



THE MONUMENT CALLED “DARA” AT MANFALUT OR THE PYRAMID OF KING KHUWI?

Known name: Pyramid of Khuwi.

Arabic name: Dara.

G-R name: North of Cynopolis.

Geographical information of the site:

The location of this monument is on the map of Egypt (1:100 000) MANFALUT portions of sheets 48/54 and 48/60 of 1932. Its coordinates on the UTM Kilometer grid are 508 N, 605 E (=27° 17' N, 30° 54' E). Eight km West of Manfalut, NW of Nag Arab el^c Amayem (a small village N of El^c Atamna). The shortest distance to the river is 10 km.

The course of the Nile in this area between the City of Assuit and the Island of El Ma^c abdah, at the southern portion of the Abu Fouda cliffs, meanders creating 5 bends in a general NW direction. The monument is oriented by its sides to the cardinal points. It cannot be seen from the western road, very close to it, because of a grove of trees. Moreover Dara is the local name of the monument itself and not the name of the site.

History of the exploration and dates.

The monument Dara was first discovered by Ahmed Kamal Pasha in 1911. He describes the corridor and burial chamber. R. Weill cleared large parts of the superstructure and made drawings in 1946-1948. J. Vercoutter worked on the neighboring site in the early 1950s. Today the site is in a confused state.

Body of the subject.

Brick monuments come from all periods of Egyptian history and royal brick pyramids come from the sites of: Abu Rawash III Dyn., Fayum XII dyn., Dahshur XII and XIII Dyn. and Khat^c ana, south Saqqara and Mazghuna XIII Dyn. Compared with these brick Pyramids this monument (base length = 130 m) is only exceeded by the brick pyramid at Abu Rawash (base length = 215 m), which was built of accretion layers and I have dated to the III Dyn., while all other brick pyramids were smaller (base length equal to, or

smaller than 105 m) built from the reign of Senusert II onwards; usually by cross walls and brick fillings. Dara represent a unique example of brick architecture with no parallels. In my opinion this monument could be classified as a pyramid-like monument, if it were a pyramid its height would be not less than 65 m and not more than 91 m. The remains, however, except for the squared base do not fit into any pyramid shape or form.

Dara was indeed a royal tomb; Ahmed Kamal's attribution to king Khuwi, who reigned towards the end of the sixth dynasty or more probably during the first intermediate period. His dating was based on indirect evidence of a cartouche of this king which appeared in a neighboring brick mastaba.

The substructure of the monument Dara, is constructed in a pit open to the sky 9 m deep. It is entered from the north side by an almost horizontal corridor which halfway slopes downwards at angle of 15° to a modest burial chamber built of stone. The roofing of the corridor is made up by means of an admirable series of brick arches.

The superstructure of this monument has a square base with rounded corners. A well built frame of brickwork 20 m thick and 15 m high preserved to a height of 4 m today standing almost upright on the inner and outer sides. It retained the core filling and was founded on an unlevelled surface of the desert. On the north side of this brickwork were some additional masses of brick masonry which slope at steeper angles. No one hitherto has suggested a reconstruction of this unusual monument.

Bibliography

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