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No one can claim a clear understanding of the Protodynastic Period in Egypt; some of the simplest questions have not yet been answered. Remoteness in time, lack of evidence and difficulty in deciphering rudimentary hieroglyphs are some of the reasons. But Egypt had already developed a high individual character that needed but a little polishing to reach the Pyramid Age magnificence. Yet we still wonder if terms that apply to later times could help us towards some understanding of Egypt's earliest history such as the rise and fall of the early dynasties, the religico-political motives behind such mutations and the actual power of the god-king. For these reasons - among others - "*Egypt of the Pharaohs*" the great swan song of Sir Alan Gardiner, leaves this period of beginnings till the last chapter.

The answers we put forward are merely hypothetical; we think that the suggested fall of the First Dynasty was a result of a religious break-up that might have taken place in the politically

1) "The Fall of the First Dynasty" is a term that seems to imply a radical change, our sub-title is not intended to be understood in that way. It is maintained however because the Second Dynasty - as we see it - had a character very much different from its predecessor.

united country. When a time of royal feebleness occurred, a spasm of anarchy brought about a cataclysmal tragedy. Starting at the very beginning, as events seem to have happened, we observe that southern chieftains had led a confederation of clans into ages of combat that finally brought about the unification. Among the emblems of these triumphant clans the ensign of Seth, God of *Nubt* (Ombos) was salient. But later during the First Dynasty, it looks as though Seth had been abstracted in the political scene except in very rare cases(2); for example, on the famous label from Naqada the the head of his animal is seen looking aft from the bow of *Hor Aha's* ship(3). And possibly in a very crude manner on three stelae and a label fragment(4).

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- 2) Dr. Peter Munro states (orally) that: "Seth was - as the dogma put it - the inevitable alter-ego of Horus, much cursed but never really denied." hence the abstraction was never the case. This is very true when decompositive analysis of the incarnated Horus, or in other words, the Pharaoh are applied. We evade that very interesting aspect of Seth. The religico-political effect of this "problematic, troublesome and bellicose deity" on the destiny of the First Dynasty is what we are aiming at.
- 3) J. de Morgan, *Recherches sur les origines de l'Égypte*, Paris 1897, where the label was initially published; it will be frequently found in many works we need not mention.
- 4) W. M. F. Petrie, *The Royal Tombs of the First Dynasty* II, London 1900, pl. XLVII No. 96, 128 and 129 probably show the animal of Seth; *ibid* I, pl. XVIII No. 29, shows a fragment of a label dating to "Horus *Qa*" where Seth is probably identified. The sign for collar of beads, Gardiner, *Egyptian Grammar*, Sign-list S 12, p. 505, is among groups alternating with the *serekh* of Horus *Qa* in *ibid* pl. XXIX No. 82, 83, 84 and 85, and pl. XII No. 5, it is doubtful if it refers to Ombos or Seth? Can the groups be of a "Golden body of Horus", or an estate of an unknown triad Min, Seth and Horus?

One of the first dynastic kings may have left his southern hometown for a newly founded capital at the apex of the Delta. His successors must have well implanted themselves as Horus-God-Kings and disregarded their old ally and neighbour, Seth of *Nubt*. Politically this deity was a lingering shadow of the past (5). Nevertheless, this royal attitude was contradicted by the aboriginals of the South; where the cult appears to have spread and the followers grew in number. Later in the Pyramid texts [The Priest speaks:]

“ Provide yourself with the great of magic, (even) Seth ”
 “ dwelling in Nubet, lord of Upper Egypt ; nothing is ”
 “ lost to you, nothing has ceased (?) for you ; behold, ”
 “ you are more renowned and more powerful than the gods ”
 “ of Upper Egypt and their spiritis (6) ”

Seth Nubty in that context was the “ Lord of Upper Egypt ” this epithet of sovereignty was maintained throughout Egyptian history. Consequently a static division detached his followers from those of Horus, the royal god. Was the bird of ill omen seen by the royal house ? Perhaps the infrequent resurrection of a reverence for Seth, expressed their apprehension (7). The Second Dynasty, however, appears to be much more Sethian; direct and indirect reference to this god is found in three royal “ *serekhs* ” (8); and the Manethonian tradition mentions another king given the name Sethenes.

5) See note No. 2

6) Utterance 222 § 204 in R. O. Faulkner, *The Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts*, Oxford 1969, page 50.

7) See note 4, above.

8) They are of “ Horus *Hetepsekhemwi* ” “ Seth *Perabsen* ” and “ Horus - Seth *Khasekhemwi* ”.

Hitherto it had always been agreed that "Horus *Qa*" was the last Pharaoh of the First Dynasty. We think that the cataclasm could not have happened during his lifetime, he possessed distinguished monuments among which were the most elaborate tomb at Um el Giab (9) and the largest at Sakkara (10). Wealth, being a sign of stability, is a serious objection to the fall of one kingship and the rise of another. The disinheritance must have been an outcome of a less stable period, i. e. a time when the god-king was not able to maintain a strong hand over a country torn up statically between Horus and Seth. The founder of the Second Dynasty, however, transmits the "pacification of the two powers" (Horus and Seth) from the meaning of his name "*Hetepsekhemwi*". Apparently this king's ascension discontinued a short period of turmoil. (11) To whom did this period belong? To answer this question, we are forced to consider a gap between the reigns of "*Qa*" and "*Hetepsekhemwi*". Luckily the king-lists of Sakkara and Turin exclude this lacuna and provide us with the name "*Bawneter*", (12) who can be identified with "*Bieneches*" (13) of the Manethonian tradition (see table).

Before we proceed to investigate the identity of "*Bawneter*", we would like to mention a few words about the king-lists (see

- 9) Tomb "Q" at Abydos, Petrie op. cit. I pl. LX; W. B. Emery *Archaic Egypt*, Hardmonsworth 1972 p. 87.
- 10) Tomb No. 3505 at Sakkara, Emery, *Great Tombs of the First Dynasty*, III, page 11.
- 11) A. H. Gardiner, *Egypt of the Pharaohs*, Oxford 1966, p. 415.
- 12) Another opinion of this name is given in J. de Morgan's op. cit. p. 262, and many other old works.
- 13) Emery does not identify "*Bieneches*" with "*Qa*" in his *Archaic Egypt*, p. 87; Gardiner, op. cit. p. 430, gives the Manethoan name opposite to the king list name of "*Biunutje*" (our "*Bawneter*").

table). With the exception of the Sakkara list they all start by "Meni" (Menes) followed by royal names which - except in a few cases - find no conformity on contemporary relics of the Early Period. Some names are hitherto thought to be fictitious (14) and some names are added or omitted for local considerations as we are about to demonstrate. From Thinis, near Abydos in Upper Egypt came "Hetepsekhemwi", but the later Egyptians are seen to have held contradictory legislations towards this king. To the South on one hand, he had been a reformer, the concept by the North on the other hand was paradoxical. These observations are inferred from the lists, as the compilers of Abydos record him under "Bedjaw" with no assent to the overthrown "Bawneter"; the scribes of Sakkara and Turin cannons overlook the southern usurper. Happily Manetho renders equivalent names of these two kings in succession (see table). Caution is necessary at the same time, not because Manetho's original work is lost, or because the excerptor-chronographers disagree in relaying his tradition, but because of fantastic narratives, obviously based on popular romances rather than sound sources. Despite scepticism, the 26 year (15) reign Manetho gives to "Bieneches" ("Bawneter"), still remains a weak point in our hypothesis because we have already given the impression of a reign that is thought to have been ephemeral. (16)

Clearing the underground galleries of "Djoser's" monuments at Sakkara, thousands of beautifully carved vessels from a variety of

14) Gardiner, op. cit. p. 416.

15) Emery, *ibid*; he thinks the 26 years belong to "Horus Qa". We note that Manetho omits Qa. (see table).

16) A. Klasens in Emery's *Great Tombs*, III. describes the reign of Horus *Seneferka* - whom we are about to identify with "Bawneter" - to be: "...the reign of this (ephemeral?) king or usurper probably followed shortly the reign of Ka'a [our Qa]..." The view adopted here is not in absolute harmony with Klasens'

fine stone were brought to light. These splendid dishes, bowls and vases are thought to have been collected at the beginning of the Third Dynasty from the much ruined tombs of the archaic kings, and preserved under the step pyramid and southern-tomb of *Djoser's* funerary complex. Small texts with many early kings' actual Horus names sometimes accompanied by the "*Nebty* and *Nesubit*" were incised on a few of these stone vessels. (17) Of very special interest are three copies having almost the same hieroglyphs. In each case the text comes beside a royal "*serekh*" which encloses the name of "*Qa*" on two fragments (18) and a new royal name of a "*Horus Seneferka*" on a bowl. (19) All the texts refer to a recessed monument, (probably the house called: "*Thrones-of-the-Gods*") (20) recorded on the Palermo Stone annals under a king whose name was lost. According to Lauer and Lacau: the lost king is thought to be "*Qa*" (21). At the archaic necropolis of Sakkara, however, in a large recessed mudbrick mastaba (Tomb No. 3505) this new name was also found (22). Emery believes that tomb to be the final rest-

17) P. Lacau and J-Ph. Lauer, *La Pyramide a Degres*, t. IV. *Inscriptions gravees sur les vases*.

1er Fascicule : Planches IFAO 1959

2eme Fascicule : Texte IFAO 1961

18) Ibid. 1er fasc., pl. 9, No. 44 et 45.

19) Ibid. pl. 17 No. 86; reproduced in the present essay, pl. 1. a.

20) J. H. Breasted *Ancient Records of Egypt* I, § 108, § 109, and § 110; Lacau and Lauer op. cit. p. 25; we support their view in the light of Gardiner's *Egyptian Grammar* 3rd ed. Oxford 1969, page 687 signs No. Q1 and Q2.

21) Lacau and Lauer, op. cit. p. 26.

22) Emery, op. cit. p. 11 and pls. 28a and 38 No. 1, reproduced here in pl. 1. b.

ing place of *Qa* (23). In our view the temptation to assume that Tomb No. 3505 was originally "Thrones-of-the-Gods" is irresistible. Moreover another monument - without any recessed paneling called (protection behind the Lord) (24) - was not only associated with *Qa* (25) and *Hetepsekhemwi* (26) but also with Horus *Seneferka* (27).

Who was this pharaoh? or rather, who bore the Horus name of *Seneferka*? Did *Qa* adopt it for a certain period of his reign? Or, was it a name of an independant king? (28) If *Qa* adopted the name, we would expect to see it more often in all his monuments and we would ask, how the stelae found at "Um el Giab" would have looked? (29) Seth-Perabsen gives us a good example of stelae alteration. (30) Lauer and Lacau remark that if he were a king to be determined, then he would be close to *Qa* (31) Emery and Klasens consider him an (ephemiral?) king or usurper that probably followed shortly after *Qa*. (32) Favourably it is evident that the four eminent Egyptologists allude to the name as being of an individual ruler. If that were true, the origin of "*Bawmeter*" would most probably be determined, and this identification as we see it is more conjectured than postulated.

23) Emery, op. cit. p. 5.

24) Emery and Klasens, op. cit., p. 31 and pl. 28a and 38 No. 1.

25) Lacau and Lauer, op. cit. 2eme fasc. p. 26; 1er fasc. pl. 9 No. 46.

26) Amelineau, *Nouveau Fouilles*, 1896/7 pl. 21, 1 and 6; cf. Petrie, opcit. II, pl. 8, 12 (Raneb).

27) Emery, op. cit. pl. 28 a and 38 No. 1.

28) Lauer and Lacau, op. cit. fasc. 2, p. 40.

29) They have the Horus name of *Qa* very beautifully sculptured.

30) Emery. *Archaic Egypt* p. 96.

31) See note No. 28 above.

32) See note No. 16 above.

We think that "Horus *Seneferka*" was an unlucky ruler, because he must have failed in maintaining a firm hand over the "Followers of Seth". The statically charged detachment mentioned above burst into a dynamic output of anarchy and turmoil, his end came rapid and sad, we may never know how, but we only think we know why he perished. It might have happened before his tomb was planned. The deliberate burning of all the First Dynasty's royal tombs at Sakkara, Abydos and Naqada (33), might be the best indication of that disorder. Emery has shown also that these tombs were very badly damaged by the end of the Second Dynasty (34).

Our fragmentary knowledge of this period requires much more digging in all the early dynastic sites, not to mention the unexcavated area at Sakkara that lies between the South East of the Pyramid of *Teti* and Emery's work in the archaic necropolis. If a tomb of Horus *Seneferka* were discovered we would have to reconsider some of our present views. More sustaining to our hypothesis would be the absence of such a monument because we think it was never erected. The investigation would not, however, be fruitless, because the tomb of *Semerket* is still missing and those also of Horuses *Ka*, *Scorpion* and *Narmer*, if one of these predynastic kings was the actual *Menes*!

At this point we must turn back to the bowl that Lauer found under the Step Pyramid, with Lacau he remarks that the hieroglyphs of *Seneferka* were engraved over an erased part of the

33) Emery *Great Tombs*, III p. 11.

34) Emery *Archaic Egypt*, p. 29.

serekh that according to their suspicion, had *Qa* originally written. (35) This evidence makes "*Seneferka*" a real usurper, but not of the throne as much as of the bowl. (36) We think that the accession of *Seneferka* came after *Qa's* death, who was buried with great pomp. Preparations of all sorts, completion of tombs, ceremonial rites, opening of the mouth and burial proceedings, were undoubtedly *Seneferka's* preoccupation. But the trouble of Seth in the South must have eclipsed all events, especially the following cult of the newly dead god. The latter had to be overlooked on account of the former and offerings may have been presented without the royal presence of *Seneferka*. Consequently, the name on older vessels may have been altered to bear that of the new king. If *Seneferka* came to meet his fate and the country was kingless by that time our postulation may seem to be logic and no more can be added about this monarch.

Following that troubled episode a great pharaoh emerges and one of the most interesting dynasties brought about many events of exceptional thrill. Horus *Hetepsekhemwi* starts this new era by rectifying the disorder and probably equating Seth with Horus. We think that the Helcopolitan theology and Osiris began to play their major role during the second dynasty. The priests of *Ptah* set down the rule of the canon of Egyptian art (37). The tomb developments added vast hypogea to the conventional burial-shaft of the First Dynasty, such an elaboration can be seen in the astonishing galleries

35) Lauer and Lacau op. cit., Fasc. 2, p. 40 ; Mr. Lauer points out (in a personal note) that the hieroglyphs composing *Qa's* name can still be seen on the bowl.

36) See note 16 above.

37) Peter Munro; (expressed orally) and recorded by his permission.

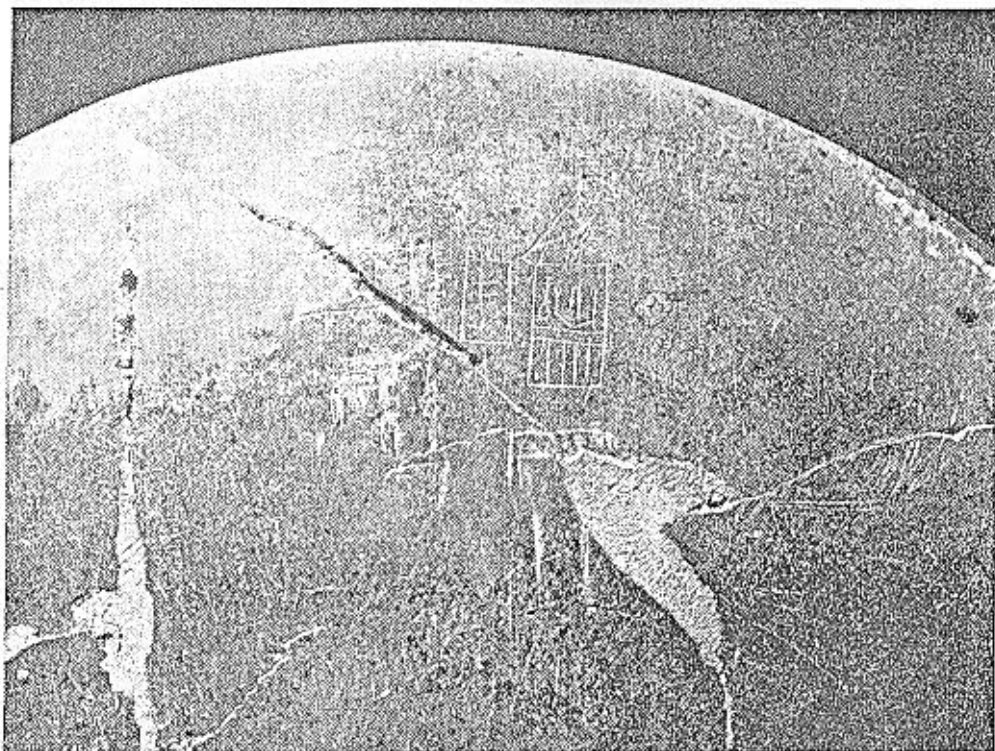
of the supposed tomb of "*Hetepsekhemhwi*" or "*Raneb*," under the pyramid temple of *Unas* at Sakkara.(38)

Looking back at this essay we have suggested a hypothetical lacuna which has conveniently been filled up by the name of *Baw-
neter* of the king lists and *Bieneches* of *Manetho*. These names have not been identified with any of the *Horus* names on monuments until *Horus Seneferka* was noticed. The question that follows is numerical ; could *Seneferka* be the 8th king of the First Dynasty ? And by this method, *Hor Aha* would be the first ?(39) This very interesting debate is to be left as an open question.(40) Out of a few fractions we have built a structure which may appear to be fragile, its stability, however, depends on future evidence, and we want to know what REALLY HAPPENED during that episode of the protodynastic period.

38) J- Ph. Lauer *Histoire Monumentale des Pyramides d'Egypte*, t. I, plans pl. 6a; to its east there is a similar one dated to "*Neteren*".

39) The Sequence would be *Aha*, *Djer Edjo*, *Den*, *Adjib*, *Semerkhet*., *Qa* and *Seneferka* overlooking Queen *Meryetneit* in the third position according to *Emery* and *Narmer* in first position as accepted by many.

40) Barry Kemp, *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* Vol. 52, 1966. p. 22 suggests a short reign between "*Aha*" and "*Djer*".



- (a) Bowl found under the Step Pyramid, showing the serekh with the name of Seneferka and the recessed enclosure, probably "Thrones-of-the-Gods" (After J. Ph. - Lauer).



- (b) Reproduction of a fragment found in tomb no. 3505, with the name of Seneferka and the building called "Protection behind the Lord". The serekh (?) is without the Falcon of Horus. (After W. B. Emery).

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE

DYNASTIES AND SOURCES	THE FIRST DYNASTY					THE SECOND DYNASTY			
	HYPOTHETICAL					LACUNA			
Numerical Sequence as hitherto accepted	5th king	6th king	7th king	8th king	1st king	2nd king	3rd king	4th king	
Horus name on contemporary relics	Den	Adjib	Semerkhet	Qo (42)	Semerkhet <i>Hetep sekhemw</i>	Kameb	Neteron (43)	? (46)	
Nebty or Neper-bit contemporary name	Zemti	Mertchop	Priestly fig.	Qa	(unknown)	Hetep	Neteron?	Neteron	
Identification on the Saqqara list	(41)	Mertchop	(omitted)	Qobh	Baometer	(omitted)	Kakaw	Baometer	
Identification on the Turin canon	Zemti	Mertchop	Semsem	Qobh	Baometer	(omitted)	Kakaw	Baometer	
Identification on the Abydos list	Zemti	Mertchop	Priestly fig.	Qobh	(omitted)	Bedjao	Kakaw	Baometer	
Identification with Manetho	Uasphale	Mebis	Sememjases (omitted) (43)	Bierches (44)	Boethos	Kutchos	Pinochris	Tiss	
Length of reign according to Manetho	20 years	26 years	18 years	ditto	26 years	38 years	39 years	47 years	
								17 years	

41) The Saqqara list ignores the kings before "Mertchop".
 42) The last 4 kings appear in sequence in Lacau and Lauer op. cit. page I, pl. 4 No. 19, 20 and 21.
 43) See note 13 above.
 44) Ibid: the name here is according to Africanus, Eusebius renders the name "Ubicantes", cf. Gardner *Egypt of the Pharaohs*, p. 430.
 45) The first 3 kings of the Second Dynasty are given on a statue in the Cairo Museum Catalogue I Journal 34557 or Guide No. 3072.
 46) Emery *Ancient Egypt*, p. 95 places "Horus Sekhemw" identified with "Seth Peremsen" in this position.
 47) Gradenwitz in *Ann. de Service*, XLIV, page 290 ff.

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N. S.

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