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RELATIONS BETWEEN EGYPT AND MESOPOTAMIA FROM PREHISTORIC TIMES TO THE END OF THE MIDDLE KINGDOM¹⁾

BY

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The question of connections between Egypt and Mesopotamia has been studied by many scholars for several decades. There is no doubt that there were connections of some kind, though the problem has always been, and still is, the actual extent of these connections and the process by which they came about. Recent studies have shown that we cannot postulate with any certainty direct contacts for the period under consideration. Leemans, working from the standpoint of the Old Babylonian material, has concluded that it is "not plausible that

1) The following abbreviations are used throughout this article. Other abbreviations follow standard practise.

Asselberghs = Asselberghs, *Chaos en Beheersing. Documenten uit Aeneolithisch Egypte* (Leiden, 1961).

Cultures = Baumgartel, *The Cultures of Prehistoric Egypt* Vol. I, rev. ed. (London, 1955); Vol. II (London, 1960).

Hayes, *Scepter* = Hayes, *The Scepter of Egypt*. 2 vols (New York, 1953-59).

Helck, *Beziehungen* = Helck, *Die Beziehungen Ägyptens zu Vorderasien im 2. und 3. Jabrtausend v. Chr.* (Wiesbaden, 1962).

Massoulard = Massoulard, *Préhistoire et protohistoire de l'Égypte* (Paris, 1949).

Perkins, *Comp. Arch.* = Perkins, *The Comparative Archeology of Early Mesopotamia* (Chicago, 1949).

Porada, *Corpus* = *Corpus of Ancient Near Eastern Seals in North American Collections*.

Vol. I, Porada, *The Collection of the Pierpont Morgan Library* (Washington, 1948).

Rel. Chron. = Ehrich (ed), *Relative Chronologies in Old World Archeology* (Chicago, 1954).

Roy. Cem. = Woolley, *Ur Excavations II. The Royal Cemeteries* (Philadelphia, 1934).

Tomb. Dev. = Reisner, *The Development of the Egyptian Tomb down to the Accession of Cheops* (Cambridge (Mass.), 1936).

Vandier, *Manuel* = Vandier, *Manuel d'archéologie égyptienne* 3 vols. (Paris, 1952-58).

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any trade occurred between Babylonia and Egypt in the Old Babylonian period otherwise than through several intermediaries" ¹). Working from the standpoint of Egypt, I have concluded that direct Egyptian relations with Asia never extended beyond Palestine and western Syria from prehistoric times to the end of the Middle Kingdom ²). It is thus apparent that both Babylonia and Egypt had definite spheres of influence in western Asia beyond which their direct interests did not go ³). These spheres of influence did not come into direct contact.

The present study has not been undertaken simply to substantiate the fact that Egypt and Mesopotamia never came into direct contact prior to the mid-second millennium B.C. This is, of course, still a problem of major significance since the theory of a Sumerian invasion, or at least direct trade contacts, through the Wadi Hammamat is still being defended. That I cannot accept this theory will become clear in the following pages. There remains, however, the matter of accounting for the very clear evidence that there was some kind of contact between Egypt and Mesopotamia in the late Prehistoric period. But even here scholars have, in my opinion, given much more credit than is due to Mesopotamian influence on the development of early Egyptian civilization. Then too, much of the material presented to substantiate Egypto-Mesopotamian relations can be interpreted otherwise. It is therefore necessary to collect and re-study this material and determine just how useful it is in determining the extent of relations that existed between Egypt and Mesopotamia prior to the Egyptian Empire age. It is this re-evaluation of the available material which is the primary purpose of this paper.

1) Leemans, *JESHO* 3 (1960), 36, and *Foreign Trade*, p. 138 f.

2) Ward, *Orientalia* 30 (1961), 22-45, 129-55; *JESHO* 6 (1963), 1-57.

3) Leemans, *JESHO* 3, p. 34, and *Foreign Trade*, p. 137 ff., concludes that direct trade from Babylonia extended only as far as the cities on the borders of the Mesopotamian plains.

I. FROM THE NAQADA I PERIOD TO THE APPEARANCE OF THE DYNASTIC RACE

A. Supposed Relations in the Naqada I Period

The question of contacts with Asia in the Predynastic Period is inseparably bound to the question of the development of Egyptian Predynastic culture. Indeed, the two questions are really one, since many scholars see in the sequence of Egyptian Predynastic cultures the direct action of outside influences, predominantly from western Asia. It is the last two Predynastic cultures—Naqada I and II—that will concern us here ¹).

It is now generally felt that the Naqada I culture belongs to an African substratum of Egyptian civilization with primary ties toward the south ²). Though Dr. E. Baumgartel also accepts this ³), she is convinced that the painted pottery tradition of Naqada I was of Iranian inspiration ⁴). Several scholars have criticized her ideas, both in general and in detail ⁵). For example, rows of zig-zag lines, triangles and squares are certainly not distinctive enough to warrant cultural borrowing ⁶). These are patterns of the simplest possible geometric design and, in themselves, do not constitute proof that the early Egyptian and Iranian cultures were related.

Mrs. Baumgartel suggests corroborative evidence to support that

1) The Semainean Culture, supposedly following Naqada II and immediately preceding the historic age, did not really exist; cf. Kantor, *JNES* 3 (1944), 110-36. Naqada I and II are also known as Amratian and Gerzean. Throughout this study, I follow Miss Kantor and others in allowing for no separate period such as the vague "Dynasty O." I use the term "Late Predynastic" to indicate the late Naqada II age.

2) Scharff, *Die Frühkulturen Ägyptens und Mesopotamiens* (AO 41, Leipzig, 1941) p. 12, 34; Scharff and Moortgat, *Ägypten und Vorderasien im Altertum* (Munich, 1950), p. 14; Massouliard, p. 171; Kantor, *Rel. Chron.*, p. 3.

3) *Cultures* I, p. 24; II, p. 140.

4) *Cultures* I, pp. 54 ff., especially pp. 70-71. Herzfield, *Iran in the Ancient East* (Oxford, 1941), pp. 94 and 101, hints at the same thing.

5) Kantor, *AJA* 53 (1949), 76-79; Vandier, *Manuel* I, pp. 291 ff.; Arkell, *Bib. Or.* 13 (1956), 123-27.

6) *Cultures* I, pp. 54-56, figs. 4-8. Gilbert, *Cd'É* 52 (1951), 225, also notes point-to-point squares as being a design of Mesopotamian origin.

of the geometric designs. Several of the patterns she notes "are complicated enough not to be natural products . . . They were invented to convey a certain meaning" ¹). Pottery designs, according to her, must have had magical significance, though this is now lost to us. Thus, in both Egypt and Mesopotamia, wavy lines were used as the hieroglyph for water. In both cases, these hieroglyphs supposedly go back to pottery designs which must have been intended to convey the same meaning. Such an argument cannot really stand up; a wavy line, or series of wavy lines, is the most obvious way of representing water in any culture. Nor is it necessary that wavy lines used as decoration on prehistoric pottery must mean "water", or indeed have any meaning at all, other than simple decoration.

Painted figures of hunters from Iran and Egypt are considered to be "very closely related to each other" ²). This comparison also fails to stand up under detailed analysis ³). Mrs. Baumgartel also suggests that certain pottery types are common to both Egypt and Iran at this time ⁴). These are, however, simple shapes and none is distinctive enough to really be acceptable as evidence of a connection between the two areas. Simple cups with slanted sides, or goblets with flaring feet are too ordinary to be considered proof that the Naqada I culture was closely related to prehistoric Iran. Then too, there is a chronological problem. Mrs. Baumgartel uses comparative material from Naqada I, Susa I and Sialk II though the latter two, according to McCown, are contemporary to the Warka and Halaf periods, respectively ⁵).

A final piece of evidence produced by Mrs. Baumgartel is "one of their (Naqada I people) sea-going boats, painted on a jar" which is "of the type of Red Sea Craft to which Frankfort first drew attention" ⁶). This so-called Red Sea Craft is shown on numerous documents

1) *Cultures I*, p. 59.

2) *Cultures I*, p. 64, fig. 13.

3) Cf. Vandier, *Manuel I*, pp. 293-94.

4) *Cultures I*, p. 68, fig. 18.

5) McCown, *Rel. Chron.*, p. 67. Throughout this essay, McCown emphasizes the uncertainties in dating Iranian sites and the lack of sufficient evidence to produce more than theories.

6) *Cultures I*, p. 71.

from early Egypt, but since the appearance of these supposedly foreign craft is of greater importance to the Naqada II Period, this particular subject will be discussed below (pp. 29 ff.). Also discussed below is the problem of the piriform mace-head, a type which may have made its appearance in Egypt during the Naqada I Period (pp. 14 ff.).

Taken as a whole, the supposed Asiatic connections of the Naqada I culture are more apparent than real. The "similarities" between Egypt and Iran can be considered the products of two independent cultures which were not in contact with each other. One would not be inclined to judge this material so harshly were it not for the fact that the theory of Egypto-Iranian relations is based on simple geometric designs, superficial resemblances in elementary pottery types, and the like. Nor can Mrs. Baumgartel's historical interpretation be admitted. According to her, the Obeid culture of Mesopotamia and the Naqada I culture of Egypt were both strongly influenced by Iran; Egypt received this influence directly from Iran. "It seems possible that this culture reached Egypt *via* the Straits of Aden and followed the upper course of the Nile; but this is pure conjecture, for nothing is known about the prehistory of the countries that might have formed the bridge between Asia and Africa"¹). Such a connection by sea is, I feel, completely out of the question.

Such negative conclusions may not be applicable if we think in terms of artistic influence from the northern Obeid culture arriving in Egypt *via* trade through Syria. It is possible that, through an exhaustive study of the material now available, an indirect contact between the north Obeid culture of Mesopotamia and the Naqada I culture of Egypt can eventually be postulated. The Obeid painted pottery style, or at least a variant tradition, is known as far west as Ras Shamra and the Amouq Valley. If we must insist on some kind of Asiatic influence on the painted pottery tradition of Naqada I times, this would seem the more likely route. However, in the present state of our knowledge, I feel it is incorrect to suppose even an indirect connection with Mesopotamia in this period. The evidence would still consist of very elementary

1) *Cultures I*, pp. 70-71; note Arkell's remarks in *Bib. Or.* 13 (1956), 124.

geometric designs and much more positive proof is needed. While I do not think it likely, the possibility must at least be left open for further research.

B. Relations in the Naqada II Period

It is during the Naqada II Period that the first positive contacts with Asia can be seen¹). From the very beginning of this age, spouted jars based on a Mesopotamian prototype appear in Egyptian deposits and continue to appear to the end of the period²). Another Mesopotamian pottery type—large bowls with four triangular lugs joined by an incised band of decoration—appears in late Naqada II deposits³). This pottery—along with the loop-handled cups noted below and several cylinder seals, one or two of which may be Egyptian copies of Mesopotamian prototypes⁴)—represent the sum total of Mesopotamian objects in Egypt during the Naqada II Period. This material fixes beyond reasonable doubt the relative chronological position of these early cultures: early Naqada II=Protoliterate a-b, late Naqada II=Protoliterate c-d.

Miss Kantor strongly denies any connection between the typical bevelled-rim bowls of Protoliterate Mesopotamia and similar, though much cruder, ware of Naqada II⁵). This connection was made by Mallowan who suggests some kind of international votive ritual using this bowl type⁶). Mrs. Baumgartel⁷) and Burton-Brown also accept this identification⁸). However, while Burton-Brown suggests that bevelled-rim bowls were imported into Egypt at the beginning of the Dynastic Period and used commonly until the end of the Old Kingdom,

1) As noted at several points in the present article, there are hints at relations during the Naqada I Period but these are still not sufficient to be conclusive.

2) Kantor, *JNES* 11 (1952), 249-50. and *Rel. Chron.*, p. 4; *Cultures* I, p. 91.

3) Kantor, *JNES* 11 (1952), 250, and *Rel. Chron.*, pp. 5-6; *Cultures* I, p. 90.

4) Kantor, *JNES* 11 (1952), 239 ff.

5) Kantor, *Rel. Chron.*, p. 6.

6) Mallowan, *Iraq* 9 (1947), 222, pl. 66. 4.

7) *Cultures* I, pp. 93-94.

8) Burton-Brown, *Studies in Third Millennium History* (London, 1946), pp. 36 ff.

the examples he quotes are classed by Petrie as being of a very crude local manufacture¹).

Other supposed connections between Egypt and Mesopotamia during this period are equally as unacceptable. For example, Gilbert has proposed a connection between the "animal concert" on a harp from Ur and a masked figure playing a flute on a small Predynastic palette²). Even accepting the lowest possible chronology for Egypt, the two objects are separated by three or four centuries. Then too, the scene on the Ur harp is made up of real animals, probably only with comic significance, while the Egyptian figure is that of a man wearing a mask, undoubtedly performing a cultic rite having to do with hunting.

At this point, it is necessary to return to Mrs. Baumgartel's theories about the Asiatic origin for the painted pottery traditions of Egypt³). Just as she has proposed an Asiatic origin for the painted pottery of the Naqada I culture, the same is proposed for Naqada II⁴). Generally speaking, her case is much better for Naqada II. Certain of her connections would certainly seem to be valid. The pattern dividing the vase into vertical stripes⁵) and the fan-shaped tree in an ellipse⁶) are certainly distinctive enough to be considered evidences of some kind of relationship between Egypt and Mesopotamia. Other motives such as rows of animals⁷), the pentagram⁸), a spiral⁹) and simple geometric

1) Petrie, *Royal Tombs I* (London, 1900), p. 29, pl. 43. 149-50.

2) Gilbert, *Cd'É* 52 (1951), 232; for the harp from Ur, cf. *Roy. Cem.*, pl. 104; for the Egyptian palette, cf. Asselberghs, pl. 128.

3) I should note that my disagreements with Mrs. Baumgartel's books are confined mainly to her broad theories about the origins of Egyptian Predynastic culture. Otherwise, these two volumes are of immense value and my criticisms here, limited to the realm of foreign relations, do not adequately portray my genuine admiration of them.

4) *Cultures I*, pp. 71 ff. A Mesopotamian origin for the idea of painting designs on pottery, particularly boats with shrines, is supported by Arkell in *Antiquity* 33 (1959), 52-53. 5) *Cultures I*, fig. 24.

6) *Cultures I*, fig. 27; this motive is also found on cylinder seals, for example, Frankfort, *Stratified Seals of the Dyala Region* (Chicago, 1955), No. 80.

7) *Cultures I*, fig. 22.

8) *Cultures I*, p. 74; noted also by Mackay, *Excavations at Jemdet Nasr. Field Mus. Anthropol. Mem.* I, 3 (Chicago, 1931), p. 254, pl. 68. 8.

9) *Cultures I*, fig. 26.

designs such as rows of triangles are too liable of independent invention to be used as proof of foreign connections.

Of actual pottery types, Mrs. Baumgartel notes those already listed above, but strangely seeks to discount Miss Kantor's attempt to connect three loop-handled cups found in Egypt with contemporary Palestinian pottery. "Following Petrie, she (Miss Kantor) wishes to equate them with Palestinian forms of which the handles only are preserved. It is doubtful whether such an equation on such a slender basis should be attempted" ¹⁾. The recent excavations at Jericho, however, have yielded scores of these loop-handled cups ²⁾ and Miss Kantor's suggestion must now stand. M. Dothan studied this type in 1953 with some interesting results: this style is foreign to Egypt (as all authorities agree) and does not appear before Naqada II times. Similar cups are known from Mesopotamia in the Warka and Protoliterate Periods, contemporary deposits in Lebanon and in Palestine, beginning with the late Chalcolithic age ³⁾. On the origin of this type, Dothan hesitatingly suggests Mesopotamia and notes: "it seems hardly conceivable that the spread of this strange form from Mesopotamia to Egypt could have occurred without intermediate stations. It seems that the transmission was through Palestine, and took place not later than the Protoliterate Period" ⁴⁾. Thus, while Mrs. Baumgartel is able to see a connection between the Mesopotamian and Egyptian examples of this pottery type, thereby lending support to her overseas invasion theory, we can now broaden our horizons a bit and trace this type through Syria-Palestine as well. This is an important point, having significance for the route by which Egypto-Mesopotamian relations may have occurred.

In her discussion of stone vessels, Mrs. Baumgartel points out some

1) *Cultures I*, p. 94.

2) Kenyon, *Jericho I* (Jerusalem, 1960), figs. 12-13, Proto-urban A Period. If this connection is valid, it adds one more piece of evidence to the discussion of the early chronology of the Near East. Carbon 14 dating for the tomb in which this pottery was found gives a date of 3260 ± 110 (p. 25). This would thus be another indication of the approximate date for the Naqada II Period and support the high chronology for Predynastic Egypt; cf. Ward, *JESHO* 6 (1963), 3, note 2.

3) Dothan, *PEQ* 1953, 132-37.

4) *Ibid.*, p. 137.

highly interesting parallels¹). I have already shown that Egyptian stone vessels must have been used for export from very early times²), though there are substantial difficulties in trying to point out specific examples from Mesopotamia that may have originated in Egypt. Some of the similarities are striking, especially between Egyptian vessels and those of Arpachiyya, Uruk and Telloh. But there are certain problems involved here which cannot be solved at the present time. Chronologically, there is a discrepancy (noted by Mrs. Baumgartel) since most of the Egyptian types which have counterparts in Mesopotamia come from the first three dynasties while the Mesopotamian material is earlier. To make really positive identification, one would have to compare methods of manufacture and analyze materials, specialized studies which have not yet been undertaken. Like Mrs. Baumgartel, I am convinced that the stone vessels, properly studied, would be of great value to our knowledge of foreign relations in these early periods. But this would necessarily involve an examination of the actual objects and a search for the original source for the material used as well as a study of the processes involved in making them. Until such studies have been made, we must set aside possible evidence from stone vessels³).

One type of object which many have considered a Mesopotamian import into Egypt may in reality be originally Egyptian. This is the scalloped or crescentic axe-head⁴), the earliest Egyptian example of which is found on a Late Predynastic stone vase fragment depicting a warrior brandishing an axe which is clearly of this type⁵). Examples

1) *Cultures I*, pp. 102 ff.

2) Ward, *JESHO* 6 (1963), 54 ff.

3) Cf. Reisner, *Antiquity* 5 (1931), 200-12, who studied several stone vessels from Mesopotamia having similarities to Egyptian vessels and concluded that all were of Sumerian manufacture. These include the cylinder jar which Mrs. Baumgartel feels must be Egyptian; *Cultures I*, p. 115. Cylinder jars are found frequently in Mesopotamia, but Reisner was convinced the type could easily have developed independently in both places.

4) Cf. Frankfort, *The Birth of Civilization in the Near East* (Bloomington, 1951), p. 109, for a list of such motives, etc.

5) Shown in Schafer, *Von Ägyptischer Kunst*. 3d ed. (Leipzig, 1930), pl. 3. 3; Bonnet, *Die Waffen der Völker des Alten Orients* (Leipzig, 1926), fig. 13; Smith, *A History of*

of the scalloped axe-head are known from Egypt from this time to the Middle Kingdom¹). Rare examples come from Palestine²) and a few are known from Mesopotamia³). Stronach has studied this type of axe⁴) and concludes that it originated in Mesopotamia during the Early Dynastic Period, was copied in Early Bronze Syria-Palestine and arrived in Anatolia in the last two or three centuries of the third millennium because of a diffusion of Mesopotamian and Syro-Palestinian forms. He strangely does not take the Egyptian examples into account. When Frankfort originally proposed the example on the Predynastic stone sherd as showing Mesopotamian influence, he noted that this type of weapon was only adopted in Egypt at the end of the Old Kingdom, but had been known in Mesopotamia from the beginning of the Early Dynastic Period and "possibly" earlier⁵). However, there does not seem to be any evidence that this type of axe existed prior to the Early Dynastic Period in Mesopotamia or the late Early Bronze Age in Syria-Palestine. It is a tenuous argument, but the appearance of a clear example of this style of axe, borne by an Egyptian (or possibly a Libyan, certainly not a Semite), in the Late Predynastic Period would stand in favor of this weapon being of North African and not Mesopotamian origin. In this case, we would finally have an example of Mesopotamian borrowing from Egypt at this early age; the lack of such Mesopotamian borrowings has been noted by all who have studied the subject.

One attempt to show an Egyptian artistic theme in early Mesopota-

Egyptian Sculpture and Painting in the Old Kingdom. 2d ed. (Boston, 1949), fig. 35. This fragment, now in the Berlin Museum is of the Late Predynastic Period.

1) Petrie, *Tools and Weapons* (London, 1917), p. 9, pl. 6.1 (Old Kingdom); Brunton, *Qau and Badari I* (London, 1927), pl. 38.12 (First Int. Per.); Ranke, *Egyptian Collections of the University Museum* (Philadelphia, 1950), fig. 47 (First Int. Per.); Hayes, *Scepter I*, fig. 185 (Middle Kingdom).

2) Kenyon, *Jericho I*, fig. 66. 1 (EB III). Miss Kenyon feels that this type is dated ca. 2400-2200 B.C. (p. 179).

3) *Roy Cem.*, pl. 224, Types A12-13. Woolley suggests (p. 306) that the origin of this type is Anatolia, though this cannot be correct; Mackay, *The "A" Cemetery at Kisb. Field Mus. Anthropol. Mem. I*, 1 (Chicago, 1925), p. 39, pl. 17.8

4) Stronach, *Anat. St.* 7 (1957), 122-25.

5) Frankfort, *AJSL* 58 (1941), 357.

mian art has been made by Gilbert. In discussing animals with long necks in Egypt and Sumer¹), Gilbert concludes that the long-necked animal motive was originally Egyptian since (1) the original animal involved was the giraffe, an African animal, (2) the entwined necks form a space for mixing paint in Egyptian examples, giving this motive a practical use not found in Mesopotamian art, (3) the particular rendition of the motive on the Narmer Palette “préfigure la ligature des plantes héraldiques de Haute et de Basse Égypte”²), and (4) the relatively longer time this symbol was in use in Egypt. None of these reasons is conclusive. Giraffes are never shown with entwined necks, though the entwined necks are part of the theme everywhere it is found in Mesopotamia. The purely decorative use to which this design was put in Mesopotamia and the practical use in Egypt can be accounted for by the types of monuments on which it appears: palettes in Egypt, cylinder seals in Mesopotamia. That the motive on the Narmer Palette may anticipate the floral symbol of union would be acceptable on psychological grounds, but one wonders why, if the animals were in reality an Egyptian motive, they were not kept in later art. Finally, Gilbert assumes a long usage in Egyptian art on the bases of the symbol of the town of Cusae: a man standing on the backs of two long-necked animals with panther-like heads³). Granted that the Cusae symbol may well be a later echo of a Predynastic theme, this does not shed any light on the origin of this theme. A borrowed artistic motive may be used in the borrowing country long after it has gone out of style in its country of origin. It is significant that this theme appears on cylinder seals of the Uruk Period which makes the theme a great deal older in

1) Gilbert, *Cd'É* 43 (1947), 38 ff.

2) On the Narmer Palette, two men hold ropes attached to the entwined necks of panther-headed creatures. The entwined floral symbol of union is often so held by two figures: cf. Fecheimer, *Die Plastik der Ägypter* (Berlin, 1920), fig. 130 (throne of Neusserre).

3) Cf. Blackman, *Rock Tombs of Meir I* (London, 1914), p. 1, note 3, who also points out a possible relation to the panther-headed creatures on the Narmer Palette. For several examples of the Cusae symbol, cf. *ibid.* II (London, 1915), pl. 17.

Mesopotamia than in Egypt¹). Because of an incorrect chronological synchronism, Gilbert missed this point²).

To this point, I have dealt with major items indicating some kind of connection between Mesopotamia and Egypt in the Naqada II Period and at the very beginning of the historic age. While I do not consider a few of these items to be valid, there is enough evidence to prove that there was definitely a connection between the two areas³). Before examining the question of how this connection came about, however, there are a few isolated objects which should be mentioned as well as the troublesome problems of the piriform mace-head and the

1) Porada, *Corpus*, No. 1. Gilbert, *op. cit.*, p. 40, notes that this theme appears only in the Uruk and Jemdet Nasr Periods in Mesopotamia. Since the earliest Egyptian examples come from the Late Predynastic Period, present evidence will not support a borrowing from Egypt. We should also consider the possibility that the giraffe motive was a local development and may have no relationship to the animals with entwined necks at all. The only foreign influence one can really see here is the giraffe in antithetical pairs, a feature characteristic of Mesopotamian, but not Egyptian, art. Finally, perhaps the entwined serpents motive is also related. This theme appears on several Late Predynastic knife handles (Asselberghs, pls. 33-36) and is also common in Mesopotamian art. Note the entwined lion-headed snakes on a cylinder seal of the Early Dynastic Period: Porada, *Corpus*, No. 62. With the exception of the giraffe which is native to Africa, which does not fit the category of fabulous animals and which is not found with entwined necks, a Mesopotamian origin for the mythological creatures with long entwined necks seems much more plausible.

2) In a later article dealing with artistic comparisons — *Cd'É* 52 (1951), 225 ff. — Gilbert begins with the statement: "le point de départ est très net; il faut le tenir pour établi que l'unification de la Haute et de la Basse Egypte en un seul royaume répond au passage de la période d'Ourouk à celle de Djemdet Nasr en Mesopotamie". It is impossible to make such a synchronism in the light of the increasing evidence that the Jemdet Nasr Period is contemporary to the late Naqada II Period.

3) At one time, Von Bissing could say: "Ich glaube also nicht zu viel zu sagen, wenn ich das Ergebnis unserer eingehenden Prüfung aller ernst zu nehmenden Beweise für eine weitergehende Abhängigkeit der archaischen ägyptischen Kunst von der elamischen oder mesopotamischen dahin zusammenfasse, dass kein einziger solcher Beweis sich als stichhaltig erwiesen hat. Ob im fünften und vierten Jahrtausend irgendein direkter oder nennenswerter indirekter Einfluss, irgendeine Berührung zwischen den Flussgebieten des Nil und des Euphrat und Tigris stattgefunden hat, ist auf archäologischen Wege nicht zu entscheiden; einzig unsere fortschreitende geschichtliche Kenntniss konnte hier sichere Tatsachen schaffen". *AfO* 5 (1928-29), 75-76. Such positive denials of Egypto-Mesopotamian relations are now no longer possible.

sudden appearance of niched panelled architecture in the First Dynasty.

Mallowan has suggested that a connection with Egypt may be found in two objects of the early Jemdet Nasr Period from Tell Brak. The first is a kidney-shaped seal of black serpentine which contains a stylized lizard in its design ¹⁾. This he connects with a cylinder found at Abydos which has three similar figures ²⁾. A seated monkey of alabaster ³⁾ shows some similarity to those found at Abydos ⁴⁾. Neither of these objects can be used without qualification as evidence of an Egyptian connection with northern Iraq. The lizard motive is one that could be copied from nature in both places and neither the seal from Brak nor the cylinder from Egypt were imported. The seated monkey has a possible connection through Byblos where similar figures were found ⁵⁾. There is no need to emphasize here the Egyptian connection with Byblos from very early times; it is just possible that the Brak figurine actually did come originally from Egypt *via* Byblos. There is still a chronological difficulty, however, in that the Jemdet Nasr age is contemporary to late Naqada II and the Egyptian monkeys from Abydos are of the early Protodynastic Period. Then too, as Mallowan indicates, the monkey seems to be quite prominent at Brak and the figurine under consideration is certainly not unique in subject matter at that site.

A small ivory figurine carved from the tip of a tusk has been described as a woman in a long flounced skirt, dated to the early Naqada II Period and connected to female figurines wearing flounced skirts in Crete and Mesopotamia ⁶⁾. However, this object was not found in excavations and the description of the carving as a woman in a flounced skirt is open to question. This carving might actually represent something else and,

1) Mallowan, *Iraq* 9 (1947), 121, pl. 17.15. Mallowan notes examples from Uruk and Ur, though these are of more realistic style.

2) Petrie, *Abydos I* (London, 1902), p. 23, pl. 51—11. Petrie calls these figures crocodiles.

3) Mallowan, *op. cit.*, p. 97, pl. 7.6.

4) Petrie, *Abydos II* (London, 1903), pl. 4.9; *ibid.* I, pl. 53.

5) Montet, *Byblos et l'Égypte* (Paris, 1928), No. 176.

6) Petrie, *Prehistoric Egypt* (London, 1920), p. 7, pl. 1.3; Thomas, *Ancient Egypt* 1933, 89 ff.

in any case, Petrie's date of S.D. 45 is based purely on the fact that figurines carved from tusks are known from this period. There are far too many questions about this figurine to consider it as a possible link between Egypt and Mesopotamia¹). Finally, Contenau's suggestion that the Hathor heads on the Narmer Palette are similar to bull's heads from Ur is out of the question²) as is his suggestion that a seal from Warka showing a king vanquishing his enemies must be related to the traditional theme of Pharaoh smiting his enemies³).

C. The Piriform Mace-Head

One class of object, the piriform mace-head, is constantly used as proof of foreign relations, either between cultures in western Asia or between Asia and Egypt. The seemingly sudden appearance of the piriform mace-head in Egypt in the Naqada II Period and the fact that this style of mace apparently replaced the disc-shaped mace-head of Naqada I times have led to the conclusion that this class of object was borrowed from some foreign source⁴). In reality, the piriform mace-head did not appear suddenly and the two types seem to have been

1) Mrs. Baumgartel (*Cultures II*, p. 69) wishes to see a connection between female figurines from Egypt which have heads "roughly shaped like that of a bird" and female figurines from Sumer which have heads of "similar" shape. The Mesopotamian figurines come from the Obeid and Warka Periods, the Egyptian from Naqada I, so this is acceptable chronologically. However, the Mesopotamian figurines have reptilian heads, not avian; cf. Parrot, *Sumer (Arts of Mankind Series; Paris 1960)*, figs. 74-77. (A connection between these Mesopotamian figurines and *Badarian* figurines is suggested by Massouard, p. 125.) There is no real artistic resemblance between these figurines and, beyond the motive of a female figure with a non-human head probably denoting some mythological or magical concept, there is no other feature of these figurines which warrants comparison.

2) Contenau, *Manuel d'archéologie orientale III* (Paris, 1931), p. 1591: "cette même tête de vache a été retrouvée en cuivre dans les tombes royales d'Our". The chronology, of course, is impossible and the bull's heads from Ur can have no connection with the Hathor-heads of Egypt.

3) *Ibid.*, IV (Paris, 1947), p. 2063. The Warka seal (p. 1972, fig. 1069), is unrelated to Egyptian art either in style or theme. The concept of a king destroying his enemies is universal to all cultures which practise absolute kingship.

4) Mallowan, *Iraq 9* (1947), 96; *Cultures II*, pp. 110-11; Childe, *New Light on the Most Ancient East* (New York, 1952), p. 72; etc.

contemporary for some time ¹). As the following discussion will show, the piriform mace-head is well documented from the whole Near East and it is impossible to offer any judgement as to the origin of this type, if indeed there was a single place of origin at all.

The distribution, both chronological and geographical, of this class of object is vast. The Appendix to the present article gives a representative list of find-spots in western Asia, including Iran, Iraq, Syria and Palestine. Elsewhere in the ancient world, round or ovoid mace-heads seem to be characteristic of early Anatolia ²), though one possible piriform mace-head comes from Early Bronze Alishar ³) and a splendid specimen in copper was found at Tarsus ⁴). Examples are known from Crete ⁵), Early Bronze Macedonia ⁶) and the Indus Valley ⁷).

In Egypt, piriform mace-heads as actual weapons are found primarily in the Naqada II and Protodynastic Periods; examples have been found at several sites in Upper Egypt ⁸). Several specimens from Merimde which may be earlier are discussed below. Large ceremonial piriform mace-heads appear at the beginning of the historic age ⁹) and examples

1) Piriform and disc-shaped mace-heads have been found together in the same graves: *Cultures II*, p. 111; Vandier, *Manuel I*, p. 330. Both types were still in use as weapons in Protodynastic times; Emery, *Archaic Egypt* (Penguin, 1961), pp. 114-15.

2) Mellaart, *Anat. St.* 8 (1958), 149 (Hacilar); Mellaart, *Anat. St.* 12 (1962), 55 (Çatal Hüyük); Garstang, *Prehistoric Mersin* (Oxford, 1952), figs. 8 and 96; Von der Osten, *The Alishar Hüyük. Seasons of 1930-32. Part I* (Chicago, 1937), figs. 90 and 187.

3) Von der Osten, *op. cit.*, fig. 187, shows a mace-head which might be termed piriform. Note also fig. 270, No. d1039, which is a fragment of what could be a piriform mace-head, though the author states it is of a type known in previous periods which are round or ovoid (p. 258).

4) Goldman, *Tarsus II* (Princeton, 1956), p. 273, No. 78, fig. 420. This is apparently intrusive in a Middle Bronze context.

5) Evans, *The Palace of Minos I* (London, 1921), figs. 3k and 7b; Pendelbury, *Aegyptiaca* (Cambridge, 1930), pl. 26.

6) Heurtly, *Prehistoric Macedonia* (Cambridge, 1939), fig. 64.

7) Marshall, *Mohenjo-daro and the Indus Civilization II* (London, 1931), p. 459; *Further Excavations at Mohenjo-daro I* (New Delhi, 1938), p. 399. Piriform mace-heads seem to be unknown at Chanhu-daro; cf. Mackay, *Chanhu-daro Excavations 1935-36* (New Haven, 1943), p. 225.

8) Petrie, *Prehistoric Egypt*, pp. 22-23; Emery, *Archaic Egypt*, pp. 114-15; Petrie, *Royal Tombs II*, pls. 32.69, 38.85-87, 41.95; *Cultures II*, pp. 110 ff.

9) Vandier, *Manuel I*, pp. 600 ff.

are known as late as the reign of Khafre¹). Other examples, probably also of ceremonial use, have been found in Middle Kingdom tombs²). Though there is clear evidence that this type of mace was actually used as a weapon in early times³), there is no way of determining when it was discarded in practical use. It is the piriform mace-head, of course, which is always shown in the traditional Egyptian theme of the Pharaoh smiting his enemies, but this is due to the traditions of art rather than actual fact.

From the foregoing summary, it is obvious that it is most difficult to offer any theory about the origin of the piriform mace-head that would stand up against critical analysis. This type of mace-head appears in Egypt, Iran, Iraq and Syria-Palestine at about the same time (see Appendix), though we are dealing with a relative chronology and there is no way of telling which find-spot is the earlier. The earliest example in Mesopotamia seems to be that from Tepe Gawra XII which falls at the end of the Obeid Period. Many examples are dated to the Warka and Protoliterate Periods, with some also from the Early Dynastic Period. It may be significant that the examples quoted from Iran are contemporary to the Obeid Period, though again we have only a relative chronology and it would be useless to postulate an Iranian origin for the piriform mace-head on this basis. Piriform mace-heads are found widely distributed in Palestine during the Chalcolithic age and then, sporadically, throughout the Bronze Age. From published finds, then, it would appear that this class of object had its most extensive use in western Asia and Egypt in the later centuries of the fourth millennium and the early centuries of the third.

The earliest appearance of the piriform mace-head in Egypt, a crucial point in the present discussion, is still a matter of debate. It has long been known that this was a characteristic feature of the Naqada II and

1) Petrie, *Scarabs and Cylinders* (London, 1917), pl. 8, No. 4.3.11; Hassan, *Excavations at Giza III* (Cairo, 1935), pl. 66.3.

2) Mace and Winlock, *The Tomb of Senebtisi at Lisht* (New York, 1916), p. 102; Hayes, *Scepter I*, pp. 282-83.

3) For example, the hunters on the Lion-hunt Palette carry piriform maces; Asselberghs, fig. 122.

Protodynastic Periods; the oldest example which can be dated according to Petrie's Sequence Dating comes from early Naqada II times (S.D. 42). But we now have to take into consideration a dozen examples from the Lower Egyptian settlement at Merimde. This site has generally been termed Neolithic and considered the next advanced stage in the culture of northern Egypt after Fayum A ¹). Several features in the Merimde culture would seem to make it contemporary to the southern Naqada I culture ²). However, Mrs. Baumgartel, working on the similarities she finds in the flint and pottery industries of Merimde and Naqada II, has made these two cultures contemporary. One of her reasons for so stating is that piriform mace-heads, characteristic of the Naqada II culture, were found at Merimde ³). Her dating of Merimde is not at all proven and has not gone unchallenged ⁴). Typologically, the Merimde assemblage stands between Fayum A and Maadi; the former is generally considered contemporary to the Badarian culture of Upper Egypt, the latter contemporary to Naqada II ⁵). Hence, the Merimde material should fit somewhere in the Naqada I range. One cannot be dogmatic about this, however, since the evidence from the north is restricted to only a few sites. Still, the preponderance of the evidence and scholarly opinion is that the Merimde culture is roughly

1) A resumé of the excavations is given in Vandier, *Manuel* I, pp. 95-153. Junker's excavation reports are not available to me.

2) Round huts, bag-shaped pottery and model human feet on pottery vessels are common to both Merimde and Naqada I. The latter is a distinctive feature found only during the Naqada I Period in the south and only at Merimde in the north.

3) *Cultures* I and II, *passim*, especially I, pp. 14 ff. She concludes (p. 18): "The beginning of the Merimde settlement must have taken place at a time when the Naqada II Culture was already well established in Upper Egypt. This date is supported by the occurrence of the pear-shaped mace-head typical of Naqada II".

4) Vandier, *Manuel* I, pp. 181 ff.; Kantor, *AJA* 53 (1949), 76-79.

5) Here again, Mrs. Baumgartel disagrees, placing Fayum A contemporary to Naqada I (*Cultures* I, p. 16) and Maadi in the First Dynasty (*Cultures* I, p. 121). However, the appearance of Palestinian lugged pots and loop-handled cups at both Maadi and at Naqada II sites is an excellent argument for Maadi being contemporary to the Naqada II Period. Arkell, *Bib. Or.* 13 (1956), 125, disagrees completely with placing Fayum A contemporary to Naqada I. Finally, the similarities between Badarian, Fayum A and Merimde are close enough to make them all related; Kantor, *op. cit.*, p. 77.

contemporary to Naqada I. This would mean that piriform mace-heads are not restricted to Naqada II times and that, if this type of object was borrowed from elsewhere, the borrowing was done in the Naqada I Period ¹).

Whether or not the opposite should be considered—that the piriform mace-head was originally an Egyptian weapon and was borrowed by western Asia—remains an open question. In spite of the objections to Merimde as a contemporary to the Naqada I Period, I do not see how we can conclude otherwise. This would mean that the piriform mace-head appeared in Egypt at least as early as it did in western Asia. It also means that the piriform mace-head was not an object brought into Egypt during Naqada II times when a definite connection with western Asia can be established. That this class of weapon makes its first appearance in Lower Egypt may perhaps be significant in that the obvious route between western Asia and Egypt would be from Syria by sea or Palestine by land. Whether such a route existed at this early date cannot now be proven due to the lack of sufficient Upper Egyptian material.

There is a third possibility, that the piriform mace-head could have been developed indigenously in several places. Tobler suggests that this is what may have happened at Tepe Gawra. The mace-heads from levels XVIII-XI (Obeid Period) are predominantly of a squat spheroid shape. Piriform mace-heads begin to appear in level XII (end of Obeid Period) and continue into the Warka Period. Tobler feels that the squat spheroid shape of the earlier levels could have developed into the piriform and barrel shapes of the later levels ²). The development of one type of mace-head into another has also been suggested by Arkell for two sites in Nubia. At Shaheinab, the flat-topped mace-heads of that site were evolved from stones used to grind ochre ³). And sandstone

1) Such a conclusion would force a complete restudy of the Naqada I culture with the aim of determining whether or not there were any trade relations with Palestine at this time. A hint that such might be the case comes from the possible connections with the Beersheba Culture (cf. p. XX, note X, below), though nothing definite can yet be established.

2) Tobler, *Excavations at Tepe Gawra II* (Philadelphia, 1950), pp. 203-04.

3) Arkell, *Shaheinab* (Oxford, 1953), p. 49.

rings may have developed into disc-shaped mace-heads at Khartoum ¹).

Whether such a development can be postulated for piriform mace-heads in Egypt is completely a matter of hypothesis. Certainly, the various steps in such a process could be suggested from the existing material. The disc-shaped mace-head—which is not a true disc at all, but has a pyramidal base with concave sides ²)—could have evolved into the flat-topped type with convex sides ³), and this could have developed into the spheroid, round and piriform shapes. But no such theory can be proven because of the lack of dated examples. Very few mace-heads of any type can be given a Sequence Date and it is therefore impossible to suggest any sequence of development from one type to another which can be verified by dated examples.

Of the three possibilities, I prefer the last. The piriform shape is not so distinctive that it could not have been invented in several places. There is, at present, no real reason to believe that this class of object was borrowed either by Egypt from western Asia or vice-versa.

D. Mesopotamian Niched Brick Architecture in Egypt

One of Frankfort's greatest contributions in the field of foreign relations was his demonstration that the niched brick architecture which became so popular in Egypt in the Protodynastic Period, had its origin in Mesopotamia and is a clear case of cultural borrowing ⁴). Frankfort's thesis is simple; there are no antecedents in Egypt for the complicated niched facades of First Dynasty tombs, while the development of such architecture can be traced back many centuries prior to this period in Mesopotamia. As Frankfort states ⁵):

the first generation of Egyptians to use bricks on any scale at all was at the same time familiar with every refinement of which the material was capable It was not merely the use of bricks that appears to have been adopted under the First Dynasty but the use of bricks in a definite application to a very specific type of

- 1) Arkell, *Early Khartoum* (Oxford, 1949), p. 107.
- 2) *Cultures II*, p. 106; Petrie, *Prehistoric Egypt*, pl. 35.22.
- 3) *Ibid.*, pl. 36.49-52.
- 4) Frankfort, *AJSL* 58 (1941), 329-58.
- 5) *Ibid.*, p. 334.

building, namely, to structures decorated all round with graduated recesses. And it is precisely this advanced and sophisticated type of brick building which is found in Mesopotamia during the period when contact with Egypt is known by a great deal of evidence to have taken place.

Frankfort's theory of the derivation of Egyptian niched facades has not gone unchallenged and there are many who see no connection between the Mesopotamian and Egyptian examples. Ricke insists, on architectural grounds, that there are sufficient differences between them to warrant the conclusion of independent invention¹). Helck, rightly stressing the fact that there could not have been direct connections between Sumer and Egypt, also denies any relationship between the niched facades of Mesopotamia and those of Egypt. He feels that such a connection would automatically imply a direct contact²). Many authorities refuse to take sides³) or suggest some indirect connection between architectural forms whose similarity "is too obvious to be ignored"⁴).

This particular problem, however, is much more complicated than a simple comparison of Egyptian mastabas with Sumerian temple walls. There are many who see in the niched brick mastabas of the earliest dynasties a reproduction of a palace facade, also shown in the *serekb* motive which enclosed the Horus-name of the king⁵). Since the *serekb* already appears on monuments at least contemporary to the oldest mastabas with niched facades⁶), the conclusion is that royal palaces once existed, probably made of wood, which had elaborately niched facades and gateways. While no trace of such palaces exists, it is assumed from the *serekb* that they once did and that the niched facades of the

1) Quoted by Helck, *Beziehungen*, p. 7. Smith, *The Art and Architecture of Ancient Egypt* (Penguin, 1958), p. 18, also suggests this.

2) Helck, *loc. cit.*

3) Vandier, *Manuel I*, p. 699, note 4.

4) Emery, *Archaic Egypt*, p. 177.

5) Gardiner, *Egypt of the Pharaohs* (London, 1961), p. 52; Vandier, *Manuel I*, p. 595; Emery, *op. cit.*, p. 178; Hayes, *Scepter I*, p. 50; Smith, *Art and Architecture of Ancient Egypt*, p. 18. Mrs. Baumgartel (*Cultures II*, pp. 147-48) insists the *serekb* is not a building but a throne.

6) For example, on a slate palette: Asselberghs, fig. 170; Hayes *Scepter I*, fig. 22

early mastabas and the decoration of sarcophagi of the Old Kingdom as well as the "false door" are all based on this original palace facade.

Approaching this whole question from the standpoint of religious *vis à vis* secular architecture, Reisner came to different conclusions ¹). The *serekb*, to him, represents not a facade but only the main entrance to the palace or a similar entrance in the outer wall surrounding the palace. The niching on the mastabas is derived, at least in meaning, from a different source. Reisner assumes that Predynastic tomb superstructures (of which none survive) were probably built of mounds of loose gravel surrounded by a retaining wall of wattle or wood; built into this retaining wall was a single *ka*-door through which communication between the living and the dead was made. When brick replaced wood, this *ka*-door was maintained as part of the structure. The elaborately niched mastabas simply had *ka*-doors all round in a series of great *ka*-doors separated by groups of three ordinary *ka*-doors. The *ka*-doors themselves may well have been copied from actual doorways, either ordinary or elaborate, but the mastaba is in no sense a reproduction of a house or palace. Thus the form of the individual niche came from palace doorways, but the use of a series of niches making up a continuous facade was simply a proliferation of *ka*-doors. Niched facades were thus native to Egypt.

Another element which must be included here is the comparison of archaic buildings on Sumerian cylinder seals with examples of the Egyptian *serekb*, representations of this panelling on sarcophagi, etc. ²) Shrines portrayed on these early cylinders sometimes have a superficial resemblance to certain Egyptian monuments ³) and some even show what could be considered elaborately niched doorways ⁴). We may assume that the shrines on Sumerian cylinder seals and the panelling

1) *Tomb Dev.*, pp. 243 ff., 352.

2) Frankfort, *Birth of Civilization*, pl. 22.

3) Emery, *ASAE* 45 (1947), 147. Emery's connection between a building on a cylinder seal of the Uruk Period and Egyptian designs is not accepted by Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 18, note 18. Gilbert assumes the reverse process in *Cd'É* 52 (1951), 226-27. Porada, *Corpus*, No. 3 (Uruk Period) is another early cylinder with such similarities.

4) Porada, *Corpus*, No. 23 (Jemdet Nasr Period).

shown in the Egyptian *serekb* represent actual buildings. The problem now is to determine if there was actually any impetus from Mesopotamia which created this new style of architecture in Egypt at the close of the Predynastic age, or if we must conclude that there is no relation between the two and the recessed panelling so prominent in both countries was an independent development.

Unfortunately, our knowledge of Egyptian architecture in Predynastic times is very meager. There were certain types of shrines built of reeds and other perishable materials which can be reconstructed from drawings on ivory tablets and the like ¹). But the fact remains that there is nothing which can be produced as the beginning stages of an architectural style which culminated in the elaborate niched facades of the First Dynasty tombs. In this respect, there are certain features of Reisner's theory which must be rejected. There is really nothing to back up his assumption that the *serekb* represents only the elaborate doorway of a palace or palace wall. Certain early *serekbs* show that a whole wall may actually have been intended ²). This however does not get at the heart of Reisner's theory. As we have seen above, he began with a single niche or *ka*-door which he assumes to have existed in the earliest tombs and then suggests that the all round niching is simply a proliferation of *ka*-doors ³). From certain evidence, the process seems to have been exactly the reverse.

In the earliest known mastabas with niched facades, all niches are alike with no distinguishing features to make one different from another ⁴). This style continued in use throughout the first two dynasties, though only one example is known from the Second Dynasty. In the mid-First Dynasty, certain changes begin to appear in isolated mastabas. In the reign of Wadji (Zet), a mastaba was built at Tarkhan which, while it shows the elaborate all round niching of its contemporaries,

1) Fakhry, *ASAE* 51 (1951), 1 ff.

2) Cf. p. 20, note 6, above.

3) "The palace-facade mastaba merely beautifies the *ka*-door and increases enormously its number". *Tomb Dev.*, p. 352.

4) *Tomb. Dev.*, figs. 21-23: Naqada (Queen Neithhotep), QS 2185 and Giza V; Sakkara 3357, 3471 and 3503 are also of this early age.

has one niche with a wooden back and wooden floor. It is significant that this individualized niche stands in one of the long walls, opposite the burial chamber, on the east wall toward the southern end of the wall¹). Toward the end of the same dynasty, a smaller mastaba with only a single niche at the southern end of the east wall was constructed at Sakkara²). A more general change comes with the introduction of two-niche mastabas which appear already in the First Dynasty⁴) and are standard in the Second³). In these two-niche mastabas, the niches are on the east wall, the southern niche invariably larger than the northern. We can hardly escape the conclusion that there must be a direct relationship between the large southern niche of the Second Dynasty mastabas and the variations of the First Dynasty noted here. In each case, the emphasized niche is on the east wall toward the southern end.

The style of continuous all round niching was introduced into Egypt at the beginning of the First Dynasty and continued, though on a much smaller scale, in the Second Dynasty⁵). For reasons of their own, the Egyptians began altering this architectural style already in the First Dynasty and abandoned it altogether for exterior walls by the end of the Protodynastic Period⁶). Since the tomb was such a significant factor in the psychology of ancient Egypt, we may logically infer that the variations on the continuous panelled facade and its eventual abandonment at so early a period had something to do with the purpose of tombs. As Reisner pointed out⁷), the Egyptian tomb

1) *Tomb. Dev.*, fig. 24. Also from Tarkhan comes a further variation of the mastaba with all round niching. A small offering chamber is built into the enclosure wall of the tomb at the southern end of the eastern side; *Tomb. Dev.*, figs. 27, 53. This small chamber is the antecedent for the regular chapel built around the southern niche, a feature which already appears in the Second Dynasty (Sakkara 2304).

2) Emery, *Great Tombs of the First Dynasty* III (London, 1958), pp. 98 ff., pl. 114.

3) Sakkara 2105; cf. *Tomb. Dev.*, pp. 248 ff.

4) Quibbell, *Archaic Mastabas* (Cairo, 1923), pls. I-II; *Tomb Dev.*, pp. 136 ff.

5) *Tomb Dev.*, p. 248.

6) Sporadic examples of very simplified shallow panelling do appear after the Protodynastic Period; Reisner, *History of the Giza Necropolis I* (Cambridge, Mass., 1942), p. 380.

7) *Tomb Dev.*, pp. 1 and 245.

served to protect the burial and “make possible the periodic provision of food and drink, necessary to the after-life”. There can be no disagreement with him that the superstructure of the tomb served both these functions. But it was inherent in the function of providing a place where offerings could be made and prayers rendered that a specific point in the superstructure be allocated for this purpose. This notion of a focal point for communication between living and dead can be traced to the First Dynasty. Small mastabas from Tarkhan, dating to this period, show two holes in the retaining wall of the superstructure which normally appear at the end of one of the long walls, opposite the head of the body inside¹). It seems probable that the Tarkhan mastaba with its wood panelled niche, the Tarkhan mastabas with all round niching and a single offering chamber (p. 23, note 1) and the single niche mastaba from Sakkara are also evidence of this concept.

Another point which I suggest with some hesitation is that the elaborate all round niching seems to have been preserved for the large mastabas belonging to the royal family and greater nobility. The smaller tombs of the period, where the superstructure is preserved, do not evidence all round niching, though some do show the two niche plan²). It is thus possible that there existed a “palace style” and a “common style”, the former dominated by all round niching. This would lend support to the existence of the “Dynastic Race”, a group of foreigners who apparently imposed their rule on Egypt during the First Dynasty (cf. pp. 33 ff., below).

But did this continuous niched facade adequately serve the needs of religion? We cannot be sure just when it became traditional for the Egyptian tomb to have a focal point at which communication between living and dead took place. Certainly this was already true in the Second Dynasty, when a mastaba normally contained two niches, the southern larger than the northern. And the slim evidence noted above would indicate that the idea was already in evidence in the First Dynasty.

Assuming that this concept was fixed, or at least gaining popularity,

1) *Tomb Dev.*, fig. 126.

2) *Tomb Dev.*, fig. 127; Vandier, *Manuel I*, Figs. 453-54.

during the First Dynasty, it is easily seen that the great mastabas with all round niching did not suit the needs of religious belief. For they offered no focal point of worship, all niches being the same. It is for this reason that Reisner's theory that all round niching was simply a multiplicity of *ka*-doors must be rejected. This goes contrary to the very purpose of the *ka*-door which was to provide precisely the focal point of worship required by theological doctrine. In short, the whole process of the development of niched panelling in Egypt looks more like an architectural innovation, adopted at the very beginning of the historic period and abandoned when it could not conform to theology, or when a new theological doctrine was introduced which could not be adapted to the all round niching. From the extant evidence of the use of this style of architecture in Egypt, the development from continuous niching at the beginning, through variations which set aside one niche as more important than the others to a final abandonment supports Frankfort's thesis that the niched facade was borrowed from Mesopotamia.

What of architectural evidence from within Egypt itself? Like Reisner or anyone else who writes on this subject I must make certain assumptions. Due to the complete absence of any preliminary stages which would necessarily have led up to the elaborate structures of the First Dynasty, we must assume (1) that no such preliminary steps existed, (2) that they once existed in a perishable material such as wood, or (3) that they have been destroyed or not yet discovered. It seems to me that the first assumption—that no such preliminary stages existed—is the most valid one.

Building complicated niched structures out of a more perishable material than mud brick has no support in actual evidence. There is no doubt that some important structures of Predynastic times were built of a wooden framework onto which woven mats were lashed. The fact that just such painted designs, including the rope lashing, are found on the niched facades of First Dynasty tombs¹⁾ has led some to the

1) Emery, *Great Tombs of the First Dynasty* III, pls. 6-8; etc.

conclusion that these wood and matting structures were in the form of niched panelling. But such a structure would present broad flat surfaces, not elaborately panelled ones. Frankfort is correct in saying that the painted designs of the early niched mastabas represent one architectural style imposed as decoration on another and that there can be no connection between the wood-mat prototypes of this painted decoration and the niched facades they adorn ¹⁾. That wooden prototypes of the niched mastabas once existed also seems out of the question. Wood for construction had to be imported and, while timber was being brought in from Lebanon already in the Predynastic Period, it was not being brought in such quantities that palaces—the supposed prototype of the mastaba-facade—could be constructed of wood, particularly palaces with panelled facades which would require even more lumber than flat wall surfaces. Here too, there is no evidence to support such a theory ²⁾.

The assumption that mud brick prototypes once existed and no trace has yet been discovered is also untenable in the light of present evidence. Our knowledge of mud brick architecture in the Predynastic Period is extremely scanty, consisting solely of graves and the remains of houses. The use of sun-dried mud bricks is known from certain sites where some graves are lined with this material ³⁾ and bricks infrequently appear in house construction ⁴⁾ However, there is nothing so far known in

1) Frankfort, *AJSL* 58 (1941), 332. Cf. also Emery, *Archaic Egypt*, p. 177. *Tomb. Dev.*, pp. 291-92, derives the painted decoration from the *sh*-pavilion, a wood-mat structure.

2) Petrie's interesting attempt to fit short timbers found re-used in a coffin into a niched pattern (*Tarkhan I and Memphis V*, p. 24) cannot be correct. Frankfort suggests these timbers were salvaged from a wrecked boat (*op. cit.*, p. 340). Petrie's theory, however, is still noted as a possibility: Fakhry, *op. cit.*, p. 22. While I assume that timbers for construction were imported, the use of local wood for making short pieces cannot be ruled out completely. The strength of a wooden building, however, depends on firm beams of considerable length which could not be found in Egypt.

3) Vandier, *Manuel I*, pp. 243-44 (Mahasna), pp. 255-56 (Abusir el-Meleq).

4) Brunton, and Caton-Thompson, *The Badarian Civilization* (London, 1928), pp. 47-48; *Cultures II*, pp. 133-34. The subterranean structure at Hierakonpolis, the so-called "painted tomb", is still debated as to its function and date; cf. Vandier, *Manuel I*, pp. 527 ff. and 561 ff.; *Cultures II*, p. 126.

Egypt which could possibly be taken as the earlier stages of the First Dynasty facades beyond the mere fact that the Egyptians had prior experience with mud bricks. It is perfectly true that most Predynastic sites have suffered the ravages of time, that these sites have been denuded, robbed and destroyed for centuries and that any mud-brick structures which may have existed above ground may have long since disappeared. Yet the monuments of the First Dynasty were preserved to substantial heights; are we to suppose that the First Dynasty monuments, although plundered, remained partially intact while prototypes of the Late Predynastic age were completely destroyed without a trace? Such selective destruction does not seem likely. Surely, had the Egyptians worked out the intermediate stages between the simplest use of mud bricks—lining for graves—and the complicated use of bricks evidenced in the niched mastabas, some trace of these intermediate steps would have come to light by this time.

In point of fact, the architectural accomplishments of Predynastic Egypt simply do not prepare us for the advanced architectural skill of the earliest years of the Protodynastic Period. I do not believe we can account for this by saying that prototypes once existed which have been destroyed, or once existed in materials that have perished. Neither in actual buildings nor in art is there a single undisputed example of a niched facade preceding the advent of the historic age. I do not see how it is possible to escape the conclusion that the niched facade style of architecture was indeed borrowed from Mesopotamia.

E. The Nature of Early Egypto-Mesopotamian Contacts

Having reviewed the evidence which proves that there was some kind of connection between Egypt and Mesopotamia during at least the Naqada II Period, it now remains to explain how this connection came about. The assumptions with which I begin this discussion are as follows ¹):

1) Cf. Ward, *JESHO* 6 (1963), 46-51.

1. The Naqada II culture developed out of the Naqada I culture, both originating in Upper Egypt. The differences between the two are the result of gradual and normal changes evidenced in any human culture as it progresses.
2. Asiatic influences, including Mesopotamian, appear at the beginning of the Naqada II Period, increasing in variety and number toward the close of this period. (Evidence for earlier contacts is unconvincing, though this possibility must be left open; cf. p. 5, above).
3. There is no evidence to indicate an invasion or mass migration of Asiatics into Egypt at the beginning of the Naqada II Period. The probability of such an invasion or migration at the end of the Naqada II Period is supported by a reasonable body of evidence, in particular the indications of the appearance of the "Dynastic Race" (cf. pp. 33-39, below).

There are two routes proposed by which Mesopotamian influence came to Egypt: (1) from Sumer by sea to Koseir at the mouth of the Wadi Hammamat, thence to the Nile Valley, and (2) from Syria-Palestine either by land or sea. Since the Wadi Hammamat has often been proposed as a route for supposed invasions at both the beginning and end of the Naqada II age, I will discuss this problem first.

The theory of an invasion through the Wadi Hammamat rests primarily on the fact that Naqada II sites cluster around the point where the Wadi Hammamat enters the Nile Valley, the appearance of the so-called "Red Sea Craft" on objects from this area and the assumption that there was at one time a now unknown geographical link between Sumer and the Red Sea. If we assume that the Naqada II culture was native to Upper Egypt and accept the evidence that the "Red Sea Craft" are not Mesopotamian (cf. pp. 29ff, below), there is nothing left to support a Sumero-Egyptian contact by sea. The presumed geographical link between Sumer and Egypt has left no trace. Frankfort, the most outspoken champion of the Red Sea route, suggested a "Mesopotamian" culture somewhere in the Persian Gulf or Arabian coast which would have served as the intermediary between Sumer and Egypt¹). Mrs. Baumgartel strongly supports an invasion through the Wadi Hammamat²), though she strangely also supports a north

1) Frankfort, *AJSL* 58 (1941), 358.

2) *Cultures* I, pp. 44-50.

Syrian origin for the Naqada II people¹). Massoulard suggests that all Mesopotamian influence came by sea; Mesopotamian boats sailed up the Red Sea across the Wadi Hammamat to the Nile²).

Certainly the Wadi Hammamat was a well-used route throughout prehistoric times. A survey expedition into this area, including the Lakeita Oasis and the Red Sea coast, produced many remains of this period³). These include Paleolithic and Mesolithic flints, Badarian graves, a Naqada I village and several villages or settlements of later Predynastic and Protodynastic date. Consequently, there is no doubt that the road from Coptos to Koseir, *via* the Wadi Hammamat was known and used in very early times. But the trail of evidence stops on the shores of the Red Sea. From Koseir to Sumer, there is no trace of any traffic between Egypt and Mesopotamia. Nothing has so far been reported which would indicate the necessary halting-places along the extensive coastal route which ships would have had to follow. That the Sumerians engaged in long-distance sea trade with western India during the third millennium B.C. is now well known⁴). The intermediate sites between Sumer and the Indus Valley are now coming to light⁵). But no such evidence has ever been produced to substantiate a similar sea-route to Egypt.

The idea that Sumerian ships actually sailed across the Wadi Hammamat is based on the appearance of the "Red Sea Craft" on the Gebel el Arak knife handle (presumably found at a site near Denderah), in the Hierakonpolis "painted tomb", rock-carvings in the desert and on pottery from both Naqada I and II times. Since all this material comes from Upper Egypt and it was assumed that the particular type of ship in question was of Mesopotamian origin, the conclusion was quite logical that the Sumerians actually sailed through the Wadi Hammamat

1) *Cultures* II, 140-41.

2) Massoulard, p. 229.

3) DeBono, *Cd'É* 50 (1951), 238 ff.; *ASAE* 51 (1950), 59 ff.

4) Cf. Leemans, *Foreign Trade in the Old Babylonian Period* (Leiden, 1960), pp. 159 ff.

5) The islands of Bahrain and Fulaika (off the coast of Kuwait) are now proving of immense value in establishing Indo-Sumerian contacts: Glob, *ILN* Jan 4, 1958, pp. 14-16; Jan 11, 1958, pp. 54-56; *Jahrbuch KUML* 1960, 153-213, and 1961, 169-201; Roussell, *ILN* Jan. 28, 1961, pp. 142-43.

or transported their craft overland to engage in hostilities in the Nile Valley itself.

The evidence for this so-called "Red Sea Craft" is confusing, to say the least. Generally speaking, this ship has a high vertical prow and stern with some kind of indeterminant features (floral?) at the tip of the prow or both prow and stern. Cabins and other additions vary with the individual boat. The most quoted of these ships are those portrayed on the Gebel el Arak knife handle. Similar boats appear on objects from Diospolis Parva, Abydos and in rock carvings from the eastern desert ¹), though none of these are really similar enough—beyond the high prows and sterns—to make identity a certainty.

A Naqada I pot-herd from Mostagedda bears the fragmentary remains of what is usually considered to be one of these craft ²). However, this boat has only a high stern and is therefore quite different from those vessels with both high prow and stern. The same is true of the single "Red Sea Craft" portrayed in the Hierakonpolis "painted tomb" ³). This also has only a high stern, the prow lifting only slightly out of the water. I do not believe that these boats with only the high stern can be considered in the same category as those with both high stern and prow.

On the Naqada ivory of Aha-Menes, a ship appears with high stern and prow, though the prow is fitted out with a complex group of elements not found on the other "Red Sea Craft". Vikentiev ⁴) suggests that this boat is of Syrian or Mesopotamian style and concludes: "La grande barque serait alors un bateau de guerre faisant sa rentrée triomphale pour assister à la celebration de la fête Sed" ⁵). However, this boat is more probably an early representation of a sacred solar bark ⁶).

1) Petrie, *Diospolis Parva* (London, 1901), pl. 21.52; Petrie, *Abydos II*, pl. 12; Vandier, *Manuel I*, fig. 7.

2) Brunton, *Mostagedda* (London, 1937), p. 83, pl. 38.4; *Cultures I*, p. 71; Asselberghs, p. 42, fig. 10; Vandier, *Manuel I*, fig. 187.

3) Asselberghs, pl. 25.

4) Vikentiev, *ASAE* 33 (1933), 219 ff.

5) *Ibid.*, p. 224.

6) Thomas, *JEA* 45 (1959), 38, note 5.

Finally, we must also consider an early series of boats with sails which show a high prow and stern. The earliest is on a painted pot of the late Naqada II Period ¹). The prow is decorated with a bird and the ship is seen under full sail. Another ship under full sail is on a pot from Abydos; this graffito shows the prow slanting slightly forward, but just as high as the stern ²). A similar ship is seen in a Nubian rock-carving portraying a river battle ³). This has a high vertical stern with a long near-vertical prow jutting out at a high angle; a mast but no sail is shown. Though not specifically labelled as such, the references to comparable ships indicate that this too is considered a probable "Red Sea Craft".

This series of boats is called on to prove the existence not only of Mesopotamian influence but also of invasions from the east. And since this type of ship is shown only on monuments from Upper Egypt, the assumption has been that these invasions came through the Wadi Hammamat. The core of this theory is the Gebel el Arak knife handle which shows positive Mesopotamian artistic influence. Hence, it is said, the "foreign" ships must also be Mesopotamian since similar ships can be seen on Mesopotamian cylinder seals of the period. Because of this naval battle between Egyptian and "Mesopotamian" ships, a Sumerian invasion of Upper Egypt has been proposed.

The distinctly Mesopotamian artistic elements appear on the verso ⁴); the recto contains two scenes, a land battle and a naval battle. But the "foreign" combattants cannot be called Sumerian. They may be Libyans, Semites or even Egyptians, but certainly not Mesopotamians ⁵). Therefore, the boats in which these combattants arrived in Upper Egypt do not have to be Mesopotamian. The fact that Mesopotamian in-

1) Asselberghs, figs. 19 and 21; Petrie, *Prehistoric Egypt*, pl. 23.3. Cf. Bowen, *Antiquity* 34 (1960), 117-131, who discusses a possible method by which the sail was invented in Egypt as well as its later development.

2) Petrie, *Abydos II*, pl. 12.

3) Arkell, *JEA* 36 (1950), 28-29, fig. 1.

4) Vandier, *Manuel I*, pp. 534 ff.

5) Beards, long hair and the phallus sheath are generally considered to be characteristic of Libyans. However, beards and long hair are also Semitic features. The long hair and beards are the only features which distinguish these foreigners from the Egyptians on this monument.

fluence appears on the verso does not necessitate its presence on the recto. Assuming that the other boats are Upper Egyptian—they are of the type shown on the painted pottery of Naqada II—where did the “foreign” ships come from and what is the historical context of this scene?

It is difficult to see how the Gebel el Arak knife handle can be dated so positively to S.D. 60¹). It was not found *in situ* but was acquired by purchase, hence had to be dated on stylistic grounds. Such a procedure has its value, but I feel it is not possible to be quite so exact about the date of a Predynastic object found out of context. It must fall in the late Naqada II Period, but just where will have to remain an open question²). This means it is a matter of conjecture as to the historical context of the battle scenes. Assuming that these scenes represent actual events, and there is no good reason why they should not, we are faced with a war between the inhabitants of Upper Egypt and some group of people presumably foreign to that area, arriving in ships presumably from their place of origin.

The ships have a strong similarity to Mesopotamian ships of the Uruk and Jemdet Nasr Periods, particularly from Uruk³). At this point, I should emphasize that I can accept only the ships on the Gebel el Arak knife handle as showing similarities to Mesopotamian ships. All the other examples quoted above are not, in my opinion, of the same type and cannot be called Mesopotamian⁴). But is a mere similarity between the Gebel el Arak knife handle and Mesopotamian ships on cylinder seals enough to warrant connections which preclude historical events of no small significance? There are important differences which must also be taken into consideration. The Mesopotamian ships of this style are not war galleys and appear in ritual scenes, usually associated with a shrine. They generally carry two men, one rowing at the stern,

1) This conclusion was reached by Bénédite, *Mon. Piot* 22 (1916), p. 36, and Petrie, *Ancient Egypt* 1917, 26-36.

2) Cf. the remarks by Miss Kantor, *JNES* 3 (1944), 119 ff.

3) Amiet, *La glyptique mésopotamienne archaïque* (Paris, 1961), pls. 13bis. E, 46.656, 61.827, etc.; Frankfort, *Cylinder Seals* (London, 1939), pl. 3d-e.

4) Helck, *Beziehungen*, p. 7, quotes Kaiser, *ZAS* 81 (1956), 103, as producing much the same conclusion as I have reached here. Kaiser's article is not available to me.

one standing at the bow with a long pole. These are obviously cultic boats of some kind. The general type continues with variations into later periods ¹).

Miss Kantor has shown that the Gebel el Arak knife handle belongs to the late Naqada II Period and that this culture immediately preceded the advent of the historic age ²). Assuming that the knife handle represents a real historical event and that it comes at the end of the Naqada II Period, the conclusion is logical that this object is somehow related to the "Dynastic Race" which made its appearance around this time ³). While not all scholars are agreed that a new ethnic element entered Egypt at the beginning of historic times, it seems to me that there is enough evidence to warrant giving such a theory serious consideration.

Several documents of the late Naqada II Period portray a troubled country, though the warfare depicted is mostly with Libyans. Thus, the Palette of the Vultures, the Palette of Libyan Tribute, the Palette of Bulls and several fragments ⁴) are ample indication of a substantial unrest in the Nile Valley. Just what was responsible for this time of warfare is unknown, but these monuments probably depict the internal struggles of the country prior to the unification at the beginning of the First Dynasty. In this case, these documents may all be related to the coming of the Dynastic Race. Vandier has suggested that the battle scenes on the Gebel el Arak knife handle represent the first battle between Asiatic invaders and the natives of Upper Egypt. These Asiatics, he feels, came from Syria-Palestine, entered Egypt through the

1) Frankfort, *Stratified Seals of the Dyala Region*, Nos. 366 and 551 (Early Dynastic Period); Von der Osten, *Altorientalische Siegelsteine der Sammlung Hans Silvius von Aulock* (Uppsala, 1957), p. 148, No. 254 (Akkadian Period).

2) Kantor, *JNES* 3 (1944), 110 ff.

3) On the Dynastic Race in general, cf. Engelbach, *ASAE* 42 (1943), 193-221; Emery, *Archaic Egypt*, pp. 38 ff.

4) Cf. Vandier, *Manuel* I, pp. 584 ff. Mrs. Baumgartel disagrees that these documents are really of the Predynastic Period (*Cultures* II, pp. 94 ff.) and judges most of them to be later than the unification of Egypt. But her arguments are based purely on similarities to later artistic works. The reasons advanced for a later Predynastic date are just as valid.

Delta and moved up the Nile Valley, meeting no opposition until they reached the area of Nag Hamadi ¹). This is a very plausible interpretation and helps in understanding the foreign ships and men portrayed on this document.

I have noted above a general similarity between these ships and those portrayed on Sumerian cylinder seals of the Uruk and Jemdet Nasr periods. I have also noted that the non-Egyptian figures are more likely to be Libyans or western Semites than anyone else. Libyans or Syrians arriving in Egypt in Sumerian ships is hardly probable. We must thus either propose that the ships are of a style originating in the west Delta region, hence Libyan, or that the foreigners are Syrians, arriving in ships of a style originating along the Syro-Palestinian coast.

The latter suggestion has much in its favor. The westward expansion of the Jemdet Nasr culture can be traced as far west as Syria-Palestine, thus establishing a contact between Mesopotamia and the Syrian coast during the period in which the Gebel el Arak knife handle was made. The obvious Mesopotamian influence on the Gebel el Arak knife handle could very well have been transmitted to Egypt through Syria. I have proposed elsewhere that the original trade connections between Syria and Egypt were by sea and were begun on Syrian initiative ²). Syrian trade relations were well established with Egypt in the south, Mesopotamia in the east and Cyprus and beyond in the west. The focal point of Near Eastern trade at this time seems unquestionably to have been the north Syrian coast. There is little doubt that Syrians could have brought Mesopotamian objects and other influences to Egypt throughout the Naqada II Period and could have invaded Egypt at the close of this period.

1) Vandier, *Manuel* I, pp. 605 ff. Vandier also interprets the "painted tomb" of Hierakonpolis in the same context. This, he says, represents the triumphal entry of the invader's king, his conquest completed, portrayed in his tomb. But this structure is probably not a tomb (cf. p. 26, note 4, above) and the closest possible dating is S.D. 46-60 (cf. Kantor, *op. cit.*, pp. 111 ff.), that is almost anywhere in the Naqada II Period. Hence, it is doubtful that this structure can be definitely associated with historical events of the end of the Naqada II Period.

2) Ward, *JESHO* 6 (1963), 43 ff.

Evidence from within Egypt supports this. Much has been made of the Egypto-Semitic¹⁾ character of the earliest Egyptian inscriptions, and justly so. Written Egyptian, as we know it from the inscriptions, is an artificial tongue, that is, it is not a pure language but a mixture of North African and Semitic, though there is much more involved than this. Egyptian also has a close relationship with Hamitic (the Libyan and Berber dialects of North Africa), Cushitic (the non-Semitic dialects of Ethiopia) as well as Semitic. Furthermore, there are linguistic elements common to all these, though there is still no satisfactory solution to the origins of these broad linguistic connections²⁾. About this much we can be sure: the earliest Egyptian inscriptions represent a language already mixed, having a strong Semitic linguistic superstratum impressed on the native North African language. This factor obviously has great historical significance. But the major difficulty is to determine just when this mixture came about.

Several scholars have seen in this linguistic situation proof that the Naqada I people were of North African stock while the Naqada II people were Semites. The mixture of speech would thus have taken place at the beginning and during the Naqada II Period. This reconstruction of the origin of the Semitic features in Egyptian is used to support a Semitic invasion of the Nile Valley at that time. But, as I have indicated³⁾, the evidence for an invasion of Egypt from any direction at the beginning of the Naqada II Period does not stand up under examination. It is just as possible that this strong Semitic element was introduced at the close of the Naqada II Period by the Dynastic Race.

Unfortunately, a certain confusion has been created by the theory that the Sumerians introduced the idea of writing into Egypt⁴⁾. The Sumerians had invented writing some time prior to the earliest Egyptian

1) On this term, cf. Ward, *Orientalia* 32 (1963), pp. 413 ff.

2) The best survey of this problem is still Lefebvre, *Cd'É* 22 (1936), 266-92.

3) Ward, *JESHO* 6 (1963), 46 ff.

4) Cf. Frankfort, *Birth of Civilization*, pp. 106 ff.

inscriptions¹). It is quite natural to suppose that with the expansion of the Jemdet Nasr Culture westward and the definite influences of this culture as far away as Egypt, the idea of writing could also have been introduced into Egypt by this means. But there is one more argument against direct contact between Sumer and Egypt. Had Sumerians actually come to the Nile Valley in the so-called "Red Sea Craft", we would find Sumerian linguistic elements, if only to the extent of vocabulary, in Egyptian, and such elements do not exist. A few isolated words in Egyptian can be traced back to Sumerian originals, but these were transmitted *via* Semitic²). A direct contact between Sumer and Egypt would surely have produced a Sumerian element in the Egyptian language.

But if there is no linguistic influence, did the idea that the spoken word could be represented by written symbols come from Mesopotamia? The "similarities" between early Sumerian writing and Egyptian have been produced as evidence that Egypt gained the concept of reproducing speech by written symbols from Sumer. That both systems developed the rebus principle and used ideograms, phonograms and determinatives is admitted. But the same can be said of early Chinese or Aztec³). The supposed similarities between Sumerian and Egyptian writing are universal to pictographic scripts and cannot be used to prove that the Sumerians taught Egyptians the value of writing.

1) Written documents first appear at Uruk in level IV (Late Protoliterate Period = Jemdet Nasr Period) which is roughly contemporary to the later Naqada II culture. While it is still impossible to work out an acceptable absolute chronology, it is certain that the late Protoliterate of Mesopotamia is contemporary to the Naqada II of Egypt, meaning that written records appear in Sumer some time before they appear in Egypt. A concise essay on Sumerian is Falkenstein, *Das Sumerische (Handb. der Orientalistik; Leiden, 1959)*. Note his remarks on the impossibilities of relating Sumerian to any known language (p. 15).

2) For example, Sumerian NAN-GAR, "carpenter", = Akkadian *naggaru*, = Egyptian *nfr*, already evidenced in the Pyramid Texts. The Egyptian form shows the assimilation of *ng* to *gg* which took place in the Semitic borrowing. Sumerian NAN-GAR itself was borrowed from the native, or pre-Sumerian language; cf. Kramer, *The Sumerians* (Chicago, 1963), p. 41.

3) On Maya and Aztec in general, cf. Thompson, *Maya Hieroglyphic Writing. Introduction* (Washington, 1950), Chap. 2. Rebus writing is quite common in these scripts (p. 46).

It is quite possible that we should separate this problem into two parts: (1) the appearance of writing in Egypt and (2) the Semitic influence in the Egyptian language. It is impossible to prove conclusively that these two things appeared at the same time or that they are part of the same phenomenon. Similarly, one cannot insist that they appeared in Egypt at two different times, but they did not have to and a good case can be made for a native invention of writing in Egypt. The basic elements of pictographic writing were present in Egypt long before the advent of the First Dynasty. If we can agree that a pictograph (1) consists of readily recognizable representations of familiar objects and (2) conveys a specific idea from the mind of the man who made it to the mind of the man who views it, then pictographs were being created throughout the Predynastic age¹). It is not really a complex move from pictographs which represent only sense to those which represent sound; this is the principle of the rebus²). Just when such a step was taken is unknown, but I cannot accept the idea that the development from pictographic to hieroglyphic writing in Egypt had

1) For example, a small palette of the Naqada I Period shows a man standing in a boat throwing a harpoon into a hippopotamus; Asselberghs, pl. 46. This picture represents a specific concept which can be translated into actual words: *stt z db m wʿ*, "a man is shooting a hippopotamus with a harpoon". The step from a pictograph to a readable inscription is a simple one in Egyptian. This early pictograph has three "hieroglyphs": MAN + HIPPOPOTAMUS + HARPOON. *Using these same pictures* with the addition of pictures representing verbal elements, the pictograph becomes a text: (SHOOT) + MAN + HIPPOPOTAMUS + (WITH) + HARPOON. While I do not believe this early picture was a conscious effort to reproduce the sounds of speech, it does represent an idea translated into pictures and can be "read" with no difficulty. Later hieroglyphic writing in Egypt used conventionalized forms of these same pictures to represent the same ideas. I will not enter into a discussion of the motives or intentions behind the production of such a scene; cf. Gelb, *A Study of Writing* (Chicago, 1952), Chap. 2. To my mind, this picture portrays a specific event put into symbols that can be understood by any who view it and, because of the nature of the later hieroglyphic writing, can probably be considered the initial stage in the development of a script in Egypt.

2) In the picture discussed in the previous note, the picture of a harpoon stands for a harpoon. The word for "harpoon" was pronounced with the consonants *wʿ* (the written script made no effort to represent vowels). The numeral "one" was also pronounced with the consonants *wʿ*, so a HARPOON-sign was eventually used to write "one", "be alone", and so on. In this case, the HARPOON-sign is no longer an ideogram but a phonogram, representing sound and not sense.

to have some outside impetus from an intellectually superior civilization.

The Semitic influence in the Egyptian language is a different matter. Here we must accept foreign influence of considerable importance. As far as we know at present, these contacts were with a West Semitic people, though it should be noted that there are no Semitic inscriptions of any kind from this early age so that this must remain a tentative conclusion, there being no comparative material. The Egyptian language is not purely Semitic. In both grammar and vocabulary it shows a mixture of Semitic and what I have called, for want of a better term, North African. Relatively speaking, the Semitic elements are quite outnumbered by the North African, but the Semitic linguistic superstratum is unmistakable.

There is no denying that Semitic words could have been borrowed into Egyptian in the normal course of trade, and trade was being carried on throughout the Naqada II Period. Thus, for a period of three or four centuries, words could gradually have found their way into the spoken language of Egypt, and probably did. But we are dealing with much more than loan-words. The Semitic vocabulary reaches into every phase of daily life and a strong Semitic influence is seen in the grammar of Egyptian. On the face of it, this would seem to suggest a long Semitic presence in Egypt prior to the appearance of writing and that the Dynastic Race in reality could have had little or nothing to do with the Semitic elements in Egyptian. However, a brief review of certain important factors may instead serve to support this idea.

The earliest inscription giving an adequate text for judging grammatical structure and the like is from the end of the Third or the beginning of the Fourth Dynasty¹). Prior to this time, there were inscriptions but these consist only of names and titles, labels attached to containers in tombs and certain extremely abbreviated phrases found from time to time on other documents. While it is possible to point to

1) Edel, *Altägyptische Grammatik* I (Rome, 1955), p. 3.

Egypto-Semitic words in Protodynastic inscriptions¹), little more than this can be done. The full impact of Semitic on native Egyptian is thus not discernible until the Fourth Dynasty. Another point is that the written documents of early Egypt represent the official class and not the masses. The only inscriptions of this period may therefore represent a language used for written documents which differed in a marked manner from everyday speech. We cannot prove such a notion, but such was the case in Egypt in later times and for most of the Arabic-speaking countries today²). It is possible that, while Semitic words were being introduced during the Naqada II Period, the Egypto-Semitic character of the written language was imposed during the dominance of the Dynastic Race, that is, during the First Dynasty. Such an influence would remain even after the disappearance of these people as the ruling class³).

One class of early objects—the cylinder seal—deserves special comment. I have noted above (p. 6) the few cylinders known from Naqada II graves which Miss Kantor has shown to be either genuine imports from Mesopotamia or Egyptian copies of Mesopotamian originals. The ultimate origin of Egyptian cylinder seals is thus beyond doubt and the probable route of transmission from Mesopotamia to Egypt can be verified by the appearance of Jemdet Nasr style seals in Syria in contemporary levels⁴). Several Egyptian cylinders¹) and nu-

1) Egyptian *ib* = Semitic \sqrt{ib} "heart", is frequently found; Godron, *ASAE* 54 (1957), 198 ff.

2) The rather sudden appearance of the colloquial dialect in texts of the Eighteenth Dynasty shows that classical and colloquial Egyptian were both being used at the same time. Today, Classical Arabic has gone out of use in everyday speech though it is still an official language, misused by all but those specially trained to speak and write it.

3) The dominant presence of a foreign language still causes interesting effects on a native tongue. In modern Lebanese Arabic, the results of the long French domination of the country are seen in the spoken language. One usually says *kif martak*, "how is your wife?", but *kif madamtak* is also common, preserving the Arabic grammatical structure. *Marhaba*, "hello", in colloquial usage is answered by *marhabtên*, or "twice hello". One can also say *bon jour*, answered by *bon jourên*, "twice good day".

4) This particular point has been noted by Amiet in *Syria* 40 (1963), 57 ff., and *La glyptique mésopotamienne archaïque* (Paris, 1961), p. 38, with note 10. According to Amiet, Jemdet-Nasr style glyptic penetrated into north Syria only, and then in

merous impressions from the Protodynastic Period attest a wide usage of this type of object from the beginning of the First Dynasty. There is, however, a significant difference between the imported seals of Naqada II times and the cylinders of the First Dynasty. No trace of Mesopotamian influence is discernible in the Protodynastic seals; this originally Mesopotamian object had already become completely Egyptianized. Without exception, the cylinders from the beginning of the First Dynasty onward show Egyptian motives, names and titles.

There were two major uses for cylinder seals in early Egypt, corresponding roughly to the material of which they were made and the subject matter they contain. First, there are those seals which had a practical usage, namely, the sealing of containers. These were made of wood, bone or ivory, though very few actual cylinders of this class have been preserved. That they were in common use is shown by the innumerable impressions found as jar-sealings. These contain royal names or the names and titles of various officials. The second class are funerary amulets rather than seals even though they retain the cylindrical shape. Cylinders of this group are made of stone, most commonly black steatite, and bear a form of inscription which can be classed as religious or funerary. One does not find impressions of such cylinders. Frankfort has already pointed out this significant difference in usage; cylinder

greatly modified form. Cylinder seals were introduced into central Syria and the coastal area by north Syrians in the period immediately following the Jemdet-Nasr age. The cylinders imported into Egypt during the Naqada II Period, he feels, show Elamite rather than Mesopotamian influence and came to Egypt *via* the sea route from Elam to the Wadi Hammamat. However, in my opinion there is no evidence to support the existence of such a sea route so we must consider the northern land route as the only reasonable alternative. While the cylinders found in Naqada II Egypt may show motives which are Elamite in origin, they do have excellent parallels at such Mesopotamian sites as Jemdet-Nasr, Uruk, Tellah and Khafadje. Finally, the fact that precisely the motives on these particular cylinders have not been found in Syria does not mean that Mesopotamian seals could not have found their way to Egypt *via* Syria. While we may accept Amiet's excellent studies of early glyptic, he offers no cogent reasons why the cylinders from Naqada II graves cannot be Sumerian nor does his favoring Elam as the origin for the motives used forbid the northern land route as the means by which these seals came to Egypt.

1) Dated cylinders: Petrie, *Royal Tombs II*, pl. 5.11; *Abydos II*, pl. 12.274-75; *Scarabs and Cylinders*, pl. 2.32-35, 39, 56; etc.

seals in Mesopotamia were not used as funerary objects¹). While some scholars in the past have attempted to analyze the early Egyptian cylinders, these studies made little progress²). More successful investigations have been made in recent years, though the subject has hardly been touched by detailed and exhaustive examination³).

The further history of cylinders in Egypt is easily given. After the extensive use of cylinders in the Protodynastic Period, they went out of common usage except for royal cylinders and a few belonging to private officials. Cylinders were still used for sealing during the Old Kingdom as evidenced by material from Giza⁴). Individual cylinders appear in every period into post-Empire times though they become quite rare after the Middle Kingdom. In passing, it should be noted that many cylinders assigned to the Protodynastic Period or early Old Kingdom may instead be of later date. For example, several have designs and motives which fit into the repertoire of First Intermediate Period button seals⁵). But this is a problem of the inner development of Egyptian seals and cannot be examined here.

What then can we conclude concerning the appearance of the cylinder seal in Egypt? The basic assumption that the cylinder seal is a characteristic Sumerian object can be accepted, I think, as valid. The evidence from Egypt clearly shows that Mesopotamian cylinders were imported into Egypt in the Naqada II Period so that the ultimate Mesopotamian origin of this class of object, which found such extensive use in Egypt, is beyond question. But except for the rare cylinders of Predynastic date in Egypt Mesopotamian influence is totally lacking;

1) Frankfort, *Birth of Civilization*, pp. 101-02.

2) Petrie, *Ancient Egypt* 1914, 61-77, 1915, 78-83; Newberry, *Scarabs*, pp. 43 ff.

3) Cf., for example, von Bissing, *Der Tote vor dem Opfertisch* (Munich, 1952), who studies 78 cylinders of the Protodynastic Period showing a human figure seated before a table of offerings. This scene is related to the similar scene shown on funerary stelae.

4) Reisner, *Mycerinus*, p. 19; Reisner and Smith, *Hetep-heres*, Chap. 6; Junker, *Giza VII*, pp. 231 ff.

5) Note Petrie, *Scarabs and Cylinders*, pl. 6.140-45, 147. Many elements here such as the loop pattern, running human figures, and animals and humans *tête bêche* and *tête à tête* are characteristic of the First Intermediate Period.

with the advent of the historic age, the cylinder seal became an Egyptian object, showing its foreign origin only in its cylindrical shape. Not only was the cylinder adapted to the needs of the funerary cult, it was also inscribed with writing. Both notions were unknown in contemporary Mesopotamia¹). It would appear that, like Mesopotamian niched panelled architecture, the cylinder seal was borrowed by Egypt, adapted to local needs and finally discarded. The cylinder seal, however, enjoyed a longer life-span in Egypt since it was not replaced in practical use until toward the end of the Old Kingdom when stamp seals and eventually scarabs were used both for the purpose of sealing and as funerary amulets.

The egyptianizing of the Mesopotamian cylinder seal took place in that obscure period when the Predynastic age gave way to the historic dynasties. We may logically wonder if this change in the character of cylinder seals is related to the appearance of the Dynastic Race, that all-important but always elusive phenomenon which is being briefly examined in these pages. Here again it is impossible to draw conclusions. The emergence of the cylinder seal as an Egyptian object in contrast to its Mesopotamian origin coincides roughly with the appearance of several of the phenomena discussed in the preceding pages—niched panelled facades, hieroglyphic inscriptions and monumental tomb architecture. All combine as heralds of the historic age in Egypt. If the historical situation supported in this paper is correct, a new people were responsible for establishing the First Dynasty in Egypt. It is to them that we may possibly ascribe the adaptation of the Sumerian cylinder seal to purposes indigenous to the Nile Valley.

This again raises more questions for which there are no completely satisfactory answers. The use of cylinder seals as funerary amulets and the placing of inscriptions on cylinders appear to be characteristically

1) Frankfort, *Birth of Civilization*, p. 101, notes that inscriptions appear first on Mesopotamian seals in the Early Dynastic II Period which is roughly contemporary to the late Protodynastic and early Old Kingdom Periods in Egypt. The notion of writing on seals could thus not have been brought to Egypt by analogy to inscribed Mesopotamian seals since such was not the practise in Mesopotamia until long after inscribed seals had appeared in Egypt.

Egyptian notions and cannot be found either in Mesopotamia or Syria at this early date. We must therefore conclude that if the Dynastic Race actually did bring about the changes in the usage of cylinder seals evident in Protodynastic Egypt, these innovations were made because of local needs and were not introduced by the Dynastic Race from outside. It is probable that the use of cylinder seals as funerary objects harks back to Predynastic times since several of the Mesopotamian cylinders from the Naqada II Period were found in graves. The rarity of such objects in Predynastic Egypt might easily account for their being added to the normal grave equipment. Inscribed cylinders were probably invented first for official sealing purposes as part of the need for some method of keeping records under the new united government. The use of inscriptions on the amuletic cylinders would naturally follow once the new system of writing was recognized as having value in the funerary cult. If inscribed names and titles had a practical usage in sealing containers, the inscribed names and titles of a deceased individual could also be put to good use in the mortuary religion to perpetuate the thus permanently rendered personality of the dead. This would also account for the more permanent material out of which the amuletic cylinders were made. A wooden seal would suffice for practical usage since the inscription on it was only valid for the lifetime of the owner. But an amulet was meant to last for eternity and must therefore be made of stone.

Thus we can suggest plausible reasons for the appearance of inscribed cylinder seals and their use as funerary amulets in Egypt. But it is still difficult to place such developments in a clear historical perspective, particularly since the Dynastic Race itself, though its existence has long been assumed, still remains a shadowy concept for which the evidence is largely indirect.

Fortunately, there is some material evidence in the form of skeletal remains which supports the appearance of a new ethnic strain¹). The ruling class in Egypt during the First Dynasty was of a different stock

1) Most of this is conveniently collected in Massoulard, Chap. 10.

than the bulk of the population. This new strain was already present in Egypt during Predynastic times. It seems plausible that we can suggest a group of foreigners who began infiltrating, probably as the result of trade connections, who were then followed by an invasion of the Nile Valley, once the potential of this land had been recognized¹). Where the Dynastic Race came from is impossible to tell without skeletal remains outside Egypt with which comparisons can be made. The concensus of opinion seems to be that they came from the east. But another possibility strikes me as being more logical. We have seen that Syrians were coming to Egypt by ship throughout the Naqada II Period. If the Gebel el Arak knife handle actually does represent the final thrust of the Dynastic Race into Egypt, we can conclude that these may have been Syrians, following the long established trade route through the western arm of the Nile and on into Upper Egypt²).

Such a theory would account for practically all the manifold problems that have been discussed in the previous pages. I believe it perfectly possible for all the Mesopotamian influence manifested in Egypt throughout the Naqada II Period and the First Dynasty to have arrived in Egypt through Syria. While a direct contact between Mesopotamia and Egypt cannot be defended, an indirect one certainly can. Syria was in direct contact with Mesopotamia *via* overland trade-routes which connected the two areas from at least as early as the Halaf Period³). This connection continued through the succeeding Obeid, Warka and Jemdet Nasr Periods, the latter being an age of unusual expansion contemporary to the Naqada II Period. The sea-link between Syria and Egypt is well-established, so the northern land and sea routes from Mesopotamia to Egypt can be verified on the basis of existing evidence. No such evidence is forthcoming for the southern route through the Red Sea and the Wadi Hammamat.

1) Cf. Derry, *JEA* 42 (1956), 80 ff.

2) Helck, *Beziehungen*, pp. 3-4, suggests that this was the only branch of the Nile which could have been used by sea-trade at this early date. I am, however, skeptical of his theory of trading-cities in the West Delta.

3) Perkins, *Comp. Arch.*, pp. 43 ff.: for early Mesopotamian influence at Ras Shamra, cf. Schaeffer, *Syria* 38 (1961), 17 ff., 223 ff.

But this does not mean that Mesopotamian influence could not have come by land, through Palestine. There is no doubt that the land-route from Palestine was being used in Predynastic times, though some have expressed skepticism¹). However, since there are solid connections between Palestine itself and Egypt during the Naqada II Period (wavy-handled pottery, etc.) there is no reason to deny the existence of the land-route. The appearance in Palestine and Egypt of pottery types which are considered to be of Mesopotamian origin (loop-handled cups) is evidence of the possibility of a series of trade-routes connecting Mesopotamia with Egypt *via* Syria and Palestine. Therefore, there is no good reason why an indirect connection between Egypt and Mesopotamia could not have existed through this means.

To be continued

1) Perrot, *IEJ* 5 (1955), 185 ff., discusses the origins of the Palestinian Beersheba Culture. While he finds some evidences here and at Safadi which might indicate connections with both Naqada I and II, he feels it is hard to establish any definite connections. "There are no insurmountable difficulties in relating Beersheba to one or the other of the Predynastic cultures of Egypt, but it is very difficult to establish a synchronism" (p. 186). Perrot feels that any Asiatic influence in Egypt, including that from Mesopotamia, came from the Syrian coast by sea.