

## THE EGYPTIAN SECTION.

## THE ECKLEY B. COXE JUNIOR EXPEDITION.

THE excavations of the ECKLEY B. COXE JUNIOR Expedition to Nubia were carried on during the winter and spring at two distinct sites, viz., Anibeh and Halfa. At the former place Mr. C. Leonard Woolley cleared and planned a remarkable castle and part of a town built by the people whose graves provided us two years ago with the rich collection of Meroitic inscriptions and Romano-Nubian objects which occupy a large part of the Egyptian gallery in the Museum. The castle, which is built of brick and rises to a height of four stories above the ground, was built between 100 and 500 A. D., and much resembles a mediaeval European fortress. It was constructed by the Blemyes, a barbarian people living just beyond the borders of the Roman province of Egypt, and is of great interest. In the same district several dozen tombs of the twentieth dynasty were opened, from which were obtained beautiful small cabinet specimens, principally of fayence, some of which are of quite new character.

The digging at Halfa, conducted by the Director of the Expedition, was in regular continuance of the work of 1909 and was executed on a very large scale. The whole area between and around the two temples of Behen was completely cleared to the original ground level, which is at an average depth of ten feet below the present desert surface. It was found that the whole area was covered with dwellings, belonging principally to the priests and officers of the temples. These have been left open for visitors to view, and the tourist who lands at Behen will now descend as at Herculaneum by a staircase which will take him from the floor level of 1910 A. D. to that of 2000 B. C. Four distinct strata of occupation are visible,

the lowest being that of the twelfth dynasty, the other three of the eighteenth dynasty. Above this latter the section shows in places clearly preserved the floors of a Roman-Nubian dwelling.

The excavations enabled us to trace the complete history of both temples, which underwent several restorations and rebuildings. The antiquities obtained include three fine statuettes, one of which, representing a seated scribe named Amenemhat, will rank among the best specimens of Egyptian statuary brought to this country, some fine painted stone jars of new varieties, a door inscribed with the name of King Aahmes, founder of the eighteenth dynasty, and some inscribed stelae.

D. R. M.

## BABYLONIAN SECTION.

## AN ANCIENT PLOW.

AN exceedingly interesting seal impression depicting a plow, drawn by two oxen, is found on a clay tablet with a cuneiform inscription in the University Museum. This tablet belongs to the Cassite period of Babylonian history, and is dated in the fourth year of the reign of Nazi-Maruttash, who lived in the fourteenth century before Christ. The seal used to make the impression must have been an unusually large one, for it measured about two and one-eighth inches in length. After the surface of the soft clay tablet had been covered with writing this seal, which was of the usual cylindrical form, was run like a roller over the inscription on both sides and the four edges of the tablet, which measure about  $2\frac{3}{4} \times 4\frac{1}{2}$  inches. That is, the entire document was covered with the impressions of different parts of this large seal. Unfortunately, there is no complete impression of the seal on the tablet. Some of the parts were repeated a number of times,

but other parts seem to be entirely wanting. Moreover, the surface of a portion of the tablet has suffered considerably, due probably to the moisture in the earth, or exposure to the atmosphere after the tablet had been excavated. The accompanying drawing of the seal impression (Fig. 1) was made after a careful study of the different traces found on the various parts of the tablet by Mr. Herman Faber, Miss Baker and the writer.

"ox," in the inscription, are in use in Babylonia at the present time. It is the Zebu or humped bull (*bos indicus*).

The individual for whom the seal was cut regarded himself as a devotee of Nin-Sar, the god of vegetation, as the first line of the inscription shows (Arad-NIN-SAR). Unfortunately the name of the owner in the second line is so imperfectly preserved that it cannot be read.

For some time other representations of

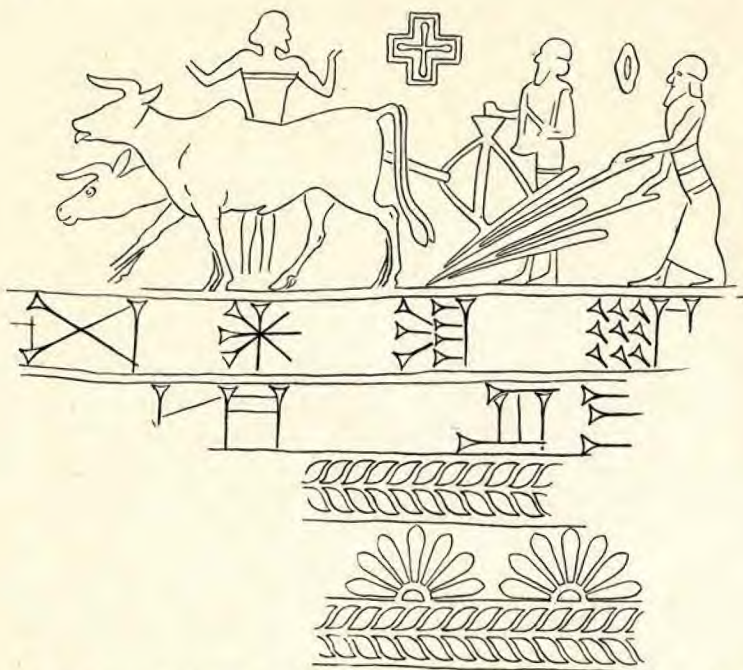


Fig. 1—Gang of men plowing and sowing. From a Babylonian Seal impression. 14th Century B. C.

The plow gang consists of three men. The one depicted larger in size than the others is doubtless the chief. He appears to be driving the animals, as is indicated by his raised arm, perhaps holding a whip. Another, having a bag over his shoulder, is in the act of feeding the tube or grain drill, through which the seed was dropped into the furrow made by the plow, which is being guided by the third man. The animals drawing the plow, known as *alpu*,

the plow in antiquity have been known, but in no instance is it so accurately represented as in this seal impression. A boundary stone of Meli-Shipak, of the Cassite period, recently found at Susa, contains the picture of a plow, which has hitherto been regarded as the earliest. It does not seem to have a tube. There is another picture of a plow found on an undated fragment belonging to the same period. Later representations of plows

with tubes are found on monuments of Sennacherib and Esarhaddon. Plows similar to the one found in this seal impression are in use in Syria at the present time. The plow on the Museum tablet, here discussed, is the earliest known, being about a century earlier than the one on the boundary stone belonging to the reign of Meli-Shipak.

piece of modern machinery does, in that it combined the processes of plowing and sowing.

A. T. C.

A VASE OF XERXES.

As early as 1762 Count Caylus published an account of a marble vase in the Cabinet des Médailles de Bibliothèque Na-

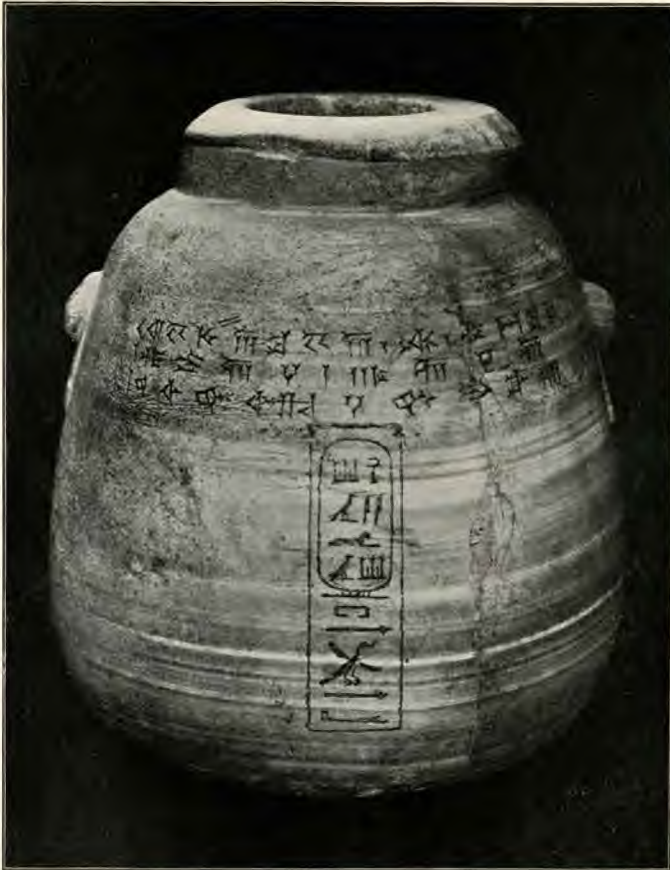


Fig. 2—Alabaster Vase of Xerxes the Great.

It is also interesting to note that one of the latest inventions of our Western civilization whereby the grain is sown by machinery was already anticipated by ancient Babylonians at least thirty-three centuries ago. In fact the simple Babylonian device accomplished what no single

tional, at Paris, inscribed with cuneiform and hieroglyphic characters. But at that time it was not possible to read the inscription.

After some progress has been made in the decipherment of the cuneiform script, through the important investigations made