

**SECOND MEMOIR OF THE
EGYPT
EXPLORATION FUND:
TANIS. PART I, 1883-4**

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W. M. FLINDERS PETRIE

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TANIS.

PART I., 1883-4.

BY

W. M. FLINDERS PETRIE.

SECOND MEMOIR OF

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.... "Copy fair what Time hath blurred;
Redeem truth from his jaws"....

HERBERT.

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CONTENTS.

SECT.		PAGE
	PREFACE	vii
	INTRODUCTION	1
1.	The Place	1
2.	The People	2
3.	The Work	3
CHAP. I.—SAN BEFORE THE EMPIRE.		
4.	Foundation of San	4
5.	Blocks of Pepi	4
6.	Amenemhat I.	4
7.	Usertesen I.	5
8.	Amenemhat II.	5
9.	Usertesen II.	6
10.	Usertesen III.	6
11.	Various Monuments of Twelfth Dynasty	6
12.	Sebakhotep III.	8
13.	Mermashau	8
14.	Various Monuments of Thirteenth and Fourteenth Dynasties	9
15.	Sphinxes of Thirteenth Dynasty	10
16.	Hyksos Monuments	10
CHAP. II.—SAN UNDER THE EMPIRE.		
17.	Pavement and Colossi of approach	12
18.	Pylon	12
19.	Hall of Columns	14
20.	Sphinxes and Obelisks	15
21.	Early Statues	15
22.	In Front of the Sanctuary	16
23.	The Sanctuary	17
24.	Around the Sanctuary	18
25.	The East end	19
26.	The General Area	19
27.	Sketch of the History of the Area	20
28.	The great Colossus	22
29.	Other Colossi	24
30.	Statues of Ramessu II.	25
31.	Obelisks and Pillars	25
CHAP. III.—GREEK AND ROMAN TANIS, AND DISTRIBUTION OF FINDS.		
	SECT.	PAGE
32.	Tell-el-Yehudiyeh	27
33.	Tell-el-Maskhuta	28
34.	Pisebkhanu at San	28
35.	Tell Farun	28
36.	Tell Sueilin	29
37.	House of Thirtieth Dynasty, San	29
38.	Chapel of Ptolemy II., San	31
39.	Tablet of Ptolemy II., San	31
40.	Ptolemaic Temple, San π.	32
41.	Ptolemaic Houses	32
42.	Ptolemaic Jewellery	33
43.	Late Ptolemaic Houses	34
44.	Roman Houses	35
45.	Roman Tombs	36
46.	Miscellaneous Objects	38
CHAP. IV.—BAKAKHUIU, THE LAWYER OF SAN.		
47.	Period of Bakakhuiu	41
48.	The House	41
49.	Statuette and Papyri	42
50.	Figures of Deities, &c.	42
51.	Furniture and Bronze Work	43
52.	Signs of an Amateur	44
53.	Alabaster and Granite Vessels	45
54.	Blue glazed Pottery	45
55.	Glass	46
56.	Pottery	46
57.	Adjoining House, No. 44.	46
58.	Marble Term	47
59.	Bronze and Iron Work	47
60.	Glass Zodiac	48
61.	Glass Lens, &c.	49
CHAP. V.—MEASUREMENTS AND TABLES.		
62.	Levellings	50
63.	Shafts	51
64.	Weights	52
65.	Deities of San	54

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PREFACE.

THE present work is half taken up with an account of the monuments of San, which had been nearly all discovered by Mariette, but of which no connected or detailed account has hitherto been written. Such a publication of the remains of a city which was only inferior to the other capitals—Thebes and Memphis—in the splendour of its sculptures, needs no comment. The other half of the account is occupied with the results of the various excavations which I carried on, and which yielded us much information on the age of many classes of objects, besides furnishing the British Museum with several antiquities of types unknown before.

In laying this memoir before the subscribers, I have endeavoured to hit the mean between the lavish style of Government publications, such as seems to have become associated with work in Egypt, and on the other hand the unpleasantly rough manner which sometimes appears in foreign works. If anything more elaborate is wished for in the matter of plates, the only reply must be that the money which would be thus spent is really wanted for actual work; the only reason that I regret the need of doing these plates myself is that it is impossible, with the many other matters that must be attended to, to issue more than a moiety of the inscriptions of San this season.

The photographs taken during the season 1883-4 are now all in England; some of the most important are reproduced in this volume, and many were exhibited at the General Meeting at the Royal Institution. Subscribers wishing to see the series are requested to communicate with Mr. Murray, 113, Pentonville Road, London, N., from whom a set can be obtained for inspection. Copies of any of them may be had at cost price from him.

I am sorry that nearly a year should have elapsed between the writing and publication of this volume, partly due to my absence at Naukratis; but

I have thereby had the benefit of the kind revision of the text by Miss A. B. Edwards and Mr. Poole, and of M. Naville's careful verification of the plates of inscriptions from the monuments themselves. In thanking my friends, I must also say how much indebted the present exploration is to the goodwill and co-operation of Professor Maspero.

W. M. FLINDERS PETRIE.

BROMLEY, KENT,
August 3, 1885.

TANIS.

INTRODUCTION.

I. BEYOND the civilized regions of modern Egypt, past even the country palm-groves, where a stranger is rarely seen, there stretches out to the Mediterranean a desolation of mud and swamp, impassable in winter, and only dried into an impalpable salt dust by the heat of midsummer. To tell land from water, to say where the mud ends and the lakes begin, requires a long experience; the flat expanse, as level as the sea, covered with slowly drying salt pools, may be crossed for miles, with only the dreary changes of dust, black mud, water, and black mud again, which it is impossible to define as more land than water or more water than land. The only objects which break the flatness of the barren horizon are the low mounds of the cities of the dead; these alone remain to show that this region was once a living land, whose people prospered on the earth.

The reddened top of the highest of these mounds may be seen rising out of the flickering haze on the horizon, some hours before it is reached; that is the great city of San, the capital of Lower Egypt. And when the traveller has climbed the crackling heaps of potsherds which cover its mouldering houses, he sees around him towns whose modern names are not in books, and whose ancient history is still buried in their ruins. Tell Ginn, Tell Dibgu, Tell Sueilin, Tell Farun, Tell Gemáyemi, Tell Khatanah, all these have their past on a still unopened page in history; a past of which we

may see the sphinxes and sarcophagi, the houses and tombs, scarcely hidden in the dust.

San, Tanis, T'aan, Zoan, these forms of the name have each a history of a different age and a different race. The miserable Arab huts of San first meet the eye; huts which belong to a people whose very nature is nomadic, who have no notions of town life,—or civilization, in the literal sense,—whose dark and miserable mud rooms are huddled together without any plan or order, in the most unhealthy flat, with on the one side a muddy stream into which they throw their dead buffaloes, and from which they drink, and on the other a swamp full of rotting graves and filth. But the high mounds which rise behind this sickening mass of dead fish and live babies, fowls and flies, are the remains of the Roman and Greek Tanis, a city well built and well ordered, whose inhabitants show no small taste in their native pottery and their imported marbles, their statuettes, their delicate glass mosaics, and their fine metal work. And it is of this city that we know most at present, as during the long and flourishing dominion of the Western Powers, which gave Egypt new life and new vigour, the successive generations built again and again on the ruins left by their forefathers; thus the mounds at last rose some forty feet higher than they had been when the Assyrians and Ethiopians had stricken the place at the close of its older history.

T'aan, the city of Sheshonk, of Pisekhannu, of

the usurping Si-amen, and of the magnificent egotist Ramessu II., is still unknown to us; and we can only yet imagine what interest may await us when we reach the dwellings of the people who lived around the splendid temple which lies in the midst of the mounds. This temple, a thousand feet from end to end, stood up above the surrounding houses; and over its long flat roof towered up the colossal statue of the second founder of the city, the great Ramessu, head, shoulders, and body even, above everything else, with stony eyes gazing across the vast plain. This temple was worthy of the capital of Lower Egypt, replete with noble statues of the older kings, of the most magnificent work, and dominated in every part by the royal splendour of the Smiter of Nations, the Strong Bull, the Destroyer of His Enemies, Ramessu, Beloved of Amon.

But beneath the capital of Ramessu there must lie the older town, the town of the bearded Hyksos, the fishy people, the worshippers of Sutekh, who honoured and adorned the early temple; and yet, beneath that again, the town of Amenemhat and Usertesen, of the great kings who first established this as their capital, to hold in check the pushing Semitic invaders; the kings who one by one, as they mounted the throne of the two lands, added their statues to the figures of the Great Gods in the temple—statues of colossal size, carved in the hardest rocks, with severe simplicity, and yet the most brilliant finish. And even before them some town existed here,—Zoan, built seven years after Hebron,—of which no trace is now visible. This large sand island in the midst of the mud, by the side of the river, doubtless had a settlement on it of either the invaders or the defenders from the first days when the Semitic tribes began to take their footing in Egypt, and to press on its rich and well-cultivated plains, which formed so tempting a prey.

2. To examine this district, and to excavate at San, I went down by boat from Faku on the

4th of February, 1884, and lived at San, in tent or house, until the 23rd of June; only leaving for two short trips to neighbouring Tells during that time. Communication with the outer world was kept up by sending a man forty miles—to Faku and back—every week, and only once did any European come down to that out of the way place while I was there.

For the first fortnight I lived in a tent, close by the village of San; but afterwards I moved up to a room that I had built on the top of the mounds, some sixty feet above the river level; and, gradually completing my house there, I had at last a little block of buildings of a defensible form, with only one outer door, and comprising six rooms around a courtyard; the rooms being about six by eight feet each, and four of them serving for me and the stores and finds, while the other two housed my overseers. From my room I could see the temple through the open doors, so as to watch the workers, with a telescope, when I needed to be up in the house. No difficulty was found in getting labourers; within a week of reaching San, I had over fifty, men girls and boys, and the numbers varied up to 180. During the harvest, of course, they had to work in their fields, and I had but thirty children left; but usually there was a party of new hands waiting to be taken on every morning. The difficulty was to avoid overstocking; as, in that case, so little attention could be given to each that they would not feel kept in hand, and would deteriorate, and become lazy. The engagement of each man, allotting the work to him, keeping account of his time, and paying him, was attended to by myself; thus there was no opening for native favouritism, bakhshish, or cheatery. The only duty of my Arab overseers was to watch the men, see that they kept to work, observe what was found, and make any little changes needed from hour to hour; but I saw every labourer at least twice, and often four times, a day. Thus I knew everyone about the place, and kept up a friendly intercourse with