

## RECENT BRITISH EXCAVATIONS IN EGYPT

### Temples of Armant

A Preliminary Survey. By Sir Robert Mond and Oliver H. Myers; with Chapters by M. S. Drower, D. B. Harden, S. A. Huzayyin, R. E. McEuen and Mary I. C. Myers. The Text. Pp. xii+223. The Plates. Pp. vi+107 plates. (London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1940.)

EGYPTOLOGY is deeply indebted to Lady Mond for making financially possible the publication in these two fine volumes of the material obtained during the excavation of the temple sites at Armant. Much of this material is of considerable archaeological and historical importance, and at the same time it comprises inscriptions, reliefs and statues, which, though for the most part fragmentary, will interest both philologists and students of Egyptian art and religion.

In the opening chapter, Mr. Myers deals with the long history of Armant, which as late as the thirteenth century A.D. was still a town of considerable size and importance. It is disappointing to have to record that with the destruction of the late Roman wall in the middle of the last century "have probably gone the last hopes of tracing the life history (as opposed to the funerary record) of Buchis" (p. 10).

A number of fragments of reliefs, once adorning the Eleventh Dynasty temple of Mentu, have been recovered (Pls. XCIV ff.). As examples of Eleventh Dynasty sculpture, several of these fragments are of great value and interest, showing as they do that some at least of the craftsmen of this period were as accomplished masters of technique and design as their predecessors in the Old Kingdom.

It might here be noted that an inscription accompanying one of the Twelfth Dynasty reliefs which Mr. Myers has unearthed suggests that the cult of the Bull of Mentu originated in the town of eṭ-Ṭūd (Pl. XCIX, 2; p. 157).

I am inclined to agree with the suggestion that the Osirid statues bearing the name of Merenptah, who seems to have had some special connexion with Armant, are of Eleventh Dynasty workmanship usurped by the above-mentioned Pharaoh (Pls. XV ff.; p. 50). I find it difficult to believe, however, that the pylon relief of the procession of tribute-bearing negroes headed by a captive rhinoceros dates from the reign of Tuthmosis III (pp. 25 f.). Not only its style but also the phraseology of the accompanying inscription, and above

all the occurrence of the word *Pr-ḥ* with the meaning 'Pharaoh'—a usage not so far known before the reign of Akhenaten (p. 160)—suggest the reign of Rameses II. Mr. J. Fisher, by the way, contributes an interesting note (p. 204) on the dimensions of the captive rhinoceros which are inscribed beside the representation of it.

An exceptionally fine example of Egyptian sculpture is the fragment of a relief displaying the heads of captive Nubians and negroes (Pl. LXXXVII, 3). The account of the measures taken to preserve the colouring of this relief is most instructive (p. 23).

Archaeologists will welcome Mr. S. A. Huzayyin's chapter on the flint implements (pp. 66 ff.) and will no doubt note with approval his remarks on the possibility of the survival of certain elements and aspects of Predynastic technique into historic times. A similar view was expressed by Dr. G. A. Reisner to me so long ago as 1908.

Mr. Myers deals admirably and at length with the Roman and Coptic pottery, material at one time shamefully neglected by Egyptologists (pp. 78 ff.). Pls. LIV ff. supply a valuable addition to the Corpus of Graeco-Roman-Coptic pottery in "Bucheum III", as do the two coloured plates LXXII and LXXIII, reproduced from paintings by Mrs. Myers, which exemplify the decorations on late Roman and Coptic ceramics.

Miss Drower's chapter on the inscriptions (pp. 157 ff.) deserves a special word of praise. Her translations and notes are admirable, and what she has to say on Mentu and the Hermonthite triad will be read with interest by students of Egyptian religious cults. She is particularly to be congratulated on the way in which she has tackled the important historical text inscribed on the fine, but unfortunately much broken, granite stela of Tuthmosis III. The text in question contains much matter of philological interest, including the Egyptian name for a rhinoceros—*Šꜣkb*.

The objects in glass, metal, wood and ivory, etc., and the beads, scarabs and amulets, are all dealt with in detail by specialists, from whose comments, as from the various registers and technical reports, much useful information is to be derived.

The photographic and other plates are excellent, clear and not overcrowded, and the indexing, without which a work of this sort loses much of its usefulness, is very thorough. Mr. Myers is indeed to be congratulated on what he has succeeded in accomplishing in these abnormal times.

A. M. BLACKMAN.