

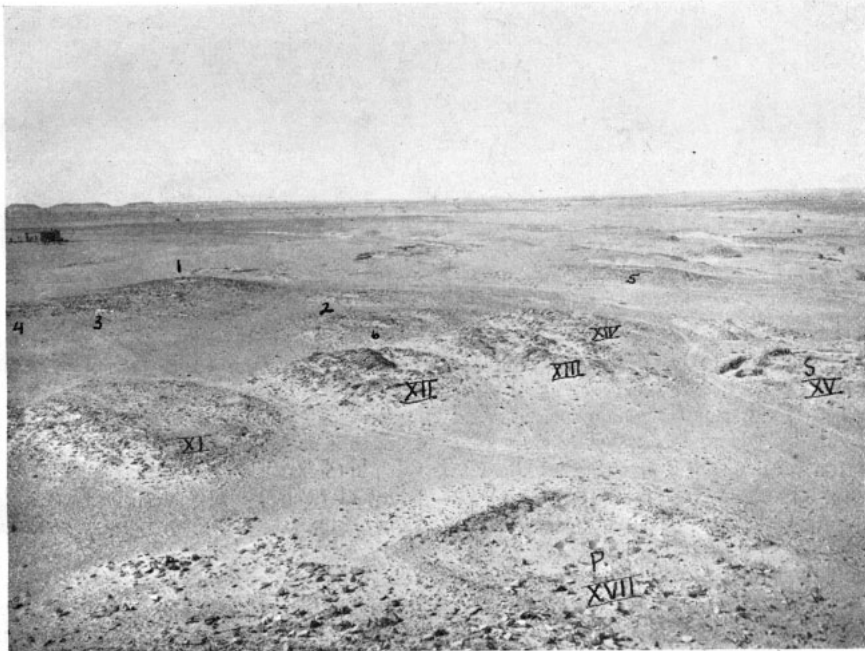
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NOS. 112 AND 113



The Royal Cemetery of El-Kur'uw previous to excavation

1. The tomb of the first ancestor

2-6. Other tumuli graves

XI-XIV. Mastabas of the great row

XV. Pyramid of King Shabaka (partly excavated)

XVII. Pyramid of King Piankhy (before excavation)

The Royal Family of Ethiopia

DURING the winter of 1918-1919 the Harvard University-Museum of Fine Arts Egyptian Expedition reached the climax of its discoveries of royal tombs in Ethiopia by finding the pyramids of four kings of Egypt,—Piankhy, Shabaka, Shabataka, and Tanutaman. They formed the Twenty-fifth Dynasty of Egypt, called Ethiopian by the ancient historians, for their home was at Napata; and they were the ancestors of the kings of Ethiopia buried at Nuri. This surprising discovery was made in a field of small pyramids so ruined and inconspicuous that I regarded them as the very last resort in our search for the tombs of the First Dynasty of Ethiopia. This field lay on the right bank of the Nile, behind a village called El-Kur'uw, about as far "north" of Barkal as Nuri was "south" of it. In

1917-1918 the excavation of the pyramids of Nuri had brought back to human knowledge the names of twelve forgotten kings and of many queens, and the chronological order of the twenty-one kings after Tirhaqa, the Ethiopian king of *II Kings* and *Isaiah*.^{*} That field was exhausted and the examination was begun of the three other known fields—Tangassi, Zuma, and El-Kur'uw,—reported by the early travellers to the Sudan. To my great disappointment the so-called pyramids, both at Tangassi and Zuma, were found to be merely tumuli-graves of late date; but the pyramids of El-Kur'uw were really pyramids. Only one of them was as large as the Nuri pyramids, and that looked to me to be much later than the time of the First Dynasty of Ethiopia. A preliminary examination of the chapel, two of the foundation deposits, and part of the stairway, proved this

^{*}See Bulletin No. 97, October, 1918.



The cemetery after excavation, looking "southeast" from the top of the later pyramid, No. 1

surmise to be correct. The largest of the El-Kur'uw pyramids was to be dated between the nineteenth and twentieth kings at Nuri. Therefore I concluded that the small mounds of disturbed rubble behind the pyramid of this late king were the ruined pyramids of his queens, situated as at Nuri. They appeared not to have the least importance. But during these preliminary works at Pyramid I, three or four fragments of the small blue faience figures called *shawabti* were found, and these were inscribed with the words: "King of Upper and Lower Egypt, Piankhy." At that time historians believed there were two or even more kings called Piankhy, and I thought these figures might have come from the tomb of Piankhy II (so-called). But the season of 1917-1918 was at an end.

When we returned to the Sudan for the season of 1918-1919, I planned to resume the excavation of the great temple of Amon at Gebel Barkal, the Napata of the ancients, and meanwhile, as a secondary undertaking, I began a search for the pyramid of the Piankhy whose funerary figures in blue faience had been found at El-Kur'uw. Following the plan of the royal cemetery at Nuri, the tombs of the kings should have been in the foreground. This was searched with trenches cut to bed-rock over an area about half a mile square, with the idea that a large pyramid, or even several pyramids, might have been carried away as building stone, leaving only the stairway. But it was in vain. There were no pyramids at El-Kur'uw except the miserable little heaps of ruins behind and beside the large pyramid of the late king. Left without any alternative, I gave the apparently hopeless order to excavate the stairways of these.

Now the manner in which we excavate royal

pyramids is thus: A gang of trained workmen is put to work to clear the stairway. These stairways had been filled in after the funeral with the clean debris left from the excavation of the rock-cut chambers and the building of the pyramid. Then the plunderers came and dug a hole in the clean filling of each stairway, which afterwards became stopped up, partly with the things the thieves threw away, and partly with drift sand. Thus it is very easy to distinguish between the original filling and the debris of the thieves' hole. The objects found in the earth of the thieves' hole came usually from the burial-chamber of the king or queen, and in our records have to be distinguished carefully from the other objects. When the doorway at the foot of the rock-cut stairway has been reached, the gang of workmen is then taken out and put to clearing the pyramid above or another stairway, until the record of the door-blocking and the measurements of the stairs have been made. After that, the sand which has always washed into the burial-chamber is removed, leaving only about twenty centimeters (eight inches) of the floor debris intact. Whatever is found in the sand—and it is little enough—is counted as having been washed in from the thieves' hole outside. When the sand is out, then the serious and difficult work of examining and removing bit by bit the floor debris begins, and for this only the most skilful of our Egyptian workmen are used. This floor debris is to us what "pay-dirt" is to the gold miner.

Thus at El-Kur'uw, the preliminary work was begun by attacking the stairway of a ruined pyramid which I numbered Ku XV. To my surprise the stairway proved unusually large for the size of the pyramid, which was only twelve meters square; but our men have had long practice in clearing such



The stone-cased tumulus No. 6, the mastabas XII and XIII, the pyramids of King Piankhy and King Shabaka, looking "west," with the village, El-Kur'uw, in the background

places, and after three days were close to the doorway, where the greater part of the objects thrown away by the plunderers lay scattered. On February 2 a fragment of a blue faience figure was found on which, written in ink, I read: "The king of Upper and Lower Egypt, Shabaka." In amazement I suddenly realized that these poor ruined pyramids at El-Kur'uw must be the tombs of the Twenty-fifth Dynasty of Egypt, the first Dynasty of Ethiopia. I ordered the whole force of workmen to the pyramids of El-Kur'uw. The excavation of the pyramids, Ku XVII, XVI, XVIII, and VIII, was begun at almost the same time. On the 9th of February, Ku XVIII was identified, again by a broken *shawabti*-figure found in the thieves' hole, as the tomb of Shabataka, the son of Shabaka. On the 15th, Ku XVII was found to be the tomb of the long-sought Piankhy, and on the 17th, Ku XVI, the tomb of Tanutaman. But Ku VIII was never identified by an inscription, and it was not until the end of the season that I realized that Ku VIII must be the burial-place of King Kashta, the father of Piankhy. The identification of the tombs of four kings of Egypt in fifteen days was one of the most amazing series of discoveries which has ever fallen to the lot of any expedition, and it gave us the distinction of having recovered the tombs of *all the kings of Ethiopia* from the founding of the monarchy until its power passed to the kingdom of Meroë, from 750 B. C. to about 250 B. C., a period of five hundred years. All the works of the royal craftsmen which were placed in these tombs, in so far as they have been preserved to the present day, have passed into the records of the expedition, and have been divided fairly

between the Sudan Government and the Museum of Fine Arts. Some pieces of sculpture may yet be found in Ethiopian temples, but very few of the fine products of the other crafts may be expected, —those of the goldsmiths, the coppersmiths, the ivory-carvers, the makers of stone vessels, the faience-workers, and the amulet-cutters. In other words, the expedition has established a practical monopoly of the royal works of Ethiopia.

With this explanation the unique character of the collection of Egypto-Ethiopian antiquities obtained by the expedition is made clear. At the same time the historical material has opened up a new chapter in the history of the ancient world and reveals the story of a great family which began as a wandering tribe in the Libyan desert, established a kingdom in Ethiopia, conquered an empire in Egypt, and lost its empire, but not its kingdom, to the greatest race of conquerors of antiquity, the Assyrians, at the height of their power.

When one walks through the straggling modern village of El-Kur'uw stretching along the desert edge only a hundred yards from the bank of the Nile, the rock-desert rises gently before one, cut by water-courses running down to the alluvial valley. Just to the left of the broadest of these *wadys* lies the highest of the knolls, with the late pyramid about half way up the slope. The other pyramids are hardly visible from the village. But the summit of the knoll is crowned with a low heap of rubble, which marked for trained eyes from the first sight a tumulus-grave of the Nubian type. On each side of this tumulus, and in front down the slope towards the river, stand five other tumuli-graves, and then about half way between



The mastaba of King Kashta (?), No. VIII, and behind it the pyramid of King Shabataka, No. XVIII, looking "east"

the summit of the slope and the large late pyramid a row of eight square stone tombs, mastabas or little pyramids, cross the slope from *wady* to *wady*. In front of this row lie the remains of the pyramids of Piankhy, Shabaka, and Tanutaman, and behind its "northern" end stands the pyramid of Shabataka. Across the great *wady* on the "south" are situated three isolated groups of small tombs of queens and a cemetery of royal horses. To the "north" across the smaller *wady*, extends a row of five queens' pyramids, in front of which stand the pyramids of the queen of the late king buried in the large pyramid. Curiously enough the "northern" group of queens' pyramids is called at the present day "Tombs of the daughters of the Sheikh," by the people of the village, and on top of the pyramid of the late king stands a little rubble shrine with fluttering flags to which the native women make vows and bring small gifts, usually nickel coins, which they throw among the stones of the shrine.

Taking the main field, that of the kings of Egypt, and considering it in the light of other cemeteries, it is clear that the royal tombs are the latest in a cemetery which extended through a long period and which must contain the ancestors of the kings. There can be no doubt that the crown of the knoll is the site which would naturally be selected for the first tomb made in the cemetery, as that site is the most advantageous, the primary site in the field. From that point, it would be assumed on general principles, the cemetery grew downwards to the great row of mastabas and finally to the royal pyramids. The excavation of these tombs confirmed fully this *a priori* supposition, both by the forms of the tombs and by the objects

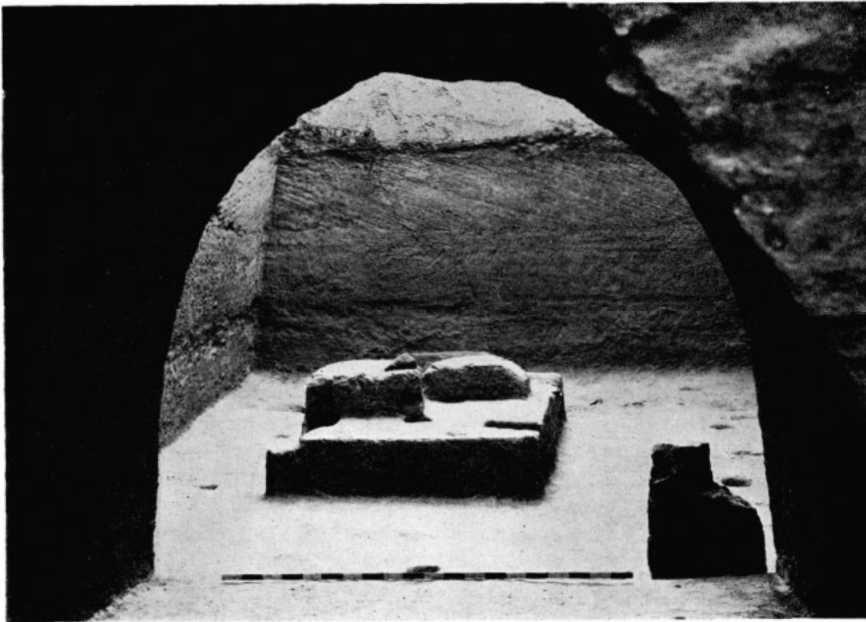
contained in them. In the previous reports the form of the royal pyramid of Nuri has been fully described, with its chapel and enclosing wall above ground, its stairway and three burial-chambers underground. The tomb of the great ancestor of this long line of kings, situated on the top of the knoll in the royal cemetery at El-Kur'uw, was entirely different. A simple rectangular shaft, orientated "north-south," had been sunk in the soft rock to a depth of about two meters (six feet) and at its bottom on one side a narrow burial-chamber had been hollowed. The chamber had been closed with a wall of mud-bricks protected by stone slabs, and the shaft filled in with earth. Over the whole a simple rubble tumulus had been built of a type which is well known in earlier times in Ethiopia. Anything more different from the royal stairway-pyramids could not well be imagined. Nevertheless, when the excavation of the whole cemetery at El-Kur'uw had been completed the tombs of the ancestors and the early kings presented every stage in the development, and proved that this tumulus-grave was the historical ancestor of the three-room stairway-pyramid. Moreover, the successive stages of this development follow the growth of the cemetery as presupposed from the relative positions of the tombs, and especially in the case of the royal tombs, where the order is known from the Egyptian inscriptions.

The second generation of the ancestors improved the simple rubble tumulus by casing it in fine white stone, adding a horseshoe-shaped enclosing wall, also of stone, and erecting a single-room mud-brick chapel on the side towards the valley. The third generation, using the same masonry and the same

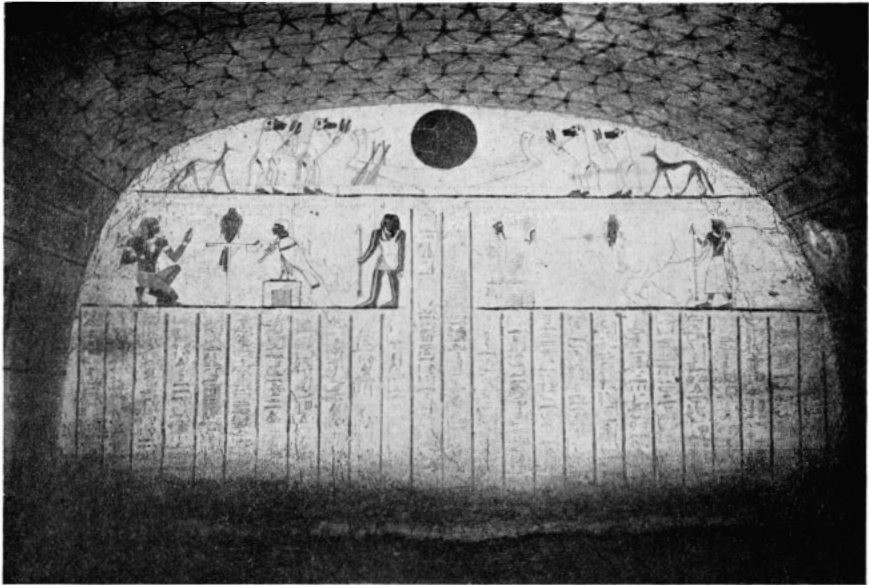


The stairway and vaulted burial chamber of King Piankhy, looking down to "east"

form of pit as the first, built square mastabas above the grave instead of round tumuli. The fourth and fifth generations made no change in the superstructure, but the fifth changed the burial-chamber to a simple open pit roofed with a corbel vault of masonry. The sixth, the generation of Kashta, the father of Piankhy, adopted the "east-west" orientation, which became traditional in Ethiopia and was dictated by the Egyptian belief that the west was the land of Osiris, the god of the dead. The corbel and the change in orientation were no doubt due to Egyptian influence, which was increasing at that time, owing to the fact that Kashta had extended his sovereignty as far as Thebes. The seventh generation is represented by the pyramid of Piankhy, which covered a corbel-vaulted pit, in essentials like the tomb of Kashta, but with a rude stairway added to give access to the burial-chamber through the "west" wall and to permit the construction of the pyramid before the burial. The chapel of Piankhy had been built on the filling of the stairway, with the result that its foundations had given way, bringing down the whole structure. Shabaka, the successor of Piankhy, corrected this fault by leading the end of the stairway through a sloping tunnel, thus leaving a solid rock foundation for his chapel. He also cut his chamber entirely in the rock, but retained the arch of the old corbel vault, and even the structural



The burial chamber of King Shabataka with broken coffin-bench, looking "east"

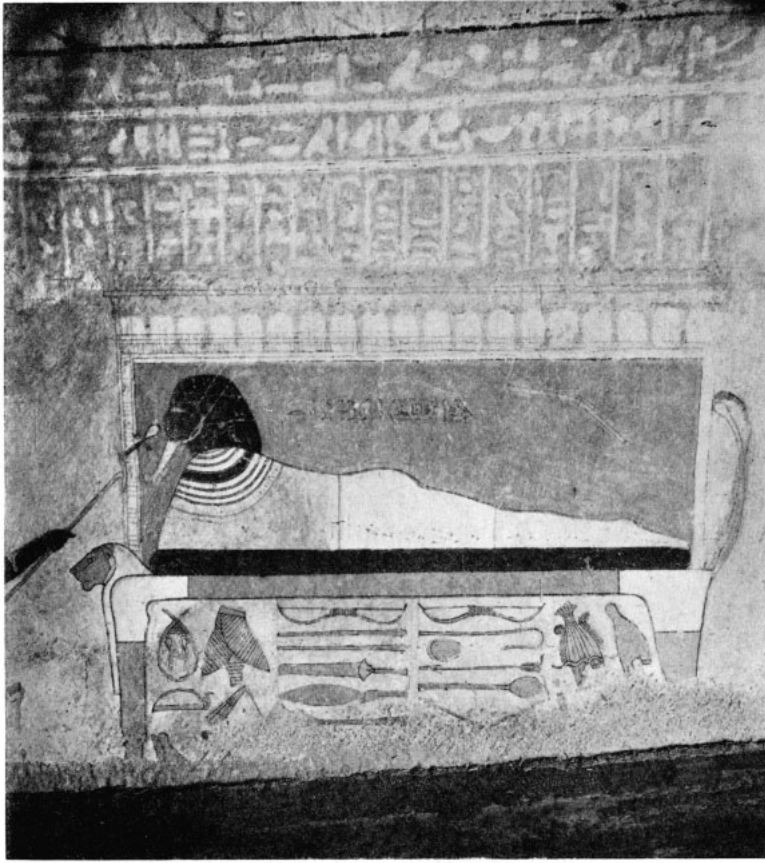


Paintings on end wall and roof of tomb of King Tanutaman, in red, yellow, blue, white, and black

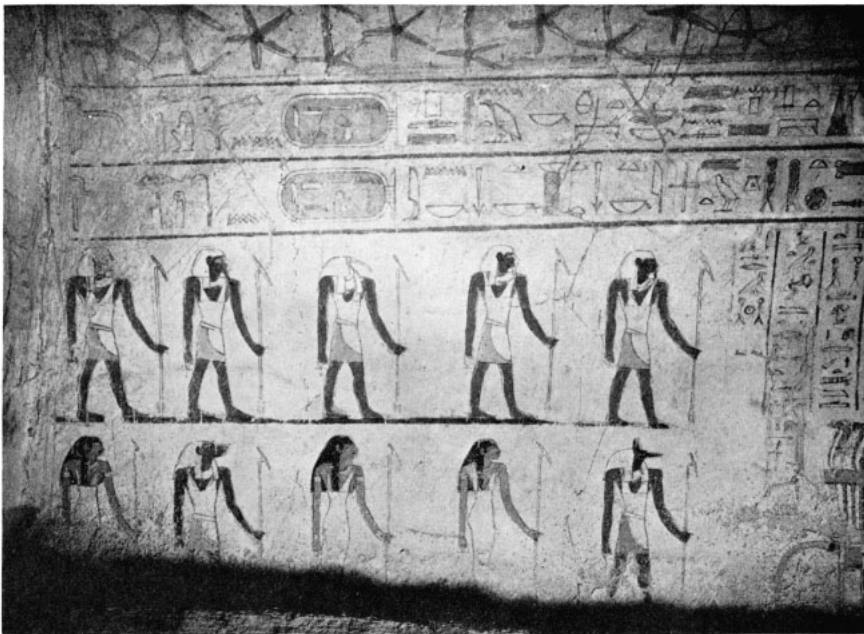
offset of the corbel at the base of the arch, and this latter feature was copied blindly in the royal tombs for more than two centuries after its structural origin was forgotten. Shabaka made the tunnel more convenient by cutting it with a horizontal roof and a flat floor. Tirharqa, whose pyramid was at Nuri, changed the tunnel into an anteroom, and thus established the type of two-room stairway-pyramid which was used by the next two kings, Tanutaman (El-Kur'uw XVI) and Atlanersa (Nuri XX) and by all the queens of the later ages of Ethiopia. The check in the development at this stage was due probably to the blow dealt the material prosperity of the kings by the loss of Egypt. In the reign of the succeeding king, Senkamansken, Ethiopian prosperity had revived, and his pyramid (Nuri III), ostentatious in both structure and furniture, gave the final traditional form to the Ethiopian royal tomb by adding a third room, a wide short room between the anteroom and the inner burial-chamber,—a room whose function was to bear the “negative confession” from the Book of the Dead inscribed on its walls for the well-being of the king in the life after death.

An examination of the contents of the tombs bears out to the full the order based on their relative situations and the development of their form. The details of this examination and the reasons on which I base the division of the tombs into six generations of ancestors previous to Piankhy, would be of little interest in this place. Nor need the tombs of the queens of Piankhy and his successors be further described except to state that they present a parallel line of development to that shown by the tombs of the kings. The whole field centered about the simple tumulus-grave of the first ancestor buried at El-Kur'uw—that on the top of the

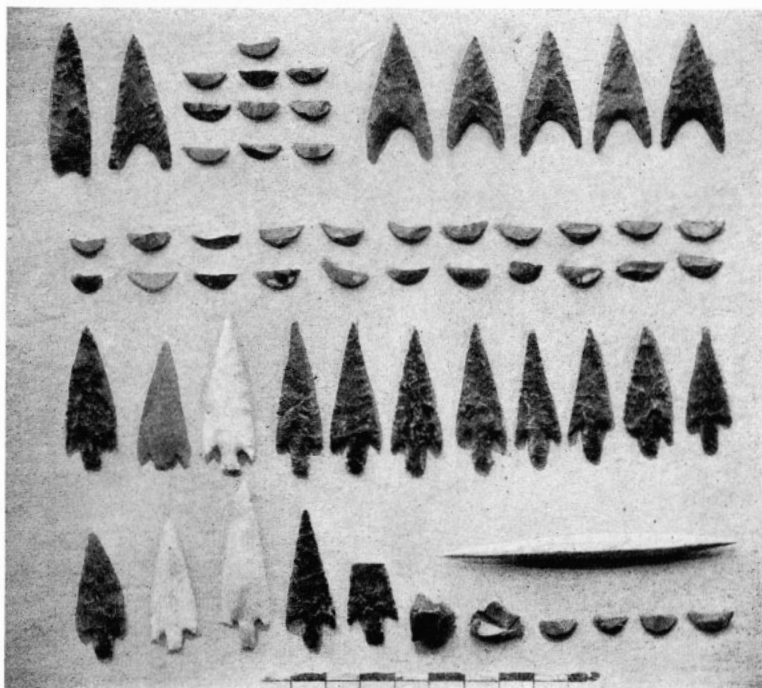
knoll. If about thirty years be allowed for a generation, and the date of Piankhy be taken at about 744-710 B. C., six generations would give us the approximate date of 920-890 B. C. for the mature activity of the man buried in the first tumulus. Who was this man who founded a family of kings, and what was his race? The grave had been completely plundered, and indeed all the graves at El-Kur'uw had suffered grievously at the hands of spoilers. Not a name was found of any of the ancestors. But archæology is not entirely helpless even in the face of such difficulties. The spoilers always dropped or overlooked something, and in the *débris* of the plundered grave of the first ancestor we found a number of very fine flint and chalcodony arrow-points and a number of heavy gold beads, equal to thirty-eight English sovereigns in weight, besides fragments of pottery, alabaster, and faience. These arrow-heads are of characteristic Libyan form, inconceivable in the tomb of an Egyptian, inconceivable in the tomb of any one who had become habituated to the use of Egyptian weapons of the period. The first ancestor came, therefore, from a more primitive condition of life than prevailed in Egypt, and from an area under the influence of Libyan forms. Other tumuli of the first and second generations also contained examples of these Libyan arrow-points, and show that for two generations at least the family was not far advanced from the primitive state indicated by the use of flint. This conclusion is confirmed by the only inscription with an historical content found at El-Kur'uw. In the first group of tombs of the queens on the “south” of the “southern” ravine, five of the royal ladies of Piankhy were discovered. The middle tomb was that of a queen named Tabiry, and contained a



Painting on south wall of tomb of Queen Qalhata



Painting on south wall of tomb of King Tanutaman



*Flint and chalcedony arrow-points of Libyan forms from the early tumuli
Also one ivory point*

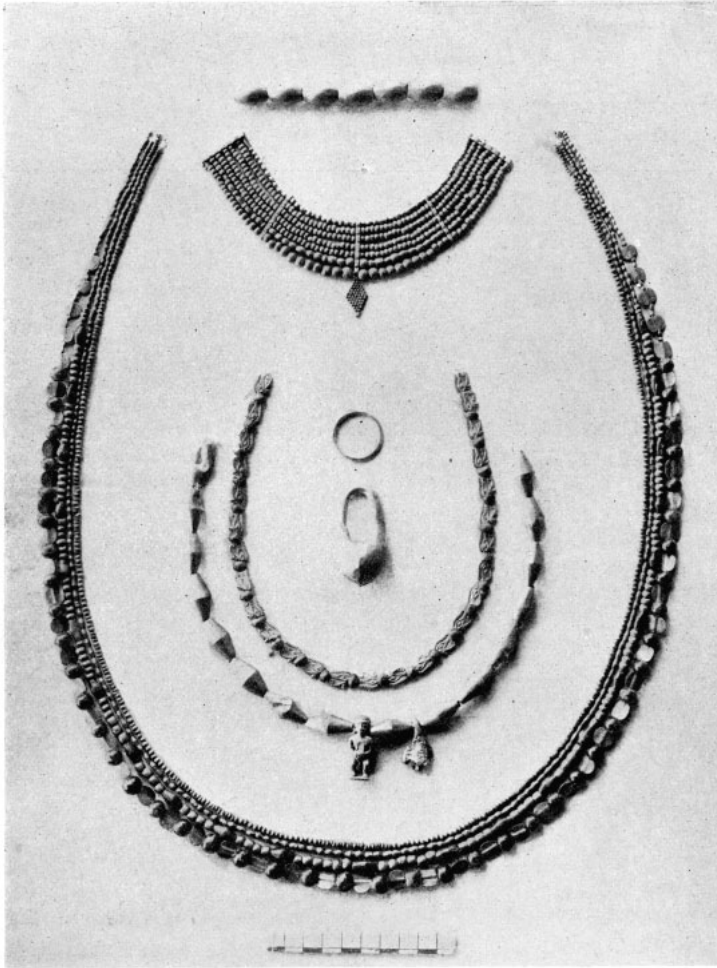
funeral stela of considerable interest. It says that Tabiry was (1) the foremost great queen of His Majesty, Piankhy, endowed with life, (2) the daughter of the Princess Alara, who was a daughter of Kashta, and (3) in her own right the great chieftainess of the Temehu, or Southern Libyans. It may be that Tabiry held her place among the Temehu by inheritance from her father and not from her mother, Alara, or her grandfather Kashta. But the intimate relations between the early generations of the royal family of Ethiopia and the chief family of the Southern Libyan tribes is clear, and, as far as the Egyptian inscriptions previously known inform us, there were no intermarriages between the Ethiopian family and the Egyptian royal family. The only plausible explanation of these facts is that the royal family of Ethiopia was Libyan in origin and had settled at Napata while still in a primitive way of life, probably as a wild nomadic tribe from the western desert. The road by which they came would have been that through the Selima Oasis, used during the war by raiding parties of Senussi Arabs.

I have stated above that the gold beads dropped by the spoilers in the grave of the first ancestor equalled in weight thirty-eight English sovereigns. In two other of the early tumuli gold beads of great intrinsic value were also gleaned from the debris, and in one a small statuette of solid gold, three centimeters high, and a large gold nugget inscribed with a magical text. The original weight of pure gold in these tumuli must have been astonishingly

large for such small graves. Moreover, fragments of fine vessels of alabaster and decorated faience of Egyptian manufacture indicated a rich outfit of such objects. Thus it is clear that the chiefs of these early generations had the control of large supplies of gold, and also access to Egyptian exports. The secret of the importance of Ethiopia in the Middle and New Empires of Egypt and of the power of the Ethiopian monarchy lay in the geographical situation of this barren land, a situation which gave the ruling power the control over



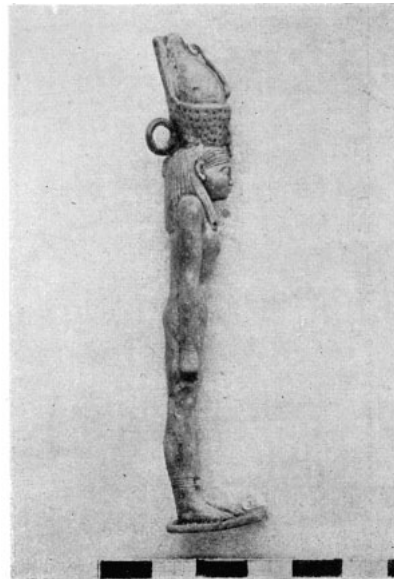
Blue faience bowl with bulls in relief, from tomb of a queen of Piankhy



Necklaces and ornaments from the early tumuli. Counting down the middle from above, Nos. 1, 2 (a seven-fold necklace), 3, 4, 6, and 8 are of gold; No. 5 is of gold eye-amulets and garnet ball-beads; Nos. 7, 9, and 10 are of gold and red carnelian



Two amulets from tomb of Queen Kashtaneferuwa (Ptankhy group). On right, a figure of Isis in silver; on left, a silver hawk with details in gold inlaid with colored paste



Silver figure of Isis, from tomb of Queen Kashtaneferuwa



Silver vessels from the tomb of Queen Khenensatiw



Hand-carved amulet-plaque of blue faience from the tomb of a queen of Piankhy



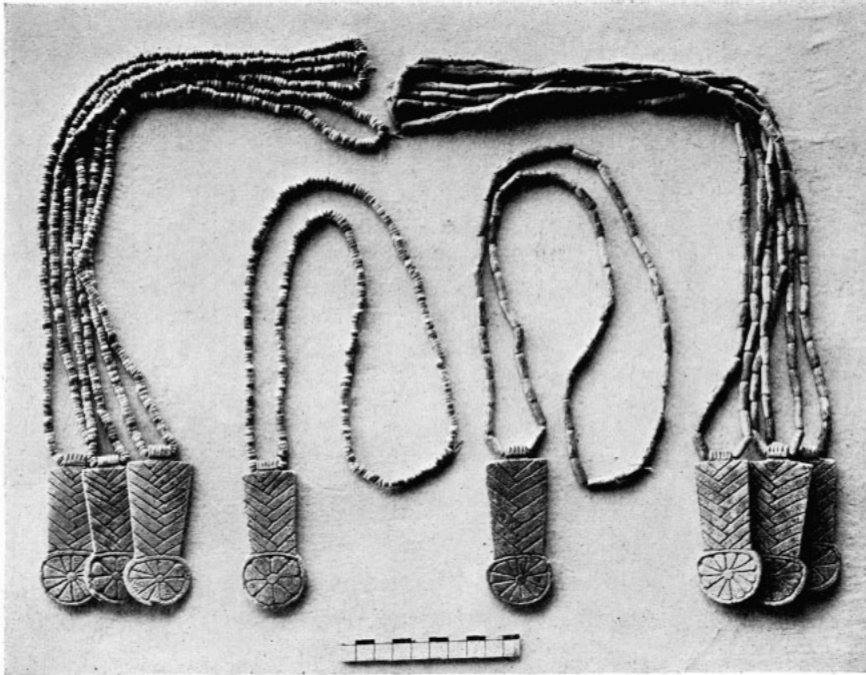
Amulet of crystal and gold from tomb of a queen of King Piankhy



Stone jars from tombs of the Piankhy queens



Quartzite jars from the tomb of Queen Khenensatiw

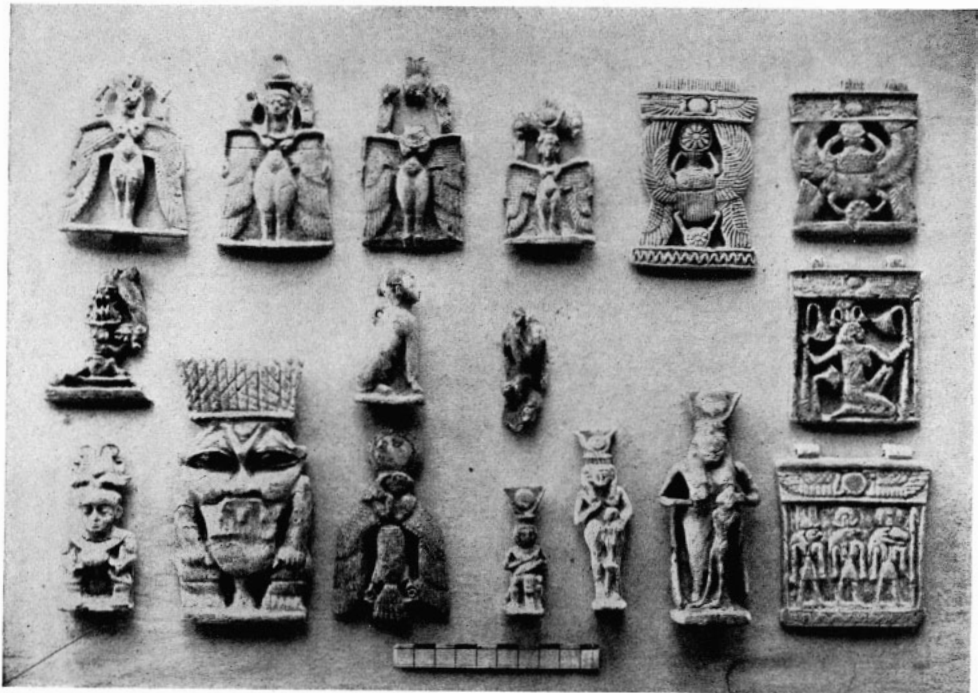


Blue faience necklaces from tomb of Queen Qalhata

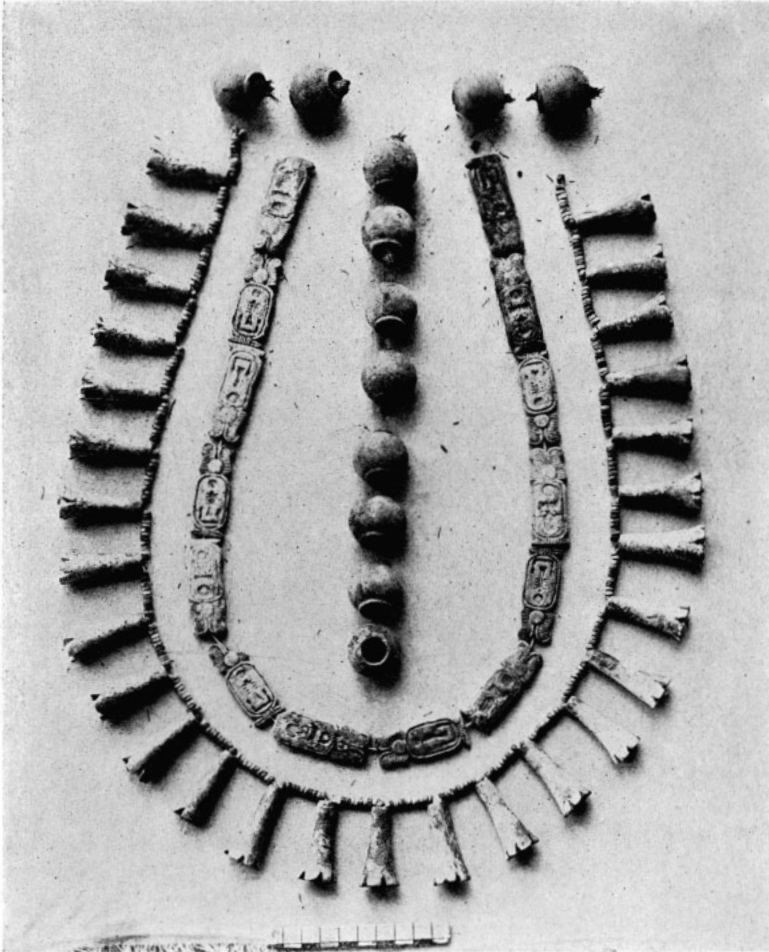
the exploitation of the gold fields of the eastern desert and over the trade routes between Egypt and Central Africa. The fragments of objects found in the tomb of the first ancestor show that he must have exercised some sort of power over this land of roads, perhaps at first merely as the tribal leader of a few hundred fighting men levying blackmail on the traffic of Egypt. It was probably the old story, often repeated in the histories of the great world empires, of a fresh and vigorous tribe from the outer wilderness forcing its way to the enjoyment of the resources of an ancient empire which had become softened by centuries of prosperity. Long before the time of the first ancestor at El-Kur'uw, the Northern Libyans had pressed into lower Egypt, and about 945 B. C. one of them had finally gained the throne as Sheshonq I. From the facts discovered at El-Kur'uw, it was probably in the reign of this Sheshonq, or soon after, that the Southern Libyans, the Temehuw, began to press into Ethiopia as their brethren had done in the north. While the Northern Libyans were ruling in Egypt as the kings of the Twenty-second and Twenty-third Dynasties, the Southern Libyans, led by the chief buried at El-Kur'uw, were consolidating their positions in Ethiopia and their control of the gold fields and the southern trade. After about two centuries, for reasons yet obscure, the Northern Libyans, the rulers of Egypt, had declined in vigor and in unity. Egypt split up into a number of small, practically independent kingdoms, and in this time Kashta, or his immediate predecessor, also made himself practically independent. Certain it is that Kashta before he died

had won the southern provinces of Egypt from his Libyan cousin and possessed enough power to force the adoption of his daughter Amenirdis I by Shepenwepet I, the daughter of Osorkon III, as her heir and successor in the office of High Priestess of Amon at Karnak. Piankhy, the son of Kashta, claimed the sovereignty of Egypt, and enforced his claim by a military conquest, of which he has left us a full account on a stela found over fifty years ago at Barkal. Thus it came about that Egypt passed from the hands of the Libyan Twenty-third Dynasty into those of the Libyan Twenty-fifth Dynasty, which was called Ethiopian by the ancients simply because it seized Egypt after having first established a monarchy in Ethiopia.

To one who has lived in the sun-baked district of Napata with its hot spring winds, it is a continual source of wonder to find that a family bred in this desolation should have reached such a height of power, and a still greater wonder that they preferred to inhabit this remote spot while governing the rich and pleasant land of Egypt. As the king of Egypt of a preceding age had administered Ethiopia through a viceroy, so now the king of Ethiopia ruled Egypt through his officers. The king's messengers went forth from Napata and traversed a thousand miles of the river valley before they reached the old capital at Memphis. His name was known throughout the ancient world, and his ambassadors passed safely under its protection to the powers of Western Asia. At Nineveh, in the royal archives of Assyria, an impression on clay of the royal seal of Shabaka was found many years ago, which was



Blue faience amulets from tombs of the Piankhy queens



Bronze balls and faience necklaces from grave of a horse of King Shabataka

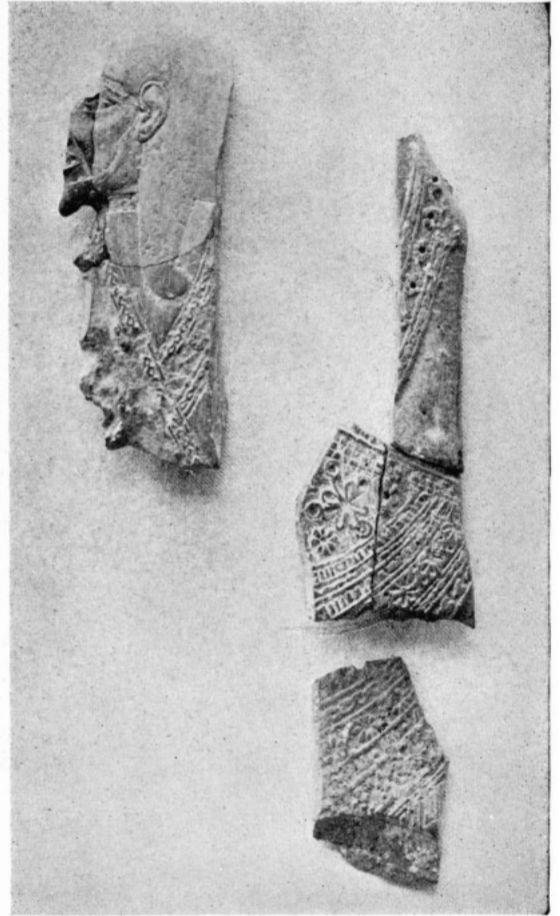
probably part of a letter from Shabaka to Sargon, king of Assyria. Possibly the counterpart to that letter was brought to Napata and may even now lie buried in some of the ruined buildings of that capital. It was a great-grandson of Sargon who finally drove the son of Shabaka from Egypt and reduced Ethiopia again to a simple monarchy. The imperial period of the Ethiopian Libyans was short—only about eighty years in length,—but the character of that great family was more clearly developed by adversity than by prosperity. For they held their Ethiopian kingdom for many generations after their defeat by the Assyrians, and passed their royal power to a line of kings who ruled Ethiopia and Meroë for eight centuries or more.

Archæological research is fraught with surprises. The history of the royal family of Ethiopia is far different from that which had been imagined. But the most curious illustration of the chances of excavations is the fact that an obscure village, hundreds of miles beyond the borders of Egypt, has at last yielded a clear insight into the number and order of the kings of the Twenty-fifth Dynasty

of Egypt and opened a new chapter in the history of Egyptian arts and crafts. The scholars who have endeavored to arrange the list of kings of Egypt have been led astray by the unexpected use of a multiplicity of names by Piankhy, and have set forth as many as four different Piankhys and three Kashtas. Every Egyptian king had five names, of which the two most used were those which followed the titles "King of Upper and Lower Egypt" and "Son of Ra." Piankhy, whose knowledge of Egyptian traditions was gained from life in Napata, a provincial town lying beyond the borders of Egypt proper, and from a corps of servile scribes to whom his merest nod was life or death, appears to have indulged himself with two names for the "Son of Ra" title, and his example was followed by Shabaka and Shabataka. Piankhy, indeed, had two full sets of five names, except that the name Piankhy was common to each; and one set he had adopted from the older stela of Thothmes III, which he found in the temple of Amon at Barkal, and set up again in the outer court when he rebuilt the temple. The solution is now quite clear. Kashta,



Ivory and ebony inlays from tomb of King Shabataka



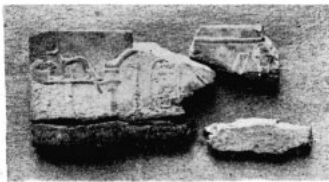
Ivory inlays from tomb of King Shabataka



Ivory game-piece from tomb of King Shabaka



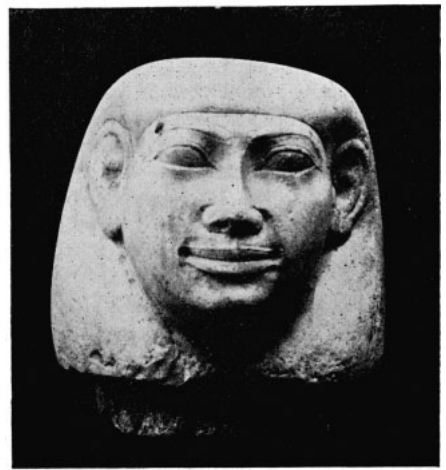
Ivory inlay from tomb of King Shabaka



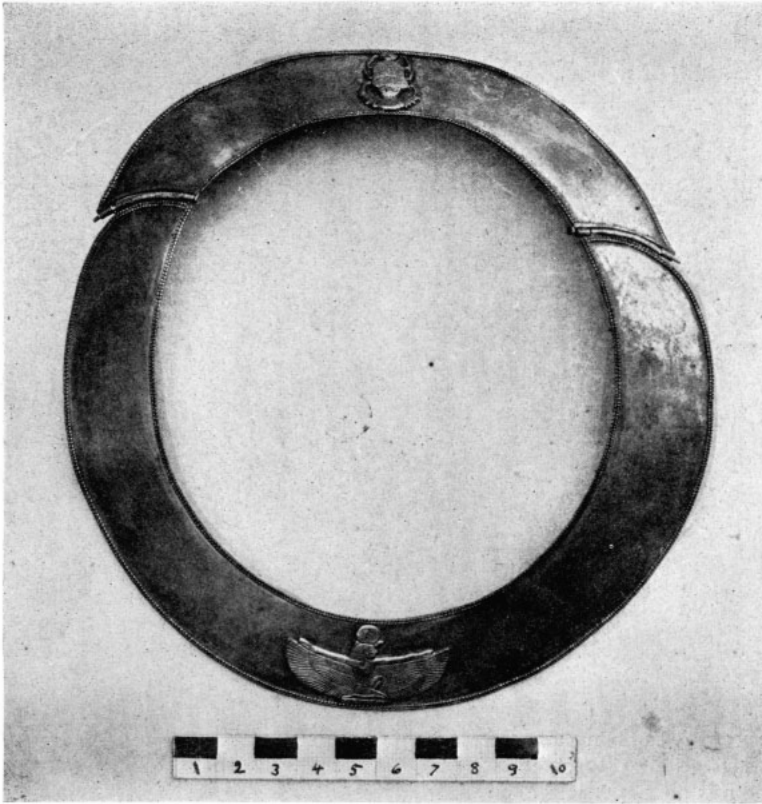
Ivory inlay-plaque with name of King Shabaka



Alabaster Canopic head from tomb of King Shabaka



Alabaster Canopic head from tomb of King Tanutaman

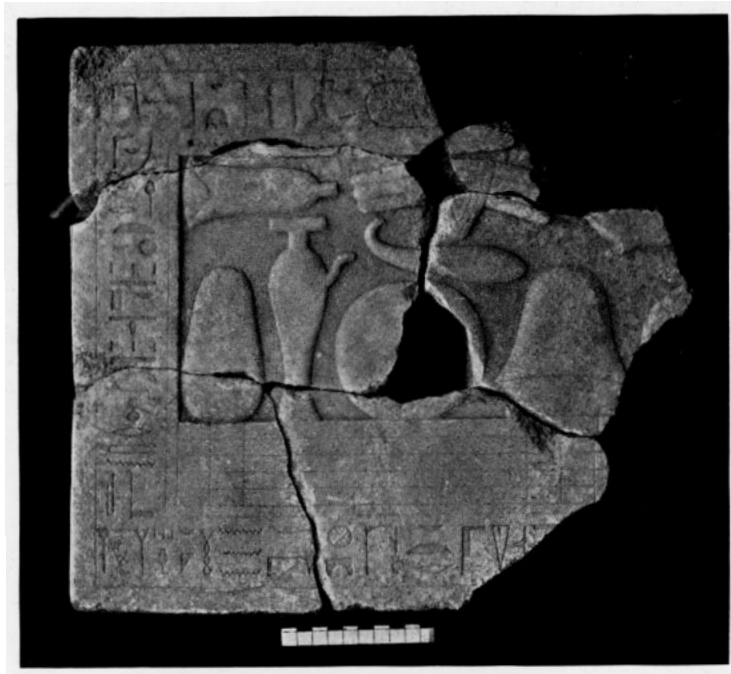


Gold collar of an unknown queen, time of King Shabataka

Piankhy, Shabaka, Shabataka, Tirhaqa, and Tanutaman are all to be reckoned as kings of the Egyptian Twenty-fifth Dynasty in this order. There was no other Kashta and no other Piankhy.

The tombs at El-Kur'uw had been completely looted in ancient times. Spoliation was the common fate of all rich tombs in the Nile valley,—spoliation which began soon after the sealing of the chambers, and was repeated at intervals down to the present time. The Mayer papyri and other legal documents give evidence that even the royal tombs in a cemetery like that at Thebes could not be protected. At El-Kur'uw, the comparatively small size of the burial places permitted a more complete search by the plunderers than is usual in royal tombs. Nevertheless, a number of objects and fragments of objects were found which were not only interesting as specimens of the royal work of the Twenty-fifth Dynasty, but also threw a new light on the rise of the Egyptian Renaissance. When, in the Twenty-sixth Dynasty, a native Egyptian family had once more taken the throne of Egypt after three centuries of domination by men of foreign blood, a marked change, apparently a revival of all classes of Egyptian art, is shown by the remains which have come down to us. In the reliefs especially, traditional forms of an earlier period appear to have been deliberately copied. The small figures in stone and faience exhibit a

delicacy that amounts almost to effeminacy. Some of the portrait statues, on the other hand, show a surprising virility, as if the natural lines of the face had been copied without the slightest consideration for anything but the truth. It has been often assumed that this apparent revival of Egyptian art was a real re-birth of the genius of the Egyptians under the stimulus of national independence, modified in later years by the influence of Greek art. In exactly what manner the Greeks affected the traditional forms and methods of the Egyptian craftsmen is a question which requires a much more exact marshalling of the facts than is now at our disposal; but it is quite clear from the works of the Twenty-fifth Dynasty found at El-Kur'uw, and from the statuary of that period found in Egypt and in Ethiopia, that the revival of Egyptian art had begun, and the naturalistic tendency in portraiture was well developed before the revival of Egyptian political power at Sais. Piankhy's great temple at Barkal, with its Egyptian reliefs, the statues of Tirhaqa and his son, Mentuemhat, the ivory carvings of Shabaka and Shabataka, the polished jasper cat of Queen Khenensauw, the bronze gazelle of Queen Pekankhary, the electrum mirror-handle of Shabaka, the faience bowls with bulls in relief of a queen of Piankhy, the amulets of faience, stone, gold, and silver of the various queens, and many other objects,—all present the



Alabaster altar of Queen Nenperu

fine workmanship of the traditional arts and crafts of Egypt. The kings of the Twenty-fifth Dynasty were Libyans born in an Egyptianized province of Egypt. The kings who preceded them were Libyans born in Egypt itself. It may therefore justifiably be inquired whether the decline of art in Egypt between the New Empire and the Saite Period has not been somewhat exaggerated. It may be that the paucity of works of art in one period and their abundance in another is partly the result of accidents of preservation and partly due to variations in the material prosperity depending on climatic conditions in the valley or on the efficiency of administration. In the causes of the Egyptian Renaissance there was certainly no connection between the race of the ruling house and the vitality of Egyptian art. I am inclined to think at present that the old traditions of the Egyptian craftsmen never entirely died out, nor the old skill, but there may have been fewer skilled men and fewer works of merit in periods of governmental inefficiency or economic depression.

One of the difficulties presented by the material hitherto recorded from the period between the Twentieth and the Twenty-sixth Dynasties has been to date exactly the objects ascribed approximately to that time. We have not a single royal tomb of the Libyan kings of the Twenty-second and Twenty-third Dynasties. Until the royal work of those dynasties has been recovered and until some certainty has been brought to the dating of ordinary tombs of that period, it would be unwise to conclude that Egyptian art had suffered a decline in workmanship or a loss of traditional forms. El-Kur'uw has shown that the history of Egyptian

art from 1000 B. C. to 300 B. C. followed a course somewhat different from that supposed by most historians. The revival in the Saite Period was quantitative rather than qualitative, and perhaps not even vaguely affected by Greek influence. With the cessation of foreign complications, the natural fertility of the land restored the general prosperity. The means of general ostentation increased and produced a widespread demand for the products of the arts and crafts. That craftsmen in response took a professional interest in the ancient monuments still exposed to view was inevitable, and that in some cases reliefs or other works of much older periods were copied was only to be expected. But the archaizing tendency has been exaggerated. As far as I can see, the borrowing from antiquity was not a conscious effort to revive the forms and the traditions of more ancient periods. The Egyptians in all times believed in the divine origin of things and held always, like other ancients, that the older a monument, the closer it was to the times of the "Followers of Horus." The true course of Egyptian art was in all probability quite parallel to that of the magical texts now called "The Book of the Dead." These texts first appear in the pyramids of the Sixth Dynasty, and again a few centuries later, considerably altered, in the coffins of the Middle Empire. From that point certain chapters can be traced from period to period down to Saite times, in which they are manifestly derived from the texts of the late New Empire, not from the older texts. A great misapprehension has been created concerning the so-called sacred books of the Egyptians, which has affected our views of Egyptian art and religion. Clemens of Alexandria



Bronze bed-legs from tomb of a queen of King Shabataka

speaks of the forty-two *sealed* books of the Egyptians, six of which dealt with medicine, and it has been supposed that these writings were fixed in text and in content like the Christian Scriptures. But the texts which have come down to us, such as the books on medicine and those of the magical texts of the life after death, entirely belie the alleged fixed character of these scriptures. On nearer approach, much of the mystery and of the inscrutable wisdom of the Egyptians fades into ordinary human intelligence bound to "the wheel of material things." The idealism of the Oriental of the Near East is only a materialism so crass, so natural, so unconscious of the existence of true idealism, as to escape detection by Occidental comprehension. So it is with ancient Egyptian art and religion. Their history and their character elude the perception of

minds steeped in the modern analysis of European history and unable to comprehend the simple psychology of a more primitive civilization.

Of considerable interest, but of less historical importance, was the discovery of a cemetery of horse-graves,—the first which has ever been found in the Nile valley. The site was on the "southern" bank of the "south" *wady*, about one hundred and twenty meters in front of the tombs of the Piankhy queens. The graves were in four rows which ran parallel to the *wady*. The row nearest the *wady* contained four graves of the horses of Piankhy; the second and third rows, eight graves each of the horses of Shabaka and Shabataka; and the fourth row, four graves of the horses of Tanutaman. All the graves had been plundered, most of them grievously so. But enough was preserved to show that each horse was buried upright with its head towards the "south." The horses were clearly of a short, rather small breed, not unlike the Arabian. As far as is known, horses in that period were always driven in a chariot, never ridden, but in these deep, narrow graves there was no room for a chariot; nor was any trace of a chariot found in the royal tombs. The trappings found in the graves include a plume-carrier of gilded silver from the top of the bridle, a silver head-band, four strings of very large bronze balls, which appear to have been fastened to the bridle and to have hung down the front of the neck, passing between the forelegs like a martingale, and also a large number of strings of beads and amulets. All these were found at the head-end of the graves, having fallen down from the head or neck of the horses. These horses were manifestly sacrificed at the funeral of the king in order that their spirits might accompany his into the other world. The basic idea was widespread, but this particular expression of it has not heretofore been observed in the Nile valley. The sacrifice of men and animals at funerals is now well established as an ancient Ethiopian custom by our excavations at Kerma. But that was a thousand years before the beginning of the Ethiopian monarchy, and in all



(a)



(b)



(c)

Heart scarab of King Shabaka: (a) side; (b) back; (c) bottom



Silver mirror-handle from tomb of King Netaqlabat at Nuri



Bronze gazelle from tomb of a queen of King Tanutaman

the royal tombs of Napata no other survival of the custom was detected. Thus to find animals sacrificed in this manner at El-Kur'uw, and above all horses, comes as a surprise. Piankhy undoubtedly instituted the custom, and that is particularly fitting, for Piankhy was a great connoisseur of horses. In his account of the siege of the Egyptian city of Eshmun he tells of his anger at finding the horses of Namlat, king of Eshmun, starved thin as a result

of the siege — an anger that came near costing Namlat his life. Piankhy pictures horses on the famous *Conquest Stela* and even on the walls of the great hall which he built in the temple of Amon at Gebel Barkal. It is an interesting revelation of the character of Piankhy, of his pride and mental boldness, that to please himself he should have instituted a new funeral custom unsanctioned by previous usage.

REISNER.



(a)



(b)



(c)

Heart scarab of King Tanutaman: (a) side; (b) back; (c) bottom

Synopsis of History

with special reference to Painting, Sculpture and the Derivative Arts

THE Museum is preparing a folder, extending the single page of the Handbook bearing the above title to a sheet of six leaves closing to the size of the Handbook page. The table of events is divided into columns denoting geographical regions, arranged on either side a

central space inscribed with the dates by half millennia from 3500 to 2000 (1800) B. C. and thence by centuries to A. D. 1900. As the items are approximately in their place within the centuries, the table offers a synchronology of such events in recorded history as are of main importance from the point of view of the fine arts.

It is a matter of significance and interest that