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## THE DYNASTIC RACE IN EGYPT

By D. E. DERRY

THE history of Egypt as it is known today has been built up in great part by the painstaking labours of Egyptologists and each new discovery adds a stone to the building. For the past sixty years the systematic examination by anthropologists of the human remains which are an almost invariable concomitant of excavations in Egypt has provided important racial evidence, the influence of which on the interpretation of many facts in Egyptian history is far-reaching. The object of the present paper is to put on record a general account of the facts which led to the conclusion that another race in addition to that represented by the remains found in all reliably dated Predynastic graves occupied Egypt in Early Dynastic times.

The earliest inhabitants of Egypt of which we have any knowledge are the so-called Predynastic people, numbers of whose cemeteries have been excavated in Upper Egypt. Where these people came from is unknown, but there is at least some evidence that they may have been the descendants of the people who inhabited what is now the Eastern Desert at a time when more frequent rain permitted sufficient vegetation to support the flocks of sheep and goats of a pastoral people. That such climatic conditions did prevail we have definite evidence. The numerous *wādīs* on the Eastern Desert bear testimony to the quantity of water which flowed down from the region of the Red Sea hills to the present valley of the Nile at a time previous to the existence of the river. Hume and Craig, quoted by Brooks, *Evolution of Climate*, p. 72, consider the river to be not older than about 14,000 years. The stone implements found in quantity on the desert indicate that in the past a considerably larger population than the scattered tribes of Arabs which now inhabit it must have occupied the country. In this connexion it may be mentioned that in the course of a desert survey and only five miles from the Red Sea coast of Egypt, Mr. George Murray was shown a recently rifled grave from which he took 'a slate palette with green malachite stains, fragments of a grey coarse earthenware pot of a type which Professor Reisner dates as not later than the First Dynasty, not earlier than the late Predynastic period', and a few other articles. He also brought back the skull which I examined and measured. Unfortunately all the bones of the face were missing, but so far as the features of the skull could be examined they accorded well with those of the Predynastic Egyptians (*Man*, 23, no. 9, Sept. 1923).

The first Predynastic cemeteries were discovered by Professor Flinders Petrie in 1895 at Naḳādah on the west bank of the Nile, a few miles north of Luxor. At first he believed he had found a 'new race', but later it was shown that these people were the autochthonous inhabitants of the Nile valley. All the bodies were in the contracted position and copper was present in the earliest graves, although stone weapons and implements were still in use. The skeletons were sent to England and the skulls formed

the subject of a special study carried out by Miss C. D. Fawcett and published in *Biometrika*, 1, 408-67 (1902). In 1901 Dr. George A. Reisner, working for the Hearst Expedition at Nag' ed-Dēr about 100 miles north of Luxor on the east bank of the Nile laid bare an early Predynastic cemetery, and the human remains were packed and sent to the Medical School in Cairo, where Elliot Smith was at that time Professor of Anatomy. When Dr. Reisner left Upper Egypt he settled in the vicinity of the pyramid of Cheops and began the excavation of the immense Fourth and Fifth Dynasty necropolis surrounding the pyramid. Here, with the exception of the great tombs (mastabas) of the nobles, the graves consisted of pits of varying depth hewn in the limestone and with a side chamber, sometimes two, in which, in those of earlier date, the body was placed in the contracted position. This began to be given up during the Fourth Dynasty, and the extended position was adopted. When I joined Elliot Smith in 1905 he had already begun a systematic examination and measurement of the human remains in this cemetery, and together we accumulated a large number of measurements to which I added many more during the following summer when, by Dr. Reisner's invitation, I stayed at his camp. Owing to the extreme fragility of the bones, we were unable to transport them to Cairo for more detailed examination in the laboratory, but the results of the measurements recorded at the graveside were to become of inestimable racial value later on. Thus we had at the Medical School the material, either as notes or the actual skeletons, of Predynastic and Early Dynastic cemeteries, both excavated by Dr. Reisner, who at this time believed that the Egyptian culture had evolved in the Nile valley and that the people whose remains we were examining buried round the Great Pyramid were the descendants of the Predynastic Egyptians. It should be said here that this paper deals only with the earliest cemeteries of both Predynastic and Early Dynastic date. As time went on, the mixture of the two races obscured the outstanding differences so clearly demonstrated in the earlier graves. It was not until the year 1909 when, after the second season's work in Nubia, where the archaeological survey of that country brought to light an enormous amount of human material and when comparative figures of skull measurements from various series were called for, that on taking out the means of our measurements on the Fourth to Sixth Dynasty crania from the Gīza necropolis, the unexpected discovery was made that the pyramid builders were a different race from the people whose descendants they had hitherto been supposed to be. Naturally after making this discovery I was asked where the invaders had come from. My reply was that quite definitely they had not come from the south as the Dynastic people were far removed from any negroid element. It was improbable that they had entered Egypt from the west, both on account of the difficulties involved in crossing the desert and still more because no such people have ever been identified west of Egypt. If these people came from the north, they must have come across the sea and traces of their presence should be found in the Delta, or if the latter in ancient times was impassable owing to its swampy condition, then on one or other side of the Delta where it is bounded by the west and east deserts; but nothing of the sort has ever been found. We are left then with the east as the most probable region from which an invasion could take place.

Engelbach, in his interesting 'Essay on the advent of the Dynastic Race in Egypt and its consequences' in *Ann. Serv.* 42, says:

That the Dynastic race came from outside Egypt cannot as yet be definitely *proved*; indeed historians are somewhat coy on this all-important subject, but the probability that they did is so strong as to make it practically a certainty. Once it is assumed that a vigorous race of fighters occupied Egypt, notorious for its extreme fertility, many subsequent events, great and small, which are provable, seem to slip into their places almost automatically.

Later in the same 'Essay' (p. 199) Engelbach says:

Before discussing the question of the part played by the Dynastic Race, we have to consider whether their advent to power was the result of peaceful infiltration or of a definite conquest. . . . Though gradual infiltration by an alien people might well profoundly modify the culture of Egypt, it could hardly produce that terrific wave of national energy which followed close on the advent of the Dynastic Race. Such a result might however well follow the invasion and conquest by a race superior in fighting strength, though perhaps far inferior numerically to the old Egyptian stock, the one having discipline, unity and a set purpose, and, above all, the art of writing, and the other having trading enterprise and a good knowledge of the arts and crafts. I consider that the balance of probability is that the Dynastic Race arrived in Egypt as a horde, perhaps after a considerable amount of peaceful penetration had already taken place. . . .

As regards the route which the invading horde may have taken for their descent upon Egypt Engelbach considers (pp. 201-2) that

the invaders took the normal route to Egypt from the east, which is along the Wadi el-Tumilat on the east side of the Delta, which connects the present Lake Timsah with the Nile Valley.

I have quoted at length from Engelbach's interesting essay to illustrate the attitude of one of the younger and most brilliant Egyptologists to the anatomical facts which so strongly influenced the elucidation of many problems of Ancient Egyptian history hitherto largely conjectural.

While this is in no sense an anatomical treatise, some figures will be given at this stage to illustrate the essential differences as between groups of Predynastic and Early Dynastic crania. These results were obtained by several observers at intervals of many years and in different parts of Egypt. With the exception of those indicated as measured by Derry or Elliot Smith and Derry, all have been taken from Dr. G. M. Morant's valuable 'Study of Egyptian Craniology from Prehistoric to Roman Times', *Biometrika*, 17, Parts 1 and 2 (June 1925). My figure for the Nag<sup>c</sup> ed-Dēr Predynastic and Elliot Smith's and mine for the Fourth and Fifth Dynasty crania from Gīza were published in the *Sixth Bulletin of the Nubian Archaeological Survey*, p. 16. The figures for the Predynastic Badari cemeteries were referred to in my report on the First Dynasty cemetery at Saḳḳārah which, so far as I know, was never published; but the crania from the latter cemetery are treated in *A Study of a First Dynasty Series of Egyptian Skulls from Sakkara, &c.*, by A. Batrawi, Ph.D., and G. M. Morant, D.Sc.

Even those unfamiliar with craniometry will be struck by the difference in the measurements of the skulls in the two series shown in the table on p. 83. The Predynastic people are seen to have had narrow skulls with a height measurement exceeding the breadth, a condition common also in negroes. The reverse is the case in the Dynastic

*Males*

<i>Date</i>	<i>Predyn.</i>	<i>Predyn.</i>	<i>Predyn.</i>	<i>Predyn.</i>	<i>1st Dyn.</i>	<i>1st and 2nd Dyn.</i>	<i>1st Dyn.</i>	<i>4th Dyn.</i>	<i>4th and 5th Dyn.</i>	<i>4th and 5th Dyn.</i>	<i>4th-9th Dyn.</i>
Locality . . . . .	Nag <sup>c</sup> ed-Dēr	Naḳādah	Abydos	Badari, 1925, 1928, 1929	Royal Tombs, Abydos	Royal Tombs, Abydos	Sondage, Serapeum, Saḳḳārah	Saḳḳārah	Deshashah and Mēdūm	Gīza	Ḳāu
Measured by . . . . .	Derry	Fawcett and Morant	Thomson and MacIver	Derry	Motley	Thomson and MacIver	Derry	Broca	Thomson and MacIver	Elliot Smith and Derry	Petrie
Length of skull (Glabello-occipital) (mm.) . . . . .	184·2	184·7	183·5	182·0	184·9	184·8	186·5	185·0	184·9	184·0	184·7
Maximum breadth of skull (mm.) . . . . .	132·0	132·7	131·4	131·7	136·2	137·7	139·7	141·0	139·3	139·1	139·6
Height of skull (Basio-bregmatic) (mm.) . . . . .	132·9	133·8	134·0	134·3	132·1	132·8	135·5	137·0	136·0	136·3	136·9

Race, who not only had broader skulls but the height of these skulls, while exceeding that in the Predynastic Race, is still less than the breadth. This implies a greater cranial capacity and of course a larger brain in the invading people. Another remarkable point is the regularity with which the same or nearly the same figures appear in the different groups for the same diameter. In both races there is little difference in the *length* of the skull, but a mean of 132.0 mm. for the *breadth* in the Predynastic people and of 139.0 mm. in the Dynastic Race came to be regarded in my mind as characteristic. The two series in the above table which do not conform to this are both from Abydos and almost certainly, as shown by Dr. Morant, are not the pure Egyptian stock. It was stated above that only the earliest graves are dealt with in this paper for the reason that mixture of the two races at later dates obscures the outstanding differences so marked in the earliest periods. It is, however, important to note that infiltration had begun already in Late Predynastic times, and the results of measurements of skulls from graves of this date frequently show the presence of a larger-headed people. This was the case in Petrie's original discovery at Naḳadah where both Early and Late Predynastic graves were brought to light, the latter including Early Dynastic burials. These are distinguished in Dr. Morant's tables (*loc. cit.*) as A and Q and B.T.R. Only the former, called by Dr. Morant 'Middle?' are included in the above table.

A striking example of the contrast between the two races was seen in a cemetery at Ṭurah on the east side of the Nile valley, a few miles from Cairo, excavated by Hermann Junker in the season 1909-10. The cemetery consisted of graves of Late Predynastic and First Dynasty date, but later interments included a group of Third Dynasty burials. While only a few intact crania were obtained owing to damage by water-soakage, the cemetery occupying ground which had been recently under cultivation, these skulls exhibited very clearly the inherent differences as between the Predynastic and Dynastic races. The means of the few measurements obtained gave the following results:

*Ṭurah*

<i>Measurement</i>	<i>Men</i>		<i>Women</i>	
	<i>Predyn. and First Dyn.</i>	<i>Third Dyn.</i>	<i>Predyn. and First Dyn.</i>	<i>Third Dyn.</i>
Length (mm.) . . .	184.0 (7)	183.7 (6)	176.0 (9)	175.8 (3)
Breadth (mm.) . . .	133.1 (7)	140.1 (6)	131.3 (9)	139.0 (3)
Height (mm.) . . .	131.5 (5)	135.0 (5)	130.6 (7)	129.0 (3)

While these figures in themselves from so few skulls would be of little worth, in the light of what has been proved from a large series of measurements of similar dates elsewhere, they provide remarkable corroborative evidence.

Before leaving the subject of the presence in Egypt of an invading race and one that dominated the country, it is of interest to record the same measurements made on nineteen people, most of whom are of the upper class, found in great tombs or mastabas ranging from the First to the Sixth Dynasty. All of those given are men, and they are listed either by the grave number or by the name of the person.



<i>Name or grave number</i>	<i>Length</i> (mm.)	<i>Breadth</i> (mm.)	<i>Height</i> (mm.)	
<i>First Dynasty</i>				
Saber . . . . .	190·5	140·0(?)	142·0(?)	Estimated from broken skull.
<i>Second Dynasty</i>				
3195 . . . . .	189·0	141·5	132·0	
407 . . . . .	195·0	138·0	125·0	
507 . . . . .	200·5	154·0	153·0	
? grave no. . . . .	191·0	144·5	136·5	
<i>Fourth Dynasty</i>				
G. 2000 . . . . .	187·5	148·0	137·0	Large mastaba; probably important person.
East of Great Pyramid . . . . .	196·0	139·0	123·5	
<i>Fifth Dynasty</i>				
Burial B . . . . .	172·5	143·5	136·5	
Ibi . . . . .	186·5	134·0	136·5	
Ankhkha'ef . . . . .	190·0	147·5	129·5	
Seshmu . . . . .	197·5	140·5	128·0	
East of Unas . . . . .	187·5	148·5	137·5	
Shepsesptah (Prince) . . . . .	192·0	142·0	134·0	
<i>Sixth Dynasty</i>				
Mark oo . . . . .	191·0	137·5	139·0	
Neferrē-Ra'en Sedheb . . . . .	189·0	142·5	136·0	
Ptahemhēt . . . . .	181·0	139·5	134·0	
Nefersheshemrē (Prince) . . . . .	185·5	145·0	136·0	
Mera . . . . .	180·0	145·5	134·0	
Ka-emhent . . . . .	195·0	154·0	141·0	

If we lump these figures together and take the means of the three measurements, we obtain a result which is very striking and which is so far removed from the mean of the Predynastic people that under no circumstances could we consider them to be the same race. It is also very suggestive of the presence of a dominant race, perhaps relatively few in numbers but greatly exceeding the original inhabitants in intelligence; a race which brought into Egypt the knowledge of building in stone, of sculpture, painting, reliefs, and above all writing; hence the enormous jump from the primitive Predynastic Egyptian to the advanced civilization of the Old Empire. Here are the means of the above figures compared with those of the Early Predynastic from Nag' ed-Dēr:

	<i>Length</i> (mm.)	<i>Breadth</i> (mm.)	<i>Height</i> (mm.)
<i>First-Sixth Dynasties</i>			
Mostly nobles (19)	189·3	143·4	135·3
<i>Predynastic</i>			
Nag' ed-Dēr (60)	184·2	132·0	132·9