shirpurla itself. No such uncertainty attaches to Hammurabi’s reference

to Nineveh, which is undoubtedly the Assyrian city of that name.

Although no account has yet been published of the recent excavations

carried out at Nineveh by the British Museum, they fully corroborate the

inference drawn with regard to the great age of the city. The series of

trenches which were cut deep into the lower strata of Kuyunjik revealed

numerous traces of very early habitations on the mound.

Neither in Hammurabi’s letters, nor upon the stele inscribed with his

code of laws, is any reference made to the contemporary governor or

ruler of Assyria, but on a contract tablet preserved in the Pennsylvania

Museum a name has been recovered which will probably be identified

with that of the ruler of Assyria in Hammurabi’s reign. In legal and

commercial documents of the period of the First Dynasty of Babylon the

contracting parties frequently swore by the names of two gods (usually

Shamash and Marduk) and also that of the reigning king. Now it has been

found by Dr. Banke that on this document in the Pennsylvania Museum the

contracting parties swear by the name of Hammurabi and also by that of

Shamshi-Adad. As only gods and kings are mentioned in the oath formulas

of this period, it follows that Shamshi-Adad was a king, or at any rate

a patesi or ishshakku. Now from its form the name Shamshi-Adad must

be that of an Assyrian, not that of a Babylonian, and, since he is

associated in the oath formula with Hammurabi, it is legitimate to

conclude that he governed Assyria in the time of Hammurabi as a

dependency of Babylon. An early Assyrian ishshakku of this name, who was

the son of Ishme-Dagan, is mentioned by Tiglath-Pileser I, but he cannot

be identified with the ruler of the time of Hammurabi, since,

according to Tiglath-Pileser, he ruled too late, about 1800 B.C.

A brick-inscription of another Shamshi-Adad, however, the son of

Igur-kapkapu, is preserved in the British Museum, and it is probable

that we may identify him with Hammurabi’s Assyrian viceroy. Erishum and

his son Ikunum, whose inscriptions are also preserved in the British

Museum, should certainly be assigned to an early period of Assyrian

history.

The recent excavations at Sherghat are already yielding the names

of other early Assyrian viceroys, and, although the texts of the

inscriptions in which their names occur have not yet been published, we

may briefly enumerate the more important of the discoveries that have

been made. Last year a small cone or cylinder was found which, though

it bears only a few lines of inscription, restores the names of no less

than seven early Assyrian viceroys whose existence was not previously

known. The cone was inscribed by Ashir-rîm-nishêshu, who gives his own

genealogy and records the restoration of the wall of the city of Ashur,

which he states had been rebuilt by certain of his predecessors on

the throne. The principal portion of the inscription reads as

follows: “Ashir-rîm-nishêshu, the viceroy of the god Ashir, the son of

Ashir-nirari, the viceroy of the god Ashir, the son of Ashir-rabi, the

viceroy. The city wall which Kikia, Ikunum, Shar-kenkate-Ashir, and

Ashir-nirari, the son of Ishme-Dagan, my forefathers, had built, was

fallen, and for the preservation of my life... I rebuilt it.” Perhaps no

inscription has yet been recovered in either Assyria or Babylonia which

contained so much new information packed into so small a space. Of the

names of the early viceroys mentioned in it only one was previously

known, i.e. the name of Ikunum, the son of Erishum, is found in a late

copy of a votive text preserved in the British Museum. Thus from these

few lines the names of three rulers in direct succession have been

recovered, viz., Ashir-rabi, Ashir-nirari, and Ashur-rîm-nishêshu, and

also those of four earlier rulers, viz., Kikia, Shar-kenkate-Ashir,

Ishme-Dagan, and his son Ashir-nirari. Another interesting point about

the inscription is the spelling of the name of the national god of the

Assyrians. In the later periods it is always written \_Ashur\_, but at

this early time we see that the second vowel is changed and that at

first the name was written \_Ashir\_, a form that was already known

from the Cappadocian cuneiform inscriptions. The form Ashir is a good

participial construction and signifies “the Beneficent,” “the Merciful

One.”

Another interesting find, which was also made last year, consists of

four stone tablets, each engraved with the same building-inscription

of Shalmaneser I, a king who reigned over Assyria about 1300 B.C. In

recording his rebuilding of E-kharsag-kurkura, the temple of the god

Ashur in the city of Ashur, he gives a brief summary of the temple’s

history with details as to the length of time which elapsed between

the different periods during which it had been previously restored. The

temple was burned in Shalmaneser’s time, and, when recording this fact

and the putting out of the fire, he summarizes the temple’s history in a

long parenthesis, as will be seen from the following translation of the

extract: “When E-kharsag-kurkura, the temple of Ashur, my lord, which

Ushpia (variant \_Aushpia\_), the priest of Ashur, my forefather, had

built aforetime,--and it fell into decay and Erishu, my forefather,

the priest of Ashur, rebuilt it; 159 years passed by after the reign of

Erishu, and that temple fell into decay, and Shamshi-Adad, the priest

of Ashur, rebuilt it; (during) 580 years that temple which Shamshi-Adad,

the priest of Ashur, had built, grew hoary and old--(when) fire broke

out in the midst thereof..., at that time I drenched that temple (with

water) in (all) its circuit.”

From this extract it will be seen that Shalmaneser gives us, in Ushpia

or Aushpia, the name of a very early Assyrian viceroy, who in his belief

was the founder of the great temple of the god Ashur. He also tells us

that 159 years separated Erishu from a viceroy named Shamshi-Adad, and

that 580 years separated Shamshi-Adad from his own time. When these

inscriptions were first found they were hailed with considerable

satisfaction by historians, as they gave what seemed to be valuable

information for settling the chronology of the early patesis. But

confidence in the accuracy of Shalmaneser’s reckoning was somewhat

shaken a few months afterwards by the discovery of a prism of

Esarhaddon, who gave in it a history of the same temple, but ascribed

totally different figures for the periods separating the reigns

of Erishu and Shamshi-Adad, and the temple’s destruction by fire.

Esarhaddon agrees with Shalmaneser in ascribing the founding of the

temple to Ushpia, but he states that only 126 years (instead of 159

years) separated Erishu (whom he spells Irishu), the son of Ilu-shumma,

from Shamshi-Adad, the son of Bêl-kabi; and he adds that 434 years

(instead of 580 years) elapsed between Shamshi-Adad’s restoration of the

temple and the time when it was burned down. As Shalmaneser I lived over

six hundred years earlier than Esarhaddon, he was obviously in a better

position to ascertain the periods at which the events recorded took

place, but the discrepancy between the figures he gives and those of

Esarhaddon is disconcerting. It shows that Assyrian scribes could make

bad mistakes in their reckoning, and it serves to cast discredit on the

absolute accuracy of the chronological notices contained in other

late Assyrian inscriptions. So far from helping to settle the unsolved

problems of Assyrian chronology, these two recent finds at Sherghat

have introduced fresh confusion, and Assyrian chronology for the earlier

periods is once more cast into the melting pot.

In addition to the recovery of the names of hitherto unknown early

rulers of Assyria, the recent excavations at Sherghat have enabled us to

ascertain the true reading of the name of Shalmaneser I’s grandfather,

who reigned a considerable time after Assyria had gained her

independence. The name of this king has hitherto been read as Pudi-ilu,

but it is now shown that the signs composing the first part of the name

are not to be taken phonetically, but as ideographs, the true reading of

the name being Arik-dên-ilu, the signification of which is “Long

(i.e. far-reaching) is the judgment of God.” Arik-dên-ilu was a great

conqueror, as were his immediate descendants, all of whom extended the

territory of Assyria. By strengthening the country and increasing her

resources they enabled Arik-dên-ilu ‘s great-grandson, Tukulti-Ninib I,

to achieve the conquest of Babylon itself. Concerning Tukulti-Ninib’s

reign and achievements an interesting inscription has recently been

discovered. This is now preserved in the British Museum, and before

describing it we may briefly refer to another phase of the excavations

at Sherghat.

[Illustration: 396.jpg Stone Object Bearing a Votive Inscription of

Arik-den-ilu.]

An early independent King of Assyria, who reigned about B.C.

1350. Photograph by Messrs. Mansell & Co.

The mounds of Sherghat rise a considerable height above the level of

the plain, and are to a great extent of natural and not of artificial

formation. In fact, the existence of a group of high natural mounds at

this point on the bank of the Tigris must have led to its selection

by the early Assyrians as the site on which to build their first

stronghold. The mounds were already so high, from their natural

formation, that there was no need for the later Assyrian kings

to increase their height artificially (as they raised the chief

palace-mound at Nineveh), and the remains of the Assyrian buildings of

the early period are thus only covered by a few feet of débris and not

by masses of unburnt brick and artificially piled up soil. This fact

has considerably facilitated the systematic uncovering of the principal

mound that is now being carried out by Dr. Andrae.

[Illustration: 397.jpg ENTRANCE INTO ONE OF THE GALLERIES OR TUNNELS CUT

INTO THE PRINCIPAL MOUND AT SHERGHAT.]

Work has hitherto been confined to the northwest corner of the mound

around the ziggurat, or temple tower, and already considerable traces of

Assyrian buildings have been laid bare in this portion of the site. The

city wall on the northern side has been uncovered, as well as quays with

steps leading down to the water along the river front. Part of the

great temple of the god Ashur has been excavated, though a considerable

portion of it must be still covered by the modern Turkish fort at the

extreme northern point of the mounds; also part of a palace erected

by Ashur-nasir-pal has been identified. In fact, the work at Sherghat

promises to add considerably to our knowledge of ancient Assyrian

architecture.

The inscription of Tukulti-Ninib I, which was referred to above as

having been recently acquired by the trustees of the British Museum,

affords valuable information for the reconstruction of the history of

Assyria during the first half of the thirteenth century B.C.\* It is seen

from the facts summarized that for our knowledge of the earlier

history of the country we have to depend to a large extent on short

brick-inscriptions and votive texts supplemented by historical

references in inscriptions of the later period. The only historical

inscription of any length belonging to the early Assyrian period,

which had been published up to a year ago, was the famous memorial slab

containing an inscription of Adad-nirari I, which was acquired by the

late Mr. George Smith some thirty years ago. Although purchased in

Mosul, the slab had been found by the natives in the mounds at Sherghat,

for the text engraved upon it in archaic Assyrian characters records the

restoration of a part of the temple of the god Ashur in the ancient city

of Ashur, the first capital of the Assyrians, now marked by the

mounds of Sherghat, which have already been described. The object of

Adad-nirari in causing the memorial slab to be inscribed was to record

the restoration of the portion of the temple which he had rebuilt,

but the most important part of the inscription was contained in the

introductory phrases with which the text opens. They recorded

the conquests achieved not only by Adad-nirari but by his father

Arik-dên-ilu, his grandfather Bél-nirari, and his great-grandfather

Ashur-uballit. They thus enabled the historian to trace the gradual

extension and consolidation of the Assyrian empire during a critical

period in its early history.

\* For the text and translation of the inscription, see King,

Studies it Eastern History, i (1904).

The recently recovered memorial slab of Tukulti-Ninib I is similar to

that of his grandfather Adad-nirari I, and ranks in importance with it

for the light it throws on the early struggles of Assyria. Tukulti-Ninib

‘s slab, like that of Adad-nirari, was a foundation memorial intended to

record certain building operations carried out by order of the king.

The building so commemorated was not the restoration of a portion of

a temple, but the founding of a new city, in which the king erected

no less than eight temples dedicated to various deities, while he also

records that he built a palace therein for his own habitation, that he

protected the city by a strongly fortified wall, and that he cut a canal

from the Tigris by which he ensured a continuous supply of fresh water.

These were the facts which the memorial was primarily intended to

record, but, like the text of Adad-nirari I, the most interesting events

for the historian are those referred to in the introductory portions of

the inscription. Before giving details concerning the founding of the

new city, named Kar-Tukulti-Mnib, “the Fortress of Tukulti-Mnib,”

the king supplies an account of the military expeditions which he

had conducted during the course of his reign up to the time when the

foundation memorial was inscribed. These introductory paragraphs record

how the king gradually conquered the peoples to the north and northeast

of Assyria, and how he finally undertook a successful campaign against

Babylon, during which he captured the city and completely subjugated

both Northern and Southern Babylonia. Tukulti-Mnib’s reign thus marks an

epoch in the history of his country.

We have already seen how, during the early ages of her history, Assyria

had been merely a subject province of the Babylonian empire. Her rulers

had been viceroys owing allegiance to their overlords in Babylon,

under whose orders they administered the country, while garrisons of

Babylonian soldiers, and troops commanded by Babylonian officers, served

to keep the country in a state of subjection. Gradually, however, the

country began to feel her feet and long for independence. The conquest

of Babylon by the kings of the Country of the Sea afforded her the

opportunity of throwing off the Babylonian yoke. In the fifteenth

century the Assyrian kings were powerful enough to have independent

relations with the kings of Egypt, and, during the two centuries which

preceded Tukulti-Mnib’s reign.

Assyria’s relations with Babylon were the cause of constant friction due

to the northern kingdom’s growth in power and influence. The frontier

between the two countries was constantly in dispute, and, though

sometimes rectified by treaty, the claims of Assyria often led to war

between the two countries. The general result of these conflicts was

that Assyria gradually extended her authority farther southwards, and

encroached upon territory which had previously been Babylonian. The

successes gained by Ashur-uballit, Bêl-nirari, and Adad-nirari I against

the contemporary Babylonian kings had all resulted in the cession of

fresh territory to Assyria and in an increase of her international

importance. Up to the time of Tukulti-Mnib no Assyrian king had actually

seated himself upon the Babylonian throne. This feat was achieved by

Tukulti-Mnib, and his reign thus marks an important step in the gradual

advance of Assyria to the position which she later occupied as the

predominant power in Western Asia.

Before undertaking his campaign against Babylon, Tukulti-Mnib secured

himself against attack from other quarters, and his newly discovered

memorial inscription supplies considerable information concerning the

steps he took to achieve this object. In his inscription the king does

not number his military expeditions, and, with the exception of the

first one, he does not state the period of his reign in which they

were undertaken. The results of his campaigns are summarized in four

paragraphs of the text, and it is probable that they are not described

in chronological order, but are arranged rather according to the

geographical position of the districts which he invaded and subdued.

Tukulti-Ninib records that his first campaign took place at the

beginning of his sovereignty, in the first year of his reign, and it was

directed against the tribes and peoples inhabiting the territory on the

east of Assyria. Of the tribes which he overran and conquered on this

occasion the most important was the Kuti, who probably dwelt in the

districts to the east of the Lower Zâb. They were a turbulent race and

they had already been conquered by Arik-dên-ilu and Adad-nirari I, but

on neither occasion had they been completely subdued, and they had soon

regained their independence. Their subjugation by Tukulti-Ninib was

a necessary preliminary to any conquest in the south, and we can well

understand why it was undertaken by the king at the beginning of his

reign. Other conquests which were also made in the same region were the

Ukumanî and the lands of Elkhu-nia, Sharnida, and Mekhri, mountainous

districts which probably lay to the north of the Lower Zâb. The country

of Mekhri took its name from the mekhru-tree, a kind of pine or fir,

which grew there in abundance upon the mountainsides, and was highly

esteemed by the Assyrian kings as affording excellent wood for building

purposes. At a later period Ashur-nasir-pal invaded the country in the

course of his campaigns and brought back beams of mekhru-wood, which he

used in the construction of the temple dedicated to the goddess Ishtar

in Nineveh.

The second group of tribes and districts enumerated by Tukulti-Ninib as

having been subdued in his early years, before his conquest of Babylon,

all lay probably to the northwest of Assyria. The most powerful among

these peoples were the Shubari, who, like the Kutî on the eastern

border of Assyria, had already been conquered by Adad-nirari I, but had

regained their independence and were once more threatening the border on

this side. The third group of his conquests consisted of the districts

ruled over by forty kings of the lands of Na’iri, which was a general

term for the mountainous districts to the north of Assyria, including

territory to the west of Lake Van and extending eastwards to the

districts around Lake Urmi. The forty kings in this region whom

Tukulti-Ninib boasts of having subdued were little more than chieftains

of the mountain tribes, each one possessing authority over a few

villages scattered among the hills and valleys. But the men of Na’iri

were a warlike and hardy race, and, if left long in undisturbed

possession of their native fastnesses, they were tempted to make raids

into the fertile plains of Assyria. It was therefore only politic for

Tukulti-Ninib to traverse their country with fire and sword, and, by

exacting heavy tribute, to keep the fear of Assyrian power before their

eyes. From the king’s records we thus learn that he subdued and crippled

the semi-independent races living on his borders to the north, to the

northwest, and to the east. On the west was the desert, from which

region he need fear no organized attack when he concentrated his army

elsewhere, for his permanent garrisons were strong enough to repel and

punish any incursion of nomadic tribes. He was thus in a position to try

conclusions with his hereditary foe in the south, without any fear of

leaving his land open to invasion in his absence.

The campaign against Babylon was the most important one undertaken by

Tukulti-Ninib, and its successful issue was the crowning point of his

military career. The king relates that the great gods Ashur, Bel, and

Shamash, and the goddess Ishtar, the queen of heaven and earth, marched

at the head of his warriors when he set out upon the expedition. After

crossing the border and penetrating into Babylonian territory he seems

to have had some difficulty in forcing Bitiliashu, the Kassite king who

then occupied the throne of Babylon, to a decisive engagement. But by

a skilful disposition of his forces he succeeded in hemming him in, so

that the Babylonian army was compelled to engage in a pitched battle.

The result of the fighting was a complete victory for the Assyrian arms.

Many of the Babylonian warriors fell fighting, and Bitiliashu himself

was captured by the Assyrian soldiers in the midst of the battle.

Tukulti-Ninib boasts that he trampled his lordly neck beneath his feet,

and on his return to Assyria he carried his captive back in fetters to

present him with the spoils of the campaign before Ashur, the national

god of the Assyrians.

Before returning to Assyria, however, Tukulti-Ninib marched with his

army throughout the length and breadth of Babylonia, and achieved

the subjugation of the whole of the Sumer and Akkad. He destroyed the

fortifications of Babylon to ensure that they should not again be used

against himself, and all the inhabitants who did not at once submit to

his decrees he put co the sword. He then appointed his own officers

to rule the country and established his own system of administration,

adding to his previous title of “King of Assyria,” those of “King of

Karduniash (i. e. Babylonia)” and “King of Sumer and Akkad.” It was

probably from this period that he also adopted the title of “King of the

Poor Quarters of the World.” As a mark of the complete subjugation of

their ancient foe, Tukulti-Ninib and his army carried back with them

to Assyria not only the captive Babylonian king, but also the statue of

Marduk, the national god of Babylon. This they removed from B-sagila,

his sumptuous temple in Babylon, and they looted the sacred treasures

from the treasure-chambers, and carried them off together with the spoil

of the city.

Tukulti-Ninib no doubt left a sufficient proportion of his army in

Babylon to garrison the city and support the governors and officials

into whose charge he committed the administration of the land, but he

himself returned to Assyria with the rich spoil of the campaign, and

it was probably as a use for this large increase of wealth and material

that he decided to found another city which should bear his own name and

perpetuate it for future ages. The king records that he undertook this

task at the bidding of Bel (i.e. the god Ashur), who commanded that he

should found a new city and build a dwelling-place for him therein.

In accordance with the desire of Ashur and the gods, which was thus

conveyed to him, the king founded the city of Kar-Tukulti-Ninib, and

he erected therein temples dedicated not only to Ashur, but also to the

gods Adad, and Sha-mash, and Ninib, and Nusku, and Nergal, and Imina-bi,

and the goddess Ishtar. The spoils from Babylon and the temple treasures

from E-sagila were doubtless used for the decoration of these temples

and the adornment of their shrines, and the king endowed the temples and

appointed regular offerings, which he ordained should be their property

for ever. He also built a sumptuous palace for his own abode when he

stayed in the city, which he constructed on a mound or terrace of earth,

faced with brick, and piled high above the level of the city. Finally,

he completed its fortification by the erection of a massive wall around

it, and the completion of this wall was the occasion on which his

memorial tablet was inscribed.

The memorial tablet was buried and bricked up within the actual

structure of the wall, in order that in future ages it might be read by

those who found it, and so it might preserve his name and fame. After

finishing the account of his building operations in the new city and

recording the completion of the city wall from its foundation to its

coping stone, the king makes an appeal to any future ruler who should

find it, in the following words: “In the days that are to come, when

this wall shall have grown old and shall have fallen into ruins, may

a future prince repair the damaged parts thereof, and may he anoint my

memorial tablet with oil, and may he offer sacrifices and restore

it unto its place, and then Ashur will hearken unto his prayers. But

whosoever shall destroy this wall, or shall remove my memorial tablet or

my name that is inscribed thereon, or shall leave Kar-Tukulti-Ninib, the

city of my dominion, desolate, or shall destroy it, may the lord Ashur

overthrow his kingdom, and may he break his weapons, and may he cause

his warriors to be defeated, and may he diminish his boundaries, and may

he ordain that his rule shall be cut off, and on his days may he bring

sorrow, and his years may he make evil, and may he blot out his name and

his seed from the land!”

By such blessings and curses Tukulti-Ninib hoped to ensure the

preservation of his name and the rebuilding of his city, should it at

any time be neglected and fall into decay. Curiously enough, it was in

this very city that Tukulti-Ninib met his own fate less than seven years

after he had founded it. At that time one of his own sons, who bore the

name of Ashur-nasir-pal, conspired against his father and stirred up the

nobles to revolt. The insurrection was arranged when Tukulti-Ninib was

absent from his capital and staying in Kar-Tukulti-Ninib, where he was

probably protected by only a small bodyguard, the bulk of his veteran

warriors remaining behind in garrison at Ashur. The insurgent nobles,

headed by Ashur-nasir-pal, fell upon the king without warning when

he was passing through the city without any suspicion of risk from a

treacherous attack. The king defended himself and sought refuge in a

neighbouring house, but the conspirators surrounded the building and,

having forced an entrance, slew him with the sword. Thus Tukulti-Ninib

perished in the city he had built and beautified with the spoils of his

campaigns, where he had looked forward to passing a peaceful and secure

old age. Of the fate of the city itself we know little except that its

site is marked to-day by a few mounds which rise slightly above the

level of the surrounding desert. The king’s memorial tablet only has

survived. For some 3,200 years it rested undisturbed in the foundations

of the wall of unburnt brick, where it was buried by Tukulti-Ninib on

the completion of the city wall.

[Illustration: 408.jpg Stone Tablet. Bearing an inscription of

Tukulti-Ninib I]

King of Assyria, about B. C. 1275.

Thence it was removed by the hands of modern Arabs, and it is now

preserved in the British Museum, where the characters of the inscription

may be seen to be as sharp and uninjured as on the day when the Assyrian

graver inscribed them by order of the king.

In the account of his first campaign, which is preserved upon

the memorial tablet, it is stated that the peoples conquered by

Tukulti-Ninib brought their yearly tribute to the city of Ashur. This

fact is of considerable interest, for it proves that Tukulti-Ninib

restored the capital of Assyria to the city of Ashur, removing it from

Calah, whither it had been transferred by his father Shalmaneser I. The

city of Calah had been founded and built by Shalmaneser I in the same

way that his son Tukulti-Ninib built the city of Kar-Tukulti-Ninib, and

the building of both cities is striking evidence of the rapid growth

of Assyria and her need of expansion around fresh centres prepared for

administration and defence. The shifting of the Assyrian capital to

Calah by Shalmaneser I was also due to the extension of Assyrian power

in the north, in consequence of which there was need of having the

capital nearer the centre of the country so enlarged. Ashur’s recovery

of her old position under Tukulti-Ninib I was only a temporary check to

this movement northwards, and, so long as Babylon remained a conquered

province of the Assyrian empire, obviously the need for a capital

farther north than Ashur would not have been pressing.

[Illustration 409.jpg THE ZIGGURAT, OR TEMPLE TOWER, OF THE ASSYRIAN

CITY OF CALAH.]

But with Tukulti-Ninib’s death Babylon regained her independence and

freed herself from Assyrian control, and the centre of the northern

kingdom was once more subject to the influences which eventually

resulted in the permanent transference of her capital to Nineveh. To the

comparative neglect into which Ashur and Calah consequently fell, we

may probably trace the extensive remains of buildings belonging to the

earlier periods of Assyrian history which have been recovered and still

remain to be found, in the mounds that mark their sites.

We have given some account of the results already achieved from the

excavations carried out during the last two years at Sherghat, the site

of the city of Ashur. That much remains to be done on the site of Calah,

the other early capital of Assyria, is evident from even a cursory

examination of the present condition of the mounds that mark the

location of the city. These mounds are now known by the name of Nimrûd

and are situated on the left or eastern bank of the Tigris, a short

distance above the point at which it is joined by the stream of the

Upper Zâb, and the great mound which still covers the remains of the

ziggurat, or temple tower, can be seen from a considerable distance

across the plain. During the excavations formerly carried out here for

the British Museum, remains of palaces were recovered which had been

built or restored by Shal-maneser I, Ashur-nasir-pal, Shalmaneser II,

Tiglath-pileser III, Sargon, Esarhaddon, and Ashur-etil-ilâni. After the

conclusion of the diggings and the removal of many of the sculptures to

England, the site was covered again with earth, in order to protect the

remains of Assyrian buildings which were left in place. Since that time

the soil has sunk and been washed away by the rains so that many of the

larger sculptures are now protruding above the soil, an example of which

is seen in the two winged bulls in the palace of Ashur-nasir-pal. It

is improbable that the mounds of Nimrûd will yield such rich results

as Sherghat, but the site would probably well repay prolonged and

systematic excavation.

We have hitherto summarized and described the principal facts,

with regard to the early history of Babylonia and Assyria and the

neighbouring countries, which have been obtained from the excavations

conducted recently on the sites of ancient cities. From the actual

remains of the buildings that have been unearthed we have secured

information with regard to the temples and palaces of ancient rulers and

the plans on which they were designed. Erom the objects of daily life

and of religious use which have been recovered, such as weapons of

bronze and iron, and vessels of metal, stone, and clay, it is possible

for the archaeologist to draw conclusions with regard to the customs of

these early peoples; while from a study of their style and workmanship

and of such examples of their sculpture as have been brought to light,

he may determine the stage of artistic development at which they had

arrived. The clay tablets and stone monuments that have been recovered

reveal the family life of the people, their commercial undertakings,

their system of legislation and land tenure, their epistolary

correspondence, and the administration under which they lived, while the

royal inscriptions and foundation-memorials throw light on the religious

and historical events of the period in which they were inscribed.

Information on all these points has been acquired as the result of

excavation, and is based on the discoveries in the ruins of early cities

which have remained buried beneath the soil for some thousands of years.

But for the history of Assyria and of the other nations in the north

there is still another source of information to which reference must now

be made.

The kings of Assyria were not content with recording their achievements

on the walls of their buildings, on stelae set up in their palaces and

temples, on their tablets of annals preserved in their archive-chambers,

and on their cylinders and foundation-memorials concealed within the

actual structure of the buildings themselves. They have also left

records graven in the living rock, and these have never been buried,

but have been exposed to wind and weather from the moment they

were engraved. Records of irrigation works and military operations

successfully undertaken by Assyrian kings remain to this day on the

face of the mountains to the north and east of Assyria. The kings of

one great mountain race that had its capital at Van borrowed from the

Assyrians this method of recording their achievements, and, adopting the

Assyrian character, have left numerous rock-inscriptions in their own

language in the mountains of Armenia and Kurdistan. In some instances

the action of rain and frost has nearly if not quite obliterated the

record, and a few have been defaced by the hand of man. But as the

majority are engraved in panels cut on the sheer face of the rock, and

are inaccessible except by means of ropes and tackle, they have escaped

mutilation. The photograph reproduced will serve to show the means that

must be adopted for reaching such rock-inscriptions in order to examine

or copy them.

[Illustration: 413.jpg WORK IN PROGRESS ON ONE OF THE ROCK-INSCRIPTIONS

OF SENNACHERIB]

In The Gorge Of The River Gomel, Near Bavian.

The inscription shown in the photograph is one of those cut by

Sennacherib in the gorge near Bavian, through which the river Gomel

flows, and can be reached only by climbing down ropes fixed to the top

of the cliff. The choice of such positions by the kings who caused the

inscriptions to be engraved was dictated by the desire to render it

difficult to destroy them, but it has also had the effect of delaying to

some extent their copying and decipherment by modern workers.

[Illustration: 414.jpg THE PRINCIPAL ROCK SCULPTURES IN THE GORGE OF THE

GOMEL]

Near Bavian In Assyria.

Considerable progress, however, has recently been made in identifying

and copying these texts, and we may here give a short account of what

has been done and of the information furnished by the inscriptions that

have been examined.

Recently considerable additions have been made to our knowledge of the

ancient empire of Van and of its relation to the later kings of Assyria

by the labours of Prof Lehmann and Dr. Belck on the inscriptions which

the kings of that period caused to be engraved upon the rocks among the

mountains of Armenia.

[Illustration: 415.jpg THE ROCK AND CITADEL OF VAN.]

The flat roofs of the houses of the city of Van may be seen to the left

of the photograph nestling below the rock.

The centre and capital of this empire was the ancient city which stood

on the site of the modern town of Van at the southwest corner of the

lake which bears the same name. The city was built at the foot of a

natural rock which rises precipitously from the plain, and must have

formed an impregnable stronghold against the attack of the foe.

In this citadel at the present day remain the ancient galleries and

staircases and chambers which were cut in the living rock by the kings

who made it their fortress, and their inscriptions, engraved upon the

face of the rock on specially prepared and polished surfaces, enable us

to reconstruct in some degree the history of that ancient empire. From

time to time there have been found and copied other similar texts, which

are cut on the mountainsides or on the massive stones which formed part

of the construction of their buildings and fortifications. A complete

collection of these texts, together with translations, will shortly be

published by Prof. Lehmann. Meanwhile, this scholar has discussed and

summarized the results to be obtained from much of his material, and

we are thus already enabled to sketch the principal achievements of the

rulers of this mountain race, who were constantly at war with the later

kings of Assyria, and for two centuries at least disputed her claim to

supremacy in this portion of Western Asia.

The country occupied by this ancient people of Van was the great

table-land which now forms Armenia. The people themselves cannot

be connected with the Armenians, for their language presents no

characteristics of those of the Indo-European family, and it is equally

certain that they are not to be traced to a Semitic origin. It is true

that they employed the Assyrian method of writing their inscriptions,

and their art differs only in minor points from that of the Assyrians,

but in both instances this similarity of culture was directly borrowed

at a time when the less civilized race, having its centre at Van, came

into direct contact with the Assyrians.

[Illustration: 417.jpg ANCIENT FLIGHT OF STEPS AND GALLERY ON THE FACE

OF THE ROCK-CITADEL OF VAN.

The exact date at which this influence began to be exerted is not

certain, but we have records of immediate relations with Assyria in the

second half of the ninth century before Christ. The district inhabited

by the Vannic people was known to the Assyrians by the name of Urartu,

and although the inscriptions of the earlier Assyrian kings do not

record expeditions against that country, they frequently make mention of

campaigns against princes and petty rulers of the land of Na’iri. They

must therefore for long have exercised an indirect, if not a direct,

influence on the peoples and tribes which lay more to the north.

The earliest evidence of direct contact between the Assyrians and the

land of Urartu which we at present possess dates from the reign of

Ashur-nasir-pal, and in the reign of his son Shalmaneser II three

expeditions were undertaken against the people of Van. The name of the

king of Urartu at this time was Arame, and his capital city, Arzasku,

probably lay to the north of Lake Van. On all three occasions the

Assyrians were victorious, forcing Arame to abandon his capital

and capturing his cities as far as the sources of the Euphrates.

Subsequently, in the year 833 B.C., Shalmaneser II made another attack

upon the country, which at that time was under the sway of Sarduris I.

Under this monarch the citadel of Van became the great stronghold of the

people of Urartu, for he added to the natural strength of the position

by the construction of walls built between the rock of Van and the

harbour. The massive blocks of stone of which his fortifications

were composed are standing at the present day, and they bear eloquent

testimony to the energy with which this monarch devoted himself to the

task of rendering his new citadel impregnable. The fortification and

strengthening of Van and its citadel was carried on during the reigns of

his direct successors and descendants, Ispui-nis, Menuas, and Argistis

I, so that when Tiglath-pile-ser III brought fire and sword into the

country and laid siege to Van in the reign of Sarduris II, he could not

capture the citadel.

[Illustration: 419.jpg PART OF THE ANCIENT FORTIFICATIONS OF THE CITY OF

VAN, BETWEEN THE CITADEL AND THE LAKE.]

It was not difficult for the Assyrian king to assault and capture the

city itself, which lay at the foot of the citadel as it does at the

present day, but the latter, within the fortifications of which Sarduris

and his garrison withdrew, proved itself able to withstand the Assyrian

attack. The expedition of Tiglath-pileser III did not succeed in

crushing the Vannic empire, for Rusas I, the son and successor of

Sarduris II, allied himself to the neighbouring mountain races and gave

considerable trouble to Sargon, the Assyrian king, who was obliged to

undertake an expedition to check their aggressions.

It was probably Rusas I who erected the buildings on Toprak Kala, the

hill to the east of Van, traces of which remain to the present day. He

built a palace and a temple, and around them he constructed a new city

with a reservoir to supply it with water, possibly because the slopes

of Toprak Kala rendered it easier of defence than the city in the

plain (beneath the rock and citadel) which had fallen an easy prey to

Tiglath-pileser III. The site of the temple on Toprak Kala has been

excavated by the trustees of the British Museum, and our knowledge of

Vannic art is derived from the shields and helmets of bronze and small

bronze figures and fittings which were recovered from this building. One

of the shields brought to the British Museum from the Toprak Kala, where

it originally hung with others on the temple walls, bears the name of

Argistis II, who was the son and successor of Rusas I, and who attempted

to give trouble to the Assyrians by stirring the inhabitants of the land

of Kummukh (Kommagene) to revolt against Sargon. His son, Rusas II,

was the contemporary of Esarhaddon, and from some recently discovered

rock-inscriptions we learn that he extended the limits of his kingdom on

the west and secured victories against Mushki (Meshech) to the southeast

of the Halys and against the Hittites in Northern Syria. Rusas III

rebuilt the temple on Toprak Kala, as we know from an inscription of his

on one of the shields from that place in the British Museum. Both he and

Sarduris III were on friendly terms with the Assyrians, for we know that

they both sent embassies to Ashur-bani-pal.

By far the larger number of rock-inscriptions that have yet been found

and copied in the mountainous districts bordering on Assyria were

engraved by this ancient Vannic people, and Drs. Lehmann and Belck have

done good service by making careful copies and collations of all those

which are at present known. Work on other classes of rock-inscriptions

has also been carried on by other travellers. A new edition of the

inscriptions of Sennacherib in the gorge of the Gomel, near the village

of Bavian, has been made by Mr. King, who has also been fortunate enough

to find a number of hitherto unknown inscriptions in Kurdistan on the

Judi Dagh and at the sources of the Tigris. The inscriptions at

the mouth of the Nahr el-Kelb, “the Dog River,” in Syria, have

been reexamined by Dr. Knudtzon, and the long inscription which

Nebuchadnezzar II cut on the rocks at Wadi Brissa in the Lebanon,

formerly published by M. Pognon, has been recopied by Dr. Weissbach.

Finally, the great trilingual inscription of Darius Hystaspes on the

rock at Bisutun in Persia, which was formerly copied by the late Sir

Henry Raw-linson and used by him for the successful decipherment of the

cuneiform inscriptions, was completely copied last year by Messrs. King

and Thompson.

Messrs. King and Thompson are preparing a new edition of

this inscription.

The main facts of the history of Assyria under her later kings and of

Babylonia during the Neo-Babylonian and Persian periods were many years

ago correctly ascertained, and recent excavation and research have done

little to add to our knowledge of the history of these periods. It was

hoped that the excavations conducted by Dr. Koldewey at Babylon would

result in the recovery of a wealth of inscriptions and records referring

to the later history of the country, but unfortunately comparatively

few tablets or inscriptions have been found, and those that have been

recovered consist mainly of building-inscriptions and votive texts. One

such building-inscription contains an interesting historical reference.

It occurs on a barrel-cylinder of clay inscribed with a text of

Nabopolassar, and it was found in the temple of Ninib and records the

completion and restoration of the temple by the king. In addition to

recording the building operations he had carried out in the temple,

Nabopolassar boasts of his opposition to the Assyrians. He says: “As for

the Assyrians who had ruled all peoples from distant days and had set

the people of the land under a heavy yoke, I, the weak and humble man

who worshippeth the Lord of Lords (i.e. the god Marduk), through the

mighty power of Nabû and Marduk, my lords, held back their feet from the

land of Akkad and cast off their yoke.”

It is not yet certain whether the Babylonians under Nabopolassar

actively assisted Cyaxares and the Medes in the siege and in the

subsequent capture of Nineveh in 606 B.C. but this newly discovered

reference to the Assyrians by Nabopolassar may possibly be taken

to imply that the Babylonians were passive and not active allies of

Cyaxares. If the cylinder were inscribed after the fall of Nineveh we

should have expected Nabopolassar, had he taken an active part in the

capture of the city, to have boasted in more definite terms of his

achievement. On his stele which is preserved at Constantinople,

Nabonidus, the last king of the Neo-Babylonian empire, who himself

suffered defeat at the hands of Cyrus, King of Persia, ascribed the fall

of Nineveh to the anger of Marduk and the other gods of Babylon because

of the destruction of their city and the spoliation of their temples by

Sennacherib in 689 B.C. We see the irony of fate in the fact that Cyrus

also ascribed the defeat and deposition of Nabonidus and the fall of

Babylon to Marduk’s intervention, whose anger he alleges was aroused

by the attempt of Nabonidus to concentrate the worship of the local

city-gods in Babylon.

Thus it will be seen that recent excavation and research have not

yet supplied the data for filling in such gaps as still remain in our

knowledge of the later history of Assyria and Babylon. The closing

years of the Assyrian empire and the military achievements of the great

Neo-Babylonian rulers, Nabopolassar, Nerig-lissar, and Nebuchadnezzar

II, have not yet been found recorded in any published Assyrian or

Babylonian inscription, but it may be expected that at any moment

some text will be discovered that will throw light upon the problems

connected with the history of those periods which still await solution.

Meanwhile, the excavations at Babylon, although they have not added

much to our knowledge of the later history of the country, have been

of immense service in revealing the topography of the city during the

Neo-Babylonian period, as well as the positions, plans, and characters

of the principal buildings erected by the later Babylonian kings. The

discovery of the palaces of Nebuchadnezzar II on the mound of the Kasr,

of the small but complete temple E-makh, of the temple of the goddess

Nin-makh to the northeast of the palaces, and of the sacred road

dividing them and passing through the Great Gate of Ishtar (adorned with

representations of lions, bulls, and dragons in raised brick upon its

walls) has enabled us to form some conception of the splendour and

magnificence of the city as it appeared when rebuilt by its last native

rulers. Moreover, the great temple E-sagila, the famous shrine of the

god Marduk, has been identified and partly excavated beneath the huge

mound of Tell Amran ibn-Ali, while a smaller and less famous temple of

Ninib has been discovered in the lower mounds which lie to the eastward.

Finally, the sacred way from E-sagila to the palace mound has been

traced and uncovered. We are thus enabled to reconstitute the scene of

the most solemn rite of the Babylonian festival of the New Year, when

the statue of the god Marduk was carried in solemn procession along this

road from the temple to the palace, and the Babylonian king made his

yearly obeisance to the national god, placing his own hands within those

of Marduk, in token of his submission to and dependence on the divine

will.

[Illustration: 425.jpg WITHIN THE SHRINE OP E-MAKH, THE TEMPLE OP THE

GODDESS NIN-MAKH.]

Though recent excavations have not led to any startling discoveries

with regard to the history of Western Asia during the last years of

the Babylonian empire, research among the tablets dating from the

Neo-Babylonian and Persian periods has lately added considerably to our

knowledge of Babylonian literature. These periods were marked by great

literary activity on the part of the priests at Babylon, Sippar, and

elsewhere, who, under the royal orders, scoured the country for all

remains of the early literature which was preserved in the ancient

temples and archives of the country, and made careful copies and

collections of all they found. Many of these tablets containing

Neo-Babylonian copies of earlier literary texts are preserved in the

British Museum, and have been recently published, and we have thus

recovered some of the principal grammatical, religious, and magical

compositions of the earlier Babylonian period.

[Illustration: 426.jpg TRENCH IN THE BABYLONIAN PLAIN]

Between The Mound Of The Kasr And Tell Amran Ibn-Ali,

Showing A Section Of The Paved Sacred Way.

Among the most interesting of such recent finds is a series of tablets

inscribed with the Babylonian legends concerning the creation of the

world and man, which present many new and striking parallels to the

beliefs on these subjects embodied in Hebrew literature. We have not

space to treat this subject at greater length in the present work, but

we may here note that discovery and research in its relation to the

later empires that ruled at Babylon have produced results of literary

rather than of historical importance. But we should exceed the space

at our disposal if we attempted even to skim this fascinating field of

study in which so much has recently been achieved. For it is time we

turned once more to Egypt and directed our inquiry towards ascertaining

what recent research has to tell us with regard to her inhabitants

during the later periods of her existence as a nation of the ancient

world.

CHAPTER IX--THE LAST DAYS OF ANCIENT EGYPT

Before we turned from Egypt to summarize the information, afforded by

recent discoveries, upon the history of Western Asia under the kings

of the Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian periods, we noted that the Asiatic

empire of Egypt was regained by the reactionary kings of the XIXth

Dynasty, after its temporary loss owing to the vagaries of Akhunaten.

Palestine remained Egyptian throughout the period of the judges until

the foundation of the kingdom of Judah. With the decline of military

spirit in Egypt and the increasing power of the priesthood, authority

over Asia became less and less a reality. Tribute was no longer paid,

and the tribes wrangled without a restraining hand, during the reigns of

the successors of Ramses III. By the time of the priest-kings of Thebes

(the XXIst Dynasty) the authority of the Pharaohs had ceased to be

exercised in Syria. Egypt was itself divided into two kingdoms, the one

ruled by Northern descendants of the Ramessids at Tanis, the other by

the priestly monarchs at Thebes, who reigned by right of inheritance as

a result of the marriage of the daughter of Ramses with the high

priest Amenhetep, father of Herhor, the first priest-king. The Thebans

fortified Gebelên in the South and el-Hêbi in the North against attack,

and evidently their relations with the Tanites were not always friendly.

In Syria nothing of the imperial power remained. The prestige of the god

Amen of Thebes, however, was still very great. We see this clearly from

a very interesting papyrus of the reign of Herhor, published in 1899 by

Mr. Golenischeff, which describes the adventures of Uenuamen, an envoy

sent (about 1050 B.C.) to Phoenicia to bring wood from the mountains of

Lebanon for the construction of a great festival bark of the god Amen

at Thebes. In the course of his mission he was very badly treated

(We cannot well imagine Thothmes III or Amenhetep III tolerating

ill-treatment of their envoy!) and eventually shipwrecked on the coast

of the land of Alashiya or Cyprus. He tells us in the papyrus, which

seems to be the official report of his mission, that, having been given

letters of credence to the Prince of Byblos from the King of Tanis,

“to whom Amen had given charge of his North-land,” he at length reached

Phoenicia, and after much discussion and argument was able to prevail

upon the prince to have the wood which he wanted brought down from

Lebanon to the seashore.

Here, however, a difficulty presented itself,--the harbour was filled

with the piratical ships of the Cretan Tjakaray, who refused to allow

Uenuamen to return to Egypt. They said, ‘Seize him; let no ship of his

go unto the land of Egypt!’ “Then,” says Uenuamen in the papyrus, “I sat

down and wept. The scribe of the prince came out unto me; he said unto

me, ‘What ail-eth thee?’ I replied, ‘Seest thou not the birds which fly,

which fly back unto Egypt? Look at them, they go unto the cool canal,

and how long do I remain abandoned here? Seest thou not those who would

prevent my return?’ He went away and spoke unto the prince, who began

to weep at the words which were told unto him and which were so sad. He

sent his scribe out unto me, who brought me two measures of wine and a

deer. He sent me Tentnuet, an Egyptian singing-girl who was with him,

saying unto her, ‘Sing unto him, that he may not grieve!’ He sent word

unto me, ‘Eat, drink, and grieve not! To-morrow shalt thou hear all that

I shall say.’ On the morrow he had the people of his harbour summoned,

and he stood in the midst of them, and he said unto the Tjakaray, ‘What

aileth you?’ They answered him, ‘We will pursue the piratical ships

which thou sendest unto Egypt with our unhappy companions.’ He said unto

them, ‘I cannot seize the ambassador of Amen in my land. Let me send him

away and then do ye pursue after him to seize him!’ He sent me on board,

and he sent me away... to the haven of the sea. The wind drove me upon

the land of Alashiya. The people of the city came out in order to slay

me. I was dragged by them to the place where Hatiba, the queen of the

city, was. I met her as she was going out of one of her houses into

the other. I greeted her and said unto the people who stood by her, ‘Is

there not one among you who understandeth the speech of Egypt?’ One

of them replied, ‘I understand it.’ I said unto him, ‘Say unto thy

mistress: even as far as the city in which Amen dwelleth (i. e. Thebes)

have I heard the proverb, “In all cities is injustice done; only in

Alashiya is justice to be found,” and now is injustice done here every

day!’ She said, ‘What is it that thou sayest?’ I said unto her, ‘Since

the sea raged and the wind drove me upon the land in which thou livest,

therefore thou wilt not allow them to seize my body and to kill me, for

verily I am an ambassador of Amen. Remember that I am one who will be

sought for always. And if these men of the Prince of Byblos whom they

seek to kill (are killed), verily if their chief finds ten men of thine,

will he not kill them also?’ She summoned the men, and they were brought

before her. She said unto me, ‘Lie down and sleep...’”

At this point the papyrus breaks off, and we do not know how Uenuamen

returned to Egypt with his wood. The description of his casting-away and

landing on Alashiya is quite Homeric, and gives a vivid picture of the

manners of the time. The natural impulse of the islanders is to kill

the strange castaway, and only the fear of revenge and of the wrath of a

distant foreign deity restrains them. Alashiya is probably Cyprus, which

also bore the name Yantinay from the time of Thothmes III until the

seventh century, when it is called Yatnan by the Assyrians. A king

of Alashiya corresponded with Amenhetep III in cuneiform on terms of

perfect equality, three hundred years before: “Brother,” he writes,

“should the small amount of the copper which I have sent thee be

displeasing unto thy heart, it is because in my land the hand of Nergal

my lord slew all the men of my land (i.e. they died of the plague), and

there was no working of copper; and this was, my brother, not pleasing

unto thy heart. Thy messenger with my messenger swiftly will I send, and

whatsoever amount of copper thou hast asked for, O my brother, I,

even I, will send it unto thee.” The mention by Herhor’s envoy of

Nesibinebdad (Smendes), the King of Tanis, a powerful ruler who in

reality constantly threatened the existence of the priestly monarchy

at Thebes, as “him to whom Amen has committed the wardship of his

North-land,” is distinctly amusing. The hard fact of the independence of

Lower Egypt had to be glozed somehow.

The days of Theban power were coming to an end and only the prestige

of the god Amen remained strong for two hundred years more. But the

alliance of Amen and his priests with a band of predatory and destroying

foreign conquerors, the Ethiopians (whose rulers were the descendants

of the priest-kings, who retired to Napata on the succession of the

powerful Bubastite dynasty of Shishak to that of Tanis, abandoning

Thebes to the Northerners), did much to destroy the prestige of Amen

and of everything connected with him. An Ethiopian victory meant only

an Assyrian reconquest, and between them Ethiopians and Assyrians had

well-nigh ruined Egypt. In the Saïte period Thebes had declined greatly

in power as well as in influence, and all its traditions were anathema

to the leading people of the time, although not of course in Akhunaten’s

sense.

With the Saïte period we seem almost to have retraced our steps and to

have reentered the age of the Pyramid Builders. All the pomp and glory

of Thothmes, Amenhetep, and Ramses were gone. The days of imperial Egypt

were over, and the minds of men, sickened of foreign war, turned for

peace and quietness to the simpler ideals of the IVth and Vth Dynasties.

We have already seen that an archaistic revival of the styles of the

early dynasties is characteristic of this late period, and that men

were buried at Sakkâra and at Thebes in tombs which recall in form and

decoration those of the courtiers of the Pyramid Builders. Everywhere

we see this fashion of archaism. A Theban noble of this period named

Aba was buried at Thebes. Long ago, nearly three thousand years before,

under the VIth Dynasty, there had lived a great noble of the same name,

who was buried in a rock-tomb at Dêr el-Gebrâwî, in Middle Egypt. This

tomb was open and known in the days of the second Aba, who caused to be

copied and reproduced in his tomb in the Asasîf at Thebes most of the

scenes from the bas-relief with which it had been decorated. The tomb

of the VIth Dynasty Aba has lately been copied for the Archaeological

Survey of Egypt (Egypt Exploration Fund) by Mr. de Garis Davies, who has

found the reliefs of the XXVIth Dynasty Aba of considerable use to him

in reconstituting destroyed portions of their ancient originals.

During late years important discoveries of objects of this era have been

few. One of the most noteworthy is that of a contemporary inscription

describing the battle of Momemphis, which is mentioned by Herodotus (ii,

163, 169). We now have the official account of this battle, and know

that it took place in the third year of the reign of Amasis--not before

he became king. This was the fight in which the unpatriotic king,

Apries, who had paid for his partiality for the Greeks of Nau-kratis

with the loss of his throne, was finally defeated. As we see from this

inscription, he was probably murdered by the country people during his

flight.

The following are the most important passages of the inscription: “His

Majesty (Amasis) was in the Festival-Hall, discussing plans for his

whole land, when one came to say unto him, ‘Hââ-ab-Râ (Apries) is rowing

up; he hath gone on board the ships which have crossed over. Haunebu

(Greeks), one knows not their number, are traversing the North-land,

which is as if it had no master to rule it; he (Apries) hath summoned

them, they are coming round him. It is he who hath arranged their

settlement in the Peh-ân (the An-dropolite name); they infest the whole

breadth of Egypt, those who are on thy waters fly before them!’... His

Majesty mounted his chariot, having taken lance and bow in his hand...

(the enemy) reached Andropolis; the soldiers sang with joy on the

roads... they did their duty in destroying the enemy. His Majesty fought

like a lion; he made victims among them, one knows not how many. The

ships and their warriors were overturned, they saw the depths as do the

fishes. Like a flame he extended, making a feast of fighting. His heart

rejoiced.... The third year, the 8th Athyr, one came to tell Majesty:

‘Let their vile-ness be ended! They throng the roads, there are

thousands there ravaging the land; they fill every road. Those who are

in ships bear thy terror in their hearts. But it is not yet finished.’

Said his Majesty unto his soldiers: ‘...Young men and old men, do this

in the cities and nomes!’... Going upon every road, let not a day pass

without fighting their galleys!’... The land was traversed as by the

blast of a tempest, destroying their ships, which were abandoned by the

crews. The people accomplished their fate, killing the prince (Apries)

on his couch, when he had gone to repose in his cabin. When he saw his

friend overthrown... his Majesty himself buried him (Apries), in order

to establish him as a king possessing virtue, for his Majesty decreed

that the hatred of the gods should be removed from him.”

This is the event to which we have already referred in a preceding

chapter, as proving the great amelioration of Egyptian ideas with regard

to the treatment of a conquered enemy, as compared with those of other

ancient nations. Amasis refers to the deposed monarch as his “friend,”

and buries him in a manner befitting a king at the charges of Amasis

himself. This act warded off from the spirit of Apries the just anger

of the gods at his partiality for the “foreign devils,” and ensured his

reception by Osiris as a king neb menkh, “possessing virtues.”

The town of Naukratis, where Apries established himself, had been

granted to the Greek traders by Psametik I a century or more before. Mr.

D. G. Hogarth’s recent exploration of the site has led to a considerable

modification of our first ideas of the place, which were obtained

from Prof. Petrie ‘s excavations. Prof. Petrie was the discoverer of

Naukratis, and his diggings told us what Naukratis was like in the first

instance, but Mr. Hogarth has shown that several of his identifications

were erroneous and that the map of the place must be redrawn. The chief

error was in the placing of the Hellenion (the great meeting-place of

the Greeks), which is now known to be in quite a different position from

that assigned to it by Prof. Petrie. The “Great Temenos” of Prof. Petrie

has now been shown to be non-existent. Mr. Hogarth has also pointed out

that an old Egyptian town existed at Nau-kratis long before the Greeks

came there. This town is mentioned on a very interesting stele of black

basalt (discovered at Tell Gaif, the site of Naukratis, and now in the

Cairo Museum), under the name of “Permerti, which is called Nukrate.”

The first is the old Egyptian name, the second the Greek name adapted

to Egyptian hieroglyphs. The stele was erected by Tekhtnebf, the last

native king of Egypt, to commemorate his gifts to the temples of Neïth

on the occasion of his accession at Sais. It is beautifully cut, and the

inscription is written in a curious manner, with alphabetic spellings

instead of ideographs, and ideographs instead of alphabetic spellings,

which savours fully of the affectation of the learned pedant who drafted

it; for now, of course, in the fourth century before Christ, nobody but

a priestly antiquarian could read hieroglyphics. Demotic was the only

writing for practical purposes.

We see this fact well illustrated in the inscriptions of the Ptolemaïc

temples. The accession of the Ptolemies marked a great increase in the

material wealth of Egypt, and foreign conquest again came in fashion.

Ptolemy Euergetes marched into Asia in the grand style of a Ramses and

brought back the images of gods which had been carried off by Esarhaddon

or Nebuchadnezzar II centuries before. He was received on his return

to Egypt with acclamations as a true successor of the Pharaohs. The

imperial spirit was again in vogue, and the archaistic simplicity and

independence of the Saïtes gave place to an archaistic imperialism, the

first-fruits of which were the repair and building of temples in the

great Pharaonic style. On these we see the Ptolemies masquerading as

Pharaohs, and the climax of absurdity is reached when Ptolemy Auletes

(the Piper) is seen striking down Asiatic enemies in the manner of

Amen-hetep or Ramses! This scene is directly copied from a Ramesside

temple, and we find imitations of reliefs of Ramses II so slavish that

the name of the earlier king is actually copied, as well as the relief,

and appears above the figure of a Ptolemy. The names of the nations who

were conquered by Thothmes III are repeated on Ptolemaic sculptures to

do duty for the conquered of Euergetes, with all sorts of mistakes

in spelling, naturally, and also with later interpolations. Such an

inscription is that in the temple of Kom Ombo, which Prof. Say ce has

held to contain the names of “Caphtor and Casluhim” and to prove the

knowledge of the latter name in the fourteenth century before Christ.

The name of Caphtor is the old Egyptian Keftiu (Crete); that of Casluhim

is unknown in real Old Egyptian inscriptions, and in this Ptolemaic list

at Kom Ombo it may be quite a late interpolation in the lists, perhaps

no older than the Persian period, since we find the names of Parsa

(Persia) and Susa, which were certainly unknown to Thothmes III,

included in it. We see generally from the Ptolemaic inscriptions that

nobody could read them but a few priests, who often made mistakes. One

of the most serious was the identification of Keftiu with Phoenicia in

the Stele of Canopus. This misled modern archaeologists down to the

time of Dr. Evans’s discoveries at Knossos, though how these utterly

un-Semitic looking Keftiu could have been Phoenicians was a puzzle to

everybody. We now know, of course, that they were Mycenaean or

Minoan Cretans, and that the Ptolemaic antiquaries made a mistake in

identifying the land of Keftiu with Phoenicia.

We must not, however, say too much in dispraise of the Ptolemaic

Egyptians and their works. We have to be grateful to them indeed for the

building of the temples of Edfu and Dendera, which, owing to their later

date, are still in good preservation, while the best preserved of the

old Pharaonic fanes, such as Medinet Habû, have suffered considerably

from the ravages of time. Eor these temples show us to-day what an

old Egyptian temple, when perfect, really looked like. They are, so to

speak, perfect mummies of temples, while of the old buildings we have

nothing but the disjointed and damaged skeletons.

A good deal of repairing has been done to these buildings, especially

to that at Edfu, of late years. But the main archaeological interest of

Ptolemaic and Roman times has been found in the field of epigraphy and

the study of papyri, with which the names of Messrs. Kenyon, Grenfell,

and Hunt are chiefly connected. The treasures which have lately been

obtained by the British Museum in the shape of the manuscripts of

Aristotle’s “Constitution of Athens,” the lost poems of Bacchylides, and

the Mimes of Herondas, all of which have been published for the trustees

of that institution by Mr. Kenyon, are known to those who are interested

in these subjects. The long series of publications of Messrs.

Grenfell and Hunt, issued at the expense of the Egypt Exploration Fund

(Graeco-Roman branch), with the exception of the volume of discoveries

at Teb-tunis, which was issued by the University of California, is also

well known.

The two places with which Messrs. Grenfell and Hunt’s work has been

chiefly connected are the Fayyûm and Behnesâ, the site of the ancient

Permje or Oxyr-rhynchus. The lake-province of the Fayyûm, which attained

such prominence in the days of the XIIth Dynasty, seems to have had

little or no history during the whole period of the New Empire, but in

Ptolemaic times it revived and again became one of the richest and

most important provinces of Egypt. The town of Arsinoë was founded at

Crocodilopolis, where are now the mounds of Kom el-Fâris (The Mound of

the Horseman), near Medinet el-Payyum, and became the capital of the

province. At Illahûn, just outside the entrance to the Fayyûm, was the

great Nile harbour and entrepôt of the lake-district, called Ptolemaïs

Hormos.

The explorations of Messrs. Hogarth, Grenfell, and Hunt in the years

of 1895-6 and 1898-9 resulted in the identification of the sites of the

ancient cities of Karanis (Kom Ushîm), Bacchias (Omm el-’Atl), Euhemeria

(Kasr el-Banât), Theadelphia (Harît), and Philoteris (Wadfa). The work

for the University of California in 18991900 at Umm el-Baragat showed

that this place was Tebtunis. Dime, on the northern coast of the Birket

Karûn, the modern representative of the ancient Lake Moeris, is now

known to be the ancient Sokno-paiou Nesos (the Isle of Soknopaios), a

local form of Sebek, the crocodile-god of the Fayyûm. At Karanis this

god was worshipped under the name of Petesuchos (“He whom Sebek

has given”), in conjunction with Osiris Pnepherôs (P-nefer-ho,

“the beautiful of face”); at Tebtunis he became Seknebtunis., i.e.

Sebek-neb-Teb-tunis (Sebek, lord of Tebtunis). This is a typical example

of the portmanteau pronunciations of the latter-day Egyptians.

Many very interesting discoveries were made during the course of the

excavations of these places (besides Mr. Hogarth’s find of the temple

of Petesuchos and Pnepherôs at Karanis), consisting of Roman pottery

of varied form and Roman agricultural implements, including a perfect

plough.\* The main interest of all, however, lies, both here and at

Behnesâ, in the papyri. They consist of Greek and Latin documents of

all ages from the early Ptolemaic to the Christian. In fact, Messrs.

Grenfell and Hunt have been unearthing and sifting the contents of the

waste-paper baskets of the ancient Ptolemaic and Roman Egyptians, which

had been thrown out on to dust-heaps near the towns. Nothing perishes

in,, the dry climate and soil of Egypt, so the contents of the ancient

dust-heaps have been preserved intact until our own day, and have been

found by Messrs. Grenfell and Hunt, just as the contents of the houses

of the ancient Indian rulers of Chinese Turkestan, at Niya and Khotan,

with their store of Kha-roshthi documents, have been preserved intact in

the dry Tibetan desert climate and have been found by Dr. Stein.\*\* There

is much analogy between the discoveries of Messrs. Grenfell and Hunt in

Egypt and those of Dr. Stein in Turkestan.

\* Illustrated on Plate IX of Fayûm Towns and Their Papyri.

\*\* See Dr. Stein’s Sand-buried Ruins of Khotan, London,

1903.

The Græco-Egyptian documents are of all kinds, consisting of letters,

lists, deeds, notices, tax-assessments, receipts, accounts, and business

records of every sort and kind, besides new fragments of classical

authors and the important “Sayings of Jesus,” discovered at Behnesâ,

which have been published in a special popular form by the Egypt

Exploration Fund.\*

\* Aoyla ‘Itjffov, 1897, and New Sayings of Jesus, 1904.

These last fragments of the oldest Christian literature, which are

of such great importance and interest to all Christians, cannot be

described or discussed here. The other documents are no less

important to the student of ancient literature, the historian, and the

sociologist. The classical fragments include many texts of lost authors,

including Menander. We will give a few specimens of the private

letters and documents, which will show how extremely modern the ancient

Egyptians were, and how little difference there actually is between our

civilization and theirs, except in the-matter of mechanical invention.

They had no locomotives and telephones; otherwise they were the same. We

resemble them much more than we resemble our mediaeval ancestors or even

the Elizabethans.

This is a boy’s letter to his father, who would not take him up to town

with him to see the sights: “Theon to his father Theon, greeting. It was

a fine thing of you not to take me with you to the city! If you won’t

take me with you to Alexandria, I won’t write you a letter, or speak to

you, or say good-bye to you; and if you go to Alexandria I won’t take

your hand or ever greet you again. That is what will happen if you

won’t take me. Mother said to Archelaus, ‘It quite upsets him to be left

behind.’ It was good of you to send me presents on the 12th, the day

you sailed. Send me a lyre, I implore you. If you don’t, I won’t eat, I

won’t drink: there now!’” Is not this more like the letter of a spoiled

child of to-day than are the solemnly dutiful epistles of even our

grandfathers and grandmothers when young? The touch about “Mother said

to Archelaus, ‘It quite upsets him to be left behind’” is delightfully

like the modern small boy, and the final request and threat are also

eminently characteristic.

Here is a letter asking somebody to redeem the writer’s property from

the pawnshop: “Now please redeem my property from Sarapion. It is

pledged for two minas. I have paid the interest up to the month Epeiph,

at the rate of a stater per mina. There is a casket of incense-wood,

and another of onyx, a tunic, a white veil with a real purple border, a

handkerchief, a tunic with a Laconian stripe, a garment of purple linen,

two armlets, a necklace, a coverlet, a figure of Aphrodite, a cup, a big

tin flask, and a wine-jar. From Onetor get the two bracelets. They have

been pledged since the month Tybi of last year for eight... at the

rate of a stater per mina. If the cash is insufficient owing to the

carelessness of Theagenis, if, I say, it is insufficient, sell the

bracelets and make up the money.” Here is an affectionate letter of

invitation: “Greeting, my dear Serenia, from Petosiris. Be sure, dear,

to come up on the 20th for the birthday festival of the god, and let me

know whether you are coming by boat or by donkey, that we may send for

you accordingly. Take care not to forget.”

Here is an advertisement of a gymnastic display:

“The assault-at-arms by the youths will take place to-morrow, the 24th.

Tradition, no less than the distinguished character of the festival,

requires that they should do their utmost in the gymnastic display. Two

performances.” Signed by Dioskourides, magistrate of Oxyrrhynchus.

Here is a report from a public physician to a magistrate: “To

Claudianus, the mayor, from Dionysos, public physician. I was to-day

instructed by you, through Herakleides your assistant, to inspect the

body of a man who had been found hanged, named Hierax, and to report to

you my opinion of it. I therefore inspected the body in the presence

of the aforesaid Herakleides at the house of Epagathus in the Broadway

ward, and found it hanged by a noose, which fact I accordingly report.”

Dated in the twelfth year of Marcus Aurelius (A.D. 173).

The above translations are taken, slightly modified, from those in The

Oxyrrhynchus Papyri, vol. i. The next specimen, a quaint letter, is

translated from the text in Mr. Grenfell’s Greek Papyri (Oxford, 1896),

p. 69: “To Noumen, police captain and mayor, from Pokas son of Onôs,

unpaid policeman. I have been maltreated by Peadius the priest of the

temple of Sebek in Crocodilopolis. On the first epagomenal day of the

eleventh year, after having abused me about... in the aforesaid temple,

the person complained against sprang upon me and in the presence of

witnesses struck me many blows with a stick which he had. And as part of

my body was not covered, he tore my shirt, and this fact I called upon

the bystanders to bear witness to. Wherefore I request that if it seems

proper you will write to Klearchos the headman to send him to you, in

order that, if what I have written is true, I may obtain justice at your

hands.”

A will of Hadrian’s reign, taken from the Oxyrrhynchus Papyri (i, p.

173), may also be of interest: “This is the last will and testament,

made in the street (i.e. at a street notary’s stand), of Pekysis, son of

Hermes and Didyme, an inhabitant of Oxyrrhynchus, being sane and in his

right mind. So long as I live, I am to have powers over my property,

to alter my will as I please. But if I die with this will unchanged, I

devise my daughter Ammonous whose mother is Ptolema, if she survive me,

but if not then her children, heir to my shares in the common house,

court, and rooms situate in the Cretan ward. All the furniture,

movables, and household stock and other property whatever that I shall

leave, I bequeath to the mother of my children and my wife Ptolema, the

freedwoman of Demetrius, son of Hermippus, with the condition that

she shall have for her lifetime the right of using, dwelling in, and

building in the said house, court, and rooms. If Ammonous should die

without children and intestate, the share of the fixtures shall belong

to her half-brother on the mother’s side, Anatas, if he survive, but if

not, to... No one shall violate the terms of this my will under pain of

paying to my daughter and heir Ammonous a fine of 1,000 drachmae and to

the treasury an equal sum.” Here follow the signatures of testator and

witnesses, who are described, as in a passport, one of them as follows:

“I, Dionysios, son of Dionysios of the same city, witness the will of

Pekysis. I am forty-six years of age, have a curl over my right temple,

and this is my seal of Dionysoplaton.”

During the Roman period, which we have now reached in our survey, the

temple building of the Ptolemies was carried on with like energy. One of

the best-known temples of the Roman period is that at Philse, which

is known as the “Kiosk,” or “Pharaoh’s Bed.” Owing to the great

picturesqueness of its situation, this small temple, which was built in

the reign of Trajan, has been a favourite subject for the painters of

the last fifty years, and next to the Pyramids, the Sphinx, and Karnak,

it is probably the most widely known of all Egyptian buildings. Recently

it has come very much to the front for an additional reason. Like all

the other temples of Philse, it had been archæologically surveyed and

cleared by Col. H. Gr. Lyons and Dr. Borchardt, but further work of a

far-reaching character was rendered necessary by the building of the

great Aswan dam, below the island of Philse, one of the results of

which has been the partial submergence of the island and its temples,

including the picturesque Kiosk. The following account, taken from the

new edition (1906) of Murray’s \_Guide to Egypt and the Sudan\_, will

suffice better than any other description to explain what the dam is,

how it has affected Philse, and what work has been done to obviate the

possibility of serious damage to the Kiosk and other buildings.

“In 1898 the Egyptian government signed a contract with Messrs. John

Aird & Co. for the construction of the great reservoir and dam at

Shellâl, which serves for the storage of water at the time of the flood

Nile. The river is ‘held up’ here sixty-five feet above its old normal

level. A great masonry dyke, 150 feet high in places, has been carried

across the Bab el-Kebir of the First Cataract, and a canal and four

locks, two hundred feet long and thirty feet wide, allow for the passage

of traffic up and down the river.

[Illustration: 447.jpg The Great Dam Of Aswân]

Showing Water Rushing Through The Sluices

The dam is 2,185 yards long and over ninety feet thick at the base; in

places it rises one hundred feet above the bed of the river. It is built

of the local red granite, and at each end the granite dam is built into

the granite hillside. Seven hundred and eight thousand cubic yards of

masonry were used. The sluices are 180 in number, and are arranged at

four different levels. The sight of the great volume of water pouring

through them is a very fine one. The Nile begins to rise in July, and at

the end of November it is necessary to begin closing the sluice-gates

to hold up the water. By the end of February the reservoir is usually

filled and Philæ partially submerged, so that boats can sail in and out

of the colonnades and Pharaoh’s Bed. By the beginning of July the water

has been distributed, and it then falls to its normal level.

“It is of course regrettable that the engineers were unable to find

another site for the dam, as it seemed inevitable that some damage would

result to the temples of Philæ from their partial submergence. Korosko

was proposed as a site, but was rejected for cogent reasons, and

apparently Shellâl was the only possible place. Further, no serious

person, who places the greatest good of the greatest number above

considerations of the picturesque and the ‘interesting,’ will deny

that if it is necessary to sacrifice Philæ to the good of the people of

Egypt, Philæ must go. ‘Let the dead bury their dead.’ The concern of the

rulers of Egypt must be with the living people of Egypt rather than with

the dead bones of the past; and they would not be doing their duty did

they for a moment allow artistic and archaeological considerations to

outweigh in their minds the practical necessities of the country. This

does not in the least imply that they do not owe a lesser duty to the

monuments of Egypt, which are among the most precious relics of the past

history of mankind. They do owe this lesser duty, and with regard to

Philae it has been conscientiously fulfilled. The whole temple, in order

that its stability may be preserved under the stress of submersion, has

been braced up and underpinned, under the superintendence of Mr. Ball,

of the Survey Department, who has most efficiently carried out this

important work, at a cost of £22,000.

[Illustration: 449.jpg THE KIOSK AT PHILAE IN PROCESS OF UNDERPINNING

AND RESTORATION, JANUARY, 1902.]

Steel girders have been fixed across the island from quay to quay,

and these have been surrounded by cement masonry, made water-tight

by forcing in cement grout. Pharaoh’s Bed and the colonnade have been

firmly underpinned in cement masonry, and there is little doubt that the

actual stability of Philae is now more certain than that of any other

temple in Egypt. The only possible damage that can accrue to it is

the partial discolouration of the lower courses of the stonework of

Pharaoh’s Bed, etc., which already bear a distinct high-water mark. Some

surface disintegration from the formation of salt crystals is perhaps

inevitable here, but the effects of this can always be neutralized

by careful washing, which it should be an important charge of the

Antiquities Department to regularly carry out.”

[Illustration: 450.jpg THE ANCIENT QUAY OP PHILÆ, NOVEMBER, 1904.]

This is entirely covered when the reservoir is full, and the

palm-trees are farther submerged.

The photographs accompanying the present chapter show the dam, the Kiosk

in process of conservation and underpinning (1902), and the shores of

the island as they now appear in the month of November, with the water

nearly up to the level of the quays. A view is also given of the island

of Konosso, with its inscriptions, as it is now. The island is simply a

huge granite boulder of the kind characteristic of the neighbourhood of

Shellâl (Phila?) and Aswan.

On the island of Elephantine, opposite Aswan, an interesting discovery

has lately been made by Mr. Howard Carter. This is a remarkable well,

which was supposed by the ancients to lie immediately on the tropic. It

formed the basis of Eratosthenes’ calculations of the measurement of the

earth. Important finds of documents written in Aramaic have also been

made here; they show that there was on the island in Ptolemaic times a

regular colony of Syrian merchants.

South of Aswan and Philse begins Nubia. The Nubian language, which is

quite different from Arabic, is spoken by everybody on the island of

Elephantine, and its various dialects are used as far south as Dongola,

where Arabic again is generally spoken till we reach the land of the

negroes, south of Khartum. In Ptolemaic and Roman days the Nubians were

a powerful people, and the whole of Nubia and the modern North Sudan

formed an independent kingdom, ruled by queens who bore the title or

name of Candace. It was the eunuch of a Candace who was converted to

Christianity as he was returning from a mission to Jerusalem to salute

Jehovah. “Go and join thyself unto his chariot” was the command to

Philip, and when the Ethiopian had heard the gospel from his lips he

went on his way rejoicing. The capital of this Candace was at Meroë, the

modern Bagarawiya, near Shendi. Here, and at Naga not far off, are

the remains of the temples of the Can-daces, great buildings of

semi-barbaric Egyptian style. For the civilization of the Nubians, such

as it was, was of Egyptian origin. Ever since Egyptian rule had been

extended southwards to Jebel Barkal, beyond Dongola, in the time of

Amenhetep II, Egyptian culture had influenced the Nubians. Amenhetep III

built a temple to Amen at Napatà, the capital of Nubia, which lay

under the shadow of Mount Barkal; Akhunaten erected a sanctuary of the

Sun-Disk there; and Ramses II also built there.

[Illustration: 452.jpg THE ROOK OF KONOSSO IN JANUARY, 1902, BEFORE THE

BUILDING OF THE DAM AND FORMATION OF THE RESERVOIR.]

The place in fact was a sort of appanage of the priests of Amen at

Thebes, and when the last priest-king evacuated Thebes, leaving it to

the Bubastites of the XXIId Dynasty, it was to distant Napata that he

retired. Here a priestly dynasty continued to reign until, two centuries

later, the troubles and misfortunes of Egypt seemed to afford an

opportunity for the reassertion of the exiled Theban power. Piankhi

Mera-men returned to Egypt in triumph as its rightful sovereign, but his

successors, Shabak, Shabatak, and Tirha-kah, had to contend constantly

with the Assyrians. Finally ITrdamaneh, Tirhakah’s successor, returned

to Nubia, leaving Egypt, in the decadence of the Assyrian might, free to

lead a quiet existence under Psametik I and the succeeding monarchs of

the XXVIth Dynasty. When Cambyses conquered Egypt he aspired to conquer

Nubia also, but his army was routed and destroyed by the Napatan king,

who tells us in an inscription how he defeated “the man Kambasauden,”

who had attacked him. At Napata the Nubian monarchs, one of the greatest

of whom in Ptolemaic times was Ergam-enes, a contemporary of Ptolemy

Philopator, continued to reign. But the first Roman governor of Egypt,

Ælius Gallus, destroyed Napata, and the Nubians removed their capital

to Meroë, where the Candaces reigned.

The monuments of this Nubian kingdom, the temples of Jebel Barkal, the

pyramids of Nure close by, the pyramids of Bagarawiya, the temples of

Wadi Ben Naga, Mesawwarat en-Naga, and Mesawwarat es-Sufra (“Mesawwarat”

proper), were originally investigated by Cailliaud and afterwards by

Lepsius. During the last few years they and the pyramids excavated by

Dr. E. A. Wallis-Budge, of the British Museum, for the Sudan government,

have been again explored. As the results of his work are not yet

fully published, it is possible at present only to quote the following

description from Cook’s \_Handbook for Egypt and the Sudan\_ (by Dr.

Budge), p. 6, of work on the pyramids of Jebel Barkal: “the writer

excavated the shafts of one of the pyramids here in 1897, and at the

depth of about twenty-five cubits found a group of three chambers, in

one of which were a number of bones of the sheep which was sacrificed

there about two thousand years ago, and also portions of a broken

amphora which had held Rho-dian wine. A second shaft, which led to the

mummy-chamber, was partly emptied, but at a further depth of twenty

cubits water was found. The high-water mark of the reservoir when full

is ------ and, as there were no visible means for pumping it out, the

mummy-chamber could not be entered.” With regard to the Bagarawîya

pyramids, Dr. Budge writes, on p. 700 of the same work, à propos of the

story of the Italian Ferlini that he found Roman jewelry in one of these

pyramids: “In 1903 the writer excavated a number of the pyramids of

Meroë for the Governor-General of the Sudan, Sir F. R. Wingate, and

he is convinced that the statements made by Ferlini are the result of

misapprehension on his part. The pyramids are solid throughout, and the

bodies are buried under them. When the details are complete the proofs

for this will be published.” Dr. Budge has also written upon the subject

of the orientation of the Jebel Barkal and Nure pyramids.

[Illustration: 454.jpg THE ISLE OF KONOSSO, WITH ITS INSCRIPTIONS]

It is very curious to find the pyramids reappearing in Egyptian

tomb-architecture in the very latest period of Egyptian history. We

find them when Egyptian civilization was just entering upon its vigorous

manhood, then they gradually disappear, only to revive in its decadent

and exiled old age. The Ethiopian pyramids are all of much more

elongated form than the old Egyptian ones. It is possible that they may

be a survival of the archaistic movement of the XXVIth Dynasty, to which

we have already referred.

These are not the latest Egyptian monuments in the Sudan, nor are the

temples of Naga and Mesawwarat the most ancient, though they belong

to the Roman period and are decidedly barbarian as to their style and,

especially, as to their decoration. The southernmost as well as latest

relic of Egypt in the Sudan is the Christian church of Soba, on the Blue

Mie, a few miles above Khartum. In it was found a stone ram, an emblem

of Amen-Râ, which had formerly stood in the temple of Naga and had been

brought to Soba perhaps under the impression that it was the Christian

Lamb. It was removed to the garden of the governor-general’s palace at

Khartum, where it now stands.

The church at Soba is a relic of the Christian kingdom of Alua, which

succeeded the realm of the Candaces. One of its chief seats was at

Dongola, and all Nubia is covered with the ruins of its churches. It

was, of course, an offshoot of the Christianity of Egypt, but a late

one, since Isis was still worshipped at Philse in the sixth century,

long after the Edict of Theodosius had officially abolished paganism

throughout the Roman world, and the Nubians were at first zealous

votaries of the goddess of Philo. So also when Egypt fell beneath the

sway of the Moslem in the seventh century, Nubia remained an independent

Christian state, and continued so down to the twelfth century, when the

soldiers of Islam conquered the country.

Of late pagan and early Christian Egypt very much that is new has been

discovered during the last few years. The period of the Lower Empire

has yielded much to the explorers of Oxyrrhynchus, and many papyri of

interest belonging to this period have been published by Mr. Kenyon in

his \_Catalogue of the Greek Papyri in the British Museum\_, especially

the letters of Flavius Abinæus, a military officer of the fourth

century. The papyri of this period are full of the high-flown titles

and affected phraseology which was so beloved of Byzantine scribes.

“Glorious Dukes of the Thebaïd,” “most magnificent counts and

lieutenants,” “all-praiseworthy secretaries,” and the like strut across

the pages of the letters and documents which begin “In the name of Our

Lord and Master, Jesus Christ, the God and Saviour of us all, in

the year x of the reign of the most divine and praised, great, and

beneficent Lord Flavius Heraclius (or other) the eternal Augustus and

Auto-krator, month x, year x of the In diction.” It is an extraordinary

period, this of the sixth and seventh centuries, which we have now

entered, with its bizarre combination of the official titulary of

the divine and eternal Cæsars Imperatores Augusti with the initial

invocation of Christ and the Trinity. It is the transition from the

ancient to the modern world, and as such has an interest all its own.

In Egypt the struggle between the adherents of Chalcedon, the “Melkites”

or Imperialists of the orthodox Greek rite, and the Eutychians or

Mono-physites, the followers of the patriarch Dioskoros, who rejected

Chalcedon, was going on with unabated fury, and was hardly stopped even

by the invasion of the pagan Persians. The last effort of the party of

Constantinople to stamp out the Monophysite heresy was made when Cyril

was patriarch and governor of Egypt. According to an ingenious theory

put forward by Mr. Butler, in his \_Arab Conquest of Egypt\_, it is Cyril

the patriarch who was the mysterious Mukaukas, the [Greek word], or

“Great and Magnificent One,” who played so doubtful a part in the

epoch-making events of the Arab conquest by Amr in A.D. 639-41. Usually

this Mukaukas has been regarded as a “noble Copt,” and the Copts have

generally been credited with having assisted the Islamites against

the power of Constantinople. This was a very natural and probable

conclusion, but Mr. Butler will have it that the Copts resisted the

Arabs valiantly, and that the treacherous Mukaukas was none other than

the Constantinopolitan patriarch himself.

In the papyri it is interesting to note the gradual increase of Arab

names after the conquest, more especially in those of the Archduke

Rainer ‘s collection from the Fayyûm, which was so near the new capital

city, Fustât. In Upper Egypt the change was not noticeable for a long

time, and in the great collection of Coptic \_ostraka\_ (inscriptions on

slips of limestone and sherds of pottery, used as a substitute for paper

or parchment), found in the ruins of the Coptic monastery established,

on the temple site of Dêr el-Bahari, we find no Arab names. These

documents, part of which have been published by Mr. W. E. Crum for the

Egypt Exploration Fund, while another part will shortly be issued for

the trustees of the British Museum by Mr. Hall, date to the seventh and

eighth centuries. Their contents resemble those of the earlier papyri

from Oxyrrhynchus, though they are not of so varied a nature and are

generally written by persons of less intelligence, i.e. the monks and

peasants of the monasteries and villages of Tjême, or Western Thebes.

During the late excavation of the XIth Dynasty temple of Dêr el-Bahari,

more of these \_ostraka\_ were found, which will be published for the

Egypt Exploration Fund by Messrs. Naville and Hall. Of actual buildings

of the Coptic period the most important excavations have been those of

the French School of Cairo at Bâwît, north of Asyût. This work, which

was carried on by M. Jean Clédat, has resulted in the discovery of very

important frescoes and funerary inscriptions, belonging to the monastery

of a famous martyr, St. Apollo. With these new discoveries of Christian

Egypt our work reaches its fitting close. The frontier which divides the

ancient from the modern world has almost been crossed. We look back from

the monastery of Bâwît down a long vista of new discoveries until, four

thousand years before, we see again the Great Heads coming to the Tomb

of Den, Narmer inspecting the bodies of the dead Northerners, and,

far away in Babylonia, Narâm-Sin crossing the mountains of the East to

conquer Elam, or leading his allies against the prince of Sinai.

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