

THE NECROPOLIS OF THEBES

The western
mountains

pyramid rears itself. To this the ancients ascribed mysterious and terrifying personality. "Beware of the Peak of the West; for there is a lion in the peak and it strikes as a lion which fascinates [its prey]; it lies in ambush for all who sin against it."¹ This dominating eminence is called "The Horn" (*Ḳurn*) and from it the village below derives its name, *Ḳurneh*.

Extent of the
necropolis

The stretch of hills in whose heart the Theban dead lie buried, cell by cell, has natural limits. South of the temple of Medinet Habu the hills recede sharply from the river, and on the north the deep ravine *Wady Bibân el Mulûk* ("Valley of the Tombs of the Kings") forms another clear boundary, though the cemetery of the early Middle Kingdom is situated beyond this point.

Burial-places
in the foot-
hills

In front of the two-mile line of cliff are four isolated foothills. (1) To the south is *Ḳurnet Murraï*, most of the tombs in which have been stripped of their records by the natives who dwell in them, the tomb of Huy being the only notable exception. (2) In the center of the field is the chief burial-place of the Eighteenth Dynasty, the hill of *Sheikh Abd el Ḳurneh*, a celebrity whose ruined sepulchre on the summit is still the object of local devotion and perhaps has replaced an ancient fane of Meryt-seger or some other popular Egyptian divinity. (3) A spur just to the east of the last-named is well called *El Khokheh* ("The Honeycombed Rock"); for countless tombs, mainly of the Eighteenth Dynasty, penetrate it on both sides and sometimes meet in the middle. The valley *El Assasîf*, lying between this and the main range, is occupied by underground labyrinths of tombs mainly post-Ramesside, and by the processional roads to the two temples of Deir el Bahri. (4) A small and unimportant mound just north of the entrance to the *Bibân el Mulûk* is named *Elwet ed Dibbân* ("Hill of Flies").

And in the
cliffs

Of the burial-places in the range itself we have, from south to north, the tombs of the Ramesside queens and princes (*Bibân el Harîm*), then the Ramesside tombs clustering round the Ptolemaic temple of

¹ Maspero, *Études de Mythologie*, II, p. 407.