CHAPTER IX
TOMBS AND TEMPLES—DER-EL-BAHRI

WITH regard to more monumental buildings during the obscure centuries which followed the XIIth dynasty and included the domination of the Hyksos, it appears that a change had taken place in the architectural ideals of the rulers of Egypt. It was no longer their ambition to commemorate themselves by massive pyramids with mortuary temples contiguous and subservient to them. Possibly the removal of the political centre to Thebes, when the habitable area was shut in on the west by rocky heights which would tend to dwarf even the Great Pyramid, may have contributed to this result. The combination of a temple with a pyramid within it as shown in that of Mentuhotep at Der-el-Bahri, which has been described, remains a solitary experiment. It is still more probable that the desecration of the older tombs of the kings, which took place during the long periods of disorder, induced their successors to abandon the practice of marking them by conspicuous monuments. Aahmes, the liberator of Egypt and the founder of the XVIIIth dynasty, was buried in a tomb of masonry at the north end of the western plain of Thebes.\(^1\) It has long since disappeared, but his embalmed body had been removed and is preserved at Cairo. His son and successor Amenhetep I, made his tomb at the extremity of a long gallery excavated in the side of the cliff overlooking the plain, and

\(^1\) Breasted, p. 252.
was the last king to mark its site by a small chapel with a pyramidal roof.¹ His successor, Thothmes I, determined to secure immunity from disturbance after death by concealing his sepulchre. He dispensed with even the simple façade which distinguishes the rock-hewn tombs of the feudal nobles of the XIth dynasty at Elephantine and Beni-Hasan, and excavated his sepulchre in a wild and desolate valley behind the western hills of Thebes with nothing to mark its entrance, intending to erect the necessary mortuary chapel in the form of a temple on the eastern side of the cliff which fronts the Nile. This became the usual practice, and for 500 years the kings of Egypt continued to prepare their burial places secretly in what is now known as “the valley of the tombs of the kings” or in an adjacent valley further west, and to perpetuate their memory by the erection of a temple which has no close association with the tomb.²

The temple which is sometimes supposed to have been intended for the funerary monument of Thothmes I, is situated at Dér-el-Bahri, and adjoins on its north side the XIth dynasty temple of Mentuhotep. (See frontispiece and illustration, p. 52.) But it was actually the work of Queen Hatshepsut, the daughter of Thothmes and wife of her half-brother Thothmes II; and is in effect a monument of her own reign. Its design was obviously influenced

¹ Breasted, p. 278. On p. 525 he mentions another unused tomb of Ahmenhetep I, near Dér-el-Bahri, being in fact that to which some of the bodies of the kings were transferred for safety in the XXIst dynasty.
² The precautions against desecration were in most cases unavailing; many of the tombs were known in the time of Diodorus and Strabo shortly before the Christian era. About fifty-five tombs and mummy pits have been opened, of which seventeen are those of kings.
by that of the adjoining temple, with the omission of the pyramid; whilst it differs materially both in plan and architectural detail from all of later date. Like Mentu-
hetep's in its sloping site it was necessarily built in terraces; but it exceeds it considerably in area, and comprises three courts at ascending levels. The first court was approached by a straight causeway which started at its eastern\(^1\) end from a propylon or trilithon gateway, of which only the foundations remain, and ran for 1600 feet between two rows of sandstone sphinxes. At the entrance of a large open court were two obelisks, and at a distance of about 200 feet within it, an inclined ascent along the central axis led to the second or middle court at a higher level. Along the front of the retaining wall, at each side of the ramp, was a colonnade or portico, the roof of which was supported by 22 pillars in two rows. These pillars, which taper slightly upwards, are rectangular in front, but the backs of the front row are polygonal in plan in order to harmonize with the rear row which are symmetrically chamfered in sixteen sides. The back walls of the porticoes are decorated with designs in low relief depicting the transportation of two obelisks by water with religious and military processions.

In the middle court, as in the first, are the remains of a central ramp leading to the uppermost terrace, and in front of the retaining wall are also two colonnades, the piers of which are all rectangular. Here the wall decorations are of special interest. Those in the northern portico illustrate the divine origin, nurture, and coronation of Hatshepsut, whilst the southern series commemorates the celebrated expedition of five ships which she sent to the land of Punt,\(^2\) and their return laden with gold,

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\(^1\) The temple actually faces about S.E., but for the sake of simplicity the orientation is assumed to be cardinal.

\(^2\) The land of Punt, which there is reason to suppose that the Egyptians regarded as the prehistoric home of their race, was
silver, ivory, ebony, spices, apes, and other strange and valuable merchandise. The art of these reliefs is of a high order. In firm and clear-cut outline they express, in the conventional style of Egyptian sculpture, all essential detail with extraordinary vivacity and obvious truth; but their beauty was seriously impaired by Hatshepsut's nephew and successor Thothmes III. In consequence of domestic animosities he obliterated nearly all representations of, or allusions to, the masterful queen, who throughout her reign chose to be represented as a man, and in these pictorial legends of her infancy appears as a boy. They were further damaged at a later date by the religious reformer Akhenaten, to whom the representation of most of the Egyptian deities was an abomination. They were afterwards inadequately restored by Rameses II.

At the north end of this middle colonnade is a well-preserved pillared hall, the roof of which, level with the upper terrace, is supported by twelve sixteen-sided columns in three rows. The entablature is continuous in Somaliland. Hatshepsut's expedition was far from being the first of its kind, though it has become the most celebrated. Breasted supposes that the ships may have sailed down the Nile and through a canal (Wadi Tumilat), to Lake Timsah and the Red Sea. Mr. Hall ("Near East," p. 147) assumes that they started from Kuseir at the end of Wadi Hammamat, the nearest point to Thebes on the coast of the Red Sea.
with that of the colonnade, and consists of the curved cornice usual in Egyptian work, surmounted by a plain vertical parapet. At the back of the hall is a shrine of Anubis, the walls of which are decorated with symbolic paintings which retain much of their original brilliance. (See page 88.) At the southern end of the corresponding colonnade, but outside the wall of the court, is a somewhat larger shrine of Hathor, which had a separate inclined approach unconnected with the temple. The shrine itself was approached through two porticoes, each of which had a double row of pillars, two of the rows being sixteen-sided and the other two circular and square in section. The latter had capitals showing the Hathor head, an early use of a type of pillar which became common in the latest dynasties.¹

The middle court seems to have been the latest part of the original building, and was not completed. On the north wall, for about half its length, was a covered colonnade 117 feet long, consisting of a single row of fifteen square pillars with four niches in the back wall. This is partly constructed of sandstone, unlike the rest of the building, for most of which a fine white limestone was used. There is no corresponding feature on the south side.

The third or upper platform is entered by a fine granite trilithon gateway still standing, but in advance of this another double colonnade open to the east extended to the right and left of the approach. The pillars of this were again diversified, the outer range being square and

¹ The heads are surmounted by a small shrine, and in this respect differ from a form used at Bubastis dating from the XIith dynasty. See Prof. Naville's Account of the Temple, E. E. F., vol. iii, pl. lxviii.
the inner polygonal in section. The inner court, which was much smaller than the others, was surrounded by a covered portico with a double row of polygonal columns of which little but the bases remain. The eastern wall has reliefs representing a procession of boats transporting the statue of Hatshepsut with attendants, which are no less expressive in execution than the other mural designs. In the back or western wall of the court is the speos or excavated sanctuary. It had a barrel vault constructed in horizontal courses, with an outer roof of inclined slabs to protect it from the detritus of the cliff. In this part of the temple some of the original work has been obliterated by Ptolemaic additions. North and south of the court are two separate enclosures: that on the north has a façade supported by three pillars which are unevenly spaced, and within it is a large altar of limestone for sacrificial purposes, the platform of which is reached by a flight of ten steps at the back. The southern enclosure contains two small open yards and a chamber, the walls of which are covered with reliefs representing offerings of varied produce made by Hatshepsut to Amen. It may have been used for the slaughter of sacrificial beasts.

The architect of this remarkable building was Senmut, the queen's steward, and the estimation in which he was
held is shown by the fact that he is represented and named in one of the reliefs. His tomb exists, though in a ruinous condition, near Dèr-el-Bahri, and two statues of him, one of which was found in the temple of Mut at Karnak, are known. The effective use of the site and the intuitive sense of proportion evident in the disposition and details of the colonnades, as well as the quality of the mural decoration, show that he was an artist of a very high order.

It is, of course, obvious that the disposition and main features of his work were suggested by the adjoining temple of the XIth dynasty, which was at least 600 years older. In that and in Ameni’s tomb of the XIIth, to say nothing of less striking relics of the Middle Kingdom, we can trace the formation of an architectural tradition which retained its vitality during the XVIIIth dynasty. A small but interesting example of it is found at the temple of Amada in Nubia which was built under Thothmes III, Amenhetep II, and Thothmes IV. It is situated on the left bank of the Nile about 125 miles above Philae. It is barely 79 feet long by 34 feet wide, and compr

1 It is the most northerly of a number of rock-tombs on a hill known as Shekh-abd-el-Kurna, between the Ramesseum and Dèr-el-Bahri, where many notables of the XVIIIth dynasty were buried. These tombs are of the same type as those at El-Bahri, some of them having a forecourt with a pillared portico. The mural paintings depicting the social life of Egypt and foreign states, including Kheftiu or men of Crete this in relation to the synchronism of Aegean c

2 See “Le Temple d’Amada,” par H. Grégoire des Antiquités de l’Egypte.)
a porch and a small pillared hall at the back of which is a portico leading into a sanctuary with a vestibule and 4 lateral chambers. The roof of the hypostyle hall is supported by six rectangular pillars which, as well as the walls, are covered with well executed reliefs. The portico at the back of the hall consists of a single row of four polygonal columns of twenty-four sides. They appear to be the earliest specimens in which the number of faces exceeded sixteen. They have low circular bases and no capitals distinct from the plain abacus which resembles those at Dêr-el-Bahri.

It is difficult to disassociate this form of art from that which arose one thousand years later in Greece. The disconcerting fact about it is that after attaining such a degree of development it should have remained unproductive, and without more definite influence on the future art of Egypt. For the designs of nearly all the great temples founded, rebuilt, or enlarged under the Empire after the XVIIIth dynasty, depart from the mere simplicity of earlier days and adopt, with a certain uniformity, a new exuberance of style which forth permeates Egyptian art, whilst it remains most part peculiar to it.
STATUE OF RAMSES II AND ENTRANCE TO THE TEMPLE OF RAMSES III AT KARNAK