

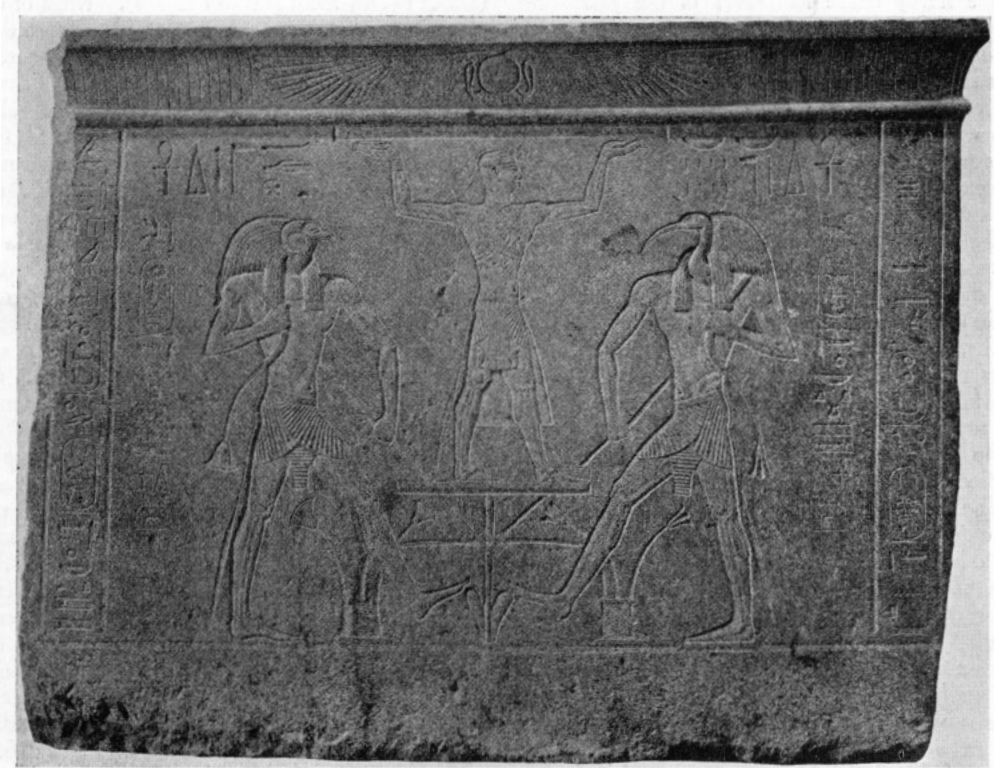
Museum of Fine Arts Bulletin

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BOSTON, JUNE, 1925

No. 137



Gray granite altar from small temple of Amon-Ra at Napata, dedicated by Atlanersa, king of Ethiopia, about 653-643 B. C. Name of his son, Senkamansiken, about 643-623 B. C., inserted in field.

Excavations in Egypt and Ethiopia 1922-1925

THE history of Ethiopia was outlined in Bulletin No. 124 (April, 1923), which also contained an account of the excavations at Meroë down to May, 1922. Work was resumed in November, 1922, under Mr. Dows Dunham as field-director, assisted by Mrs. Dunham and Mr. Amory Goddard. The principal area remaining unexcavated was the middle and the western parts of the great Western Cemetery where the minor members of the royal family of Meroë had their pyramids and tombs; but the southern and the northern cemeteries in the foot-hills also required certain final operations. A small additional camp was built at the Western Cemetery and was occupied by Mr. Dunham and his party during the whole season.

In January I joined Mr. Dunham, being accompanied by Mrs. Reisner and my daughter, by Mrs. Symonds, acting as publication secretary, and Mr. A. E. Austin, Jr., as archæological assistant; and we went into residence in the old camp on the western shoulder of the Northern Cemetery.¹

The evidence recovered confirmed and enlarged the previous conclusions drawn concerning the history of the royal cemeteries and of Ethiopia.* The western part of the Western Cemetery provided a surprise. As we worked westward the ground was seen to be rising to a low knoll, and

*The two most interesting single tombs have been published by Mr. Dunham under the title: "Two Royal Ladies of Meroë" (Communications to the Trustees, VII).

the tombs were found to be earlier and earlier in date. We immediately came to the conclusion that the earliest tombs in the Western Cemetery must be on top of the knoll; and the excavation proved that the Western Cemetery began about the same time as the Southern Cemetery,—that is, in the time of Piankhy (744-710 B.C.). We knew already that there had been a great family quarrel during the time of Shabaka, Shabataka, Tirhaqa, and Tanutaman; and here at Meroë we find further evidence in the fact that one branch of the family made its graves in the plain (the Western Cemetery) and the other branch in the foot-hills (Southern Cemetery). Estranged, perhaps hostile, in life, in death they lie divided by a mile of arid sunburnt desert. Yet the same craftsmen worked for both branches of the family, and the same series of pottery, stone vessels, bead-nets, amulets, scarabs, and gold ornaments was found in the two cemeteries. It was the branch of the family buried in the Southern Cemetery which succeeded the Napatan branch in the kingship, and thus the first pyramids of the kings of Meroë are in the old family cemetery of the southern hill. When, after the lapse of three hundred and fifty years (about 300 B.C.), the Southern Cemetery was full, the minor members of both branches of the royal family were buried in the eastern part of the Western Cemetery, and the old quarrel was pacified, if not entirely forgotten.

The graves in the Western Cemetery, especially the older graves, were less disturbed than those in the other cemeteries; and a very rich treasure, consisting of gold ornaments, necklaces, bracelets, and earrings, was recovered to illustrate the craftsmanship of the goldsmiths at Meroë. The number of scarabs was prodigious,—between five hundred and six hundred,—and many of them were older scarabs which had been looted from tombs at Kerma and in Lower Nubia. One bore the name of Menkauw-Hor of Dynasty V, though not of his time; several, the names of kings of Dynasties XII-XIII; and many, the names of kings of Dynasty XVIII and of Dynasty XXV. A gold seal-ring of Tirhaqa was found, and seals with the names of Kashta and his daughter, Amenirdis, high-priestess of Amon in the eighth century B.C.

One of the last operations undertaken at Meroë was the clearing away of debris left by treasure-seekers around the royal pyramids in the Northern Cemetery. The object was to recover the fullest details of construction and the measurements of the pyramids, and to reveal the cemetery as it was in the days of the kings of Meroë. No expectations were entertained of the discovery of any antiquities. The work was undertaken as a scientific duty, and was rewarded by one of our most important finds from Meroë,—the embossed silver goblet reported in Bulletin No. 136, and here more fully illustrated. In the debris lying along the northern side of Pyramid N II, the tomb of Amantabale, about

seven feet above the ground, the goblet was found thrown away among broken stones. The man who first saw it thought it was of pottery owing to the dull patina.

The chronological skeleton of Ethiopia, including both the Napatan and Meroitic kingdoms, was worked out in the summer of 1922 and published in the "*Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*," Vol. IX, pp. 34-77, with nineteen plates.

In June, 1923, I sent Mr. Dunham to investigate the illicit excavations being carried out at Quft (about twenty miles north of Luxor). Most of our trained workmen come from that place, and they reported that people were digging there steadily. It seemed well to discover whether they had struck on a cemetery or were merely searching the debris of the old city mound. Our work proved that there was no cemetery; but during the examination the men uncovered the foundations of an Arab tower built a few centuries ago. The stones used in the tower had been taken from a temple of Ptolemy IX (146-125 B.C.), and we managed to fit some of them together and so obtained several scenes of wall reliefs from this royal temple. As the temple itself had been destroyed and any attempt at reconstruction was impossible, the Egyptian Department of Antiquities very generously assigned these stones to the expedition.

In October-December, 1923, a final campaign was carried out at Sheikh Farag in order to finish the investigation of the site of Naga-ed-Dêr, begun in 1900. Mr. Dunham was in charge during October-November; Mr. Alan Rowe, during December and indeed until January 15, being employed on the map and the plans. Cemeteries of rock-cut tombs filling the limestone cliffs to the north of an old camp were excavated and found to be of the period from Dynasty VI to Dynasty XVIII. Although they had been plundered, a number of wooden coffins, stelæ and other objects were recovered. The painted stelæ of Dynasties VI-XII were of particular interest to our Museum, and most of them were assigned to us. The finest set of necklaces and gold ornaments was very properly taken by the Cairo Museum.

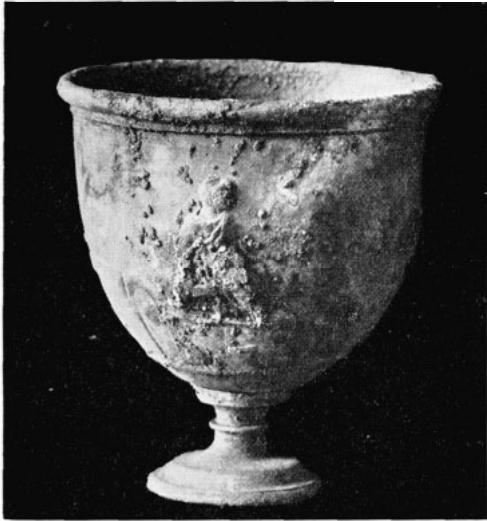
In January, 1924, we set out once more for Ethiopia, but now for the Egyptian forts (ca. 2000 B.C.) of Semna, at the head of the Second Cataract. The road, starting from the steamer landing at Wady Halfa, winds for about fifty-five miles through the rocks along the Cataract. The men under Said Ahmed Said, and accompanied by Mr. George C. Vaillant and Mr. Prescott Childs, left Halfa on January 21, riding camels and taking the heavy luggage. The whole made a caravan of about forty camels. They reached Semna after two days' hard riding, and began the preliminary clearing of the river side of the fort on the west bank. Mrs. Reisner, my daughter and myself remained in Halfa, living by the courtesy of Mr. Seager, the governor of the province, in the old "Kitchener house," beside the governor's



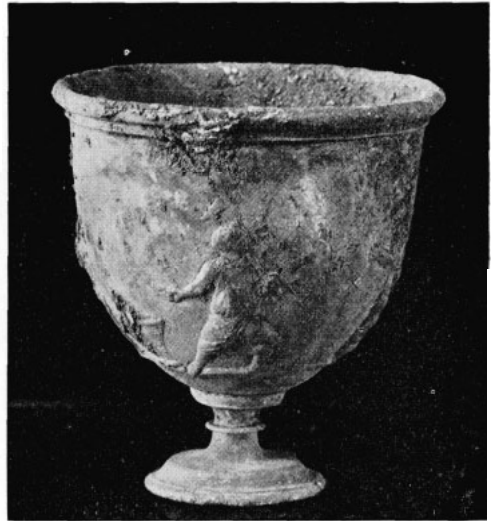
Northern Cemetery at Meroë, after excavation, looking north along great ridge, Pyramids N VI-XX.



Façade of Pylon, Pyramid N XIX at Meroë, about 200 A. D., king slaying enemies.



(a) The King on his throne.

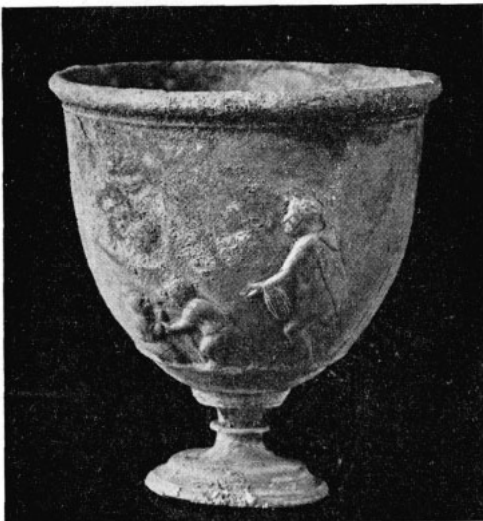


(b) The victor.

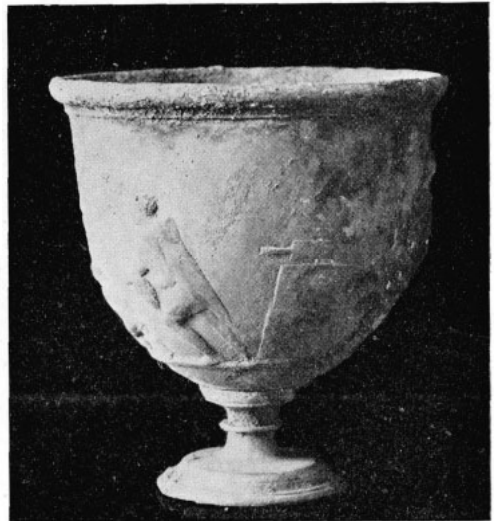
residence at Camp Halfa. A week later we went through in our "Ford" as far as Sarras, where the car was temporarily checked by a huge slope of deep sand, and from Sarras we rode the remaining ten miles to Semna, the two ladies on our horses and I myself, on a camel. I set a small gang of men to pack the sand slope with broken schist, and the car came through a couple of days later. With this the road was open, and although the drive was pretty rough, the camp was brought within five hours of the hospital at Halfa, with reasonable means of transport in case of accident or serious illness.

At first we camped in tents on the east bank, but the wind and the heat made it necessary to get under cover. The fort on the east bank,

called Kummeh, is on a high rock commanding a view of the surrounding cemetery. During Dervish times the raiders of the Khalufa used to harry the poverty-stricken villagers along the east bank, plundering and killing. So the people moved up into the old fort in order that they might see the raiders from afar and escape by swimming the cataracts,—men, women, and children. Thus we found a village of sixteen houses in the fort. After considering, I offered them three hundred dollars for the whole village, which they accepted with great satisfaction, and immediately moved out to the former site of their village, about a mile to the south. We demolished their houses, which had been built of old Egyptian bricks from the walls of the Middle Kingdom Fort (2000 B. C.), and used



(c) The children of the condemned man and the advocate (?).

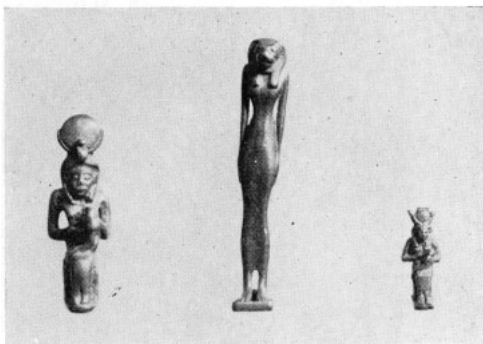


(d) The executioner's block.

Silver cup (a, b, c, d) from beside Pyramid N II, Meroë, probably about 25 B. C., Alexandrian work.



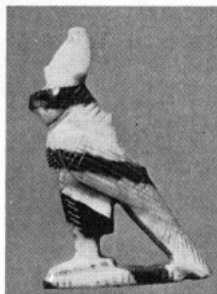
Stela of victory of King Tanyizemani, Meroitic, from entrance to Temple of Amon at Napata.



Gold amulets, Ethiopian, Meroë, Western Cemetery.



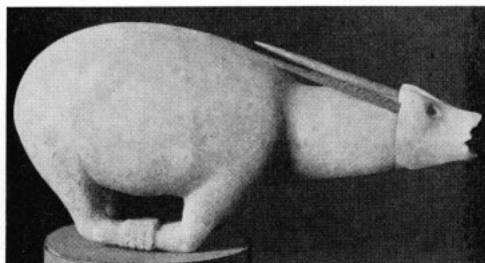
Beads, millefiori glass, Meroitic, Meroë, Western Cemetery.



Amulets: agate hawk and ape, blue crystal, Ethiopian, Meroë, Western Cemetery.



Bronze hawk, head of standard, Meroitic, Pyramid N XXIV at Meroë.



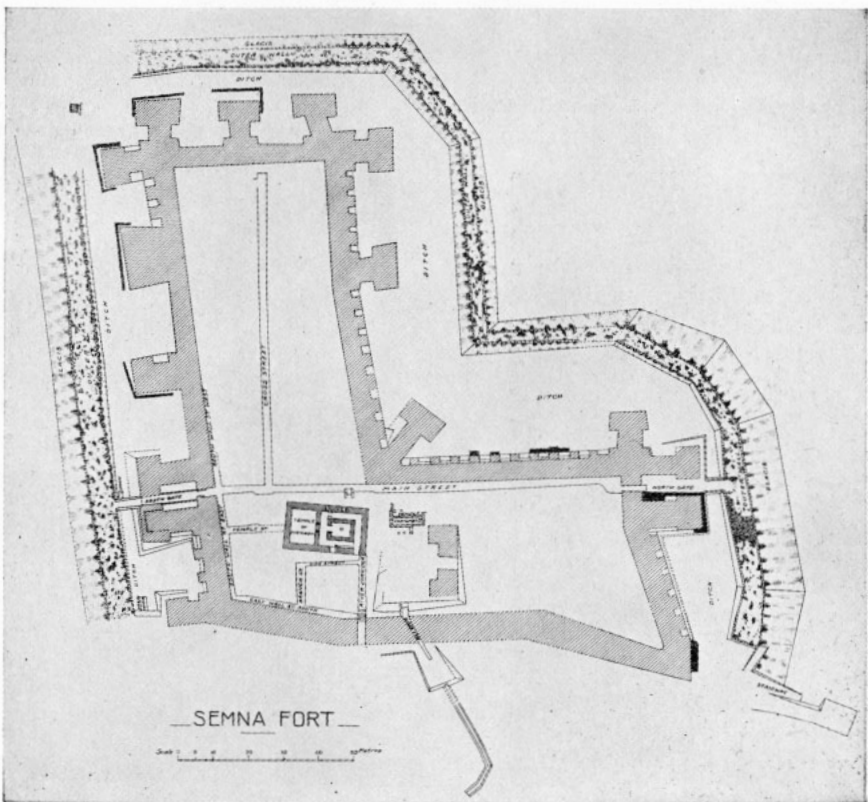
Alabaster ointment vase, Ethiopian, 8th century B. C. from Meroë, Western Cemetery.



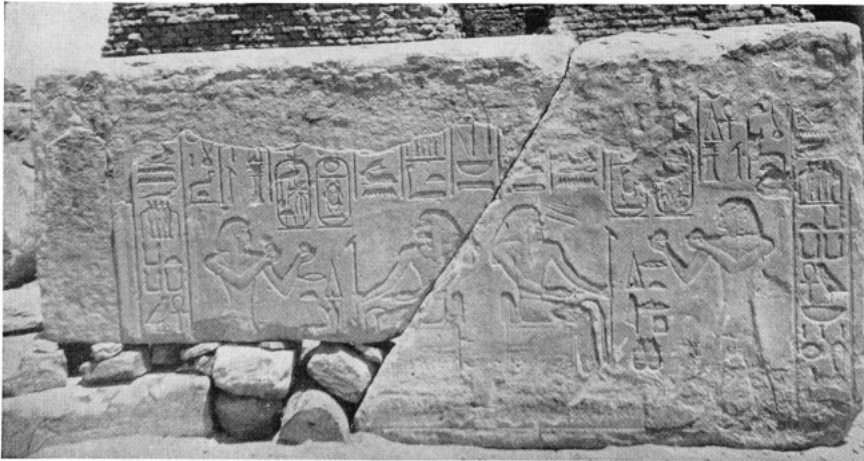
Rock inscription at Second Cataract, recording height of Nile in third year of King Sebekneferuw (Dynasty XII).



Semna Fort, southeastern quarter, looking south, house walls of three periods.



Plan of Semna Fort (without contour lines), drawn by Alan Rowe and J. Bonello.



Relief of Thothmes II (about 1500 B. C.), sandstone, from Semna Fort, found in debris below level of Tirhaqa Temple.

the same bricks in our camp bungalow,— the third time that these four thousand-year-old bricks had been used in a building. The rafters were of iron rails from the abandoned military road which Kitchener built during the reconquest of the Sudan in 1898; the roofing boards were brought from Halfa on camels, and the heavy mud plaster was

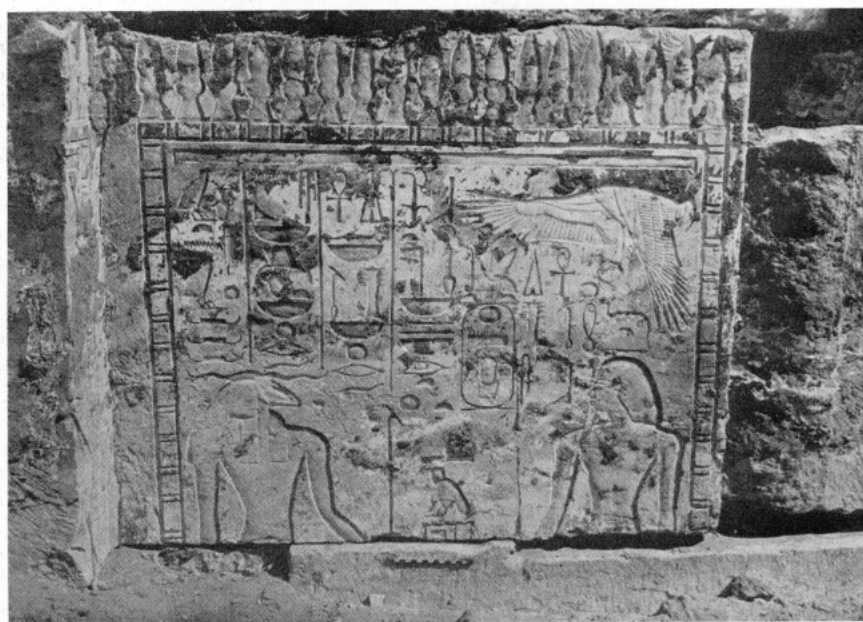
made of broken bricks found in the debris of the old ruins. The bungalow was finished in seventeen days, and the double labyrinth dark room in five days after we had moved into the house.

The work at Semna included the excavation of the two forts and the cemeteries of their garrisons, and the recording of the rock inscriptions on both banks. These fortifications were both built by Sesostris III, and form links in the chain of forts built by the kings of Dynasty XII to protect the caravans between Assuan at the First Cataract and Kerma at the head of the Third. Ethiopia, and in particular northern Ethiopia, was a land of roads, poverty-stricken in itself, but connecting Egypt with the sources of the products of the southern lands,— gold, ivory, ebony, resin, incense, ostrich feathers, skins of wild animals, cattle, monkeys, and black slaves. During the Old Kingdom, these materials had been brought to Egypt by official trading caravans which worked their way through Ethiopia at great expense, and with many delays due to the exasperating exactions of the riparian and the desert tribes. The powerful Egyptian kings of Dynasty XII broke the tribes and opened a protected road along the river.

The fort at Semna, called *Sekhem-Khakaaw-Ra* ("Sesostris-III-is-powerful"), and that at Kummeh, called *Itenuw-peduwt* ("Warding-off-the-bow-peoples"), happen to have been erected by Sesostris III, who, because of his bloody suppression of an Ethiopian revolt, was known as "the conqueror of Ethiopia." The forts continued in use as military posts during the New Kingdom, and each has a temple erected by Thothmes I, but altered and enlarged by Thothmes III and Amenophis II. In Dynasty XVIII Ethiopia became a province of Egypt and was administered in the name of the king by a viceroy, to whom was attached a regular organization of civil and military officials. The construction of the temples was carried out, of course, by the viceroys, who have left a number of records on the walls and on



Relief of Ptolemy IX, (146-125 B. C.), found in the foundations of an Arab tower at Quft.



Two reliefs of Thothmes III (1501-1447 B. C.), from foundations of temple of Amenophis II (1447-1420 B. C.) at Kummeh Fort. The king before Khnum, "the warder-off-of-the-bow-peoples."



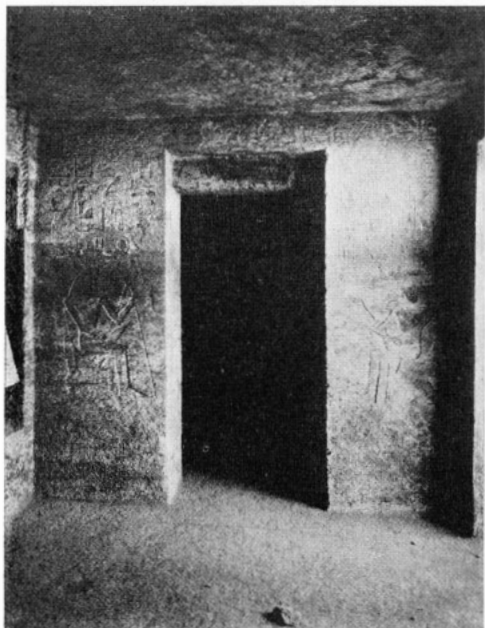
Cemetery of the family of Cheops, east of the First Pyramid at Giza, *before excavation*, looking down to southeast, taken October 31, 1924. In the foreground, ruins of the pyramids of the three queens of Cheops.



Cemetery of the family of Cheops, east of the First Pyramid at Giza, *after excavation* of northern part, looking down to east from Cheops pyramid, taken January 18, 1925.



Tomb of Qa'ar, Giza, Dynasty VI, offering scene on west wall of court, Qa'ar and his wife Gefi ("Marmoset").

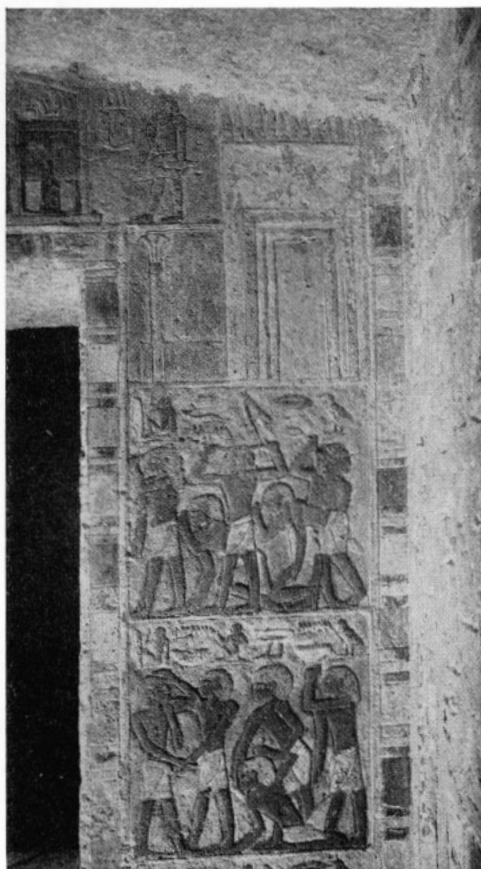


Tomb of Qa'ar, Giza, Dynasty VI; entrance to offering chamber.

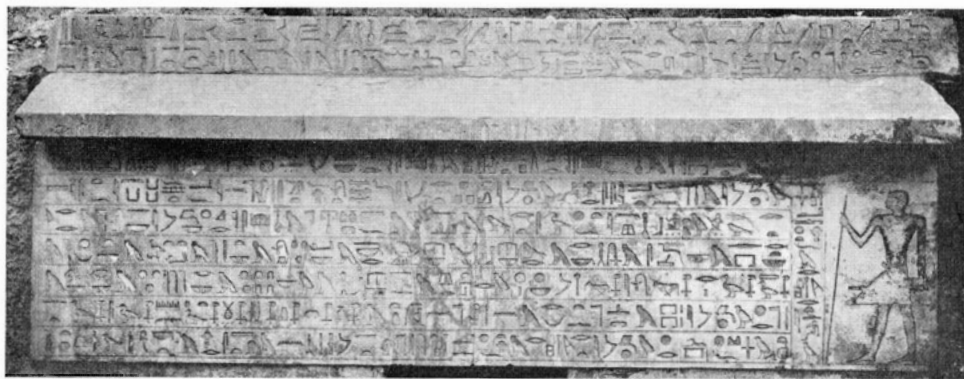
separate stelæ. During the excavations we found four stelæ of the New Kingdom viceroys,—two of a certain Wesersatet, who was the representative of Amenophis II (1447-1420 B.C.), and who perhaps rebuilt the temple in Kummeh Fort for that king.

The excavation of the fort at Semna gives us for the first time the plan, the structure, and the history of the occupation of one of these Egyptian strongholds in Ethiopia. The high thick walls of crude brick were built on foundations of granite rubble. The walls were surrounded on the south, west, and north by a wide dry trench contained by a wall of granite rubble, whose outer side was a glacis commanded by the bows of the garrison stationed on the inner walls. The "Main Street," granite-paved, ran north and south across the fort, with a gateway at each end. Opposite each gate a causeway, penetrated by a drain, crossed the dry ditch and led over an inclined plane down to the desert outside. The travel on the north-south road which led to Egypt was diverted to pass

through the "Main Street," and was controlled, no doubt, by officials stationed in the gateways. The eastern wall stood on the sheer cliff which bounds the river bank, and access to the water was maintained by a covered stairway built of granite rubble, which descended the cliff to the edge of the Nile water. This stairway consisted of an older upper part erected in the Middle Kingdom, when the Nile was higher than it is now, and of a later lower part added in the New Kingdom to carry the covered stair down to the lower level of the Nile as it was in that time. Now during Dynasty XII it was the custom to



Tomb of Iduw, Giza, Dynasty VI; north wall of offering room; mourning scenes.



Tomb of Iduw, Giza, Dynasty VI; façade. Long offering formula below; above, the following self-laudatory inscription: "I have come forth from my city. I have come down from my province. I have done the truth for its lord. I have satisfied the god with that which he loves. I have spoken good: I have repeated good. I have spoken the truth: I have acted the truth. I have given bread to the hungry and clothing to the naked. I have protected my father and been pleasant to my mother," etc.



Cemetery of the family of Cheops, Giza, the fourth street of mastabas, looking down to south.

mark the height of the Nile on the granite cliffs below both forts, and to inscribe the date as follows:

"Height of the Nile in the year 37 under the Majesty of the King of Upper and Lower Egypt, Nema'atra (Amenemhat III) living for ever and ever."

The official records show that the Nile flood rose

to a level about twenty-six feet higher than it does at present. Probably some local barrier has broken down and so caused a lowering in the bed of the river at this place, but the breaking of the barriers appears not to have affected the level of the Nile flood for any considerable distance down the river. The addition built on the end of the old river stair at Semna carries the stair down to the present

water level. It is clear, therefore, that the lowering of the river bed took place between Dynasty XII and Dynasty XVIII.

The space inside the fort walls was divided by streets and occupied by blocks of houses, of which we found four series,—Middle Kingdom, Early New Kingdom, Late New Kingdom, and Ethiopian period. The stone temples of both Semna and Kummeh were built by Thothmes I, and rebuilt or enlarged by Thothmes II, Thothmes III, and Amenophis II. And at Semna, Tirhaqa, king of Ethiopia (688-663 B. C.; Pyramid I at Nuri) built a crude-brick temple over the old temple of the New Kingdom. Under the floor of the late temple we found four statuettes of the New Kingdom, and below its level on the south a battered life-size head in granite of Sesostri III. At Kummeh two reliefs of Thothmes III were found reused as building stones in the foundations of the temple of Amenophis II, and these were removed, being replaced by iron and cement.

Mr. and Mrs. Rowe arrived from Egypt on March 17, and after initiating him into the work, I left with my family on April 2 and returned to Cairo. The Rowes remained at Semna until May 15, but we were not able to finish the western part of the fort, and must return to that another year, when we hope to discover what lies under the Tirhaqa temple in the older part of the fort.

We remained, together with Mr. and Mrs. Rowe, at Harvard Camp, Pyramids, Cairo, all summer, and resumed operations on November 1, 1924, in the cemetery of Cheops, which lies east of the First Pyramid of Giza. Here were visible the ruins of the pyramid temple of Cheops, the pyramids of the three queens of Cheops, and the rows of mastaba tombs in which were buried the sons and daughters of that king. A strip was marked out about 100 x 120 meters in area, which crossed the field from east to west from the pyramids of the queens to the eastern edge of the plateau overlooking the valley and the village called Kafr-es-Semân. At that time we had no knowledge of what the area might contain except that the visible mastabas were probably of the time of Cheops (ca. 3000 B. C.). But the moment the area was marked for excavations the methods employed by the expedition insured that whatever might be in the site was as good as found. We began in the "Queens' Street," at the southern edge of the second queen's pyramid. The slope of the rock southwards made it technically inadvisable to begin further south. The railway line which was to carry the excavated earth out to the northern edge of the rock plateau was 200 metres long at the beginning, but decreased as we worked northwards. By January 21, 1925, when I left Cairo for Boston, we had cleared five streets, and by the middle of February the whole was finished to the floors used in the Old Kingdom. The next step was the removal of these floors and the examination of the underlying debris.

During the preliminary clearing the northern tomb of each row was found to be an extraordinarily long structure formed by joining up two ordinary mastabas end to end, and covering them with a casing of Tura limestone to form one mastaba. In each case the southern half of the double mastaba was reserved for the husband, and the northern for the wife, whatever the relative rank of the two persons. Thus the mastaba G 7110 and 7120 was the tomb of Prince Ka-wa'ab and his wife, while G 7410 and 7420 was that of the Princess Meresankh and her husband. The easternmost mastaba, G 7510, the largest of all, was the tomb of a very great official named Khaef-ankh, whose wife, the Princess Hetepheres, was the subordinate personage in the tomb. In the mastaba G 7210 and 7220 the name of the Prince to whom the tomb had belonged had been erased, together with all the figures and the offering formulas,—undoubtedly by an enemy,—so that the *ka* of the Prince should suffer hunger and thirst through eternity.

North of the mastabas of Ka-wa'ab and of the Prince whose name was destroyed we found two extensive family mastabas of a later time (Dynasty VI, ca. 2600 B. C.). The chief personage of the first was a certain Qa'ar who claims the titles "chief gardener of the Pyramid of Pepy," "mayor of the pyramid city of Cheops," "chief purifying priest of the pyramid of Chephren," "mayor of the pyramid city of Mycerinus," and "writer of the King's letters, in the Presence." The owner of the second tomb was Iduw, the son of Qa'ar, who was also a priest of the pyramids of Giza and had inherited his father's title of "writer of the letters of the King, in the Presence." Unlike most of the Old Kingdom mastabas, the offering rooms were underground, cut in the rock and approached by a stair. The tomb of Iduw was the more remarkable because of the departure of some of its details from the traditional forms of Dynasty VI. On the north wall beside the entrance were mourning scenes; and in the west wall, in a niche *under* the stela, was the upper half of a figure of Iduw, showing him emerging from the earth,—that is, from the grave,—in order to receive the offering placed before the niche.*

In the course of the second clearing of the area the "new tomb" was discovered,—that which contained the names of King Sneferuw, the predecessor of Cheops. The first indication was a rectangular strip of plaster of Paris on the surface of the rock. Under this was found masonry set in plaster of Paris. The masonry filled a stairway leading down to a low tunnel cut in the rock and also filled with masonry. The tunnel led to the side of a great vertical shaft, likewise filled with masonry. The surface above the orifice of the shaft was found packed with blocks of stone, so as to resemble the rock surface around it in order to

*Illustrated on page 13, Bulletin No. 136.

conceal the actual location of the shaft itself. The masonry was removed from the vertical shaft to a depth of fifty feet, when a closed niche in the western wall was exposed and found to contain, not the burial, but a sacrificial deposit of the bones of a bull, a mat, and some beer jars. At a depth of ninety feet the doorway of the burial chamber, blocked with masonry, was encountered, and the burial seen to consist of an alabaster sarcophagus, vessels of alabaster and bronze, and a mass of decayed furniture of gilded wood. On the coffin was a gilded mat bearing the names of Sneferuw. This is the only intact tomb of an important person ever discovered of this period.

Owing to the importance of the tomb and the great difficulties involved in recording the contents, after a consultation between M. Lacau, Director-General of the Egyptian Department of Antiquities,

and Mr. Alan Rowe, who was acting head of the expedition, it was decided to seal up the tomb to await my return to Egypt.

REISNER.



The great mound of debris excavated from the two western streets and dumped over the edge of the rock plateau at Giza, looking south from the fields below.

Edward Jackson Holmes

MR. HOLMES was appointed Director *pro tempore*, without salary, at the regular quarterly meeting of the Trustees on April 16. Since his appointment in 1910 to the Board of Trustees, Mr. Holmes has zealously supported the interests of the Museum and has been instrumental in both Europe and America in securing for its collections objects of distinguished merit. For some years he has been a member of the Committee on the Museum and Chairman of the Visiting Committee to the Chinese and Japanese Department.

Appointment of the Secretary

MR. ASHTON SANBORN, the announcement of whose appointment as Acting Librarian of the Museum appeared in the issue of the Bulletin for February, 1922, was appointed Secretary of the Museum, to succeed Mr. Gilman, with charge of Publications, in addition to his work as Librarian, at a meeting of the Board of Trustees on April 16, 1925.

Notes

THE NEW WING FOR WESTERN ART. The building of the new section of the Museum is progressing steadily, the foundation piers being sunk daily in accordance with the time schedule for this part of the work. It is estimated that the building will be completed in ten months, or about February, 1926. The installation of objects and of colonial and foreign rooms will undoubtedly require an additional six months. This new section of the Museum will therefore probably be opened to the public in the autumn of next year. The aim and scope of these new exhibitions in the Department of Western Art will be outlined in a forthcoming number of the Bulletin.

CONCERTS IN THE MUSEUM. The free public concerts, made possible during the past four years by generous gifts from friends of the Museum and by an additional contribution last season from the Juilliard Musical Foundation, will of necessity be postponed until after the removal of the scaffolding erected for the installation of the Sargent mural paintings. It is proposed to give the concerts in the fall after the unveiling of the new decorations.

Special Exhibitions

SARGENT EXHIBITION. Paintings, water-colors, and drawings by the late John Singer Sargent were shown from April 29 until May 31 in the West Gallery off the Rotunda. This impromptu showing was preliminary to a comprehensive Memorial Exhibition of Mr. Sargent's work which will be opened next autumn, when the mural decorations, completed just before his death and already received at the Museum, will be unveiled. These decorations are designed for the ceilings of the vault over the main stairway and of the gallery-corridors adjacent to the stairway and for the lunette over the entrance to the Library.

LOAN EXHIBIT OF CHINESE PORCELAIN MADE FOR EUROPEAN MARKETS. Through the kindness of Mr. and Mrs. Henry Forbes Bigelow the Museum has placed on view during the summer months a part of their collection of Chinese porcelain such as was imported and used by Europeans during the latter half of the eighteenth century. In the nineteenth century this ware came to be known as "Lowestoft" through an erroneous idea of its origin. It is an Oriental ware which