

Museum of Fine Arts Bulletin

Published Bi-monthly. Subscription price, 50 cents per year postpaid. Single copies, 10 cents
Entered July 2, 1903, at Boston, Mass., as Second-Class Matter, under Act of Congress of July 16, 1894

VOL. XIII

BOSTON, DECEMBER, 1915

No. 80



Fig. 1. The Eastern Defufa (Temple II) and the camp, looking east

Accessions to the Egyptian Collections during 1914

In the following article devoted to recent excavations in Nubia by the Harvard University-Museum of Fine Arts Egyptian Expedition, Dr. George A. Reisner, Curator of Egyptian Art at the Museum and Director of the Expedition, completes the account of accessions to the Egyptian collections of the Museum during 1914, begun in the Bulletin of April last by a description of recent work about the Great Pyramids.

B. Excavations at Kerma—Hepzefa, Prince of Assiut and Governor of the Sudan

IN the report on Kerma, published in the Bulletin of last April, a type of burial of the Hyksos Period was described, in which a chief lay on a wooden bed surrounded by human sacrifices. Some of the objects found in these unusual graves were Egyptian, but most of them were un-Egyptian, like the barbarous custom of sacrificial burial itself. The strangeness of the grave furniture and the barbarity of the burial customs raised a very puzzling question as to the race to which these people belonged. That question has now been answered in the simplest possible manner by new archaeological material and by the anatomical examination of the bones carried out by Professor Elliot Smith (Manchester, England). The chiefs lying on the beds are Egyptians; the sacrifices buried around them are Nubians. Most of the other questions raised in the former report have received equally simple solutions, and the conclusions have been strengthened or confirmed. Clear proof was ob-

tained that Dongola was an Egyptian province in the Middle Empire, administered by Egyptian officials.

It will be remembered that I excavated part of the cemetery of the garrison of the Hyksos Period in the first campaign and found the graves had been dug in the débris of an older structure (see Fig. 13 of the April Bulletin, 1914). On resuming the first work was manifestly the examination of this underlying structure, which was noted not only in Mound X, but also in two other mounds (now called Mounds III and IV). To my surprise it was found that these mounds were enormous grave tumuli of a type never before noted. Each was the tomb of a single man, the Egyptian governor of the Sudan. Inscribed fragments of statues were found, so that it was possible to date Mounds III and IV to the early Twelfth Dynasty and Mound X to the early Thirteenth Dynasty. The climax came when Mound III was discovered to be the tomb of the hereditary Prince Hep-zefa of Assiut. Prince Hep-zefa made a great rock-cut tomb at Assiut, in Middle Egypt, and had ten contracts carved on the walls—a most unusual proceeding. These contracts bound the priests of the Temple of Anubis, of Assiut, to make periodical offerings, not in the tomb or to Hep-zefa's Ka, but to his statue. The reason is now clear: Hep-zefa was never buried at Assiut, but died at Kerma while serving as governor of

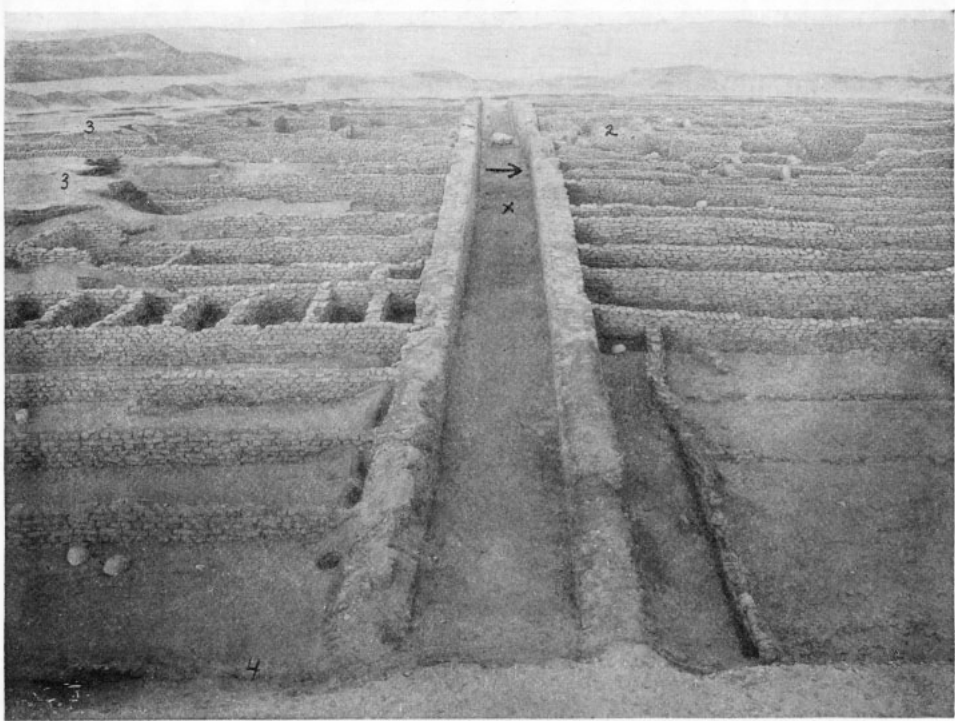


Fig. 2. Tomb of Hepzefa, looking east through corridor of Sacrifices. \rightleftharpoons Door of main burial chamber. \times Place where statue of Sennuwi stood. 2 Place where basis of statue of Hepzefa was found. 3 Mudbrick covering. 4 Circular wall, perimeter of tumulus

the South, and was buried in the great Tumulus No. III, east of the town. We found the basis of a statue of him, together with the statue of his wife, Sennuwi. His mother, Idin-at, is also mentioned on his statue. Both his wife and mother were known from the inscriptions in the tomb at Assiut. Hep-zefa lived in the time of Sesostri I (about 1980-1935 B. C.) and probably died near the end of that reign.

I have said that the grave tumuli of the Egyptian governors were of a new type unknown in Egypt. Imagine a circle eighty to ninety metres in diameter laid out on the hard desert surface, outlined by a wall of mud-brick only ten centimeters high, and crossed from east to west by two long mud-brick walls forming a corridor two or three metres wide (see Fig. 2). From the outside of this corridor cross walls of mud-brick, built at intervals of one or two metres, ran out to the circumference. Beginning with a height of ten centimeters at the circumference, these walls all rise in a curve to a height of two or three metres in the middle. All the spaces in the circle, except the corridor, were filled in with loose earth. Opening off the middle of the southern side of the corridor was a chamber roofed with a mud-brick vault (see Fig. 3). The tomb was thus ready for the burial. A great funerary feast was made at which over a thousand oxen were slaughtered and their skulls buried around the southern half of the circle out-

side. The body of the Prince was then laid to rest in the vaulted chamber with his offerings; and the wooden door was closed. The sacrificial victims, all local Nubians, either stupefied during the feast by a drug or strangled, were brought in and laid out on the floor of the corridor—from two to three hundred men, women, and children. With these Nubians were placed a few pots and pans, occasionally a sword, and often their personal ornaments. Then the corridor was filled in with earth, forming a low, domed mound. The top was covered with a floor of mud-brick. A great quartzite pyramidon was set up on top; and I believe a mud-brick chapel was built around the stone. The statues found cast down in the holes excavated by plunderers (see Figs. 4 and 5) had apparently stood in this chapel. Later when the edges of the mound became covered with drift-sand and the surface of the pavement softened in the sun, the mound was outlined with a band of dark stone chips and the top sprinkled with white pebbles (cf. Fig. 6). Almost immediately after the burial of the prince, the mound began to be used as a cemetery, apparently for his relatives and adherents. The graves of this cemetery, called subsidiary graves, were dug through the mud-brick pavement into the filling of the mound. Retaining walls were put in between the old cross-walls of the original tumulus to form an open pit. In the rectangular pit thus formed the body was laid on its



Fig. 3. Tomb of Hepzeja: main burial chamber, looking east



Fig. 4. Tomb of Hepzeja: basis of his statue, cast down in filling of tumulus



Fig. 5. Tomb of Hepzefa: head of statue of Sennuwi as first uncovered, looking west

wooden bed with its offerings and its sacrificial burials and covered with earth. A stone pyramidon was placed on top. Thus the subsidiary burials were like those found in Mound X in 1913, copying in miniature the sacrificial elements of the princely burial. In fact, the burials of last year must also be regarded as the subsidiary burials of Mound X, although they cover a longer period and are in great part considerably later than Mound X itself.

Mound IV had the corridor cut in the subsoil and the mound had been rebuilt with a skeleton of mud-brick retaining walls after the date of the subsidiary graves. The walls were found intact over the graves. But this tomb presented otherwise all the features of that of Hepzefa.

In Mound X we found the basis of a statue of Ra-khuw-tauwi, a king of the early Thirteenth Dynasty. This is undoubtedly the last great mound on the site. There are fifteen or twenty other mounds of considerable size, showing the same characteristics as the three great mounds, and these tumuli of secondary rank are no doubt also graves of provincial governors. These second-class mounds have usually two or three large rectangular pits sunk only a foot or so in the subsoil and covered with a plastered mound of earth. The mound was marked with black and white pebbles, as the larger mounds, and had a pyramidal cone on top. The chief burial was on the southern side of one of the rooms, and all the rest of the floor was covered with sacrificial burials. Around the southern side was a semi-circle of bulls' heads.

North of this group of tumuli the plain for a mile or more is thickly covered with the outlines of private graves. We had only time enough to excavate some sixty of these, which were all of the same character as the subsidiary graves of the tumuli.

Thus we found (1) a series of large graves — those of the Egyptian governors of the province; (2) a group of subsidiary graves, in which were buried the adherents of the governors; and (3) a large cemetery, lying to north of these, containing small private graves of the same character as the subsidiary graves.*

All these show the same barbarous funerary customs, the same manner of laying the body on a bed, and the same series of objects. The position of the body on the right side, with the knees slightly bent, and the custom of placing in the grave objects in use in daily life, are both familiar in Egypt. Even a few of the objects are Egyptian in origin, and more of them are distinctly copies of Egyptian products. But the greater part of the objects are from local workshops. In fact, most of the raw materials used and many unfinished pots and beads were found among the houses about the Fort (Mound I) mentioned last April. The objects of un-Egyptian character are those shown to be of local manufacture, and it is those which show the most finished craft. Yet the material collected by the Nubian Archæological Survey in 1907-1911 shows that the handicrafts of Nubia previous to the Middle Empire were crude and undeveloped in comparison with these objects

*In 1915 the northern half of this cemetery proved to be local Nubian.

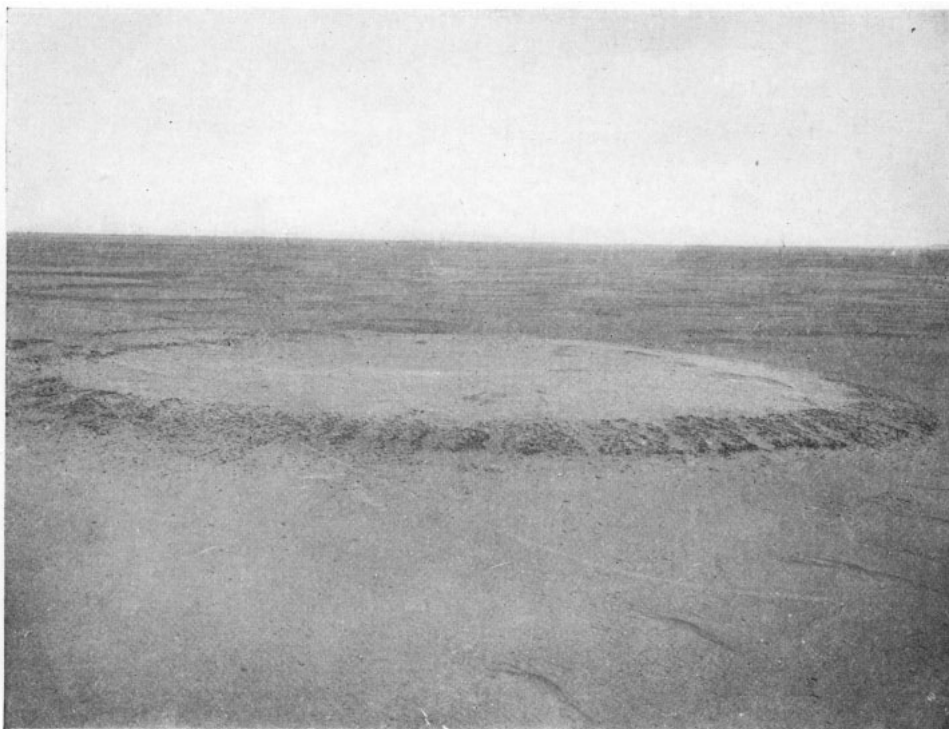


Fig. 6. *Tumulus XIX, previous to excavation, looking east*

made at Kerma in the Middle Empire. The only fact known to us which could have made the great difference between the products of the two periods was the Egyptian occupation of Nubia, which took place at the beginning of the Middle Empire. It is difficult to escape the conclusion that the development of Nubian handicrafts in the Middle Empire was due to Egyptian artisans brought by the Egyptian army of occupation. The statuettes, although almost exclusively of local stones, are characteristically Egyptian in form and technique, and they represent in every case Egyptians living in a foreign land in which there is, up to the present, no trace of a native sculptural art. So also the blue faience represents an Egyptian technical process carried out with local materials, copying Egyptian forms. The same is true of part of the woodwork and part of the pottery. The vessels of Egyptian form are even made on the wheel, but of local materials. The drab ware of Egyptian origin (Keneh ware) was imitated by making a body of red ware and covering it with a drab slip. But the larger part of the pottery, the finest in ware and form, is hand-made by processes not practiced in Egypt in this period. The large series of black-topped, thin, black ware presents the finest pottery made in antiquity previous to the Greek pottery of the best period. The black-polished pottery with white-filled incised decorations resembles at first sight the predynastic Egyptian pottery of a similar appearance; but the patterns

are different and the technique is different. *The Kerma pots are polished with black lead*, while the predynastic black-polished pots are of black-burned, pebble-polished ware.

The beautiful hand-made vessels of thin, black-topped, red-polished ware appear in Nubia for the first time in the Middle Empire, but they are more nearly related in material, form, and technique to the older Nubian than to any other known pottery. The most plausible explanation which occurs to me is that this fine Kerma pottery was developed on the spot from the older Nubian pottery by Egyptian artisans using the local material, local forms, and local technical methods. This explanation is borne out by the course of development of the pottery as traced in the later cemeteries at Kerma. The best pottery — the typically fine pottery — is found in the graves of the Twelfth Dynasty. In the Thirteenth Dynasty this ware has, in many examples, become coarser; the forms have lost their definiteness and the process has been cheapened; the black-topped, red-polished appearance is gained by painting instead of by burning. In the subsequent period the degeneration in ware and technique predominates, while the forms are for the most part broad, clumsy beakers. In other words, this Kerma pottery seems to have been created by Egyptian artisans early in the Twelfth Dynasty, to have become a traditional ceremonial ware, to have run the usual course of degeneration common to such traditional fabrics in Egypt, and to have come to an end, at any rate in Kerma, in the



Fig. 7. Alabaster vessels: that on the left inscribed

political dissolution of the Hyksos Period. But to settle the last point we still need New Empire material and may have to seek it at some other site.

Thus the objects found at Kerma represent the work of Egyptian artisans living in a strange land as the servants of Egyptian princes who ruled a conquered race. These men took the local materials and technical processes, borrowed forms from both the Sudan and Egypt, and created a new series of arts and crafts. Except for the great monuments of Egypt, nothing has ever been found which illustrates more clearly the genius of the Egyptian craftsman, — the same in all times and in all places.

Remembering, then, that almost all the work at Kerma was Egyptian, carried out under the inspiration of local conditions, a review of the objects found will be of interest:

(1) The statues are exclusively those of Egyptian officials represented in the traditional Egyptian attitudes. They were carved by Egyptian methods, but almost exclusively of local materials. Fragments of several hundred different statues were found. The workmanship varies from the best to very poor, and probably represents the work of a number of artists (or artisans). See Fig. 8.

(2) The inscriptions found are Egyptian formulas written in Egyptian hieroglyphics of Middle Empire form. The names recovered are all Egyptian. See Fig. 7.

(3) The pottery is represented by nineteen different wares showing 293 different forms. These different forms are represented by about

seven hundred variations. Thus the pottery is rich and varied, and contains the finest wares ever made in Egypt. It is divided into (a) Egyptian wheel-made pottery, (b) local wheel-made imitations of Egyptian pottery, (c) local hand-made pottery. The last division is the largest and finest of all. See Figs. 9-11.

(4) The seals and scarab seals are also partly of Egyptian and partly of local origin. The scarabs especially are of blue or green glazed steatite with forms and seal patterns typical of Middle Empire Egypt. Among these was the most remarkable scarab the expedition has ever found, — a large, blue-glazed stone set in gold with a human head and with rows of minute flies across the back.



Fig. 8. Head of a Statuette. Gray-black limestone



Fig. 9. Black polished pottery with incised white-filled decorations



Fig. 10. Pottery vessels of usual forms

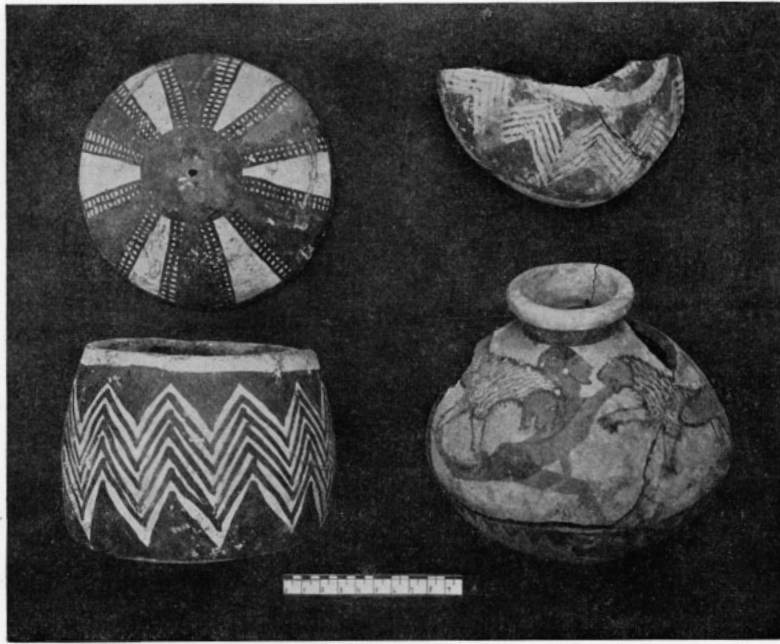


Fig. 11. Painted pottery

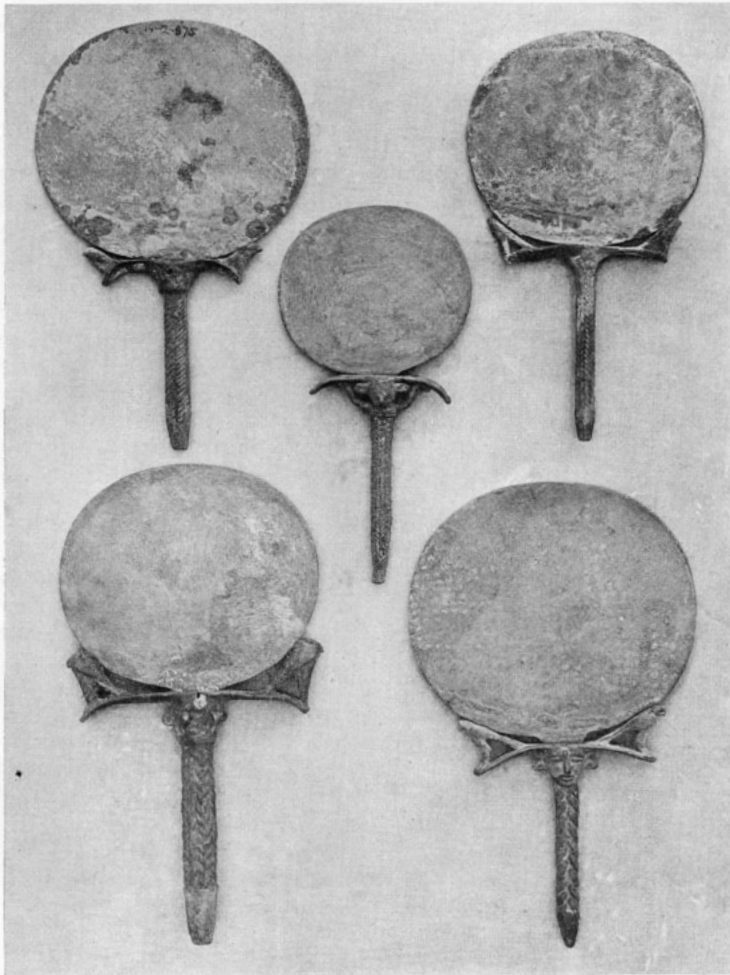


Fig. 12. Bronze mirrors

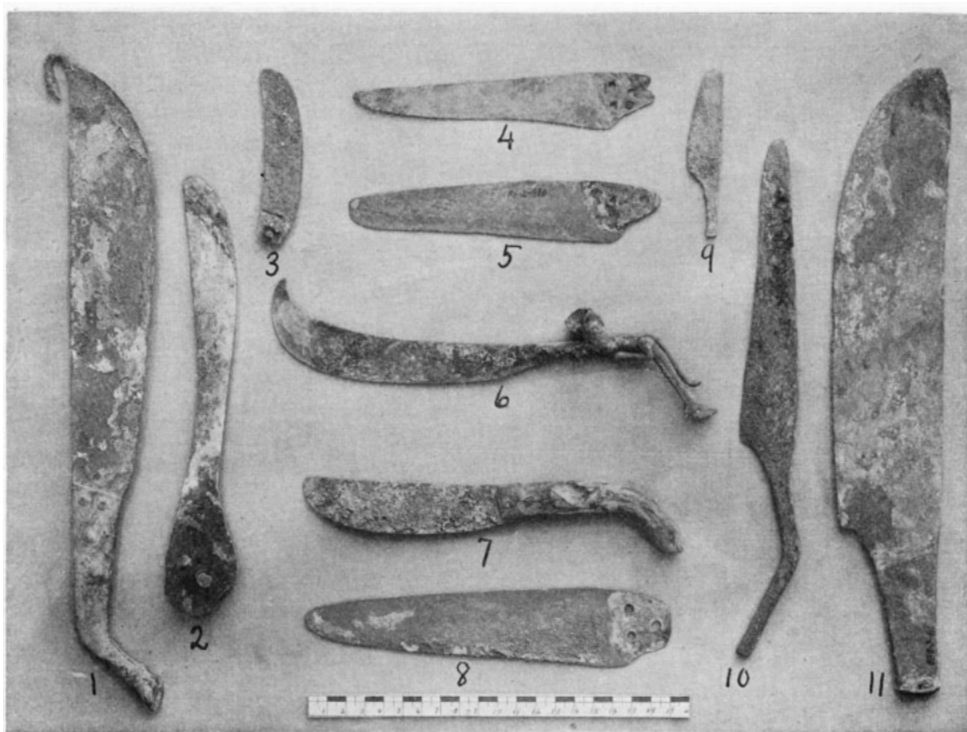


Fig. 13. Bronze knives. Note Nos. 1 and 6

The seals, partly scarabæoid in form, and partly oval or square plaques, are usually of ivory with geometrical designs and are undoubtedly of local origin. The patterns are combinations of crossed lines such as do not occur in Egypt.* Impressions of both the Egyptian scarabs and the local seals are found on the mud wads used for sealing doors and vessels at Kerma.

(5) The bronze objects, with the possible exception of the swords and daggers, are all of types found in Egypt. These include decorated mirrors (see Fig. 12), razors in wooden cases, tweezers, so-called scissors, awls, and needles. Curiously, not a single bronze axe-head, adze-head, chisel, or drill was found;† but a number of knives (see Fig. 13) occurred — heavy, practical butcher knives, ceremonial, decorated knives, and common kitchen knives. The weapons were exclusively swords and daggers with long slender blades (see Fig. 14). The total length varied from mere toys of thirty-five centimeters to solid fighting weapons of sixty centimeters length. These are different in form from the known Egyptian swords and have a tortoise shell or wooden grip with a long, flat, ivory hilt. They were carried in rawhide scabbards slung over the shoulder with a plaited leather thong (see Fig. 14).

(6) The wooden objects include headrests, footstools, four-legged stools with rawhide seats, bedsteads, coffins, and throwing sticks — all of

Egyptian forms. The decoration of the footboards of the beds with ivory inlays has, so far as I know, not been recorded in Egypt. The wood itself has not been examined, but there was clearly at least two kinds — a soft wood which has been eaten up by the white ants, and a hard wood (perhaps ebony) which is still beautifully preserved. The determination of the origin of the wood will no doubt show whether it was imported from Egypt or not. The forms of the ivory inlays indicate that the beds at any rate were made at Kerma.

(7) The ivory inlays with which the beds were decorated show many forms uncommon in Egypt of this period and some forms never found before. Among the former are the giraffe, ostriches, and ostrich chicks, the hyena, and the large bird like a bustard. Among the latter the ant-bear and the two-horned rhinoceros may be mentioned as animals never represented in ancient Egypt in any period; yet the skill with which the forms are outlined is typically Egyptian.

(8) The greater part of the stone vessels are of Egyptian forms and materials, and were probably imported from Egypt. The commonest material is alabaster, represented by vases of various known forms — pear-shaped, globular, cylindrical, and the familiar forms of the kohl-pot. Blue marble also occurs in three examples: a small oval-bodied vase with neck and two kohl-pots. A diorite cylindrical cup and two plain quartzite cups complete the list. The quartzite cups appear to me to be of local material (see Fig. 15).

* Cf. Newberry, *Scarabs*, p. 59, Fig. 46. This is a lattice-pattern seal of Kerma type. No provenance is given, but the seal evidently does not belong with the Egyptian button seals.

† Two bronze axe-heads were found later (in 1915).

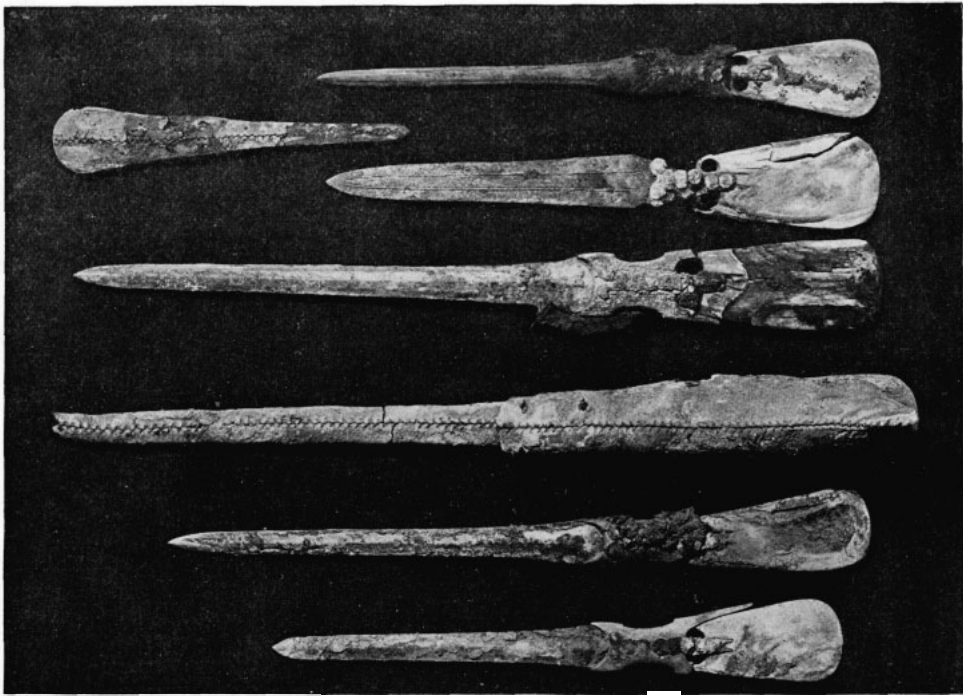


Fig. 14. Swords and daggers of ivory and bronze. Two are in rawhide sheaths

(9) The most characteristic materials found at Kerma were blue faience, blue-glazed quartzite, and blue or green-glazed crystal. In addition to the pottery and stone vessels, fragments of a large number of faience vessels were found, but only one complete vessel, a small kohl-pot. This ware was abundant at Kerma, a statement which may not be made of any Egyptian site ever recorded; and it presented rare forms and decorations, although both are known in Egypt in other materials. The forms included bowls, pear-shaped and globular pots, cylindrical cups, jugs, rilled beakers and beaker covers, and kohl-pots. Other faience objects were mace-heads, imitation shells, hippopotami, lions, scorpions, amulets, plaques, models of boats, figures of boatmen, inlay pieces, and tiles of many types. The inlays were used to decorate ivory boxes and sandstone ceiling slabs. The tiles were used to decorate walls and large pottery vessels. Parts of several lions in relief were found which had apparently been fastened on the walls of the Temple in Mound II. The decorations on all forms of faience were in black line drawing on a blue ground. One rare type, however, had all the empty spaces between the drawings colored black, throwing into sharp relief the blue background of the drawings themselves.

The blue-glazed quartzite was found as the material of various figures and a common kind of ball bead. The most common figure was a crouching lion; but the head of a ram, the bull-shaped leg of a bedstead, part of a large scorpion, and fragments of several small human figures were

found. To these may be added two disc covers for a vessel and fragments of a small vessel. In addition to the faience and quartzite, blue or green-glazed crystal beads were abundant in the graves.

The faience was made of a hardy gray, sandy body (local sandstone ground up) covered with a fine-grained white slip and heavily glazed after decoration. The normal color was a beautiful light blue (copper compound), but variations occurred running from pale blue to dark green, due in part to age and weathering.

At the Fort a number of fragments of misfired faiences were found. At the same place the débris of the houses on the west contained fragments of quartzite, natural rock crystals, green copper ore, as well as unfinished beads of both quartzite and crystal. The most common object on all parts of the site are the half-glazed natural pebbles used in the glazing ovens to support the vessels and other objects during the process. Thus it is certain that the glazing industry was practiced, and I feel quite sure that the faiences as well as the stone glazes were made at Kerma.

(10) Of the minor wares — beads and amulets (see Fig. 16), ostrich feather fans, baskets, woven and cut leather, pot-nets and other woven fabrics, bone implements, paint cups, palettes and colors — only the mica ornaments sewed on garments and the curious rug-like material made of cloth (flax or hemp?) and palm-fibres or cloth and ostrich feather fronds, deserve especial mention.

The mica ornaments, sewed especially on the leather caps of women, are cut out of thin sheets



Fig. 15. Vessels of alabaster; except third from left, above (a streaked limestone), and first from left, below (blue marble)

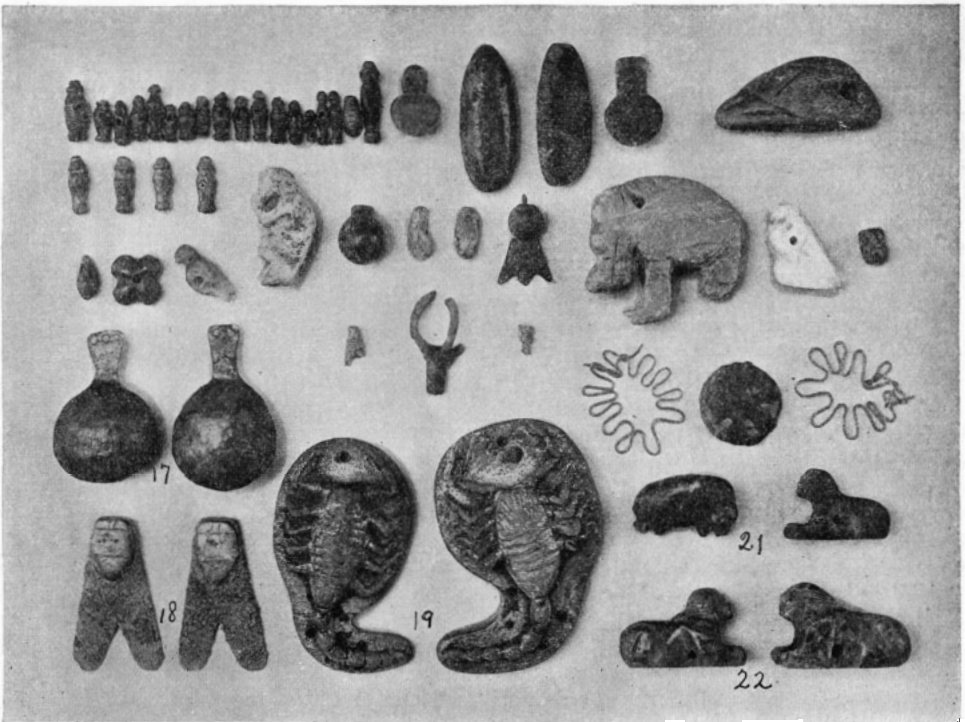


Fig. 16. Amulets. Note No. 17, gold; No. 18, silver flies with gold heads; No. 19, green faience scorpions; Nos. 21 and 22, carnelian hippopotamus and three sphinxes

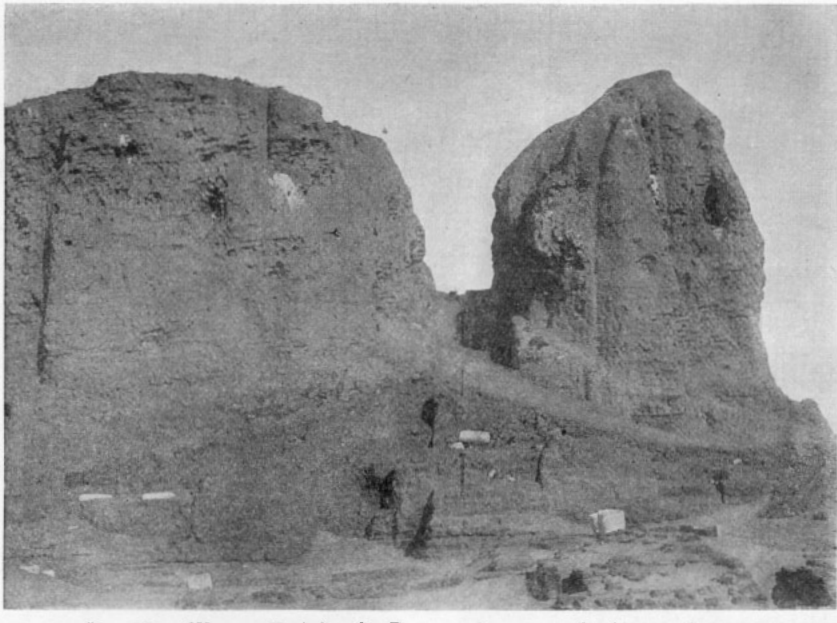


Fig. 17. Western Defäfa, the Fort: with stairway leading up from west

and are decorated with lines and punctures. They show much the same forms as the ivory inlays and the same Egyptian facility in catching the outlines of animals. The most unusual figure represented is a two-headed eagle, not unlike the eagle of the Austrian Empire. Examples of these were found in two different graves.

In addition to the cemetery, we excavated the small mud-brick temple in Mound II and finished the clearing of the interior of the Fort in Mound I. The Fort alone furnished matter of general interest. The stairway leads up from the west to a small room thirty feet above the plain (see Fig. 17). Another stair runs up northwards from the north-eastern corner of the room for another twenty feet and then turns west to the present top of the building. The rest of the building is a solid mass of brick work tied with wooden logs or beams. Above these must have been a flat floor; but whether this was protected with a parapet, or loop-holed rooms with a roof, will never be known, for the mass is denuded below the floor. The point of interest was the small room and the upper stair. These were filled with coals and ashes, and their walls were burnt red by a hot fire, — undoubtedly the same conflagration which destroyed the rooms on the east in the Hyksos Period. My impression is that the place was at the last taken by assault, and the garrison burnt out. It is altogether probable that the local tribes rose in revolt when, under the Hyksos, the Egyptian Administration lost its support from home. Even the most craven of races would risk everything to obtain relief from the material exactions and the cruelties mutely recorded in the great tombs of the Egyptian governors.

The work carried out at Kerma in February-March, 1915, cannot be fully described here, but one or two results demand mention because of the light they throw on the previous work. First of all, the Nubian cemetery has been found and given us the works of the Nubian artisans of that time. These objects not only reveal the culture of the ancient Nubian race, which was first discovered during the Archæological Survey of Lower Nubia, but show us the basis on which the Egyptians built the strange Egypto-Nubian culture of Kerma. It is not yet possible to give a complete picture of the Nubian burial customs, but the sacrificial burials throw some light on the sacrificial burials of the Egyptian cemetery. The Nubian chiefs were buried in large circular pits covered with tumuli like those of the Egyptian cemetery; but instead of ten to thirty human sacrifices, each chief was accompanied by one to three women, probably wives, and five to thirty goats. It appears as if a custom had existed according to which goats were substituted for relatives or slaves who were not inclined to make the personal sacrifice. But again the conclusions are stopped until further research has given an exact date to different parts of the cemetery or has given us older cemeteries at some other site in Dongola.

The finds in the Nubian cemetery have shown that an unusually large amount of gold was in use in the province. The Egyptian cemetery yielded wooden bed-legs cased in gold; the Nubian cemetery has now added bronze and even pottery bowls with heavy gold rims. The thoroughness of the ancient plundering, as complete as that of modern thieves, could only have resulted from a

search for gold. Mr. S. C. Dunn, of the Geological Department of Gordon College, informs me that the alluvial gold deposits on the Abyssinian border show evidences of ancient working and are still worked successfully. He suggests these deposits as the most probable origin for the gold in use in Kerma in the Middle Empire. This may well be; but the great question of ancient marts and trade routes awaits further material for research. We know almost nothing of the process of exchanges by which alluvial gold from Abyssinia might reach Dongola. A hint perhaps may be found in Mungo Parke's descriptions of the Central African markets and trading caravans; but from Dongola to Assuan the road is known to have been open, and what was common in Dongola would soon appear in the markets of Assuan—gold nuggets and bars for worked gold, or, in

bad harvests, for Egyptian grain. Probably even in the Old Empire the province had a reputation for being rich in gold. This reputation gained in the market at Assuan was, I believe, the great causal factor in the Egyptian invasions and conquests of Upper Nubia, which passed over Lower Nubia almost without leaving a trace. The Egyptians came into the Sudan, following up not only the Nile but the stream of gold which came down that ancient trade route.

Finally, it is clear that the scientific examination of Dongola and Halfa provinces promises a great material on the relations of Egypt and Nubia and on the Nile traffic of ancient times. Much will be revealed which will enrich the history of the whole valley and much which will help an insight into the ways of man in primitive conditions.

G. A. R.



Madonna and Child
Baranaba da Modena (Circ. 1375)
Gift of Mrs. W. Scott Fitz

Recent Gifts

MRS. W. SCOTT FITZ has offered renewed proof of her interest in the Museum by her recent gift of three pictures by Primitive Italian artists, one of which is reproduced above. The

remaining panels are a head of the Magdalen by Segna di Buonaventura and a portrait of a Saint, of the School of Simone Martini. The panels have been installed in the first Picture Gallery.

To Mrs. Fitz also the Museum is in part indebted for the Parian marble head of a goddess recently acquired. The work is a Greek original of the fourth century B. C. It is shown in the Second Marble Room, and although much mutilated is a worthy companion piece to the bust of a goddess from Chios in the same gallery.

Class Gifts in the Public Schools

THE Woman's Education Association has asked the coöperation of the Museum in aiding the teachers of the Boston public schools to give advice to graduating classes regarding their gifts to the schools. Upon the suggestion of the Association, an exhibition by Boston firms of color prints, ceramics, bronzes and other objects suitable for such gifts, was held at the Museum on October 30, November 6 and November 13. Many teachers and pupils viewed the exhibition and listened to explanatory talks. It is hoped in this way to raise the artistic level of the gifts from future graduating classes.

Thursday Conferences, 1916

THE Conferences are held in the galleries of the Museum. They begin at 3 o'clock, and the audience is asked to be seated at that hour. For tickets apply to the Supervisor of Education, enclosing a stamped and addressed envelope and specifying the conferences it is desired to hear, in order of preference. Tickets do not exempt the holder from paying admission to the Museum, and are limited in number to the capacity of the