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## THE ORIGIN OF EGYPTIAN CIVILISATION.

BY EDOUARD NAVILLE, D.C.L., LL.D., ETC.

WHO were the Egyptians? Were they a native race, born in the country which they inhabited, or did they come from abroad as immigrants? Were they a mixed population, and if so, can we distinguish the various elements which formed the Egyptian nation? These questions have lately occupied most intensely the attention of Egyptologists. The excavations made during the last twenty years enable us to give an answer very different from the point of view advocated by such masters as Lepsius or E. de Rougé.<sup>1</sup>

For these two pioneers in the field of Egyptian learning, the Asiatic origin of the Egyptians seemed a certainty; especially for Lepsius, who had been very much struck by the fact that the oldest monuments known in his time were the pyramids and the tombs around them, while in Ethiopia, as far as the province of Fazoql, he found nothing but very late monuments. The conclusion he drew from what he saw was that the Egyptians had come through the isthmus of the Suez, and that after having settled first at Memphis, they had extended in the valley of the Nile, the civilisation going up the river towards the south.

This idea seemed justified at a time when nothing was known of the beginning of civilisation, which appeared from the first as complete with all its special characters. As no trace had yet been discovered of its first steps, of a lower and primitive stage out of which the Egyptian culture might have emerged, it was natural to suppose that we had before us an importation from abroad, and that, if not the whole, at least the principal features of the civilisation were a product of Asia, whence they had been brought by the first settlers in the valley of the Nile.

One of the first to dispute the Asiatic origin of the Egyptians was M. Maspero, who in his *History of Egypt* (1895) states that "the hypothesis of an Asiatic origin, however attractive it may seem, is somewhat difficult to maintain. The bulk of the Egyptian population presents the characteristics of those white races which have been found established from all antiquity, on the Mediterranean slope of the Libyan continent."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> E. de Rougé's idea has been expounded by his son, J. de Rougé (*Origine de la Race Egyptienne*, Paris, 1895) "The starting point of the Egyptian Race is to be looked for in Asia where they lived in the neighbourhood of the ancestors of the Chaldæans."

*Dawn of Civilisation*, p. 45.

Since M. Maspero wrote these lines, the excavations of MM. Petrie, Morgan, Amélineau, followed by several other explorers, have revealed to us the primitive state of the Egyptians—a degree of culture which had not gone beyond the Stone Age. The tombs discovered in various places have preserved, not only the bodies of their primitive inhabitants, but also their implements, their tools, what I consider to be their idols, and pottery, the painted decoration of which shows their mode of life and their occupations.

These tombs caused great astonishment to the explorers who first opened them. The idea of an Egyptian burial was, till then, so intimately connected with mummification, that it seemed strange to unearth small tombs of oval or rectangular form, in which the body lies without any trace of mummification. The skeleton is folded, the knees being against the chest; and the hands holding the knees or being at the height of the mouth. This has been called the embryonic position. It is not the only form of burial. Sometimes the body has been broken in pieces immediately after death; in other cases there is what is called a secondary burial. After the flesh had been destroyed, the bones have been gathered; occasionally an attempt has been made to give them the embryonic posture, or they have been jumbled together into the tomb; bones belonging to various bodies have been mixed, so that Mr. Petrie believed at first that those burials showed us the remains of feasts of cannibals. With the body pottery of different colours is found in the tombs, and also vases of hard stones remarkably well made and finished; a few rude human figures, some of them characterized by the steatopygy which exists in other countries, and with distinct traces of tattooing, tools of ivory, flint instruments, of exquisite workmanship, and a great number of slate palettes. Sometimes the latter have the forms of animals, chiefly birds and fishes; others are mere lozenges. The purpose of these slates has not yet been clearly recognised. I am inclined to think that they are the images of food offerings, when they are in the hand of the deceased who holds them up to his mouth; or they may be amulets or images of divinities.

That is a short description of what are called the prehistoric or pre-dynastic tombs of the old Egyptians.<sup>1</sup> They were first discovered in Middle Egypt; but, lately, so-called prehistoric cemeteries have been found nearly everywhere above the Delta, so that we have here a positive proof of the existence of a people which had not yet adopted properly Egyptian customs, but which occupied the whole of the valley. Therefore I cannot consider the name 'prehistoric' as being correct. No doubt the state of civilisation revealed by these tombs is that which preceded Menes, the first historical king, but I cannot admit that it should have ceased when the foreign invaders conquered the native race and settled in the valley. Certainly a vase in red pottery, with black rim, of the kind which is most commonly found in those tombs, may be prehistoric, but

<sup>1</sup> Capart, "Les rites funéraires des Egyptiens préhistoriques," *Annales de la Soc. Scientifique de Bruxelles*, f. xxiv.

we have also definite proofs of that style of pottery having lasted, at least till the XIIth Dynasty in historic times. Evidently the native stock was very numerous, it was the bulk of the population, and its customs changed only by degrees. Let us consider what takes place at the present day. In the cities like Cairo or Alexandria, we find all the refinements of civilisation. At a few hours distance if we enter the tent of a Bedouin of the Delta, except for an old matchlock, what we shall see is much more similar to a prehistoric dwelling than to a product of the twentieth century.

Therefore I entirely disagree with the chronological classification which has been attempted of the so-called prehistoric pottery. I believe the true classification should be geographical. We have to notice the peculiar taste and style of each locality. Egypt is a very conservative country; besides, the fact of its not being concentrated around a city, but being a line which extends along the river, makes it much more difficult for an influence originating from the capital, to be felt at the end of the country. Even at the present day tastes and fashions differ in the various localities. The pottery, for instance, is not the same at Sioot, as it is at Keneh or Edfoo. It seems evident that it was the same in antiquity; besides, there might be differences in the degree of development. One locality, under favourable circumstances, may have made a certain progress, while another more remote, without intercourse with its neighbours, may have preserved longer the rude and coarse style of old times. That does not mean that the rude and the more perfect vase could not be contemporaneous.

I should therefore propose that this name "prehistoric" should be dropped, and should be replaced by that of native, or rather African, civilisation. For this is the result of the latest excavations. As far back as we can go we find in Egypt a native race, with customs and culture distinct from that of the later Egyptians, a culture which we must call indigenous, since we have no clue whatever to indicate that it came from abroad. This race does not seem to have progressed further from the Stone Age, but to have attained a remarkable skill in working hard stones, ivory and wood, not to speak of flint implements, of which they have left us magnificent specimens. This culture lasted late in historical times, and may have ceased to exist at very different epochs in the various places where it existed.

I call this culture African. One of the distinct African features is the mode of burial which I mentioned before, the so-called embryonic posture. Herodotus, speaking of the African nation called the Nasamonians,<sup>1</sup> says that "they bury their dead sitting, and are right careful, when the sick man is at the point of giving up the ghost, to make him sit and not let him die lying down."

Now, when Herodotus speaks of a man sitting, we must not fancy him resting on a chair. Seats do not belong to the furniture of a desert dwelling.

<sup>1</sup> L. iv, p. 190.

He sits on his heels, and, in that posture, his chest leans against the knees, and his hands are at the height of his mouth. Hundreds of old Egyptian statues represent men in that position. Supposing that a man has died sitting, and has fallen on his side; he has exactly the so-called embryonic position, which finds its explanation in that African custom. If afterwards vases with food and drink, and some of his tools are put around him in his grave, his tomb will be the abridged image of the hut in which he sat in his life-time; it will be his "eternal house," as the Memphite Egyptians called the tomb.

As for the secondary burials, I believe the explanation is to be found in a custom still prevailing among some South American Indians, and of which, I am told, some examples have been found in old burials in Switzerland.<sup>1</sup> If a man dies at a great distance from the cemetery which is to be his grave, he is interred provisionally; some time afterwards his bones are gathered and carried in a skin bag to the place where he is to be finally buried. This would explain the disorder which is sometimes noticeable in the bones of a tomb, and the fact that the bones of several skeletons have been mixed together. These skeletons have been brought from another place, after the flesh has been destroyed and carelessly put into their grave.

These tombs give us interesting information as to the mode of life of the primitive Egyptian. We gather it chiefly from yellow vases, hand-made, and decorated with subjects in red painting. These drawings, being very rude, have received different interpretations. It seems to me evident that what they usually show us are not boats, but representations of dwellings. These dwellings were huts, placed on mounds, and probably made of wicker-work. They were surrounded by enclosures made of poles, something like what is called now a "zeriba," sheltering the inhabitants against wild beasts. There are generally two huts with a kind of slope between them, which is the entrance. At the side of one is a standard pole, bearing either the symbol or the god of the village.

In these enclosures we see men whose life is that of hunters. They are armed with bows and spears; the animals are those of the desert; large birds, chiefly ostriches, gazelles and antelopes, of which the rich Memphite Egyptians liked to have large flocks. Trees appear here and there, but the inhabitants of these villages do not seem to have practised agriculture; we do not see cattle, neither oxen nor sheep nor asses, none of the domestic animals. Sometimes men are shown struggling against wild beasts, women holding their hands over their heads, as if they were carrying a jar or a basket. Boats with sails will occasionally appear, therefore they knew how to navigate. The great number of slates in form of fishes are certainly a proof that they practised fishing as well as hunting.

These people, who in some respects seem to have reached only a very rudimentary degree of civilisation, knew how to make fine vases of very hard stone. Their flint instruments are among the finest known, but their sculpture is rude, not in animals, but in the representation of the human figure. The characteristic feature of this race is that they were hunters and not agriculturists.

<sup>1</sup> I am indebted for that information to the kindness of my countryman Mr. A. de Molin.

As for their physical type; the views between the numerous experts who have studied Egyptian skulls are decidedly conflicting. However, they are unanimous on one point. They all agree that the prehistoric Egyptians were not negroes, that they had long hair, generally black, but sometimes fair, and that prognathism hardly appeared.

Some of the authors admit a negroid influence, and have come to the conclusion that there were two races, a negroid and a non-negroid. This view is strongly attacked by others. If we look at the painting of a prehistoric grave found at Hieraconpolis, we find the men of a brown or reddish colour, very like that of the Egyptians of later times.

As for the connection of the prehistoric Egyptians with the other races of North Africa, especially the Libyans and the Berbers, unquestionable evidence has been sought in craniology, or anthropometry. I cannot help quoting the two following statements which are given as equally decisive, and which are derived from the same kind of arguments. Let us hear first Dr. MacIver: "What has anthropometry to say on the question whether the prehistoric Egyptians were or were not Libyans? The answer is most definite and explicit. The prehistoric Egyptians were a mixed race, the component elements of which it is difficult to analyse with exactness, but this mixed race as a whole was not Berber . . . ." and further, "It is impossible any longer to maintain the view that the prehistoric Egyptians were Libyans."<sup>1</sup> If we turn to Professor Sergi, Professor of Anthropology at Rome, we find that he finishes his chapter on the physical character of the Libyans by the following words<sup>2</sup>: "The Egyptians were a racial branch from the same stock which gave origin to the Libyans specially so called, one of the four peoples of the Mediterranean." It is well known that Professor Sergi's statements rest mainly on the study of skulls considered in a point of view different from that of other anthropologists.

These two quite contradictory statements are the best proof that we can trust craniology in the main lines, in its broad distinctions, while it is no safe guide in the minor differences which constitute the ethnological characters. Virchow himself, the illustrious anthropologist, has declared that from the sight of a skull it is impossible to trace with certainty the ethnic position which it occupies.

Thus we find at the origin of the Egyptian civilisation a people with the Caucasian type, with long hair, occupying the valley of the Nile as far as Assuân and further south. Even now various authors suppose that the valley was peopled from Asia, and that these prehistoric inhabitants came from the East. We see absolutely no reason to dispute their native character. We cannot touch here the vexed question how the different nations were born, and how, leaving their cradle, they dispersed in the various parts of the world. We must take them when they first appear as nations. At the first sight which we have of the Egyptians, they show themselves to us as Africans, having some connection with the neighbouring

<sup>1</sup> D. Randall-MacIver and A. Wilkin, *Libyan Notes*, pp. 103, 107.

<sup>2</sup> G. Sergi, *The Mediterranean Race*, p. 83.

natives of the west, Libyans or Berbers, as they are called now, Tehennu and Tamahu as they are styled in the Egyptian inscriptions.

Certainly their civilisation, such as it appears in the prehistoric tombs, is no foreign import. It is so completely determined by the nature of the soil, and by the animals and plants which occupied the land, that we are compelled to affirm that it is of African growth.

It seems nearly certain that in that remote epoch the white races of the north extended further south than they did later, and that they were driven northwards by the negroes. If we consult an inscription of the Vth Dynasty of the old Empire, found in the tomb of an officer called Herkhûf at Assuân, we read that he went to a country called Amam, which could not be further north than Khartûm or the Soudan. The people of Amam wished to drive the Tamahu towards "the western corner of the sky." He himself went through Amam, reached the Tamahu, and pacified them, so that at that time the Tamahu must have occupied countries now called Kordofân or Darfur, or perhaps Borku. Later on, in the struggles which the Libyans waged against the Egyptians, we find them inhabiting the desert on the west of the Delta. Evidently the negro races must have invaded the territory which the Tamahu originally occupied, and compelled them to settle near the coast, where we find them under the Pharaohs of the XXth Dynasty.

With the Tamahu are often mentioned the Tehennu, a name which means "the yellow ones." I consider them as being one of the African nations of a colour lighter than that of the Egyptians, a difference which is so easily noticeable in Cairo in going to the Tunis bazaar.

I believe the name of the prehistoric Egyptians has been preserved. They are called the *Anu*. The sign *An*, with which their name is written, means a pillar—a column of stone or wood, or even as Brugsch translates, a heap of stones. According to Brugsch also, their name *Anu*, or, in the latter inscriptions *Anti* means the Troglodytes or the Trogodytes, the inhabitants of caverns, and in Ptolemaic times this name applied to the Kushite nations occupying the land between the Nile and the Red Sea.

But we find them much earlier; they often occur at Anu Ta Khent, the Anu of Lower Nubia and of Khent Hunnefer, the southern part of Nubia. An inscription in the Temple of Deir el Bahari speaks of the Anu of Khent, Lower Nubia, of Khent Hunnefer, Upper Nubia, and of Setet, which, in the texts of the Pyramids is clearly the land of the goddesses Sati and Anqet, the land and islands of the cataracts.<sup>1</sup> The Anu are found much further north. In the inscriptions of Sinai we see the King Khufu striking the Anu, the inhabitants of the mountains who are evidently the population he conquered when he invaded the peninsula.

An is the name of Heliopolis, one of the oldest cities in Egypt, and the religious capital of the country. The same name, with a feminine termination, is Anit, which means Tentrya (Denderah), but also Latopolis (Esneh) and Hermonthis (Erment). The land of Egypt is often called the two lands of An, so that we can

<sup>1</sup> W. Max Müller, *Asien und Europa*, p. 20.

trace the name of An, not only among the neighbouring nations of Egypt, but in the country itself, from an early antiquity. Evidently this name—the two lands of An—for Egypt, is a remainder of the old native stock before the conquest.

*Anti*, a word with an adjective form, means a bow. The sense of the word seems to be “that of the Anu, the weapon of the Anu.” We can recognise the Anu in those archers who are represented several times on the slate palettes, which, although later than the conquest, are among the oldest monuments of Egypt. The Anu use arrows with triangular flint points. More often we see them as unarmed men with pointed beards, trodden down by the king, who has taken the form of the divine bull Bat, or torn to pieces by a lion. An ivory blade found by Mr. Petrie shows a bearded prisoner standing, over whom is written Setet, the land of the cataracts, which, as we have seen, is one of the countries inhabited by the Anu.

Several Egyptologists have admitted that the Anu were foreign invaders who had been repelled by the Egyptians. On the contrary I conclude, from what has been discovered lately, that they were the native stock occupying the valley of the Nile, and that they had been conquered by invaders, who very soon amalgamated so completely with their subjects, that they formed one single people.

The aboriginal stock, as we saw, had carried the civilisation to a certain point. But it is clear that before the historical times, at an epoch which we cannot fix, a foreign element entered the valley of the Nile, subdued the Anu, taught them a culture which was unknown before, and created the Egyptian Empire.

With this invasion appears the hieroglyphical writing, which seems to have been unknown to the native stock. This writing has such an absolutely Egyptian character that it must have originated, or rather developed, in the country itself. We do not know any written monument which we may trace to the African dwellers of the country. On the slates and cylinders which are later than the conquest, and which are the oldest written remains which have been preserved, we find signs with an archaic character, but which lasted through the whole time when hieroglyphical writing existed.

Let us first consider how the conquerors designated their kings. It was done in a peculiar manner, in a shape which is always the same. At the top of the group is a bird, usually said to be a hawk, but which M. Loret has recognised to be the peregrine falcon. The bird stands on an oblong rectangle, often called a banner, at the lower part of which is a drawing showing the façade of a funeral chapel, the doorway giving access to the *ka*, viz., the double of the deceased. Above the drawing and below the bird are a few signs which, whenever we understand them, give us an epithet, a qualification of the king. Therefore, it is not his name, it is his first title, the first part of the complicated protocol, which will develop into a sentence, and which forms the royal name of the Pharaohs.

Thus, every king is a hawk, or, as we said, a falcon, the bird which is the symbol of the god Horus, and by which his name was written throughout the Egyptian history from its earliest beginnings to the time of the Romans. The



king is the god Horus. This name leads us to Arabia, where the falcon is called *horr*.<sup>1</sup> This is the country where we have to look for the starting point of the race which conquered Egypt. If we consult the Egyptian inscriptions, we shall find that, on both sides of the Red Sea, in Arabia as well as in Africa, there was a region which has had various names. One of them is *Kush*, wrongly translated Ethiopia; another is *Punt*, very frequent in Egyptian texts, where it is synonymous with *Tanuter*, the divine land. It seems that the region originally called by that name was Southern Arabia, whence the populations emigrated, which settled on the African coast. We do not know exactly the appearance of the race in that remote time, but the sculptures of the Temple of Queen Hatshepsu at Deir-el-Bahari show us what was the appearance of the people of Punt. At that time the population of the country was mixed; it contained negroes of different kinds, brown and black, but the real Puntites, or Punites, as I think their name must be read, are very like the Egyptians. They belong also to the Caucasian type, with long hair and pointed beards. Their colour is a little more purple-hued than that of the Egyptians.

Here a very important question arises. Did the Punites, the inhabitants of Southern Arabia, belong to the Semitic stock? Looking at the information which we have derived lately from Arabia and from Babylonia, I have come to the conclusion that they were not Semites. They were Hamites, like the Egyptians themselves, and some of the North African populations, and like some of the inhabitants of Chaldæa, whose origin is also attributed by a few scholars to Arabia, so that they should have the same starting point. No doubt I shall hear the objection that Egyptian is a Semitic language. My answer is that the better we know the Egyptian language, the more fully we grasp the conceptions of the Egyptian mind, the more it seems evident that Egyptian is an ante-Semitic or pre-Semitic language. In certain points it has kept the character of infancy. Semitic languages are in a more advanced linguistic stage, they have outgrown by far the degree of development which Egyptian has reached. To my mind we have to reverse the method which is generally followed. We are not to look for the origin of Egyptian in the Semitic languages, but, on the contrary, to see what the Semitic languages have borrowed from the old Egyptian speech and writing.

The Arabian origin of the Egyptians is mentioned by the Numidian King and writer, Juba,<sup>2</sup> quoted by Pliny. After having given the names of the various tribes of the Troglodytes, the inhabitants of the African coast, between the Nile and the Red Sea, the writer says: "As for the neighbours of the Nile from Syene to Meroe, they are not Ethiopian nations, but Arabs. Even the city of the Sun not far distant from Memphis is said to have been founded by the Arabs." Thus for Juba the Egyptians are Arabs. When he says that they are not Ethiopians, we must consider this word as meaning negroes.

The Arabian origin of the Egyptian population is adopted by several scholars

<sup>1</sup> Loret, *Horus-le-Falcon*, p. 20.

<sup>2</sup> Muller, *Fragm. Hist. Graec.*, III, p. 477.

opinions differ as to the way they followed in their invasion. I said before that the opinion of Lepsius, who supposed them to have come through the isthmus of Suez, is now abandoned. Prof. Petrie thinks that they came through the harbour of Kosseir, and that, after having followed the valley of Hamamât, they reached the region where is now the city of Keneh, and where was the old Egyptian city of Coptos. But if we study the traditions of the Egyptians, which are to a certain degree confirmed by the Greek writers, we come to the conclusion that the conquerors must have crossed the Red Sea further south than Kosseir, perhaps in the region where is now Massowah, and that they stopped some time in the valley of the Nile, in the Sudan, before they came down and settled below the cataracts.

This has been translated by Diodorus in this way :—The Greek writer says, “that the Ethiopians assert that Egypt is one of their colonies; there are striking likenesses between the laws and the customs of both lands; the kings wear the same dress and the uræus adorns their diadem.” In this case we must give the name of Ethiopians another sense than in the quotation from Juba. It does not mean negroes, but the African population called the Anu of Nubia.

If we consult Egyptian inscriptions, we find that, without any exception, the south is always what comes first. The north is never spoken of as an ancient resort from which the population should have issued. The south has always the pre-eminence over the north. The Kings of the South are mentioned before those of the north; the usual name for king properly means “King of the South.” In his orientation when he fixes his cardinal points, the Egyptian turns towards the south, so that the west is for him the right side. That does not mean that he is marching towards the south. In the mythological inscriptions we read that Horus first resided in the south, and coming down the river, conquered the country as far as the sea. The Egyptian looks towards the direction whence his god originally came. This direction is at the same time that of the Nile, of another form of the god who gives him life, and allows him to exist. The mythological narrative of the conquest of Egypt by the god Horus is of the time of the Ptolemies. The enemies of the god often take the forms of animals, and are led by Set. Horus conquers the land for his father, Harmachis, who is the king. “In the year 363,” says the text, “His Majesty was in Nubia, and his numberless soldiers with him.” Horus is the general who leads the soldiers, while his father remains in his boat. Battles are fought in various places along the river; all the episodes of the struggle are recorded by the names given to localities, to temples or to religious objects such as sacred boats. The last encounter takes place on the northern boundary of Egypt, on the Pelusiac branch of the Nile, at the fortress of Zar, now Kantarah. This narrative seems certainly a late remembrance of an establishment in the valley of the Nile, of a warlike race coming from the south.

In the monuments of the first Dynasties which have been discovered at Abydos and elsewhere there is a record of the conquest and of the subjection of the native stock. It is a festival called the Festival of Striking the Anu.

The oldest representation of it is on the large slate found by Mr. Quibell at  
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Hieraconpolis. The king, preceded by the queen and by four standard bearers, is shown entering a hall where his enemies are seen lying down with their heads cut off, and put between their feet. The proofs that the enemies of the king are the Anu is the ivory blade, which we quoted before, on which a prisoner is seen coming from the country of the cataracts, which we know was inhabited by the Anu ; also a tablet found by Mr. Petrie<sup>1</sup> on which we read that "the heads, or the chiefs of the Anu are brought to the great hall." (?) And lastly, another tablet on which the signs are more doubtful, but which speaks perhaps of the defeat of the Nubians.<sup>2</sup>

On the other side of the slate palette we see the same king holding his enemy by a tuft of hair, and striking him with his mace. This scene is also engraved on a small ivory tablet belonging to King Den, and on ivory cylinders, where the king striking his enemies is repeated many times. We have already mentioned the sculpture of King Khufu at Sinai, where he is seen striking in the same way the Anu of Sinai. It seems to have been the typical and conventional way of representing the victory of the invader over the native inhabitants, and it occurs several times in the Old Empire. Later on it changed. Instead of one single enemy we see a great number of various races. The king holds them bound together by their hair and fells them at a blow. This, in my opinion, does not record victories which the king himself has achieved ; it is a conventional and symbolical way of indicating that he belongs to the predominant race, that he can trace his descent to the conquerors of the Anu. The cluster of enemies held together is only a modification of the original scene, which may be invested with a ceremony at the coronation.

The Festival of the Striking of the Anu is mentioned in the Palermo stone, a document of the Old Empire, showing that the tradition persisted. Even as late as the XVIIIth Dynasty, this festival was celebrated by Thothmes III.<sup>3</sup>

The monuments of the first dynasties found at Abydos and Hieraconpolis give us an idea of the civilisation of the foreign invaders. As soon as they appear, we see domestic animals, the bull, the ass, the sheep, which are not found on the pictures of the prehistoric vases. The careful researches made by Dr. Lortet on the mummies of Egyptian bulls have led him to the conclusion that the long-horned bull, which is the oldest breed found on the monuments, is a native race and has not been imported from Asia. Dr. Lortet says the same of the ass and of the sheep. Thus the foreign invaders domesticated the animals which they found in the country. The fact of their having practised domestication implies that in that people there was a propensity towards civilisation and progress, which did not exist in the natives. Probably also they were agriculturists. When they settled below the cataracts they took with them the papyrus, which even now is found on the Upper Nile, although it has disappeared entirely from Egypt. This plant was used for various purposes, and not only for making paper.

<sup>1</sup> *Royal Tombs*, i, pp. 16, 20.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, ii, p. 32.

<sup>3</sup> *Leps.*, *Denkm.*, iii, p. 55.

Looking at their civilisation in general, we find that there is hardly an element of it which could not originate in Egypt. They must soon have perceived that dry Nile mud was a very good material for building, which did not require to be burnt. The art of building certainly began in Egypt with brick and wood. The first step afterwards was to replace the bricks by stone, of which there were various kinds particularly well suited for that purpose. It is natural that, having such fine material as the sandstone of Silsilis, the limestone from the quarries of Turâh and Thebes, the diorite and black granite from Hamamât and especially the beautiful red granite from Assuân, the Egyptians should have become great builders. It is perhaps the only art in which they far excelled the neighbouring nations, much more than in sculpture or in painting.

As we have said before, the writing also is of decidedly Egyptian origin. We can find in it no trace of a foreign element. Civilisation seems to have grown entirely in the last settlement of the invaders. They adopted and developed the rudimentary culture of their subjects. They improved it so as to produce the admirable display of Egyptian art and industry which occurs under the IVth Dynasty. If the followers of Horus had brought their animals from Arabia, one would expect to see among them the horse, which does not appear before the Hyksos invasion. If they had been already civilised before reaching Africa they would have left traces of their passage in the various places where they stopped. At present no vestiges of an early Egyptian civilisation have been discovered in Southern Arabia, or even on the Upper Nile. However, there is one side of their culture which decidedly comes from abroad, the art of working metal. Except perhaps for a little gold in the country between the Nile and the Red Sea, no metal is found in Egypt, neither copper nor iron. The arrows of the Anu certainly had flint points, and, although the Anu were very skilled in the way they made and used their flint instruments, they did not employ metal. If we consult the inscription of the conquest of Egypt by Horus, we see that his companions are often called *Mesennu*, blacksmiths, who knew also how to cut stone and wood, but whose chief art was that of working metal. Horus gives settlements to his companions in various parts of Egypt. I believe metallurgy must have originated from the necessity of having instruments for the culture of the soil. One can imagine the Horian invaders stopping in a land of remarkable fertility, and feeling induced naturally to improve the means they had of deriving advantage from the admirable soil of the country which they had chosen for their abode. It seems to me that at the beginning metallurgy was the associate of agriculture; later on only it was used for the fabrication of weapons.

We said before that the Horians probably brought into Egypt from their original resort on the Upper Nile that most useful plant, the papyrus. Another plant which is often mentioned in the inscriptions of the first Dynasties is the vine. On the clay sealings of the big jars discovered at Abydos mention is often made of the vineyards from which the wine contained in the jars is derived. Did the vine

come to Egypt from Asia? Here again we can trace an African origin for this plant. De Candolle, in his book on the cultivated plants, says that the vine grows spontaneously in Southern Europe, in Algeria and Morocco. The same botanist lays stress on the possible dissemination of the plant through natural causes, like the birds, the wind and the currents. In the oldest lists of offerings several kinds of wine are quoted. When the lists become more detailed and complete the names of the localities from which they came are given. They are most of them places in the Delta.

In the new Empire the good quality of the wine from the various oases is often praised. There it seems probable that the plant came from Africa; the oases always had more connection with Africa—with the West—than with the East. We hear of the Libyan wines brought by the Tamahu. They are known to Strabo as well as those from Mareotis. Thus, even for the vine, we are not obliged to admit an importation from Asia.

The Egyptian, and after them the Greek writers, tell us that the first historical king was Mena or Menes. Herodotus adds that in his time all Egypt except the Thebaid was a marsh. Mena is said to have founded Memphis and its Temple of Ptah, and also to have built a great dyke in order to regulate the course of the Nile. According to Diodorus Menes taught his people to fear the gods, and to offer them sacrifices; also to make use of tables and beds and of fine garments. He introduced luxury among his subjects.

It is usual now to speak of pre-Menite kings. I believe this to be a mere hypothesis. The tradition of Menes having been the first king rests on Egyptian monuments, and is recorded by Greek authors. When a sovereign like Rameses II. engraved on a temple a list of his predecessors, I cannot help thinking that he began with the first, and he would not have put aside the kings who were before Menes, especially when their graves or their funeral chapels were only a short distance from the temple where he engraved his list.

As for Menes, except for the scanty information which we get chiefly from the Greek authors, we are reduced to conjectures. Undoubtedly, he belonged to the race of the conquerors, to the civilisers, but I should not think that he was the leader of the conquest. The tribe of Horus must have been settled in the country some centuries before him. They must have had time to develop the civilisation which we find under the first Dynasties. He probably was the first to unite the whole country under his rule, and thus he was the founder of the Egyptian kingdom.

One may fancy that the native stock, the Anu, consisted of various tribes, each having as its central point the village where, as we see on the potteries, the symbol or god of the tribe was put on a pole as a standard. These symbols are the only religious element, the only trace of worship which we notice on the drawings of the potteries. The tribe of Horus did not eradicate these local cults. As time went on the standards became the great divinity of each nome or province. I believe this is the explanation of the great number of local gods which we find in Egypt. They were at first the tutelary divinity of a small clan of aborigines. The conquerors

seem to have preserved the religious traditions of their subjects; for instance, one of the most ancient cities of Egypt, its religious capital, where was taught a cosmogonic doctrine, which was adopted more or less in the whole land, Heliopolis is called An. It has the name of the Anu. These ancient natives appear in later times in religious ceremonies such as the Sed Festival celebrated by Osorkon II., of the XXIIInd Dynasty at Bubastis. There does not seem to have existed between conquerors and subjects an irreconcilable religious feud such as there was later between the Hyksos and the Egyptians. It would have prevented their mixing together and becoming one nation.

The relics of the first three dynasties show an extraordinary development of all ceremonies and customs concerning religion. Besides Horus, the Falcon, which is the symbol of the king, the royal god, there are other divine animals, like the jackal, the god Apuatu, the god who shows the ways; and also a bull, or rather judging from the nature of the animal, a buffalo. The hierarchy of priests is already fixed; court employments are mentioned, and festivals which will go through the whole of Egyptian history, like the Sed Festival, which I think to be an indiction. The rites of the foundation of temples are very similar to what they will be in Roman times. Hieroglyphs are sculptured, very archaic in appearance; they are the first rudiments of the hieroglyphical alphabet, which is already fully developed in the IVth and the Vth Dynasties.

Very interesting religious objects are the slate palettes, having on one side near the middle a circular depression surrounded by a ring. These slates are often sculptured, and bear animals or war scenes, or representations of festivals such as that of "striking the Anu." On such slates with a depression there are sculptures on both sides. Therefore I cannot admit with Prof. Petrie that these depressions were made for mixing green paint. If that was their purpose, there was no reason for their being so large as that found at Hieraconpolis, and for being adorned with such fine sculptures, not to speak of their being quite inappropriate for mixing colours. I believe this depression contained a religious emblem, a piece of wood or a precious stone, which had the form, either of a knob or of a bud. It corresponds exactly with the description which Quintus Curtius gives us of the appearance of the god in the oasis of Jupiter Ammon. The god had the form of an "*umbilicus*." This knob on the Hieraconpolis palette has a guard of two panthers or leopards, in other cases, of two dogs. This is not the only form of the god, who had the name of *Bat*. He may be a bull with one or two heads, and also a tree. In that case the two leopards are replaced by two other spotted animals, giraffes standing on each side of the tree. We have here an example of tree worship, such as was practised in Crete and in the Ægean Islands.

In conclusion, such are the principal features of the civilisation of the early Egyptian dynasties. It belongs to a nation formed by an indigenous stock, of African origin, among which settled conquerors coming from Arabia, from the same starting point as the Chaldæans. This explains a certain similarity between Egypt and Babylon. The foreign element was not Semitic. They belonged, like the

natives, to the Hamitic stock, therefore they easily amalgamated with the aborigines into whom they infused their more progressive and active spirit. The result was the Egyptians such as we know them under the first three dynasties, or, as we call that time, the Thinite period. At the end of it something took place which we cannot yet explain—a sudden bound from the rude culture of the Thinites to the refinement in art and industry, and to the literary growth which are exhibited by the IVth Dynasty and afterwards. Has there been a new invasion, coming this time from Asia? It is possible; but there again, we have no historical evidence of any kind, and we have to resort to conjecture.

The dawn of Egyptian civilisation, which we have to place at a very early period, is certainly a distinct proof of the important part played by Africa in the history of human culture. Whether the whole region of the Mediterranean was first peopled by Hamites as is now asserted by various authors, I do not feel competent to decide. But it seems to me unquestionable that the Hamitic civilisation has been the first in date, and that it has largely influenced the islands and the neighbouring nations. When we look at the startling results of the excavations in Crete, when we remember that this island is the natural bridge between Egypt and the Hellenic peninsula, we cannot help concluding with one of the excavators of the “house of Minos,” Dr. Mackenzie, that the races who were the bearers of the Ægean civilisation came from the south.