Of the tombs recently discovered by the Mission archéologique du Louvre à Saqqara, several date to the Late Period. I should like to dedicate the study of that of Iahmes to a distinguished colleague and great scholar of the art of the late periods. Ultimately, it is to a long-standing friend that this work pays tribute.

The tomb of Iahmes, son of Psamtikseneb (fig. 1), was discovered in autumn 2003, during our thirteenth excavation campaign at Saqqara. It is located north of the Unas Causeway, in the northern sector of the area excavated by the mission. Like numerous tombs previously discovered, it is accessed via a shaft hewn into the structure of an older Old Kingdom mastaba. This shaft was entirely back-filled. The rock-cut burial chamber was intact, a fact rare enough to raise interest in this structure.

The brink of shaft Q appeared directly under a Coptic occupation layer, dated by the presence of large amphorae. Five slabs were laid on the brink, covering up the entrance. The cross-section of the shaft is square, 1.30 m each side. Along a depth of 2 meters, the walls are carefully hewn; this corresponds to the preserved height of the mastaba. As the shaft goes deeper into the bedrock, the cross-section becomes irregular. Exploration stopped at a depth of 3.96 m, in order to study the burials then revealed. Sand clearing in the lower section, which likely leads to other undisturbed burials, is planned for later seasons.

The sand fill contained animal bones and numerous ceramic vessels, some of which were practically complete. These vessel forms are found in relation to burials: Bes vases, bottles, feeders, jugs, spindle-shaped vessels (often revealing dark marks), and torches, as well as a small lekythos (fig. 2) decorated with black palm motifs on a red background, covered with natron. Inside certain vessels were preserved traces of a substance similar to resin, with its glossy aspect and black or honey color. Over 30 uninscribed stoppers also belong to this corpus; they are fashioned from mud, covered in fabric, and occasionally retain the bindings that held them to the vessel. Basketry items also important in burial practices were discovered in the same context: basket, papyrus and reed mats, and papyrus-fiber bundles.

Shaft Q also contained close to 300 faience amulets, blue turquoise or pale green in color (fig. 3). One hundred wedjat eyes of varying types were discovered. Wedjat eyes with schematic
Fig. 1. Saqqara, Tomb of Iahmes. Plan of tomb.

Fig. 2. Lekythos.

Fig. 3. Amulets.