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EGYPT EXPLORATION FUND

SPECIAL EXTRA REPORT

THE SEASON'S WORK

AT

AHNAS AND BENI HASAN

CONTAINING THE REPORTS OF

M. NAVILLE, MR. PERCY E. NEWBERRY

AND

MR. FRASER

(WITH SEVEN ILLUSTRATIONS)

1890—1891

PUBLISHED BY

GILBERT & RIVINGTON, LIMITED
ST. JOHN'S HOUSE, CLERKENWELL, LONDON, E.C.

AND SOLD AT

THE OFFICES OF THE EGYPT EXPLORATION FUND
17, OXFORD MANSION, OXFORD CIRCUS, LONDON, W.

1891

Price Two Shillings and Sixpence

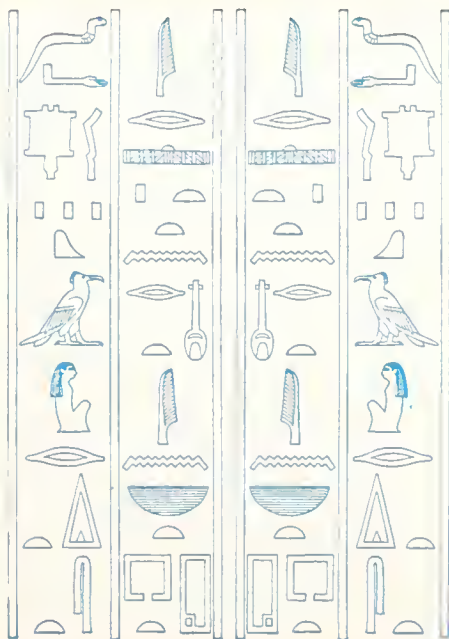
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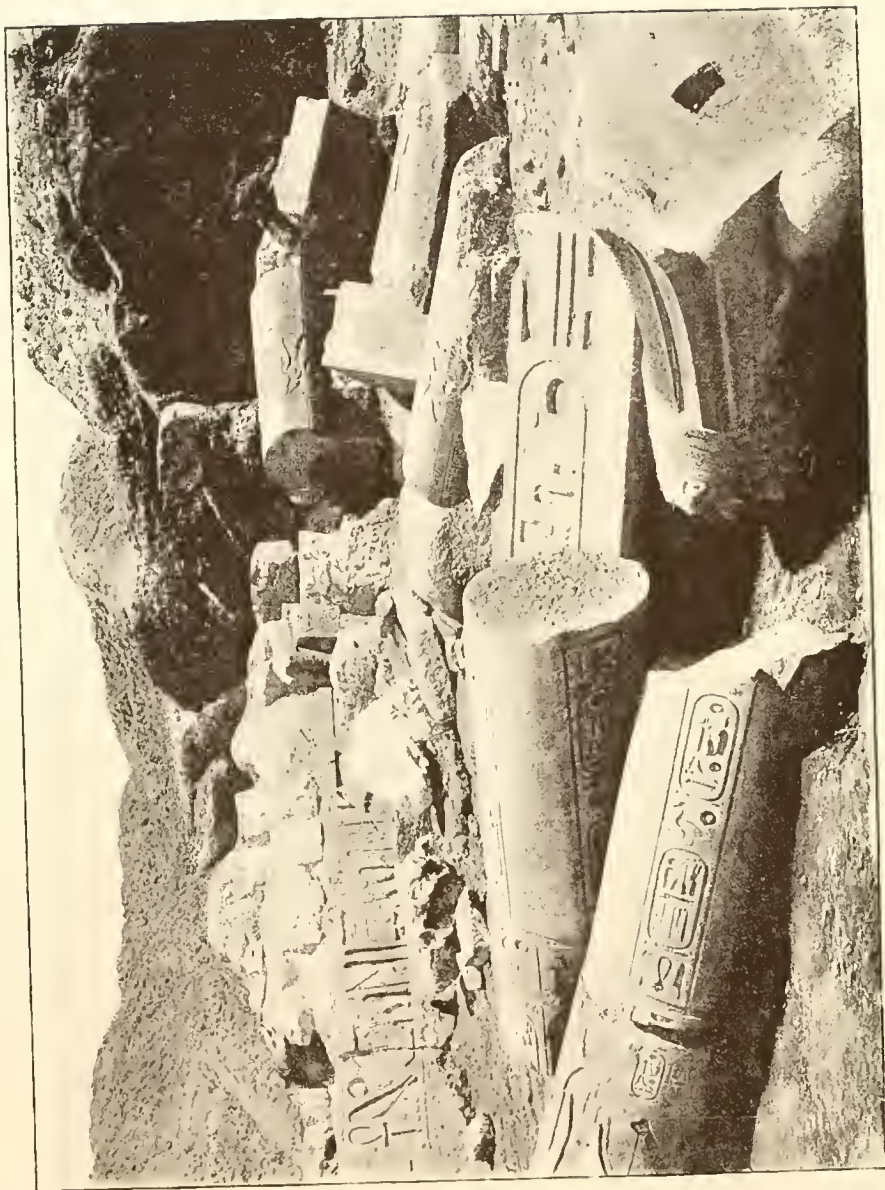
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THE SEASON'S WORK
AT
AHNAS AND BENI HASAN.



EXCAVATIONS AT AHIYAS (HEXASTICH).

Frontispiece.

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AHNAS AND BENI HASAN.

THE mounds of Ahnas, alias Henassieh, alias Ahnas el Medinet, alias Henassieh el Medinet, have long been identified by Egyptologists with  *Ha-Khenensu*, the *Hininsi* of Assyrian inscriptions, the "Heracleopolis" of Greek historians and geographers, and the "Hanes" of the Bible. These mounds are situate some twelve miles inland from Beni-Sûef, and seventy-three miles south of Cairo. They represent all that is left of the capital city of the 20th, or Heracleopolite Nome, which was the seat of government of the obscure IXth and Xth Egyptian Dynasties. That Ha-Khenensu was in its foundation a city of prehistoric antiquity may be gathered from the place it occupies in the mythological records of Egypt; for, according to a text quoted by Brugsch (*Dict. Géographique*, vol. i. p. 604) it was there that Ra, second king of the First Dynasty of the Gods, began his reign upon earth.

Twelve years ago, in that remarkable paper which has been aptly called his archæological will, Mariette—then in fast-failing health, and foreseeing the near end of his own brilliant career—drew the attention of the French Academy to the importance of various sites in Egypt which up to that time had been either quite neglected, or but imperfectly explored. Among these, Ahnas occupied a prominent place. "C'est à Ahnas el Medinet," he said, "représentée aujourd'hui par des ruines assez étendues qui n'ont été jusqu'ici l'objet d'aucune investigation sérieuse, que nous devons essayer de faire revivre des souvenirs des IX^e et X^e Dynasties" (Institut de France; Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, Séance Publique Annuelle, 21st Novembre, 1879). Three years later, Professor R. Stuart Poole again urged the claims of this site to systematic investigation. "Temple and town, and the unknown necropolis that must lie in the Libyan waste, should be excavated," he wrote, "for the materials of a lost book of

history. For here ruled two ancient dynasties of kings at the second capital of Egypt" (*Cities of Egypt*, ch. iii. p. 33). The Egypt Exploration Fund was founded a few months after the publication of *Cities of Egypt*, and Ahnas was one of the sites first proposed for excavation by Sir Erasmus Wilson. Though at that time impracticable, the project was never abandoned; and at last, in 1890, it was decided that M. Naville should be invited to undertake the task so long deferred. He did not, however, actually begin work at Ahnas till the month of January in this present year; and a summary of the results of his last campaign is here reprinted from the columns of *The Academy*, July 25th, 1891.

That excavations on so large a scale should have brought to light no vestiges of the IXth and Xth Dynasties is matter for regret, since it was at Ahnas, if anywhere, that we had reason to hope for those lost links of history. The necropolis also, which in Mariette's time was yet undiscovered, had meanwhile been found and dug over by Arab and Greek plunderers. The mounds have, nevertheless, yielded an abundant harvest of beautiful Egyptian and Coptic sculptures, of which the former have been ceded to the Egypt Exploration Fund, the latter having been reserved by the local authorities for the National Egyptian Museum at Ghizeh.

The well-known rock-cut chambers of Beni Hasan, excavated in the face of the limestone cliffs on the east bank of the Nile, 170 miles above Cairo, date, as now established by the researches of Mr. Percy E. Newberry, from the XIth to the XIIth Egyptian Dynasties. They were made for the great vassal princes who ruled at that time in Middle Egypt. Those princes were probably the lineal descendants of the independent petty sovereigns of earlier times. Their position under the Pharaohs of the XIth and XIIth Dynasties closely resembled that of the semi-independent princes of India at the present day. Nominally, they were Nomarchs, or Governors, owing allegiance to the reigning Pharaoh; but they were, in fact, each within the limits of his own province, absolute rulers over the lives and property of the people of their district. They held their provinces as fiefs, their duty towards the Pharaoh being to preserve territorial boundaries, to regulate the work of irrigation, and to furnish fighting men in case of need. Like the Indian princes, they had not only their courts, court ceremonies, and household troops, but an immense body of skilled serfs, or domestic craftsmen, who had their workshops and dwellings within the precincts of the palace walls. Here

the goldsmith, the weaver, the dyer, the cabinet-maker, the glass-blower, the shoemaker, the mason, the bricklayer, the carpenter, the rope-maker, the potter, the painter, the carver, the metal-founder, and every other artisan whose skill contributes to the necessities and business of a highly civilized age, plied his trade in the service of his lord. And it is because these craftsmen are represented on the walls of the Beni Hasan tombs drawn and coloured to the life, handling their tools, and surrounded by all the appliances of their trades, that these fast-perishing works of ancient art are so invaluable to the student of archæology. Each wall-painting is an illustrated page from the history of social science between four and five thousand years ago. Here, too, we see the Nomarch receiving deputations of foreigners, each tribe depicted with its racial characteristics and its distinctive costume. And here again we find accurate and most interesting representations of the domestic animals, the birds, fishes, flowers, fruits and trees of the Nile valley. The inscriptions interspersed throughout these tableaux are of the highest historical value, some being of very considerable length, and containing not only important biographical particulars of the lives of the former occupants of the Beni-Hasan tombs, but also throwing much light upon the details of local government in Egypt at a time supposed to be coeval with the Hebrew patriarchs.

During the first half of the present century, when Champollion, Rossellini, Wilkinson and Lepsius visited Egypt, these wall-paintings were yet in fair preservation, and many of the most striking among them were incorporated in the works of those great pioneers of modern research. Yet to none of them does it seem to have occurred that mere selections were of comparatively little value, and that for purposes of serious study, no Egyptian monument could possibly yield its full measure of instruction, unless copied as a whole. It is, however, to be remembered that those who could interpret hieroglyphic texts were then but few; that photography was not yet invented; and that the work done by those earlier labourers in the field of Egyptology was in truth stupendous. The fact nevertheless remains that few texts were fully transcribed, either in the Beni-Hasan tombs or elsewhere, and that all copies of inscriptions made in Egypt before the era of the camera and the magnesium light are more or less incorrect. It therefore becomes our obvious duty to make faithful transcripts of all that yet remains of these invaluable records—records which have long been the main source of

our knowledge of the manners, customs, arts and industries of the most highly civilized and interesting people of the ancient world.

It is in recognition of this duty, and as a practical protest against the unchecked and barbarous damage recently done to the historic monuments of Beni Hasan, of el Bersheh, and of Tell el Amarna, that the President and Committee of the Egypt Exploration Fund have entered upon so vast an undertaking as the Archæological Survey of Egypt.

A. B. E.

October, 1891.



M. NAVILLE'S CAMP AT AHNAS (HENASSIEH).

EXCAVATIONS AT HENASSIEH (HANES).

THIS year's campaign was devoted to the exploration of Heracleopolis Magna, the Hanes of the Bible; of the city which was situate twelve miles west of the present Beni Sûef, near the Bahr Yussuf; and of the necropolis on the opposite side of the canal, in the ridge of hills which separates the valley of the Nile from the southern part of the Fayûm.

We began with the necropolis, and we settled in the desert not very far from the village of Isedment el Gebel. I had explored the place the year before, and I had seen then a great number of pits which seemed to have been recently plundered. Greeks from Medinet el Fayûm had worked there; but I doubt very much whether they were largely rewarded by the result of their work. The necropolis extends from the limits of the valley towards the hills, on a slightly sloping and undulating ground. The tombs are most numerous on two rocky heights, which rise above the others at the entrance of a wide concavity by which the ridge is interrupted, and which is the way to the Fayûm. In that part the tombs are rectangular pits, at the bottom of which there are two, and sometimes three, side chambers. Many of them had been filled with sand, and we cleared them with the hope of discovering the original interments;

but everywhere we found that the tombs had been re-used in later times, plundered of their valuables, even of the coffins, and employed for bodies evidently belonging to the poorer class. They had no coffins, were generally not embalmed, and were lying over or under a mat of reeds. With the bones were sometimes found small baskets containing food for the deceased, chiefly nuts of the dôm palm and bread; sometimes also poppies and pigeons' eggs. Here and there were a few remains of the former occupants—for instance, a piece of a handsome funerary cloth on which the weighing of the soul had been painted, fragments of papyri, and pieces of limestone hieroglyphic tablets, evidently belonging to the XVIIIth and XIXth Dynasties. I should not wonder if even these were not the original occupants, and if the pits went back up as far as the XIth or XIIth Dynasty.

On one of the hills, quite at the top, and at a very small depth, among rubbish of broken bricks and chips of stone, we found about twenty coffins, most of them of women. They generally fell to pieces when they were moved. Two of them, which we took away, were made more carefully; the mummy being in a cartonnage and enclosed in a double coffin painted red. They all bear the characters of a very late epoch; some of them are even of the worst Roman style. They are without names, and without ornaments or amulets, except necklaces of very small glass beads or small shells.

In the lower part of the necropolis, the coffins are plain rectangular boxes without any ornament or painting. One or two red vases of common pottery were put in the pit, which was not deep, and of the size of the coffins. Twice we discovered mummy-cases belonging to an older epoch, which had been re-used, one of them of the XXth Dynasty, the other possibly as old as the XIth. The mummies which they contained were quite out of proportion with the coffins. The most plentiful crop we had in the tombs were hundreds of wooden or terra-cotta statuettes, *ushablis* of the coarsest

description, some of which were mere little sticks on which eyes and a nose had been indicated with ink, and where the name was written in hieratic. These statuettes belong to various epochs; and, although many of them are undoubtedly very late, I believe that some of them are remains of the XXth and even of the XIXth Dynasty. In a few large pits there were at the top painted coffins, and underneath heaps of bones and of mummified bodies, the whole having been thrown in without any order.

Finding that the necropolis gave so little result, and that there was nothing belonging to older epochs, we left the desert, and went over to the mounds of Henassieh. The site of the old city is indicated by several mounds of such an extent that they are called in the place itself, Ummel Kimām, "the mother of mounds." Several villages are built over them, the largest being Henassieh el Medinet, in the name of which we may recognize a corruption of the old "Hanes." All over the mounds, scattered blocks of red granite show that there must have been some construction of importance; but nothing in the nature of the soil or in the appearance of the locality shows distinctly, as at Bubastis, where the temple must have been. Therefore it was necessary to trench and dig pits in all the different parts of the Tell. This work was done on a large scale, for we removed more than 40,000 cubic metres of earth in order to ascertain where the temple had been, and to lay bare what is left of it. We began near two parallel rows of standing granite columns without capitals, of Roman or Byzantine aspect, locally called "the Keniseh," the church. There was nothing in the space between the two colonnades, which is more than fifty yards wide; but on the west there was another hall with limestone columns bearing well-sculptured Corinthian capitals. The whole seems to me to have been a Roman temple. In digging under the pavement of the western hall, we reached a small staircase leading to a tank built of red bricks and cement, evidently a bath.

Unfortunately, in the night which followed its discovery it was broken to pieces by the inhabitants, who build all their walls and houses with Roman bricks found on the Tell.

In two other places were several shafts of red granite columns lying on the ground. Researches made all around, and even underneath, did not lead to any result; except the discovery of a fragment of mosaic. These columns belonged to Coptic churches; the Coptic cross being engraved on several of them.

We dug also near two huge granite bases, which looked like Roman work. The excavations showed that they had supported two large columns at the entrance of a Coptic church, now entirely destroyed, but of which nearly all the materials were left. They consisted of columns in grey marble with Corinthian capitals, some of which had, instead of astragalus, a Coptic cross, also architraves and friezes well sculptured with flowers, arabesques, and animals, and even with mythological subjects. I should not wonder if a sculptured stone, bearing a coarse representation of Leda and her swan, which was in a fellah's house, had come from here.

In digging in a great depression in the western part of the mounds, at a depth of about four yards, we at last hit upon a granite monolithic column complete, with a palm-leaf capital. We concentrated all our researches around it, and we found that we had reached a vestibule which must have been one of the side entrances of the temple of Heracleopolis. The remains of it consist of six columns 17 ft. high, one of which only is perfect, with sculptures representing Rameses II. making offerings to various divinities, and in the intervals the name of Menephthah, the son of Rameses. The architraves which were supported by those columns are cut in a building with the cartouches of Usertesen II. of the XIIth Dynasty. The six columns were in one line. The length of the vestibule is 61 ft., and it was open on the water side. The

basements of the walls on the three other sides, and even a few layers of stones have been preserved. This basement is in hard limestone of Gebel Ahmar, which cannot be burnt for lime; it bears in hieroglyphs, sometimes more than 2 ft. high, the following inscription:

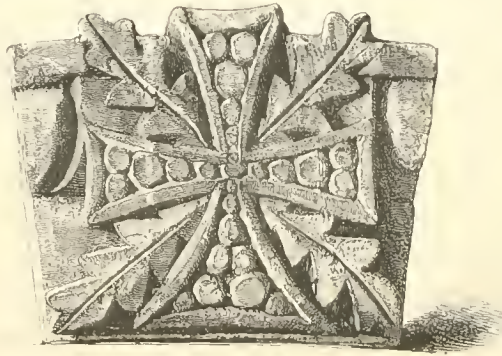
“The living Horus, the mighty Bull who loves Ma, the lord of panegyries like his father Phthah Tonen, King Rameses, erected this building to his father Hershefi [Arsaphes], the lord of the two lands [Egypt].”

It appears from this description that the temple was dedicated to Arsaphes, a form of Osiris generally represented with a ram's head. This divinity is sculptured on two of the columns. The vestibule contained statues of which there are a few remains. On the southern side, in the corner, was a sitting statue of Rameses II. of heroic size, in red limestone. We found it broken at the waist, but nearly perfect. It was painted in bright red colour, still very vivid on some parts of the throne; the stripes of the head-dress were alternately blue and yellow, like the granite Rameses II., now at Geneva, which I discovered at Bubastis. The inscription on the lower part of the base is a dedication to Arsaphes. On the same side was the bust of a red granite statue of natural size without any name, and also a group of two very weathered kneeling figures. In the opposite corner was a statue of Rameses II., symmetrical to the other, but broken in several fragments. The head had disappeared.

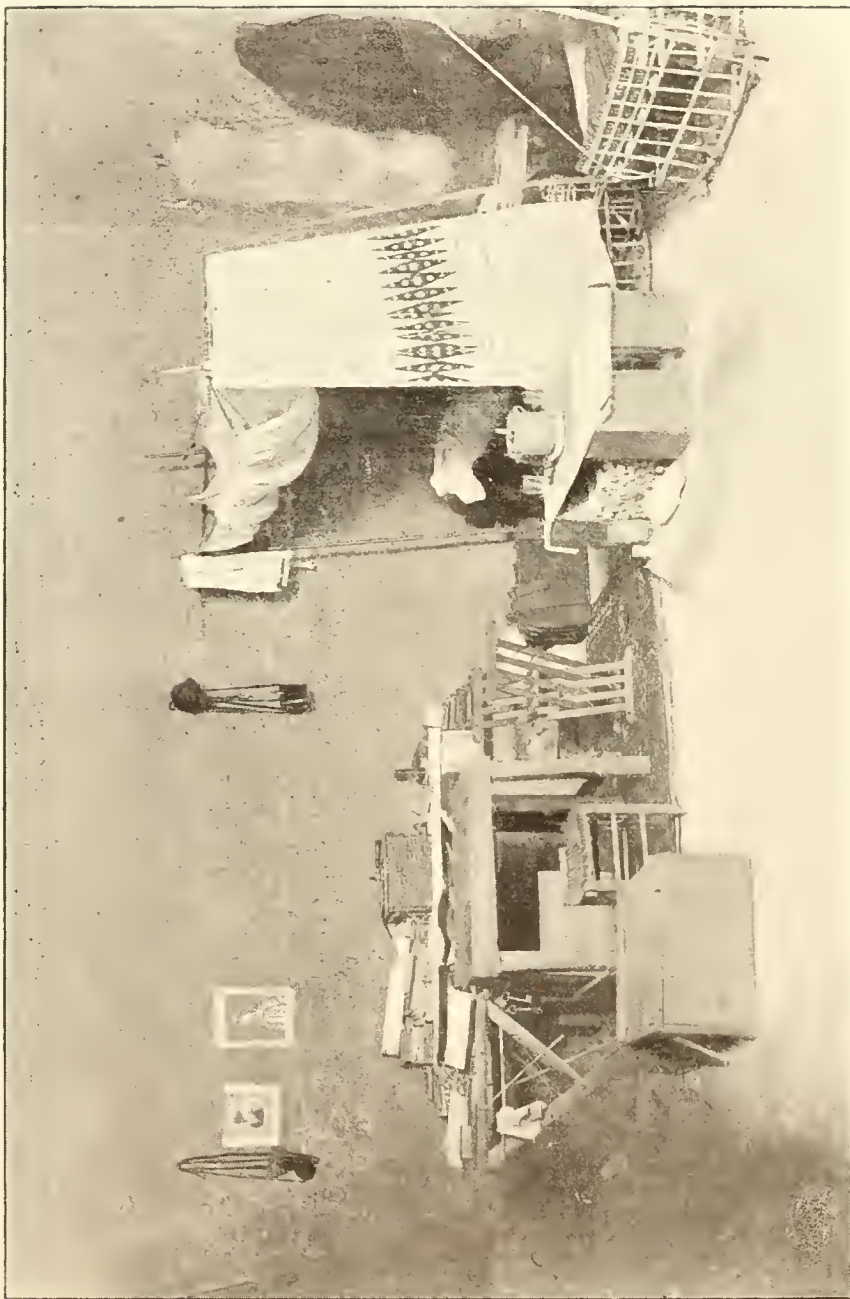
From the vestibule, a door led into the inner part of the temple. We had great hopes that behind the basement of hard limestone we should find constructions of importance; but our disappointment was complete. The temple, except the vestibule, was built of soft white limestone; and the result of this is that it has been entirely carried away. We saw, still *in situ*, bases of columns more than 4 ft. in diameter, showing that they must have been of considerable height. But except a few stray blocks here and there, with a few

hieroglyphic signs, the whole temple of Arsaphes has been destroyed and employed for building purposes; the material having been taken for the Roman temple, and then for the Coptic churches, of which there were several. So we can assert that beyond this vestibule nothing remains of the temple of Arsaphes. The considerable excavations which we made all around, down to the original pavement, to a depth which was more than 18 ft., show that there is no hope of finding any more traces of this famous building. There may have been other temples of Arsaphes in the city; but it seems certain that this was the principal sanctuary of Hanes, for in the Great Harris papyrus, Rameses III., mentioning the chief temples of Egypt to which he gave slaves, quotes "the temple of Hershefi the King of the two lands." This title of the god, which is characteristic, is that which is mentioned in the dedication of Rameses II. in the vestibule. I cannot believe that there is much more to be expected from excavations on the mounds of Henassieh.

EDOUARD NAVILLE.



COPTIC CROSS FROM THE RUINS OF AN ANCIENT COPTIC CHURCH AT AHNAS (HENASSIEH).



OUR DOMESTIC TOWER.

THE TOMBS OF BENI HASAN.

THE celebrated tombs of Beni Hasan, where the Archæological Survey party began work last November, are situate about half-way up the Gebel Beni Hasan, a hill of the Arab chain which overhangs the Nile about one hundred and seventy miles south of Cairo. A short distance further to the south, stands, on the same bank of the river, the picturesque little village from which the hill and the tombs derive their name. At the beginning of the present century there were three villages of the "sons of Hasan" hereabouts, but only one of these is now inhabited. The others were plundered and destroyed by Mehemet Ali's soldiers, under the pretext that the inhabitants were murderers and thieves, and their ruins may still be seen on the edge of the desert between the Gebel and the Nile. Even at the present day, the natives of the district are considered to be dangerous characters, and we were warned by the police authorities before going among them to be always on our guard. During our six months' residence in their neighbourhood, however, we seldom met with anything but courtesy and civility. When we wanted their assistance we had no difficulty in procuring it, and as workers we found them not much, if at all, inferior to their fellow-countrymen of the Delta or the Fayûm.

The survey party, comprising Mr. Fraser, myself and our servants, reached Beni Hasan by boat from Minieh on the evening of the 25th November, shortly after sunset. The following morning we disembarked our goods and chattels, hired camels from the village sheikh to convey our things to the

tombs, and by midday we were, with all our possessions, on the breezy heights of the Gebel. We selected one of the uninscribed tombs for our abode, and in less than a week were comfortably ensconced in it. We had two native palm-stick beds, over which we suspended our mosquito curtains by means of palm-sticks. The whole-page illustration, from a photograph by Mr. Fraser, shows my own corner of our abode. The mysterious-looking, cylindrical objects stored under the table to the right are my rolls of tracings. Our servants (two men and a boy) slept in a small circular tent which we rigged up for their especial benefit; and we also put up Mr. Fraser's tent inside our tomb, to serve as a "dark room" for photographic purposes. In short, this rock-cut chamber, which some ancient Egyptian had excavated for his eternal resting-place, was speedily turned into an inviting and homely-looking abode. Our Arab friends always called it *quies*—"pretty"; and one distinguished visitor even went to the length of saying that it was "a house fit for a king." Royalty might not, however, have approved of our fellow-lodgers, for it abounded in beetles, and was much favoured by bats. The ceiling also was perforated with hornets' nests, and the cliff above our heads was a meeting-place for jackals at night. These, however, were minor and very unimportant discomforts.



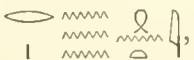



The tombs, numbering in all some thirty-nine, are placed in a line, and extend along the face of the cliff. They all front the west, and are packed so close together as to present the appearance of a row of houses in a street. From the Nile below, they look like a series of pigeon-holes. Before their entrance is a kind of esplanade from which there is a noble view over the Nile valley—from near Roda on the south to Minieh and Kom el Akhmar on the north. Immediately opposite, just across the river, is the Coptic village of Abu Kerkas, behind which stretches, as far as the eye can see, the Libyan desert.


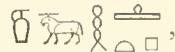
The principal tombs are entered by large doorways hewn in the rock, and form spacious and comparatively well-lighted rooms supported by columns forming a part of the rock. Some of them have architectural fronts—a portico supported by two octagonal columns. The walls inside have been smoothed and covered with a thin coat of plaster : upon this latter are the paintings and inscriptions for which the tombs are justly celebrated. At the present time there are about 12,000 square feet of painted wall surface in the group : in former times there must have been considerably more. Much of this is in a fearful state of dilapidation, and year by year it is getting worse. Large flakes of painted plaster are falling from the walls ; many of the scenes have faded away so completely as to be hardly distinguishable ; and in a few years' time, if active measures are not taken to preserve the tombs, little will remain on their walls to tell of their former beauty. Knowing that they could do but little, if anything, to arrest this work of mutilation and destruction, the Committee of the Egypt Exploration Fund decided to at least preserve a faithful record of what yet remains ; and it was with the object of making plans, tracings of all the paintings, and coloured copies of the most interesting scenes, that Mr. Fraser and myself (and later on Mr. Blackden, an artist of great ability) proceeded to Egypt last winter. We worked there during the whole winter season and far on into the spring, and by means of ladders, a trestle, and tracing paper,* succeeded in doing nearly all that could be done “to preserve a faithful record of what yet remains.” The tombs have been surveyed and planned by Mr. Fraser, and I have brought back to England outline tracings of all the wall-paintings in six out of the eight painted tombs, as well as copies of all the hieroglyphic inscriptions, a fine series of coloured drawings by Mr. Blackden, and nearly a hundred photographs. At the present time I am preparing this mass of material for publication, and in

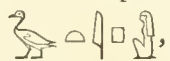


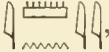

* See full-page Illustration facing p. 19.

my forthcoming volume, which I hope will be ready for distribution to subscribers in March next, I shall give in the plates drawings of the scenes which are still preserved. The book will also contain full explanations of all the scenes, with hieroglyphic texts, and translations.



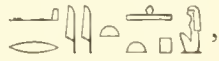

A brief description of some of the most interesting scenes, and an account of the inscriptions, may not be without interest in this report.

Twelve of the tombs in the group are inscribed. Of these twelve, but eight contain wall-paintings. Three alone are dated; but curiously enough, from these three we can with tolerable certainty date the remainder. The most ancient are, without doubt, those at the southern end of the group, and for several reasons (which will be stated fully in my forthcoming volume) we may put down tomb No. 29 as the earliest. It was excavated for a prince of the Oryx nome and Lord of the town of Herur, named , Baqta (I.). By his wife, named , Tahutiqa, this prince had a son, named after his father, Baqta (II.), who inherited the principedom of the nome, and was, at his death, buried in an adjoining tomb (No. 33). These two tombs probably date from the beginning of the XIIth Dynasty. The next tomb in point of age is tomb No. 27. This was hewn out of the rock for a man named , Remushenta, also a prince of the Oryx nome and Lord of , Herur. He was not improbably a son of Baqta II., though no direct evidence of his being so remains. Tomb No. 15 was excavated for a son of Remushenta, by his wife , Hoteperāu, named Baqta (III.). He also was a prince of the Oryx nome and Lord of Herur. Of his family but little is known, except that he had a daughter (whose portrait is painted on the north wall of his tomb) named , Neferheput, which means "Beautiful of rudders." Tomb No. 17 was made for a "son

of Baqt" called , Kheti, and for his wife , Khnumhotep. Kheti was a distinguished soldier, and in an inscription above his portrait on the north wall of his tomb he is called "General of the soldiers in all places." His tomb is apparently a copy of No. 17, and many of the scenes on the walls are, one might almost say, facsimiled, from the corresponding scenes in tomb No. 17. A great portion of the designs are here devoted to gymnastic exercises, especially wrestling, and on the east wall are no less than 150 groups of wrestlers in almost every conceivable position. There are many little descriptive notes written over the various groups in cursive hieroglyphs. One of these reads, "You are a coward, your heart trembles." Another runs, "If you wish to get up, say 'dead!'"

Still taking the tombs in chronological order, the next to be mentioned is No. 14. In this tomb I discovered several inscriptions hitherto unknown. It was also hewn for a prince of the Oryx nome and Lord of Herur, named Khnumhotep (I.). He was the son of a lady named Baqt, and married a beautiful woman whose portrait is painted next to his own in his tomb. She was named , Set-a-pe, and was entitled "the mistress of all women." According to an inscription in this tomb, Khnumhotep (I.) was raised to the rank of a prince by Amenemhat I., whose cartouche may still be seen on the right-hand wall as you enter. By his wife Set-a-pe, he apparently had two children, one a son named , Nekht, the other a daughter named , Baqt. Nekht inherited the principedom after his father's death; but it does not seem that he held it for long, as it soon passed out of the hands of this family into those of a man named , Amen, the son of a soldier by a lady named , Henu. This great prince Amen* was buried in the grandest and most magnificent of all

* We have seen that Kheti was called "General of the forces in all places." It is, in fact, within the bounds of possibility that he was Amen's father.

the tombs at Beni Hasan (No. 2). An inscription on the south wall of the entrance gives its date—"the forty-third year of the reign of Usertesen I., the second month of the season of inundation, the day 15." A long inscription below this gives us an account of his life and deeds. Other inscriptions in the same tomb name his wife, a "priestess of Hathor and Lady of the Valley," called , Hotept, and his eldest son, Khnumhotept. At Ameni's death, the principedom of the Oryx nome reverted back to the family of Khnumhotept (I.). During Ameni's rule (or perhaps before) Nekht had died, and the head of the family was his sister Baqt. She had, it appears, married a certain , Nehera, "governor of the New Towns," and son of a woman named , Arithotep, and by him she had a son named Khnumhotept. This man, Khnumhotept II., has left us a most interesting and important biographical inscription—the one well known to students of Egyptology as the "Great inscription of Beni Hasan." It is sculptured around the lower part of the walls of his tomb (No. 3) and consists of no less than 222 lines. On the south wall of the tomb are represented the various members of his household: his wife Kheti, a daughter of the prince of a neighbouring nome, all her children, and his concubine, a woman named , Djat. From his biography we learn that his eldest son, named Nekht (II.), was made a prince of the Jackal nome by Amenemhat II., and that his second son, Khnumhotept (III.), was made a *smer uati āu* or "great courtier," by the same monarch. By his concubine he had three children, two sons and a daughter. One of the former was afterwards an hereditary prince, and the tomb which he contemplated excavating at Beni Hasan to contain his body was begun but never finished. Its portico was nearly completed and the interior chamber only just begun; but he, nevertheless, had his

name carved up so that he who runs may read the simple inscription :



“The hereditary prince, Khnumhotep, born of the Lady of the house, Djat.”

The wall-paintings of these tombs furnish us with the fullest, and by far the most curious, representations we possess of the daily life of the ancient Egyptians of the middle Kingdom. There is hardly an incident in ordinary life that is not here delineated. We see represented the princes in their robes with their wives and children ; their household officers, from the herald to the sandal-bearer ; their agriculturists, and their artisans. Even their barbers, their chiropodists, their pet dogs and their monkeys are figured. In the tomb of Ameni are represented the personal attendants on the Lady Hotept. These are her fan-bearer and mirror-bearer, a woman carrying ointments, another with linen, and another with jewelry. Goldsmiths, potters, weavers, glass-blowers, bakers, ropemakers, laundresses, carpenters, artists and sculptors are represented at work. There are several battle scenes, in one of which we see a party of Egyptians attacking a fortress with the testudo. There are also hunting and fowling scenes ; and in the tomb of Baqta (III.), No. 15, are figured a large number of wild animals and birds, each with its ancient name written above it in hieroglyphic characters. In the same tomb are also represented many (if not all) the games, from draughts to playing with the ball, that were indulged in on the banks of the Nile more than 4500 years ago. And what makes all these pictures doubly interesting is the fact that they nearly all have explanatory notes in hieroglyphs written just above them. Over the head of the chiropodist, for instance, is the inscription *art ant*, “doing the toe nails.”

It should be added that in the tomb of Khnumhotep I. (No. 14 of our survey) I have discovered a group of foreigners

which finds a parallel in that of his grandson, Khnumhotep II. The scene here represents seven persons being led by an Egyptian officer. Three of the seven figures are warriors with yellow skin, blue eyes (now turned to green), and thick and matted red hair, in which are stuck five or six ostrich feathers. They are clothed in red garments fringed at the bottom; in the right hand they carry ostrich feathers; in the left a curved club. The remaining four figures of the group represent women. They also are fair-skinned and blue-eyed, and have light brown or red hair. Two of them carry children in a basket slung over their shoulders, and two carry a red coloured monkey on their backs. These peculiarities point to their being Libyans. A facsimile of the group, of the size of the original, has been made by Mr. Blackden, uniform with the rest of his full-size facsimiles of the wall-paintings of this group of tombs. It is extraordinary that this group of Libyans should have been overlooked not only by the artists of the French Commission, but by Lepsius, and all subsequent travellers.

Finally, the history of the powerful family founded by Khnumhotep is now traced through no less than five generations, from the time of Amenemhat I., through the reigns of Usertesen I. and Amenemhat II., to the sixth year of the reign of Usertesen II.; and evidence has been found which proves that the majority of the tombs in the Southern group (namely, the tombs of Baqt, Kheti, Remushenta, Baqta I. and Baqta II.) date from the XIth and not the end of the XIIth Dynasty, as has been before generally supposed.

PERCY E. NEWBERRY.



TOMB OF AMENT. BENI HASAN.



THE CLIFFS AT BENI HASAN.

THE CLEARANCE OF THE TOMBS AT BENI HASAN.

ON arriving with Mr. Newberry at Beni Hasan (November 25th, 1890), my first work was to construct a scaffolding consisting of two trestles and some ladders. The ladders were used by us continually all the time we were at work, and one of the trestles was afterwards adapted and used by Mr. Blackden while painting.

During the month of December, I employed parties of men to clear all the tombs down to floor level. In this way the two tombs of Baqt and Kheti, which appeared to have been partially cleared by the authorities of the Ghizeh Museum, were entirely cleared, and the proportions of the tombs can now be clearly seen.

During the clearing of the tombs, an interesting discovery was made of ancient stone chisels with which the surfaces of the walls had been dressed down. They are chipped out of the boulders which abound here, the material being a hard, fine, crystalline limestone. They appear to have been used with both hands, and not to have had any hafts.

During the clearing, a good deal of Coptic pottery was

found, most of it broken. Such of the unbroken pieces as were not taken by the Museum Inspector, I stored down one of the tomb-wells before leaving.

From the date when the clearance of the tombs was finished until early in April, I went on with the measurements and survey of the tombs; but having then received permission to clear out the rest of the wells, I started a gang of men in Khnumhotep's great tomb. The well proved to be only 28 feet deep, though large in the other dimensions. In it was found part of one of the inside columns of the tomb, weighing 1 ton 6 cwt. With Mr. Blackden's aid, this was successfully raised, and has been left in the tomb. The sepulchral chamber, which had been rifled, contained fragments of pottery belonging to the early burial; also pieces of the great wooden coffin, and the table of offerings—a plain one, worked in a very poor piece of limestone. At M. Grébaut's request, I took this to the Museum of Ghizeh, on my way to England.

A gang of men who had been started on a large well in the tomb of Baqt, the son of Hoteperau, soon got into stones; and this well proved very troublesome. It was 80 ft. deep, and we lifted not less than forty tons of stone out of it. With the able assistance of Mr. Blackden, however, a tackle was constructed which drew up a hoist made up of an old box strengthened. By means of this, we were able to lift about 3 cwts. of stone at a time, with only seven or eight men on the hauling rope.

At 80 ft. down, we found a door leading into a chamber placed S. of the well. In the centre of this chamber was another well 20 ft. deep, leading to the real burial chamber, which was made with benches along the side for the coffins. Everything had been plundered in early times, and I have reason to believe that the large stones in the well were due to the religious, or other, animus of the plunderers, who must

have taken much trouble to bring such a mass of stone in from the hill side.

Amongst the débris, I found a few clay vessels of XIIth or perhaps XIth Dynasty shapes; also a small saucer in hard stone, and a kohl pot in marble.

I succeeded in photographing the tomb-chamber by means of magnesium light.

Of the other tomb-wells cleared, the most noticeable was an undisturbed burial, seemingly of the XIIth, or early XVIIth Dynasty; the name on the plain box coffin was unfortunately illegible. The coffin was in bad condition, and not worth removing; but the inscriptions were copied. The body was laid straight, the head to the north. The vessels found with this burial were all of clay, and all broken; but 13 clay stands of various sizes were obtained perfect.

Another small well in an unfinished tomb yielded us a broken bronze battle-axe of the same pattern as those shown in the paintings, and the skull of the owner.

The well outside tomb 28, which was opened at the beginning of our work, contained a disturbed burial, with some unbroken clay vessels, apparently of the XIIIth, or XIVth, Dynasty, to judge by the shapes; also part of a finely cut stela in three fragments. These objects, at the request of the Ghizeh Museum authorities, were handed over to their inspector.

I was able, however, to obtain photographs of the pottery and the stela; also of a fragment of a Greek inscription found in tomb 32, and of the pottery found in the other wells cleared later on.

Before leaving, I painted the numbers of the tombs (for the purpose of the survey) above the door in each tomb, well out of reach of the Arabs.

I continued my measurements and survey until June 6th, when, my health not being very good, I decided to return.

The survey of the Northern and Southern groups of tombs on both the upper and lower levels is now completed in the rough. Certain points, however, remain to be finished next season ; but will not require much time.

GEORGE WILLOUGHBY FRASER.



OUR ARAB BOY, MAHOMMED.

LONDON -
PRINTED BY MESSRS. GILBERT AND RIVINGTON, LIMITED,
ST. JOHN'S HOUSE, CLERKENWELL, E.C.

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