

G U R O B

CHAPTER I.

MEDINET GUROB.

1. The cemetery and town of Medinet Gurob, which in Arabic means the town of the crow, are situated on the edge of the desert, about a mile and a half to the W.-S.-W. of Illahun, on the border of the province of the Fayum, and at no great distance from the Bahr Yusef.

The cemetery covers a large area, but is somewhat scattered, as the ground was evidently not all equally suitable for the excavation of tombs. The town, many of whose inhabitants were foreigners, seems to have flourished during the XVIIIth Dynasty, and probably owed its origin to Tahutmes III. It continued on into the XIXth Dynasty, and then seems to have fallen into decay. The cemetery, however, was again used in Ptolemaic and Roman times.

The ruins of a small village, also dating from the XVIIIth Dynasty, lies about 500 yards to the south of the old town, in close proximity to an animal cemetery.

Professor Petrie excavated at Gurob some fourteen years ago, and the result of his work was published in the volumes entitled "*Kahun*" and "*Illahun*." Since then very little has been done at the site, except by natives, who have plundered it extensively.

2. Hitherto no prehistoric burying place was known further north than Sohag; this is some 210 miles south of a cemetery now discovered.

This cemetery was on a small "kom" or eminence about half-a-mile to the south of the ancient town, close to the cultivated land, and consisted of some fifty graves, which had been so effectually plundered that only three perfect pots and fragments of a few other types were obtained (PL. I, 1-9).

All of these may be referred to the middle prehistoric period, circa 6,000 B.C., according to the sequence dating given by Professor Petrie in his

"Diospolis Parva." The graves were mostly oblong in shape, and varied in depth from 2 to 3 ft.

Although the country was carefully searched in all directions, not a trace of another prehistoric grave was discovered, from which one may conclude, that the original colony was either a very small one, or that it has only occupied this district for a short period, and removed to some more congenial spot.

3. A small temple or shrine was dedicated to the worship of Tahutmes III, and is situated to the W.-N.-W. on the outskirts of the ancient town, and about fifty yards from the large temple discovered by Prof. Petrie about fourteen years ago. It was probably erected at the end of the XVIIIth, or beginning of XIXth Dynasty, and built of medium-sized sun-dried bricks.

The design is simple, consisting of two courts, a terrace and three chambers beyond it.

The front court, B, had two steps in the N.-W. corner,¹ and six column bases, one of which was a sculptured slab originally belonging to a XIIth Dynasty tomb; at the base of the eastern wall a Ptolemaic burial was found.

The second court, D, contained four column bases, a flight of six steps, at the foot of which were four small stones, probably forming the base of an altar, E, also a beam made from the stem of a palm tree, which had originally formed part of the roof. The walls of both courts were covered with mud plaster whitewashed; the upper portion had been decorated with figures, &c., in red, several fragments of which were found in the rubbish.

The flight of steps leads up to the terrace, F; this together with the chambers beyond are raised twenty inches above the level of the court, D. At the top of the steps are two pillar bases, one on either side; in front of them is the sanctuary, G, on either side of which is a chamber, H and K, possibly

¹ For convenience of description, the temple is supposed to face due north.