

### Early Chronology of Sumer and Egypt.

ON Wednesday, April 27, Prof. S. Langdon delivered a lecture on behalf of the Egypt Exploration Society at the Royal Society's rooms at Burlington House on "The Early Chronology of Sumer and Egypt and the Similarities of their Culture." The chair was taken by Lord Carnarvon, who has just returned from Egypt and gave a few interesting details of recent excavation work carried out there.

Prof. Langdon said that the ancient people commonly known as the Egyptians were not the first civilised people on the banks of the Nile, but they were preceded by an Asiatic people who were probably Sumerians or Elamites. These two Asiatic peoples are now known to have belonged to the same race, and they founded the first organised societies known to history on the shores of the Persian Gulf and in Elam in the Stone age. The Sumerians, the most talented branch of a widely spread race, spoke a highly organised agglutinating speech. They are found in prehistoric levels from the head of the Persian Gulf northwards along the banks of the Euphrates and the Tigris as far as Assur, north of the Lower Zab, and in Russian Turkestan. Recently discovered dynastic tablets establish the date of the earliest kingdoms of Mesopotamia as early as 5000 B.C. At that time the Semites had already invaded the Mesopotamian Valley and established themselves in the region of Bagdad. The history of ancient Babylonia consists of two rival kingdoms, Sumer in the south, the principal capital of which was Erech, and Kish in the north, the principal capital of which from 5000-2900 B.C. was at Kish.

The earliest Sumerian culture is strikingly similar to that of prehistoric Egypt; it must be assumed that a branch of this people occupied Upper Egypt in the region of Abydos and Hierakonpolis as early as 5000 B.C. The Sumerian linear pictographic writing is clearly revealed in the Egyptian pottery markings which preceded the Egyptian hieroglyphs. This writing is known to have been well developed in Sumer or ancient Chaldea before 3800 B.C., and the prehistoric Egyptian linear style cannot be much later. The Sumerians and Elamites appear to have reached Egypt by sea routes, trading and adventuring along the coasts of southern Arabia until they reached Punt, Ethiopia, and finally the Nile Valley in the

region of Coptos. All their prehistoric remains have been found in Upper Egypt, principally at Abydos and Naghada. They brought with them into Egypt the cylinder seal, the mace head, and a style of decoration in stone which is characteristic of Sumerian art.

The characteristic features of this remarkable people were a long head of large brain capacity, a thin, high nose which joined the cranium without depression, a slightly receding forehead, and eyes the axes of which are not horizontal, but slant slightly outward. The position of the axis of the eye is precisely the reverse of the Mongolian type. It is possible to discern in their prehistoric tomb paintings in Egypt the same physical characteristics. They disappeared in Egypt some time before the first Egyptian dynasty founded by Menes, and were superseded by an African people who amalgamated with Semitic races from Asia. This new race invented their own system of writing, which developed into the classical hieroglyph. The older Sumerian linear style appears to have been used in Egypt without intelligence even by the Sumerian-Egyptians themselves. It was probably never understood in Egypt, and the signs survived only as occult marks on pottery after the older Asiatic peoples had disappeared.

The religion of the Egyptians is obviously related to the Sumerian, and there is no Semitic influence in the fundamental religious concepts of the ancient religions of Babylonia and Egypt. The names of the gods in both pantheons do not reveal a single Semitic name. It is probable that the great cults of Tammuz and Osiris are the creations of two branches of the same people, that of Osiris being inherited by the Egyptians from the older Asiatic people.

Prof. Langdon attempted to fix the beginning of the first Egyptian dynasty by comparing the methods of year-dating of the famous Semitic Emperor Narâm-sin (2795-39 B.C.) with those of Egypt. He argued that Narâm-sin borrowed his system of year-dating from Egypt, and showed that this could have taken place only after Den, fifth king of the first dynasty. He also argued from archæology to make Narâm-sin a contemporary of the last two kings of the second Egyptian dynasty. He arrived by these two methods at a date *circa* 3200 B.C. for Menes.

### Imperial Forestry Education.

THE Report of the Interdepartmental Committee on Imperial Forestry Education appointed to prepare a scheme for giving effect to the resolutions of the British Empire Forestry Conference of 1920 with regard to a central institution for training forest officers has just been issued (Cmd. 1166, H.M. Stationery Office, *2d.*). Keeping in view the decision of the conference that the future higher training in forestry should take place at a single central institution, the Committee recognises that the main object to be aimed at in the training of forest officers is to turn out men fully equipped with theoretical and practical knowledge, with minds broadened by education, and with capacity, strengthened by practical experience in forest work, to direct men and operations. It considers that it would be a retrograde course to interfere with the work already done by universities in establishing and maintaining courses of training in forestry, and seeks rather to co-ordinate all these courses, to bring them up to a common level, and to utilise them as a preliminary to a higher course of training at one centre.

Under this scheme the course of study at a university would extend over three years, leading to a degree in forestry; at this stage men would be selected as probationers for one or other of the forest services, and admitted to the central institution for a period of higher training extending over one year in the case of ordinary forest officers, or longer in the case of those who propose to specialise. In order to widen the field for recruitment and to obtain men with a high scientific training, it is considered desirable that a certain number of probationers should be selected with honours degrees in science; these men should then, after a forestry course covering the second and third years at a university school, spend a final year at the central institution. In the case of men required as specialists honours graduates in science should be selected, given such a course in general forestry as may be considered necessary, and then sent for two years to the central institution.

The Committee directs attention to the great value of maintaining close relations between the central training institution and research work; research into