

The Work of the Egyptian Expedition

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Source: *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin*, Vol. 7, No. 10 (Oct., 1912), pp. 184-190

Published by: The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3252822>

Accessed: 18-01-2019 16:10 UTC

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THE WORK OF THE EGYPTIAN EXPEDITION



FIG. 1. LIMESTONE STELA
PALACE OF AMENHOTEP III

DURING the past two seasons of field work the Egyptian Expedition of the Museum has concentrated the larger part of its efforts upon the excavation of the concessions granted to it by the Egyptian government

on the west side of the Nile Valley opposite Luxor in the districts of the modern native villages of Gurneh and El Ba'arat. The work on the temple of Hibisin Khargah Oasis started by the Expedition in coöperation with the Service des Antiquités and described in the BULLETIN for October, 1910, has been continued, but until the restorations which M. Emile Baraize is making in the temple fabric on behalf of the government have been completed, it has been found advisable to delay finishing the clearing of the temenos. Mr. H G. Evelyn-White of the Expedition has, however, dug in the avenue of approach leading up from the east through the gateways, during the last two seasons (1910-11 and 1911-12), and laid bare the rows of sphinxes at the sides, two of the best preserved of which have since been restored and remounted on their pedestals. He has also unearthed new fragments of the Portico of Nectanebo, including another capital from the same façade as that from which was derived the large sandstone capital in the Eighth Egyptian Room. During the coming year the copying and photographing of the reliefs and inscriptions of those parts of the temple recently restored, will be continued under the direction of Mr. N. de G. Davies.

In the new concessions at Luxor the Museum has obtained field for the pursuit

of investigations and the acquisition of material from the period of the Empire — a period which in the work at Matania and Khargah was only met with incidentally. Of prime importance in this respect is the site of the Palace of Amenhotep III, south of the temple of Medinet Habu, beside the dikes of what is generally supposed to have been the pleasure lake he had made for Queen Tiy, his wife. This site had been known since M. Daressy during the administration of M. Grébaut as Director General of the Antiquities Service, conducted some tentative excavations which yielded for the Cairo Museum the frescoed pavement of a throne similar to that shown in the restoration on the wall of the Seventh Room. Messrs. Newberry and Titus subsequently continued the clearing for one season and the latter embodied the results of their work in a Preliminary Report, in which he published a number of the mural decorations found by them, a plan of the parts cleared, and evidence of the date of the structure. From the results of the Museum's excavations it can be surmised that the building of the palace was begun some time in or before the eleventh year of the king's reign when the lake is recorded to have been made, and it seems to have gone on through several periods of construction down to the end of his reign — or from about B. C. 1400 to B. C. 1375. It was abandoned by his son and successor Akhenaten, who soon after moved his capital from Thebes to Tell el Amarna.

The work of excavation on this site by the expedition was taken up in December, 1910, and continued throughout that winter and the last, with a gang of workmen which usually numbered from one hundred to one hundred and fifty men and boys. The palace was found to have consisted of a number of vast, rambling, one-storied structures built independently from time to time on the flat desert plain between the high Gurneh mountain and the cultivated lands. Beside one of these structures there was laid out a row of dwellings built by the royal workmen at one of the periods when the construction of the palace itself was in active progress, for the use of courtiers and officials.

Farther south, in an area given over exclusively to them, were the houses and shops of the workmen and artisans who were engaged about the palace or in the manufacture of faience beads, rings, scarabs, and pendants for the inmates of the royal dwelling. The whole of this vast aggregation of buildings — the different parts of

the palace itself, the houses of the nobles, and the village of the artisans — as well as large flat spaces too big to be called court-yards and more in the nature of drill grounds, was enclosed within a brick wall. There was a gateway to the west, and probably one to the north opening out on a road from the king's temple where the colossi still stand, and another, presumably, to the east, leading to the lake. The greater part of this area has now been explored, as well as some outlying houses and many of the heaps of rubbish thrown out by the ancient inmates. Photographs and drawings

and many of the objects from the excavations are displayed in the Sixth and Seventh Egyptian Rooms.

The most interesting part of the palace, the royal harim, is shown in the plan on the wall of the Seventh Room. It was a section cut off from the courts and columned halls where the king received his subjects in public, by a wall in which there is but one door. This single entrance leads into a small vestibule which was probably guarded by the eunuchs of the harim, and the vestibule in turn opens into a pillared antechamber. Long, bare passages for

servants lead off on either side and a stairway to the roof gave the inmates a way up to the place where they probably passed the summer nights out in the cool of the desert air. From the antechamber one enters the banquet hall, the central feature of the royal apartments, from each side of which open the suites of the king and the

ladies of his household. There was accommodation in this part of the palace for eight of the ladies with their servants, six having suites identical in size and appointments, while the other two had apartments similarly arranged and differing only in size and greater luxury. On entering any of these suites one passes from the great banquet hall into a chamber, which seems to have been the bath room, the roof of which was supported on wooden columns with stone bases. Beyond comes a square room, again columned, with a dais for the chair of the occupant, which we know from the Tell



FIG. 2. RESTORATION OF A SECTION FROM
A CEILING
PALACE OF AMENHOTEP III

el Amarna tomb frescoes, was a sitting and lounging room for the lady of the king's harim and her servants. On either side of the throne were doors opening into her bedroom, into a smaller room, and into the wardrobe — a long hall with a high bench or counter running along both sides, on which could be placed baskets or small boxes and under which could be stored chests and trunks containing clothing and personal belongings. The king himself had a large bedroom, retiring rooms, a bath, and a special banquet

chamber in which there was a throne placed opposite the large door through which he could be seen seated from the banquet hall. The other parts of the palace contained offices, record halls, store rooms, work courts, kitchens, the apartments of the army of officials of a royal household whose titles are so familiar on ancient monuments, and the multitude

instance, the vultures of the goddess Mut stretched across the ceiling and figures of the domestic god Bes formed a dado around the walls above a band of amulets. In another of the king's apartments the ceiling design was made up of spirals surrounding the cow's head with a rosette between her horns, known in Aegean art of this period, already published on page 97, fig. 42, of the

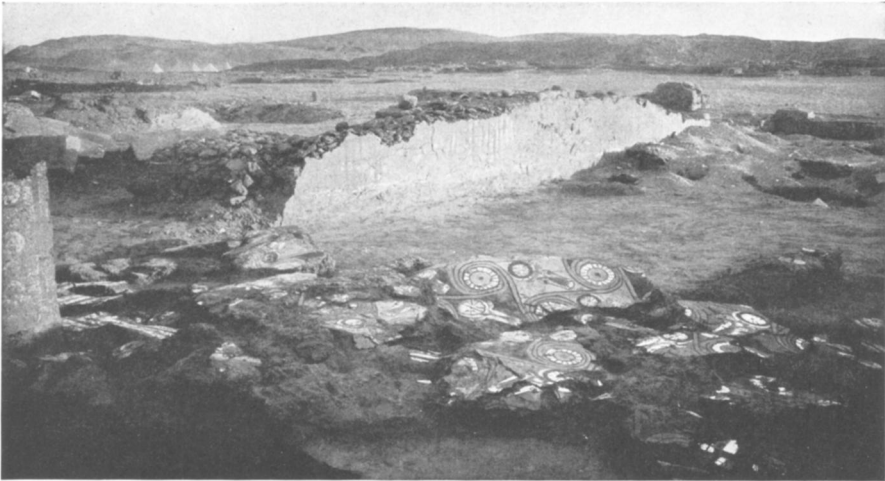


FIG. 3. FRAGMENTS OF FALLEN CEILING LYING IN POSITION
PALACE OF AMENHOTEP III

of places needed for all the members of an enormous oriental court in the days of the Empire.

The palace was built throughout of sun-dried bricks. They are often stamped with the names of the king, in one part with the name of the palace itself — “Neb-maat-re (Amenhotep III) in the ‘house of rejoicing’”, — and in the last period of the construction a few bricks were used stamped with the name of the king and of his wife, Queen Tiy. The floors were usually of bricks; the roofs, supported on wooden columns, of palm logs, matting, and mud; and the whole — floors, walls, and ceilings — was covered with a plaster of chopped straw and tenacious mud. In the more important rooms ceilings, walls, and sometimes even the floors were decorated with tempera frescoes in a multitude of designs and subjects. In the royal bedroom, for

Handbook of the Egyptian Rooms. In still another part of the palace the ceiling decorations were flights of pigeons and ducks (fig. 2) drawn in a more naturalistic style, similar to that of the calf running through a papyrus swamp, from a bench support in one of the harīm wardrobe rooms.

On the abandonment of the palace, if not even before, the roof beams and all the woodwork were attacked by white ants whose depredations eventually brought about the collapse of the ceilings. Sagging before it broke, the mud plaster often fell face up on the floors, and in the subsequent fall of the walls on it, was in some cases buried and protected in a way that the wall decorations themselves were not. On clearing a room, therefore, where the walls are preserved at present to a height of scarcely two feet it is not uncommon to find portions of the ceiling lying on the

pavement. In some cases the pieces can be reassembled face down on sheets of glass through which they can be seen during the process of fitting, and then backed with plaster of paris, without the support of which it is absolutely impossible to transport them in their present frail state. Figure 3 shows the fragments of the ceiling

has been noticed above, and the ruins of their factories have yielded fragments of the crucibles in which they melted the glaze in the manufacture of faience, hundreds of moulds for beads, pendants, and finger-rings, and many examples of the objects themselves, often in their incompleting condition, showing in a most interesting

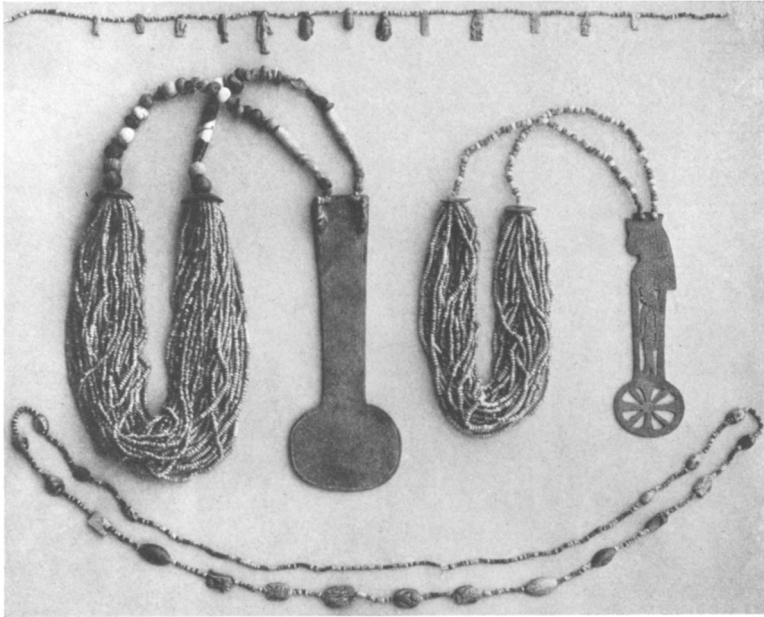


FIG. 4. MENATS AND NECKLACES
FROM HOUSE NEAR PALACE OF AMENHOTEP III

referred to above, as they were found in the place where they had fallen from the ancient roof, turning in the air, as they fell and landing face up on the ancient floor.

Of the minor arts during the culmination of Egypt's imperial development in the eighteenth dynasty, the Museum's excavations have yielded a good deal of representative material. There was a great demand at Amenhotep III's court for necklaces of faience beads and for beads and natural flowers such as the Museum has from Mr. Theodore M. Davis' excavations in the Valley of the Kings. To supply this demand, a settlement of artisans sprang up within the palace area, as

way the method of their manufacture. Inlaying and firing mosaics of colored glass paste into a ground of white or blue faience was practised, and glass cut for this purpose, as well as fragments of the finished products, have been found. Polychrome glass bottles were made there as well, moulded on earthen cores, and inlaid with colored glass rods pressed into the body while the latter was still in a semi-viscous state, and then worked into wavy patterns as they coalesced with the base, by a pointed instrument. Examples of all these manufactures found in the first season's excavations are displayed in Case B, Room Six. Further material—notably a set of polychrome glass bottles

restored from fragments found scattered through a rubbish heap under an addition to the palace — was obtained during the past winter and will soon be on exhibition.

Of the smaller objects from this site an interesting set is shown in figure 4. All the objects in this photograph had been placed in a small linen bag, of which traces were still visible at the time they were found, and had been left in a private house between the palace and the lake, on the east side of one of the dikes. Owing to the ancient thread having rotted and the beads here strung as two necklaces having fallen into some confusion, it was impossible to restore them more than approximately. But in the case of the beads on the two *menats* enough was still visible to make their stringing a practical certainty. The *menats* are both of bronze, the larger one, now in The Metropolitan Museum, having a large bunch of blue glazed beads suspended on two strings of glass, faience, and stone beads ending in two bronze caps. The other *menat*, now in the Cairo Museum, is chiseled and cut with the characteristic rosette below, and a head and figure of the goddess Hathor above. The beads on this example are all of faience. The *menat* was an attribute and symbol of Hathor from a very early date and subsequently of a limited number of other deities. As such, it was carried by women and by priestesses during the ceremonies connected with the cult, together with the sistrum. In the Handbook of the Egyptian Rooms, page 102, attention is called to its presence in this way in the Abydos reliefs.

The Museum's collection of antiquities of the Empire period is also being greatly

strengthened by the examples of polychrome pottery from this site. Wines, oils, potted meats, etc., were stored in plain jars, on the shoulders and stopper seals of which were written and stamped the name, year of vintage, and source of the contents. Numerous examples of such seals and labels have been found in the ruins of

the magazines and store chambers. Vessels for use by the inmates of the palace, however, were elaborately decorated with painted flower designs in which blue predominates, derived from the wreaths with which jars were often draped in the banquet hall as we see them in the tomb paintings. Following this innovation, which is one of the mid-eighteenth dynasty, other decorative motives were introduced and were frequently modeled in the clay of the pot in relief. Hathor and Bes, two of the domestic deities, flowers and animals, were the most usual subjects. A good specimen is the amphora shown in the accompanying cut (fig. 5). An ibex is represented



FIG. 5. AMPHORA
FROM PALACE OF AMENHOTEP III

lying among the plants on the shoulder of the pot. The body is simply painted, while the neck and head from the shoulders up are modeled in the round, free standing from the vessel except where the tips of the horns touch the rim. Other examples of this ware are shown in the Sixth Room.

An interesting little stela of limestone from one of the smaller buildings in the palace enclosure, and now in the Cairo Museum, is shown in figure 1. It bears a characteristic example of the more florid late eighteenth dynasty decorative designs.

The field work on the palace has been

conducted during the past two seasons by Mr. H. G. Evelyn-White and the writer, and the plans and facsimile copies of frescoes have been done by Mr. W. J. Palmer-Jones, all of the Museum Expedition Staff.

In connection with the work on the new Luxor concession, the final clearing was undertaken of a tomb on the north end of Sheikh abd el Gurneh hill, overlooking the two temples of Der el Bahri. It was originally built by a certain high official of the eleventh dynasty named Daga, who, through the connection he may have had with the building of the Mentuhotep temple, procured the services of some of the best of the contemporary relief artists. Blocks from the walls of the entrance and first chamber of the tomb (figure 6) show work worthy of being classed with the Der el Bahri reliefs and the slightly later Lisht reliefs in the Fifth Room, which form so strong a part of the Museum's Egyptian collection. The tomb of Daga being one of the earliest decorated tombs in Sheikh abd el Gurneh, it suffered more than the usual vicissitudes of its neighbors. The principal reliefs were on masonry walls, and not cut in the living rock of the hill as usual, and were therefore destroyed in the demolition of the walls in ancient times. So little was recovered, comparatively speaking, and that so scattered, that a re-

construction of the masonry was impossible and the fragments were therefore divided between the Cairo and Metropolitan Museums.

In Coptic times Daga's tomb became the dwelling place of a Theban anchorite who attained considerable notoriety in his day for piousness, and possibly for his writings, for he was called "the modern psalmist."

He was a certain Apa Epiphanius who, with a companion, Apa Psan, founded there a little monastery in the days of Bishop Psinthios of Koptos at the beginning of the seventh century A. D. and lived there together with a few followers. They had a loom and one or two buildings made of bricks collected from earlier monuments outside the old entrance of the tomb, and they lived in the first chambers of the tomb itself as well. After the death of the founders of the little monastery, it continued in existence for two or three generations under their successors, and gradually in their rubbish holes and round about their buildings there ac-



FIG. 6. COLORED LIMESTONE RELIEF FROM TOMB OF DAGA, DYNASTY XI



FIG. 7. CODEX FROM MONASTERY OF EPIPHANIOS

cumulated numerous letters and documents written on papyri and potsherds. The Expedition recovered a quantity of manuscripts which are an important contribution to our knowledge of conditions of monastic life in Egypt before the Arab conquest. The small codex, two pages of which are shown in figure 7, is interesting as giving a hymn in Greek and Coptic as

well as apothegmata of some of the early Fathers of the Church.

The excavation of the tomb of Daga was begun by Mr. N. deG. Davies on behalf of the Egyptian Research Account and the eleventh dynasty material will be published by him for that society.

When the clearing was taken over for the Museum, Mr. Ambrose Lansing of the Expedition Staff took charge of the work in the field. The study of the Coptic literary and archaeological material has been begun by Mr. W. E. Crum and the undersigned.

H. E. W.

NEW ARRANGEMENT OF THE NEAR EASTERN COLLECTIONS



GENERAL VIEW OF A ROOM OF THE
NEAR EASTERN COLLECTION

DURING the summer the Museum's collections of Near Eastern art have been rearranged and the space given over to them materially increased through the addition of two new rooms which it was found possible to construct between Addition E and the Lecture Hall. The new rooms are built with vaulted ceilings, flagged floors, and walls finished in a rough-cast plaster very slightly tinted, in an endeavor to procure a background suggesting the plaster and color-wash found in native houses throughout the Near East. The cloth wall cover-

ing formerly in Galleries 12, 13, and 14 has been replaced by a grayish plaster like that in the two new rooms, so that the walls of all five galleries are now similarly treated, although the color has been varied slightly in the different rooms to harmonize with the character of the objects in each. The increased space has made possible a more accurate chronological arrangement than the old conditions admitted of and the various collections are now shown to much greater advantage than formerly. The first of the new rooms, which is entered from Gallery 14, contains the earliest Persian pottery, twelfth and thirteenth century pieces from the ruined cities of Rhages and Sultanabad, together with slightly later wall tiles from the Mosque at Veramin and the remarkable early carpet lent by Mr. C. F. Williams. An inscribed panel of lusted tiles, forming a niche and dating from the fourteenth century, is a recent and noteworthy loan of Mr. J. Pierpont Morgan's. Gallery 14 is devoted to examples of later Persian art, chiefly of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, together with Indian woodwork and miniatures of the same period, the art of the two peoples being at that time very closely related. The three panels of tiles from the Palace of the Forty Columns which was built for Shah Abbas, have been placed on the wall in this room immediately over the lacquered doors from the same building, so that the close relationship between the two is at once evident.

In Gallery 13 objects from the various parts of Asia Minor are exhibited, including a number of recent acquisitions. A man's coat in gold and silver brocade and a large altar frontal of a similar material have been purchased by the Museum; six fine panels of tiles of the type usually called Rhodian, but more probably made in the towns along the west coast of Asia Minor, have been lent by Mr. Morgan; a number of chest fronts, a pair of lacquered doors, and a large panel of blue and white tiles, all from Damascus, by Mr. Lockwood de Forest.

The second new room, which opens off of Gallery 12, contains examples of Mes-