WILEY

74. Burials of the First Dynasty.

Author(s): W. M. Flinders Petrie

Source: *Man*, Vol. 22 (Sep., 1922), pp. 129-130

Published by: Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2840353>

Accessed: 27-06-2016 09:46 UTC

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at
<http://about.jstor.org/terms>

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

Wiley, Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland are collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *Man*

BURIALS OF THE FIRST DYNASTY.

ORIGINAL ARTICLES.

With Plate I—J.

Egypt: Archæology.

Petrie.

Burials of the First Dynasty. By *W. M. Flinders Petrie, LL.D.*,
F.R.S.

74

During the past winter the British School in Egypt was excavating a series of some five hundred graves of the courtiers of the earliest age of history—according to the Egyptians 5400 B.C. The Royal Tombs at Abydos, which I excavated over twenty years ago, had around each of them some lines of graves in which the courtiers were buried; and buried all at once, as the brickwork was yet soft and had slipped down over the burial in many cases. Now we have found, a mile away from that, three great squares of graves, about 250 to 400 feet along the sides, sometimes a single line, sometimes double. A trench about five feet deep was dug in the sand-wash of the plain, lined with brickwork and subdivided by cross walls into graves about five feet long and four wide, in which the body was placed contracted.

Though many of these bodies appear to have been buried in a coffin, with vases of alabaster and pottery, and tools of copper and flint, yet there were several which seemed to have been conscious when buried. Some with a knee raised, others with arms stretched out as if lifting the body. The clearest instance is illustrated here. The heels had evidently been bound up to the hips, to prevent resistance; the body was thrown into the grave, upon a rising boulder, chest downward; the head was twisted round, at right angles to the spine both backwards and sideways. The forearm was raised in front of the face. That this appearance was not due to decapitation, was proved by lifting the skull, which was in articulation to the atlas vertebra, and tracing the vertebræ continuously down to the straight line of the back; then on replacing the skull in articulation it stood exactly as when found. There were no broken or wounded bones observed in any of the skeletons; it seems therefore as if the people, men and women, had been sand-bagged, and then buried while stunned—a most painless kind of death. The frequent examples of property with kings' names buried here shows that these people belonged to the royal household.

The custom of killing off the court at the king's death was a wholesome preservative of orderly government. Everyone around the king knew that he could not survive the king, and therefore might as well sacrifice his life to preserve that of the king from violence. It was the ancient custom in the Sudan, where the viceroy in the twelfth dynasty was buried there with about three hundred Nubians, lying scattered about in the passages which led to the tomb. In the first dynasty there are hundreds of burials to each king at the beginning, and dwindling to dozens at the end of the dynasty. Evidently the custom was waning, and seems to have disappeared later. About eighty skulls were obtained, and were all dipped in melted paraffin and brought to London. A few complete skeletons were also brought away; and all the long bones and skulls were measured.

The flint knives were all worked by scaling, and not by ripple-flaking, which belongs to the second prehistoric age. There were equal numbers of two types: one narrow and thick, used for scraping, and usually worn down, as the first example here, which shows the original width at the handle; the other type wide and thin, as the second example, used for slicing. These are of unusual size, the narrow knives being over a foot long. All have the notch handle, except one. This notch began in the second reign of the first dynasty. Copper tools were as usual as flint and some bear the names of the third and fourth kings, Zer and Zet. They are massive and well-formed, with inscriptions cleanly cut. Ivory carving of lions, for

gaming pieces, and of labels for necklaces, bearing the kings' names, were also found; as well as sets of ivory rods and magnesite balls used in games.

Why these hundreds of royal servants should have been buried in large squares, apparently without any central burial, and so far from the royal tombs, we cannot yet understand. It seems unlikely that any further series of burials of this beginning of history will be found elsewhere, and this year's work rounds off all that we can hope to have to represent this early age. W. M. FLINDERS PETRIE.

Britain: Archæology.

Armstrong.

Two East Yorkshire Bone Harpoons. A. Leslie Armstrong, F.S.I.,
F.S.A. (Scot.).

75

In the collection of Mr. William Morfitt, of Atwick, a village in the Holderness portion of East Yorkshire, are two bone harpoons of exquisite workmanship, found beneath lacustrine deposits of peat in that locality, under conditions analogous to those of Maglemose, in the island of Zeeland.*

The harpoons are of a type not hitherto recorded in Britain, and comparable to examples from Maglemosian deposits of the Baltic area. They are more refined both in detail and design than the well-known flat Azilian harpoons of Victoria Cave, Settle, Oban, etc., and very strikingly recall Madgalenian examples from French caves. These facts, together with their position when discovered and the associated *Ancylus* fauna, suggest that the harpoons are of Maglemosian culture—a view

supported by Burkitt† and the Abbé Breuil.‡ Therefore, as no evidence has previously been obtained of Maglemosian culture in Britain, these indications in East Yorks. are of exceptional interest, and by the courtesy of Mr. Morfitt I am permitted to describe and figure them for the first time.

The Hornsea harpoon (Fig. 1) is the largest, measuring $10\frac{1}{2}$ inches long, $\frac{9}{16}$ inches broad and an extreme thickness of $\frac{5}{16}$ inches. It is pointed at both ends and has 11 barbs on one edge. The section of the barbed edge is triangular, and both faces are flattened in the centre and splayed towards the lower edge. The section in the middle (A), is therefore an irregular heptagon, becoming a pointed oval at the ends (D).

* F. L. Sarauw, "En Stenalders Boplads i Maglemose ved Mallerup" (*Aarbøger for nordisk Oldkyndighed og Historie*, Series 2, Vol. XVIII. (1903), p. 148). Hugo Obermaier, "Der Mensch der Vorzeit," p. 467.

† "Prehistory," pp. 155 and 108.

‡ Munro Lecture. Edinburgh, 1921.