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THE PREDYNASTIC ORIGIN OF EGYPTIAN
HIEROGLYPHS: EVIDENCE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT
OF RUDIMENTARY FORMS OF HIEROGLYPHS IN
UPPER EGYPT IN THE FOURTH MILLENNIUM B.C.

The Ohio State University, Ph.D., 1973
History, archaeology

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The Predynastic Origin Of Egyptian Hieroglyphs: Evidence
For The Development Of Rudimentary Forms Of
Hieroglyphs In Upper Egypt In The
Fourth Millennium B.C.

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of The Ohio State University

By

William Samuel Arnett, B.A., M.A.

The Ohio State University

1973

Reading Committee:

William F. McDonald

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Plate LV. Reverse: "Fantastic Animals" Palette. Ibid., Fig. 7.

Plates LVI and LVII. Catalogue of tribal artifacts from Upper Egypt in Predynastic times. By Arnett.

Plate LVIII. Comparison of Nome Standards from Upper Egypt (based upon Budge, From Fetish to God, pp. 106-111) with tribal blazons from various artifacts discussed in this paper. By Arnett.

Plate LIX. a, b, and c. Comparison of more nome standards (ibid., pp. 106-111) with tribal blazons from various artifacts discussed in this paper. By Arnett.

d. 1. Narmer, the "Golden Horus" on his Mace-head. Drawn from Plate LI.

2. Oryx in Narmer's "corral", from his mace-head. Drawn from Plate LIII.

Plate LX. a. Standard of Cynopolis, 17th Nome of Upper Egypt. Budge, From Fetish to God, p. 108, 17.

b. Jackal and Leaf Motifs. Drawn from artifacts used in this paper.

Plate LXI. Comparison of Nome standards using the Seth-emblem (based upon Budge, pp. 106-111) with Seth-figures from artifacts discussed in this paper. By Arnett.

Plate LXII. Map of Upper Egypt Showing the Major Tribal Centers of Predynastic Egypt. By Arnett.

Plate LXIII. Nile River System. By Arnett.

INTRODUCTION

A definitive history of Predynastic Egypt has not yet been written although there are many excellent cultural studies of the period--the best of which is Elise Baumgartel: The Cultures of Prehistoric Egypt.¹ Although serious study of Predynastic Egypt began as long ago as the 1890's with the work of Petrie at Naqada and Ballas,² still, after some eighty years, there is no generally accepted interpretation of the period. Perhaps the most controversial part of the era is the so-called Late Predynastic Period (ca. 3500-3000 B.C.) at the close of which Egypt was unified under one central monarchy, Egyptian art and writing assumed their traditional forms, and the Egyptians began to develop a unique civilization which lasted for some 3000 years. Those responsible for this Egyptian civilization have traditionally been called the "Dynastic Race." This term has long implied that a new people with political and intellectual abilities superior to those of the Predynastic Egyptians suddenly appeared in

¹Elise J. Baumgartel, The Cultures of Prehistoric Egypt, 2 vols., London, Oxford University Press, 1955, 1960.

²William Mathews Flinders Petrie and J. E. Quibell, Naqada And Ballas, London, Bernard Quartich, 1896.

Egypt ca. 3000 B.C. and established themselves as the rulers of the land.³

The purpose of this paper is to show that, so far at least as the beginning of hieroglyphs is concerned, their origin antedates the coming of the Dynastic Egyptians into the Delta and lies in Upper Egypt (the south) and not in the Delta.

For this reason, it is not pertinent to the subject of this paper to discuss the origin and provenance of the Egyptians of the Delta in the Protodynastic and early Dynastic periods (ca. 3500-3000 B.C.). Whether the Delta was inhabited before ca. 3500 B.C., and, if inhabited, whether the inhabitants came from the direction of the sea, or from Libya, or Syria, are inquiries which, however proper and fruitful of themselves, lie outside the ambit of this discussion, and are therefore omitted.

The majority of Predynastic sites in Egypt are located either in Middle or Upper Egypt and are grouped in a line from north to south, and confined to a 160 mile stretch of the Nile Valley. These are: Deir Tasa, Badari, Naga-ed-Dēr, El Mahasna, Abydos, El Amrah, Diospolis Parva, Deir-el-Ballas, Coptos, Naqadah, and Hierakonpolis. With the exception of the first two and the last-mentioned sites, all these are within an even

³The most recent expression of this interpretation is that of Douglas E. Derry, "The Dynastic Race In Egypt," The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology, Vol. 42, 1956, pp. 80-85.

more confined sixty mile stretch of the Valley. These sites are the bases for discussion in Chapters II, III, and IV, and, therefore, are not discussed here. They are shown on the map in Plate I.

Hierakonpolis, the southernmost of these cities, is only seventy-five miles from the First Cataract at Aswan beyond which lies Nubia and the Sudan, "the land of the blacks." Most Egyptologists doubt any major Sudanic (and therefore "Negro") influence upon these Egyptian sites. But there are some exceptions.

Certain features of the so-called, "Khartoum Neolithic" culture found at Esh Shaheinab some thirty miles north of Khartoum⁴ have been treated as possible antecedents of similar features discerned in the cultures of Fayyūm, Merimdeh, and Badāri.⁵ But even Arkell is inclined to look beyond the Sudan into the Southern Sahara for the original homeland of the early cultures of the Sudan and Egypt. But, as Fairervis points out, the "evidence from the Sahara is only suggestive and

⁴Its excavator is A.J. Arkell, Shaheinab, London, Oxford University Press, 1953.

⁵Arkell claims a Sudanic origin to the "black incised" pottery of Badari in his "The Sudan Origin of Predynastic 'Black Incised' Pottery," JEA, 39, 1953, pp. 76-79. C.B.M. McBurney notes that "adzes and gouges identical with those of the northern cultures" have been found. See his The Stone Age of Northern Africa, London, Pelican Books, 1960, p. 243. Arkell has even made an inventory of "parallels" between the Khartoum Neolithic and the Fayyūm Neolithic: fireholes, flimsy habitations, domestication of animals, burnished pottery, etc.

not conclusive."⁶ Certainly, the consensus of opinion would discount the Central or Southern Sahara as being virtually unknown, and most scholars, it seems, would settle for a compromise statement whereby the various proposed outside influences are considered possible, and "indigenous North-African traditions" are given serious consideration.⁷

It should also be remembered that Khartoum is about 850 miles upstream from Hierakonpolis, and one can only guess as to the dynastic Egyptian's awareness of the ultimate sources of the Nile. Herodotus knew the Nile reasonably well as far as Elephantine, but beyond that point his only information was hearsay.⁸ Claudius Ptolemaeus (ca. 150 A.D.) knew of the Atbara and Blue Nile branches (although not necessarily of their Abyssinian sources), and, apparently, of the White Nile as far as the great marshes about nine degrees north of the equator.⁹ E.H. Warmington, however, was convinced that the ancient

⁶William A. Fairservis, Jr., The Ancient Kingdoms Of The Nile And The Doomed Monuments Of Nubia, New York, Mentor Books, 1962, p. 69.

⁷McBurney, pp. 244-246. (He tends to look towards a "Levantine" origin, however); William C. Hayes, Most Ancient Egypt, ed. by Keith C. Seele, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1964, pp. 88-89; Fairservis, p. 70.

⁸H.F. Tozer, A History Of Ancient Geography, second edition, New York, Biblio and Tannen, 1964, p. 92.

⁹E.H. Bunbury, A History Of Ancient Geography Among The Greeks And Romans From The Earliest Ages Till The Fall Of The Roman Empire, 2 vols., London, John Murray, 1879, Vol. II, pp. 612-614.

Egyptians knew the Blue Nile to its source and considered it possible that they also knew the source of the Atbara and the White Nile to its confluence with the Bahr el-Ghazal.¹⁰ But beyond the later Greek and Roman references and our modern conjecture, we cannot be certain of the Egyptian's knowledge of the Sudanese Nile in 3000 B.C.

The fact does remain, however, that Southern (or Upper) Egypt is the primary location of the Late Predynastic Egyptian cultures, there being as many as eleven sites in the region. And it must be reported that it was the present writer's opinion already stated to a limited extent elsewhere,¹¹ that the origins of the so-called "Dynastic Race" are to be found within the region of Southern Egypt. In the cited work, however, only one limited topic (carved slate palettes) was investigated. The palettes, not the origins of the "Dynasts" were being considered, and with the results of that very limited study casting some doubt upon many of the views concerning the "Dynastic Race," it was believed that a more intensive research of other key artifacts of Late

¹⁰Eric Herbert Warmington, Greek Geography: In The Library of Greek Thought, London, J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1934, p. xxxiv. See Plate LXIII for a map of the Nile River System.

¹¹William S. Arnett, "The Carved Slate Palettes Of Late Predynastic Egypt," A Thesis Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree Master of Arts, The Ohio State University, Columbus, 1968 (Typewritten).

Predynastic Egypt might further challenge the "Dynastic Race" concept. In fact, the evidence gathered from the excavations of these eleven Upper Egyptian sites and of Gerzeh and Tarkhan in Lower Egypt, specifically in the matter of primitive hieroglyphs, indicate considerable continuity between the Predynastic cultures of Upper Egypt and the civilization practiced by the Egyptians beginning in the Protodynastic Period [i.e. after 3000 B.C.].

CHAPTER II

DECORATED POTTERY AND POT-MARKS: THE RUDIMENTARY BEGINNING OF HIEROGLYPHS

The most common object excavated from Predynastic settlements and cemeteries is pottery. Many of these pots are decorated, and, as a result of methods developed by Flinders Petrie, the various shapes and styles of Egyptian pottery can be classified and arranged chronologically.¹² Painted pottery has produced almost countless motifs; some pots bear sculptured, raised reliefs, and numerous others bear so-called "pot-marks" which are probably the precursors to Egyptian hieroglyphic writing.

The incised markings (or pot-marks) on Predynastic and Protodynastic pottery probably represent "possession" or "property" marks. They generally occupy only small areas on pots already decorated by paintings. They seem,

¹²Petrie began organizing a corpus of prehistoric pottery in Nagada And Ballas, pp. 17-66. He refined this system in the work published by himself and A.C. Mace, Diospolis Parva: The Cemeteries of Abadiyeh and Hu, London, The Egypt Exploration Fund, 1901, pp. 4-12; it was supplemented by D. Randall-MacIver and A.C. Mace, El Amrah And Abydos: 1899-1901, London, Egypt Exploration Fund, Publication 23, 1902, pp. 47-48. Thereafter, each new "dig book" made an additional contribution to Petrie's corpus of pottery. A refinement of this corpus is found in W.M.F. Petrie, Corpus of Prehistoric Pottery And Palettes, London, British School of Egyptian Archaeology, 1953. Decorated pottery was classified as "D-ware."

therefore, to indicate ownership rather than an expression of artistic talent per se. As such, these pot-marks represent the need of the Late Predynastic and early Dynastic Egyptians to develop a system of writing.¹³

This chapter will examine selected pottery paintings, reliefs, and pot-marks in order to demonstrate that Predynastic motifs were the early means of expressing ideas or words which were later formalized in hieroglyphic forms. Some of these examples are well known (though not emphasized as primitive hieroglyphs); others are identified here for the first time; still others are given interpretations different from those expressed elsewhere.

The first example is a Tasian pot sherd (ca. 4000 B.C.) with two painted motifs (see Plate II, a, 1 and 2). The figure shown as a,1 on the upper left portion of the pot sherd has a leaf-like or fan-like appearance, and resembles a design which Petrie believed to be a potted plant and which Raphael interpreted as "a representation of the painted skin mounted on a stick."¹⁴ The design bears a likeness to the later hieroglyph for "tree" (see Plate II, b) and resembles a motif from the

¹³Petrie and Quibell, Nagada And Ballas, pp. 43-44; Max Raphael, Prehistoric Pottery And Civilization In Egypt, transl. by Norbert Guterman, in The Bollingen Series, VIII, New York, Pantheon Books, 1947, pp. 146-155; George A. Reisner, The Early Dynastic Cemeteries Of Naga-ed-Der, II, University of California Publications: Egyptian Archaeology, Leipzig, J.C. Hinrichs, 1908, pp. 122, 125.

¹⁴Petrie and Quibell, Nagada And Ballas, p. 12 and Plate XXXIV; Raphael, pp. 136, 138.

Hierakonpolis tomb painting.¹⁵ The motif itself is represented in various forms on much Predynastic pottery.¹⁶ Whether it is intended to be a large leaf and, therefore, either a symbolic representation of a tree or a fan, cannot, as yet, be determined. Although the typical sunshade or fan of Dynastic times was made of ostrich feathers attached to a pole or rod, nevertheless, the fan shapes as represented in hieroglyphs (see Plate II, d, 1 and 2) bear a resemblance to the Tasian example. On the macehead of King "Scorpion" (see Plate L), to be discussed in Chapter IV, and, again, on the macehead of Narmer (Plates LI-LIII), servants carry fans whose shapes are both possible derivatives of the Tasian motif as well as definite precursors of the hieroglyph for "fan." These fans indicate that the Tasian figure (in a, 1) is the

¹⁵J.E. Quibell, Hierakonpolis, I, London, Egyptian Research Account, 1900. J.E. Quibell & F. W. Green, Hierakonpolis, II, London, Egyptian Research Account, 1902, Plates LXXV-LXXIX. This example was recognized by Raphael, p. 138. For the hieroglyph for "tree" and the three variations given in Plate II see E. A. Wallis Budge, The Rosetta Stone And The Decipherment Of Egyptian Hieroglyphs: The Rosetta Stone In The British Museum, London, The Religious Tract Society, 1929, p. 232 and Alan Gardiner, Egyptian Grammar: Being An Introduction To The Study Of Hieroglyphs, 3rd edition, revised, London, Oxford University Press, 1957, p. 478, M1.

¹⁶See, for example, Petrie and Mace, Diospolis Parva, Plates XVI, 39, and XX, 8, 11; W.M.F. Petrie, G.A. Wainwright, and E. Mackay, The Labyrinth, Gerzeh And Mazghuneh, London, British School of Archaeology In Egypt And Egyptian Research Account, Publication 21, 1912, Plates XII, 1, 2, IX, 39f, 43b, 44; Petrie and Quibell, Nagada And Ballas, p. 12 and Plates XXXIV, 36d, 41, 43, 45, 48, 50, LXVI, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, LXVII, 11, 12; Raphael, Plate XXXII, 1, 2.

antecedent of either the hieroglyph for "tree" or for "fan" or both.

It is possible that these early symbols had more than one meaning or a meaning more closely related to one specific object such as a tree which, after continued use by Predynastic artists, acquired various secondary (and even abstract) meanings. Hence, huge palm leaves could have been used as fans in Predynastic times, and a symbol originally representing the "palm tree" eventually could have been used to portray a "fan" (or shade?) when the Egyptians found it necessary to express that concept in "writing" or art work and borrowed a pre-existing and related motif in order to do so. These "changes in meaning" are common among languages in their primitive stages of development. As Raphael notes:

historical evidence supplied by earlier or later epochs must be correlated, with due awareness of the possibility of changes in meaning. . . . The signs of later pictorial or written documents are not necessarily to be regarded as identical with those in question, nor should the content of the later signs be projected into the past; they may, however, supply certain indications as to the field in which the interpretation is to be found.¹⁷

A primitive motif hitherto overlooked is shown on Plate II, a, 2. The Tasian artist painted a figure which closely resembles the hieroglyph for "libation," two examples of which are given on Plate II, c and e. These

¹⁷Raphael, pp. 75-76.

demonstrate that in historical times a wavy or zig-zag line drawn as if projecting from a pot represented the pouring of the pot's liquid contents. Furthermore, there is a peculiar, thick object at the mouth of the pot drawn on the potsherd (a, 2) which closely resembles the hieroglyph for "vomit" drawn on Plate II, f. The wavy line in this hieroglyph in connection with that thickness indicates that the liquid is going away from rather than into the object. A further indication that this Tasian motif might be related to the given hieroglyphs for "libation" is the hieroglyph for water: (the letter "n"). Therefore, the motif depicted on the Tasian potsherd seems to represent some liquid being poured from a "pot," and it closely resembles the later hieroglyphic expression for "libation." It is quite possible that this painted figure from Deir Tasa represents the primitive model upon which the later more cursively rendered hieroglyph was based.

A common motif found on Gerzean pottery (ca. 3500-3000 B.C.) is quite possibly related to the Tasian motif shown in II, a, 2. Because of the nature of the details of these pot decorations they have been enlarged and shown on two Plates: Figures a and b on Plate III, and Figures a, b, and c on Plate IV. These interesting motifs have never been satisfactorily identified, but most scholars tend to interpret them as plants. Petrie felt they might represent plants growing in pots, and Raphael

went so far as to identify the plant as the aloe.¹⁸ Another ingenious suggestion relates it to the "ensete" plant, common to Ethiopia. But, as Simoons points out, these guesses may be possible, but are "far from convincing."¹⁹ One fact seems certain: the bases of all these motifs represent pots. The majority of examples of Egyptian pottery have bases similar to the tapered ones shown in Plate III, a and Plate IV, a and c. Even the less frequently found square bases (drawn in Plate III, b and Plate IV, b) have their counterparts among actual Egyptian wares. These are familiar vase shapes and are found in all the Predynastic sites. Examples of similarly shaped vases are shown in Plate V, b and c.²⁰ Thus, these bases could represent simple pots or vases.²¹ Furthermore, the concentric and semicircular lines which encircle or are near the given bases (or "vases") may be interpreted as water being (or already) poured or

¹⁸Petrie & Quibell, Nagada And Ballas, p. 12; Raphael, p. 136.

¹⁹Frederick J. Simoons, "Some Questions On The Economic Prehistory Of Ethiopia," Journal Of African History, VI, 1965, pp. 1-12. The "ensete" plant is more commonly known as the "false banana." It is indigenous to Ethiopia.

²⁰Vase shapes seen in V, b correspond to the tapered bases; those in V, c correspond to the squat, nearly square bases.

²¹The tops of these "vases" are shown facing full-front rather than in profile (i.e. as the rim of the potsherd is drawn in Plate II, a). This is another familiar style which characterized Egyptian art in all periods, except that, eventually, the hieroglyphs for water-pots, etc. were drawn in profile (see Plate IV, d, e, f).

spilled. In some cases, instead of a "flower" at the other end of the arching line which runs from these bases, there seems to be a second pot which, if so, is receiving or pouring water rather than "blossoming."²²

It is also true that the low, squat-shaped bases remind one of the hieroglyph for "well" (drawn in Plate IV, g). In both a clay sealing from Tarkhan (shown on Plate V, a, 1) as well as painted pottery marks from the Late Predynastic tomb of King Ka-Ap at Abydos (Plate V, a, 2 and 3) the early form for "well" is apparent. In the case of the pottery examples from Abydos, the presence of wavy lines (for water, n) seems to prove the early origins of the hieroglyphic ideogram for "well." If the motifs on Plates III and IV do represent plants, then they could be interpreted as growing at a well or oasis just as readily as in a jar. On the other hand, if the projections of these figures represent water being poured from pots, they could be intended to show libation or purification ceremonies at wells or springs. In this connection, see the hieroglyphs drawn on Plate IV, d, e, f. These show the relationship of pots and water lines in the rendering of such concepts as "libation" (d and e), or "in the interior of" (f), and, within the limits of the interpretation being suggested here, they might offer

²²For example, see Plate III, a and b. In the case of Fig. b, there seems to be the same thick shape (marked with an arrow) which occurs at the mouth of the pot figured on Plate II, a, 2 and in the hieroglyph drawn in II, f.

us a possible view of how these Gerzean motifs should be interpreted.²³ The Abydos "well" symbols are placed over "water" symbols in exactly the same manner as the hieroglyph "in the interior of" is (Plate IV, f). That these Predynastic figures, regardless of their original meanings, were the bases for the later hieroglyphs shown in Plate IV, d, e, f and g seems certain.

The Dynastic Egyptians used several symbols to represent "land," "territory," "region," "country," "district," etc. The next Predynastic motif to be considered is one of them. In its final form the hieroglyph is represented as a grid pattern with six parallel vertical lines intersected by three horizontal lines (see Plate VI, b). Several examples of this figure have been identified from Predynastic evidence and are drawn in Plate VI, a. Numbers 1 through 4, as well as the clay sealing motif (number 7) are from Tarkhan; numbers 5 and 6 are from Naqada; number 8 is from Ka-Ap's tomb at Abydos.²⁴

²³Tarkhan belongs to the period of transition between the Late Predynastic and Protodynastic periods. Monuments of some of the Late Predynastic kings, such as "Scorpion" and Narmer, have been found there. Petrie and his associates excavated Tarkhan between 1911 and 1913. They uncovered a great cemetery which was near the temporary capital of the "Dynastic Race" before the latter founded Memphis. Therefore, the Tarkhan evidence embraces the Late Predynastic and Protodynastic periods. See W.M.F. Petrie, G.A. Wainwright, and A.H. Gardiner, Tarkhan I and Memphis V, London, British School Of Archaeology In Egypt, Publication 23, 1913; and Petrie, Tarkhan II, British School of Archaeology In Egypt, Publication 25, London, 1914.

²⁴Petrie, Abydos, I, London, Egypt Exploration Fund, Publication 22, 1902, provides several examples

A hieroglyph with a meaning similar to sp̄t is n̄wt, , a circle with an "x" representing cross-roads and used to express "village" or "town" (see Plate VI, c). The use of the hieroglyphs sp̄t and n̄wt to express geographical meanings is common in historic times. Thus, the Egyptian wrote (d̄tt) to express the concept of "estate."²⁵ Even the figure (t), a semicircle, which represents a loaf of bread a staple of life and, therefore, one of the most basic ideograms in the Egyptian language⁷, was often used to signify "land of" as is seen in the nesu-bit title of Pharaoh (see Plate VI, d, 1 and 2), and , in combination with the "tree" symbol and n̄wt, , is transliterated as "Baq-t", or "Egypt."²⁶ The use in combinations (or by themselves) of several geometric figures such as the straight line, angle, circle, semicircle, triangle, oval, and variations of these shapes to express geographical concepts is highly common in hieroglyphic writing. Several of these ideograms or determinants of locality are drawn in Plate VI (e) and VII.

It is also significant that several of these geometric-shaped hieroglyphs are represented in the primary Egyptian alphabet as fundamental foundations of hieroglyphic

of this figure included in the titulary of this Late Predynastic king. See Plate I, 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 10, and 12, and Plate II, 14, 16, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23.

²⁵Gardiner, Egyptian Grammar, p. 488, N24.

²⁶Budge, p. 54.

writing. Hence, the sandy hill-slope ( ) often shown as a simple triangle ( ) is the letter k; oblique strokes ( ) variant forms of two reed-flowers ( ), represent the letter y; the square ( ) represents p; the water ripple ( ) is the phonetic symbol for n; the oval used to express the "mouth" ( ) is the letter r; the reed shelter of the field ( ) is the letter h; the circle with horizontal lines ( ) representing the placenta (?) is the letter h (pronounced ch); the rectangle for a pool ( ) represents š (pronounced sh); and the semicircle, symbol for bread ( ), is the letter t.²⁷

These hieroglyphs are quite similar to several geometric shapes and given combinations of shapes found on Predynastic bowls and platters. In Plates VIII, IX, and X, the bowls and platters (with their insides so decorated that when one looks down on them their designs appear to be drawn on flat surfaces) are given as examples of the Gerzean expression of geography and (possibly) other ideas as well. The examples drawn as numbers 1, 3, 4, 5, and 6 on Plate VIII are reminiscent of the hieroglyph for "town" or "village." The bowl shown in figure 4 shows the combination of angles with the grids (marked with arrows) being suggested here as primitive forms of the hieroglyph špzt. The Figure drawn on Plate X, 2 shows a triangle decorated with straight lines, and

²⁷Gardiner, p. 27.

still another variation is shown in Plate X, 3 where triangles are imitated by parallel lines of varying lengths. The oval platters drawn on Plates IX and X offer further evidence for the combined usage by Predynastic artists of angles and lines. Whereas the platter drawn in IX, 2 shows angles and grids together and the platter shown in IX, 3 has a central, oval motif which bears resemblance to the hieroglyph for "land" ( ) or its various forms, the platter drawn in IX, 4 looks like a Predynastic treatise on Egyptian cosmology.

The Egyptians' concepts of the universe were influenced by the nature of the Nile Valley and its environs. Isolated from the rest of the world by large expanses of desert or water, their "world" was defined by the narrow band of blue-green which ran the course of the Nile and which was bordered by cliffs and desert hills. Consequently, they used the same word to say the "land" of Egypt or the "earth." There were two major characteristics of the land of Egypt: "the triumphant daily rebirth of the sun and the annual rebirth of the river." The flatness of alluvial plain ( ) was in stark contrast to the desert "highlands" (or "hill-country") ( ) and mountains ( ) , and because these mountain ridges were barren and inhospitable they used the same terms for "foreign country."²⁸ One other feature of Egypt's "world," of course, was the

²⁸Wilson, et al., Before Philosophy, pp. 42, 44 and 47.

sky which, in the course of historical times, was the source of the chief Egyptian deity, the sun. On the platter drawn in Plate IX, 4 there are two suns, one at either end. In the middle two "hills" seem to be implied and the wavy lines on either side are strongly reminiscent of the hieroglyph for water (~~~~~). It does not seem that these symbols are arranged here by chance. Rather, if we consider examining the entire motif by comparing it to a passage written by Wilson (who as far as is known never saw this particular platter), the interpretation of this platter as given above seems irresistible (the underlining is used here for emphasis):

The Egyptian conceived of the earth as a flat platter with a corrugated rim. The inside bottom of this platter was the flat alluvial plain of Egypt, and the corrugated rim was the rim of mountain countries which were the foreign lands. This platter floated in water. There were the abysmal waters below, on which the platter rested, called by the Egyptian 'Nūn'. Nūn was the waters of the underworld, and, according to one continuing concept, Nūn was the primordial waters out of which life first issued. Life still issued from these underworld waters, for the sun was reborn every day out of Nūn, and the Nile came pouring forth from caverns which were fed from Nūn. In addition to being the underworld waters, Nūn was the waters encircling the world, the Okeanos which formed the outermost boundary, also called the 'Great Circuit' or the 'Great Green'. Thus it was clear that the sun, after its nightly journey under the world, must be reborn beyond the eastern horizon out of those encircling waters, just as all the gods had originally come forth out of Nūn.²⁹

In addition, it is noted that the platter

²⁹Ibid., p. 54.

itself is shaped like the hieroglyph which, besides meaning "land," stood for "horizon." Furthermore, since we know that the hieroglyph for water was the wavy line ( ) , this platter conceivably could represent the Egyptian "world" or "horizon" and the ripples along the rims could represent the waters primeval (or Nūn).³⁰

Countless other examples of "mountains" and "water" can be found on Predynastic pottery. One example is drawn on Plate X, 4. It is taken from a Gerzean pot and represents four "mountains" over wavy lines ("water"?).

That the Gerzeans intended these triangles to be interpreted as mountains is verified by their use on the ship standards (see Plate X, 5) which were common on the red decorated ware of the so-called "Third Culture" of the Predynastic era.³¹ While satisfactory interpretations of many of the objects mounted on these standards are not yet possible, it is clear that the standards were frequently used in Predynastic art and were extremely

³⁰Gardiner, p. 487, N19 and p. 490, N35. One wonders just how early the Egyptians vocalized the name of the primitive mother goddess Nūn (NNŪNN) and just when the phonetic expression of the word was first put into writing.

³¹i.e. the Late Predynastic (or Gerzean) Period (ca. 3500-3000 B.C.). The inclusion of this particular category of pottery decoration (i.e. the standards,) at this point in our discussion necessitates a slight digression (in order to explain the standards), but it is felt that a thorough discussion of the mountain-standards where they are relevant serves a better purpose than a partial discussion involving the "mountain-country" emblem on the one hand and the standard pole on the other--which approach would have required their inclusion in two separate places.

common in Dynastic art [see the hieroglyph ( ) for "standard" in Plate X, as the standards for religious symbols and the various nome attributes.³²

The Predynastic standard in question here has long been the subject of discussion. Thus, its inclusion here is not "original." Nonetheless it serves a twofold purpose here: it reinforces this paper's interpretations of the above mentioned triangles and it adds further evidence to our theory that Predynastic art contains many rudimentary forms of later hieroglyphs. In this case the hieroglyph is the ideogram for the god (or Ha): .³³ The comparison appears to be obvious. There

³²Raphael, pp. 139-140, makes some unsupported interpretations for some of the figures surmounted upon these Gerzean ship standards as representing (he seems sure of it) Lower Egyptian provinces; Petrie reckons them as emblems of port towns in Prehistoric Egypt; and P. E. Newberry, Annals of Archaeology and Anthropology, vol. V, 1913, has catalogued them. It will be seen in Chapter IV that by the period just prior to the time of Narmer (ca. 3000 B.C.) the standards as found on slate palettes and maceheads do relate directly to Dynastic nome standards.

³³Gardiner, p. 502, R12. Ha was a mountain god. See G. A. Wainwright, "Some Celestial Associations of Min", JEA, XXI, 1935, pp. 161-162. Also, G. A. Wainwright, The Sky-Religion In Egypt Its Antiquity And Effects, Cambridge, 1938, pp. 9-10. In the above cited JEA article Wainwright indicated that the mountains definitely were objects of worship in the Predynastic Age. He noted that these mountain standards (i.e. like that on Plate X, 5) "are shown quite indifferently as a group of five, four, three, or two peaks, , , , , suggesting that it is mountains generically which are depicted." Here it might also be useful to note the interpretation of the labrys (or double-axe), , as a "thunder symbol." Several examples of this symbol are found on Predynastic pottery. If Wainwright, Petrie, and Quibell are correct, these two figures (i.e. the mountain and labrys) indicated the worship of a mountain

can be no doubt as to the meaning of the standards, and that the "Dynastic Race" continued to display their gods and nome attributes upon the i3t in the same manner as their Predynastic forebears offers additional evidence to the continuity between the civilizations of Predynastic and Dynastic Egypt. In addition to what has already been published concerning this fact, further evidence from Naqada is offered here. Several pot-marks from that site indicate that the i3t may have served as a fetish by itself. Examples of these have been drawn on Plate XI, a.

As there are many examples of the use of the triangle in Predynastic contexts which parallel Dynastic usages, so there are several examples of the use of the square or the later hieroglyphic p ( ) on Predynastic vases which compare with Protodynastic examples. The Predynastic examples come from several sites (Diospolis Parva, Naqada, and Tarkhan), and evidence has been drawn from the Royal Cemetery at Abydos in connection with the writing of the "p" in the name of King Ka-Ap who was one of the immediate predecessors of Narmer. The Predynastic forms and that found at Abydos are compared in Plate XI, b.³⁴

god. See Petrie and Quibell, Naqada And Ballas, p. 49. It should be stated that in all of the cases of the occurrence of the labrys on Predynastic pots observed by this writer, none had handles.

³⁴Examples of squares: Petrie and Mace, Diospolis Parva, Plate XXII, 150, 173, 175, 176, 177, 180, 184;

While the evidence from Ka-Ap's tomb which is shown in Figure 8 closely resembles the other Predynastic squares, there are other examples (drawn on Plate XI, d) from this king's pottery which differ from the earlier types (found at Diespolis, Naqada, etc.). While these other examples may appear to be more similar to the hieroglyph spꜣt ( ) than to the p ( ), it is certain that they are variations of p. As such they represent the archaic form of the hieroglyph, and show all of the details formerly associated with the original object after which the geometric figure is modeled. If this is so (and it seems to be), it tends to substantiate Gardiner's contention that the was originally modeled after a stool with a reed-matting and, more precisely, that the original object was the stool-covering (i.e. the matting pattern) rather than an actual stool.³⁵

The figure drawn out of context in Figure b, 8 is shown in Figure e in the complete rendering of Ka-Ap's titulary: "Suten Ap, the Horus Ka."³⁶ This example adds further emphasis to the significance of such Predynastic figures

Petrie and Quibell, Naqada And Ballas, Plate LIV, 210, 211, 212, 223, 224, 225, 226, 227, 228; Petrie, Wainwright, and Gardiner, Tarkhan I, Plate XXX, 27, 28, 29, 30; and Plate XXXI, 79, 118, 189, 128, 135, 136, 137, 141, 142, 143, 145; Petrie, Tarkhan II, Plate XX, 39, 41; Petrie, Abydos I, Plates I and II.

³⁵Gardiner, p. 500, Q3.

³⁶Petrie, Abydos I, p. 3. The use of the prehistoric figure for the sedge or "swt-plant" (Petrie's "Suten") in connection with the titulary of Ka-Ap will be discussed below, p. 34-35.

as the square which, at the dawn of history, were important as the means of expressing royal names.³⁷

Besides the use of traditional geometric shapes for the purpose of expressing place names or the syllables of personal names, the Egyptian hieroglyphs also used astronomical symbols to express the physical aspects of the cosmos on the one hand and special concepts or sounds on the other. One such example was the star, which usually was represented with five points, , and which was a variant form of the letter g in the Egyptian alphabet.³⁸

Our earliest example of the five-point star on pottery--a pottery relief from the Predynastic cemetery at Hierakonpolis--has its direct counterpart in the well-known slate palette from Gerzeh (see Plate XXX).³⁹ Because of the very close similarities between the potsherd shown in Plate XII, a and the related portion of the Gerzeh palette, it seems clear that we can date the potsherd to the Naqadian period and interpret its meaning as representing an appendage of the prehistoric Sky Goddess. It is believed that these five points represent the five fingers of the goddess, and, since the entire motif (assuming the potsherd, when complete, was a duplicate

³⁷The Horus hawk perched on the serekh (or tomb facade) will also be discussed below, p. 64.

³⁸Gardiner, p. 487, N14.

³⁹Found by Wainwright and Bushe-Fox at Gerzeh, Grave 59, in 1910-1912.

of the palette's design) will be discussed in detail below, the reader is referred to Chapter IV for a more complete discussion of this motif.

There are other examples of the star sign on Predynastic pottery. Nine examples are shown on Plate XII, figures b, c, d, and f. All these are quite close to or identical with the star hieroglyph (figure e, 1). The unusual design of the Tarkhan example (figure f) seems to be a boat (?) with a star attached to its hull. If so, this could be one of the earliest renderings of the royal barque of Ra as it traverses the heavens.⁴⁰ However, the star in a circle meant the "netherworld" in dynastic times (see Plate XII, e).⁴¹ At any rate the Dynastic Egyptians used the star in a variety of ways ranging from pure cosmology (i.e. simple star-gazing) to religious symbolism. These practices probably were begun in Predynastic times and (though refined and appreciably more sophisticated) continued to be used in Dynastic times. Other examples of astronomical or "cosmological" motifs from Predynastic pottery are drawn on Plate XIII, a, 1, 2, and 3. The motif drawn in Figure 1 represents a "three-mountain" figure placed above an asterisk-like object supported by a crescent-shaped curve. While the lower portion of the motif bears some similarities

⁴⁰For an example of this common Egyptian motif see Henri Frankfort, Ancient Egyptian Religion An Interpretation, New York, Harper & Row, 1961, figure 9.

⁴¹Gardiner, p. 487, N15.

both to the hieroglyph used to express "half-month festival" (Plate XIII, b, 1) and to that meaning "month" (Plate XIII, b, 3), there seems to be more reason to compare this motif to the ideogram for "netherworld" (drawn on Plate XII, e). First of all, we have just seen the Tarkhan symbol (on Plate XII, f) which seems directly related to the given ideogram, and, secondly, the motif now under discussion is also from Tarkhan. Thirdly, the placement of the mountains on one plane and the asterisk-crescent motif on another (and lower) one reminds one of the ancient Egyptian concept that there were three levels of existence: the heavens where benevolent gods dwelled, the earth where man dwelled, and the netherworld where malevolent gods lurked.⁴² Two of the three seem to be represented here. The mountains have already been shown to represent the earth, while, if the asterisk were meant

⁴²Wilson et. al., Before Philosophy, especially p. 54. A fourth reason for not equating Figure a to the two symbols drawn in Figure b is the fact that no one has been able to prove satisfactorily that Breasted was correct in attributing the beginning of the Egyptian calendar and the observance of the Sothic cycle in 4241 B.C. See James H. Breasted, A History Of The Ancient Egyptians, New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1916, pp. 14-15. Raphael, p. 84, interprets some of the Predynastic symbolism as evidence of the existence of a calendar during the Gerzean period. While admitting its possibility, the best approach seems to await documentation. In regard to the use of the encircled star as a symbol of the Netherworld, Wilson remarks that the Egyptian "craving for symmetry, as well as a sense that space is limited, called forth a counterheaven under the heaven, bounding the limits of the underworld." Therefore, it may be that the Tarkhan motif (Plate XII, f) represents the night's journey of Ra's barque through the underworld's "heavens."

to be a star in the heavens, surely it would have been placed above the mountains. It seems probable that the asterisk here does represent a star and that the "pit" or "locale" occupied by this "fallen star" is the hieroglyph for "well," (see Plate IV, g and Plate V, a).

In this connection there is a related motif found on a jar at Abydos (see Plate XIII, c, 1) which directly parallels the lower portion of the Tarkhan example with the exception that only three lines (not four) meet at the central axis of the "star", and one of the three lines does not cross through that axis. The figure thus created closely resembles the traditional five-point star. If it is rotated clockwise on its axis (as shown in Plate XIII, c, 2) it becomes such a star. The interpretation of the curvilinear frames of these "stars" as the familiar "well" hieroglyphs seems correct when one compares them with the shapes of the "well" motifs given in Plate V, a, 1, 2, 3 and 4 and with the actual hieroglyphic form shown in Plate IV, g.⁴³

As has just been demonstrated, the crescent was a common figure among the numerous Predynastic pot-marks. The example shown as Figure a, 2 (Plate XIII) is taken from a pot found at Naqada, and a survey of Naqada pot-marks has produced some eighty crescents.⁴⁴ Some are

⁴³The figure drawn in Plate V, a, 4 like the original example of the motive here being proposed as the "nether-world," is from Tarkhan.

⁴⁴Petrie and Quibell, Naqada And Ballas, Plate LV. About a dozen compare with the two-dimensional example drawn in a, 2.

"double" or two-dimensional as in the case of the above example, but most are simple curved lines, . This example directly resembles the hieroglyph , or "moon," which is shown on Plate XIII, b, 2.⁴⁵ Considering the widespread use of geophysical motifs on Predynastic pottery, most of the eighty crescents probably represent "moons."⁴⁶ Thus, the crescent adds another example to the growing list of rudimentary hieroglyphs which were drawn (or "written"?) in Predynastic times--often far in advance of the time of Narmer and the unification of Egypt in ca. 3000 B.C.

Still another motif which is related to hieroglyphs that were used to express geo-physical concepts is shown in Plate XIII, a, 3. The top figure in this motif is identical with the hieroglyph (drawn as a "mouth", , and shown in Plate XIII, b, 4). Other examples come from a Tarkhan clay sealing and pot-mark (Plate XIII, a, 4 and 5), and the latter example shows clearly that

⁴⁵Gardiner, p. 486, N11.

⁴⁶As was seen in Plate XVI, B, the moon was used in Dynastic times in order to express concepts of time-keeping, but, as stated in footnote 42, one should approach the possibility of the existence of a Predynastic calendar cautiously. The fact that the Predynastics drew (or scratched) pictures of the moon may imply some religious-magical purpose, a simple rendering of the elements of nature based upon observation, or (though thoroughly undocumented) some time-keeping process. Whatever the interpretation might prove to be, the fact is that this was a common motif in Predynastic art and that it assumed chronological associations as the Egyptian civilization progressed. Certainly it is a well known fact that the Egyptian month was based upon a lunar calendar. Wilson, Before Philosophy, p. 56, indicates that "there are traces that there had been early important centres of moon worship."

it is a mouth symbol with the outer oval accompanied by an inner oval in imitation of lips. This upper figure is attached by a straight line to an X-shaped symbol placed directly below the r-sign. This bottom figure is identical with the hieroglyphic determinative for "break" (two crossed sticks) which is shown in Plate XIII, b, 5.⁴⁷ No further examples of this particular motif have as of yet been published, but these two symbols (minus the connecting line) frequently appear together in various expressions used in hieroglyphic writing (see two examples on Plate XIII, d, 7 and 8). Furthermore, both are fundamental pictographs utilized in countless combinations with a wide range of hieroglyphic forms. Some examples illustrative of the basic concepts which these two primitive symbols helped express are drawn in Plate XIII, d, 1-10. They depict such basic meanings as "season" (1), the "South" (2), "mixed" (3), "divide" (4 and 5), "boundary" (6), and "street" (10). Several of the geometric shapes discussed previously dominate these groups of hieroglyphs, and these basic language units are used here for the measurement of time and space and for numbers. It was through these three categories (i.e. time, space and numbers) that the ancient Egyptian explained

⁴⁷Gardiner, p. 452, D, 21, and p. 538, Z9. The X-shaped symbol occurred over sixty times at Naqada: Petrie and Quibell, Naqada And Ballas, Plate LII and p. 11; it also was found repeated thirty times at Diospolis Parva, Petrie and Mace, Diospolis Parva, Plate XXII.

natural phenomena.⁴⁸

One further linear motif with spatial or geophysical implications was the symbol for a "winding wall"--four examples of which are drawn in Plate XIII, e. The proposed hieroglyph (for which these Predynastic figures seem to be precursors) is drawn in Plate XIII, p. That this geometric figure is consistent with the previous examples' roles in established hieroglyphs as determinatives of place-names, etc., is shown by the hieroglyphic expression "street" (shown in Plate XIII, d, 10). There it is accompanied by the hoe (to be seen below as another Predynastic symbol), the "mouth"-sign (or r), the loaf of bread sign (or t), and the house ideogram (, or pr). Again, all these signs are basic geometric shapes or, in the case of others (like the "hoe"), close imitations of basic and fundamental implements of Predynastic life, and, though (or, perhaps, because) they were symbols of ordinary objects or basic geometric shapes (i.e. hoes, bread, ovals, etc.), they persisted throughout Dynastic times as important hieroglyphs.

Hence, it seems clear that the Predynastic Egyptians had developed a number of special signs to represent various geographical or topographical realities. These

⁴⁸Henri Frankfort, et al., Before Philosophy, p. 19. The example of the use of shown in Figure d, 2 (Plate XIII) is one of the most convincing arguments for the important role these symbols play in the development of hieroglyphs. It would be a monumental task were one asked to count the numbers of times the concept "King of" or "Land of" the South was expressed.

signs assumed important roles in the development of hieroglyphs. Most of these signs (or symbols) were either purely geometric, or imitative of the geophysical object (i.e. the star, sun, mountain, etc.), or both. Their recurrence in hieroglyphic expressions and their basic role as major contributors to the Egyptian alphabet indicate the significance of these primitive terms (or forms) in relation to the development of hieroglyphs.

The symbols drawn in Plate XIV, a are pot-marks found on pots at Tarkhan and Diospolis Parva. Each seems to be the drawing of the hind of a cow which means "cow's skin" in hieroglyphs (see Plate XIV, b).⁴⁹ Petrie and others speculated that certain objects found on Naqadian pottery (see examples drawn on Plate XIV, c) might be skins stretched out to dry.⁵⁰ In their general shape they do appear to be similar to the hieroglyph for cow's skin, but the meaning of these motifs is still uncertain.

Another example of a Predynastic symbol which became a hieroglyph is the "hoe." This object is depicted on several Predynastic pots; some examples are shown on Plate XV, a, and they are compared with the various forms of the hieroglyph shown in Plate XV, b. These "hoes" were depicted on pots from Tarkhan, Naqada, and Diospolis Parva as well as on the "Victory" palette (Plate XXXVI).

⁴⁹Gardiner, p. 464, F27.

⁵⁰See Petrie and Quibell, Naqada And Ballas, Plate XXXIV, 45 and Plate LXVI, 6, 8, 9, and 10, and p. 12. Raphael, p. 136, concurs with the view that the objects are skins.

King Scorpion's macehead (Plate L), and the Dynasty I Stele of Queen Merneith.⁵¹

Another proposed rudimentary hieroglyph is presented here in Plate XV, c, 1. It is a pot decoration from Diospolis Parva and dates, therefore, to the Naqadian Period. It seems to be the counterpart of the hieroglyph Sh(e)ms (shown on Plate XV, c, 3).⁵² Another possible figure related to this design is also from Diospolis Parva and is entered as XV, c, 2. So far, just the two examples of this figure have been published.

The student of Egyptian history is familiar with the Dynastic spiritual symbol known as the ka ( ) , and this symbol is also derived from Predynastic origins. Examples of the ka (or "soul" or "spirit") are found on Predynastic pottery from Naqada and Tarkhan (drawn on Plate XVI, a and b), on the Late Predynastic or early Protodynastic slate palette from Helwan and in the Horus name of King Ka-Ap of the Late Predynastic Period--from his painted pottery at Abydos--drawn on Plate XVI, c.⁵³

⁵¹See Arnett, pp. 17, 18, 19, 42 and Plate XVI. Jean Capart, Primitive Art In Egypt, London, H. Grevel & Co., 1905, pp. 186-189; and W.M. Flinders Petrie, The Royal Tombs Of The First Dynasty, London, The Egypt Exploration Fund, Publication 18, 1900, frontispiece. The "hoe" is phonetically transcribed as mr (Gardiner, p. 516, U6, 7 and 8).

⁵²The form presented in Plate XV, c, 3 is taken from Budge, p. 53. A variant form is found in Gardiner, p. 513, S18: .

⁵³The palette from Helwan is an unusual example of this art form which, by the First Dynasty, had generally become disassociated from its former utilitarian purpose

The hieroglyph, ka, is drawn on Plate XVI, d, and a Tarkhan cylinder seal provides an excellent parallel between the Predynastic ka (i.e. the figure drawn in Plate XVI, e) and its Dynastic derivative.⁵⁴ The figure scratched on a pot from Naqada (shown in Plate XVI, b, 1) reveals the antiquity of the ka symbol and proves that the other Tarkhan and Naqada figures drawn in Plate XVI, a and b are correctly interpreted as kas. This figure represents a human body with its arms extended above the head. The stick-like "arms" and branch-like "fingers" closely resemble the other figures drawn in Figures a and b. How deeply these Predynastic symbols were involved with the later concepts of the ka is not clear, but it is certain that the rudimentary form of the hieroglyph is quite ancient.

The scorpion was a symbol of fear and terror throughout Egyptian history. In historical times it was associated with the goddess Serget (or Selket). She was of Nubian origin (the black scorpion being very common in the Sudan), and her cult center was the town of Pselchis (or El Dakkah) now submerged by Lake Nassar. Although her

(i.e. that of a cosmetic palette). But Saad fails to give an accurate chronology for this piece. See Zaki Y. Saad, The Excavations At Helwan, p. 55, and Plate 75; also, W.M. Flinders Petrie, Abydos I, London, Egypt Exploration Fund, Publication 22, 1902, pp. 3-5, Plates I, II, and III. The hieroglyph is found in Gardiner, p. 453, D28.

⁵⁴ This cylinder seal actually provides two important motifs from Predynastic Egypt. Besides the ka-sign (Plate XVI, e) it also displays the well-sign shown in Plate V, a, 1.

character was evil, she guarded the canopic jars in the tombs--a service she shared with Isis, Nepthys and Neith. The scorpions shown in Plate XVII, 10 and 11 are hieroglyphs associated with her.⁵⁵ The third hieroglyph for scorpion (shown in Plate XVII, 9) is quite stylized or, as Gardiner notes, "modified for superstitious reasons." It represents an apparent effort to weaken the scorpion by not providing it with a stinger-tail.⁵⁶ Scorpions were represented in Egyptian art very early in the Predynastic Period. Figure 8 (Plate XVII gives all our scorpion examples) is a rendering of a scorpion from a piece of Gerzean red ware.⁵⁷ Two examples from Diospolis Parva (Figures 4 and 7) were painted motifs, and there were three examples from Naqada: two (5 and 6) are sculpted reliefs on a vase and the other (3) is a pot-mark. The finest examples of the scorpions so far known in Predynastic art were done for the Scorpion King, a predecessor of Narmer. These were in the form of sculptured pottery reliefs (as exemplified by Figure 2) and a sculptured scorpion in the round made of black haematite (seen in Figure 1).⁵⁸ Artifacts belonging to the Scorpion king

⁵⁵ Alan W. Shorter, The Egyptian Gods: A Handbook, London, Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., Ltd., 1937, p. 140; E.A. Wallis Budge, From Fetish To God In Ancient Egypt, London, Oxford University Press, 1934, pp. 96-97. Figure 11 of Plate XVII is (specifically) the black scorpion.

⁵⁶ Gardiner, p. 478, L7.

⁵⁷ Raphael, Plate XXXII, 4.

⁵⁸ J.E. Quibell, Hierakonpolis I, London, Egyptian Research Account, Fourth Memoir, 1900, p. 8 and Plate XIX, 5.

abound at Hierakonpolis in Upper Egypt, and the fact that the scorpion in the round (i.e. Figure 1) is done in black stone could be significant with relationship to the Nubian scorpion. If so, it could imply contacts with Libya in the Late Predynastic Period. But it suffices here to illustrate the early origins of the hieroglyph, "scorpion." Further interpretation of the various meanings would tend to be speculative and unsatisfactory in view of the limited nature of our sources.

As noted above, the Late Predynastic King Ka-Ap incorporated the "swt-plant" in his titulary. But far from this symbol's being indicative of the late development of this "classic" Egyptian motif, or, therefore, evidence of a new ruling class, this plant like so many of our examples has its precursor in Predynastic art. The earliest example is a pottery relief from Naqada (drawn on Plate XVIII, a, 1). Its "roots" are almost in the form of a base or platform like that seen in the hieroglyph "South" drawn on Plate XIII, d, 2 or that depicted as part of the royal "nesu-bit" formula on Plate VI, d. Two examples from Tarkhan also have definite bases or platforms, but, admittedly, have unusual forms (i.e. Plate XVIII, a, 2 and 3). The maturation within the Predynastic period, of this motif, however, is evident in two other examples from Tarkhan--shown on Plate XVIII, a, 4-5. These very closely approximate the Dynastic hieroglyph. From Abydos the tomb of Ka-Ap has produced several examples of the

"śwt-plant" in connection with the rendering of his royal titles. An example of his Horus-name on Plate XI, e has been mentioned before. There one can see a "śwt-plant" as it would be used for nearly 3,000 years (i.e. in the "nesu-bit" name as shown on Plate VI, d), and one more example of the use of the "śwt-plant" in Ka-Ap's titulary is drawn as Figure 7 on Plate XVIII, a. Finally, in order to show that some of these early Predynastic motifs are the precursors of the hieroglyphic śwt, three variations of the hieroglyphs are shown in Plate XVIII, b, 1, 2 and 3. All three have vertical lines crossing the branches just as the one other example from Tarkhan (Plate XVIII, a, 6) has vertical lines near the end of the branches. Furthermore, the third hieroglyph (b, 3) has a pedestal or base like that of the Naqada example. It is clear that this Predynastic symbol, depicting a plant common in Upper Egypt, was the precursor for the traditional hieroglyph and its variations as seen on Plate XVIII, b. The symbol represented the "South" or "Upper Egypt,"

$\angle Sm^p(w) \rangle$.⁵⁹ The Predynastic Egyptian artists depicted the "śwt-plant" quite frequently. Thus, when the Southerners experienced a need to commemorate their political accomplishments on monuments in Late Predynastic times, they adopted this plant as an emblem of their territory. Then, as these Southerners occupied Lower (or Northern) Egypt, the plant of their land (the

⁵⁹Gardiner, p. 483, M27.

sedge) was contrasted with the most common plant of the Delta, the papyrus: .⁶⁰

In this connection, it is significant that the earliest known example of the red crown of Lower Egypt ( ) is a pottery relief from Naqada (drawn on Plate XVIII, c. 1).⁶¹ It dates from the middle of the Predynastic period (ca. 3600 B.C.). There are no extant Predynastic examples of this crown from the Delta area. The only artistic renderings of this motif in Predynastic times were done by Southerners. In view of the fact that no archaeological evidence has been produced to support either the existence of a Predynastic Upper Egyptian Kingdom or the use by the latter of the red crown as a royal and geographical symbol, it is necessary to reject Wainwright's belief that this symbol from Naqada documents one of three possibilities:

- 1) The existence and political importance of the kingdom of Sais;
- 2) The influence of the religion and culture of Sais;
- 3) A connection of the Upper Country with Libya.⁶²

⁶⁰Ibid., p. 481, M16. Indeed, this plant was depicted on the Palette of Narmer where the Horus hawk is shown conquering the Delta or "land of Papyri." See Plate XLVII.

⁶¹Petrie and Quibell, Naqada And Ballas, Plate LII, 75.

⁶²G.A. Wainwright, "The Red Crown In Early Prehistoric Times," JEA, IX, 1923, pp. 26-33. The chronology is based on Petrie's Sequence Dating. The crown was on a piece of B-ware whose type is placed between S.D. 35 and S.D. 39. S.D. 40 represents the Naqada period's beginning.

We might add a fourth, fifth, and sixth possibility:

4) The red crown was always a Southern motif with some non-geographical meaning;

5) If, indeed, the curl atop the Predynastic crown represented a feather, and if that feather signified Libya (or the North), it doesn't necessarily follow that any established kingdom (Sais or otherwise) was implied--the existence of feather-bearing nomads is one alternative;

6) If this crown implied Libya (under the limits imposed in the last suggestion), the crown may have been an emblem of victory over the North--"King of the feather-bearers," etc.--rather than the surviving emblem (or crown) of the Delta's prehistory.

It should be obvious that the basis of Wainwright's essay on the Red Crown (and of the three possibilities added here, for that matter!) is pure speculation. The important fact here is that this crown was represented in Predynastic Egypt and is, therefore, one more example of the large number of hieroglyphic forms whose origins can be traced back beyond the time period wherein the supposed invasion of the "Dynastic Race" occurred. It is also true that another Predynastic Southerner, Narmer, is shown wearing the Red Crown on the obverse of his palette.⁶³

Finally, there is the harpoon motif. The harpoon is an object which was used often by the Predynastic fishermen. Several examples of bone, ivory, even copper

⁶³See Plate XLVI. Another conjecture proposed by Wainwright, "The Red Crown In Early Prehistoric Times," pp. 27-28, is that the crown, known in historic times as the symbol of the goddess of Sais (Neith), was meant to represent her. This may be correct; but it could mean that Neith was worshipped in the South in Predynastic times. Then, with the early Dynastic occupation of the North, the worshippers of Neith established a cult center at Sais in the Western Delta. See Budge, From Fetish To God In Ancient Egypt, pp. 57-59.

harpoons have been excavated at Badari, Naqada and El Amrah. Some of these are drawn on Plate XIX, a.⁶⁴ Pottery Paintings from Badari (Plate XIX, b), El Mahasna (Plate XIX, c), Diospolis Parva, Gerzeh, and Naqada (selected examples of the last three sites being drawn in Plate XIX, d) demonstrate the wide-spread use and artistic representation of the harpoon. Numerous pot-marks from Diospolis Parva, Naqada, and Tarkhan (shown in Plate XX, a) provide conclusive evidence that the Predynastic artists' rendering of the harpoon became the model of the later hieroglyphs as seen in Plate XIX, b. The harpoons reproduced in Plate XIX, b and c are equipped with lines or ropes in order to facilitate the capture of the quarry (fish, etc.) and/or the retrieval of the weapon. The harpoon drawn in Plate XX, c, 1 was painted directly over a Gerzean ship with a harpoon standard which is reproduced as Figure c, 2. These figures show clearly that the blazons borne by several of the ship standards are, indeed, harpoons.⁶⁵ Another important example which

⁶⁴ Brunton and Caton-Thompson, The Badarian Civilization, p. 54, noted the discovery of bone harpoons at Badari and indicated their belief that in order for the Badarians to have killed the hippo (whose thick hide would seem impervious to bone harpoons) they must have had copper harpoons. As is seen below, the Badarians hunted hippos and these authors cited E.H. Hall in the Cambridge Ancient History, I, First edition, p. 261, where it is noted that the harpoon, accompanied by the name "Mesenu," used to be translated as "metal-workers," and that the more accepted translation today is "hippopotamus-hunters." See Gardiner, p. 514, T19, 20, 21.

⁶⁵ This example, as noted in the "List of Illustrations," is from Naqada. Other examples of harpoon standards on painted pottery are found in Petrie, Wainwright, and

relates the standard blazons to the harpoon is the pot-mark from Diospolis Parva drawn in Plate XX, a, 1. It shows a two-pronged harpoon over the Z-shaped harpoon symbol with lines like the Badarian example (Plate XIX, b, 3).⁶⁶ Again, this demonstrates the common use of the harpoon motif in Predynastic times and the fact that the hieroglyphic forms of the harpoon have Predynastic origins. One further example of the primitive harpoon is the pot-mark from Naqada shown in Plate XX, d. It was incorrectly interpreted by Raphael as "a combination of a spiral and a mutilated Y form,"⁶⁷ but obviously it is a harpoon.

Therefore, it has been demonstrated that Predynastic pottery paintings and pot-marks provide us with numerous examples of figures, symbols, concepts, motifs, etc. which appear as hieroglyphs in historical times. Most of the examples shown above remained unchanged in the transition from Predynastic to Dynastic usage. Where they have changed they have retained enough of their former characteristics to show their importance to the development

Mackay, The Labyrinth Gerzeh And Mazghuneh, Plate XII, 1, 2, and Plate IX, 44; Petrie and Quibell, Naqada And Ballas, Plate XXXIV, 43; Plate LXVI, 6, 7, 8; Plate LXVII, 11, 12; Petrie and Mace, Diospolis Parva, Plate XX, 2, 3, 6, 9, 11, 12.

⁶⁶There are several examples of harpoon pot-marks: Petrie and Mace, Diospolis Parva, Plate XXI, 44, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60; Petrie, Tarkhan I and Memphis V, Plate XXX, 34, 35, 36; Petrie, Tarkhan II, Plate XX, 15-26; Petrie and Quibell, Naqada And Ballas, Plate LII, 58, 59, 61.

⁶⁷Raphael, p. 149.

of hieroglyphic writing. If the hypothetical "Dynastic Race" did invade Egypt in ca. 3000 B.C. one point is clear. They adopted a pre-existing "writing system" to express many of the concepts inherent in hieroglyphs. Certainly, in the case of Predynastic pottery paintings and marks there is ample evidence to prove the existence of several primitive or rudimentary forms of hieroglyphs throughout the millennium preceding the unification of Egypt in ca. 3000 B.C.

CHAPTER III

MISCELLANEOUS PREDYNASTIC ARTIFACTS WHICH BEAR RESEMBLANCES TO LATER HIEROGLYPHS

In the plastic arts and in carvings (using such media as stone, bone, ivory, clay and wood) the Predynastic artist fashioned figures in the round or in relief which, like the pottery paintings and marks discussed above, seem to be rudimentary forms of later Egyptian hieroglyphs. That some of the examples to be discussed in this chapter are, in fact, implements, weapons, or similar objects rather than actual carvings, inscriptions, or "writings," does not lessen their importance to this paper's thesis that large numbers of rudimentary forms of hieroglyphs are to be found on (or in) Predynastic artifacts. There are many examples in hieroglyphs where "pictorial elements" (i.e. pictures of given objects) simply and visually represent those objects, while there are as many examples where, instead of the latter type of picture-writing, the same objects are used to express "phonetic elements," or phonetic values. Hence, the hieroglyphic rendering of, say, a plow might simply represent a plow per se in the sense of a determinative as in the expression

 ed "hack up."⁶⁸ But could also represent the phonetic value mr and be incorporated in such an abstract and unrelated concept as "love" (, mri).⁶⁹ As Gardiner points out:

Egyptian hieroglyphic writing did not attempt completely to replace pictorial elements by sound elements; throughout the entire course of its history that script remained a picture-writing eked out by phonetic elements.⁷⁰

It is clear, therefore, that not only pictorial representations of people, actions, or objects, etc. but also the objects themselves served as models for hieroglyphs. In the shapes of Predynastic amulets, ornaments, and other objects as well as in a series of miscellaneous artifacts (placques, uncarved palettes, cylinders, toilet articles, jewelry, etc.) several such hieroglyphic models have been identified and are presented below.

An amulet from Badari illustrates this. The object is a serpentine, ornamental fly pierced with a hole for suspension. It is drawn on Plate XXI, a, 1, and a comparison with the hieroglyph "fly" (Plate XXI, a, 2) seems obvious.

Another Badarian amulet, in the form of a hawk, is pictured in the same Plate as b, 1. Again, this is a very early example of a common Dynastic hieroglyph (see figure c, 1 on the above-mentioned Plate), and there is

⁶⁸Gardiner, p. 516, U6.

⁶⁹Ibid., p. 516, U6.

⁷⁰Ibid., p. 8.

ample corroborative evidence which illustrates the widespread use of the hawk motif throughout the fourth millennium B.C.--long before it appeared on the monuments of the Late Predynastic and early Dynastic kings. The Predynastic examples come from Diospolis Parva⁷¹ (Plate XXI, b, 2), Naqada (b, 3, 4, 5), Tarkhan (b, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10), Hierakonpolis (b, 11), and Abydos (b, 12). The similarity between these Predynastic forms and the basic outline of the hieroglyphic hawks drawn in Plate XXI, c, 1, 2, 3, and 4 is striking. The latter figures represent the culmination of over 1,000 years' rendering of the hawk, and they (i.e. the hieroglyphs) differ very little from the earlier forms. Especially noteworthy is the apparent "duplication" of the Predynastic hawk drawn in Plate XXI, b, 8⁷² by the hieroglyphic "archaic image of a falcon" shown as figure c, 2. The similarities are obvious. Equally significant is the similarity between the shape of even the earliest Predynastic hawk motif (namely, the Badarian example in B, 1) and that of the later hieroglyphic forms. To illustrate further this comparison the Badarian hawk and one from Naqadah (b, 5) are redrawn on Plate XXII, A, 1 and 2. A series of dot-dash lines are superimposed upon these figures in order to illustrate the fact that the hieroglyphic hawks are

⁷¹This hawk comes from the ring reproduced in Plate XXIII, c, 3.

⁷²This figure is reproduced from the carved outline of a hawk on top of a slate palette from Naqada.

constructed first by beginning with the 1000-year-old outline of the bird's back, head and beak, front, and the lower outline of the wing; to this outline (which is further emphasized by extracting and drawing the outline of three of the hieroglyphic hawks in Plate XXII, b, 1, 2, 3) are added the tail feathers, the two legs, and the feet.

Therefore, the hawk as an artistic motif not only perservered throughout the long period of prehistory between the Badarian era and that of the First Dynasty, but it also remained relatively unchanged in form during that same period. It seems quite possible that the hawk was either a fetish or a territorial blazon or tribal symbol in Upper Egypt for 1000 years prior to its use as a tribal standard by the so-called "Followers of Horus" (also Upper Egyptians) who, led by such kings as Narmer and Scorpion, unified all Egypt and whose monuments--especially their palettes and maceheads--display the importance of the same hawk as a tribal blazon in Late Predynastic times.⁷³

A third Badarian ornament, the jackal (drawn on Plate XXII, c, 1) demonstrates the antiquity of still another hieroglyph which was common in Predynastic times. As will be seen in Chapter V, the jackal often appears on the carved slate palettes of the last period of the Predynastic era (i.e., ca. 3500-3000 B.C.). An outstanding

⁷³See the hawk standards, etc. on Plates XXXIV, XXXIX, b, XL, 2, XLI, 3, XXXVI, XLIII, XLVI, and LII.

example of a Predynastic jackal motif is the slate jackal from El Ahaiwah (Plate XXVIII). It bears a remarkable resemblance to the hieroglyphs shown in Plate XXIII, b, 1 and 2. In fact, the jackal was a common subject for Predynastic artists, and, with only slight changes, the Predynastic form of the jackal became both an historial hieroglyph as well as a well known nome standard of Upper Egypt.⁷⁴

Another Badarian jackal figure which is quite similar to the two above mentioned examples is drawn in Plate XXII, c, 2. It is significant that (as will be seen in Chapter V) the jackal was the dominant motif on the carved slate palettes⁷⁵ and that the later palettes⁷⁶ depict jackals in poses practically identical to those of the Badarian examples. Furthermore, there are numerous other examples of the use of the jackal in Egyptian art which serve to emphasize the continued use of this basic motif throughout Egyptian history. These range from the pot-marks from Tarkhan vases (see Plate XXIII, a, 1) to the series of early Protodynastic jackals from the royal tombs of Abydos (two examples of which are given in figure a, 2, and 3) and, finally, to the well-

⁷⁴The jackal was the standard blazon for the Cynopolite nome (the seventeenth) of Upper Egypt: . This and other such nome standards are discussed in the next chapter and in the concluding chapter.

⁷⁵See discussion in Chapter IV and Arnett, pp. 12-36.

⁷⁶See Plates XLIII, XLVI, L, LII.

known jackal from Tutankhamon's tomb.⁷⁷ Certainly, there can be little doubt that the Predynastic jackals just cited were the precursors of the hieroglyphic jackals shown in Plate XXIII, b, 1 and 2. What is most remarkable, perhaps, is the fact that the examples from Badari (Plate XXII, c, 1 and 2), which predate the hieroglyph (drawn in Plate XXIII, b, 1) by at least 1,000 years, show very few signs of change over that long period.

A fourth example of a Predynastic artifact which served as the model (or at least as the prototype) of a later hieroglyph was the Predynastic finger-ring. Several different examples of rings are preserved today; a few are drawn in Plate XXIII, c. This type of jewelry represents an obvious example of the above-mentioned "pictorial element" wherein the physical object is duplicated by the immaterial prototype (i.e. the hieroglyph). The two rings figured as nos. 2 and 4 are from Naqada;⁷⁸ the ring in figure c, 3 is from Diospolis Parva and is adorned by four hawks (one of which has been reproduced in Plate XXI, b, 2); and the rings in figures 1 and 5 are also from Diospolis Parva.⁷⁹

⁷⁷ See Smith, The Art And Architecture Of Ancient Egypt, Plate 147, A.

⁷⁸ See Petrie and Quibell, Naqada and Ballas, Plate LXIV, 78 and p. 47. Ivory rings similar to figures 4 and 5 also were found at El Badari: Guy Brunton, Mostagedda and the Tasian Culture, Plate XLIII, 16. A ring with four bird heads (in positions similar to those of the hawks on the ring figured in Plate XXVI, c, 3) was found at Tarkhan. See Petrie, Tarkhan II, Plate III.

⁷⁹ Petrie and Mace, Diospolis Parva, Plates IX, 23 and X, 24, 25, and pp. 21-22.

An ivory figurine from El Mahasna (Plate XXIII, e, 1) may be the earliest representation of the unidentified animal sacred to Seth.⁸⁰ The hieroglyphic ideogram for Seth is drawn in figure e, 3. The snout, ears, and nape of the figurine are quite similar to those of the hieroglyph, and the hieroglyphic Seth-head scepter (figure e, 2) also compares with the snout and ears of both.

An interesting ivory spoon from Tarkhan has a handle carved in the shape of a "fantastic animal" (Plate XXIV, a) which belongs to the same class of animals found on several slate palettes to be discussed in Chapter IV.⁸¹ This animal has a cat-like body, an elongated neck, and the head of a panther.⁸² Like so many other Predynastic models upon which later hieroglyphs are based, this "fantastic animal" is much more elaborate and detailed than the later hieroglyph (see figure b, Plate XXIV). The spoon handle indicates that the Predynastic artist used these long-necked "monsters" in other than monumental or commemorative works.

A slate palette from Tarkhan bears an incised drawing of a man with a mace and staff (see Plate XXIV, c). This figure is a pure hieroglyph. The standard hieroglyph for a man holding a walking-stick and a club is drawn in

⁸⁰ Ayrton and Loat, Predynastic Cemetery At El Mahasna, Plate XII, 2 and p. 27.

⁸¹ See Plates XXXIV, XLVI and LIV.

⁸² See Arnett, pp. 12-13. Legge, "The Carved Slates And This Season's Discoveries," PSBA, XXXI, 1909, p. 302, termed these beasts as "non-descript."

Plate XXIV, d to illustrate the hieroglyphic characteristics of the Tarkhan drawing. Both the drawing and the hieroglyph have the profile head, full-front eye, and full-front torso, with the arms, legs and feet being shown in profile--characteristics well known in both historical Egyptian art and hieroglyphs. Even the stance of the Tarkhan figure is paralleled by the hieroglyph. Furthermore, both the mace and the stick represent historic hieroglyphs as is shown in figures e, 1 and 2.

The Predynastic mace is an artifact found quite frequently in Gerzean "digs" as is illustrated by the examples drawn in Plate XXV, a and by the maceheads of Narmer and Scorpion (Plates LI-LIII and L respectively) to be discussed in Chapter IV.⁸³ Margaret Murray has noted that the white limestone mace, equipped with a handle-strap, so common in Gerzean times, became the sign for the word "white" in hieroglyphs (see Plate XXIV, f).⁸⁴ Like the finger-rings, the Gerzean mace could be represented as a "pictorial element" or as an ideogram in hieroglyphic writing. The origin of the mace-related hieroglyphs is clearly Predynastic.

Among the numerous artifacts belonging to Narmer is an ivory cylinder found at Abydos (Plate XXV, b). This

⁸³ Another example of a carved mace-head not discussed in this paper is the "Great Mace" from Hierakonpolis (Quibell, Hierakonpolis I, Plate XXVI).

⁸⁴ Margaret A. Murray, The Splendour That Was Egypt, p. 6. This hieroglyph also took on the additional meanings of "light" or "bright."

product of Late Predynastic artists has the familiar emblems of Narmer: the "nar" fish (its front half missing) and the "mer" chisel. It also has two major motifs which are common in Dynastic art and hieroglyphs: the vulture and the captive prisoner of war. The vulture with its wings spread probably represents the goddess Nekhbet, important as a hieroglyph (see Plate XXVI, a) both as a phonetic value (nrt) and as the symbol of one of the "Two-Ladies" so important in the royal titulary of later pharaohs (see Plate XXVI, b).⁸⁵ This particular vulture motif, of course, is better known from the many tomb paintings from Dynastic times where the spread wings of the vulture are seen protecting the deceased kings or nobles.⁸⁶ This same vulture motif (although having clearer, more elaborate details) will be seen below on Narmer's macehead. The other bird on this cylinder is probably the hawk, which has just been shown to be a common motif in Predynastic art. Its adoption by Narmer as Horus will be discussed in Chapter IV.

The bound men shown in the middle and lower registers represent Predynastic examples of a common hieroglyph (see Plate XXVI, c). As will be seen below, Narmer's monuments (his cylinder, palette, and macehead) represent the real foundation of royal motifs in Egyptian art. But

⁸⁵See Petrie, Royal Tombs, I, Chapter 2.

⁸⁶See the panel on the chair of Tutankhamon, in Smith, Art And Architecture, Plate 149. Also see his pectoral (Plate 152, A).

the use of hieroglyphs by Narmer and his royal successors represents not the beginning of the hieroglyphic system of writing but rather the culmination of at least 1,000 years in the development of Egyptian art--a period beginning at least as early as 4000 B.C. and reaching maturity at the close of the Predynastic era (ca. 3000 B.C.).

One other medium used by Predynastic artists was the knife handle. Three examples are given here. The first comes from Abydos (see Plate XXVI, e).⁸⁷ The obverse of this handle is decorated by two entwining serpents and several rosettes. The serpents weave in and out in the manner in which snakes tend to slither along the ground. This is also the manner in which the snake is depicted in hieroglyphs (see Plate XXVI, d). The rosette designs compare with those on the Narmer Palette and mace-head as well as the Scorpion macehead (Plates XLVI, LI, and L respectively) where, as will be seen in Chapter IV, they are interpreted as being symbolic of royalty. On the reverse of the handle nine animals fill all available space. Four of them, gazelle, lion, oryx, and ibex are redrawn on Plate XXVII, a, 1, b, 1, c, 1 and d, 1 respectively. They are in each case (a, 2, b, 2, c, 2 and d, 2) compared to hieroglyphs. These four examples

⁸⁷ Jacques De Morgan, Recherches sur les origines de l'Egypte: l'age de la pierre et les metaux, Paris, Ernest Leroux, 1896, I, p. 112; II, p. 266, Plate V. This knife is in the Cairo Museum; it has a flint blade and handle, but the design is incised on gold leaf which, in turn, is sewn on by gold thread. Capart, pp. 68-69.

illustrate that the manner in which the later hieroglyphs of these animals were drawn closely resembles their forms as seen on this knife handle. These and other animals recur on the carved slate palettes where they generally represent territorial or tribal emblems, gods, or totems.⁸⁸ On this knife handle and the one to be discussed below it seems that the major purpose of the motif was the simple rendering of some of the several species of wild animals in Egypt. If so, these knife-handle motifs probably predate the palettes and mace-heads to be discussed in Chapter IV. Nevertheless, the comparative drawings given in Plate XXVII, a-f demonstrate the early origins of the related hieroglyphs whose precursors appear on these early knife handles as well as upon such products of the "Followers of Horus" (in Late Predynastic times just prior to Dynasty I) as the commemorative slate palettes. This inventory motif (or artistic rendering of several types of animals) is repeated on an ivory knife-handle which is in the Pitt-Rivers Collection, Farnham, Dorset.⁸⁹ This handle is not in the best of condition, and much of it is missing, but several distinct birds, antelope, carnivores, an elephant, crocodile, etc. are depicted on the portions that remain. Eight of those animals are drawn in Plate XXVII, f.

⁸⁸See below in Chapter V.

⁸⁹Petrie and Quibell, Nagada And Ballas, Plate LXXVII, and p. 51; DeMorgan, Recherches, II, pp. 266-267.

They include the owl, jackal, two herons (?), an ibis (?), a swallow (?), an oryx, and a gazelle. The oryx and gazelle on this knife handle not only agree with their counterparts on the Cairo piece (Plate XXVI, e), but, also, with the later hieroglyphs drawn in Plate XXVII, a, 2, and c, 2. The owl, jackal, heron, ibis, and swallow motifs are also closely related to hieroglyphs as is seen on Plates XXXVIII, a, XXIII, b, and XXXVII.⁹⁰ The oryx (figure f, 7) compares with both the oryx on the Abydos knife-handle and its hieroglyphic counterpart (figure c, 1 and 2 respectively). The gazelle (figure f, 8) is also the same as that on the Abydos knife-handle (figure a, 1) and, therefore, it compares to the hieroglyph (figure a, 2).

The last knife-handle to be discussed here is drawn in Plate XXVII, g, 1 and 2. From Gebelein,⁹¹ this artifact seems to clarify the meaning of the motif on the Tasian potsherd discussed in Chapter II (pp. 8-10) and shown in Plate II, a, 1. The obverse of this knife-handle (Plate XXVII, g, 1) is decorated by a motif of three women one of whom holds a fan. The motif on the reverse (g, 2) includes a boat, water ripples, and the same fan-like object seen on the above-mentioned Tasian potsherd.

⁹⁰The related hieroglyphs for which these figures (i.e. oryx, gazelle, ibis, heron, jackal, etc.) are antecedents are discussed below in Chapter V.

⁹¹Quibell, "Flint Dagger From Gebelein," in the Annales du service des antiquites de l'Egypte, II, 1901, pp. 131-132, as cited by Capart, p. 68.

Although the use of these two figures on opposite sides of the handle may be entirely coincidental, nevertheless, the fan on the obverse proves the early origins of the hieroglyphs for "fan" (see Plate II, d) and may justify the interpretation of the given object on the reverse and on the Tasian sherd (Plate II, a, 1) as the representation of a fan also. If this is so, the Gebelein knife provides further evidence of the early development of figures which represent rudimentary forms of later hieroglyphs.

Among the artifacts considered in this chapter are items of everyday use in Predynastic Egypt: a spoon, a cosmetic palette, knives, finger-rings, and amulets. These items would have been among the most valued of the belongings of their owners, and in most cases were the possessions of wealthy persons whose tastes are reflected in the motifs which decorate their belongings. Some of the motifs, such as the jackal, hawk, and Seth figures may represent religious themes as is implied by the usage of these same figures in later times. If so, they represent symbols of various spirits or deities whose protective powers were sought in the daily routine of life. These extraordinary artifacts probably represent only a small percentage of the total productivity of the Predynastic artisans. The latter primarily used animal motifs which were also popular in Dynastic times both as subjects of art and as symbols for the gods and nomes. Such a two-fold purpose may have been served by the Predynastic

motifs discussed here, but, whether this is true or not, it is clear that the Predynastic artist generally emphasized the same animals (the hawk, jackal, vulture, etc.) as the Dynastic artist. Furthermore, as has been demonstrated in Plates XXI-XXVII, the Predynastic artist portrayed those animals (as well as human and inanimate figures) in forms similar and often identical to the related hieroglyphs. Like the pottery decorations discussed above, the miscellaneous possessions of the Predynastic Egyptians provide further support to the contention that the hieroglyphic writing of Dynastic times was the natural result of at least a thousand years of artistic expression in Predynastic Egypt.

CHAPTER IV

THE CARVED PALETTES AND MACEHEADS OF LATE PREDYNASTIC EGYPT: THE BEGINNINGS OF MONUMENTAL INSCRIPTIONS IN EGYPT

A. The Palettes

The carved slate palettes of Late Predynastic Egypt have long been studied as examples of prehistoric art. They represent the culmination of over a thousand years' development of an artifact the original purpose of which was utilitarian (i.e. a means of grinding eye paint) and the ultimate use of which was as an artistic medium whereby the Southern tribes of Late Predynastic Egypt commemorated their victories and accomplishments. Next to pottery the slate palettes (either carved or plain--in which latter case they were fashioned in the shapes of animals or geometric figures) are the most common objects excavated from Predynastic graves.⁹²

⁹² A discussion of the origins and historical development of the slate palette as well as an analysis and catalogue of the majority of presently known carved slate palettes may be found in Arnett, in which the carved slate palettes are shown to be products of the Late Predynastic tribes of Southern Egypt. Furthermore, the carved palettes are here used collectively for the first time as historical documentation of the conquest and unification of Egypt by the Southern Egyptians whose political and military accomplishments (commemorated by these carved palettes as well as by the maceheads and other miscellaneous

The earliest known carved slate palette was discovered at El Amrah in 1899, and contains two symbols one of which seems to be the precursor to the historic emblem of the ancient god, Min.⁹³ The emblem in question is drawn on Plate XXIX, b (the "Min" palette is reproduced in Plate XXIX, a). Certainly, El-Amrah is in the proximity of Coptos which was a major center for the very early cult of Min, and this palette's rendering of the "double-headed arrow" motif is probably the earliest expression of the emblem of Min.⁹⁴ It compares with the prehistoric pot-marks from El Amrah, Naqada, and Diospolis Parva (examples of which are drawn in Plate XXIX, c), and these marks tend to illustrate both the correctness of the identification of this palette's emblem as belonging

artifacts discussed in Chapter III) resulted in the foundation of the Protodynastic or so-called "Archaic" period and of Dynasty I.

⁹³D. Randall-MacIver, and A.C. Mace, El-Amrah And Abydos: 1899-1901, 1902, p. 38; Jean Capart, 1905, p. 90, established this palette as the "first example of palettes carved in relief."

⁹⁴The emblem is likened to "two fossil belemnites" [i.e. fossil shells of the extinct cuttlefish, which, as the original Greek form (belemnion) implies, are shaped like arrows] by Gardiner, p. 503, R22, 23. An explanation of this "double-headed arrow" motif is given by Budge, From Fetish To God In Ancient Egypt, pp. 62-63, thus: that it was "in someway connected with coition . . . and the union of male and female organs of generation." Min was the god of procreation and fertility par excellence, and in historical times he was often represented as ithyphallic. In this connection see the primitive Min statue from Coptos with the huge phallic sheath in Smith, The Art And Architecture of Ancient Egypt, Plate 4.

to Min and, therefore, the popularity of this fertility god in Upper Egypt during the Predynastic era. Scorpion's mace-head (see Plate L) and the "Bull Fragmentary" Palette (Plate XLIII) both have a standard with Min's emblem. These examples show the early development of the hieroglyph for Min.

The "staff" or "crook" which is overlapped by the "Min standard" was a common hieroglyph in Dynastic times as is shown in Plate XXIX, d, 3. Again, examples of this motif are found on Predynastic pottery. Two such examples are drawn on Plate XXIX, d, 1 and 2. The importance of this hieroglyph as a phonetic term as well as an ideogram or determinative in divine names is well known. In historic times the staff was often used as a "standard" for a god's emblem.⁹⁵ The best example that demonstrates this development is the standard of Min on the "Bull Fragmentary" Palette (reproduced on Plate XXIX, e). It closely resembles the motif on the "Min" Palette. Thus, this very early "inscription" can probably be read as "the god, Min." It is another clear indication of just how early primitive hieroglyphs were being "written" in Egypt, and it is significant that it was expressed on a type of artifact (i.e. the slate palette) which is as typically Egyptian as the pottery discussed in Chapter II.

⁹⁵Gardiner, p. 508, S38, P. 509, S39. In particular, the head of the Seth (?)--animal was used on this "standard" (S40, S41). This was done as early as Dynasty I. See the wooden panel on Plate 10 in Smith, Art And Architecture of Ancient Egypt.

Our next carved palette example is the so-called, Gerzeh palette (see Plate XXX) which, as noted above (see pp. 23-24), is a symbol probably to be related to the early Sky Goddess, Hathor. The motif outwardly appears to represent the head of a cow which is decorated with stars (all but one having five points). The stars are at the tips of the "horns," on the "forehead," and beside the "eyes" (or "ears"?).⁹⁶ The "cow's head" could be representative of the Sky Goddess herself. The "horns" could be interpreted as the upraised arms so commonly seen on the goddesses depicted on Predynastic pottery (see Plate XXIX, f). Furthermore, the "ears" could be breasts and the star on the forehead could be the magical substitute for the goddess' head and, therefore, the motif could be associated with the ritual of dismemberment the practice of which is known to have existed in Predynastic graves.⁹⁷ Such an interpretation has had widespread acceptance,⁹⁸ and it seems to indicate the development of Dynastic religious symbolism in the Gerzean Period (ca. 3500-3000

⁹⁶Arnett, pp. 7-8, 40. See especially: Winifred M. Crompton, "A Carved Slate Palette In The Manchester Museum," *JEA*, V, 1918, p. 59, where this palette is referred to as "a rough cow's head."

⁹⁷Petrie and Quibell, Nagada And Ballas, pp. 14-33.

⁹⁸Margaret A. Murray, "Burial Customs And Beliefs In The Hereafter In Predynastic Egypt," *JEA*, 42, 1956, p. 96, considers this to be the earliest known example of the celestial cow-goddess, Hathor (or Nut); Petrie, *et al.*, The Labyrinth Gerzeh And Mazghuneh, p. 22, expresses the view that although "the design appears to represent a cow's head," it could represent Hathor "in an astronomical aspect."

B.C.). Henri Frankfort has proven the existence of a wide-spread cult of Hathor during the Predynastic Period and has shown that during the Old Kingdom Hathor was addressed as "the Lady of the Stars."⁹⁹ Furthermore, that the principal goddess of the Dynastic Egyptians was Hathor is shown by the fact that there were seventy-nine separate priesthoods and local cults devoted to her (over twice as many as were devoted to the next most popular god, Maat, and three times as many as were devoted to Horus who was the royal, and, therefore, "national" god of pharaonic times.)¹⁰⁰

Another indication of the primacy of Hathor among the Egyptian deities can be seen in the large number of goddesses who wore her attributes--especially her horns.¹⁰¹ Her worship was practically universal in Egypt, and the Egyptians compiled their own list of the numerous "great goddesses" who possessed some form of Hathor's nature or attributes.¹⁰²

There are also numerous artistic representations of Hathor's major attribute--the horns of a cow--found on Predynastic pottery, slate palettes and other miscellaneous

⁹⁹Frankfort, Kingship And The Gods, pp. 168-172.

¹⁰⁰W.M.F. Petrie, Religious Life In Ancient Egypt, Boston, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1924, pp. 4-5.

¹⁰¹Among these were Isis, Mehturt, Apet, Ausāas, Qetesh, Ernutet.

¹⁰²Budge, From Fetish To God In Ancient Egypt, pp. 228-233.

works of art. One example is the Predynastic flint model of a cow's head and horns in the British Museum;¹⁰³ but most evidence comes from palette carvings and pot-marks and pottery paintings.¹⁰⁴ Besides the Gerzeh palette there are the important renderings of Hathor heads on the tops of the obverse and reverse of the Narmer palette (Plates XLVI and XLVII); furthermore, there is the "Hathor girdle" worn by Narmer on the reverse of his palette (see close-up of details on Plate XXXI, a).

The ship standards on Gerzean pots provide a number of cow-horn emblems examples of which are drawn in Plate XXXI, b, 1-4.¹⁰⁵ One Gerzean vase motif seems so significant in this examination of the early renderings of the Sky (or Cow) Goddess that it is reproduced in detail on Plate XXXI, c. It depicts two ships carrying the horn blazons atop standards. Between the two ships and to the right of

¹⁰³(No. 32124), cited in *ibid.*, p. 228. Note that the actual rendering of "Hat-Hor," which means the "House of Horus," was not done until Dynastic times:

But as Budge (*Ibid.*, p. 228) states, the earliest symbol of Hathor was the bucranium: . It was hung "on the top of a pole in front of the door of the predynastic 'god-house' or temple." See Plates XXXI and XXXII and the following paragraphs in the text for Predynastic renderings of the cow-goddess.

¹⁰⁴This pottery evidence is included here rather than in Chapter II because the palette motifs provide the key to our understanding of this evidence and because together these two major types of examples demonstrate the evolution of the hieroglyphic bucranium-symbol and the importance of the Cow-Goddess (and Sky-Goddess), Hathor, in Predynastic Egypt.

¹⁰⁵See Petrie and Quibell, Nagada And Ballas, Plate LXVII, 12, and Plate LXVI, 6; Petrie, Wainwright, and Mackay, The Labyrinth Gerzeh And Mazghuneh, Plate XII, 2.

the motif are figures of the Sky (or Cow) Goddess, her arms raised in imitation of cow horns. The presence of the goddess on the same vase as the horn emblems seems to confirm the interpretation of the horn emblems as Predynastic symbols of Hathor and, as such, the antecedents of the common Dynastic hieroglyphic symbol for Hathor.¹⁰⁶ An example of an early Dynastic Hathor-head is seen on Plate XXXII, b, 3.

The Gerzeh Palette helps to identify two previously unidentified pot-marks as symbols of Hathor. These are drawn on Plate XXXII, a, 1 and 2 where they are compared in shape to the Gerzeh Palette (no. 4). Furthermore, a palette carved in low relief, whose motif has been described as "difficult to identify,"¹⁰⁷ is here drawn

¹⁰⁶ That the two larger figures are deities seems certain from the fact that they are shown as about twice life-size. It has been established elsewhere that Narmer's palette was "a precedent for the artistic representation of pharaoh" as greater than life-size in relation to his subjects. This indicates that Narmer was not only "chief" or "king," but also a god. See the discussion in Arnett, pp. 33-34, 35. According to Henrietta A. Groenewegen-Frankfort in Arrest And Movement: An Essay On Space And Time In The Representational Art Of The Ancient Near East, Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 1951, p. 21, this exaggeration of the king's stature first received its "pictorial expression" on Narmer's palette. But the fact that the Gerzean goddess is here shown (on Plate XXXI, c) on a larger scale than her male "attendants" is evidence that the Predynastic Egyptians of the Gerzean period already depicted their gods as being greater than life-size. Thus although the concept of divine kingship may have originated with Narmer (and Scorpion; also Ka-Ap who is given a "Horus-name" which implies the association of the King with Horus), the representation of Narmer on such a scale is the natural development of a practice already employed in earlier Predynastic art.

¹⁰⁷ Capart, pp. 82; 91, Fig. 61.

as no. 3 and compared with the Naqada pot-marks. It seems that the pot-marks and the latter palette can be interpreted as early symbols of the Cow Goddess (i.e. Hathor). The figure drawn in Plate XXXII, a, 1 resembles the typical ship standard blazon (Plate XXXI, b). The second pot-mark (Plate XXXII, a, 2) is similar in outline to the Gerzeh Palette (note the projections on each side) and, therefore, seems to be the symbolic representation of the cow's head. The shape of the top of the early palette (Plate XXXII, a, 3) not only appears to resemble a cow's horns, but the carved motif also seems to be directly related to the cow horn motif. Still another example of the cow's head is the Tarkhan pot-mark drawn on Plate XXXII, b, 1. It closely compares with the early hieroglyphic emblem of Hathor (Plate XXXII, B, 2), while the Gerzeh Palette, the palette drawn on Plate XXXII, a, 2, the ship standards and other pottery evidence presented above seem to be the antecedents of the common hieroglyph for cow horns (Plate XXXII, c) which served as the emblem of Hathor (and later Isis) in Egyptian art for over 3,000 years.

The palette fragment pictured in Plate XXXIII, bears another example of a motif which recurs in hieroglyphic writing. The object in question is the lapwing (Vanellus cristatus), the hieroglyphic phonetic determinative rh(y)t.¹⁰⁸ The latter hieroglyph is drawn on Plate

¹⁰⁸Ibid., G23, p. 470.

XXXIII, c. The rhyt bird on this palette corresponds to still another example (see Plate XXXIII, b) found on a vase from Hierakonpolis. This bird is in relief, and there seems to be little doubt that it is the lapwing also.¹⁰⁹

The mace-head of King Scorpion (Plate L) portrays a series of captured rhyt birds (lapwings) hanging from the standard poles of the tribes of Scorpion's kingdom.¹¹⁰ Examples of the rendering of the rhyt bird from the royal tombs of Abydos are drawn on Plate XXXIII, d and e. These early Ist Dynasty motifs are included here to illustrate the transition of the motif from a Predynastic art form to a Dynastic hieroglyph having the phonetic sound "rhyt" as well as being an ideogram for the lapwing.¹¹¹ Note furthermore that the boat depicted on this palette fragment is similar to those represented in primitive hieroglyphs.¹¹²

¹⁰⁹See Jean Capart, pp. 100-102, and 229; also Quibell and Green, Hierakonpolis II, Plate LIX.

¹¹⁰Smith, The Art And Architecture Of Ancient Egypt, pp. 16-17, noted that these rhyt birds represent the concept "common people" (often in the sense of rebels) in later times and that these birds on the Scorpion's mace-head may well be representative of his vanquished foes. See Gardiner, p. 470.

¹¹¹Petrie, The Royal Tombs Of The First Dynasty, I, p. 39, Plate VII, 1 and XXXIII, 3.

¹¹²See Gardiner, pp. 298-499. Georg Steindorff, "Eine neue Art ägyptischer Kunst," in Aegyptiaca, Festschrift für Georg Ebers, Leipzig, Wilhelm Engelman, 1897, pp. 122-141. He linked this boat to the hieroglyph

. Steindorff further noted the way the

A small palette in the Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York) is figured on Plate XXXIV. It was probably used as an amulet judging from its size. The central motif is the Horus hawk mounted on the serekh which would indicate that this was a royal palette, but the "palace" or "tomb" facade (serekh) contains no name.¹¹³

In the case of both the hawk and the serekh, we are dealing with two of the most important ideograms and hieroglyphic figures in Egyptian history. The "Followers of Horus" were the unifiers of Egypt, and their standards bearing their god, the Horus hawk (or falcon) will be seen below on the "Hunters Palette" (Plate XXXIX, b), the "Battlefield Palette" (Plate XLII, b), the "Bull Fragmentary Palette" (Plate XLIII), the "Victory Palette" (Plate XXXVI), and Narmer's Palette (Plate XLVI). Both King Scorpion and Narmer also represented the hawk on their maceheads (Plates L and LI-LIII). Besides the palette evidence, the Predynastic artists have provided numerous examples of the hawk rendered on vases, placques, and other miscellaneous artifacts examined in Chapter III. Three such examples of the hawk are drawn in Plate XXXV, a. Four examples of the serekh (or Horus facade)

planks in the middle were fastened with ropes in the same manner as found on later Egyptian ships:

¹¹³This palette, the smallest one extant, was published by W.C. Hayes, The Scepter Of Egypt, I, p. 28. See a complete discussion of the palette's details in Arnett, pp. 12, 41. The presence of jackals on this palette, first noted by this writer in 1968, will be mentioned below.

are represented in Figure b of that Plate. All four are from the Late Predynastic cemetery at Tarkhan, and they illustrate the fact that, except for the worn and obviously much older slate palette drawn in Plate XXXIV, all the Predynastic examples of the serekh motif occur in the period just prior to the unification of Egypt.¹¹⁴ The hieroglyph is rendered on Plate XXXV, b, 5.

For the purpose of comparison with the above mentioned hawks as well as with those to be discussed below, the hieroglyphic forms of the falcon are drawn in Plate XXXV, c. Note that the Hierakonpolis example, drawn in Figure a, 2, is practically identical with the hieroglyphic ideogram shown in Figure c, 3. It is the standard for the XIIth nome of Upper Egypt. Further consideration of the historical significance of the Predynastic hawk figures is discussed below.

The next series of palettes to be discussed are more sophisticated in so far as the rendering of hieroglyphs are concerned. They will not be discussed in detail except for the hieroglyphs carved on them, and their historical significance will be reserved for this paper's concluding remarks.¹¹⁵

¹¹⁴The reader is reminded of the Horus facade of Ka-Ap's titulary discussed in Chapter II and shown on Plate XI, e. Ka-Ap is also in the period just before Narmer's reign.

¹¹⁵This writer's thesis, The Carved Slate Palettes, provides both a detailed discussion and bibliography on these palettes' motifs.

The "Victory Palette" reproduced on Plate XXXVI is dominated by hieroglyphs on its obverse side. Seven crenelated "towns" are shown being besieged by the tribal deities of the Southern Egyptians. Only four tribes are represented here--three deities being lost. The "names" of the towns--on the upper row, from left to right--are the dung beetle (scarabaeus sacer), two naked wrestlers, a bird considered by Legge to be an ibis but being interpreted here as the heron, and an owl respectively. Below--in the same order--we see what may be the reed (or śwt) sign, a thatched-domed building, and the ka sign respectively.¹¹⁶ Although Petrie believed the upper and lower rows represented towns of Middle and Lower Egypt, respectively,¹¹⁷ Legge rejected this view on the grounds that we lack sufficient evidence at present properly to identify the towns.¹¹⁸

It would seem that A.H. Sayce misunderstood the meaning of the figures on top of the cities--which he interpreted as protective deities.¹¹⁹ Considering the fact that these deities are wielding the picks or "hoes" seen above (p. 30 and Plate XV, a), we must conclude that

¹¹⁶ See Francis Legge, "The Carved Slates From Hieracopolis And Elsewhere," PSBA, XXII, 1900, pp. 125-139.

¹¹⁷ W.M.F. Petrie, "Note On A Carved Slate," PSBA, XXII, 1900, pp. 140-141.

¹¹⁸ Legge, "The Carved Slates And This Season's Discoveries," PSBA, XXXI, 1909, pp. 204-211.

¹¹⁹ A.H. Sayce, "The Beginnings Of The Egyptian Monarchy," PSBA, XX, 1898, p. 99.

the tribal deities are attacking the towns, and the fallen bricks (the result of the hoes' actions) shown within the towns tend to confirm this conclusion.¹²⁰ The tribal standards represented on the "Victory Palette" are those of the "Horus Hawk" (above the "owl" town), the "Two Hawks" (above the "reed" town), the Scorpion (above the "thatched-domed building" town) and the "Lion" (above the "ka" town).¹²¹

These deities and their enemies' towns' names, obviously, are represented by hieroglyphs: the hawk which is rendered on Plate XXXV, c; the Scorpion (shown on Plate XVII and on the mace-head in Plate L); the ka-sign (Plate XVI) and the reed or "swt-plant" (Plate XVIII). The sacred dung beetle, the sign of immortality in "classical" Egypt is shown in its hieroglyphic form on Plate XXXVII, a. That the beetle was significant to the Predynastic Egyptians, however, is amply shown by their practice of burying pots full of beetles in their graves.¹²² Apparently, the beetle was considered sacred even in Predynastic times. Although there was a crested

¹²⁰Petrie, "Note On A Carved Slate," p. 140. See Ceremonial Slate Palettes, p. 15, where Margaret Murray considers them as "unexplained" and goes into a discussion of their possible meanings.

¹²¹See Legge, "The Carved Slates And This Season's Discoveries," p. 205.

¹²²Petrie and Mace, Diospolis Parva, p. 32. Grave B17 (S.D. 30-50), "a jar by the head contained 36 scarab beetles;" p. 35 graves R5 (S.D. 70), "scarabaeus beetles in a wavy-handled jar", and R18 (S.D. 76), "two scarab beetles in a jar."

ibis in later hieroglyphs (see Plate XXXVII, b, 1) the crest of the bird on this palette is represented by a series of lines which bear closer resemblance to the hieroglyphic heron (drawn on Plate XXXVII, c) than to the ibis. Furthermore, the Victory Palette's bird has a straight beak--another characteristic shared with the heron hieroglyph but distinguishing it from the ibis (see the other ibis forms on Plate XXXVII, b, 2, 3). In addition, the Predynastics frequently represented the ibis in their art, and the extant examples all differ from the figure on this palette [see the ibis from: the "Giraffe and Palm" palette (drawn on Plate XXXVII, d), the "Battlefield" palette (in Plate XLII, b), the "Bull Fragmentary" palette (Plate XLIII), and the Ibis standard on the Narmer palette (drawn here on Plate XXXVII, e)]⁷. Therefore, the bird must be the heron.

The "owl" is a well known hieroglyph. It was the phonetic equivalent of the letter m, and two owls represented a monogram having the sound of mm (see Plate XXXVIII, a). The building with the thatched roof (drawn on Plate XXXVIII, b) cannot be surely related to any hieroglyph, but it does resemble the general shape of "shrine" hieroglyphs (see Plate XXXVIII, b, 3), and it is quite similar to the structure on the "Hunters" Palette (reproduced on Plate XXXVIII, b, 2),¹²³ The crenelated town

¹²³See also Petrie, Royal Tombs, II, Plate IV, 11, p. 22 for other renderings of Predynastic shrines which tend to verify this interpretation.

(or "fort") motif (drawn on Plate XXXVIII, d, 1) is related to the "town" motifs on the "Bull Fragmentary," and the Narmer Palettes as well as by the hieroglyph for "battlement" (see Plate XXXVIII, d, 2 and 3, respectively).

One figure (drawn in Plate XXXVIII, c, 3) on the reverse of the "Victory" palette in the lower register and to the right of the plants is a sign read by both Murray and Moret as Tehenu (Thn) or the "Libyans." Moret believes that it represents a boomerang (such as is seen on the "Hunters" Palette and reproduced on Plate XXXVIII, c, 1) resting on top of the elliptical sign for "foreign countries."¹²⁴ Murray had read the sign as representing a twisted hank of flax, lashed at the top; but she also seems to agree that it is the same sign as that seen on the "Battlefield" Palette and drawn on Plate XXXVIII, c, 2.¹²⁵ Thus, the predominant interpretation of the "Victory" implied by this palette seems to refer to a victory over the Libyans by the tribes represented on the obverse. But this interpretation is not convincing. It is true that this figure as a club (/) is found in the phrase, ¹²⁶ or ¹²⁷

¹²⁴Alexandre Moret, M.R. Dobie, trans., The Nile And Egyptian Civilization, New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1927, p. 115.

¹²⁵Margaret A. Murray in Petrie's Ceremonial Slate Palettes, p. 15. In this work this palette is called the "Tehenu" palette.

¹²⁶E. Naville, The Temple of Deir El Bahari, 6 vols., Vol. IV, London, The Egypt Exploration Fund, 1895-1908, Plate 114.

¹²⁷Gardiner, p. 513, T14.

where it determines the meaning as Thnw or "Libya," but it is also used to determine such nationalities as "Asiatic", all foreign peoples and countries in general, and "Nubian", as well as the concept of "rebel."¹²⁸ Certainly, the figure rendered without the vases so that it becomes , compares with the symbol on the "Victory" palette, but a completely acceptable interpretation is not yet possible. Nevertheless, one can accept the general interpretation (i.e. "Libya") which is the most widely accepted one so far proposed.

The next palette (see Plate XXXIX, a), while too fragmentary to enable a clear identification, nevertheless is significant. This "Marching Men" fragment shows two rows of marching men carrying weapons and/or a staff. The men compare with the "hunters" on the "Hunters" Palette. This fragment, however, was discovered not in Egypt but in Syria.¹²⁹ One can only speculate about the significance of this, but some consideration might well be given to the possibility of Egypto-Syrian social intercourse or commercial connections prior to Dynasty I. The only discernible object on this palette (other than the men) appears to be some sort of crook or staff (perhaps

¹²⁸Ibid., p. 513, T14, notes 8, 9, 10 and 11.

¹²⁹Petrie, in Ceremonial Slate Palettes, p. 14, argues that this fragment is evidence of prehistoric relationships between Syria and Egypt--going so far as to intimate the existence of related, palette-making peoples in both Syria and Egypt. Jean Capart, Primitive Art, p. 248, terms this palette "archaic" and places it with the earliest palettes.

a standard pole? or a boomerang?). The "soldiers" seem to be wearing "feathers" or "tails" suspended from their waists after the manner seen on the "hunters" on their palette (see Plates XXXIX, b and XL) and the general beard and hair styles are similar.

One of the most significant palettes both to the historian and the art historian is the so-called "Hunters" Palette alluded to above (see Plate XXXIX, b). The "hunters" are depicted in such numbers and detail as to provide a study of predynastic weapons, clothing, and physical features. Six figures, taken from this palette, are drawn on Plate XL. They apparently wear no helmets, but they have wigs with ostrich feathers attached.¹³⁰ They wear kilts similar to that of Narmer on his palette (Plates XXXI, a, XLVI, and XLVII) from which animals tails hang in back--also like Narmer.

The weapons are enlarged on Plate XLI. Seven "hunters" are armed with bows and crescent-headed arrows--surely of flint (of which we have many actual examples)¹³¹--like "hunter" no. 4 in Plate XL (the bow and arrow are also seen in nos. 6, 7, and 8 of Plate XLI, and their

¹³⁰ Legge, "The Carved Slates From Hieraconpolis And Elsewhere," p. 130. Their physical characteristics are described and analyzed in detail in Arnett, pp. 20-21; 42.

¹³¹ For example see the "Transfixed Warrior" fragment reproduced on Plate XLII, a. H.R. Hall, The Ancient History Of The Near East: From The Earliest Times To The Battle Of Salamis, London, eleventh edition, Methuen & Co., Ltd., 1963, p. 100 and note.

feathered, V-shaped shafts are also seen in nos. 8 and 9). Two men carry a lasso (one is shown as no. 4 on Plate XLI). One has even lassoed a harte-beest on the lower right of the palette (Plate XXXIX, b). Also seen are boomerangs $\sqrt{\text{held}}$ by four "hunters" across the top of the palette and by one on the bottom--just left of the missing piece⁷. These are seen in nos. 5 and 6 on Plate XL and 13 through 16 on Plate XLI. Four of the "hunters" across the bottom (Plate XXXIX, b) carry oval-shaped shields--seen on "hunter" no. 2 in Plate XL, and no. 5 on Plate XLI. A few carry spears (possibly with bronze heads)¹³² which are seen with "hunter" no. 5 on Plate XL and as nos. 10, 11, and 12 on Plate XLI. Finally, there are to be seen several maces and axes both with single and double heads.¹³³ The tribal standards and deities are discussed below (p.89), and the domed building on the palette's far right has been discussed above (p. 68). The "monstrous sign" containing the foreparts of two bulls may be crude hieroglyphs which signify a place of refuge, but this is uncertain.¹³⁴

In an effort to demonstrate the importance of these figures and weapons in the development of hieroglyphs, related hieroglyphic figures and terms are presented on

¹³²Legge, "The Carved Slates From Hieraconpolis And Elsewhere," p. 130.

¹³³Legge, *Ibid.*, p. 139, argues that these indicate the origin of these hunters as Asia Minor; but this is doubtful.

¹³⁴*Ibid.*, p. 305.

Plate XLV, c. Furthermore, the bow and double-axe compare with other Predynastic renderings as well as with hieroglyphs. In this connection, see the double-axes drawn on Plate XLV, e,¹³⁵ and the bow (from the Hierakonpolis vase)¹³⁶ drawn on Plate XLV, d.

The "Bull Fragmentary" Palette (Plates XLIII and XLIV) also has a number of rudimentary hieroglyphs including more of the by now familiar tribal deities (two jackals, the ibis, the hawk, and the bolt of Min). Of interest here (on the palette's obverse) are the hands at the end of the standard poles which signify that each nome is participating in the "lassoing" of a vanquished foe. These elongated arm-and-hand motifs may be the precursors of the hieroglyph "forearm" drawn on Plate XLV, a,¹³⁷ and the lasso has already been demonstrated above (p. 72) as a motif depicted by Predynastic artists (see Plate XXXIX, b, and XLl, 4) which evolved into a hieroglyphic figure. On the reverse, once again, there are two crenelated town motifs containing a lion and rhyt bird (in the upper and lower towns, respectively). The rhyt bird is drawn

¹³⁵Also see the discussion above on pp. 62-63, note 92. The maces will be discussed again in Chapter IV.

¹³⁶The same vase whose reliefs of the scorpion, the rhyt bird, and hawk have been discussed above. Petrie found actual examples of bows in Dynasty I tombs, Royal Tombs, II, p. 26, Plate 7, A.

¹³⁷See Gardiner, pp. 454-455, for several examples of the forearm holding objects like the forearms on this palette.

on Plate XLV, b. That these palettes are related is becoming increasingly obvious.

Our last palette example is also the most important (see Plates XLVI and XLVII). Narmer's palette is the only one for which any definite date can be affixed. Narmer (or Menes) has been shown to be the man who unified Egypt at about 3000 B.C.¹³⁸

Hieroglyphs abound on the Palette of Narmer. The king's name is thrice repeated--twice in the serekh-facade at the top of the obverse and reverse (Plates XLVI and XLVII respectively), and once above the king on the obverse. His name is composed of the catfish and chisel,¹³⁹ the n^r-fish hieroglyph and the mr-chisel figure.¹⁴⁰ The appearance of the Hathor heads at the tops of both sides of the palette (Plates XLVI and XLVII) and on the girdle of the king on the reverse details of which were shown on Plate XXXI, a--factors already discussed above--indicate that that goddess was the protective deity of Narmer's kingdom.¹⁴¹ Perhaps the rectangle with the hieroglyphic sign (, the "hoe"), directly above the

¹³⁸Petrie, The Making Of Egypt, London, The Sheldon Press, 1939, p. 78.

¹³⁹Legge, "The Carved Slates From Hieraconpolis And Elsewhere," p. 126.

¹⁴⁰Gardiner, p. 7.

¹⁴¹Petrie, The Making of Egypt, p. 78; Legge, "The Carved Slates From Hieraconpolis And Elsewhere," p. 126, states that the Hathor heads are similar to the boukrania and thus possibly mean that the scenes on the palette took place in a temple. This seems unlikely.

sandal-bearer, represents the actual name of a temple: per mer (?). At least it is intriguing that this other phonetic determinative of the sound mr (the "hoe") should also appear on the Palette of Nar-mer along with the m'r-chisel. The scribe who precedes King Narmer on the upper register of the obverse is called "Thet": (see these hieroglyphs as they are rendered in Plate XLVIII, a and b).¹⁴²

The sandal-bearer has been discussed above (p. 61), but of interest here are the sandals and the pot he carries. Both can be shown to be hieroglyphs as are the pictures of the objects they represent (see Plate XLVIII, c and d). Even the apron he wears seems to be the precursor of the hieroglyph for "clothing" (as shown in Plate XLVIII, e). Furthermore, this servant wears a "yoke" about his neck similar to the yoke by which slaves were attached to the slave pole in historical times.¹⁴³ At all events, it is certainly similar to the general shapes taken by hieroglyphic renderings of collars and pectorals (see Plate XLIX, a and b for a comparison of the sandal-bearers "yoke" and these hieroglyphs). But the object in question may well be more closely related to the hieroglyph htm, or "seal," shown in Plate XLIX, c. This figure represents a collar worn for the purpose of carrying the royal seal--a meaning derived

¹⁴²For an analysis of the controversy concerning the sex and actual role of this individual see Arnett, p. 28, note 109.

¹⁴³According to Legge, "The Carved Slates From Hieraconpolis And Elsewhere," p. 126.

from its later usage in: , or "treasurer of the king of Lower Egypt," a phrase used at least as early as the 1st Dynasty.¹⁴⁴ This interpretation (suggested here for the first time), is attractive since the sandal-bearer has already been shown carrying the king's sandals and some vessel (perhaps a lamp), and this representation would provide us with a picture of the importance attached to the cylinder seal (and, in this case, the royal seal) by these early kings who, as has been demonstrated by Henri Frankfort and Helene Kantor, imported the cylinder seal from Mesopotamia.¹⁴⁵ This interpretation seems certain when one renders the given hieroglyph in an effort to depict its original (i.e. its less cursive) form as being suggested here on Plate XLIX, c, 2. The hieroglyph and "yoke," therefore, seem to be identical.

As alluded to above, the servant and the scribe are both rendered one-half the size of the king--showing at this early date the typical magnification of the Egyptian King's importance.

Above the rows of the decapitated bodies of Narmer's vanquished foes is the bark (or boat) which is a hieroglyphic determinant for a festival.¹⁴⁶ The two hieroglyphs

¹⁴⁴Petrie, Royal Tombs, I, pp. 11, 14.

¹⁴⁵See Henri Frankfort, "The Origin of Monumental Architecture in Egypt," The American Journal of Semitic Languages And Literatures, LVIII, No. 4, October, 1941, pp. 329-358. Evidence of the use of these seals is provided by the excavations of Tarkhan, Abydos and Helwan.

¹⁴⁶Gardiner, p. 499, P3.

in front of this boat have been translated as either "the great door"¹⁴⁷ or "the great port."¹⁴⁸ The object is certainly the hieroglyphic "door" (see Plate XLIX, d, 1 and 2) and the bird is probably the swallow, or wr (i.e. "great"), which is compared with this palette's bird on Plate XLIX, e, 1 and 2.¹⁴⁹ Above the boat, but not shown in Plate XLVI is a pair of hieroglyphs reading "the follower (or attendant) of Horus."¹⁵⁰ These figures, representing the hawk perched on a harpoon, are drawn on Plate XLIX, f.

King Narmer wears the Red Crown of Lower Egypt (symbolizing his hegemony there--compare the Naqada pottery relief on Plate XVIII, c), and he carries the pear-shaped mace and the royal flail. The former has already been examined as a weapon rendered in Predynastic motifs as well as Dynastic writing (p. 48). The latter is quite common in Dynastic art as well as in inscriptions. See the hieroglyph drawn on Plate XLIX, g. Still another

¹⁴⁷Legge, "The Carved Slates From Hierakonpolis And Elsewhere," p. 127. He compares it to the "great door" mentioned in the Palermo Stone.

¹⁴⁸Margaret A. Murray, The Splendour That Was Egypt, p. 13. She considers this motif to signify that the sacrifice here depicted took place when Narmer reached the sea.

¹⁴⁹Gardiner, p. 471, G36.

¹⁵⁰Legge, "The Carved Slates From Hierakonpolis And Elsewhere," p. 127. See K. Lange and M. Hirmer, Egypt: Architecture, Sculpture, Painting, In Three Thousand Years, transl. by R.H. Boothroyd, London, Phaidon Publishers, Inc., 1961, Plate 4.

crenelated town is rendered on the lower register of this palette's obverse. The bull, no doubt, represents the king; the fallen bricks demonstrate the destructive power of the bull's (i.e. the King's) horns. This bears out the interpretation given above (p. 67) to the "bricks" in the towns on the "Victory" Palette.

On the reverse (Plate XLVII) King Narmer wears the White Crown of Upper Egypt and, holding the hair of a foe with his left hand, prepares to crush his skull with the mace in his right hand. This motif is used throughout Egyptian history.¹⁵¹ The title above the kneeling foe has been read as the "Attendant of the Lake,"¹⁵² or the "Place of Harpoons,"¹⁵³ or "Washi" (harpoon w, pool š).¹⁵⁴ The composite sign above this figure represents the Horus-king's victory over the "Delta" or the "Papyrus-land" (T3-mhw)--composed of a "land" symbol ( ) with a human head attached and six papyri stalks.¹⁵⁵

In the lower register of this palette's reverse (Plate XLVII) are two fallen (or fleeing) foes with hieroglyphs denoting their tribes.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵¹Ibid., p. 292.

¹⁵²Legge, "The Carved Slates From Hierakonpolis And Elsewhere," p. 129. This would, perhaps, imply the capture of the Fayyūm.

¹⁵³Lange and Hirmer, Egypt, p. 292.

¹⁵⁴Gardiner, p. 7.

¹⁵⁵Ibid., p. 7, and Lange and Hirmer, Egypt, p. 292.

¹⁵⁶Or they imply the enemy town ( ) being

The Narmer Palette is a true historical document. With it one can actually read the name of the participant in an historical event, the unification of Egypt--the first page, so to speak, in the "first chapter of the written history" of Egypt.¹⁵⁷

But Narmer himself is still rather mysterious to historians. It cannot be proven whether he is the last Predynastic king of the South or the first king of the First Dynasty [i.e. Menes].¹⁵⁸

B. The Maceheads

King Scorpion partially rivals Narmer as the unifier of Egypt. King Scorpion's mace-head (Plate L) shows him (apparently) supervising the excavation of a new canal in the Delta.¹⁵⁹ Furthermore, Scorpion leads the same Southern tribes as Narmer and he also is shown greater than life-size in comparison to his subjects.¹⁶⁰

Of course Narmer's mace-head (Plates LI, LII and LIII) like his palette, provides a more complete picture

encircled ( ) and destroyed. See Gardiner, pp. 522, V7, and 496, 036, 37.

¹⁵⁷ Hayes, The Scepter, p. 31.

¹⁵⁸ See Emery, Archaic Egypt, Baltimore, Penguin Books, 1961, pp. 27-37, in which the reader can find an excellent summary of the "Menes" controversy; Emery favors Hor-Aha as the first king of the First Dynasty.

¹⁵⁹ Smith, The Art And Architecture Of Ancient Egypt, pp. 16-17.

¹⁶⁰ Capart, Primitive Art, fig. 187, p. 249.

of Narmer's accomplishments than the badly fragmented mace of Scorpion does for his. On his mace, as on his palette, Narmer's Horus-name is given in the serekh-facade. His two major attendants on the palette recur on the mace with the same names. Hence, Teti (or Thet) and the sandle-bearer (whose title judging from the rosette and vase would be "servant of the king")¹⁶¹ are in the same poses and garbs. Narmer's bull also recurs as do his tribal standards. Obviously, the same artist (or school of artists) did both works. Beside the above mentioned characteristics, Narmer's mace-head has a few more hieroglyphs not rendered on his palette, but definitely related to later hieroglyphs. One very clear example is the "finger" shown to the right on the bottom register ( ). This hieroglyph is identical to the historical form which denoted the number 10,000.¹⁶² Furthermore, two fingers are rendered as well as the symbol for 100,000: (i.e. the "tadpole").¹⁶³ Therefore, the bound "captive"-figure is meant to represent "120,000 captured

¹⁶¹Quibell, Hierakonpolis I, p. 9. Quibell believed that the rosette must be translated as "King" because it is applied to the royal servant on Narmer's palette and mace-head and because it was prefixed to the scorpion in King Scorpion's royal name. He also noted the use of the eight-pointed star by the Babylonians to denote "King"--perhaps another example of cultural borrowing on the part of the Egyptians. But here it must be added that the kings of Egypt as early as Ka-Ap rendered their names in the serekh, etc., not with the rosette.

¹⁶²Gardiner, p. 456, D50.

¹⁶³Ibid., pp. 191; 475, 18.

prisoners," and the presence of four "tadpoles" under the bull (or ox) implies "400,000 oxen," while the "numbers" under the goat add up to a total of 1,422,000. The kneeling man with upraised arms ( ) represents the number 1,000,000 and the leaf, stalk and rhizome of the lotus plant ( ) represents 1,000--hence, the total figure 1,422,000. These figures, in Quibell's words, offer striking proof of the existence of "the system of enumeration . . . as fully developed before the 1st Dynasty as it was in any later time."¹⁶⁴

The "fan" motifs below the king's nine-stepped throne are noted here because they compare with the "fans" on King Scorpion's mace and those rendered on Predynastic pottery.¹⁶⁵ Also, as seen above with Narmer's ivory cylinder (Plate XXV, b), the vulture hovering over the King's throne seems to be (with the example on Narmer's cylinder) the earliest rendering of a theme common in Dynastic art--the Vulture goddess Nekhbet protecting the King's person. Narmer is shown holding the flagellum or flail in the manner seen on his palette. The primitive shrine with the ibis perched above it and the vase on a stand indicate that the victory celebration rendered on Narmer's mace-head (Plate LIII) is being conducted within the holy precinct of some temple or shrine.

¹⁶⁴ Quibell, Hierakonpolis I, p. 9.

¹⁶⁵ See the discussion in Chapter II, pp. 8-10, and Plate II. See also pp. 52-53 in Chapter III.

Hence there can be little doubt that Narmer is a later king than Scorpion and that Narmer literally has left us inscriptions of his accomplishments. He obviously won victories over the North (i.e. the Delta), but there is no conclusive proof that he was the legal ruler over the Delta. Thus, although one cannot surely credit Narmer as being the final "Unifier" of Egypt, one can declare that Narmer was the latest great unifier of Egypt of whom we possess monumental evidence. Until monuments of some later king are uncovered, one must credit Narmer and his people--"the Followers of Horus"--with having accomplished the unification of the two Egypts and with having laid the foundation for the building of the Old Kingdom. Petrie's discovery of various monuments, inscriptions, and sealings of Narmer at Tarkhan, the great cemetery which served as the burying place and temporary capital for the Predynastic kings prior to their founding of Memphis, further establishes the late dating of Narmer's reign.¹⁶⁶

In this chapter it has been shown that the Southern tribes that unified Egypt used primitive forms of hieroglyphs on their palettes and maceheads. The more important carved examples of these objects were commemorative of battles and episodes which lead to the foundation of Dynasty I. But the hieroglyphs used by this so-called

¹⁶⁶ Petrie, Wainwright, and Gardiner, Tarkhan I And Memphis V, pp. 11, 21, 26; also Petrie, Tarkhan II, p. 1.

"Dynastic Race" were not the product of some foreign "race" or land. Rather, they were the result of at least 1,000 years of artistic development of the Predynastic Egyptians.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

I. Summary

In this paper the products of the Predynastic Egyptian artists have been examined in order to determine if there is any relationship between Predynastic motifs and later Dynastic hieroglyphs--the latter being elements of a sophisticated writing system which, nevertheless, remained largely a picture-language. The scholars who hold that Pharaonic Egypt was founded by an alien "Dynastic Race" which was culturally superior to the Predynastic Egyptians believe that writing (as well as most other cultural attributes of Dynastic Egypt) was imported by that "Race." But more recent research had led many students to conclude that Egyptian writing had its origins in Upper Egypt in Predynastic times. The primary source materials supporting this theory are the published artifacts, "written," drawn, carved, painted or "inscribed" by the Predynastic Egyptians and, in the main, scientifically excavated, and recorded in the "dig books" by Petrie and his successors. These primary materials have revealed the presence of rudimentary forms of hieroglyphs in Egypt as much as one thousand years

in advance of the founding of Dynasty I. The following summary gives in brief the findings of this paper dealing with the primary sources.

A. Pottery Paintings and Pot-marks (Chapter II)

Painted pottery motifs and pot-marks are shown to be precursors of hieroglyphs. The pot-marks correspond to the needs of the Late Predynastic and early Dynastic Egyptians to develop a system of writing. As such they seem to be marks of ownership rather than expressions of artistic talent per se. But they are based, in large part, upon artistic motifs which can be traced chronologically back through the centuries preceding the foundation of Dynasty I to a date as early as 4000 B.C. Prominent among these early motifs are geometric figures which were used in historical times to express geographical or cosmological concepts in hieroglyphic writing. Several of these Predynastic figures became basic letters in the hieroglyphic system: (k), (y), (p), (N), (r), (h), (š), and (t). Others (a series of Gerzean platters) show that the cosmology of "Classical" Egypt was not only being conceived but also illustrated by Predynastic Egyptians.¹⁶⁷ The hieroglyph i3t ( ) , or "standard"

¹⁶⁷ Important here is the common Predynastic figure, , which becomes the hieroglyph for "horizon" and "land." It appears prominently in the platter design illustrated in Plate IX, 4 and discussed on pp. 17-19.

pole, is a direct descendent of the symbol used to introduce the names of important gods on Predynastic pots as well as the slate palettes. Many of the symbols of the gods (such as Ha, Hather, Anubis, Horus, and Min) shown on the "standards" continue to be important in Dynastic times. They illustrate both the continuity of tradition (exemplified by the use in historic times of the prehistoric symbols of the above-mentioned gods), and the role these Pre-dynastic gods played in geo-politics and governmental administration throughout the 3,000-year history of Pharaonic Egypt. Furthermore, several Pre-dynastic "astronomical" and geometric figures (✱ , ⊗ , ◯ , ∪ , ✕ , □) dominated historical hieroglyphic expressions of time, geo-physical terminology, and numbers. All these symbols as well as such important figures as that of the Ka, Scorpion, the swt plant, the Red Crown, etc. provide additional examples of the large number of hieroglyphic forms whose origins can be traced back beyond the time when the supposed invasion of the "Dynastic Race" occurred.

B. Miscellaneous Artifacts From Predynastic Times (Chapter III)

It is shown here that several objects commonly used in Predynastic Egypt--i.e. weapons, amulets, ornaments, tools, utensils, etc.--served as models for later hieroglyphs. Such "pictorial elements" as the "fly" and the

"hawk" indicate that the origin of some hieroglyphic symbols is as early as Badarian times (ca. 4000 B.C.). In the case of the "hawk" and "jackal" motifs one can trace their evolution from primitive Predynastic figures into Dynastic hieroglyphs--the Predynastic precursor often being more detailed (e.g. the "Scorpion" of Hieraconpolis) than the stylized hieroglyph.

C. The Carved Slate Palettes And Mace-heads (Chapter IV)

The carved slate palettes and mace-heads of Late Predynastic Egypt contain numerous examples of primitive hieroglyphs. These artifacts were made primarily to commemorate the political and military successes of the chiefs (or kings) and of the tribes of Southern Egypt who unified Egypt in ca. 3000 B.C. It was the royal need of these immediate predecessors to the Dynastic Pharaohs that stimulated the development of an actual system of writing--a system which utilized familiar Predynastic symbols which had been in use for centuries. The discovery of such artifacts as the Palette of Narmer and the mace-heads of Kings Narmer and Scorpion, all of which bear unmistakable hieroglyphs, influenced scholars to envision the sudden, "overnight" appearance of a mature system of hieroglyphic writing in Egypt--a phenomenon which seemed to coincide with the establishment in Egypt of the Pharaonic ruling class. Certainly, the hieroglyphs developed and constituted a true system of writing in

the Protodynastic period and, in Reisner's words, did so "like all other new arts "being" invented for those who wanted it and could pay for it--the chiefs and kings."

Then the need for marks of ownership, the lack of which is expressed in the private marks on pottery, the need for conveying authority from the head man to his subordinates, the necessity of marking the indistinguishable equal years by the great deeds, the great events of the king's life--all these dire wants brought the system of writing quickly forward to the completed state of the time of Menes.¹⁶⁸

However, this paper shows that the use of hieroglyphs by Narmer and his royal successors represents not the beginning of the hieroglyphic system of writing, but rather the culmination of at least 1,000 years in the development of Egyptian art. As noted above, much of the historical value of the palettes and mace-heads lies in the tribal standards which are carved on them. In the following paragraphs these standards will be examined in order to demonstrate the value of the carved slate palettes and mace-heads of Late Predynastic times in the reconstruction of the "prehistory" of Egypt.

II. Historical Analysis

While the findings of this paper appear to relate more to art history and archaeology than to history, they are nonetheless of value to the historian who studies the

¹⁶⁸ Reisner, The Early Dynastic Cemeteries of Nag-ed-Der, I, pp. 125-126.

Predynastic and Protodynastic history of Egypt. This historical significance is shown with reference to:
A) tribal standards; and B) the development of writing in Egypt.

A. Tribal Standards

The Predynastic tribal standards play a significant role in revealing the history of the political accomplishments of Narmer and Scorpion and their immediate predecessors.

First, there exist several carved slate palettes which, though not discussed above, are clearly related to the palettes discussed in this paper and serve as records of the military exploits of the same tribes of Southern Egypt whose palettes we have discussed.¹⁶⁹ Those palettes have motifs which are dominated by the same animals as appear on the nome standards of Southern Egypt. Collectively, they tell a story of the gradual assumption of power by a group of tribes, especially the "Jackal" and "Hawk" Tribes. The jackal is by far the most common animal depicted on these palettes, and in several palettes jackals literally "frame" the motifs which depict the pursuit of animals of prey (such as hartebeests, antelopes, ostriches, and the oryx). They seem to indicate the existence of tribal warfare and an alliance between the Jackal tribe and various

¹⁶⁹See the discussion of the details and interpretation of the "Two Birds," "Manchester", "Trussed Goose", "Gazelle-Goose," "Fantastic Animals", "Giraffe and Palm", "Jackal", "Donkey (?)", and the "White Oryx", Palettes in Arnett, pp. 9-17; 40-41, and Plates III, IV, V, VII, IX, X, XI, XII, XIII, XIV and XV.

other tribes. Their enemies (whether actual devotees of the animals of prey, or associated with them because of their weak and less-warlike nature) are symbolized by the animals of prey. Other "allies" in the form of "fantastic animals" seem to be representative of wild desert tribes "of whom the later Egyptians only preserved the remembrance under the guise of fabulous animals of excessive swiftness and striking power."¹⁷⁰ These "allies," or "fantastic animals," are shown attacking the same animals as those being attacked by the jackal and its first ally, the lion (see Plates XXXIV and XXXVI). A carved palette not discussed in this paper is relevant here. It is the so-called "Fantastic Animals" palette, which is illustrated here in Plates LIV and LV.¹⁷¹ As on the last two palettes cited, this palette bears motifs depicting jackals, lions, and "fantastic animals" attacking weaker animals of prey.¹⁷²

¹⁷⁰ Legge, "The Carved Slates And This Season's Discoveries," p. 303. Legge further conjectures that the Lion represents a stronger tribe coming into the Nile Valley.

¹⁷¹ See a complete discussion of this palette in Arnett, pp. 12-14; 41; and Plates IX and X.

¹⁷² On the lower left of the reverse of this palette one can see the figure of a man wearing the mask and tail of a jackal. See Winifred Crompton, "A Carved Slate Palette In The Manchester Museum," JEA, V, 1918, pp. 57-60, and William S. Smith, A History Of Egyptian Sculpture, p. 111. It is significant that the gods of Dynastic Egypt (and, in this case, Anubis) often were depicted with the body of a human and the head of the given beast he or she represented. This seems to lend further support for the contention here that these animals carved on the palettes and standards do indeed represent the gods of Egypt and are precursors to the historical hieroglyphs which depicted them.

Petrie maintains that there seemed to be some "regional division between the subjects of the two sides" represented on these palettes.¹⁷³ This hypothesis has merit and is supported by the tribal emblems seen on the palettes and mace-heads discussed in the previous chapter.

First of all, these palettes provide us with evidence of a shifting of alliances from those implied by the above-mentioned animal palettes. For instance, the small palette shown on Plate XXXIV has jackals on the bottom and around the central depression as well as a "fantastic animal" just below the serpentine ring, but above the ring is the Horus Hawk. On the "Giraffe Palm" Palette¹⁷⁴ besides the eight jackals, a lion and one "fantastic animal," there is an ibis. The "Victory" Palette (Plate XXXVI) shows the hawk, and then two hawks on standards, the scorpion, and the lion besieging the crenellated towns. Based upon the evidence drawn from the animal palettes as well as from the palettes discussed in the last chapter, the animals attacking the other three cities are probably two forms of the Jackal and an Ibis.¹⁷⁵ Apparently, the Lion Tribe withdrew (or was expelled) from the alliance by the Jackal and Hawk tribes. This is indicated by the

¹⁷³Petrie, Ceremonial Slate Palettes, p. 13.

¹⁷⁴Arnett, Plate XI.

¹⁷⁵Again, this is based upon the favorable position among the tribal gods given the ibis in the other palettes and provides one more reason to challenge Legge's interpretation of this bird in the town on this palette as an ibis. See pages 66, 67, and 68.

fact that lions are now among the animals of prey on the "Hunters" Palette (see Plate XXXIX, b), and even the jackal is not shown on a standard--there being only Hawk and Ibis on standards. But at least two jackals are shown pursuing the antelope and oryx. Obviously, the Lion has become a foe. Two lions are shown pierced by the "hunters'" arrows. The lion is indicated as the name of one of the two towns (the other being indicated by the rhyt bird) on the reverse of the "Bull Fragmentary" Palette (see Plate XLIV) which seems to represent the towns of the foe being trampled by the Bull (i.e. the king).¹⁷⁶ On the obverse of that palette (Plate XLIII) only the jackal, ibis, hawk, and the god Min are represented on the standards of the tribes "encircling" the enemy. While the "Battlefield" Palette (Plate XLII, b) may belong to the period before the expulsion of the Lion tribe from the alliance (since a lion is shown devouring a slain foe), nevertheless, it may be significant that the lion appears to be performing the same function as the scavenger birds on the "battlefield." Furthermore, only the ibis and hawk standards are shown perched upon the anthropomorphic standards which are "grasping" bound captives, and the discovery of a third fragment of the missing upper portion of this same palette shows a jackal trampling a prostrate foe.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁶Arnett, p. 25; Capart, Primitive Art, p. 243.

¹⁷⁷J.R. Harris, "A New Fragment Of The Battlefield Palette," JEA, XLVI, 1960, pp. 104-105.

The Narmer Palette and Mace-head (Plates XLVI, XLVII and LI) have only the jackal, hawk, ibis, and the peculiar "Khons" emblem on the tribal standards, while the mace-head of King Scorpion depicts the emblems of Ha, Seth, Min, the "Khons," Thoth (the Ibis), and Anubis (the jackal). The tail of another bird (probably the hawk) can be seen just before the ibis. Therefore, on the monuments of these two late and important kings the Lion Tribe is no longer represented.

An inventory of the palettes and mace-heads with notations as to the chief god(s) and theme on each is given on Plates LVI and LVII. Of the sixteen artifacts the jackal is prominent in eleven and was probably represented on a missing portion of a twelfth (the "Victory" palette). The hawk is figured on seven and, probably, on the missing fragment of an eighth (the Scorpion mace). The Ibis is depicted on six, while it too was probably shown on the damaged portion of the "Victory" palette. The emblem of Min occupies space on three of these artifacts. Together the bull and Hathor cow decorate four of the artifacts. The Khons emblem is shown only on the three monuments of Narmer and Scorpion. Seth's animal and the mountain emblem of Ha appear only on Scorpion's mace-head. Narmer indicates no favoritism to either god. The latter king, however, unlike Scorpion, devotes places of honor to Hathor and the Vulture goddess. This anticipates a familiar characteristic of historic times when the several Pharaohs

showed preferences for different gods or goddesses while, at the same time, paying homage to the major deities of the Egyptian pantheon. It is clear from this evidence that the practice of identifying political and geographical districts with a given sacred animal perched on a standard (the hieroglyph i3t), which was common in historic times, was already prevalent in Predynastic times.

In order to establish the accuracy and historicity of the following totem identifications, it is necessary to discuss the historical sources for connecting a given totem with a given nome. Excavations at Coptos in 1912 by Adolphe Reinach and R. Weill uncovered an VIIIth Dynasty decree which lists twenty-two nomes of Upper Egypt.¹⁷⁸ Through such a list and through scattered lists or single nome inscriptions, it is possible to identify the ancient nomes of Egypt. In addition, there are the nome lists lining the entrance corridor of the Valley Temple of the Bent Pyramid of Sneferu (Dynasty IV) at Dahshur. Thus the totem figures seen on the "Bull Fragmentary," the "Hunters," the "Victory," and "Narmer's" Palettes as well as those on the mace-heads of Scorpion and Narmer may be compared with those of Old Kingdom nome standards, and thereby help in the identification of the people whose deeds are commemorated on the palettes and mace-heads. The evidence from these primary sources is drawn for

¹⁷⁸R. Weill, Decrets Royaux de l'Ancien Empire, Paris, 1912, as cited by Hall, The Ancient History Of The Near East, pp. 138-139, and by Moret, The Nile, p. 45.

comparison beside the historic nome standards on Plates LVIII, LIX, LX and LXI.

This evidence seems to prove that all these palettes (and maces) bearing the Jackals, the Ibis, the Hawk, the Bolt of Min, and the Seth animal, represent the exploits of Upper Egyptian peoples. The Hawk was known in historical times as the god of several Upper Egyptian nomes: Apollinopolis Magna, or Edfu, the 2nd nome; Coptos (whose old god was Aahes, who was later identified with Min), the 5th nome--where the double-hawk motif was the blazon; and Hebnu (the 16th nome) whose blazon was originally the oryx but later the hawk of Herus perched upon the oryx's back. This latter example may recall the series of events recorded first on the "White Oryx" Palette, and subsequently on the series of palettes showing the oryx among the animals of prey being hunted or attacked by the Hawk and his allies; and, finally, on the mace-head of Narmer (Plate LI) where three oryx are shown in an enclosure--captives of the "Living Herus," Narmer.

It seems that prior to the political developments which encouraged the adoption of standard symbols (i.e. the i3t plus totem figure) the Predynastic artists were already associating given tribes with certain animals (such as the oryx, cow, jackal, hawk, etc.). This conclusion seems justified by the very early representation of Hathor by the bucranium symbol (see Plates XXX, XXXI and XXXII); that symbol's use by Narmer on his monuments; and, finally,

its reproduction upon historical monuments as is seen in the nome standard of Diospolis Parva (Plate LVIII). Therefore, these tribal and geo-political symbols are Egyptian, and several date quite early in the Predynastic era--too early to have been meaningful to an alien and invading ruling class. The standards displayed by the conquerors Narmer and Scorpion are not only thoroughly Egyptian but (thanks to the information now available concerning the nome standards of historical Egypt) also traceable to given geographical sites. The standards and emblems of the victorious Predynastic tribes as they are recorded upon their monuments are the precursors of the nome standards of Dynastic times and provide the means of tracing the geographical locations of the tribes of Southern Egypt who unified Egypt in ca. 3000 B.C. The major capitals of these early tribal kingdoms are shown on Plate LXII. These sites represent the geographical origins of those warriors who would comprise the armies of the so-called "Dynastic Race" in ca. 3000 B.C. just as this same area supplied the military strength and political leadership which reunited Egypt in the Middle and New Kingdoms.

B. The Development Of Writing In Egypt

Where written records are scarce or non-existent the historian must proceed with caution. In prehistoric Egypt "written" records are not only primitive but few in number. Obviously, this is a controversial problem.

The "writing" of Predynastic Egypt is crude and difficult to interpret. Furthermore, one cannot determine for sure the exact circumstances leading to, nor the actual time of, the transition from a pictorial art to a system of writing wherein preexisting symbols were given phonetic values and ideographic meanings not always identical with their more obvious and original meanings. But if it can be shown that the hieroglyphs are based upon Predynastic motifs and symbols, the scholar has an invaluable aid for interpreting the meanings of hitherto unexplained figures and symbols depicted on Predynastic artifacts.

In conclusion, this paper makes a strong case that the primary origins of hieroglyphic writing were found in the Nile Valley north of the First Cataract. No major foreign contribution to the development of hieroglyphs has yet been discovered. Therefore, the fact that the art and writing of Dynastic Egypt (a period of history involving 3,000 years of fairly constant religious, political, and artistic traditions) were derived from autochthonous traditions makes the Predynastic era one of the most important periods of Egyptian history. If enough Predynastic inscribed material can be collected and catalogued, it may be possible to write an earlier chapter to the history of Egypt and to cast light upon an epoch which remains obscured in what, at present, must be termed prehistory.

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a. Tasian
potsherd

b. Hieroglyphs for "tree"

c. "libation"--Hieroglyph

d. Hieroglyphs for "fan"

e. "libation"--hieroglyph

f. Hieroglyph
for "vomit"

a.

b.

a. Predynastic "well" motifs

b. Predynastic pottery shapes

c. Predynastic pottery shapes

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

a. Predynastic motifs similar to the hieroglyph, sp t

b. Hieroglyph, sp t

c. Hieroglyph, niwt

d. Nesubit title of Pharaohs

1. "sky"

2. "sun"

3. flat alluvial land with grains of sand

4. sandy tract; horizon

5. "Tongue of land"; "bank"; "shore"

6. "the two banks," i.e. "Egypt"

1. irrigation canal, irrigated "land"

2. sandy hill-country over edge of green cultivation: "hill-country," "foreign land," "desert"

3. sand-covered "mountain" over edge of green cultivation

4. "Hierakonpolis"

5. Sun rising over mountain. Horizon where sun rises

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

1.

2.

3.

4.

Plate IX.

1.

2.

3.

5.

4.

6.

Plate X.

a. Predynastic "standards"--i t--from pot-marks

b. Predynastic "p's"

c. The hieroglyph "p"

d. The hieroglyphic "p" as found on the pottery of Ka-Ap

e. The titulary
of Ka-Ap:

"Suten Ap the Horus Ka"

a. Gerzean potsherd with five-point star

b. Five-point stars from Diospolis Parva pot-marks

c. stars on Naqada pot-marks

1. ("star") 2. (Netherworld)

e. Hiero. "stars"

d. stars on Gerzean pots

f. Tarkhan pot-mark
(netherworld?)

1.

2.

3.

a. Predynastic pot-marks
resembling the hieroglyph "cow's skin"

b. Hiero.
"cow's skin"

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

c. Pottery motifs from Naqada

a. "Ka" pot-marks from Tarkhan's Predynastic cemetery

b. The "ka"-sign from Naqada pot-marks

c. "Ka" symbol of Ka-Ap
from Abydos

d. "Ka" hieroglyph

e. A "ka"-sign from a
Tarkhan seal impression

f. Another "ka"-sign from a
Tarkhan seal impression

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

10.

11.

a.

1. Badarian amulet

2. Hieroglyph, "fly"

1. Badarian amulet

2. Hawk from Diospolis Parva ring

3.

4.

5.

Hawks from Naqada

6.

Hawks from Tarkhan

7.

8.

9.

10.

11.

12.

b.

1.

2.

c. Hieroglyphic Hawks

3.

4.

a. "Fantastic Animal"
spoon handle

b. Hieroglyph utilizing the
long-necked "monster"

c. Tarkhan Slate Palette

d. Hieroglyph

A man holding a club and a
mace

e. Hieroglyphs

f. Hieroglyph: "white" (mace
with a strap to pass around
hand)

a. Predynastic (Gerzean) Maces

b. Narmer's Ivory Cylinder

a. Hieroglyph,
"vulture"

b. Hieroglyph, Vulture-goddess

c. Hieroglyph, "enemy"

d. Hieroglyph, "snake"

1. obverse

2. reverse

e. Knife handle in Cairo Museum

1. from knife handle

2. Hieroglyph

a. gazelles

1. from knife handle

2. Hieroglyph

b. Lions

1. from knife

c. Oryx

2. Hieroglyph

d. Ibex

1. from knife

2. Hieroglyph

1. from knife

e. Griffins

2. from palette

1. owl

2. jackal

3. herons

4. ?

5. crested ibis?

6. swallow

7. oryx

gazelle

8.

f. Animals from Pitt-Rivers knife handle

1. obverse

2. reverse

g. Knife handle from Gebelein

Slate Jackal from El Ahaiwah

Gerzeh

Palette

Plate XXX.

a. Hathor girdle of Narmer

1.

2.

3.

4.

b. Cow-horn ship standards

c. Gerzean vase motif

Palette with serpent-form central depression and Horus-
palace-facade

a. Obverse

b. Reverse

"Victory"
Palette

Plate XXXVI.

a. "Marching Men" fragment

b. "Hunters" palette

1

2

3

4

5

6

"Hunters" from palette in Plate XXXIX, b

Details of weapons, etc., from palette in Plate XXXIX, b

a. "Transfixed warrior" fragment

b. Obverse:
Ashmolean fragment

("Battlefield Palette")

c. Obverse:
British
Museum
fragment

"Bull Fragmentary" Palette (Obverse)

"Bull Fragmentary" Palette (Reverse)

a. "Forearm", Hieroglyph

c. Hieroglyphic Weapons

1. mace with pear shaped head

2. bow consisting of oryxhorns joined by a wooden center-piece

4. lasso

5. arms holding shield and battle-axe

b. Rhyt from "Bull Fragmentary" Palette

3. archaic bow

d. relief from Hierakonpolis vase

e. Predynastic pot-marks showing heads of double-axe

Obverse: Palette of Narmer

Reverse: Palette of Narmer

<p>a.</p> <p>1. rope for tethering animals (Phonetic <u>t</u>)</p> <p>2. bread: (ideogram or semi-phonetic <u>t</u>)</p>	<p>b.</p> <p><u>tet</u></p>
<p>c.</p> <p>1. lamp(?) carried by Narmer's sandal bearer (obverse)</p> <p>3. Hieroglyphic "pot" perhaps used also as a lamp</p> <p>2. pot carried by sandal-bearer (reverse)</p>	
<p>d. Sandals</p> <p>1. carried by Narmer's sandal-bearer (obverse)</p> <p>2. Hieroglyphic sandal</p> <p>3. reverse of Palette</p>	
<p>e. Aprons (clothing)</p> <p>1. Apron worn by sandal-bearer</p> <p>2. Hieroglyphs: horizontal strip of cloth with two strands of a fringe ("clothing")</p>	
<p>Plate XLVIII.</p>

Scorpion mace-head

Narmer's Mace

Narmer's Mace

Narmer's Mace

Fantastic Animals Obverse

Fantastic Animals Reverse

ARTIFACT	TRIBE OR GOD TO WHOM DEDICATED	THEME OR MOTIF	PLATE NOS.*
1. Min Palette	Min	Emblem of Min	XXIX, a
2. Gerzeh Palette	Hathor	Cow-head	XXX
3. Rhyt-bird Pal.	?	Rhyt and boat	XXXIII
4. Horus Palette	Horus (hawk), Anubis (jackal), Lion & "Fantastic Animals"	These "allies" attacking enemy tribes (animals of prey)	XXXIV
5. "Fantastic Animals" Palette	Anubis (jackal), "Fantastic Animals", Lion	"Allies" attacking enemies	LIV, LV
6. Giraffe and Palm Palette	Anubis (jackal), Thoth (ibis), Lion, "Fantastic Animals"	Purely decorative	[XI, XII]
7. Jackal Palette fragment	Anubis	Two jackals face each other around a central depression	[XIII]
8. "Donkey (?)" frag.	Anubis	Same as above	[XIV]
9. "White Oryx" frag.	Oryx	Two oryx face each other	[XV]
10. "Victory" Palette	Horus, Scorpion (Serqet), Lion, 3 others	"Allies" besieging towns of scarab, heron, wrestlers, owl, <u>swt</u> -plant, hut, Ka	XXXVI
11. "Hunters" Palette	Horus, Anubis, Thoth	"Hunters" of these tribes attacking lions and animals of prey	XLII, b
*Bracketed numbers refer to Plates in Arnett, Carved Slate Palettes			
Plate LVI.			

ARTIFACT	TRIBE OR GOD TO WHOM DEDICATED	THEME OR MOTIF	PLATE NOS.
12. "Battle-field" Pal.	Anubis, Horus, Thoth, Lion(?)	"Allies" defeating enemies	XLII b & c
13. "Bull Fragmentary" Palette	Bull, Anubis, Ibis (Thoth), Horus, Min	"Allies" defeating enemies: Lion and Rhyt-bird	XLIII XLIV
14. Scorpion Mace-head	Ha(mts.), Seth, Min, Anubis, Thoth Khons, Serqet, and perhaps Horus	King Scorpion digs canal & commemorates his victory over enemy(rhyt-birds)	L
15. Narmer Palette	Hathor, Bull, Horus, Anubis, Khons, Thoth	Narmer defeating enemies in Delta & uniting Egypt	XLVI, XLVII
16. Narmer Mace	Horus, Anubis, Khons, Thoth, Nekhbet	Narmer reviews the spoils of war, including oryx	LI, LII, LIII
Plate LVII.			

Standard of 2nd Nome
of Upper Egypt

Hieraconpolis
or
Apollinopolis Magne(Edfu)

From "Bull
Fragmentary"
Palette

From
"Battlefield"
Palette

Standard of
18th Nome of
Upper Egypt

Hipponis

From Horus
Palette

From Narmer's
Palette

Coptos, 5th Nome of
Upper Egypt

Double Hawks

Double
Hawks

From "Victory" Palette

7th Nome
of
Upper Egypt

Standard
of
Diospolis Parva

Narmer Palette

Tarkhan
pot

Gerzean ship
standards

9th Nome
of Upper Egypt

a.
Standard of Panopolis

From "Bull Frag.
Palette

From
Scorpion
Mace

From Min Palette

16th Nome
of Upper Egypt

c. Standards of Hebnu (Hibiu)

1. Narmer, the "Golden Horus" on his
Mace-head

2. Oryx in Narmer's "corral,"
from his mace-head

(Anubis-Horus)

a. Standard of Cynopolis, 17th Nome of Upper Egypt

From Narmer's
Palette

1.

From
Scorpion
Mace

2.

3. From "Bull Fragmentary"
Palette

b. Jackal and
Leaf Motifs

Plate LX.

Standard of
Oxyrhynchus (18th)

19th Nome
of
Upper Egypt

Standards of Hypsele

Predynastic Seth-figure

From Scorpion's Mace