



*EGYPT'S  
ANCIENT HERITAGE*

*By Rodman R. Clayson*



*WISDOM THAT HAS  
ENDURED THE  
TEST OF TIME*

# EGYPT'S ANCIENT HERITAGE



by Rodman R. Clayson

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## **Dedicated to My Friend**

RALPH M. LEWIS

A man for whom I have the greatest of admiration and respect, a man who has provided me with much inspiration.

*R.R.C.*

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# FORWORD

FOR MORE YEARS than I care to remember, I have had a burning romance. This has not been a secret passion. My wife, Rutlie, has been fully aware of this affair. She has been tolerant and, in fact, has shared in my love for ancient Egypt. Together we have stood in wonder, amazement, and fascination at the monuments, many of which are now in ruins. They are magnificent even today, and we think of the grandeur they portrayed in ancient days. The time span of thousands of years does not dim the view of the greatness of the pyramids, temples, and painted tombs. When we first saw the obelisks, those lofty monoliths, we felt like Sinbad who was about to explore fabled palaces and bazaars. To us the now silent halls of the temples seemed to speak softly of time and history. As we walked the dusty stone floors, we thought we heard the voices of ancient kings and temple priests.

Today in Egypt as in olden times the air is clear and the sky is blue. Horus, the divine falcon, still spreads his wings against die blue. There is a breeze. The flutter of Horus slightly breaks the silence. We think we hear familiar names such as Zoser, Khufu, Thutmose, Amenhotep, Seti, and Rameses. There is magic in this mystic land. It holds an entrancing and alluring spell. There is majesty in its stark beauty. It beckons to us. We sense the inspiration that drove the ancients to seek the unknown. Their mood overcomes us. Gripped by the mysterious depths of time we are held captive. The essence of this haunting reverie goes back to the earliest of remote times when man began to dimly perceive and understand his environment and direction in life as something more than the obvious, the Nile River, green fields, the desert, the stone temples and pyramids, and perhaps, just perhaps, he was a tiny part of an Infinite Cosmos.

And so we kneel and dip our hands in the quiet waters of the Nile. We let our eyes drink in the beauty of the land and all that is upon it that our memory would forever be deeply impressed. And so it is.

# PREFACE

**T**HIS BOOK IS not intended to be a history of ancient Egypt. History has been thoroughly done by professional Egyptologists and archaeologists. It is, however, an effort to deal with many things about which it is hoped a large number of readers will find interest. This book is for everyone who is just a little more than idly interested in ancient Egypt. It is more of a compendium than a history.

If I have made any statements that seem questionable, it must be remembered that much of the history of ancient Egypt still remains in the field of speculation. It is my hope that what is presented here will be found to be creditable as well as of much interest. I hope that I have revealed one or two things, at least, that have not been previously presented, certainly not some great truth, but perhaps a new perspective, a new light on an old subject. When I think of Egypt I am imbued with curiosity, excitement, and romance, a genuine love for these people, what they accomplished, and what we today have inherited from them. My fascination is a living thing. As a serious student of Egyptology, I have endeavored to present this study in depth. I have been pulled irresistibly to this land as if I had known, lived, and loved it in a previous existence. Its appeal is not experienced by everyone. Some see today what to them is only a stricken land. Through the mists of time they do not perceive what has caused this land to endure.

I have had the pleasure of hosting groups of enthusiastic people in Egypt, many of whom were Rosicrucians. Being with these people, I came to know those things which were of particular interest to them. Most of their interests paralleled my own; and, although I am a romantic, I am also very serious about this fantastic ancient land. Almost everyone is curious about ancient Egypt, its builders, its oriental mystery, its monumental antiquities. This is evidenced by the nearly four hundred thousand people who annually visit the Egyptian Museum in Rosicrucian Park, San Jose, California, and also by the large number of tourists each year who include Egypt in their travels.

In my former capacity as an officer of the Rosicrucian organization, I have been associated with the Rosicrucian Egyptian Museum for

many years. The curator of the Museum is James French, with whom I traveled to Egypt on one occasion. My travels to Egypt and other lands have been sponsored by the Rosicrucian Order, AMORC, of which the chief executive officer is Mr. Ralph M. Lewis, who made the visits possible, and who in his own right is an authority of long standing on the history of ancient Egypt. His father, Dr. H. Spencer Lewis, and first chief executive of the Rosicrucian Order, had constructed an earlier Egyptian Museum in Rosicrucian Park. In recent years under the direction of Mr. Ralph M. Lewis, a huge, beautiful, modern museum was erected with galleries on several levels. The museum, the largest Egyptian and Babylonian collection in western America, houses tens of thousands of artifacts, statues, etc., most of which are originals from ancient Egypt and Babylonia.

I deeply appreciate the Introduction, and other material provided for this book by Mr. Lewis. I am grateful to my secretaries, Lucille Philbrick for typing the manuscript, and Marion Mosier for typing necessary drafts, and for the valuable aid of Ruth Phelps, librarian of the Rosicrucian Library. I also wish to acknowledge the assistance and interest of a great number of friends too numerous to mention. And, of course, I owe much to the urgings of my good wife, Ruthe, who journeyed with me to this amazing storied land.

Some of the material in this book is from abridged articles which I have written over a period of years for the *Rosicrucian Digest*, the monthly magazine of the Rosicrucian organization, which incidentally is a world-wide nonsectarian fraternal order which teaches a practical philosophy of life with mystical overtones.

What has been written herein is delightfully meaningful to me, and I trust it will be equally so for the reader. The most this author can do is give an impressionistic picture; and, although perhaps it is somewhat imperfect, it is, however, one which has been carefully and conscientiously studied. I try to reconstruct the past and convey through the printed word a fleeting image of that colorful three-thousand-year period in history when Pharaohs reigned over the Valley of the Nile.

RODMAN R. CLAYSON  
 Saratoga, California  
 March 1970



# INTRODUCTION

**W**HEN DOES CIVILIZATION begin? Mutual dependence by a people for the providing of sustenance, security, and their adoption of customs and regulations to assure same, is generally agreed to be the basis of society and the rudiments of civilization. Different civilizations develop and acquire varied cultures.

These cultures are not only the refinement of environmental factors resulting in agriculture, crafts, trade, and more comfortable living quarters. Culture is also represented by a refinement of the individual himself. It is evident in the appraisal of self and its relationship to nature. From the consciousness of this relevancy moral and ethical codes are developed and a growing awareness of esthetic values is realized. These are the springs from which flow the arts, religion, philosophy, and science.

A highly developed civilization is not alone indicated by its military conquests or its efficient administration, but by the intellectual and esthetic achievements of its people. The Egyptian civilization lasted over 3,000 years! As the author of this work, Rodman R. Clayson, points out, Egypt had its cycles of advancement and decline. However, no period of decline ever resulted in a complete loss of previous achievements even though such may have been greatly arrested. This book, EGYPT'S ANCIENT HERITAGE, is not a history of events alone. Rather the author delineates in an interesting manner the aspirations and inner motivations of the Egyptians through the centuries as best as modern Egyptology has revealed them.

One cannot fail to realize upon reading these pages our heritage from Egypt which is reflected in many of the common day practices and even in our conception of life's values.

RALPH M. LEWIS  
Imperator  
Rosicrucian Order, AMORC

# PROLOGUE

IT IS THE nineteenth dynasty in time. It is mid-morning, and the light is dazzling in the Valley of the Kings. The vault of a blue, cloudless sky arches overhead. A falcon silently wings his flight toward the river. A warm, gentle breeze caresses the rugged, dry-as-a-bone rock walls of the valley in the intense silence. More or less hidden in the canyon walls are sumptuous tombs of kings and members of the royal court. Here prevails an infinite loneliness. There is an atmosphere of waiting, of anticipation.

The valley lies to the west of the Nile River. From the river the road follows a gradual upward slope. It is warm. The heat of the sun beats down mercilessly. Dust rises listlessly from the feet of those involved in the procession which is following the well-worn road from the glittering Nile to the Valley of the Dead.

Across the river on the east bank tower the stone pylons and obelisks of the Luxor and Karnak temples. The fluted, graceful columns of the Luxor Temple fronting the river are obvious. At the landing stage on the west bank are the barges and sailing boats, or feluccas, on which the large party of light-brown skinned people have crossed the river. On its way to the valley, the procession has passed the two colossi of the Pharaoh Amenhotep III. The sculptured figures of the king face the river. The statues are the guardians at the gateway to his magnificent temple. A little farther on, the party has passed the Ramesseum on their left. This is what is probably the largest likeness of a man ever carved in stone by man. It is estimated that the statue of Rameses weighs 1,000 tons.

It is an elaborate funeral procession that is entering the valley. A sledge is being pulled by two oxen. On the wooden sledge rests a large rectangular coffin. Resting upon the lid of the coffin is the wooden mummiform coffin of the dead vizier. The latter which, generally speaking, is in the shape of a human figure is colorfully decorated. It will soon be placed within the larger coffin. Preceding the oxen, which are drawing the sledge, walk the officiating priests of the Karnak Temple. One priest wears a leopard skin. Another carries a staff. These

are the kherihebs. The leopard skin and staff are symbolic of the special priestly duties of each. In the procession there are many other priests. Their heads are shaven.

Leading the procession are male and female chanters, or singers, loudly intoning ritual chants. One female carries a sistrum which she shakes from time to time. Both men and women wear immaculate, white, plaited linen garments. There are long as well as short skirts. Our eyes are drawn again to the sledge as the party moves along slowly. Three important personages are riding on it. One is a representative of the Pharaoh, one is an embalmer, and another is a lector. We also see representations of the divine sisters, Isis and Nephthys. On either side of the oxen-drawn coffin march the relatives and friends and servants of the departed. Toward the rear are a large number of professional mourners wailing and otherwise making mourning sounds. All are appropriately costumed.

The procession proceeds in an orderly, although somewhat noisy, manner. One of the many porters bearing gifts which are to be placed in the tomb stops to change the position of the rather heavy load he is carrying. Bringing up the rear of the procession is the widow of the vizier. She rides in what we might call a sedan chair carried by stalwart male bearers.

The procession at last halts at the opening of a newly carved tomb in front of which stands a priest disguised as the dog headed Anubis. All members of the party gather around. In great ceremony the symbolical rite of the "opening of the mouth" is conducted. Having left the oxen and the sledge on the road, the coffin and the mummiform coffin are carried to an area in front of the tomb where the widow of the vizier now stands, having descended from her carrying chair. The priest, disguised as Anubis, now removes the mummy of the vizier from the mummiform coffin and stands it on its feet facing the group. The kheriheb, the priest wearing the leopard skin, brandishes a slender vessel wafting incense. The priest who carries the staff now holds a "magic" wand before the face of the mummy to encourage the symbolical "opening of the mouth." Another priest holds a jar containing a liquid to be used symbolically for the purification of the deceased.

## YESTERDAY HAS MUCH TO TELL

The lamenting widow kneels at the foot of the mummy. Another priest reads the ritual for the presentation of the entire ceremony. He also is a kheriheb. The female figure shakes the sistrum intermittently.

These particular rites being over, the sarcophagus, or outer wooden coffin, is carried deeply into the tomb where it is placed on a pedestal or bier. The mummy is replaced in the mummiform coffin, carried into the tomb and placed in the sarcophagus. This is sealed by the priests. The porters now bring into the tomb accoutrements necessary for the afterlife of the deceased, such as jewelry, weapons, linens, food, etc. A priest places a papyrus copy of the *Book of the Dead* nearby. All of the priests in the guise of gods move about the tomb to make sure there are no evil spirits present.

The walls of the tomb which have been appropriately prepared for this occasion dramatically illustrate the judgment of the heart of the deceased before Osiris. Anubis, the god of death and embalming, weighs the heart of the vizier on the scales. Thoth stands beside the balance to record the weighing. The feather of Maat, goddess of truth, rests in its pan on the side of the scale opposite from the heart.

The priests and porters leave the tomb. Workmen, who have been standing by, securely seal the tomb. All of the cortege then, including the widow and the wailing mourners, retrace their steps under the midday sun down the hot dusty road to the river, but with considerably less ceremonial decorum.

The falcon hovers in the blue sky overhead. The deceased vizier has received the traditional formalities which will insure immortality and his destiny in the afterworld.

## Chapter I

# HISTORICAL SEQUENCE

**A**BOUT 14,000 YEARS ago, that part of Northeast Africa now known as Egypt experienced a change in weather and climate conditions. The rains which had made the tablelands lush with vegetation and game came less and less often. Those who had peopled the plains abandoned the nomadic life of the hunter, entered the Nile Valley, especially the delta region, and settled down to farming. Since then, the character of the Egyptian and life have been dominated by the 750 miles of the “river of life” which links the Nubian frontier with the Mediterranean Sea.

By the time of the new stone age, about 7,000 years ago, the dwellers in the Valley of the Nile decorated pottery and a variety of utensils. They were living in light wood, reed, and mud houses. There were the domestication of useful animals and the establishment of fixed burial customs and funerary beliefs. Sophisticated tools and weapons were introduced.

As time went on, the people who had been divided politically into possibly forty-two small independent districts, or *nomes* ruled by *nomarchs*, united themselves into two clearly defined states: the Kingdom of Lower Egypt, and the Kingdom of Upper Egypt. The latter pertained to the Nile Valley to the south. Cultural and political differences had always existed between the peoples of the north and their neighbors to the south. The two kingdoms became locked in a long, bitter war for the control of the country.

About 3100 B.C. victory was achieved by Upper Egypt largely through the efforts and direction of Menes. The country was united. The uniting of the two lands established the united nation of Egypt, and the First Dynasty began with Menes as the first true Pharaoh. The First and Second Dynasties, extending to 2700 B.C., cover what is known as the Thinite Period. The capital was established at Thinis, near present-day Abydos. Necropolises were established at Abydos and Sakkara.

During the reign of the eighteen kings of the First and Second Dynasties, the development of the newly united nation was rapid. By the beginning of the Third Dynasty, the Egyptians already possessed the political and administrative organization, the material equipment, and the cultural background necessary to the inauguration of the great era which was known as the Old Kingdom. Writing first appeared in Egypt at about this time and achieved a form to which it adhered with few changes for the ensuing 3,000 years.

The Third Dynasty in 2700 B.C. was the beginning of what we refer to as the Old Kingdom. Zoser became Pharaoh and moved the capitol to Memphis to the north. Until this time mastabas had been used for burial (see Chapter II). Zoser inaugurated the structural change to a step or terraced pyramid for his tomb. It is known that he was greatly influenced by Imhotep, his chief adviser. Imhotep, by his grandiose achievements in architecture and the allied arts and sciences, reaped the fruits of the preceding centuries of development, and in doing so established the standards and conventions which from now on governed Egyptian life, culture, and art. Although the Pharaoh Zoser was evidently a strong and able ruler, his fame has been almost completely overshadowed by that of Imhotep, a man renowned from his own day to this as architect, physician, priest, magician, writer, and maker of proverbs. Twenty-five hundred years after his death, "he had become a god of medicine in whom the Greeks, who called him Imouthes, recognized their own Asklepios."

In 2650 B.C. the Fourth Dynasty dawned with Pharaoh Snefru as its founder. He was instrumental in designing the sloping-sided pyramids as we know them today. It is known that he built one pyramid at Dashur, and another at Medum, and it is quite possible that he may have built another. It was in this dynasty that the Pharaoh Khufu built the Great Pyramid at Gizeh. The Pharaohs who followed Khafra and Menkaura also constructed their pyramids at Gizeh.

Pyramid building continued in the Fifth Dynasty, the principal one being that of the Pharaoh Unis. It was at this time that the "pyramid texts" first appeared in the inner chambers of pyramids. We find the "texts" in the pyramids of Unis, Teti, Pepi I, Pepi II, and Sekeremsaf, and they refer largely to funerary formulae.

The Old Kingdom ends with the close of the Sixth Dynasty. A serious and unfortunate social upheaval was beginning. This continued into the Eleventh Dynasty. The time span starting with the Seventh Dynasty and ending with the Eleventh Dynasty is known as the First Intermediate Period. It lasted from 2200 to 2010 B.C.

The power of the landed nobility of the Fifth and Sixth Dynasties had steadily risen until toward the end of the latter dynasty it threatened to overshadow that of the king himself. During the short reigns of the weak rulers who succeeded Pepi II, this threat became a reality. The central government was disrupted or ignored; the country broke up into a series of petty states, and the Old Kingdom came to an end in dissention, internal strife, local feuds, and general disorder. These conditions existed for more than a century with first one princeling and then another claiming sovereignty over the land. During this period there rose and fell in rapid succession the Seventh and Eighth Dynasties of Memphis, and the Ninth and Tenth Dynasties of Herakleopolis. In the Eleventh Dynasty the Mentuhoteps, the warrior nomarchs of Thebes, defeated the confederacy and firmly re-established Pharaonic rule.

The Middle Kingdom which spans about 200 years pertains solely to the Twelfth Dynasty. This was a time for the reconstruction of the Pharaonic state at Thebes. Peace and prosperity prevailed. The Twelfth Dynasty gave Egypt good Pharaohs, among which were Amen-em-het I and II, and Sen-usert I and II. For Thebes it also brought into prominence the god Amon.

The Second Intermediate Period began in 1800 and continued to 1570. It involved dynasties from the Thirteenth through the Seventeenth. The kings of the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Dynasties were feeble, and the political, economic, and cultural conditions for the state worsened. About 1750 B.C. Egypt was subjected, for the first time in its recorded history, to the indignity of a foreign overlordship. The northern part of the country was seized by the princes of an Asiatic people known to us as the Hyksos. From their fortified capital in the Delta, these foreigners ruled the whole of Egypt, and exacted tribute from the native rulers to the south. Their presence forever afterward had an effect upon the life and culture of the Egyptians. The Hyksos

were basically of Semitic stock. They were the first people with whom the Egyptians came in contact who knew and used the horse. The horse became an important animal in Egypt. The Hyksos introduced the chariot for warlike purposes.

For the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Dynasties, Hyksos kings prevailed. In the Seventeenth Dynasty the princes from Thebes began to fight back in earnest, with Kamose being particularly strong. His younger brother Ahmose ascended the throne and successfully drove the Hyksos out of Egypt. Ahmose was the founder of the Eighteenth Dynasty, and this was the beginning of the Great Era which we know as the New Kingdom, the Empire Period. Once more Egypt became an independent and powerful nation and embarked upon those centuries of glorious achievement and high civilization.

No longer content with simply policing their northern and southern boundaries, the Pharaohs of the Eighteenth Dynasty campaigned farther and farther into Asia and Africa. At the death of Thutmose III, the great-great grandson of Ahmose, Egypt controlled and levied tribute on an empire which stretched southward to the fourth cataract of the Nile, and northward to the farther shore of the Euphrates. Raw materials, finished articles, animals, and an immense supply of gold poured into the Valley of the Nile. It was drawn as tribute from provinces and vassal states, and extracted in a steady stream from the rich and constantly worked mines in Nubia. Gold became the outstanding medium of barter. By controlling the bulk of gold supply of the then known world, Egypt was able for centuries to hold the balance of power among the nations of the Middle East. Although conservative to the end and ever reluctant to alter its traditional mode of existence, "the land watered by the Nile" became in the following centuries less an isolated African community and more and more a component part of the eastern Mediterranean world. The Pharaoh ruled in absolute power. The nobility so prominent in the Middle Kingdom had been completely suppressed and their place taken by numerous officials of the crown. At the head of these and directly responsible to the Pharaoh himself were two viziers, one for Upper Egypt, and one for Lower Egypt. In addition there were two chief treasurers.



Ahmoese was succeeded by Amenhotep I, Thutmose I and II, and Queen Hatshepsut who actually reigned as a Pharaoh. Then came illustrious Thutmose III who was a king of many attributes, not the least of which were his military exploits. He was followed by Amenhotep II, Thutmose IV, Amenhotep III, the builder of Luxor Temple. Except for the land granted by royal decree to the god, all land was the property of the crown, and was worked by the king's serfs or was bestowed "as a favor of the king's bounty" on his officials. The principal government activities in which every citizen played a part, either voluntarily or by compulsion, included, in addition to the almost yearly military campaigns, the exploitation of quarries and mines, the opening of trade routes through the deserts, the excavation of waterways and irrigation canals, and the erection of new and increasingly stupendous buildings. The chief beneficiary of the Pharaohs' extensive building operations was the god Amon-Ra of Thebes. As patron of the nation's capital and the special divinity of Egypt's ruling family, this deity had risen to unchallenged supremacy.

The principal house of the god, the greatest shrine, was the Temple of Amon at Karnak. To the service of this and numerous other temples to the god, there was diverted much of the nation's wealth in gold, lands, serfs, and cattle. The priesthood of Amon, as time progressed, absorbed more and more of the country's manhood, and the administration of the god's huge estates required a host of stewards, scribes, treasurers, overseers almost as numerous as those in the employ of the king.

Apparently Thutmose I was the first Pharaoh to have his tomb excavated in the secluded cliffs to the west across the Nile. His example was followed by the Pharaohs of the Eighteenth as well as those of the Nineteenth and Twentieth Dynasties. The necropolis on the west bank became what we know as the Valley of the Royal Tombs of the Kings. Funerary beliefs were dominated by magic, as typified by a series of spells designed to assure the comfort and well-being of the deceased in the world beyond the tomb, and known collectively as the *Book of the Dead*.

Amenhotep III was succeeded by his son who moved the capital 200 miles to the north and assumed the name of Akhnaton. He set

up a new religion devoted exclusively to the worship of the vital force emanating from the disk of the sun, “the living Aton “ The new religion placed emphasis on love of nature. The affairs of state were apparently ignored, and the empire of his forebears fell slowly to pieces and disorder. Akhnaton’s monotheism, however, was destined to live on and later become a part of the moral culture of the world. Akhnaton’s wife and queen was the beautiful Nefertiti. Akhnaton was briefly succeeded by his son-in-law, Smenkh-ka-ra, then Tut-ankh-amon, and Aye, and finally Horemhob, which brought the Eighteenth Dynasty to a close in 1305 B.C. With the passing of Akhnaton, the god Amon-Ra was restored at the country’s religious center at Thebes.

The Nineteenth Dynasty included the Pharaohs Rameses I, Seti I, and the prolific builder Rameses II. The Twentieth Dynasty included nine Pharaohs who carried the name of Rameses. The decline was under way. Frontiers were no longer protected. The Amon priests assumed power and control of the country. In the Twenty-second Dynasty the Libyans seized control. The next two dynasties brought further disintegration. In the Twenty-fifth Dynasty the Ethiopians rose to power. The Assyrians sought to invade Egypt, but were driven out. There was temporary calm during the Twenty-sixth Dynasty known as the Saite Period. The end came in the Twenty-seventh Dynasty with the onslaughts of King Cambyses of Persia. Egypt remained a Persian province through the next three dynasties, until conquered by Alexander the Great in 332 B.C. Upon Alexander’s death, a Macedonian general named Ptolemy became governor of Egypt. For the next three hundred years Egypt was ruled by Ptolemy’s descendents. The last of the Ptolemies was Cleopatra VII. Her temple is at Denderah. Ironically, this Greek woman has come to be the best known “Egyptian” queen in history. After her, the Romans ruled Egypt for nearly 500 years.



EGYPTIAN FELUCCA

Perpetuating the ancient method of crossing the Nile.

## Chapter II

# THE PHARAOHS' ROYAL TOMBS

**T**ODAY IN TRAVELING to Egypt one uses modern, fast jet air transportation. Such travel is in sharp contrast to the still prevailing modes of transportation in this timeless land. Although today's Cairo has the modern with the old, the city dates back one thousand years, and we find on the streets camels, donkeys, horse and water buffalo drawn carts just as was done when the city was young so long ago. For many Egyptians, camels and donkeys are important as beasts of burden, as well as a means of travel.

Picturesque sailboats, known as feluccas, still ply the Nile River. Then, as now, they provide a ready means of transporting people, as well as cargoes of manufactured earthen jars, sugar cane, and other products. Some Egyptian families even live on their feluccas. The felucca, as seen on the Nile today, is undoubtedly very similar to the first sailboat conceived by the ancient Egyptians.

Among their many accomplishments, the ancient Egyptians pioneered such things as astronomy, medicine, structural engineering, hard metal tools, an alphabet, writing, art, sculpturing, a kind of paper from the papyrus reed, and a calendar. I will touch on some of these achievements in the chapters to follow.

Their astronomy was practical, and from it they introduced a rational calendar. The agricultural calendar of ancient Egypt, consisting of three seasons of four months of thirty days, formed the background of peasant life, and, with the addition of five intercalary days at the end of the year, was used as the official calendar of 365 days to the year. This "year" originally began with the arrival in Egypt of the flood-water of the Nile in the third week of July by our reckoning. The absence of a leap year caused this to lag through the centuries. The inundation usually prevailed from late July to late November.

Their civilization and culture left for us the very earliest fixed date of 4241 B.C. The year began with the appearance of the star Sirius at sunrise. This annually presaged the rising of the Nile River to the point where it would inundate land on either side of the river, and make possible abundant crops.

The temples and temple complexes were many up and down the land, but always along the Nile. Perhaps the greatest of temple complexes was that of Karnak at Thebes, now located in an area known as Luxor. It is estimated that Karnak was 2,000 years in the building.

Until one visits Egypt, the casual visitor does not realize that, despite the various temples, they are far outnumbered by tomb structures of one kind or another. On the other hand, as all the world knows, preoccupation with death and mummification was a peculiarity of the Egyptians. However, this was not a morbid preoccupation.

The early Egyptians accepted the sun-god Ra as their chief deity and the Pharaoh as the "Son of Ra" or "son of the sun." He ruled as king and god in one. To comprehend this, one should try to understand the religious background of the Pharaoh, for the office and power are likewise inexplicable. Such a background helps to explain the seventy or so man-made mountains of stones known as pyramids which extend in a long irregular line set back some distance from the banks of the Nile, beginning just west of the city of Cairo and continuing southward. They are the Pharaohs' royal tombs.

Some authorities have suggested that the pyramid shape was adopted because it resembles the slanting rays of the sun shining down through a break in the clouds. There are those who believe the pyramids represented the primeval hill so important in the ancient Egyptian stories of creation. Others have said that the pyramids were mountains in miniature.

The Pharaohs' custom of having their tombs in pyramid like mountains was followed by later kings, who chose the natural mountains at Thebes in Upper Egypt, where are found the Valley of the Kings and the Valley of the Queens. Apart from their religious significance, the pyramids are a lasting testimony of the power of the Pharaohs such as Zoser, Snefru, Khufu, Khafra, and Menkaura of the

early dynasties. They must be included among the great builders of ancient Egypt.

At Thebes one marvels at the tremendous spread of Egyptian antiquities. Here, in ancient days, were the 100 doors celebrated by Homer. Thebes was the new capitol of the Pharaohs in the Middle and New Kingdoms which steadily became more splendid and opulent during ten successive dynasties. The tomb of Tut-ankh-amon was found in the Valley of the Kings. In this valley, the walls and ceilings of the tombs are adorned with religious scenes and inscriptions of great beauty and interest. The valley itself is an awe-inspiring scene of natural rugged grandeur.

Even the tombs of the nobles have panoramic scenes representing the incidents of daily life and the events in the careers of their owners. They, too, are lavish. Prior to the pyramid age, it was customary to construct tombs on the level land in rectangular shapes such as those found at Sakkara. They were called *mastabas*. First made of dried mud-brick, they were later made of stone, but always the Pharaoh saw to it that he would have what he felt would be a proper resting place. Mastabas were usually flat, and contained several chambers. For the Egyptian, the soul of the dead continued a new life exactly as it had lived the old one, the tombs containing all the things that had been used in daily life—even meals for the future. The mummies were preserved in their sarcophagi, at least until the tomb robbers found them later. The coffins were beautifully decorated with important symbols. Some were of gold. All of this was surrounded by immense treasures.

Three of the largest pyramids are found at Gizeh, west of Cairo, the largest and perhaps the best known, of course, being the Great Pyramid of the Pharaoh Khufu, whose reign began early in the Fourth Dynasty. A huge towering pyramid would be conspicuous throughout the land. As a tomb it was fitting tribute to the king. When the sun-god Ra arose each day, his first rays would greet the summit of the eternal abode of the divine Pharaoh. Khufu was called Cheops by the Greeks. Khafra, also known as Chephren, and Menkaura as Mycerinus, built the other two pyramids at Gizeh across the river and eight miles west of what is now Cairo.

The pyramids were once sheathed in dazzling white limestone. Associated with each, and standing at its base, were two or more temples. One was known as the Mortuary Temple, another the Valley Temple. The Valley Temple stood near the river and the edge of cultivated land. It was the entrance to the pyramid complex. A stone causeway connected it with its pyramid. In it stood statues of the Pharaoh. Sometimes there were small chapels.

Visitors to Egypt will find the Valley Temple of the second pyramid at Gizeh, that of Khafra, with its long connecting causeway, standing beside the sphinx to the east of the pyramid. As a matter of fact, this is often called the Temple of the Sphinx. The sphinx, a monumental figure of a man-headed lion, guards the eastern approach to the pyramids of Gizeh. The tablet on the breast of the sphinx recounts the dream of Thutmose IV that he would become Pharaoh and would remove the sand that then covered the sphinx. Thutmose IV did become Pharaoh, and he removed the sand which covered the sphinx. There is no question that all pyramids, except perhaps the Great Pyramid of the Pharaoh Khufu, were built as tombs. For the last hundred years, there has been controversy as to whether this pyramid was actually the tomb of Khufu. Archaeologists say that it was; romanticists doubt it.

The royal tombs can be understood only in the context of the ancient Egyptians. They believed in life after death. Survival after death depended largely on the preservation of the earthly body in the tomb, and therefore on the permanence of the tomb itself. They did not feel that their future life was to be essentially different from their earthly life, although they felt that it would be more comfortable and elaborate. They sought to preserve their bodies, believing them necessary to the well-being of the Ka. Ka seems to correspond to what we define as the personality of the soul. It was considered necessary for the Ka to recognize its body after death, in order to be united with it. That was why the ancient Egyptian felt it was important to have his body preserved. It is well known that the Egyptians excelled in the embalming and mummifying of bodies. Death was life prolonged forever. The colossal monumental tombs were constructed to "make his name live." They considered death an interruption, not the end of life.

Their thinking was profoundly influenced by the miraculous daily rebirth of the sun, and the annual rebirth of the Nile. A cosmic order was once and for all established at the time of creation. In accordance with their static interpretation of the cosmos, they considered life to be everlasting. They denied the reality of death.

Their ancient culture sought to bring them into alignment with the cosmos through the permanence of their monuments and buildings. The pillared temples, geometrical pyramids, and chambered shrines are more than houses of cult mysteries and consideration for the dead. They are concrete embodiments of the philosophy of life. They built for eternity, and they would live eternally.

Gold is not subject to deterioration. It was easily connected with the concept of eternal life. It was the active symbol of eternity, and this was transmitted to the dead who wore it. Gold, jewels, ornaments found in tombs were not a show of ostentation, but rather the assurance of immortality.

They believed they would live after death in much the same way they had enjoyed their earthly existence. The deceased was to be aware of the ritual which must be observed in addressing the gods of the underworld. To enable relatives and funerary priests to attend the needs of the deceased, a place in the tomb was reserved for offerings. By design the tomb masons provided a false door which allowed the Ka, the double of the deceased, to move about, and also partake of the offering. It was common practice to have a false door in the sepulchral chamber to allow freedom of movement for the Pharaoh's Ka.

Egyptologist John A. Wilson has written that one cannot understand Egyptian history and the testimony of its monuments without considering the convictions and motives that caused these ancient people to believe and do what they did. The pyramids, the temples, tell the secret of their beliefs, convictions, culture, and power. All of us, wherever we may live, owe a debt to this ancient culture in a land which even today continues to wear the mysterious air of majesty.





### THE GREAT SPHINX

The Great Sphinx located at Gizeh, one of many sphinxes in Egypt. It is the largest sculpture of the ancient world.

## Chapter III

# TEMPLES

**D**URING THE 3,000 years of recorded history the Pharaohs of Ancient Egypt carried on enormous building programs. It is believed that beginning with Menes in 3100 B.C. and ending with the Ptolemaic period about 50 B.C. the country was ruled by at least 350 Pharaohs through thirty dynasties. In addition there were queens who governed from the throne. They were Queen Nitocris of the Sixth Dynasty, Queen Sebeknofrure of the Twelfth Dynasty, and Hatshepsut of the Eighteenth Dynasty. With the passing of Queen Cleopatra VII in 30 B.C., Egypt's glorious history ended, and the country became a part of the Roman Empire.

Throughout their long history, the Pharaohs' stone masons skillfully built pyramids and other tombs and temples to the various gods. Many of the structures were monumental such as the Great Pyramid at Gizeh and Karnak Temple at Thebes. Very few temples built prior to the Eighteenth Dynasty remain today due to the fact that succeeding Pharaohs, in building new temples, used blocks from older temples as well as newly quarried stone.

Along the Nile there still stand many beautiful ancient temples for the visitor to behold. Among these is the Hathor Temple, restored by Cleopatra VII at Denderah. A soaring pylon fronts the precinct which has two great courts and a many-columned hypostyle hall. I well remember the circular astronomical zodiac on the ceiling of a second-story chamber. The present configuration is a cast of the original which now reposes in the Louvre in Paris. From the temple roof we gazed across green sugar cane fields to the Nile sparkling in the sunlight.

This is the Temple of Cleopatra, the queen of kings, who, in the tragic and despairing atmosphere that surrounded her, seduced Caesar, married Anthony, squandered her fortune on Octavius, and preferred suicide to being humiliated before Rome.

To the north at Abydos is the Temple of Seti I with two fine hypostyle halls. The reliefs on the interior walls are among the finest in Egypt. We find here the famous gallery of kings which shows the cartouches of seventy-two Pharaohs. Abydos was a flourishing city in ancient Egypt. It was the burial center associated with the cult of Osiris, the god of the dead. A tomb in the ancient necropolis was once thought to be that of the god, but was in fact that of a king of the First Dynasty. For this reason the sanctuary was a privileged burial place.

Four hundred miles south of Cairo at Luxor on the site of the old capitol city of Thebes, we find several temple complexes. On the east side of the river we have, first, the Temple of Luxor built largely by Amenhotep III. The precinct is fronted by a huge pylon and an obelisk and statues of Rameses II. Within are several colonnaded courts, the principal and most beautiful one being that constructed by Amenhotep III. The fluted columns of the hypostyled hall were designed to represent clusters of papyrus, with each bundle of the reeds tied at each end. And, of course, there is the usual sanctuary area. The complex was added to by Tut-ankh-amon, Horemhob, and Rameses II. A short distance to the north is the tremendous Temple of Karnak complex with its axis directed toward the river. At one time Luxor and Karnak Temples were connected by an avenue of ram statues. Many of these reclining figures are still to be seen.

Few of the great Egyptian temples of dynastic times were planned and executed as single units, most of them having been built, rebuilt, and added to at irregular intervals over long periods of years. Nearly all of them conform to the same basic pattern. The central or inner portion of the temple, always the first part built, contains the sanctuary and the adjoining private chambers—in other words, the living quarters of the god. In front of this is the columned audience chamber, or hypostyle hall, corresponding to a semi-public reception room. This, in turn, opens onto a walled and usually colonnaded forecourt, approached from the front of the temple through a monumental gateway, flanked by two great rectangular towers supporting tall flag or pennant staffs. The whole of this last named element, the pylon, is repeated again and again before the earlier parts of the temple, each of these parts having at one time been the front of the building. Each temple was provided with several necessary storerooms.

By far the largest building of this type is the Temple of Amon at Karnak, situated in the midst of a 200-acre precinct. More than 400 yards in length, the temple complex, with the exception of some Middle Kingdom structures, was built almost entirely of sandstone, surfaced with white stucco, and covered with miles of painted reliefs. The forecourt, fronted by the colossal first pylon, covers over 90,000 square feet. Behind the court, and screened by the second pylon, is one of the wonders of the ancient world—the great hypostyle hall, erected together with the pylon by the first three Pharaohs of the Nineteenth Dynasty: Rameses I, Seti I, and Rameses II. The roof of this tremendous hall was supported by 134 tremendous columns. Those of the central aisle tower sixty-nine feet to the seven-ton stone roof beams. Six acres of relief sculpture decorate the interior. Back of the hypostyle hall, and surrounding the remains of the original limestone temple of the Middle Kingdom, is a series of pylons, courts, halls, inner chambers, and obelisks built by the great Pharaohs of the Eighteenth Dynasty. In its time so long ago, the Amon Temple sparkled with color and reflected light, its brightly painted cornices standing out vividly above its white walls, its gigantic bronze doors, its tall pennant-tipped flag staves encased in electrum, and the electrum caps of its towering obelisks gleaming under a bright Egyptian sun.

On the west side of the river is one of the numerous temples built by Rameses II, and the temple complex at Medinet Habu. Here is the lion goddess Sekhmet's Temple of Rameses III with its wonderful courts and columns. Here also are the courts and inscriptions of the impressive Temple of Thutmose III.

Nearby facing the Nile are the two stone seated figures of Amenhotep III. These sixty foot high statues are known as the Colossi of Memnon. The statues once fronted a temple of Amenhotep which was destroyed by an earthquake in 27 A.D.

In the Valley of the Kings is the lovely Mortuary Temple of Queen Hatshepsut. It is built on three terraces with inclined ramps, and is today known as Deir el-Bahri. The temple columns are square. The capitals of some of the columns are sculptured to represent the cow goddess Hathor. Colorful wall murals depict the expedition which Hatshepsut sent to the land of Punt. Beside her temple complex are the

ruins of what was once the monumental Temple of Mentuhotep III. Many of Egypt's great Pharaohs, such as Thutmose III and Rameses II, celebrated their campaign victories by building magnificent temples decorated with sculpture and painting of outstanding beauty.

Egyptian temples were geometrical in form. Towering pylons, the outer walls of which slant inward toward the top on the structure, came into use in the Eighteenth Dynasty. The pylon symbolizes entry into the sacred precinct and indicates the entrance to the temple. In the wall facing outward were several vertical recesses for the placement of flag poles with banners at their top. There were stone statues of the Pharaoh signifying that he was the living son of the god of that particular temple. The avenue leading up to the entrance was sometimes lined with sphinxes. If an obelisk had been erected, it signified the abode of the god.

In its simplest form a temple consisted of a forecourt, a hypostyle hall of columns, and a sanctuary. Usually the sanctuary was ensconced in the darkest recesses of the temple. Temple floors were paved with what appears to us as flagstone. Hieroglyphs and other inscriptions, particularly in the outer wall, were incised deeply, often as much as five inches, another indication that everything the Egyptians did was to be permanently everlasting. In an inscription at Medinet Habu my extended fingers penetrated four inches.

All worshipers had access to the first or large court behind the pylon. Those of the class of nobility could enter the intermediate area. Only the priests could enter the sanctuary where rites were conducted every day before the principal statue of the god. Each temple had chambers for the purpose of receiving offerings and tribute. When there were special rites in the temple, the beholders would hear the coarse ringing sound of the sistrums, accompanied by instruments of the musicians who took part in great temple processions amid the smoke and fumes of incense. In this regard an inscription reads, “. . . satisfied the hearts of the gods.”

The general form of construction was the same for all temples except for the early sun temples at Heliopolis and Abusir among others, and the Temple of Akhnaton which was open to the sky to receive the rays of Aton, at what is now called Tell el-Amarna.

With stone structures, each succeeding Pharaoh endeavored to further glorify the national or prevailing deity. At Karnak it was of course Amon-Ra. The architecture, although massive, was in good taste and achieved harmony between refinement and simplicity. An inscription from the Pharaoh Khety reads, "Erect monuments to the gods so that the name of the builder may live again." Some of the temple inscriptions were done with paint or enamel in brilliant colors such as blue and yellow. To see these colors today, one finds it hard to realize that they were applied thousands of years ago. We gaze with little understanding at the results of human genius and colossal powers which moved and set these masses of stone.

In the naos in the temple sanctuary, reposed a wooden boat possibly as long as twenty feet. In the center of the boat, and rising from its deck, was a sort of square kiosk, chapel, or shrine with columns at each corner supporting a canopy, all of which was appropriately decorated. At the prow and stern were representations of the head of the god of the temple. At Edfu this was Horus; at Karnak it was the ram of Amon; at Denderah it was Hathor, the cow goddess. The boat was equipped with a carrying lateral pole on each side. Every four or five days the statue of the god was taken from the temple sanctuary and placed in the shrine under the canopy on the boat, following which, with several priests on each side bearing the vessel, it was carried in a procession from the temple and throughout the city.

The religion of the ancient Egyptians was stable and beautiful. It imposed the concept that the universe had been established for all eternity with an unvarying pattern. The world was held in balance by the harmonious relationship of its elements. Their necessary cohesion was indispensable to the preservation of established forms. This was the aspect of the world that had been chosen by the gods. This was the universal order with basic elements which provided for the stars in their courses, the succession of days, and even the humblest of manifestations. This was cosmic balance, harmony in living, religious piety; it was truth and justice, and it was respect for the earthly order set up by the gods.

In the temple it was necessary for the Pharaoh to repeat certain fundamental rites every morning. Symbolically he was reborn each day.

At Karnak, it is believed that he ascended the stairs to behold and greet Ra, the sun-god, at the great window constructed for that purpose. As Ra, in his several forms and aspects, was purified and reborn each morning at dawn, so his incarnation, the Pharaoh, had to undergo the same daily ritual renewal in order to identify himself with the Lord and Giver of Life. Every morning the priests cleansed and incensed the statue of the god of the temple. When the Pharaoh did not arise for the renewal ritual, a priest substituted for him.

From the Memphite theology, in which the god Ptah was involved, we learn that Ra is the sole god, he who manifests in many forms as different gods. The sun appears as this divine power. Every night he goes down into the nether world, and is reborn again the next morning on the eastern horizon. In accordance with this concept, Ra is Kheper, he is Horus, he is Atum. It was believed that all the gods were forms or aspects of Ra. The sun disk is the visible manifestation of Ra. "Thou didst make thy first forms as Ra in order to illumine the two lands which thou hast made, he who riseth in the heavens, his form being the sun."

In Egyptian theology, the one god is many, with many forms and names. Perpetually the god moves in a cycle of life and death. Ceremonies for the dead are related to this concept. The rebirth of Ra each day undoubtedly gave rise to the myth of Osiris. The deceased was identified with Osiris, the god, it was said, who died and came to life again.

It was the ancient Egyptian's attitude that the purposefulness of nature and all natural phenomena spring from its being the physical manifestation of the metaphysical cosmos. His architecture signifies constancy. The old might be augmented by the new, but nothing ever changed and nothing was discarded. Their life was in accord with the cyclic renewal patterns of nature. The stone temples and tombs symbolized their beliefs in an effort to communicate their concepts. Monuments bridged the chasm between mortal man and the undying gods. We, today, try to breathe into what we see in Egypt the pantheistic spirit that originally determined their shape and purpose. What they built was to last forever. The heritage of ancient Egypt will be found not only in the stone monuments, but in the art, science, and culture left to the world.



KINGDOM SYMBOLS

The two different style columns denote Upper and Lower Kingdom of Ancient Egypt.



## Chapter IV

# THE MYSTERY OF THE GREAT PYRAMID

**W**AS THE GREAT Pyramid used as the tomb and burial place for the Pharaoh Khufu of the Fourth Dynasty? Professional archaeologists are convinced that it was. Mystics and romanticists say that it was not. There is much to be said, of course, for the contentions of the men of science. Until recent times, the Great Pyramid was the largest edifice ever constructed by the hands of man. It still remains one of the largest, and will undoubtedly continue to stand for another 5,000 years.

Unless seen, the size of this pyramid is almost incomprehensible. It covers thirteen acres. The measurement of each side at the base is 747 feet. It is 485 feet high, and contains 2,300,000 blocks of granite, averaging two and one-half tons each. Some of these blocks are larger and weigh as much as fifteen tons. Across the Nile River, and just eight miles to the west from the present city of Cairo, the Pyramid of Khufu stands upon the fairly high Gizeh plateau along with the pyramids of Khafra and Menkaura. It is in a commanding position, and overlooks the area for miles in every direction.

The Great Pyramid is one of many which stretch southward in an irregular line for perhaps sixty miles to the west of the Nile River. The Pharaoh Zoser of the Third Dynasty built the very first pyramid at Sakkara, a short distance south of Gizeh. Zoser's was a step or terraced pyramid. Prior to Zoser's time, the Pharaohs had been entombed in mastabas which are rectangular brick structures. Zoser was followed by what is believed to be eight Pharaohs, some of whom made attempts at constructing small pyramids.

Snefru came to the throne as Pharaoh with the beginning of the Fourth Dynasty. Snefru is credited with building at least two if not three pyramids. One of these is at Medum. It is quite possible that this,

a step pyramid, was started at the end of the Third Dynasty, and was completed by Snefru. Six miles to the south of Sakkara on fairly high ground at what is known as Dashur, Snefru constructed two pyramids. Although one of these structures is known as the Bent Pyramid, they both adhere to the shape and form of the pyramids to be erected by Pharaohs which were to follow, all of which were presumably used as tombs for the Pharaohs. It appears that Snefru was entombed in the Bent Pyramid of Dashur. Snefru was succeeded by his son, Khufu, and thus began the illustrious Fourth Dynasty of tremendous pyramid building.

At Gizeh on the high plateau, Khufu, over a period of years, built his Great Pyramid. As a result of the conclusions of present-day archaeologists, it is believed that Khufu was one of the great Pharaohs of ancient Egypt, that he was a man of dignity, and that he stabilized the economy and all of the affairs of the country. It is natural to think that Khufu built his pyramid as his eternal house, and that he followed the customs of his predecessors. Within the pyramid itself would be a chamber which held the sarcophagus of the Pharaohs body. In those days, the west bank of the Nile was much closer to Gizeh than it is now. As was the custom, a causeway was built from the eastern side of the pyramid to the west bank of the Nile, and, as was the custom, an edifice known as the Valley Temple was constructed there; and at the foot of the pyramid on the east side was constructed the Mortuary Temple. Archaeologists, however, state that the plan of the Mortuary Temple of Khufu's pyramid is entirely different from those which preceded and followed it.

Immediately east of the Great Pyramid he three smaller pyramids. We see them today in fairly good condition. These were erected in the custom of the times. It is thought by historians that the southernmost of these three pyramids was erected for the Great Wife of Khufu, whose name was Henutsen, and that the other two small pyramids were probably built for other wives of Khufu or perhaps his princess daughters. Also, in accordance with the custom of the times, "solar" boats were placed in pits on various sides at the foot of the Great Pyramid.

The entrance to the Great Pyramid which, of course, has long since been closed, is in the center of the northern face, and opens into a long, steeply ascending passage. The entrance used today is the breakthrough in the northern side caused by Caliph Al Mamoun and his men in 820 A.D. In this pyramid there are no hieroglyphs or murals. The only marking of any kind in the entire pyramid that associates it with Khufu is found in the structural stress area above the King's Chamber. Here is found the quarryman's mark which is identified with Khufu.

Now let us turn our attention to the contentions of the mystics and romanticists that the Great Pyramid was not the eternal house of the Pharaoh Khufu. There is no evidence that the huge red granite sarcophagus in the King's Chamber, which was situated quite high in the pyramid, was ever used for burial purposes. An American authority recently said that Khufu secretly arranged for a false burial at his pyramid and directed that his body be placed elsewhere. The body of Khufu has never been found. The opening into the chamber is through a forty-two inch square entranceway. There is evidence that the construction of the pyramid was altered twice during its construction. In the exact center of the pyramid, and below the King's Chamber, is a hall known as the Queen's Chamber, which was never finished and was therefore never used. In the bottom of the pyramid, at the foot of a descending passage in what is known as the pit, is a chamber which some archaeologists believe was originally intended as the burial place of the Pharaoh. Apparently it was never used. Perhaps in the beginning, Khufu intended for the pyramid to be his eternal house, and then changed his mind and was buried elsewhere. Perhaps one of the pyramids at Dashur attributed to his father is his.

In all pyramids the burial chamber was at the ground level or below it. The Great Pyramid is the exception. There is no doubt that Khufu built this pyramid because, as was just stated, his cartouche has been found in an area above the King's Chamber. Here huge stones were placed in such a position that they would relieve the pressure of the weight bearing down upon the chamber from above. Quarry marks are still to be found on these stones.

The three small pyramids at the base of the Great Pyramid may or may not have been used for his queen and two other wives or daughters. These, the “solar” boats, the Valley and Mortuary Temples may have been used simply as window dressing to fool the eventual entrance of tomb robbers. With the exceptional affluence of the country, this would have been no problem costwise. It is believed that Khufu’s mother, Hetepheres, was buried at Dashur and then later moved; however, her body has never been found. The natural question that is asked, then, is, Could not Khufu have been entombed in one of the two or three pyramids attributed to his father, Snefru, or perhaps in a mastaba or another pyramid which has not yet been found? It seems hardly likely that Snefru would have desired or needed two or even three pyramids for himself.

If Khufu had intended the Great Pyramid to be a temple of learning and for initiations, as many believe, he would not have been entombed in it. Khufu had certainly gained the veneration and tribute of his people, and in what better place could this have been given than at his monument, the Great Pyramid, its causeway, in the Valley Temple, and even the Mortuary Temple which archaeologists say was entirely different from any that was ever built? It is possible that he built the pyramid as a cenotaph, a monument to himself.

Archaeologists state that, following the completion of the Great Pyramid, an escape passageway down to the bottom of the pyramid was left for the workman. Once the Pharaoh was entombed, if he was, there would have been no escape for the workman within the Pyramid because the structure would have been sealed. Is it not possible that the so-called escape passageway could also have been used as an entranceway for those of that time who may have come to this structure as a temple of learning and for initiation?

In Dr. H. Spencer Lewis’ book, *The Symbolic Prophecy of the Great Pyramid*, he quotes a very reliable authority, Dr. Selim Ilassan, as saying in an article written in 1935, “We have discovered a subway used by the ancient Egyptians of 5,000 years ago. It passes (at right angle) beneath the causeway leading between the second Pyramid and the sphinx. It provides a means of passing, under the causeway, from the cemetery of Cheops (Khufu), who built the first or Great Pyramid of Gizeh, to

the cemetery of Chephren (Khafra), who built the second Pyramid. From this subway we have unearthed a series of shafts leading down more than 125 feet, with roomy courts and side chambers.” This means that this underground passageway began at or near the Great Pyramid and traveled southward past the sphinx. The sphinx was built by a succeeding Pharaoh Khafra. Is it not possible that the escape passage from the Great Pyramid, to be used by the workman, could have entered this subway which perhaps could have had openings to the surface at the sphinx and beyond? From this speculation, it is easy enough to assume that the escape passageway and the subway were not only used by workmen but later as an entrance and egressway by serious minded students and initiates who were intent upon entering the Great Pyramid.

All professionals agree that this is the most famous monument of antiquity. Whether or not it preserved the body of Khufu, it succeeded in preserving his name for all time. As recently as 1961 Professor Ahmed Fakhry, in his book *The Pyramids*, wrote that no one will deny that we have not yet solved many of the problems concerning the pyramid and its construction. Perhaps in time new light will be thrown on the mystery of the Great Pyramid.

## Chapter V

# RA

**R**A, THE SUN which so gloriously shone in the sky, was worshiped throughout the entire history of ancient Egypt. Ra was the god who ruled visibly in the Egyptian sky. The euphonious word Ra had at least three designations: There was Ra, the sun-god; Ra, the name taken by the Pharaoh; and Ra, the name given to other gods. Generally speaking, the god of the sun was regarded as the creator and preserver of the world.

The oldest sun cult was maintained by the temple priests of Heliopolis. Sun worship, which probably had begun before the Third Dynasty, was fully established by the Fifth Dynasty. In the Second Dynasty, the royal name “Ra is my lord” shows that the Egyptians had begun to take advantage of this support. It was in the Fourth Dynasty, the beginning of the Pyramid Age, that the Pharaoh formally began to assume the title “Son of Ra.” In the royal house, this solar relationship was retained until the end of Egyptian history. It is recorded that, with the beginning of the reign of the Pharaoh Sahure in the Fifth Dynasty, nearly all the kings introduced the divine name on their shields.

The earliest sun temple of which we have knowledge was at Abusir. The sacred object which represented the sun-god was the ben ben. This was a large granite stone shaped very much in the form of a pyramid elevated on a stone pedestal. Together they resembled an obelisk. By the Fifth Dynasty, there were many sun temples dedicated to Ra. The ben ben had an important place in each sun temple.

The huge stone monuments we know as pyramids were not merely burial sites but solar monuments as well. The obelisk-like stone column of the ben ben, the chosen seat of the sun-god, at the city of On, or Heliopolis, was worshiped under the name of the sim, the Horus, who is on the horizon of Ra-harakhty. In early times the sun-god was called Ra-harakhty “who rejoices on the horizon in his name of light who is in the sun’s disk.” At Heliopolis the local deity was Atum. The temple

priests put this god on a par with Ra, and asserted that Atum was only another form of Ra-harakhty. This was the beginning of the custom of identifying local sun-gods with Ra.

It was at Heliopolis in the Third Dynasty that the sun, as a positive or personal experience, was referred to as *Aton*. In the new Egyptian Encyclopedia it is stated that the ancient Egyptians used the word Aton when they meant the sun as a positive experience. There were those who believed that the essence of the divine being was to be found in the sun which was visible every day.

The pyramid and the obelisk were symbols sacred to the sun-god Ra. The actual symbol of the sun-god was the winged sun disk. This was the solar disk with cobras on either side against a background of spread wings. The wings were those of the falcon. In this form Ra was believed to be a falcon flying across the sky. In the early dynasties, Osiris, as well as Ra, was of significant importance.

In the New Kingdom, it seems, Osiris and Ra became two aspects of the same divine condition. They were not in opposition to one another but were complementary. Osiris had to do with the world of the dead, while Ra had to do with the living.

E.A. Wallis Budge states that Ra and Osiris were two forms of one god; Ra was the form which that god assumed during the daytime, and Osiris was the form which he took during the hours of the night. In fact, every living king as the "Son of Ra" was Horus, and every dead king was Osiris. The Pharaoh was the physical son of the sun-god Ra. Ra must insure divine rule of the land of Egypt. The title *Son of Ra* emphasized the story of his physical birth as a god; the title *Horus* emphasized his divine credentials to rule in the palace as the god who had been awarded the sovereignty of kingship by the divine tribunal of the gods.

The ancient myths associated with Ra were inspired by the sight of the sun's daily journey across the Egyptian sky. Early texts describe Ra's rising in the East as an emergence from water. Ra then boarded his day bark which sailed across the sky until evening. At sunset he changed boats and boarded the night bark and was towed through the underworld before the next morning's sunrise. Many legends have

been woven around this voyage of the sun. In some myths it is said that upon arising at dawn he is the child Kepher. At midday, he is Ra, the full-grown man; and at sunset, he is the doddering old man Atum.

In another legend, Ra sailed across the heavens during the day as a brilliantly plumed falcon, or Horus, driving away hostile clouds. In another myth, Ra was a powerful young hero, new-born every morning and waging a ceaseless combat with the powers of darkness. Ra, as the sun, shone gloriously in the sky every day. As the god of the living, Ra was the greatest god. Opposed to him was the god of the underworld, Osiris, who had triumphed over death.

A very early Egyptian concept of creation had to do with Kepher. The symbol of this ancient god was the beetle. The ball of the sun, which was the immediate cause of life to the world, was supposed to be rolled across the sky by the gigantic beetle Kepher.

Allegorically, the daily rising of Ra indicated victory over the darkness of death. Also, allegorically, the sun's rising could be viewed as the passive undergoing of rebirth or regeneration. For the most part, however, the legends deal with conflict or battle maintained by Ra standing in his solar bark as it sailed through the sky by day and through the underworld by night. During the night, his boat is manned by allied gods, and the enemy is Apophis, the serpent or dragon of darkness. With the coming of dawn, Apophis is, of course, conquered.

In a different sense, there is the dramatic contrast between the god Amon of Thebes and the Aton of Heliopolis, and in later times of Akhnaton. The word Amon meant the unseen, the hidden one. His shrine was in the innermost and darkest part of the temples. Aton, on the other hand, was the visible physical disk of the sun which could not be obscured. His temples lay open to the skies so that he might be worshiped "in visible candor." Anthropomorphism was involved in this view because the rays coming down from the sun disk ended in hands which extended the *ankh*, or cross of life, to the Pharaoh and his family.

Despite the existence of Heliopolis, the city of the sun, the capital of the ancient kingdom was established at Memphis, twenty-five miles to the south, and on the west bank of the Nile, where it remained for



many centuries. Ptah was proclaimed to be supreme to all the gods at Memphis and to be even the creator of the heavens, the world, and men. His powers were acclaimed to be the greatest of the gods. It was said that everything which existed before it came into being existed in the mind of Ptah, who was the heart and tongue of the company of gods.

We find at this early time in Egyptian history that at the same time Ptah was being proclaimed at Memphis as the creator, Ra was also being proclaimed at Heliopolis as the great creator. This sort of inconsistency was not uncommon in ancient Egypt. However, a land of reconciliation was arrived at by declaring that at Memphis Ptah was the earthly power of the creator, while at Heliopolis the great creative power of Ra was in the sun.

Henri Frankfort, the eminent authority, states that what is important about the creation story or theology of Memphis is that all that exists came into being as the uttered thoughts, the spoken words, of Ptah. In this concept, the earth-god, Ptah, made extensive use of the thoughts and images evolved in the sun cult at Heliopolis.

As time went on, the Egyptian mind was profoundly affected, "in giving a deeper significance to ingrained Egyptian beliefs." It was the Memphite theology which provided for the creative principles of Ptah in which the heart conceived thought and the tongue produced command. In this concept, authoritative utterance or commanding speech brings a condition into being. And then there is perception and cognitive reception of the object, idea, or situation. These qualities were not confined to Ptah or the sun-god Ra; they were also attributes of the king.

In his writings, James Henry Breasted refers to an ancient drama in which the god Ptah of Memphis is portrayed as playing the role of the sun-god Ra as the supreme god of Egypt. This implied that the old nature-god, the sun-god Ra, was transformed into an arbiter of human affairs and moral values.

Later, when Thebes in Upper Egypt became the capital of the kingdom, there was a new development in the Egyptian religion. The great god of Thebes, Amon, became identified with the sun-god under

the name Amon-Ra. For a time Ptah was also included. The three supremely important gods were placed in a single divinity. Involved in this was the idea to enlarge the god Amon by incorporating the other two gods into his being. "All gods are three: Amon, Ra, and Ptah; and they have no second. Only he is Amon and Ra and Ptah, together three." In other words, the three gods were one.

The ancient Egyptians were much given to singing and chanting. When the word Ra was sung, it had a powerful sound. We are given to understand that the spoken word was not always a simple social tool that helped to promote human relationships. A word as an audible expression could represent the deepest essence of things. They believed in the creative quality of sound. Obviously to some degree this was associated with the god Ptah of Memphis. It is said that, following a mental image, Ptah had only to speak and that which was evoked came with his voice.

Much of the so-called wisdom of ancient Egypt had to do with their constant awareness of the unlimited power of sound and words. The audible articulation of certain syllables or sounds seems to have to do with the secret of the existence of many things. From this view we begin to see that words convey a relationship with nature, and that there seems to be an unlimited power in the sound of words. In them is the basic energy which sustains the universe; we might even say, a cosmic force.

Budge states that the first act of creation was light, and that when the thought of it was expressed in a word, the sun appeared as a result. The air, no less than the sun, was seen to exemplify creative power. At Thebes, it was said that the god Amon, the hidden one, was manifested in the wind which blew, and that wind, air, breath were the mysterious source of life. But at Thebes the god came to be known as Amon-Ra, who provided for the creative power of the sun and the creative power of the air to be one.

When in the Eighteenth Dynasty Akhnaton became Pharaoh, he made every effort to obliterate the influence of Amon, the hidden one, of Thebes. It would appear that the young Pharaoh favored the old sun-god Aton. His adoption of Aton was undoubtedly a purified version of the old doctrine of Heliopolis. In this concept, parallels

with the old sun cult of Heliopolis can be traced. In the new concept, Aton was not only intangible but the only god. The solar barks were done away with, and Akhnaton evolved his own beautiful hymns to the sun.

From the Pyramid Age onward, the making of every Pharaoh a son of the sun-god Ra resulted in transferring to Ra human qualities. The original concept of Ra as being the means of life-giving power and the constant source of life, heat, and light to men never changed. This extraordinary recognition, call it what you will, was constantly reiterated.

Throughout the history of ancient Egypt, the position of the Pharaoh was unique. He was himself a god in one aspect; he was Horus, and he could be Osiris. He was the incarnation of every local deity. Every temple belonged to him. He was the equal of every deity, and he was that deity in human form. There was only one condition to which he owed allegiance, and that was Ra.

In the late declining period of Egypt's history, Ra became more a protector of the gods than a protector of men. Ra remained more or less in the background, a sort of last resort in case things went wrong with the other gods.

It is impossible not to conclude that the ancient Egyptians gave Ra an extremely exalted character. Ra was looked upon as a living power. His early rulership of Egypt was handed over to other gods. In the end, this fell to the god Horus, who was incarnate in each Pharaoh. This delegation of power put the Pharaoh on a par with other gods. It was said that in the beginning Ra, the creator, put order or Maat—truth, justice—in the place of disorder, falsehood, and injustice. The achievement of Pharaoh is described in the same terms. The Pharaoh repeated this significant act at his accession, in every victory, and upon the dedication of every temple.

For the ancient Egyptians, society was a part of a universal divine order. The laws of nature, the laws of society, the divine commands, all belonged to the one category of Maat, that which was right, just or true. It was a nation built upon the concept of a divine ruler. It placed a high value upon the individual. It advanced the concept of social

justice for all men, a civilized culture which promulgated the belief in the sustaining power of the universal Ra.

The concept of a static cosmic order was upheld by the Pharaoh, who endeavored to maintain harmony between man and the universe. It was necessary to maintain a balance between the society of man and nature. While there were many men and many gods, all apparently were ultimately of the one nature.

Breasted wrote that Ra was the physical sun, which the earliest Nile dwellers envisaged in human form. In the beginning, the sun-god dealt with material forces. Later, human affairs became his domain. Ra became the most eminent god of Egypt. The sun-god was pre-eminently a god of the world of living men. Men felt their responsibility to Ra here and now.

The social forces were the ultimate influences which contributed to the high ideal which enriched and humanized the otherwise perfunctory “political conception” of Ra’s domain. Ra was always the divine king *par excellence*, and the Pharaoh was at once his son and co regent.

The circle with the dot in its center as a hieroglyphic symbol of the sun-god Ra was the fruit of centuries of tradition and culture, illustrating in a very real sense the importance and effect of Ra on the lives, thinking, and psychological background of the ancient Egyptians. For them, Ra remained the giver, preserver, and sustainer of immortal life.

## Chapter VI

# ABOUT MUMMIES

AS ALL THE world knows, the Egyptians seemed to be preoccupied with death. They made elaborate preparations for the afterlife. One of these provisions was to preserve the physical body of the deceased by way of mummification. The preservation of the dead was all important. Two opposing concepts were readily accepted, the dead lived on in the tomb, and the dead went to a “blessed afterworld” far away. The ancient Egyptians were not concerned by the inconsistency.

They believed each person was born with an invisible twin known as Ka. He was the protector in the afterworld. When a man died, his Ka lived on in the afterworld and waited for the deceased. In order to find the proper tomb, it was essential that the Ka, or soul, recognize its owner so that they could be united. The custom of having the body of the dead person preserved was maintained for thousands of years. The practical means for this, of course, was mummification, and the dead were preserved as mummies.

The embalming process was accompanied by a religious ritual. The jackal-headed Anubis was the god of death, and he presided over embalming. Seventy days were required for the preparation of the mummy. Each step in the procedure coincided with priestly ceremonies. In preparing the corpse for mummification, the viscera were removed. The heart was left in the body. There were separate canopic jars for the lungs, liver, stomach, and intestines. Each canopic jar was protected by a particular divinity. In the preservation of the body, natron—a mixture of sodium carbonate, bicarbonate, and chloride—was used.

The body was cleansed and anointed, and then wrapped in strips of linen. Twenty or more layers of bandages were often used in wrapping the entire body. Resin was used as a binder. Shrouds were occasionally placed intermittently between the layers of wrappings. The wrapping required several hundred yards of linen, and they often bore religious texts.

If the deceased had made provision for a tomb, the decoration of the tomb took place during the seventy-day period in which the preservation and mummification process took place. Carpenters constructed the coffins. Often there was a series of them, one to fit inside the other. After the construction, artists decorated the burial chests, other craftsmen were busy gathering various articles to be placed in the tomb with the mummy. As shown in the *Book of the Dead*, texts prepared by scribes and priests and written on rolls of papyrus were made ready to be placed in the tomb. Many of these were beautifully illustrated. The texts contained information which would be helpful to the deceased in gaining admittance to the afterworld and in overcoming problems with which he would be confronted on his journey.

Following the removal of the deceased to his tomb, and the elaborate procession which was involved, there occurred the final ceremony of the "opening of the mouth." That the deceased might successfully fulfill his destiny in the afterworld, the priests performed the final rite which would restore some of the functions of a living person. It was believed that the deceased should have the ability to talk, to move about, and to eat. This rite was performed in front of the tomb, following which the mummy was carried into the tomb and placed in the innermost of the series of coffins. These were then placed within a larger outer coffin, or sarcophagus. This was then sealed. Mortuary gifts were placed in the tomb, and a papyrus copy of the *Book of the Dead* was placed near the sarcophagus.

As is now widely known, all of this did not immediately guarantee that the deceased would be admitted to the afterworld. In accordance with the prevailing concept, the deceased was required to appear before forty-two "spiritual assessors" and assure the group that he had led a proper and upright life. After this, he appeared before Osiris, the great god of the netherworld. His heart was placed on the Great Scales and balanced against the symbol of truth, Maat, a feather. The jackal-headed god of embalming and protector of the dead, Anubis, performed the weighing. The result was recorded by the ibis-headed scribe of the gods, Thoth. If the heart of the deceased successfully passed the test, he was admitted to the netherworld. If he did not pass, it was believed his soul was forever restricted to the earth.

The Egyptians were using tombs as early as five thousand years ago. The typical tomb had two necessary parts, a burial chamber and a hall in which offerings to the dead could be placed. Other than tomb chambers cut in the hillside rock, there were the low, rectangular structures of brick or stone known as mastabas. The mastabas preceded the pyramid tombs. The age of large pyramids began in 2700 B.C. and lasted for 600 years. The Fourth Dynasty Pharaohs built colossal monumental pyramids as their tombs. The walls of tombs which were constructed later were covered with painted, as well as sculptured, scenes in low relief.

The so-called pyramid texts are found in the chambers of pyramids at Sakkara, built by the Pharaohs of the Fifth and Sixth Dynasties. These were religious texts to aid the dead king to enter the netherworld and were painted or inscribed on the stone walls of the mortuary chambers of the pyramids of that period. Nobles of this period were accorded sumptuous mastaba burials, but these tombs bear no texts. Few pyramids and no mastabas were built after 2000 B.C., when it became the custom to hew out of solid rock, tombs and necessary chambers in the hillsides along the Nile.

By the time of the Middle Kingdom, religious texts were painted on coffins. The so-called coffin texts were taken from the older pyramid texts along with more recent concepts. By this time, coffins were constructed in the shape of the mummy which was to lie in it. The mummiform coffin was in general use by the beginning of the Eighteenth Dynasty. The pyramid texts and the Book of the Dead found continued use. Sections of the latter were illustrated on the mummiform coffin. A series of coffins, one inside the other, could now be used not only by the Pharaoh and nobles but also by any person of wealth or rank. Frequently the outer coffin was carved from stone in the form of the mummy. Also the use of a huge stone sarcophagus continued.

Rock-cut tombs in the Valley of the Kings and the Valley of the Queens, across the Nile from Thebes (now Luxor), reached their peak. Halls, or passageways, descended to chambers for several hundred feet through solid rock. The life of the deceased was beautifully portrayed with inscriptions and pictures along with religious texts. With the

beginning of the Twenty-first Dynasty, the use of the canopic jars was discontinued. The external appearance of the mummy wrapping became more showy. In late Roman times, the decoration of the coffins became downright garish. Painted portraits of the deceased that had been placed over the face of the mummy have been found.

There were three grades of burial with varying costs. For common people there was a burial chamber to accommodate only the coffin. It was the desire of every Egyptian not only to have his body mummified but for it to have a tomb that was perpetually cared for. His survivors were charged with the responsibility of maintaining the tomb. For a favored official, the state would finance a portion of the maintenance cost. As time went on, however, attention was concentrated only on the more recently deceased. Possibly this was because the efforts of the tomb robbers persisted, as they had for hundreds of years. Occasionally a tomb robber was caught and punished.

Some of the painted symbolic designs on coffins that have been found retain virtually their original brilliance. Coffin texts were painted on the inside walls. On the outside were to be found inscriptions and prayers to Osiris and Anubis. Wooden coffin boards were joined by wooden dowels and cleats.

Limestone canopic jars appeared to come into use toward the end of the Old Kingdom. Except for false jars, they were no longer used after the Twentieth Dynasty. In the Twelfth Dynasty, the four jar-lids carried a representation of the head of the deceased. For the Nineteenth and Twentieth Dynasties, the practice was for the jars to be protected by lids bearing representations of the four sons of Horus, a human head, an ape head, a hawk head, and a jackal head. The burial chamber of the tomb was, of course, kept sealed, but its adjacent mortuary chamber could be entered by friends and relatives with offerings.

It was believed that a god incarnate assumed the form of an animal. In the mind of the Egyptian, virtually every deity was associated with a bird or beast. We would expect to find, then, ancient cemeteries for the burial of animals. And so it was. If a particular cemetery was devoted to one kind of animal, there would be, adjacent to it, a temple for the cult of the god identified with the particular animals buried in the place. Animals of all kinds were mummified, and often placed



in coffins conforming to the shape of the animal whenever this was possible. There are even animal tombs, such as those for the Apis bulls at Sakkara.

The casual reader may be forgiven for thinking that perhaps only kings were mummified, and that therefore the actual number of mummies was not great, and that most of them repose in museums. All of royalty was mummified, as well as those of lesser status who could afford it. Thus, over a period of more than 3,000 years, the number of linen wrapped mummies would be enormous. Tens of thousands of human and animal mummies have been brought to the light of day.

One hundred and ten years ago, an enterprising Egyptian sold shiploads of mummies to a manufacturer in the state of Maine, whose name was Augustus Stanwood. This man operated a paper mill. The woven wrappings and papyrus fillings were used in the making of paper. The immediate area was apparently short of local natural materials.

At about the same time when Egypt acquired steam engines for its railroad, mummies were used for fuel. There is no timber in Egypt, and, except for that which was imported, wood was always scarce.



PORTION OF LUXOR TEMPLE

Site of Thebes, Ancient Capitol of Egypt.

## Chapter VII

# HORUS, THE DIVINE FALCON

ONE OF THE finest and best preserved temples of ancient Egypt is the Temple of Horus at Edfu situated some distance to the south of Luxor and the Valley of the Kings. The present temple was built by Ptolemy III and Ptolemy IV about 100 B.C. It is believed that originally a Third Dynasty temple stood here. The Edfu temple has a hypostyle hall and sanctuary, and numerous incised as well as relieved figures, inscriptions, and hieroglyphs. On the walls are portrayed the contests of the god Horus with his enemies who are depicted as crocodiles and hippopotami.

A scene on one wall shows the Pharaoh kneeling before Horus. High above the entrance to the first court on the facade of the pylon in relief is the beautiful solar disk with the widespread wings of the falcon. It is believed that it was the Pharaohs of the Fifth Dynasty, about 2400 B.C., who introduced the winged solar disk with the uraeus, or cobra, on each side. The sun disk was that of Ra, or Aton. The wings were those of Horus. In view of the fact that the Edfu temple is dedicated to Horus, it is appropriate that we find standing on either side of the entrance to the temple and its courtyard beautifully carved king-size granite statues of the falcon wearing the double crown.

The falcon, or hawk, was probably the first living creature to be worshiped in the Valley of the Nile. The lofty flight of the falcon, which seemed to be a comrade of the sun, had led the fancy of the Egyptians to believe that the sun might be like a falcon taking his daily flight across the heavens. As a falcon, Horus was a god. Throughout their history, the ancient Egyptians believed that gods were manifested in animals. Today it is difficult for us to understand the relationship between a god and his animal. The god Horus was depicted as a bird that was believed to manifest in one or more individual falcons. On the other hand, Horus was said to be a falcon whose eyes were sun

and moon, and whose breath was the cooling north wind. This was an impressive way of describing this great god.

An important symbol to the Egyptians was the Udjat which represented the eye of Horus. It had an unusual device under it which resembled a falcon's cheek. The Udjat, the eye of Horus, no doubt symbolically represented the sun, and it was regarded as a powerful emblem.

From early times the falcon god Horus was considered to be a great sky-god like the bird itself which was his emblem. Sometimes he was the god of the sky, sometimes he became the sun under the name Ra-harakhty. Through his connection with the kings, he united Upper and Lower Egypt. Horus became the royal god. Horus became the divine falcon, protector of the king, and to some extent even the king himself. The Horus falcon, or hawk, became the symbol of royalty. His figure appeared on seals and royal documents. The king's favorite title was *Horus* by which he identified himself as the successor of the great god who had once ruled over the land.

At one time the sun-god was looked upon as the creator of Egypt, and it was the sun, Ra, who was called the first king of Egypt. The Egyptians looked upon the sun as a living power, and it is implied in their theology that Ra eventually disposed of his rulership of Egypt by turning it over to other gods, and primarily to the god Horus, who is incarnate in each Pharaoh. This designation of power not only placed the Pharaoh in the divine sphere but on a par with other gods. The death of a Pharaoh maintained, in accordance with their beliefs, the necessary periodic change. The succession from one king to another was viewed as an unchanging order of events. Pharaohs were succeeded by their sons. Horus always succeeded Osiris, and Osiris disappeared from the earth's scene, figuratively speaking.

The worship of the sun-god Ra prevailed at Heliopolis, the site of the northern suburb of present-day Cairo. The god was conceived as the sun itself in the form of a disk. At the capital in Memphis, a few miles to the southwest, the Pharaohs came under the influence of the sun cult, and the result appears to have been a fusion of the sky-god Horns and the sun-god Ra. By the time of the Fifth Dynasty, the king, who was now identified with Horus, became the Son of Ra. In early

times at Heliopolis, the concept was developed whereby the purest form of the sun-god was not to be found in the falcon-headed Horus, but in the physical orb of the sun itself, which was designated by the name of Aton; thus, Ra and Aton were held to be the same form of the sun. The symbol for this in that particular period was that of a man with the head of a falcon crowned by the sun disk encircled by the uraeus.

In the Osiris legend, Osiris was murdered by Seth, and eventually revived to be a power in the beyond. Horus vindicated the terrible tiling done by Seth, assumed the throne, and, as the new Pharaoh, assumed the role of Horus. At death, the father fused with Osiris. The king, who during life had mediated between his people and the powers of nature, merged these powers at the time of his passing, and his vitality broke forth from the earth in which he rested. As Osiris, he provided life for the growing grain and the waters of the Nile. The legend deals with a struggle between Horus and Seth, and this undoubtedly represented a conflict between two hostile cults and a confrontation which was necessary for maintaining the balance of forces in the universe. In the myth, Horus was the son of Osiris and Isis, and was the nephew of Seth. As the sun, Horus was heir to his father's terrestrial kingdom. Horus eventually won the conflict, and triumphantly he was proclaimed the eternal and universal king of the earth.

In later times, in accordance with the representations at the temple of Edfu, Horus conquered the world for Ra. He had overcome the enemy who was none other than Seth. Ra was primarily the god of the living, while Osiris was essentially the god of the dead. The living Pharaoh was regarded as an incarnation of the great god Horus who, on death, became Osiris. Upon succeeding the Pharaoh, the son became the new Horus.

In the beginning, the north and south areas of Egypt were two separate kingdoms. The insignia of royalty for Lower Egypt of the north was the white crown, and the insignia for Upper Egypt of the south was the red crown. Following the uniting of the two lands by Menes, the double crown was evolved. This indicated that the king was the ruler of the two lands. At one time Horus represented Upper Egypt, and Seth represented Lower Egypt.

In early dynasties, the royal name of the Pharaoh was written inside the figure of a rectangular inscription, a representation of a palace gateway, on which was perched a falcon. This was the so-called Horus name. The falcon of Horus surmounting the symbol of the rectangular frame of the great house or royal palace represented the dynastic god of all Egypt who was identified with the sun-god, and was the son and avenger of Osiris. A long invariably took for himself several titles.

A second title was portrayed by the figures of the vulture and the cobra goddesses. Together they represented the uniting force for the two lands. A third title was represented by a reed and a bee symbolizing Upper and Lower Egypt—"He who belongs to the reed and bee."

A fourth title was the *Golden Falcon* or *Horus of Gold* whose symbology declared, "Blessed in years who makes all live." This represented a kind of glorious sweeping power. Gold was of great significance. It was thought to be the skin of Ra. It was the flesh of the sun itself, its brilliance justifying the resemblance. When he adorned himself with gold, the Pharaoh was clothed in the light which illuminates the earth. The metal alone deified him. He was the *Horus of Gold*. And still another title which the king adopted was *Son of Ra*. As the Son of Ra, the Pharaoh expressed his divine affiliation to the sun-god.

The rectangular gate symbol surmounted by the falcon was elongated to include all of the king's titles. Still later, this was changed to the now familiar oval shape of the cartouche. One or more cartouches, or name rings, carried the king's titles. One cartouche would carry the personal name of the king since his birth. It was not until the Eighteenth Dynasty that kings became known as Pharaohs. In the Eighteenth Dynasty, about 1500 B.C., the vizier Rekhmire wrote, "What is the king of Upper and Lower Egypt? He is a god whose deep feelings one lives, the father and mother of all men, alone by himself, without an equal."

In the early part of the Old Kingdom, the concept of the Pharaoh as the god Horus incarnate probably reached its fullest development. Zoser's Step Pyramid and the pyramids of Gizeh are undoubtedly its greatest memorials. By the time of the Fifth Dynasty, a change came about whereby the Pharaoh was regarded as a descendent of the god Ra. This was a shift in emphasis from the idea of an incarnation to the idea of a physical son of a god.

## YESTERDAY HAS MUCH TO TELL

The ancient Egyptians' view of the cosmos was essentially static. Change was only a recurring rhythm. There was always the struggle between opposing forces. Though the land might be parched in summer, the inundation from the Nile was sure to come and bring relief. The old Pharaoh would suffer death, but his son, the new Horus, would reign in his stead. The victory of the sun-god was proclaimed with every dawn, and this was a daily reminder of the triumph of good over evil by Horus.

In the forecourt of the Temple of Edfu is a small but beautifully pillared stone sanctuary known as the Mammisi, which, in accordance with the concepts of the ancient Egyptians, was the Birth House of the god Horus, the divine falcon.

## Chapter VIII

# THE EVOLUTION OF WRITING

**E**DWARD GIBBON, IN his *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, states that the use of letters is the principal characteristic which distinguishes a civilized people from a herd of savages.

H.G. Wells, in his *Outline of History*, writes that a graphic system is the true measure of civilization. They are both referring, of course, to a system of writing. Writing as a means of expression and communication developed very early in ancient Egypt, and the Egyptians evolved a true and lasting graphic system of letters and symbols.

Writing seems to have passed through three definite stages of development. First, the pictorial or representative, wherein a picture of the idea to be conveyed is actually portrayed. The animals drawn on the walls of a cave in southern France by Cro-Magnon man of 20,000 or more years ago are an illustration.

Second, ideographic writing, wherein characters or signs rather than pictures represent ideas. The characters in ideographic writing usually lose resemblance to the pictures of ideas for which they stand; actually, they are little more than conventionalized symbols. For people living on islands in the Pacific Ocean, a palm tree as a symbol could represent an island.

Third, phonetic writing, wherein the characters lose all semblance to, or even any association with, the objects they originally portrayed, and denote only sounds. The signs no longer stand for pictures or even ideas; instead, they stand for sounds only. When used in combinations, they denote combinations of sounds.

Phonetic writing may be further divided into: (1) Syllabic writing, in which the characters represent syllables—that is, compound rather than simple sounds; (2) Alphabetic writing, wherein each of the



characters or letters stands for a single sound. Egyptian hieroglyphic writing is an example of syllabic writing. Our modern alphabet is an example of alphabetic writing.

The earliest Egyptians told their story in pictures instead of words. Several hundred years later they were telling their stories in hieroglyphs. James Henry Breasted, in his book *The Conquest of Civilization*, wrote that the early Egyptians “had a simple language with words for all ordinary things they used and did every day.” But there was a need for a means of making records of their business and government. This they evolved.

They apparently began using the calendar of 365 days in each year in 4241 B.C. Next we find lists of year names. When some very important event occurred, the year was given a special name. “The earliest year-list of this sort in human history now surviving, called the Palermo Stone, began about 3400 B.C., and contained when complete the names of some 700 years ending about 2700 B.C.” Later the Egyptians found it more convenient to number the years of each king’s reign, and to date events in the first, fifth, or tenth year of that particular king.

Hieroglyphs as a form of writing were used by the ancient Egyptians to date their monuments and temples from the years of the reigns of the Pharaohs who erected them; thus, “in the first year of the reign of the son of the sun, Thutmose,” or “in the fifth year of the reign of the son of the sun, Rameses.”

If no monument or temple happened to have been erected during the closing years of any particular reign, these years were dropped from the total of the record; thus the condition was cumulative instead of compensative. In the course of several thousand years of the Pharaonic Period, exact dates and reigns became difficult for modern day scholars to determine.

Early records such as these were at first only pictures, but as time went on, the business of the government and the people made it necessary to keep records of transactions. This required pictorial symbols. The use of pictorial symbols was the earliest step toward writing. We find pictorial writing in use even today among certain North American Indians. This stage was only a preliminary.

Now two steps had to be taken before the pictorial or representative records could become *real*, as Breasted refers to it, meaning phonetic writing: “*First*, each object had to gain a fixed form, always the same and always recognized as the sign for a *particular word* denoting that object.” Thus it would become a habit for the scribes to draw a loaf so as to be read *loaf* and not food. *Second*, syllables followed as the natural second step. If the sign for a leaf had always been read as *leaf* and not *foliage*, the symbol could be further used as a syllable wherever needed, for example, in the word *belief*. The bee might become the sign for the syllable *be*. So, with the bee and the leaf symbols, we have a phonetic sign. This was ideographic writing.

The development of phonetic signs among the early Egyptians was what made *real* writing for the first time. At an early period Egyptian writing contained at least 600 signs, many of them representing whole syllables like *leaf* or *loaf*. Egyptian scribes gradually learned many groups of syllabic signs. Writing, to them, became a large number of sign groups, each group being a word, and a series of such groups forming a sentence. There were syllabic as well as verbal symbols.

The evolution continued until the Egyptians finally possessed a series of signs, each representing a letter or alphabetical sign. There were twenty-four letters in this alphabet which came into use before or near 3000 B.C. It was the earliest alphabet known. The Egyptians could have continued with their written twenty-four alphabetic letters if the sign-group habit had not been so strong. Today, the letter-group habit is so strong with us as to prevent the introduction of a simplified phonetic system in English spelling. Thus we should not belittle the Egyptians’ cumbersome sign-groups. Egyptian letters represented consonants. The Egyptians pronounced their words with vowels as we do, but they did not write the vowels.

Convenient equipment for writing was devised. It was discovered that an excellent water color paint or ink could be made by thickening water with a little vegetable gum and mixing in soot or pure carbon from the implements or vessels used over the fire. By dipping a point of reed into this mixture, writing was executed. By splitting into thin strips a kind of river reed called papyrus, they had material upon which they could write with comparative ease.

Papyrus was a conveniently portable material. When desiring a larger sheet, the Egyptians found that they could paste their papyrus sheets together with overlapping edges. By pasting two such sheets together, back to face, with the grain crossing at right angles, they produced a smooth, tough, nearly white or ivory-colored paper. Thus pen, ink, and paper were provided.

These language-literary inventions have descended to us from the Egyptians, and paper still bears its ancient name, but slightly changed. In Greek, it was *papyrus*; in Latin, it was *papyrus*. "The invention of writing and of a convenient system of records on paper" have without question had a greater influence in evolving civilization and educating the human race than any other achievements, as Breasted has said.

Egyptian hieroglyphs form a system of picture-writing in which concrete objects were originally expressed as pictures representing such things as an eye, a face, a pigeon, a plow, or the sun. Abstract ideas were represented on the same principle by the use of pictures of objects suggesting the idea to be expressed. Thus, the idea to rule was expressed by the picture of a shepherd's crook or scepter, and the idea of *south* by a picture of a lily, which through a period of development came to represent Upper Egypt.

A great advance was made when words for which there were no special signs began to be expressed by the pictures of other and different objects—the phonetic significance of which, however, happened to be the same. Thus to *go out* was expressed by the picture of a house. The son of a Pharaoh was expressed by the picture of a goose.

In addition, there was another class of hieroglyphics known as determinatives, which were placed after the word in order to give some hint as to its meaning. Therefore, when the picture illustrating *to drink* was written, it was followed by the determinative picture of a man with his finger at his mouth, indicating that the idea expressed had something to do with the mouth. These greatly facilitated the reading of inscriptions and were freely used, especially in later hieroglyphic periods. The hieroglyphic system as we find it in the earlier Egyptian inscriptions was already complete.

The discovery of the Rosetta Stone and the solution to the interpretation of the hieroglyphics by Jean Francois Champollion and Dr. Thomas Young early in the nineteenth century was an important turning point in the science of Egyptology. A young Pharaoh was successful in gaining the support of the priests of Memphis. In 196 B.C. the priests issued a statement to this effect in writing in the form of a decree. The decree, inscribed on a rather large stone, was in three forms: hieroglyphics; demotic, which was the writing of the people; and Greek, which was a common tongue of the eastern Mediterranean. In 1799 A.D., one of Napoleon's soldiers found the basalt Rosetta Stone while digging trenches in northern Egypt.

Hieroglyphics were usually written from right to left, sometimes in perpendicular rows, sometimes in horizontal rows. Occasionally, but quite exceptionally and then only for decorative purposes, they were written from left to right. For the sake of convenience, modern reproductions of hieroglyphics are written or printed from left to right. It was almost a matter of course that both the shapes of the hieroglyphics and the orthography of the words should vary greatly in the course of thousands of years during which the system was used. In the Old Empire, the characters were simple and bold. In the Eighteenth Dynasty, the symbols were more ornate. Much later, during the decline of the Ptolemaic Period, the hieroglyphics and the abbreviated handwriting known as demotic were crowded, small, and not so well executed.

When the picture-characters, instead of being carved with a copper chisel, were written with a reed pen upon papyrus or wood, they generally assumed a simpler and more rounded form. In this way arose a system of literary hieroglyphics, which we meet with mainly in carefully executed manuscripts. For the purposes of ordinary writing, this system was still further simplified and abbreviated, and for the sake of speed the separate characters were often united, thus forming a cursive style which is usually termed *hieratic* writing. In this style, a figure which originally literally pictured an owl degenerated into a mere outline, which to us looks like the Arabic figure 3.

Hieroglyphic inscriptions made with copper chisels in sandstone, limestone, and granite were placed on obelisks, boundary monuments,

temples, pylons, and tombs. Sometimes the hieroglyphics were painted in lustrous lasting colors. The hieroglyphics not only had to do with word signs but with figures of kings and gods. As a form of writing, it reached a high degree of perfection, and as art, it reached an equally high degree of appreciation. Hieroglyphics were not only incised in stone, sometimes to a depth of five or six inches, but in many instances the work was done in stone relief. A high level of technical and artistic skill was attained. Many were delicate and exact in execution. The pictorializing of human figures was done often with elegance and charming softness of form.

Gibbon and Wells wrote that a graphic system of letters or symbols is a true measure of civilization. A superb example is the civilization and culture of ancient Egypt, with its mature though elaborate means of expression and communication. We are indebted to the Egyptians for an alphabetic system of writing which was to lay the foundation for later alphabets and writing of other peoples.

The dry climate of the Valley of the Nile made a perfect storehouse for preserving the innumerable records which its people loved to collect and put away. Filmy linen, delicate furniture of reed and weed, textiles, papyrus, and paintings, which would have perished in damp climates elsewhere, have survived thousands of years in Egypt, with texture and color undimmed by time. Their writing, either in hieroglyphics or in cursive hieratic script was their most highly valued asset. It was used constantly and extensively. The scribes were kept very busy. Writing was used not only for tomb and temple inscriptions, but for funerary, religious, and mythological texts, literary compositions, stories, songs, mathematical exercises, medical prescriptions, didactic treatises, letters, deeds, wills, work reports, court records, inventories, lists, memoranda, and labels of all kinds.

Our knowledge of life in ancient Egypt is derived largely from the contents of the tombs, the decorated walls of the tombs and temples, and rolls of papyrus.

## Chapter IX

# THE LEGENDS OF OSIRIS

OSIRIS, ABOUT WHOM there were numerous legends, was one of the foremost gods of ancient Egypt. Not only was he a mortuary god, but he was a nature god—essentially, the god of corn, or grain. In statues and in colorful murals on walls of temples and tombs that remain in Egypt, he is traditionally pictured in a tight-fitting garment, arms crossed over the breast, holding a shepherd's crook, or scepter, and a flail, and wearing the white crown flanked by two large plumes.

The painted walls of the tombs pertain to early religious rites and the immortality of the deceased. Life after death, according to the ancient belief, repeated the best features of life in this world. This was one of the exceptional concepts in the culture of the ancient Egyptians. It promised every good man eternal happiness.

It is evident that in the very earliest days there was a conflict between two different mortuary religions—the relation of the dead to Osiris, and the relation of the dead to the sun which sets in the West to rest, only to rise again in glory the next morning. Such inconsistencies, however, were not important. What was important was the perpetuation of Osiris, who was the god of the fields of grain which died regularly and came to life again.

By the beginning of the dynasties, Osiris had come to be *the god who was dead but still lived*. This implies that he was the dead ruler and also the ruler of the dead. The deceased Pharaoh came to be Osiris, and his son who followed him to the throne came to be the dutiful son, Horus, who took whatever steps were necessary to keep his deceased father alive in the other world.

Legend has it that Osiris was born on the first of the five days devoted to the beginning of the new year and, as a consequence, became king of the world. When he became king, he raised the Egyptian people from their then miserable existence and instructed them regarding the fruits

of the earth. He gave them laws and taught them to respect the gods.

Earlier, before Upper and Lower Egypt became a union under Menes, Osiris may have been the first king of a group of nomes in the eastern delta or, at least, the chief god. In remote antiquity, he became identified with a local god named Anedjety and assumed that god's insignia of the shepherd's crook and the flail.

At this time, Horus was an independent god, ruling a group of nomes in the western delta. Later, he was looked upon as the son of Osiris. Isis prevailed during pyramid times and, as the wife of Osiris, seems also to have been a delta goddess. The cult of Osiris became linked with that of Horus, and its influence extended southward. By pyramid times, Osiris had become identified with gods at Memphis and Abydos.

The solar cult at Heliopolis greatly influenced the religion of the pyramid builders. In time, it became necessary to include in its theology a cult which was not solar in origin—the cult of the god Osiris. This cult and that of unrelated local gods were simply assimilated by the solar cult.

Egyptian religious texts contain innumerable references to the legends on which the cult of Osiris was based. The following accounts are taken from preserved Egyptian texts and from the writings of Plutarch.

Osiris, the eldest son of the earth-god Geb and the sky goddess Nut, ruled over his people as a just and benevolent king. He instructed them in the various arts and crafts, converting them to a state of civilization. In time, prompted by jealousy, his brother Seth murdered him. Plutarch states that the murder was committed by a cunningly conceived trick. Seth, having prepared a banquet to honor his brother's return to Egypt from a foreign land, invited seventy-two of his friends to attend as guests. During the banquet, a chest of clever workmanship was brought into the hall and offered by Seth as a present to anyone who would fit it exactly when lying down inside it.

By a prearranged plan, a number of guests tried the chest first, but, of course, they were not the right size. Then Osiris entered it and, owing to his unusual dimensions, fitted it exactly. While he was

inside the chest, some of the accomplices closed it and carried it to the Nile. After ferrying it down-stream, they cast it adrift in the sea, which eventually washed it ashore at Byblos.

When Isis discovered that Osiris had been murdered, she set out on a long and eventful search for his corpse, which she found and brought back to Egypt. For a time, she remained in the marshes of the delta, keeping watch over the coffin of Osiris and awaiting the birth of her child, Horus.

An alternate version states that, while out hunting, Seth discovered the coffin and removed the body, cut it up, and scattered the different parts over the country. Isis went in search of the dismembered body and, upon finding each section, buried it where she found it. One part was found in Abydos.

Still another version of the legend relates that, after Isis had found the body, Ra ordered Anubis to embalm it. Life was restored to Osiris when Isis fluttered her wings over him. This is an important variant of the story because the process of embalment, as we know it from the Egyptian mummies, was closely associated with the Osirian legend. Following his restoration to life, Osiris became king of the region of the dead.

An addition to this legend is recorded on an excellently preserved papyrus from the New Kingdom. It concerns the long battle between Seth and Horus. Horus had resolved to slay his uncle and avenge his father's death. He eventually triumphed and succeeded to the throne of Osiris. Thus Osiris became essentially the god of the dead and of the region of the dead, while Ra became the god of the living. Both gods, however, had one thing in common; theirs was a divine example of survival after death.

In the case of Ra, his daily disappearance behind the western horizon was looked upon as his death. He was reborn each morning at sunrise, however, providing the concept of survival after death. But to the ancient Egyptians, this was not just a normal consequence. Survival had to be insured by the proper ritual and by providing material assistance for the dead similar to that required by the gods for their own survival. They had a relish for life, and the hope of triumph in a future life as



opposed to the doom of death. The land for immortality was to the west.

Despite the fact that the Egyptians were meticulously practical in all other matters, they never evolved a precise conception of the afterlife or of matters of religion. New concepts or ideas were superimposed upon the old. Nothing was discarded. Suffice it to say that from the very earliest times they believed man to be composed of body and spirit. The spirit, they thought, would remain alive after physical death if the body were preserved and provided with certain necessities.

The afterlife of the spirit probably took place in the pit of the tomb or pyramid. This simple concept was never entirely supplanted by other ideas. In later times, the tombs were provided with every imaginable article for the use of the dead. An excellent example of this is the tomb of Tut-ankh-amon.

Abydos, in Upper Egypt, held a unique position in the Osirian cult. We will recall that it was in Abydos, according to one tradition, that Isis found and buried a part of the body of Osiris. Another tradition alleged that she buried the entire body at Abydos. A ceremonial was evolved commemorating this, and each year Abydos became the scene of a solemn festival, which was somewhat in the nature of a passion play, in which events in the life and death of Osiris were re-enacted. It was believed that the annual festival in Abydos would have its counterpart in the life to come.

From the Old Kingdom onward, many tombs were equipped with boats to enable the deceased to make the journey to Abydos. For those who could afford it, second tombs, or cenotaphs, were established at Abydos. The spirits of the deceased could thus dwell near Osiris and participate in the annual festival while remaining in their real tombs, regardless of where they were. There was even the practice of placing the name of Osiris as a title before the name of the dead. This was an extension of a privilege which had originally been intended for the Pharaoh alone.

During his earthly life, the Pharaoh was considered the embodiment of Horus, the son of Osiris. It was only natural, then, that he should be regarded as Osiris when he died, and his son and successor was

thought to be the next embodiment of Horus. At first, the privilege of becoming an Osiris was extended only to members of the royal family. Finally, it came to be a right claimed by all.

From early times, the Osirian hereafter was looked upon as a mirror or an idealized version of this world situated below the western horizon and presided over by Osiris. This region was called the *Field of Reeds* by the ancient Egyptians. Eventually, the Greeks referred to it as the *Elysian Fields*, representing it as a group of islands reached by a boat. Those who had been accepted by the god could dwell in perpetual spring. The main occupation of the fortunate dwellers in the *Field of Reeds* was the cultivation of crops of corn. They lived in the kingdom of the god of fertility where the ground yielded fabulous harvests of corn.

Before Osiris came to be acknowledged as the god of the dead, he was undoubtedly the embodiment of the fertility of the earth. Thus in his multiple personality he retained the aspects of a nature god. He remained one of the stars illuminating the night; he was even said to be what we know now as the constellation of Orion in the southern sky. He was also thought to be a form of the night sun. The disparate elements of the divine personality of Osiris, however, were fully harmonized.

At the beginning of the fourth month of the Egyptian year, when the flood waters of the Nile were receding and the fields were ready to emerge for cultivation, dramatic ceremonies of Osiris took place in Abydos with great throngs of people in attendance. Others were performed in some of the hidden chambers of the temples. In these ceremonies, the original functions of Osiris as the god of the earth and the god of vegetation were reproduced. Little figures of damp clay mixed with seeds were made in the form of Osiris and placed on a bed. As the seeds germinated, little green gardens the same shape as the earth figure of Osiris which had given it life sprang up. These were the corn figures of Osiris as represented in the religious texts. They were divine gardens. Some of these withered gardens have been found in tombs in the Valley of the Kings.

The Egyptian soil, after its annual death through the burning of the summer sun, like the god was reborn when the waters of the Nile re-

covered the land. The soil was endowed with new life. When we look at a statue of Osiris wearing the two large plumes, his arms crossed over his breast and his hands holding the crook and the flail, we think of the two aspects represented: He who triumphed over death, and the incarnation of the land of Egypt which periodically had its vegetation destroyed by sun and drought, only to be reborn again from the waters of nature or the Nile River.

We recall the legend that Osiris was murdered by Seth, that Isis helped to regenerate him with new life, that he was dependent upon the support of his son, Horus. In this sense, Osiris resembled every Egyptian. Conceivably, every man might think how his fate after death depended on the good services of his son who, it was hoped, would be like Horus, the son of Osiris. In death, the vitality of Osiris broke forth from the earth in which he rested. He was alive in the growing grain and corn, in the waters of the Nile, and in the stars of the night. It has been said that the dead, by becoming Osiris, acquired immortality within the perennial movements of nature.

It seems to me that there is very human character to this legend of Osiris. Authorities are of the opinion that it is a story of the triumph of good over evil. In our sophistication, we may smile about what we feel are the incongruities and inconsistencies of the ancient Egyptians. But, perhaps, we may feel also, as stated by I.E.S. Edwards in *The Pyramids of Egypt*, that they were a people searching in the dark for the light of truth. Perhaps they found several keys, one of which they thought might fit the lock on the door to truth, and they retained all of them as a precaution against discarding the right one.

One of the murals in the Temple of Denderah gives an account of the burial of Osiris and his resurrection. In other temple chambers are found representations of the dead body of Osiris, with stalks of corn springing from it, while a priest waters the stalks from a pitcher which he holds in his hand. The accompanying inscription sets forth that this is the form of the great Osiris of the mysteries, who springs from the corn which has been watered by the rains of nature. So we come to understand that it was Osiris who gave support and sustenance in this life, and hope for life everlasting.

## Chapter X

# THE WORD OF TRUTH

**I**N THIS DAY and age we are the guardians of the light of truth. Truth is certainly no modern invention. As we know it, truth exists where there is conscience; one is involved with the other. But whence came truth, righteousness, and justice, and what we may refer to as a code of ethics? It would appear that our civilization and culture is indebted to ancient Egypt. Of all known cultures or countries, Egypt has the oldest historical records dating back in excess of more than 5,000 years.

In Egyptian, the word for truth is *Maat* (pronounced Maht). The use of *Maat* appeared with the Pyramid Age, which began about 2700 B.C. In the beginning, *Maat* was associated with the sun-god Ra, with the Pharaoh, with the administration of the country, with the common man, temple rituals, and mortuary practices.

In addition, *Maat* eventually was associated with Osiris, the god of the after-world. To the ancient Egyptians, the word *Maat* meant not only truth but righteousness and justice. Their symbol of *Maat* was the ostrich feather. The feather, as a symbol, is found everywhere in Egypt—in tombs, and on temple walls and columns. The feather is meant to convey the thought, “the truth shall be.” The feather was carried in Egyptian ceremonies often at the top of a staff. It appears as a part of the headdress of the goddess.

To the Egyptians of the Pyramid Age, *Maat* was discerned as something practiced by the individual. It was, as well, an existent social and governmental reality. It was also a moral order identified with the rule of the Pharaoh. Throughout ancient Egypt, *Maat* was the thing which the Pharaoh personified and enforced. *Maat* was the Egyptian conception of justice. It was justice as the divine order of society. It was also the divine order of nature as established at the time of creation. The concept was just as much a part of cosmology as it was of ethics.

In the pyramid texts of the Old Kingdom, Ra was said to have come from the place of Creation: “. . . After he put order, Maat, in the place of chaos . . . his majesty drove out disorder, falsehood, from the two lands so that order and truth were again established in its place.” Truth and order were put in the place of disorder and falsehood by the creator. Pharaoh, the creator’s successor, repeated this significant act at his accession, on the occasion of victories, at the completion of the renovation of a temple, and in connection with other important events.

One of the pyramid texts reads: “Heaven is satisfied and the earth rejoices when they hear that King Pepi II has put Maat in the place of falsehood and disorder.” It is the conclusion of modern historians that justice was the essence of government, inseparable from the king and, therefore, the acknowledged object of an official’s concern. It not only is involved in the conception of justice, but also in ethics. The innumerable gods of the Egyptians were said to live by Maat. This meant that the powers to be found in nature functioned in accordance with the order of creation.

To the people, the Pharaoh stood with the gods in his relation to Maat, as is borne out by this quotation: “I have made bright the truth, Maat, which Ra loves. I know that he lives by it. It is my bread, too. I, too, eat of its brightness.” Thus the king or Pharaoh lived by Maat.

Officials under the Pharaoh were expected to live by Maat, as is suggested in this quotation: “If thou art a leader who directs the affairs of a multitude, strive after every excellence until there be no fault in thy nature. Maat is good, and its work is lasting. It has not been disturbed since the day of its creator. He who transgresses its ordinances is punished. It lies as a path in front even to him who knows nothing. Wrong-doing has never yet brought its venture to port.” The meaning here is obvious. It pleads for honesty. Honesty was ever the theme.

The Pharaoh’s officials must strive after every excellence, and in their work be fair, true, and just. It was the Egyptian belief that a divine order was established at the time of creation, and that this not only was manifest in nature, but also in society as justice, and in the individual’s life as truth. Maat was this order, the essence of excellence.

The Maat concept bears out the ancient Egyptian belief that the universe is changeless, and that all apparent opposites must hold each other in a state of balance. It forcefully implies permanence; it encourages a man to strive after excellence until he has no faults. Harmony and the established order of Maat are implied by this; permanence is also implied.

A man's success in life would necessitate that he live harmoniously in accordance with the concept of Maat and in attunement with society and nature. Righteousness produced joy; the contrary brought misfortune. This was a profound concept to the ancient Egyptians, a concept which passed beyond the scope of ethics, we might say, and did in fact affect the existence of man and his relationship to society and nature. There were, of course, those among the ancient Egyptians who had no desire to follow the path of Maat.

Maat prevailed throughout the land. The peasant insisted that the poorest had inherent rights. It was felt that the creator-god had made every man like his brother. The life span was short for the person who practiced untruth, falsehood, and disorder, the opposite of Maat. That made life impossible. The effectiveness of Maat could not prevail when one associated himself with dishonesty.

All the gods in the Egyptian pantheon functioned in accordance with the established order of Maat. The Egyptian felt that Maat of the divine order would mediate between him and the gods. In accordance with his belief, when a man erred he did not commit a crime against a god; he instead did something against the established order. One god or another would see to it that the order was vindicated.

In the paintings to be seen on temple and tomb walls, the Pharaoh is shown exhibiting Maat to the other gods every day. Thus the Pharaoh was carrying out his divine function in accordance with the order of Maat on behalf of the gods. Here again we see the implication of permanence, that Maat was eternal and unchanging. This was truth—truth that was not susceptible to verification or testing. Truth was always in its proper place in the order created and maintained by the gods. It was a created and inherited rightness which the tradition of the ancient Egyptians built up into a concept of orderly stability.

The law of the land was the word of Pharaoh, spoken by him in conformance with the concept of Maat. Because the Pharaoh was himself a god, he was the earthly interpreter of Maat. As a consequence, he, too, was subject to the control of Maat within the limits of his conscience. If eternal happiness was to be experienced by any Egyptian, it was expected of him that he be morally circumspect. Personal character was more important than material wealth.

In accordance with the belief of the Old Kingdom, Ra was a god of the world of living men. Reference is made to "that balance of Ra in which he weighs Maat." The concept was that Maat lasted into eternity. It went into the necropolis with him who was placed there. When he was buried or entombed, his name did not die but was remembered for the goodness which it had manifested.

In later times the god Osiris, who had to do with the hereafter, was to become the judge of the dead, presiding over the weighing of a man's heart against the symbol of Maat. The heart was thought to be the seat of the mind and of will. Before this period the divine tribunal was under the sun-god Ra, and the weighing was called *counting up character*.

One of the best known documents to come out of ancient Egypt is the *Book of the Dead*, which has to do with mortuary texts, the use of which began with the Empire Period, and was used subsequently in later periods. In the *Book of the Dead* is what is known as the Confession to Maat.

To be worthy of a place in the hereafter, an Egyptian was said to confess that he had done no wrong; therefore, his was actually a declaration of innocence, which is the reverse of a confession. Contemporary Egyptologists and historians feel that the term *Confession* is erroneous. However, traditionally, we shall undoubtedly continue to refer to the mortuary texts bearing on this in the *Book of the Dead* as the Confession to Maat.

The texts appear on papyrus. They deal with the hall of judgment for a deceased Egyptian. The judge is Osiris assisted by forty-two gods who sit with him in judgment of the dead. The gods represented the forty-two nomes, or administrative districts, of Egypt.

The priests evidently evolved the court of forty-two judges in order to control the character of the dead from all parts of the country—the idea being that one judge at least would have to come from the nome of the deceased. The judges represented the various evils, wrongdoings, etc. The dead Egyptian being held in judgment did not confess to wrong-doing, but asserted his innocence such as, “I did not slay,” “I did not rob,” “I did not steal.”

To the ancient Egyptians death was not an end but an interruption. The Egyptian must never be unworthy of his divinity and of Maat. The concept of the judgment undoubtedly made a deep impression upon living Egyptians. The drama involving Osiris is graphic and depicts the judgment as affected by the balances.

A particular papyrus of very fine workmanship and artistry shows Osiris sitting on a throne at one end of the judgment hall with Isis and Nephthys standing behind him. Along one side of the hall are arranged the nine gods of the Heliopolitan Ennead headed by the sun-god. In the midst stand the balances of Ra, wherein he weighs truth.

The balances are manipulated by the ancient mortuary god, the jackal-headed Anubis, behind whom stands Thoth, the scribe of the gods, who presides over the weighing. Behind him stands the crocodile monster ready to devour the unjust. Beside the scales, in subtle suggestiveness, stands the figure of destiny accompanied by the two goddesses of birth who are about to contemplate the fate of the soul at whose coming into the world they had once presided. At the entrance stands the goddess of truth, Maat. She was the daughter of Ra. She is to usher into the hall of judgment the newly arrived soul.

Anubis calls for the heart of the new arrival. The heart is placed on one side of the balances while on the other side appears the feather, the symbol of Maat. The heart is addressed and is asked not to rise up against the deceased as a witness. The appeal is apparently effective, for Thoth then says, “Hear ye this word in truth. I have judged the heart . . . His soul stands as a witness concerning him. His character is just by the great balances. No sin of his had been found.” Having thus received a favorable verdict, the deceased led by Horus, the son of Isis, is presented to Osiris. After kneeling, the deceased is received into the kingdom of Osiris.



In the Confession to Maat, the deceased declared his innocence. He stated that he had done nothing wrong. In many instances a scarab, on which a formula was written, was buried with the deceased. This formula was to prevent their own hearts from rising up and bearing witness against them. In the Egyptian Museum in Rosicrucian Park is exhibited a funerary papyrus depicting the judgment in the Confession to Maat.

In the Eighteenth Dynasty, Amenhotep IV displaced Osiris and the many gods. He brought forth and re-emphasized Maat as the symbol of truth, justice, and righteousness. The solar disk became Aton. Amenhotep regularly attached the symbol of Maat to the official form of his royal name. On all of his state monuments are the words *Living in Truth*, or Maat.

In keeping with this fact, Amenhotep called his new capital at *Akhetaton Horizon of Aton* and *The Seat of Truth*. The latter reference is found in a short hymn attributed to Amenhotep when, with his queen Nefertiti, he changed his residence to Akhetaton and took the name of Akhnaton, which meant he who is beneficial to Aton.

The adherents to Akhnaton's monotheistic concept were fully aware of the Pharaoh's convictions regarding Maat. Frequently we find the people of his court glorifying Maat, or truth. In his revolution Aton, as the sole god, was the creator and sustainer of truth and righteousness. Maat, or truth, was the Cosmic force of harmony, order, stability, and security.

In the Pyramid Age, Ptah-hotep advanced the concept that the heart was the seat of responsibility and guidance. During the time of Thutmose III, in the Eighteenth Dynasty, it was declared, "The heart of a man is his own god, and my heart is satisfied with my deeds."

This was thought to be the inner voice of the heart and, with surprising insight, was even termed to be a man's god. The Egyptian had become more sensitive. The heart had become more discriminating in its approval or disapproval of a man's conduct. The heart took on the equivalent of the meaning of our word conscience.

James Henry Breasted wrote that out of the truth, righteousness, justice concept of Maat came conscience and character. Over and over

again Akhnaton emphasized the righteousness concept of Maat. He developed the recognition of the supremacy of Maat as righteousness and justice to a national moral order under a sole god.

The concept of Maat of ancient Egypt prevailed strongly until the Middle Kingdom or early Empire Period. For a time it was relaxed. The concept became strong again throughout the Eighteenth Dynasty, and especially during the time of Akhnaton. By the time of the Twentieth Dynasty, however, Maat had deteriorated.

There was governmental inefficiency, indifference, avoidance of responsibility, actual dishonesty. Social conscience, group interest and personal integrity were absent. No longer was there a righteous man, as such, living in harmony with the divine order of Maat. No longer was there a concept of character, human dignity and decency. When the established order of Maat, on which the Egyptian way of life was based, was discarded, life became meaningless. The ancient truth, Maat, which had prevailed for perhaps 2,000 years, no longer prevailed.

We must concede from monumental evidence that, for the ancient Egyptians, the concept of Maat brought about a great human society which involved personal and social justice.

## Chapter XI

# SACRED ANIMALS

THE SEEMINGLY OBSESSION of the ancient Egyptians for animals has for many years been greatly misunderstood. Certain animals were cared for and worshiped because they were true repositories of the beneficent or perhaps even dangerous forms of the divine power. It is well known that the ancient Egyptians clothed their gods with external manifestations and symbols. The people frequently saw the manifestations of their gods in the numerous animals with which they were surrounded. The veneration of the sacred animals continued throughout the age of culture and civilization of ancient Egypt.

The late M. Zakaria Goneim, eminent Egyptian archaeologist, in his book *Lost Pyramid*, wrote that an animal would be selected to be a place of manifestation of a god in the same manner as a statue would be fashioned to serve as a material medium for the appearance of the divinity in the temple. A single beast would be selected as a place of manifestation for a god as his statue presented a convenient place for his functional appearance.

Although we probably should, it is difficult to avoid the phrase *animal gods*. There is no question that animals did play an unusual role in Egyptian religion, although we will probably never know how certain gods came to be associated with certain animals. An animal devoted to a god was to be cherished and respected just as much as the physical structure of a temple.

What was the meaning which animals possessed for the early Egyptians? In the beginning they were probably symbolic of various Egyptian tribes. Peoples other than the Egyptians venerated animals. In a way that we can understand, all peoples respected animals in the sense that there was fear of some of them; there was the great strength of some animals; there was also a mutual dependence of man and beast, making a strong bond. This could explain animal worship

wherever found, but in ancient Egypt the obvious difference was that the relationship between an animal and the Egyptians had religious significance. Their religious importance is beyond question. There was a strange link between divinity and the actual beast.

Long a student of Egyptian history, Mr. Ralph M. Lewis, the Emperor of the Rosicrucian Order, AMORC, has written: "Animals were worshiped as early as the beginning of the feudal period of Egypt. However, most Egyptologists—and we must concur—do not think that this is indicative of a decline in the Egyptian religion. The animals were worshiped, at least for a considerable period, because they *symbolized* some virtue or power which men revered. Animals and birds were strong, swift, virile, cunning, or pretty. In these living creatures, therefore, men saw objectified the qualities which they desired for themselves, either here or in the next life. It was a religious duty for them to reverence the animals, not for themselves, but for those qualities which they exhibited."

Then, too, the Egyptians regarded animals as more than symbols or totems. The creatures deserved to be cared for and worshiped because, as stated before, they were true repositories of forms of divine power. In each town the tribal god was incarnate in a particular animal, such as a lion, cat, or falcon, and protected by a taboo.

In the beginning of the historical period just prior to 3000 B.C., the place of the original tribes with their different cults seems to have been taken by nomes or provincial districts. The tribal gods were dispersed over the whole country—each nome or each town, even each village, having its separate deity, its own god. These local deities have often retained the old appellations, but in many cases they were known only by some attribute used in place of the old proper name—that is, for example, the lion goddess who was worshiped at Memphis was known as Sekhmet, the powerful and the avenger. In the Eighteenth Dynasty at Medinet Habu, Sekhmet was the fire goddess. She represented the fierce heat of the sun for the annihilation of enemies.

With the passing of time, there was the fusion of a number of clans, each of which possessed its independent religious life and cults. The historical destiny of Egypt brought together many of these cults. It is well known that nothing of ancient Egypt was ever discarded; the new

was merely added. Whenever the more general cults were introduced, they did not supplant the ancient gods. They were superimposed on them, and the old gods were thus given new attributes, and the attributes of the new gods altered to retain some of the attributes of the older gods they already incorporated.

Eventually, there arose the idea of a distinction between the god and his perceptible manifestation. His statue, or cult image, was only a kind of manifestation which fixed in one place the universal divine essence. From this starting point, it became possible to believe in the fundamental omnipresence of a supreme divinity whose local forms were merely aspects complementary to each other. The creation of figures of composite divinities was only an expression in perceptible form of a belief in a single divine omnipresence, despite the diverse earthly manifestations.

Where sacred animals were concerned, a god was given the human body with the head of the particular animal. For instance, in the earliest times, the god of the desert cemeteries was the jackal-god Anubis. He insured proper burial. When mummification became common, he was looked upon as the master of embalmment. In the early period, Anubis was shown as a reclining jackal. In later periods, the god was depicted on papyri and in temple reliefs with a human body and a jackal's head.

Because animals were looked upon as being divine, deities that were conceived of as animals received human figures with the heads of the animals sacred to them. Thus Sobek, the crocodile god, was venerated at Bubastis and at Ombos as a man with a crocodile's head. The relationship between a god and his animal could vary greatly. If Horus is said to be a falcon whose eyes are the sun and moon, and whose breath is the wind, it might be thought that this was a mere image to describe an impressive god. But the god was depicted as the falcon bird from the earliest times and was apparently believed to be manifest in individual birds.

The god Thoth was the scribe's patron. He had charge over everything having to do with intellectual pursuits. Thoth was concerned with the invention of writing, the evolution of languages, the recording of annals and laws, and the divisions of time. The ibis bird and the

baboon were associated with Thoth. His human figure usually carried the head of the ibis.

It has become customary to say that an Egyptian figure symbolizes this or that. A symbol is a material object representing an abstract idea. In some areas of ancient Egypt, the hippopotamus was looked upon as evil, but the hippopotamus was not a symbol of evil. After all, the great animal was destruction. By killing it or by breaking a representation of it, to the ancient Egyptians evil was destroyed. There were, of course, other implications for the hippopotamus. At Thebes, Thoueris or Taueret, the goddess of childbirth, had as her sacred animal the hippopotamus. It was believed that this goddess could either cut short or prolong the labor.

Symbols as figures of gods sometimes tell us something about the god, and sometimes they do not. To us, their meaning is sometimes elusive. This may be because the god was not always confined to a single mode of manifestation. To the temple priests, the figures were evidently symbolic; but to the masses, they were thought to possess an inherent power. Then, too, we are often involved with different periods of Egypt's history. The goddess Hathor, for instance, in late papyri and even in royal statues, appears as a cow; yet she was rendered in the First Dynasty with a human face, cow's horns, and cow's ears. This early appearance of human features was to be expected, for a god represented personified power.

It has been suggested that the animal figures were similar to pictograms. Graphic representations influenced the old Egyptian texts to read as if the animal-headed form did exist. As an example, this is true of the human-headed Ba bird. After death, man's personality consisted of Ba and body. The Ba bird is often shown hovering over the body or flying down the tomb shaft to rejoin it.

The very absence of a general rule and the variety of the creatures involved suggest that, what in these relationships became articulate, was an underlying religious awe felt before all animal life.

Aside from the great religious significance of animals, the Egyptians saw in them the nonhuman or superhuman. After all, a god should be superhuman, and an animal, although inarticulate, had great wisdom,

great certainty, unhesitating achievement; above all, he was an ever-present static reality. The animals never changed any more than did the rising and setting of the sun. They shared in the fundamental nature of creation.

The Egyptians viewed their living universe as a rhythmic movement contained within an unchanging whole. Their social order reflected this view. It determined their outlook to such an extent that it must be looked upon as an intuitive interpretation of what to them was the world order. To them, through eons of time, animals existed in their unchanging species, in their respective modes of life, irrespective of the coming and going of individuals.

To the ancient Egyptian, animal life indeed would appear to be superhuman because it shared directly in the life of the universe. Recognition of the sacred animals was recognition of the divine. The relationship between gods and animals was greatly respected. James Henry Breasted wrote that there were many Egyptian gods whose earthly symbols were animals, and that while the animals were not gods in the earliest dynasties, they were symbols of the divine beings, just as the winged sun-disk and the pyramid were symbols of the sun-god.

Animals and birds were widely revered. Deliberate killing was a capital offense. Those who committed accidental killing were severely punished. There was a divine association of animals with their religion. They needed a tangible representation of deities. Generally, animals were not treated as gods until later times.

Anyone conversant with Egyptian history is familiar with the Egyptian's veneration of the bull. At Memphis there was the bull Apis. This was a black bull with white spots. At Heliopolis there was the bull Mnevis, which was light in color. The Apis bull was called the living Apis, the herald of Ptah who carries the truth to Ptah. Ptah was an earth-god. On the other hand, the Mnevis bull was associated with the sun-god Ra. These bulls were the divine servants of their gods.

The bull was the procreative symbol of fertility. The Apis bull of Memphis borrowed the sun-disk of Ra from Heliopolis and carried it between his horns. Eventually, a fusion of Apis with Osiris gave rise to a funerary deity. As soon as the Apis bull died, he was reborn. He

could be identified by the special marks on his coat—a white spot on the forehead, on the neck, and on the back.

A deity, such as Hathor, could be manifested as a cow but depicted in human shape. On the other hand, Nut the sky goddess is depicted as a woman, but also, in her aspect as mother of sun and stars, as a cow. The sun is often rendered as a falcon or a falcon-headed man wearing the sun disk as a crown.

Among the great number of sacred animals, there was the cat, which became the cat-goddess of the town of Bast or Bubastis in the Delta. The wolf named Wepwawet, the war god, was worshiped in the nome of Assuit. The animal sacred to Amon at Thebes was the ram. The falcon was sacred to Harakhty, the special form of Horus. Kepher, the beetle, was regarded as a form of the sun-god. Khnum, the god of Elephantine and the cataract districts, had as his sacred animal the goat. Mut, the wife of the god Amon of Thebes, had as her sacred animal the vulture. Selket was the scorpion goddess. Uat, goddess of the town of Buto in the Delta, was represented by the serpent. The cow was sacred to Hathor, the goddess of love and joy. She was also the goddess of Denderah and the guardian of the necropolis at Thebes.

It was probably not only the names but also the essences of the gods that were multiplied. The many gods worshiped in the various parts of Egypt came to be looked upon as distinct beings. Nevertheless, it is said that the idea that many gods with different names had originally been one was never entirely lost by the people. This was undoubtedly a great help to the priests in their later efforts to unify the gods. The gods were innumerable. There were local gods, and also there was a considerable number of lesser deities who exercised influence over human beings.

It was believed that the gods chose the sacred animals to represent them. The sacred animal in which the god inhaled was frequently distinguished by special markings, as in the case of the Apis bull, which was kept in the temple and worshiped as divine and after its death interred with honor, while its place in the temple was taken by another Apis bull. The belief that gods chose animals as their abode and revealed themselves in the form of animals was generally widespread.



The layman today has always been perplexed that a cobra should be sacred. Remember that in the ancient concepts the divine could be manifest in animals, even in a serpent. The Pharaoh and his queen needed protection. The cobra-goddess Wadjet was the protector. This concept originated in Lower Egypt where, it was related, the fiery poison of the cobra struck death to the enemies of the Pharaoh. The Pharaoh's diadem came to be adorned with the figure of this uraeus, or Wadjet, the cobra. The cobra, with spread hood ready to strike, was worn by all Pharaohs on the forehead as an emblem of royalty. It will also be remembered that the Pharaoh headed a dual monarchy of the Upper and Lower areas of ancient Egypt. The cobra Wadjet represented Lower Egypt, while the vulture-goddess Nekhbet represented Upper Egypt.

Paradoxical as it may seem, in very ancient times the Pharaoh was referred to on various occasions as a bull, a crocodile, a lion, a falcon, and a jackal. The god Horus was represented by the falcon. When the Egyptians said that the Pharaoh was Horus, they did not mean that the king was playing the part of Horus. There is reason to believe that they meant that the Pharaoh was Horus, and that the god was effectively present in the king's body during a particular activity.

In one particular Egyptian text, the Pharaoh is equated with a series of deities. He is Ra, he is Khnum, he is Bastet, and he is Sekhmet. For the Pharaoh, these undoubtedly represented the attributes of understanding, rule, protection, and punishment; and the Pharaoh was each of them. Each of these attributes was manifest in a god or goddess, and the Pharaoh was each of these. Therefore, if the Pharaoh could represent a god, it is also true that he could be represented by a man or an animal, or both.

Many Egyptologists believe that the ancient Egyptians were really monotheistic, and that all gods were subsumed into a single god—perhaps not necessarily a single god, but a single nature of observed phenomena throughout the universe, with the potentiality of exchange and substitution. Just as there were many gods, just so there were many men, and all were ultimately of one nature. The myths and legends of ancient Egypt bear out the idea that they conceived much humanness in their gods.

The single nature or substance concept held throughout the long history of Egypt through the Nineteenth Dynasty. Then concepts began to change. Decadence was under way. Gradually, sacred animals as individuals were no longer venerated as they once were. The entire species of each animal came to be involved. In the late period, there was national animal worship for an entire species. Archaeologists have found mummified cats, falcons, bulls, and crocodiles buried by the hundreds in vast cemeteries. There was no worship of a species of animals as such until the degeneration of Egyptian history.

While animal life in and by itself might be a mystery, it was indeed a part of nature, and nature included the changeless rhythm of the seasons and the phenomena of the regular appearance of the sun and the moon. Transcendent power and order were found in all of this. To the ancient Egyptians, it had a relevancy to the affairs of man and his orderly life, his problems of immortality, and the problem of justice. Man lived close to nature. The daily recurrence of the sun meant much more to the Egyptians than it does to us. And then there was the falcon flying silently in the sky, the jackal moving silently along the edge of the desert, the crocodile lurking silently in the Nile—they were a part of a mysterious and inscrutable divine force. The gods, man, animals, plants, trees, the Nile were all related. Each complemented the other.

Apparently, human behavior was the frame of reference for nonhuman behavior. To us, the sacred animal or its image might be meaningless, but to the ancient Egyptian the sacred animal or its image represented divinity. There was basic unity among the people in the belief that divine power could be manifest in certain animals such as falcons, lions, rams, cows, and bulls. They were sacred animals to Pharaoh, who was himself divine. While the Pharaoh remained himself and did not become identical with other forms such as the sacred animals, he had, on the other hand, a different form of appearance for different purposes, just as human beings have different garments. For the ancient Egyptians, the Pharaoh, the gods and goddesses, and the sacred animals were something such as we might refer to as the nature of a spectrum, and they were subject to much speculative thought.

## YESTERDAY HAS MUCH TO TELL

To the very end of Egypt's history, gods were believed to be manifest in animals. Sacred animals and nature itself, of which they were so much a part, possessed tremendous religious significance, and this, in turn, had much bearing on the culture of ancient Egypt.

## Chapter XII

# RELIGION

**R**ELIGION PROVIDED THE fabric for the unfolding tapestry of the history of ancient Egypt. The complex and involved religion touched virtually every aspect of life, including state, social and everyday affairs.

### MANY GODS ARE ONE

In the temples, the maintaining and preserving of a god was in the hands of a few priests. Only priests and men and women of nobility were allowed to learn the ritual pertaining to this. Apparently the common people did not participate, and it is doubtful if they were allowed to take part in the rituals. All ceremonies pertaining to a god were retained in the hands of the priests. It is possible that superior concepts may have been too exalted for the common people, and that they preferred to depend on more accessible deities. Ra, of course, was the supreme entity. The Egyptian concept was carried on a high level of thought in this regard. But for the common people there apparently had to be provision for a lower class of gods, of which there were many. Max Mueller wrote that a system of “departmental” gods called for a supreme entity to be placed above them, and that the departmental gods were subordinate.

Even in the Eighteenth Dynasty the people were not ready for the concept of one supreme entity. I recently came across a story about a traveler, from north of the Mediterranean Sea, who visited temple priests in Egypt hundreds of years ago. I cannot vouch for its authenticity. The visitor later wrote about his conversation with a priest of the temple in Alexandria: “. . . Then you believe that all gods are one?” “Yes, all gods are one; but the people must not be so told. All gods are one, but the divine entity has many names. There is one god of all things; hence, all things are as one, and all originated from the same source.” Only further study and interpretation can determine whether such an assumption is valid. It might be said that there prevailed the

conception of a unity of energy in diversity of operation. We often read that these ancient people were not capable of abstract thought. There is no doubt, however, that some had this faculty, and that there was some introspection.

The Egyptians had many gods, and they sometimes had several names for one god, such as Ra. In this case this applied to the different phases of Ra in the morning, at noon, and in the evening. Ritualistically the Egyptians recited or intoned words or sounds that perhaps indirectly would affect the gods and cause them to assist in any undertaking. As placation, offerings to the gods were made.

Legends and myths were evolved to account for certain phenomena. Accounts such as these could have been evolved only by a people of a somewhat advanced nature, by people who at least to some degree had attained the faculty of introspective and metaphysical thought. Admittedly the abstract conception of a god has ever been an extremely difficult matter for the human mind to grasp. We could even say that today there are many people who have not broken away from anthropomorphic deities endowed with human qualities. For the ancient Egyptians, there was ever a tendency to revert to old and less advanced forms.

Religion, as it pertained to them, was as a form of government, a strong force. It entered into every phase of life, every aspect of the daily life of the individual. Such powers and concepts have always had very important effects on human development. It is said that like good and evil they represented a needed cohesive force. Proverbs, legends, and myths prove that the ancient Egyptians were seeking to explain the origin of man and the universe and of all earthly things. They indicate that man made progress in the search for the creator of all he saw about him, and that he sought to learn something about his final destiny. I feel that what they did has contributed to the culture of our world today.

The ancient Egyptian allowed for metaphysical thought, and he evolved a form of religion that was the necessary cohesive power in his social system, even though this revolved around the divinity of the Pharaoh and the pantheon of gods.

CREATION AND THEOGONY

Creation, the very beginning, was a matter of great importance to the ancient Egyptians. There are at least four legends, or stories, of creation, each being identified with a particular temple or period.

Heliopolis: In early Heliopolis, Atum was the principal god. Atum created himself and, having no place to stand, he created what is known as the primeval hill. He created the other gods, and he became identified with Ra who already prevailed. Atum's emergence on the hill was interpreted as the coming of light to disperse darkness. He was Ra-Atum. Ra-Atum was symbolized by the bennu bird which alighted at dawn on the apex of an obelisk known as the ben ben. The obelisk represented a ray of the sun. Ra-Atum was also symbolized by the scarab beetle pushing his egg before him. This represented a new cycle of creation. There is a legend that Ra-Atum had an eye in the center of his forehead, and this was associated with the cobra goddess Buto also known as Wadjet and Edjo. This ultimately became the uraeus on the front of the headpiece worn by Pharaohs. The cobra was a symbol of power and royalty.

Memphis: At Memphis the chief god was Ptah, master of destiny, master of craftsmen, and creator of the world. Other gods were manifestations of Ptah. He was declared to be the father, the great god. Atum was an agent of Ptah's will. Horus, too, was an aspect of Ptah. It was said that Ptah not only created the primeval hill, but that he was the hill. He was the creative principle acting through thought and will. He established moral order and royal power. As the creator-god, he was the origin of divine utterances and divine acts of creation. As supreme creator, he was the divine artificer. Ptah was just, and he was accompanied by Thoth, god of wisdom.

Hermopolis: At Hermopolis it was believed that the primordial gods were created from the receding flood waters of the Nile River. Here there prevailed several creation legends. One was that all creation came from an egg laid by an ibis bird. Another was about the lotus flower that rose out of the water. When its petals opened, there was the divine Ra. Another version of this was that the lotus opened to reveal a scarab beetle. This, of course, was another symbol of Ra.

Obviously the implications indicated that men were the children of Ra. The association of the lotus with the sun-god is easily understood. The flower opens and closes every day, and the sun rises and sets each day.

Thebes: The invisible creator, or hidden one, at Thebes was Amon. It was believed that the aspects of creator-gods were incorporated in Amon. It was also felt that the primeval hill rose out of the water at Thebes, and that Amon created himself and other gods as well as men. Eventually Amon departed the earth to abide in the heavens as Ra.

### SCARABS

Stone scarabs were used as royal seals, ornaments, and amulets. Scarabs, which were made in various sizes but always oval in shape, to all intents and purposes related to the scarab beetle which, at Heliopolis, was associated with spontaneous creation and regeneration, a manifestation of the god Kepher, the rising sun. As a seal, the scarab was mounted in a ring or as a pendant. Scarabs were used to stamp sealings and clay tablets, letters, containers, etc. They were also carried as protective amulets. After all, the beetle, it was thought, had within him the power of eternal renewal of life. Scarabs were made of hard stone and glazed. The flat side carried a cartouche, inscription, or decoration. As seals they bore the name and title of the official. Historical scarabs were issued in the same way as our commemorative medals. So-called heart scarabs, usually flanked with falcon's wings, were funerary talismans. The heart scarab of stone was laid upon the breast of the mummy, and this indicated that the guilty soul must stand in the judgment hall in the presence of Osiris. The scarab thus used was to secure exemption from the possible performance of an evil life. Inscribed on the heart scarab were these words: "O, my heart, rise not up against me as a witness."

### THE SCARAB BEETLE

The ancient Egyptians drew from the sacred scarab beetle a wealth of symbolism. One is of particular interest. The Egyptians must have been impressed with the drama of the scarab beetle rolling before it, on the ground, a ball of dung many times the size of the beetle. They believed that the scarabs rolled their enormous spheres from

dawn to sunset, and they saw in this what they felt was a symbolism of the sun. The awakening sun in the morning was Kepher. The ball of the sun, which was the immediate cause of life in the world, was supposedly rolled across the sky by the Kepher beetle who, of course, was identified with the creator.

### FESTIVALS

The united lands of Upper and Lower Egypt enjoyed many festivals, some of which were annual. In the late period the marriage of the goddess Hathor of Denderah to Horus of Edfu was celebrated. There was always an annual celebration for Hapi, the god of the Nile River. There were five feast days in July devoted to the ending of the old year and the beginning of the new. The star Sirius, known to the Egyptians as Sothis, was involved in this. At the height of the inundation there was what was known at Thebes as the Opet festival, conducted in honor of the god Amon-Ra. It is believed that this lasted twenty-four days. The bark of Amon was taken from the temple in Karnak to the river and traveled by barge the short distance to Luxor Temple. After twenty-four days, the bark carrying a statue of the god Amon was returned to Karnak. In the ceremonies there were food-and-drink offerings to Amon, his consort Mut, and their son Khonsu. In all of the important festivities there were colorful processions.

Another festival had to do with the raising of the Djed column which represented the backbone of Osiris. Following the inundation, a festival was conducted in commemoration of the resurrection of Osiris. Every thirty years there was the Sed celebration. This was essentially a royal rite for the purpose of rejuvenating the reigning Pharaoh by investiture and other activities to confirm his beneficent rule over the two lands, as was first accomplished by Menes. In the Nile Valley it was domination over the forces of nature which the Pharaoh controlled, and this had to be secured by the periodic regeneration ritual.

### THE ANKH

The looped cross, known as the ankh or crux ansata, is one of the most outstanding figures or symbols which appears everywhere in Egypt. It appears inscribed on columns of temples at Karnak, Edfu, and elsewhere. It appears on inscribed or painted wall murals at Luxor



Temple, Hatshepsut's Temple, Karnak, Medinet Habu and others, and on obelisks. The ankh appears on the walls of tombs. Graphic temple or tomb wall scenes often portray a god extending the ankh to the Pharaoh. An example of this is in the tomb of Amenhotep II where we see the ankh being proffered by Osiris.

Instead of the vertical straight top section above the arms of the cross, which is usually associated with Christianity, the top of the Egyptian cross is in the form of an oval or loop. To the ancient Egyptians this signified life, and the symbol, in fact, was known as the *key of life*. I have found that historians have devoted little space in their writings to the significance of the ankh. When we see the ankh on a temple column or obelisk, and it is not being extended by a god, the looped cross is almost always associated with another well-known Egyptian figure or symbol which stands beside the ankh. This figure is the same height as the ankh; and, while at the bottom it is the same width, it narrows to a point at the top. To us it is an isosceles triangle. This is the hieroglyph or sign that, when shown with the ankh, signifies *forever*. Together the two symbols indicate *life everlasting*. The ankh apparently made its first appearance in the Fifth Dynasty.

#### USHABTIS

Ushabtis were small stone statuettes placed in tombs with the dead. When the deceased was called upon to perform some task, the ushabti would hasten to take his place and do the job for him, so it was believed. Meanwhile the deceased could continue to enjoy life.

#### PIT BOATS

Boat pits are known to have been associated with several pyramids as well as mastaba tombs. Public attention apparently first came to these a few years ago when boats in their pits were revealed at the foot of Khufu's Great Pyramid. In 1954 the press announced the discovery of a long cedar boat in a rock-cut pit beside the pyramid. Although called solar, it is proper also to refer to the boats as *ritual* and *funerary*. They were intended to provide the dead king with physical substitutes for the vessels he would need in the after-life. According to legend, one boat would be used for crossing the sky in the retinue of the sun-god by day, and another boat for traveling by night.

REINCARNATION

I am indebted to Mr. Ralph M. Lewis, head of the Rosicrucian Order, AMORC, for the following discussion on the subject of reincarnation.

“During the long period of some 3,000 years of Egyptian history there existed both the belief in transmigration and reincarnation. Commonly the two words were interchanged. Transmigration is the passing over from one body to the other. It is the belief in the embodiment of a soul or spirit in any kind of living form, whether human or animal. According to this conception, a human soul may incarnate in an animal form such as a cow or even as a serpent or a bird.

“To the higher forms of mystical philosophy, the concept of transmigration is repulsive. The soul-personality of humans is considered to be the highest state of consciousness of living things on earth. For it to incarnate in a lesser form than a human one is considered a retrogression.

“Specifically the doctrine of reincarnation expounds that after a Cosmic interval, the soul of man incarnates again into a human form only, the purpose being that each life or each incarnation may afford the soul-personality the opportunity of further experience and evolvment.

“What is to be noted is that the rebirth, in almost all philosophies or religions advocating reincarnation, is not intended as a form of retribution or punishment. In the religious systems in which the belief in transmigration is included, it is usually conceived of as an act of retribution or punishment. The soul is obliged to incarnate in an animal, reptile, bird, or insect to compensate for or expiate certain sins committed while residing in human form. The soul is imprisoned in that kind of physical state until released by some spiritual act of another, or until it has atoned for its previous misdeeds.

“Hindus are reluctant to destroy any form of life, even to kill insects, as are many primitive peoples elsewhere, in the belief that they may be destroying the earthly form of an incarnated soul of a suffering human. This conception, which is transmigration, is repugnant to the devout believers in reincarnation.

“In ancient Egypt, the masses had their popular religions. Such could not be too abstract or deal in intangibles. Gods had to be beings. Souls were a substance. These were symbolized by birds to the mystical, but to the common man were actually birds possessed of the soul of a god.

“One of the reasons for the failure of the inspired religious revelations and concepts of Akhnaton was that his thoughts were beyond the mental capacity of the masses of In’s time to comprehend. They could not conceive of a sole god as an impersonal creative energy that gave all things their existence. Such an idea of a deity could not be imagined by the common Egyptian, just as millions of persons in our time cannot comprehend such an impersonal God. The gods of the people had to be more tangible, have forms which were perceivable and comprehensible. The great statues of the god Amon, for example, were something that suggested power, substance, superiority, all of which awed the individual.

“In animals were seen behavior that suggested certain traits of human character such as bravery, cowardice, cunning, deception, cruelty, and the like. It, therefore, easily suggested to primitive reasoning that there was a sympathetic relationship between such animals and reptiles and human character. It was but another step for the imagination to think of such animals as embodying a human soul that had transmigrated. The priests inculcated fear in the people, which gave the priesthood dominance over the lives of the believer. However, the priests of certain of the advanced mystery schools had quite different doctrines for the more astute inquirers into the mysteries of life. These doctrines became true mystical philosophies. In some of these were teachings that could only be construed in the light of reincarnation as distinguished from transmigration.

“In Chapter LXIV of the *Book of the Dead*, which is a collection of liturgies and accounts of the next life, the deceased identifies himself with the divine hidden Soul who created the gods. It specifically refers to the second birth, and strongly implies that the soul has a godlike life without any implication of its embodiment in animal form. In Chapter CLXXXII of *the Book of the Dead*, the god Osiris is addressed as he ‘who maketh mortals to be born again.’ In this latter instance,

however, it can be construed as meaning a rebirth in the kingdom of Osiris—that is, the next world and not upon earth. The rebirth of Ra, the sun-god, was thought to occur daily at the rising of the sun. Transmigration is evidenced in the belief that ‘the ram of Mendes and Hawk’ were the incarnation of the spirit of the sun-god. The bull, too, was likewise thought to be the ‘living soul of Ra.’

“There is another element that must not be lost sight of in the Egyptian reference to animals or birds possessing the soul of a god. Certain attributes or characteristics of birds and animals suggested virtues thought to be possessed by the gods. Thus to the priests such animals became symbols of these virtues. To the people, however, the spirit of the gods was actually incarnated in such animals.

“There is no doubt that the conception of reincarnation had its inception in Egypt, as have the beliefs in resurrection, immortality, the soul, conscience, the afterlife, and similar elements essential to the theologies of living religions. Any student of history or Egyptology is soon convinced of this by the facts presented. Time may have refined and given a somewhat different connotation to such beliefs, but to Egypt must be conceded their origin.”

## Chapter XIII

# ART AND SCIENCE

**F**LINDERS PETRIE, LATE nineteenth century archaeologist, wrote: "The art of a country, like the character of its inhabitants, always belongs to the nature of the land." And so it is with the Egyptians in their painting, writing, sculpture, architecture and, in fact, all of their stone work. Their ideals and emotions were very much involved. Toward the end of ancient Egypt's glorious era, Alexandria in the Delta of Lower Egypt and Heliopolis were very much centers of learning in what we today call the ancient world. The Greeks and Phoenicians, who civilized the Mediterranean world, drew their inspiration for their arts and sciences from Egyptian culture.

### STONE MASONS

Probably we will never know the exact technique used by the stone masons in dressing and jointing huge blocks of granite and limestone. Stone blocks were fitted closely without the use of mortar. There is evidence, however, that blocks were fitted end to end with key slots, with copper key bars linking adjoining blocks. The cutting and finishing of stone was a remarkable art. In temples and pyramids stones were accurately laid in their courses. To raise and place cross beams, raise columns, erect tremendous obelisks was no mean engineering feat.

All monumental constructions had either a religious or memorial purpose. It was a cause for which the laborers worked without objection. Every project required a well planned engineering program with a sufficient number of specialists and labor force on hand to carry out the work as planned. Labor was performed with undeviating obedience to authority. For projects such as the Great Pyramid, farmers worked on the job during the season of the Nile's inundation, when agricultural work was impossible, in lieu of payment of taxes.

There were no machines for transporting or raising multi-ton blocks of stone. The objective was accomplished through human energy

and with friction-reducing devices such as gliders, sledges, levers, and inclined ramps. Some of the monuments that were quarried and moved weighed from fifty to as much as 1,000 tons. The obelisks of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Dynasties were quarried at Aswan and brought down the Nile on barges to Luxor. Heavy stone blocks could not have been lifted up and then taken down repeatedly to test their fit. If the masons knew how to fit the blocks without trial and error, then they would also know how to erect obelisks.

There is much evidence that earth ramps were employed on a large scale. Heavy stone blocks were dragged up inclined ramps to their position on a pyramid or temple by large gangs of men. It is assumed that a hypostyle hall, such as that at Karnak with its immense columns and heavy stone horizontal spans or architraves, was erected by filling the interior of the hall with earth. As the construction grew in height, stones were raised by drawing them up dirt ramps laid against the exterior. The same method for raising the limestone blocks that form the heart of the pyramids at Gizeh is mentioned by Herodotus. When a project was completed, the earth ramps were removed. The wheel was not known. Logs or planks, known as sleepers, could have been laid on the ground lengthwise so that upon them heavy objects could be moved. Tools used are described in Chapter Fifteen. A Twelfth Dynasty tomb painting shows one hundred sixty-eight men dragging a sixty-ton alabaster statue of a noble on a sledge. The sledge is apparently being moved on greased wooden planks. In all of their architectural splendor, there was a sense of eternity.

## STATUES

Nearly all statues are monumental, and their function is to perpetuate, not so much the memory of the existence of the dead but as a dwelling place for the soul in case any harm should come to the mummified body. At first, statuary was the prerogative of the king alone, the royal family, and later their dependents. In time sculptors adapted their work to the needs of the ordinary people. A tomb statue was really a human image which assumed the identity of the embalmed corpse, and provided the spirit with a substitute for the body if necessary. Each statue had to be a portrait which avoided any suggestion of human frailty. The sculptors worked with incomparable skill.

Egyptian sculpture reached a high level of technical mastery. We know now that the forms the artists worked on were composed deliberately through a system of squares. In several tombs the carving is incomplete, and the figures still show the network of squares or grid by which the artist was guided. The squares always intersect the bodies, whatever their scale, at exactly the same points, and divide them into exactly the same parts. The system is based on the theory that each part of the human body has a fixed ratio to the other parts. So human proportions were standardized, and the sculptor had to construct his figures according to theory and not as he saw them. The canon applied to sculpture in the round applied equally to relief sculpture and painting. In standing statues, both feet had to be planted firmly on the ground.

Out of this geometric equilibrium, Egyptian sculptors produced works of vitality and naturalness. The realistic element in Egyptian art fulfilled itself in portraiture, and in this art the sculptors proved to be masters. Perhaps the best known and certainly one of the most beautiful works of art is the sculptured bust of Queen Nefertiti, wife of Akhnaton, a Pharaoh of the Eighteenth Dynasty. This statue reveals to us that Nefertiti was one of the most beautiful women of ancient times.

### PAINTING AND RELIEF SCULPTURE

The main function of Egyptian art was to serve religion and to create lasting memorials of persons and events. Art was the visible interpretation of religious thought, and as such, it had to justify and glorify the temporal power of the god-king. This meant that the artists spent most of their lives working in the setting of a tomb chamber or shrine.

A number of painted reliefs in tombs fortunately have been preserved. They are complete scenes which give a vivid impression of the busy life of Egyptian country people. They depict them sowing and reaping their crops, tending their animals, grinding corn, hunting in the papyrus swamps, fishing in the Nile, and preparing food. As lifelike and full of movement as the scenes are, their decorative aspect is always apparent in their arrangement in the horizontal zones divided by friezes, in their lack of spacial illusion, and in the placing of the silhouettes of figures.

The reliefs illustrate very clearly the Egyptian formula for presenting the human figure: shoulders and eye seen from the front, head and legs from the side. This was not because the artists were unskilled or ignorant. They knew that only one arm and shoulder could be seen in profile. But it was important to present a complete image of the human being, and by twisting the torso to a front view the artist could show the whole body, instead of merely recording an exact visual image. Usually the distortion is not even disconcerting, so skillful were the artists in uniting the parts in a decorative whole.

Artists had greater opportunities for freedom and imagination in relief carving. They invented variations on traditional themes and filled their scenes with freshly observed detail. The people were interested in the outward appearance of living and inanimate things, and the artists were skilled in imitating surfaces and textures. They never lost their sense of the clarity of forms, however, and made superb use of line. The rational approach to visual impressions developed by the Greeks was alien to the early Egyptians.

### MORE MYSTERIES

The use of the Great Pyramid is a mystery, and we have devoted a chapter to the subject. The paints and enamels used by the Egyptians are a mystery to us. Their color and luster continue after thousands of years. What they did apparently cannot be duplicated today. Still another mystery has to do with the tombs. The penetration into the rocky cliffs in the Valley of the Kings in some instances is tremendous. In others it is the great depth at which the burial room with its sarcophagus was placed. Several flights of steps or stairs downward was common.

The question is, How did the artists illumine the dark underground areas so that walls and ceiling of all chambers and passageways could receive the colorful murals and hieroglyphs depicting gods and events in the life of the departed? Today's specialists who have pondered this remarkable achievement can make no suggestion as to how the tombs were illumined so that the artists could perform their work. They state that resinous or oil torches cannot be the answer. We are more and more astonished and moved to admiration of the work of the artisans of ancient Egypt.



THE SCRIBE

The scribes were a very important class in ancient Egypt. They alone had the chance of a career in the civil service or as a steward of a great estate, since writing was a specialized profession. The career of a scribe was as exacting in its requirements as it was honorable and profitable in its rewards. A young man fortunate enough to have passed through the great school of scribes at Memphis, or later at Thebes, was expected not only to be able to read, write, and draw with considerable skill, but also to have a thorough knowledge of the language, literature, and history of his country. Furthermore, he must be well versed in mathematics, bookkeeping, law, management and maintenance of personnel, general administrative procedure, and even such subjects as mechanics, surveying, and architectural design. Once a man had qualified as a scribe, he automatically became a member of the educated official class. This status exempted him from menial labor of any sort, and he could rise through a series of recognized stages to the very highest offices in the land.

In performing, his work, the scribe would sit cross legged, making the tightly stretched front of his linen kilt serve as a desk. With pen or brush in hand, and with a roll of papyrus stretched across his knees and on the kilt, he was ready for dictation. The Rosicrucian Egyptian Museum has a fine statue of a scribe in the pose. His writing pigments, usually red or black, were contained in alabaster bowls resting on the floor beside him. The scribe wrote from right to left in what is known as hieratic usually with a slender brush composed of a reed with a carefully frayed and trimmed tip. His paper was made of narrow strips of the papyrus reed, crossed in two directions, pressed together, and subsequently burnished.

SCIENCE

The sciences in which the Egyptians excelled were medicine, applied mathematics, engineering, and a degree of astronomy. I have devoted a chapter to their medicine, and I have many times remarked about their engineering expertise. We know they had full knowledge of and used geometry, but it is doubtful that they had evolved higher mathematics. Because of the very nature of the physical conditions of the country and also the vital building programs, engineering was a necessity.

The annual inundation of the land was of tremendous importance to crops and to life itself. The measuring of the rise and fall of the river was carefully and scientifically done with a gauge known as the Nilometer. A year of rise of the river could destroy villages. Years of low flood could mean famine. Canals were cut inland, and mud dams were constructed at the river to conserve and utilize "high" water. In the First Dynasty the engineers of the pharaoh Menes changed the course of the river so that the city of Memphis could be built on the site of the old river bed of the Nile, and this was truly an engineering feat. In the Twelfth Dynasty canals, dikes, and sluices were introduced in the Fayum in a successful effort to conserve excess water of the inundation. It is believed that also in this dynasty a waterway was dug from the Nile to the Red Sea.

Astronomy provided knowledge of the positions of the constellations and the courses of the known planets. Important constellations were Ursa Major and Orion. The dog star Sirius or Sothis was of special importance, for its rising heralded the inundation. The sun and moon were included in the list of "seven" planets or "travelers," along with Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, Venus, and Mercury. The earth was looked upon as being the stationary center of a geocentric universe and was therefore omitted. The planets were conceived as moving in spheres or orbits around the earth and passing through twelve constellations or "fixed stars" which made a zodiac or "belt of animals," around the heavens with the sun's path or ecliptic as the middle line. Since the sun travels through all the signs of the zodiac in one year and remains about the same length of time in each, this system evolved something like a solar month which could be related to the equinoxes and the solstices. The year consisted of 365 days. Each of the twelve months was divided into three ten-day weeks. There were star maps and star fists. A night was divided into twelve hours and this twelve hour division was imposed on the day as early as the Eighteenth Dynasty. The twenty-four hour day with its twelve hour night and day designations was accepted and long established. The sun and moon were natural time indicators.

To determine short periods of time water clocks were invented. This was a method for water to flow into or out of a vessel at a given rate in a specific time period. It is known that in the Eighteenth Dynasty during the reign of Amenhotep III an alabaster water clock was in

regular use. When the vessel was filled, water flowed out through a special opening. A modern authority has said that, by noting the water level against a scale of markings on the inner surface, a reasonable estimate of the interval of time was obtained. For exact calculations a fair amount of mathematical knowledge was necessary. In hieroglyphs we find references to "hours filled with water."

### HATSHEPSUT

Queen Hatshepsut, daughter of Thutmose I and his wife queen Ahmose, married her half-brother, Thutmose II. Upon his death, she was crowned with the full royal regalia and titulary, and reigned for about twenty years. She was a woman of character and energy.

Very soon after her coronation, Hatshepsut began building on a large scale in many parts of her kingdom. But beyond all question the most superb of her undertakings was the temple of Deir el-Bahri across the Nile from Thebes in the Valley of the Kings. Apparently the rightful king was her nephew, Thutmose III, and it is fairly certain that there were rivalries at court. Nevertheless, her own political capacity and that of her advisors were enough to maintain this remarkable woman in power for a generation. In an inscription by one of her father's officials, Hatshepsut is described as the "divine companion of Thutmose III, she who directed the affairs of the two lands, Upper and Lower Egypt, according to her will." It was the accepted belief that she, as sovereign, was in truth the child of the sun-god.

The architect of this splendid temple was Senmut, chief of the devoted group of officials who served the queen and who clearly stood in some special relationship to her. The temple resembles no other of its time, although its form was doubtless suggested by the neighboring tomb complex built by Mentuhotep some 600 years earlier. Hatshepsut's building was not a tomb but a temple in honor of her "divine father." It rises in three terraces from the level area within a dramatic bay of cliffs in the Valley of the Kings, to an upper court surrounded by the rocky mass of the canyon wall. Around each terrace are rows of fine columns arranged in beautifully exact perspective. The columns of most Egyptian temples were in covered halls leading through growing dimness to the ultimate sanctuary. In Hatshepsut's

temple the square columns led to spacious courts open to the sky. No other Egyptian temple equals it for beauty. To Hatshepsut, it was the paradise of Amon, and on its approaches she planted the myrrh and incense trees which she had brought from Punt in far Somaliland, a journey graphically depicted on the courtyard walls.

Architecturally Hatshepsut's temple must be considered to be a dramatic work of art. My wife, Ruthe, thinks it is the most beautiful temple in all of Egypt.

### TUT-ANKH-AMON

Tut-ankh-amon's tomb was discovered in the Valley of the Kings by Howard Carter in 1922. The young king died at the age of eighteen years. The lavish furnishings of his tomb tell us that probably all of the tombs of the Pharaohs were furnished similarly. Fortunately the tomb robbers had not been successful with that of this young Eighteenth Dynasty Pharaoh. His sarcophagus remained undisturbed for over 3,000 years.

It will be sufficient to briefly mention something of the find by Carter. The tomb was sealed inside deep rock. In the center of the burial chamber stood four richly decorated shrines, one inside the other. Within was a huge yellow quartzite sarcophagus with a rose-colored granite lid. Exquisitely sculptured guardian goddesses stood at the four corners. Inside the stone sarcophagus, which was covered with religious inscriptions, were several gold gilded coffins. Inside the third, which was gold, was the mummy of Tut-ankh-amon. A wreath of flowers still lay on the coffin, and they had retained their color. There were fantastic jewels, gold statues, pectorals, amulets, beads, silver mirrors, rings, and necklaces with gold pendants shaped like lotus flowers.

Among the many luxurious furnishings were beds, chairs, stools, tables from the palace, Tut-ankh-amon's marvelous gold throne, alabaster vases, scepters, bows and arrows, ostrich-feather fans, a panel showing the young king and queen with the Aton symbol, a chalice, and an alabaster oil lamp. The walls and ceilings of the tomb were adorned with religious scenes, paintings of some of the gods, the most outstanding of which was Osiris.

One perceives much beauty in the colorful inscriptions. A graceful alabaster boat reposed in the tomb with ibex heads at the prow and stern. Amidship is a delicately carved kiosk, the roof or canopy of which is supported by four columns. The contents of the tomb present Egyptian artistry at its best. Every royal article is an outstanding masterpiece of magnificent artistic workmanship. The artifacts found in this tomb should be included in any discussion on the subject of art.

## Chapter XIV

# SOCIAL CONDITIONS

**T**HE EARLY EGYPTIANS were uncomplicated people and enjoyed life. They were thoroughly human.

### HOME AND FAMILY

The ancient Egyptians were devoted to a happy family life. The wife and mother were held in high esteem. Marriage was monogamous, although a man could have as many concubines as he could afford. An established slave trade supplied domestic servants. Dinner and evening leisure took place on the cool rooftops of town houses and country villas.

It is known that dwellings in the Eighteenth Dynasty were surrounded by a brick wall behind which there were gardens, flowers, a pool, a water well, and a courtyard. Some dwellings were of two stories. The dwellings provided a reception hall, parlor, master bedroom, bedroom for the “great” wife, bedrooms for the children and servants, kitchens, and a harem area. There were, of course, several bathrooms. Some homes had granaries. While this describes the home of a noble, it is known that the working class had homes that were much less sumptuous. The homes had latticed windows, and drapes were hung to keep out winds and sandstorms. The chief articles of furniture were beds, chairs, stools, and inlaid ivory ebony chests of excellent workmanship. The floors were covered with rugs. The food was varied with different kinds of meat, poultry and fish, fruits, bread and cakes, sweets, wine and beer.

Jewels were an important part of the dress of Egyptian ladies. The technical virtuosity of the goldsmiths to create jewelry of rare sumptuousness was exceptional. The high standard of taste corresponded to the beauty of the art. Bracelets, necklaces, and pendants were popular. Of course, the Pharaoh and queen displayed the richest products of the refined art. Some of the jewelry was meant

for funerary purposes. Milady was provided with jewel and cosmetic boxes. Cosmetics, then as now, helped to preserve feminine beauty.

There is ample evidence that the noblemen and their ladies had a great liking for music. Musicians and singers were always very much a part of social gatherings. They also enjoyed games, one of which appears to us to have a close resemblance to a game we refer to as draughts. Toys for the children included animal figures that could be pulled along with a string.

The costume was simple. For men, it consisted of a white linen kilt secured at the hips by a girdle or band. Oftentimes a broad collar was worn. Women were clothed in a thin, close-fitting, sleeveless, white linen garment hanging from the breast to the ankles. It was supported by two bands or ribbons passing over the shoulders. A wig, collar, and necklace, and a pair of bracelets completed the costume. It was fashionable for both men and women to wear wigs. The ladies used cosmetics and mirrors, and the men used razors. Sandals were worn by both men and women on certain occasions. Their musical instruments consisted of various stringed instruments including the harp and pipes or flutes. Undoubtedly there were times when drums were used. At parties, guests were entertained by dancing girls.

## BATHS

Everyone knows that the Romans were famous for their private and public baths, buildings, and accoutrements pertaining thereto. Most people know that the Romans got the idea from the ancient Greeks who had remarkable bathing facilities, but not nearly so sumptuous or on the elaborate scale of the Romans. It is not generally known, however, that the Greeks got their ideas from the ancient Egyptians. Bathing in ancient Egypt was necessitated by the hot climate. Consequently, bathing was performed from personal desire, and, of course, ablution was a prerequisite of all religious rites.

There is evidence that shows that the bathroom existed as a part of a private house. Excavations at Sakkara, having to do with the Second Dynasty, have unearthed toilet accessories and wash basins. In the Old Kingdom, the bathroom was called the House of Morning, and in the Middle Kingdom it was called the Cabinet of Morning. The bathroom

was usually situated next to the bedrooms, and was thus called as a result of the custom of bathing upon arising in the morning and washing the mouth before breakfast.

Actually, the bathroom and the manner of bathing are depicted on monuments and tomb paintings. In one such painting at Thebes, we find a lady with four attendants bathing her. One is hanging the lady's clothes and jewels on a hanger, another is pouring water from a pot over her head, a third is massaging with her open palms the lady's arms and body, while the fourth is sitting close holding a lotus bud for the lady to inhale its perfume. The priests bathed twice each day in pools arranged for them for this purpose.

In the fifth century B.C. Herodotus commented on the good health of the Egyptians, and he informs us that the ancient Egyptians preferred cold water for bathing. Since his time, however, we have learned that the Egyptians used hot water, as well, for bathing, and that sacred animals were also bathed. Baths in Pharaonic Egypt were limited to private houses and temples. No trace has so far been discovered of the existence of public baths. It is known that baths were very much in use during Akhnaton's time.

Generally speaking, for the people of ancient Egypt the bathroom was made up of a chamber containing a basin with a low edge on which the bather stood while hot or cold water, mixed with natron, was poured over him. On one side of the basin was an opening through which the water was drained into another basin which was covered. The walls of the bathroom were of mud brick, and were covered with large sheets of stone for protection against the water. It is believed that commodes were always adjacent to the bathrooms.

The bathroom had a religious role, for in all religions washing is a means of purification. Consequently the bathroom was a part of the temples. In the Temple of Edfu, the bathroom, or House of Morning, is situated on the western side of the entrance to the outer hypostyle hall. There the king performed his early morning ablutions before performing his religious duties. The king might enter the House of Morning, wash his body with water mixed with natron, wash his mouth first with natron, then with water, dress, have breakfast, and then enter the temple. This applied to the king or to the priest who represented



him. The rest of the lay priests, before entering the temple, would wash in the holy pool in the temple courtyard. Ablution was not restricted to religious ceremony, but similarly as with us today it was part of social custom and tradition.

With regard to cleanliness, washing the hands prior to eating was to the ancient Egyptians as important as the eating itself. They paid attention to their nails, and washed their mouths and teeth. They also washed their feet, and perfumed their hands and bodies. Aspects of these practices were eventually assimilated by the Greeks in the form of private and public baths.

For the rich and poor, cleanliness inside and out was the rule. They occasionally took purges. Soda and oils, as well as water, were used as cleansing agents. Sophisticated perfumes, scented oils, ointments, and cosmetic paints were used then as now.

### TAXATION

Taxation of the individual Egyptian prevailed throughout the entire history of the country. In theory and practice, the crown owned all of the land. The farmer was what we might call a serf. He leased his land from the state. Each farmer was advised as to what he might grow on his land and how much of each crop could be sown. The produce was taxed. His rent and taxes were usually paid in corn, flax, or farm animals.

At a fixed price, the state could buy from a farmer as much of the corn, flax, oil, fruit, and wool as it wished. It was the responsibility of the farmer to cultivate his land, and sow, reap, and transport his crops at his own expense. Taxation varied from year to year because the agriculture of the country depended on the inundation of the farm lands from the annual rising of the waters of the Nile.

## Chapter XV

# HOW DID THEY DO IT?

**W**E ARE TOLD that the ancient Egyptians built for eternity. But how? we ask in wonderment. What did they use for tools? This is an enigma which has always perplexed the layman, and sometimes even the professional construction engineer. Every visitor to Egypt is in awe of the standing stone monumental temples and pyramids. The fact must be acknowledged that the ancient Egyptian craftsmen had great knowledge of theoretical and applied science, and that they were skillful artists as well. Their masterpieces were built by the simplest methods, and with simple tools which were used with the greatest of precision.

Archaeologists have revealed to us what many of these tools were, and, for the most part, they were made of copper. We know that copper saws were used, and copper chisels, hammers, drills, and knives. There were also copper punches and copper needles, and the copper adz, axe, and hoe blades. Other implements and instruments were wooden crowbars, wooden rollers and sledges, ropes and levers, and the stone maul. They also used flint to advantage. The copper tools were used in working with stone.

In the Great Pyramid alone there are more than two and a quarter million huge stone blocks. Some of these weigh many tons. Herodotus claimed that the Great Pyramid was built in twenty years, and that one hundred thousand men were employed in three periods of three months each year. The imagination is staggered by the amount of work involved, even if done with modern equipment. True, the work must have been slow and arduous, but it was effective. Time and patience with the well-organized use of much manpower made all construction possible.

Copper tools were in use before the beginning of the dynastic periods. In the Third Dynasty, King Zoser built the first pyramid, the Step Pyramid of Sakkara. By this time the builders had created a

true architectural style. From that time onward, pyramids and temples were constructed out of great stone blocks supported by monolithic columns, and roofed with stone slabs, and joined by stone architraves. The Great Pyramid of the Pharaoh Khufu was built in the Fourth Dynasty. By the middle of the Old Kingdom, the theme and style and decoration of Egyptian architecture had become fixed. Thousands of tons of stone had been cut, dressed, and placed in position with surprising ease. For us, it is so difficult to imagine how they could have built so much and so well without tools comparable to our own. The assumption still prevails that the early Egyptians mastered the process of tempering copper to make it very hard—a process unknown to us. One way, however, in which copper could have been hardened was by hammering.

Egypt possessed only small deposits of copper ore. Most of the ore came from Nubia and Sinai. In later times, additional copper was to come from Cyprus and Mitanni. The copper ore was smelted in the locality in which it was found, and the resultant copper transported to the workshops in the Nile Valley. All copper tools were cast solid. Open molds for such casting are found today in ancient town sites. Old Kingdom tomb murals show the working of copper. It was melted in a crucible or fire kept at fierce heat by men with blowpipes. After the molten metal had been poured out and cooled sufficiently, it was beaten into sheets of the required thickness by mallets and stone pounders. They were highly efficient in casting copper.

From the sheets of hammered copper were cut the tools. In shaping the metal, we are certain that some of the work was hammered cold while other was hammered while the copper was hot. We also know that the melted copper was poured into molds for later shaping. In the case of light tools such as saw blades, chisels, and knives, the metal was cut roughly into shape and then cold hammered. Heavier tools such as the axe, hammer, adz, and hoe blades appear to have been cast roughly to shape and then hammered while still hot from the mold. Authorities today state that the only way of hardening the cutting edges of copper tools was by hammering. Saws, chisels, and drills were capable of cutting any kind of stone, with the possible exception of granite. We are given to understand that saws and drills had jeweled cutting points. The function of the saw and drill was reinforced by

sand or emery. We still do not know exactly how they worked granite. It is believed, however, that granite was hacked by diorite balls or split with fire and water. It was then finished with mathematical exactness. Polishing granite was accomplished through the use of beeswax and carborundum. For the grinding they used a slightly hollowed out slab of granite which could be handled by two men and pushed back and forth on the surface to be polished.

As an aid to sawing material such as limestone, however, a wet abrasive material such as moistened quartz sand was probably employed. For the shaping of the stone to be used in blocks in temples, pyramids, and tombs, and also the stone to be used for sculptured figures, it has been deduced by studying the marks of the tools that the rough shape was hammered out by means of the hammer and the stone maul. It was then cut with a saw, polished with sand, carved with a pointed copper instrument, and bored with the bow drill which, when properly weighted, gripped and rotated a small cylinder. Well-hammered copper, helped by an abrasive, would have sufficient cutting edge.

In the erection of a temple or pyramid, workmen first smoothed the sides of the stone blocks very carefully, and, after laying the first courses of masonry, a technique was evolved to enable the builders to reach the higher courses. The stones, of course, first had to be cut from quarries, and then loaded on sledges for transporting to the river. The stones were placed on barges, and eventually floated to the shore of the Nile nearest the pyramid or temple that was to be constructed. In the building of the temples and pyramids, the successive courses following that of the foundation—the drums of the columns, and then the capitals, the architraves and ceilings—were raised to their required level on enormous ramps, made of brick and earth, leading to the top of the mounds of sand banked inside temporary walls constructed for that purpose. Wooden crowbars, wooden sledges, rollers, levers and ropes were used for this purpose. The ramp structure was removed when the work was completed.

In the quarries a block of stone was cut away with chisels and mauls down to the base. On each side of the stone to be moved, the workmen chipped the stone downward vertically. A considerable amount of this was done in order to allow the workmen to proceed freely. This was

necessary so that eventually wooden wedges could be inserted into holes cut at the bottom of the stone in order to make a horizontal split in the rock, and free it entirely from its bed in the quarry. With the wedges in place, the split was achieved by wetting the wood so as to cause it to expand. Granite obelisks were shaped and cut loose in quarries in this way. Obelisks for such places as Luxor and Karnak were brought from the quarries at Aswan. We marvel that these early Egyptians were able to transport an obelisk weighing three hundred tons or more by wooden sledges and water barges, and then set upright on their bases in confined spaces. We have no knowledge of how a one-hundred-foot high obelisk was erected. Apparently this was such an ordinary tiling to do that it was not considered worthy of record.

It is doubtful if the accuracy of the ancient Egyptian engineers could be surpassed today by modern technicians. It has been found that the perimeter of the foundation of the Great Pyramid deviates from a true level plane by only one-half inch. The southeast corner is that imperceptible amount higher than the northwest corner. No doubt much knowledge was gained from the pre-pyramid age when they prepared their lands for irrigation by means of water conducted through the channels and canals from the river. They used an instrument in the shape of a narrow horizontal bar, known as the merkhet, which probably functioned in connection with the use of the plumbline. They used a square just as we do today. Their unit of measurement was the royal cubit which has been determined as being 20.62 inches, and, of course, they knew how to accurately survey land.

All the monumental construction of the ancient Egyptians was done before the iron age. There is evidence, however, that there was some use of iron of meteoric origin. The cedar lumber which they used came from Lebanon. Having no timber of their own, this lumber had to be used sparingly.

Bronze did not come into use until the Middle Kingdom. Tin is necessary for alloying with copper to make bronze. Their source of tin is unknown to us. We do know, however, that in the making of bronze the tin content was from ten to fourteen percent.

The wheel, if known, was not used. Using wheels as a means of transportation did not come into use until the Eighteenth Dynasty, at

which time they were used with chariots.

In earliest times, jars, bowls, dishes, and cups were made of solid stone. There was perfection in this achievement in the use of the copper tools which made it possible. With the exception of granite, no stone was too hard to use for this purpose. Eventually pottery making was introduced, as well as the making of glass.

The metals principally worked by the early Egyptians were copper and gold. Much of the gold was used in making jewelry which was exquisitely done. Copper was used not only in making tools but also for vessels. Spouts, handles, and rims were attached to vessels with copper rivets. These people had knowledge of solder, and were expert in joining two pieces of copper together or two pieces of gold. They were also expert in making copper pipes which were used for drainage from temples, even though there appeared to be little rain to warrant this. One such pipeline ran the length of a causeway of more than one thousand feet. This alone is eloquent testimony of tooling and manufacture. They knew how to draw copper in the making of wire. Wire was used on utensils principally as handles.

Egypt's gold was chiefly imported from the south. It is recorded that a Mesopotamian king in addressing the Pharaoh's emissary stated, "The gold in your country is as common as dust." Statues and statuettes at times were made from copper; however, this was principally done in stone. They also made extensive use of unbroken mural decoration on temple walls and ceilings and columns, in figures fashioned in stone. This was magnificent relief work. Their stelae were decorated with some relief sculpture, and so were the bases of statues and altars.

The visitor in Egypt today, in seeing the results of the work of the early Egyptians, is impressed by not only the massiveness of the monuments, but also the equally efficient and meticulous attention to minute, delicate details such as are found in relief wall sculpturing. The technique of making scenes in relief had been developed in the pre-dynastic period, and it was a mode of decoration destined to live forever. All this was done with fine copper tools. Some of the work is in low relief, and some of it is incised, or sunk, relief. In the latter, the sculptor cut away the background, thus making the figures stand out half in the round. The style of low relief varied from time to time,

but was always delicate. Its skillful execution and dignity is striking. To make incised relief, the artist cut out silhouettes varying in depth in accordance with the details on a well planned drawing on papyrus. The exterior walls of a monument are decorated in figures of incised, or sunk, relief. On the walls on the inside of a monument, the figures are in raised, or low, relief.

The colossi, statues, ushabti, hieroglyphs, and even the scarabs were all beautifully carved. Sculptureship, of course, to the ancient Egyptians was true realism. The head of Nefertiti, wife of the Pharaoh Akhnaton; the head of Khafra, the builder of the second pyramid of Gizeh; and Horns, the divine falcon, are excellent examples of beautiful sculpturing and art; and, of course, the Nineteenth Dynasty is represented by innumerable skillfully sculptured statues of Rameses II. For the Egyptians, the sculptor carved a body intended to live forever, and this admirable work was done with the simplest of tools. We appreciate the geometric beauty of the structures and their rich and magnificent decoration.

According to their conception of things and for the needs of then society, the early Egyptians built for themselves. Their creative genius went into the building of pyramids, temples, obelisks, sculptured figures, and tombs. They ceaselessly built and maintained their powerful ritual system in each reign. Every stone structure had its place in the performance of the vital rituals. In form and decoration the buildings were representatives in stone of the religion and its ritual. These provided or symbolized life in this world and survival in the next. Everything was according to cosmological order and ritual needs. The complex religion determined for them the foreverness of their spiritual destiny—immortality.

A modern Egyptian archaeologist has stated that the more he learns about the monuments and the tools which were used, the more he must admire the science and skill of his predecessors. In hieroglyphs, the Egyptians themselves said that the temples and tombs of the Pharaohs were “made of fine stone to stand for eternity.” These eternal monuments have been with man throughout the entire period of written history.

## Chapter XVI

# EGYPTIAN MEDICINE

**H**ISTORICALLY, EGYPT MUST be considered the pioneer in the science of medicine. This becomes evident from the discoveries and interpretations of archaeologists. In the ancient world, Egypt's physicians commanded great respect for their knowledge of anatomy and surgery. In later times, the Greeks frankly said that they gained some of their scientific knowledge from the Egyptians and the Babylonians.

Two documents which have been extant for many years are: *The Edwin Smith Surgical Papyrus*, and *The Ebers Medical Papyrus*. The Smith manuscript apparently is derived from sources dating from the time of the Old Kingdom. In both the Smith and Ebers manuscripts, attention is given to the functions of the heart. It is pointed out how the heart "speaks" in various parts of the body. The statement, "measuring for the heart," probably did not refer to a pulse count so much as an impression of the patient's condition by the physician observing the rapid or slow beat of the heart.

It is doubtful that they had a concept of the circulation of the blood. They did, however, have a recognition of the organic relation of the heart to the various parts of the body and also a recognition that the heart might be the source of life. Even though some Egyptian medical documents describe home remedies based on the use of herbs and sympathetic magic, the fact still remains that their physicians were shrewd observers of the functions of the physical body.

The Smith manuscript deals largely with broken bones. The doctor, in describing each break, indicates the proper treatment and whether it can be dealt with successfully. There is very little reference to magic in this papyrus. On the other hand, there is considerable reference to manual treatment, medication, rest, and diet. The Egyptian doctor was a careful observer of physical symptoms. In one translation, we note how the physician maintained a scientific, unemotional state of mind,



and indicated that the difficulty of one of his patients was attributed to physical causes and not the result of the work of a demon or divine force.

The utterance of the spoken word was extremely important to the ancient Egyptians, and the spoken word became involved in incantations which were used in magical practices for the sick. Such practices were used for the bites of scorpions and serpents. A professor of medicine of a university in Cairo has recently written, in reference to therapeutic healers, that magic was the child of man's ideas about his place in the cosmos. While there were persons that might be referred to as magicians who endeavored to bring about a certain amount of healing, there were trained specialized physicians, dentists, veterinarians, oculists. Depending upon their particular field, the specialists had a knowledge of general medicine, gynecology, bone surgery, eye complaints. Fractures and dislocations received splints and fresh linen bandages.

The Ebers Papyrus deals largely with the heart, and states, "There are vessels in it which go to every member." This meant every part of the body.

Modern researchers have come across a great number of prescriptions used by the ancient Egyptian physicians. Prescriptions were recommended for such afflictions as respiratory distress, internal maladies which could be recognized from outward symptoms, hemorrhages, digestive and gastric disorders, constipation. Castor oil was prescribed for the latter. Appropriate dressings were used for wounds. They prescribed for headaches, difficulties with the eyes, dental troubles. Their dentists knew how to "fill" teeth. They were acquainted with disorders of the gums. Between 1600 and 1000 b . c . Egyptian dentists were restoring teeth with bridges. For coughs, milk and honey were prescribed. Today there are general practitioners who prescribe the same remedy.

In the Smith Papyrus, forty-eight "cases" are described, including those having to do with dislocation of the jaw, bruises to the vertebrae, fractures of the clavicle, ribs, nose, and skull. It is known that splints were prescribed for broken limbs. There were countless herbs, draughts, fomentations, ointments, liniments suitable as application for the

disease under treatment. James C. French, curator of the Rosicrucian Egyptian Museum, has written: "Mineral drugs were used, among them one that cannot be identified today. It produced anesthesia so as to make operations possible without suffering." With all of this, we actually have very little preserved for us of the knowledge of the physicians of ancient Egypt. The work of a physician was called an art and, in fact, they stated that medicine was "a necessary art."

Learning in specialized fields was a secret thing. The secrecy of learning seems to have been general. This was true of medicine just as it was with the scribes. Writing was a secret science, and a scribe was a very important person as well as recorder. Many physicians also bore the title of *scribe*.

Although there may be many reasons why so little has been preserved for us on the subject of the practice of medicine in ancient Egypt, the fact must not be overlooked that much of what was learned was oral teaching; therefore, the physicians may have had an even greater knowledge of the physical body and its disorders than perhaps was thought at one time. We now know that they knew about the arteries and how to count the pulse. They knew the relationship of the heart to the lungs. They knew what to do about fractures and bone setting. They used scalpels, forceps, and scissors.

For distress of one kind or another, hot baths or mud baths were prescribed. They had knowledge of sutures and cauterizing. They had the means for treating tumors, abscesses, hernia; and, what is rather surprising, it is now known that they realized the relationship between the nervous system and the voluntary movements of the physical body. They were able to localize a condition of paralysis, depending on the situation of a nerve lesion. A physician was not permitted to deviate from his medical training. Ancient papyri tell us how the physicians used kindness and gentleness in dealing with their patients. There are accounts of detailed clinical examinations. Contrary to what was thought at one time, some of their drugs are no longer considered to be ridiculous.

The ancient Egyptians were great believers in cleanliness and good health. Herodotus of the fifth century B.C. wrote that the ancient Egyptians "were perhaps the healthiest people in the world." Personal

hygiene seemed to have reached a high degree of perfection. We usually think of the ancient Greeks as having originated games to help maintain the health of their youth, but long before their time the Egyptians had prescribed games for the same purpose. We are told that they were careful about washing, about their baths, and the taking of purgatives. The homes of the ancient Egyptians provided bathrooms, bathtubs, and commodes.

For the poor who were sick, religio-magical medicine was available. The family or friends of a sick man carried him to the marketplace or wayside where a practitioner used incantations and spells with herbal remedies to soothe his distress. On the other hand, the well-to-do had the benefit of highly specialized medicine practiced largely by the temple priests. In later times, the temples became centers of medicine. For illness, a person might be examined and treated by a priest-physician trained in observing symptoms. Wounds were stitched.

The linen industry was very important in early Egypt. Linen was used not only for clothing and bedding but also for medical dressings, bandages and, of course, in large quantities for the wrapping of mummies. It is interesting to learn that the ancient Egyptians had "sanatoria" within the complex of various temples for convalescing patients. Imhotep, the architect for the terraced pyramid of the Pharaoh Zoser, eventually became venerated as a god of healing. He was worshiped in the late period, and there was a chapel dedicated to him at Sakkara, which became a sanatorium. In his time he is said to have brought about miraculous healings, and he was renowned not only among the Egyptians but also among the Greeks.

Medicines and drugs were sacred, and their knowledge was limited to the specially trained physician. Many physicians were temple priests. As a matter of fact, most temple priests practiced medicine and healing. The priest-physicians of two temples in particular had acquired a high reputation for healing; one was the Temple of Denderah just north of Thebes, and the other was the Temple of Hatshepsut at Thebes. Ancient Egypt's medicine was practiced by learned physicians, and it is apparent that the practice of medicine and the consideration of medical science occupied the best minds.

## YESTERDAY HAS MUCH TO TELL

Physicians received their remuneration from the state. There apparently was not only a department of public health, but also a medical association which developed methods of treatment. There is little doubt that the practice of the principles of the ancient Egyptian physicians constituted the foundation of the modern art of medicine.

## Chapter XVII

# THE ILLUSTRIOUS THUTMOSE III

**T**HE EIGHTEEN DYNASTY is one of the most colorful and outstanding in the entire history of ancient Egypt. It produced personalities of distinction, such as Thutmose III, Amenhotep III, Hatshepsut, Akhnaton, and of course Tut-ankh-amon whose reign, while not very important historically, is of interest to the modern world. In this chapter, we are primarily concerned with Thutmose III, whose reign as Pharaoh spanned the period from 1490 to 1436 B.C. He has been referred to as Thutmose III, The Great. Some authorities have called him *The Magnificent*.

Prior to the beginning of the Eighteenth Dynasty, the Hyksos, so-called shepherd kings from lands to the north, had occupied Egypt and endeavored to maintain a stronghold in Lower Egypt at Avaris. A nationalist uprising by a prince of Thebes helped to make possible their exodus. This was Ahmose. When Ahmose succeeded to the throne in 1570, he drove the Hyksos from the country. The Hyksos, however, were a continued threat to Egypt, and, along the northern frontier, they were still strong enough to attempt to regain their lost conquest.

Amenhotep I, who succeeded Ahmose in 1545 B.C., was forced to fight more than one campaign against them. In 1525 B.C. Thutmose I succeeded to the throne, and in his fighting he was even more successful than Amenhotep. Because of his successful conquest to the north and south, Egypt was able to enjoy a certain amount of peace and began to build her economic state. At the end of his reign in 1510, Thutmose I associated his daughter, Hatshepsut, with him as co regent. Thutmose II succeeded Thutmose I, and Hatshepsut was co regent with him. Thutmose II reigned only a short time. Thutmose III, at the time, was only a boy, and Hatshepsut became the virtual ruler.

Hatshepsut is the dominating female figure in Egypt's long history. She was the stepmother and aunt of Thutmose III whom she managed to hold for many years in subjection while she reigned as a female Pharaoh. She considered herself Pharaoh, and conducted herself accordingly. On official occasions she wore the king's apron, and put on the false male beard, and managed to keep her stepson in the shadows for at least eighteen years.

With her great force of character, Hatshepsut was, however, a woman of charm. She extended the country's trade to the south, and brought an advance to architecture and all forms of art. She had erected two obelisks in the great Temple of Amon at Karnak. She built her magnificent temple in the Valley of the Kings, and it is noted not only for its beauty but for the many inscriptions on the walls. This temple is said to be an architectural jewel and, of course, is one of the finest and most dramatically sited of the ancient monuments of Thebes.

History records that her chief adviser and chancellor was Senmut. He encouraged her to carry out her many plans and sustained her quest for power. Senmut was quite possibly Hatshepsut's lover. She bestowed upon him endless honors. She caused several granite statues to be made of him. Of herself, Hatshepsut had statues, sphinxes, and wall reliefs made showing her in the conventional garb of the king.

Peace prevailed at this time throughout the country. During the time of Thutmose III and Hatshepsut, Egypt experienced an upward surge of fine creative art. The statues of Thutmose and Hatshepsut are masterpieces. In succeeding the throne, Thutmose III had technically been co regent with Hatshepsut. History records that he also gained the throne, at least in part, through "divine appointment." This came through a ceremonial in the Temple of Amon when the priests, in a procession and while carrying the image of the god Amon, stopped before Thutmose and refused to proceed further. Thus his succession to the throne was felt to be divinely ordained.

When Hatshepsut was no longer the queen serving as a Pharaoh, Thutmose III achieved the undisputed possession of the throne and banished Senmut. Thutmose III was about thirty years old when he became Pharaoh. Thutmose now found himself faced with a coalition

of powerful princes to the north. The princes of Megiddo and Kadesh were looking for an opportunity to invade Egypt. Thutmose took action at once. He assembled his army and marched to attack the enemy before they were prepared. This was a highly successful campaign for Thutmose III. He proved to be a military genius, and the events of the campaign were extensively recorded on the walls of the Temple of Karnak and also engraved on leather rolls. The terms of surrender were not harsh. A certain amount of tribute was required, and a governor was placed in charge of the area.

Thutmose III carried out seventeen campaigns in all in Syria, Palestine, and Nubia. It is interesting to note that Syria and Palestine were forced to keep the peace and, under the benign rule of Thutmose III, reached a degree of prosperity. Egypt had now developed into a world power such as had never before been experienced. The Egyptian state had passed through a complete transformation. It must be said of Thutmose III that he was not only an outstanding general but a statesman as well. It is recorded that as Pharaoh Thutmose III was truly a man of high ideals and character. The instructions of Thutmose III to his vizier, Rekhmire, show his insistence on the impartiality of a judge, emphasizing the absolute necessity of treating all men alike and showing no favoritism to a friend or relative.

Thutmose III built extensively. He erected at least four obelisks, two of them at Karnak. He erected buildings in most of the larger cities, and created many sanctuaries, few of which survive today, unfortunately. He bestowed gifts upon the various priesthoods. The economy was excellent, the country had become rich.

At Karnak, to the east of the tremendously colonnaded Temple of Amon, we pass through the sixth pylon of the Temple Complex, a pylon erected by Thutmose III, and find a many-roomed area. Here is the first Hall of Records. The figures on the walls tell of the exploits of Thutmose III. In this hall stand two square pillars of red granite which once supported a roof. The decoration on the pillars was sculptured in high relief. The figures are of heraldic plants of Upper and Lower Egypt. One pillar carries the representation of the lily which was the symbol of Upper Egypt, and the other pillar carries the papyrus representation which was the symbol of Lower Egypt.

The walls of the sanctuary are adorned with inscriptions about the military exploits of Thutmose III. Here, too, is his second Hall of Records, and within it stands a chapel built entirely of pink granite. Beyond this hall is his festival temple. Here in bas-relief is recorded an account of the plants and animals that Thutmose III brought back from Syria in the twenty-fifth year of his reign. The plants and also the animals were undoubtedly added to his temple gardens. That he loved beautiful gardens and cool placid pools there is no question; in fact, elements of his botanical gardens were carefully recorded on the walls of the Temple of Karnak.

Thutmose III built a beautiful temple and sanctuary on the west side of the Nile in what is now known as Medinet Habu. His beautiful statues were executed by the best sculptors of the time, and, as one historian has written, these sculptures reflect the magnificent spirit of the man who was every inch a king.

An exciting discovery was made a few years ago when excavations were being carried on between Hatshepsut's Temple and the Eleventh Dynasty temple of Mentuhotep to the west, in the Valley of the Kings. Another temple of Thutmose III was found. The structure consisted in part of a Hathor Chapel, an inner sanctuary, and columns flanking a processional avenue. Inscriptions indicate that Thutmose named this temple "The Holy Horizon."

According to the traditional history of the Rosicrucian Order, AMORC, there were mystery schools in Egypt. It is believed that Ahmose I was the first Pharaoh to convene meetings for the secret society or school in his private chambers. Thutmose III organized the physical form of the brotherhood and outlined many of its precepts. In these schools a kind of philosophy was promulgated along with religion and mysticism. Birth, life, and death, and consideration of life after death were involved. Motion or vibrations such as the shaking of a sistrum symbolized, for instance, the universal or cosmic motion.

Egyptologist, Sir E.A. Wallis Budge, wrote: "It is impossible to doubt that there were mysteries in the Egyptian religion. . . . It is therefore absurd to expect to find in Egyptian papyri descriptions of the secrets. . . It must be construed that there was secret wisdom, and those who were in possession of such knowledge were under oath not to wrongly



reveal it. Budge quotes a hieroglyph referring to this as reading, "Never let the ignorant person nor anyone whatsoever look upon it."

The second wife of Thutmose III bore him a son. This was Amenhotep II. Father and son shared the throne for a short time just prior to the death of Thutmose III. Along with the affairs of the state, Amenhotep II carried on his father's work in the society or brotherhood.

The Syrian princes now sought to return to their old evil ways. Having inherited some of his father's military genius, Amenhotep II took care of this situation in one campaign. Like his predecessors, Thutmose III had provided for his last resting place, a rock tomb in the lonely Valley of the Kings where his father lay in a tomb, and where Hatshepsut had excavated for herself a tomb under the direction of Senmut. The sarcophagus and mummy of Thutmose III are now preserved in the Egyptian Museum in Cairo.

Rekhmire, the vizier of Thutmose III, referred to his king as "the god by whose guidance men lived." Egyptian poets, at the time of his death, referred to him as "His Majesty, the King Thutmose, true of voice, ascended to heaven and joined the sun's disk." Another records: "Splendor is in valor, in might, and in triumph. He mounted to heaven; he joined the sun." Of Thutmose III it is also recorded: "He . . . united himself with the sun, and mingled with him who had created him."

On official state documents each Pharaoh placed the imprint of his particular cartouche (seal). Naturally, Thutmose III as Pharaoh had his own cartouche and, as was customary, the cartouche of the Pharaoh appeared on the underside of a clay scarab, a representation, of course, of the sacred beetle. Thutmose III not only placed the seal of his cartouche on state documents but also on the decrees of his mystery school or council.

That Thutmose III was one of the most illustrious personalities of his time, there is no question. Many Egyptologists say that Thutmose III should be honored as one of the most significant Pharaohs ever to appear on the throne in ancient Egypt.

## Chapter XVIII

# AKHNATON BREAKS WITH THE PAST

Archaeologists and historians continue to ponder the Amarna Period of ancient Egypt, which spanned the years from about 1369 to 1344 B.C. This period had to do with the Pharaoh Akhnaton and his beautiful wife and queen, Nefertiti. The time was the closing years of the Eighteenth Dynasty, when the Pharaoh Akhnaton had his revelation concerning devotion to one god, Aton, and dared to demonstrate his resoluteness. In his endeavor to introduce his new religion to his people, he was forever after known as *the heretic*.

Evidence pertaining to this and other important periods in the history of ancient Egypt continue to be sifted and re-evaluated. The so-called. Amarna Period covered a brief span of only a few years at the most; yet it has received the interest of historians and the public equal to that of the Pyramid Period more than a thousand years earlier. Akhnaton was a controversial figure and an idealist, who made a lasting mark in the history of the world.

Akhnaton introduced the monotheistic concept, the belief in one god. It seems that he felt that the time had come for his people to have a new religion and, endeavoring to establish his new concept, he tried to turn their attention away from many gods to devotion to only one. He felt, too, that the power of the priests over the people and the kings must be changed and redirected as well.

The Eighteenth Dynasty began about 1570 B.C. It provided many brilliant Pharaohs, among them Ahmose, Thutmose III, Amenhotep III, and of course Queen Hatshepsut. Thutmose III many times led his army into Syria and desert wastes to the northeast, subduing the cities of the vassal states and defeating the Hittite king at Kadesh. Thebes had become the richest and most powerful city on earth.

Temple treasuries of the god Amon at Karnak were filled with gold, silver, bronze, copper, and semiprecious stones brought back by the army crusades. The vassal states to the northeast continued to send their yearly tribute to the Pharaoh. The oldest civilization in the world was more glorious than ever. The god Amon at Karnak had become equated with the sun-god Ra. The invading shepherd kings, the Hyksos of earlier years, had been driven out.

Following the triumphs of Thutmose III, peace settled on the land. The wealth of the conquered provinces poured into Karnak at Thebes. The priests, as guardians of the temple treasuries, were attaining power that almost equaled that of the Pharaoh. Under the reign of Pharaoh Amenhotep III, there continued to prevail a luxurious peace. It is believed now that Amenhotep III was concerned with the growing power of the Amon priesthood and again began to favor the sun-god Ra who had been worshiped by the kings of the Old Kingdom. Ra was sometimes called Aton, which had meant the physical sun disk, the seat of a god.

The queen of Amenhotep III was Tiy. In the fourth year of his reign, Queen Tiy bore him a son who was named Amenhotep IV. At the age of twenty-one, Amenhotep IV married the beautiful Nefertiti. She may have been his half-sister. Such marriages were not unusual. Nefertiti may have been the daughter of Aye, a priest in the Temple of Amon at Karnak, whose wife was named Tiy also. There are some authorities who feel that Nefertiti was the daughter of the king of Mitanni.

At the Sed festival of Amenhotep III, celebrating his thirtieth year as Pharaoh, he had his son made his co regent. John A. Wilson writes that the young prince was associated with his father upon the throne as co regent. At Thebes, they ruled jointly for four years. With his father, Amenhotep IV felt apparently that there was a need to offset the power of Amon and a need, as well, for a universal god who would be recognized not only in Egypt but also in the foreign provinces. Then perhaps the allegiance of the subject peoples could be maintained without the frequent show of force by the army.

Most authorities feel that Amenhotep III died in the fourth year of the co regency. So, in the fourth year, Amenhotep IV began to build

a new city and capital some two hundred and forty miles north of Thebes on a virgin site on the east bank of the Nile. Two years later, with Nefertiti, he left Thebes and established himself with his court in the new capital, which he called Akhetaton, “the horizon of Aton.”

In the new city, he built his great temple, a building with no roof. Its sanctuary was open to the sky—to Aton. In contrast to this, the temples of Amon-Ra were roofed, and the sanctuary of the god was in the innermost dark recesses of the building.

Amenhotep IV and Nefertiti lived together in Akhetaton for eleven years, surrounded by court officials and nobles, who had tombs made for themselves in the hills to the east of the city. These tombs with their inscriptions tell us of life in Akhetaton, and there is reference to only one god, Aton, whose life-giving power, symbolized by the sun disk, is radiated from its countless arms and hands.

When Amenhotep IV broke with the priests of Amon at Karnak, he changed his name to Akhnaton, which meant “it is well with Aton,” “the glory of Aton,” “living in Maat—truth.” In each tomb is a representation of the sun’s disk from which descend rays, each ending in a human hand which sometimes touches human figures. Nefertiti’s name meant “the beautiful woman has come,” “beautiful is the beauty of Aton.”

Aye, possibly Nefertiti’s father, had come to the new city and become a noble in the court. The new religion embraced love of beauty in nature and art. It was here that Akhnaton composed his great hymn, which has only one subject, one object of worship—the Aton—and in its simplicity reveals his religious philosophy. Today, authorities believe the concept pertained not just to the physical disk of the sun but also to its life-creating power. The Aton faith was not simply political; it was truly religious. Actually, Akhnaton declared Ra, the sun, to be a physical manifestation, or symbol, of the sole God—the symbol of life itself. This changed the worship of the sun as a god to the worship of God, symbolized by the sun, the essence of which “existed everywhere, in everything.”

That Akhnaton had Nefertiti’s whole support for his new religion, the new concept of monotheism, there is no question; in fact, it

appears that she may have been even more intense and avid in the belief. The sole concern of both Akhnaton and Nefertiti seems to have been their devotion to their religion and the maintaining of the new city. The material needs of the country evidently were somewhat ignored. No thought was given to conquests or war of any kind. In Akhetaton, Akhnaton pursued his great idea. He was, indeed, a religious revolutionary. He wanted to free his people from primitive magic and superstition and the worship of many gods.

Trouble in provinces to the north began to brew. Letters on cuneiform tablets asking for his help were written to him. There is doubt that he ever saw them. It is likely that they were intercepted by traitors in his court. There is no record that he ever replied. The provinces were being subjected to attack. Akhnaton, the poet and mystic, pressed on with his objective to overthrow the polytheistic faith of his ancestors. The tablets, many of which were found in Akhnaton's city—in later times called Tell el Amarna by the Arabs—were found in 1887. They revealed that rulers exchanged diplomatic correspondence. These tablets are known as the *Amarna Letters*. There was a common diplomatic language for such communications known as Babylonian cuneiform.

There were letter-tablets from such vassal states as Syria, Babylonia, and Mitanni. The Hittites, from what is now Turkey, pushed south and began attacking cities loyal to the Pharaoh. Their governors wrote to him asking for troop support. No help came. The intrigue, which most certainly prevailed, never allowed the letters to reach Akhnaton. In propounding his Aton religion, he continued to be concerned with the strength of Amon-Ra at Thebes. He sent his emissaries throughout the land to remove the name of the god wherever it appeared. He knew there was unrest and confusion, and it appeared that those living outside Akhetaton were not accepting the new religion.

There is no question that Nefertiti was intensely devoted to the Aton religion, just as was Akhnaton himself. Perhaps, as an idealist, she would not consider any kind of a compromise. It would seem, however, that Akhnaton sought to reunite his people by a compromise. It is known that after the fourteenth year of his reign, Nefertiti left the palace in the city of Akhetaton and moved to what was known as the North Palace, a mile or so removed.

At this time, the oldest daughter, Meritaton, married one of Akhnaton's half-brothers, Smenkh-ka-ra, also known as Sakere. Together, they went to Thebes, where Smenkhka-ra reigned as co regent. Akhnaton remained at Akhetaton. Probably Smenkh-ka-ra and Meritaton went at the urging of Akhnaton, believing that the priests could be influenced and their power lessened. Perhaps this was an effort to weaken the power of Amon-Ra. If so, it failed. In the third year of his co regency, Smenkh-ka-ra began to restore a form of Amon worship at Thebes. This may have involved the compromise of the Pharaoh and may, as well, have meant a split in the court, with one faction urging a complete return to Thebes.

Akhnaton died at the age of forty-one in the seventeenth year of his reign, as determined from today's available evidence. His body has never been found. Years ago, a mummy found near the tomb of Tut-ankh-amon was thought to be his, but it was established that it was not. It may have been that of his half-brother, Smenkh-ka-ra. It is not known how Akhnaton died. It seems that Smenkh-ka-ra died at Thebes about the same time. Some years ago, it was believed that Akhnaton mounted the throne in his early teens and died at about thirty. This is known now to be incorrect. He became Pharaoh when he was perhaps twenty-four.

When Nefertiti retired to the North Palace, she took with her another younger half-brother of Akhnaton, Tut-ankh-aton. He was little more than a boy. Nefertiti immediately had her third daughter, Ankhsenpaaton, marry Tut-ankh-aton. The second daughter, Meketaton, had died. This legitimized the accession of Tut-ankh-aton, which by custom and tradition had to be through the female line. Tut-ankh-aton and Ankhsenpaaton were mere children. He reigned at Akhetaton for a very short time and was then compelled or persuaded to return to the ancestral capital at Thebes and adopt a new name, Tut-ankh-amon. His child wife changed her name to Ankhsenamou.

King Tut's tomb contained the Aton symbol, the sun disk with descending rays; so, he must have subscribed to the Aton religion when he ascended the throne. Nefertiti presumably died at this time. Her body has never been found. The magnificent sculptured bust of her found at Tell el Amarna reveals her exquisite beauty.

There was no longer the will or power of any kind to maintain the Aton belief. Soon the priests of Amon-Ra at Thebes regained full power and the old religion was restored. Emissaries were sent throughout the land to remove the name of the heretic king from the monuments. In the tombs at Tell el-Amarna, and also in the tomb of the vizier, Ramose, in the Valley of the Kings, you will see evidence of the disfigurement of the wall representations of Akhnaton and Nefertiti by the advocates of the Amon-Ra priesthood of Karnak Temple following the death of Akhnaton. The disfigurement of all monuments having to do with him was apparently carried out throughout the land.

Akhnaton's Akhetaton was deserted and left to fall in ruins. Alone now, Ankhsenamun needed a husband to reign with her as king. She saw the scheming courtiers around her struggling for power. She wrote to the Hittite king, asking him to send her one of his sons to be her husband and king. The Hittite king did so, but the son never reached Thebes. Intrigue had taken care of that.

Akhnaton's former chief minister, Aye, now appears in history as the next Pharaoh. Aye gained the throne because he was Nefertiti's father. Tut-ankh-amon, the last of the family line, died about 1344 B.C. The Eighteenth Dynasty soon came to an end. After Aye's short reign, Horemhob apparently seized the throne. Horemhob claimed it by marrying Akhnaton's sister, Beketaton. When Horemhob, military man and opportunist, seized the throne, he restored the supremacy of the Theban god, Amon-Ra.

Some of the above views have been advanced by archaeologists, John Pendlebury and H.W. Fairman, and by the noted writer and historian, Leonard Cottrell.

The Amarna Period brought a new art into being. It was sheer realism. The old formalism in sculpture and painting was abandoned. Akhnaton, Nefertiti, and their family were not shown as gods but as human beings with human devotion. For some reason, Akhnaton allowed his physical defects to be exaggerated in the realism of the art of his time. They had six children, all daughters. Akhnaton and Nefertiti were completely one in their attitude and ideals about living for beauty and in truth.

## YESTERDAY HAS MUCH TO TELL

The light of Akhnaton's religious philosophy, which had shone for such a short time, flickered, but the light did not go out. It flickered and burned low, only to grow bright again with future generations of enlightened people in the centuries of another age. Akhnaton's sole God has continued to send down its rays.



## Chapter XIX

# THE SPLENDOR OF ATON

“HOW MANIFOLD ARE all thy works! they are hidden from before us, O thou sole God, whose powers no other possesseth.” These are words of beauty and significance, words which at one time or another you have undoubtedly heard or read.

We are inclined to think of inspiring literature as being of fairly recent origin, and to believe that there was little or no literature of beauty and meaning before the compilation of the Bible. However, following the discovery and eventual translation of the Rosetta Stone, archaeologists were able to determine the significance of hieroglyphic characters which are the words of a prominent Egyptian king, the significance of which they felt was worthy of the finest literature.

We refer to the hymns engraved on the walls of stone tomb-chapels, hymns that are of the Eighteenth Dynasty, the period of reign of the Pharaoh who lived almost 3,300 years ago. The hymns, and there are two in number, have to do with Aton, and were composed by the king either for personal devotions or for his temple services, ceremonies which are known to have taken place. The hymns are known generally as “Praise of Aton by King Akhnaton and Queen Nefertiti.”

It has been noted that there is a striking similarity between the Egyptian hymns and the one hundred and fourth Psalm of the Hebrews. The words of the hymns are those of Akhnaton, the Egyptian king who reigned with his beautiful wife, Nefertiti, during the years 1367 to 1353 B.C.

Under the guidance of the priests of the Pharaohs, the people of Egypt worshiped a multiplicity of gods. When Amenhotep IV became king, he was very much concerned about the many gods, and particularly the sun-god Aton. Under his reign, Aton became the lord of the sun. The vital heat of the sun became deified. Aton was said to be everywhere active by means of his rays, and his symbol was the

disk in the heavens. From it the diverging rays extended earthward, terminating in hands. Each hand grasped the symbol of life, which was the *crux ansata*. There was tremendous symbology in this, for it represented the invisible power of the Supreme God. The sun became the symbol of the deity. It was not a god or an idol, but a physical symbol representing Aton. In the age in which he lived, Amenhotep could have had little or no knowledge of the physical and chemical aspects of the sun.

Thebes became the “City of the Brightness of Aton.” Aton became not only the supreme God, but the god of the empire. Three cities were founded to represent the three divisions of the empire which were Egypt, Nubia, and Asia. Several hundred miles below Thebes, Akhnaton built his new holy city to Aton. He called it Akhetaton—meaning “The City of the Horizon.”

So Amenhotep IV, now Akhnaton, endeavored to have his people accept his doctrine or philosophy. One who respected his teaching is quoted as having said, “How prosperous is he who hears thy teaching of life.” His subjects felt that they perceived a definite relationship between Akhnaton and Aton, the supreme god.

From revelations, undoubtedly experienced during his periods of meditation, Akhnaton composed the hymns to Aton. In addition to the one that is referred to here, there are undoubtedly many beautiful hymns of Akhnaton, which have been lost to us. In one or more of Akhnaton’s hymns we find the words: “O thou sole God, beside whom there is no other.”

Akhnaton brought a new spirit into Egypt. He endeavored to have his new teaching overcome the old traditionalism. It is unquestionable that he was capable of deep, serious, and most profound thought. He grasped the idea of the Creator, the Creator of Nature; he saw the beneficent purpose in all that had been created; he had a clear realization of the power and beneficence of God. Undoubtedly Akhnaton attributed a certain amount of righteousness to the character of God, and he felt that this should be reflected in the character of men.

The word *truth* appears many times in Akhnaton’s hieroglyphic hymns which have been preserved. To his name he attached the phrase “Living in Truth.” There is no mistake about the intent in this phrase

by Akhnaton. He lived an open and unconcealed life, and truth to him was undoubtedly applied, at least in part, in his acceptance of the daily facts of living. His reign brought new art into being. His court artists, with brush and chisel, left for us the simple and beautiful realism which they saw in animal life. Such art depicted some of the truth lived by Akhnaton.

In his *A History of Egypt*, James Henry Breasted wrote: "He based the universal sway of God upon his fatherly care of all men alike, irrespective of race or nationality; and to the proud and exclusive Egyptian he pointed to the all-embracing bounty of the common father of humanity. . . . It is this aspect of Akhnaton's mind which is especially remarkable; he is the first prophet of history." He sought to return to nature; he sought to recognize the goodness and beauty to be found in it. He sought to solve the mystery of it which, as Breasted said, "adds just the fitting element of mysticism in such a faith."

In reference to the religious philosophy of Akhnaton, Sir Flinders Petrie, in his *History of Egypt*, said that "this could not be logically improved upon at the present day." To the priesthood, Akhnaton was known as a fanatic; he was even called "the criminal of Akhetaton."

With the passing of Akhnaton, the old priesthood of Amon regained control. The old religion was re-established, the religion of innumerable gods. But Akhnaton's evolution and his recognition of truth, as he saw it, of a supreme god, as he understood it, had made its indelible mark in the history of the world. It was enlightenment brought to mankind 3,300 years ago. His appearance on the horizon of his time left a mark never to be erased.

Breasted, who was one of the worlds foremost Egyptologists, wrote that Akhnaton, undaunted, faced tradition, "that he might disseminate ideas far beyond and above the capacity of his age to understand. . . . The modern world has yet adequately to value or even acquaint itself with this man, who in an age so remote and under conditions so adverse, became the worlds first idealist and the world's first individual."

It is interesting that today the attention of the public is being directed toward Akhnaton and the period of his reign. A motion picture, entitled *The Egyptian*, taken from the book by the same name, is an example of this. Many books have been written about him.

As we have said, Akhnaton's hymns have become beautiful literature; they are perhaps monumental in their magnificence, and will continue to live, just as have the stone walls in Egypt on which his hymns were carved. In the opinion of the writer, some of the most significant and beautiful lines in his hymns (hymns which were divided into strophes or stanzas, and began with "The Splendor of Aton") are:

Thy dawning is beautiful in the horizon of heaven,  
 O, living Aton, Beginning of life!  
 When thou risest in the eastern horizon of heaven,  
 Thou fillest every land with thy beauty;  
 For thou art beautiful, great . . .  
 Thy rays, they encompass the lands,  
 Even all thou hast made.  
 Thou art Ra . . .  
 Thou bindest them by thy love.  
 Though thou art afar, thy rays are on earth . . . .

Bright is the earth,  
 When thou risest in the horizon,  
 When thou shinest as Aton by day.  
 The darkness is banished,  
 When thou sendest forth thy rays . . . .

They live when thou hast shone upon them.  
 How excellent are thy designs, O lord of eternity! . . .  
 Thus thy rays nourish every garden, When thou risest they live, and grow by thee.  
 Thou makest the seasons, in order to create all thy works; . . .  
 In order to behold all that thou didst make . . . .

Thou art in my heart,  
 There is no other that knoweth thee, . . .  
 Thou hast made him wise in thy designs  
 And in thy might.  
 The world is in thy hand,  
 Even as thou hast made them . . . .  
 For thou art duration . . .  
 By thee man liveth,  
 And their eyes look upon thy beauty. . . .  
 Living and flourishing forever and ever.

How manifold are all thy works!  
 They are hidden from before us,  
 O thou sole god,  
 Whose powers no other possesseth.

(Quotations by James Henry Breasted from his book *A History of Egypt*, published by Charles Scribner's Sons, New York.)

## Chapter XX

# RAMESES II

ON THE SANDS of a court at the Ramesseum in the Valley of the Kings lies the broken upper half of the red-granite figure of Rameses II. Originally, it stood seventy feet high, weighed one thousand tons, and was probably one of the largest sculptured figures ever attempted. During the Persian conquest of Egypt, it was overturned.

Up and down the length of the Nile, among other magnificent monuments of antiquity, are to be seen the prodigious handiwork of this zealous and indefatigable Pharaoh of the Nineteenth Dynasty, who left his king-sized mark on the pages of Egyptian history. And that makes Shelley's lines in 1819 all the more biting:

'My name is Ozymandias, King of Kings:  
Look on my works, ye Mighty and despair!  
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay  
Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare  
The lone and level sands stretch far away.

Rameses II ruled sixty-seven years, and lived to be ninety years of age. Among the many building projects, which his long reign permitted him to carry out, was the splendid temple at Tanis in northern Egypt, in earlier times named *Rameses* in his honor. Before its pylons, he erected a granite monolith to himself some ninety feet in height and weighing several hundred tons. He erected fourteen obelisks at Tanis. In the north, too, he built the city of Pithom, according to tradition the work of the Children of Israel. One of the daughters of Rameses is believed to have adopted the infant Moses.

The buildings Rameses constructed at Heliopolis and at Memphis have not survived the intervening centuries, but at Abydos is his own Mortuary Temple close to that of his father, and at Luxor a large colonnaded court and pylon in front of the temple of his predecessors. Before the monumental pylon he erected six statues of himself and two red-granite obelisks. One of these now stands in the Place de la

Concorde in Paris. He erected six temples in Nubia, and even today in the streets of Cairo and Luxor granite statues of him are to be seen.

With the exception of the pyramids, Rameses erected some of the largest structures ever raised by the hand of man—his most gigantic probably being that of the Temple of Abu Simbel. Here, carved from the living rock which slants away from the Nile like the side of a pyramid, are four seated figures of this Pharaoh, each sixty-five feet high.

James Henry Breasted, in *A History of Egypt*, wrote: “Few of the great temples of Egypt have not some chamber, hall, colonnade or pylon which bears his name, in perpetuating which the king stopped at no desecration or destruction of the ancient monuments of his country.” In his zealous desire to build and perpetuate himself in stone, Rameses ransacked pyramids, took up pavements, smashed beautiful monuments to obtain materials for his own work.

His grandfather was Rameses I, his father Seti I. Rameses was one of Seti’s many sons. Although Seti desired a son other than Rameses to succeed him, Rameses had other ideas, and before his father’s death plotted to take over the throne. Within days following the death of Seti, Rameses seized the throne.

Rameses appealed to the priests of Amon at Thebes—the seat of power at that time—that the memory of his father be perpetuated. He set about completing and putting in repair the Temple of Seti at Abydos, and other unfinished construction projects. Rameses recorded his own good deeds on the walls of his father’s temple. In accordance with the belief of the period, this carried favor with his father who, as a companion of the gods following his transition, could now intercede in his son’s behalf. This, in turn, would insure “the favor of the divine powers to grant him a long and powerful reign.”

History records that the center of power was drawn from Thebes to the Delta in the north because of Egypt’s concern in Asiatic affairs. It had remained at Thebes throughout the Eighteenth Dynasty except for the reign of Akhnaton, who transferred it to Akhetaton, the city which he built and which is now known as Tell el-Amarna.

Seti I had been obliged to devote part of his reign to the Delta region, and Rameses II finally abandoned Thebes altogether as the royal residence. It remained the religious capital, however, and the Pharaoh continued to attend its great temple feasts.

Crusades in Asia had not recovered the empire earlier achieved by Thutmose III. In the third year of his reign, needing new sources of income for the treasury of his country and its temples, Rameses consulted with officials at Memphis about the advisability of opening up the gold mines of Nubia, which his father had been unsuccessful in developing. Their development was apparently one of his early successful ventures.

The Hittites, long a thorn in the side of the Egyptians, now occupied Syria to the north. In the fifth year of his reign, Rameses at the head of his army marched on the center of Hittite power at Kadesh. His campaign was not well planned, and only by sheer luck, apparently, did Rameses and what remained of his army escape destruction.

Rameses, however, reported otherwise. On his return to Egypt, he bragged of his miraculous victory. No episode in Egypt's history occupies so much space on temple walls as that of his "conquering" of the Hittites at Kadesh. That he and his army were ambushed, there is no question, but it is certainly to be doubted that he personally and single-handedly routed the Hittites.

Evidently a Pharaoh must not suffer defeat. On the walls of the Temple of Abu Simbel, at Abydos, at Karnak, at Luxor, at his Mortuary Temple, the Ramesseum at Thebes, and probably on other buildings which have now perished, the important incidents of the battle are such as to show the young Pharaoh victorious over the Hittites.

In the eighth year of his reign, Rameses set forth again to capture Palestine, and later the Valley of Orontes. Although the Hittites had been a source of great concern for years, eventually they offered permanent peace and a treaty of alliance in the twenty-first year of his reign.

This is the earliest known international treaty, and reads in part: "The treaty which the great chief of Kheta . . . the valiant, laid upon a silver tablet for Rameses II, the great ruler of Egypt, the valiant, the

son of Seti I, the great ruler of Egypt, the valiant, the grandson of Rameses I, the great ruler of Egypt, the valiant, the good treaty of peace and of brotherhood, setting peace between them forever.”

The Hittite king later personally visited Egypt to celebrate the marriage of Rameses to his oldest daughter. This visit is depicted on the front of Rameses’ Temple at Abu Simbel.

Every traveler who has visited Abu Simbel at sunrise has described the experience as one long to be remembered. Rameses planned the settings of his temples with great care, the one at Abu Simbel being carved from a massive sandstone cliff. Four huge, sixty-five-foot seated images of Rameses exactly alike face the east. Between the second and third statues is the entrance to the temple within the cliff itself. The rising sun illumines the interior to an extent of about one hundred and eighty feet. Within stand eight pillars against which are thirty-foot figures of the king in the character of Osiris. The walls and ceilings are covered with scenes of Egyptian history involving Rameses, depicting his battle at Kadesh, receiving homage, as Pharaoh presenting gifts to himself as a god.

Lesser members of the royal family are carved at the feet of the four figures of the giant statues. On the rock terrace, meant to resemble the temple pylon, perch sculptured falcons, representations of the god Horus. Above the temple door is the god Ra bearing the solar disk.

Another temple at Abu Simbel somewhat smaller was dedicated to the goddess Hathor and to Queen Nefertari. Like the heavy, ostentatious rock carvings of the four sitting figures of Rameses near by, this temple, too, has six colossi—four of Rameses himself and two of his queen.

More than 3,000 years have taken their toll; crowns have either broken or fallen, and the upper portion of one of the seated statues lies on the ground, but the admirable workmanship is still evident. The art work, carrying some of the influences of the period of Akhnaton, is beautifully and excellently done.

Rameses left a family so large that it developed into a class of nobles—the Ramesside—which continued to provide a continuous line of Pharaohs for over 400 years.



## YESTERDAY HAS MUCH TO TELL

The temples at Abu Simbel, in danger of being submerged by the waters of the new high dam south of Aswan, were spared. Engineers cut the temples and statues from the rock cliff, and reassembled them on a stony overlook two hundred feet above. The raised temple and statues supported by cement pillars and rock fill still command a view of the waters of the Nile.

To accomplish this, engineers literally had to raise a mountain of stone. If the structures of this Pharaoh were great, this modern-day engineering feat was no less so. Never before has a monument received such world-wide interest and notice to save it from being lost to the world. The figures of Rameses will continue to look upon the rising sun and the waters of the Nile for perhaps another 3,000 years. In his endeavor to perpetuate himself to eternity, Rameses may have realized his desire at Abu Simbel in 1969.

## Chapter XXI

# RAMESES III AND THE DECLINE

**I**N THIS COMPENDIUM of information, I have considered most of what are thought to be the Pharaohs who were the greatest builders of ancient Egypt. As the last of these prominent kings, Rameses III should be included even though briefly. Rameses II I of the Twentieth Dynasty was indeed a builder and among many works of construction he erected temples at Heliopolis, Memphis, Aswan, Karnak, and of course the dramatic and majestic building which we see today at Medinet Habu near the Valley of the Kings. Like the temples of other Pharaohs, the temples of Rameses II I had their walls covered with inscriptions describing his victories. At least twice during his reign, peoples from lands to the east of the Mediterranean unsuccessfully tried to invade Egypt. Libya was also unsuccessful in her attempt to invade. The army and what must be referred to as the navy of Rameses was well prepared, it seems, for any onslaught.

Rameses III appears to have died as a result of a conspiracy in his own harem. Historical evidence indicates that the conspirators were subsequently brought to trial and received appropriate sentences.

Following the death of Rameses III the decline of Egypt's power and dignity as a nation began. Never again did Egypt completely regain the glories and achievements she had once known. The reasons for the gradual disintegration were many. Part of this must be attributed to the tremendous power of the temple priests, and the immense wealth of the Temple of Amon. The insatiable priesthood commanded enormous wealth, and there was a constant need for gold and for slaves to mine it. Other causes were weak Pharaohs, conspiracies, threatened rebellions, wars, mercenary troops, huge building projects. It is even said that there were pressure groups who were indifferent to the common good of the country and its people, and claimed virtually any and everything they could. The kingdom was spiritually weakened

and was sometimes divided. Egypt became more and more subject to invasion by Libya and other countries. As time went on, internal collapse threatened, and the day of the ultimate demise moved ever nearer. Symbolically the light that had made possible Egypt's greatness fluttered and sputtered. There would be further structural additions to the Karnak Temple complex, and in time in the Ptolemaic period temples such as those at Denderah and Edfu would be erected.

It is a sad commentary that apparently pyramiding problems became too complex and monumental to resolve.

# EGYPT'S ANCIENT HERITAGE

**T**HE ANCIENT EGYPTIAN was intelligent and quick to learn. He was a cheerful and thoroughly likable fellow. He was practical. His natural talent for hard work made him the most industrious, perhaps, of all known people. He maintained a dominant position among the nations of the ancient world for more than 3,000 years, and achieved an enviable civilization and culture.

As for personal virtues, he was gentle, devoted to family, friends, king, and gods. He had a sense of humor, and he was not snobbish. To be sure, there were times when he was illogical and inconsistent in his beliefs and thought processes. He was very conservative, and was susceptible to superstition. We would not refer to him as weird, but rather as thoroughly human.

Among his outstanding contributions to the world's culture was his art. Although perhaps naive, it was honest. Honesty seems to have been the hallmark of these ancient people. With great skill his art was used to record all that the Egyptian regarded as fine, interesting, and enjoyable in himself, his life, his deeds, his possessions, and his natural environment. All of this, it seems to me, was governed and characterized with a sense of dignity.

Good moral intent is revealed in the precept of the vizier, Ptah-hotep: "If you are a leader ruling the multitude of people, struggle to be worth while so that you may always act in the best way you can. Righteousness is of great value and infinitely worthy of preservation."

Geographical conditions accounted for the peculiar ingrowing insularity of the ancient Egyptians. The frontiers of the country were easy to defend. The mass migrations of near eastern peoples left them comparatively unaffected. While conquest and infiltration may have altered the racial type of rulers from time to time, the common man

on which the character of Egyptian culture and its economy ultimately depended remained unchanged and unchanging.

Egypt's well-balanced philosophical, religious, and cultural ideology, which was practical for them, endured successfully for thousands of years in the protective and abundant Nile Valley, with little change in an orderly harmonious way of life. Theirs was an equitable climate in a land with plenty of natural resources. As the royal house prospered, so would the land and agriculture. The stability of the throne was unlike that of any other country.

Religion and morality were subjects of concern, as were the mysteries of existence of nature and man's duty to his neighbor. Their gods were kindly. They were imbued with veneration for the sun disk which cast life-giving rays equally upon all men, and all men were equal before it. They were concerned with the laws of nature, the laws of society, and they felt that along with divine commands everything was of one category, that of Maat, that which was truth, that which was just and right. In their relationship with nature, we must assume that they were cognizant of what we may call a cosmic force, the basic energy which sustains the universe.

To them, human society was a part of a universal divine order. In their emotional involvement with natural phenomena, they believed there was unity in all things, that life was timeless, and that there were eternal values. They found harmony in music, poetry, the dance, and in the beasts and plant life.

Across the ages which separate us from the people of this first and longest civilization and culture, we feel that we have an appreciation of the emotional and symbolic impact which their sacred temples must have had upon them. Within the walls of their temples, we muse to ourselves that it is but a step from legend to tradition to reality, and we have been a witness to this in this ancient land.

In Egypt today one stands in awe before the tremendous stone monuments with their colossal blocks of stone and their finely carved hieroglyphs and wall murals. One ponders on how these things were accomplished. The ancient Egyptians unquestionably had a fine knowledge of engineering. We know of their advanced culture. We know of their development of mathematics and medicine and many

other fields. In fact, it might be well, I feel, to review some of the things which the modern world owes to ancient Egypt.

Of Egypt's achievements in its earliest history, the masonry in the pyramids is perhaps the best known, but by 2000 B.C. the Egyptians were using decimals in their mathematics, and the finest of weights and measures. In the mechanical arts, the carpenter, the boatbuilder, the potter are frequently represented on their ancient monuments, and we see the blowpipe, the bellows, the siphon, the press, balance, lever, saw, adz, the chisel, forceps, and the syringe, harpoon, and the razor. They had glazed pottery, the potter's wheel, the kiln, and excellent specimens of glass. From the time of Thutmose II I they practiced gold beading, wire drawing, engraving, and casting. They grew and prepared flax for their looms. There were draughtsmen, lapidaries, jewelers, and tile masons.

The debt which the modern world owes to ancient Egyptian culture for art, architecture, and mathematics among other things, is no small one. We owe to Egypt the first book, the first paper material, the first statue, and the first wall relief. In the art sense, we owe to her the first pictures or murals of outstanding execution, of which we have knowledge. If some of these seem to show little of the wonderful development of which the future was to prove them capable, we must remember that they were seeking for greater understanding.

Ancient Egypt had spiritual triumphs, and technical and intellectual success. A fine nation was built around the concept of a divine ruler, a faith which dared to deny death. High value was placed upon the individual, with social justice for all. It was a culture which was civilized in the full sense of the word. They maintained belief in the sustaining power of a universal supreme entity.

Arthur Toynbee, modern historian, respectfully speaks of the immortality which Egypt's culture sought and found in stone. The pyramids bear inanimate witness of the greatness of their builders, monuments which continue to stand after nearly 5,000 years. It is quite possible that they will survive another similar period, and perhaps even outlast man himself. Let us keep in mind that the essential factor having to do with their magnificent stone structures was their desire to build for all eternity.

Today it is considered proper to say that our culture is an extension of that of the Greeks and Hebrews. But if we extend our culture back that far, why should we not extend it to the Egyptians as the builders of the very civilization which we are endeavoring to enjoy? Egypt worked out for herself a distinctive character which was well suited for the time and place. And it lasted. Keep in mind that the Egyptian was not warlike in nature. He enjoyed living.

All that Egypt did was practical. Her physicians commanded wide respect in the ancient world. Our social, economic, and political institutions are generally the same as those of ancient Egypt, or at least they were until the industrial revolution of not so long ago. Our way of life is very much like theirs. May we regard her as our ancestor, this earliest manifestation of civilization? Their way of life marked a certain maturity of outlook. Is there not an association between us and ancient Egypt, an intellectual, spiritual, and material association? The sources of our moral heritage lie in ancient Egypt. Their concepts provided for the recognition of human values, the dignity of the common man, and his right to justice.

Anthropologists tell us that, if we are to know what man is, we must know something about what he has been, and the laws and environment that controlled his mental, moral, spiritual, and physical development. A knowledge of the ancient Egyptians may help to explain what advancement may be ours and perhaps prepare us for even further progress. Our attitude toward them should be a sympathetic one. We should recognize their strivings to understand and advance. As with us, through the dim and changing centuries, however inadequate the results, man has ever striven to learn.

I sincerely hope you have enjoyed this visit with me to the monuments of ancient Egypt, land of mystery, romance, and splendor—a fascinating land that stirs wonderment, and most certainly increases one's knowledge and understanding. Together we have walked upon the empty stage of today on which tremendous dramas of the distant past have been enacted. We have perhaps sensed the loves, the frustrations, the angers, and the frailties of a great people of the past. We have trod the floors of the temples, and perhaps have sensed the wisps and whispers of these ancient people.

## YESTERDAY HAS MUCH TO TELL

How does one compare a few hours or days with thousands of years of history? For a time we have retreated from the twentieth century to an era where time took on a very different dimension. In this mystic land that cherishes permanence, we have recalled the glories of ancient Egypt; and, as we moved among the majestic pyramids and temples along the Nile, we sensed the eloquent silence in the dust where once ancient Pharaohs walked. This is the foreverness in this timeless land where the Pharaohs' splendid monuments were built for eternity, this land whose heritage we profoundly respect.



# CHRONOLOGY

Archaeological research and carbon 14 radioactive dating method has helped to confirm or newly establish important dates of the ancient history of Egypt.

First and Second Dynasties	3100-2700 B.C.
<i>Old Kingdom</i>	
Third Dynasty	2700-2650
Fourth Dynasty	2650-2500
Fifth Dynasty	2500-2350
Sixth Dynasty	2350-2200
<i>First Intermediate Period</i>	
Seventh, Eighth, Ninth, Tenth, and Eleventh Dynasties	2200-2010
<i>Middle Kingdom</i>	
Twelfth Dynasty	2010-1800
<i>Second Intermediate Period</i>	
Thirteenth, Fourteenth, Fifteenth, Sixteenth, and Seventeenth Dynasties	1800-1570
<i>New Kingdom</i>	
Eighteenth Dynasty	1570-1305
Nineteenth Dynasty	1305-1200
Twentieth Dynasty	1200-1090
<i>Post Empire Period</i>	
Twenty-first, Twenty-second, Twenty-third, Twenty-fourth, Twenty-fifth, and Twenty-sixth Dynasties	1090-525
<i>Persian Conquests</i>	
Twenty-seventh through Thirtieth Dynasties	525-332
<i>Greek and Roman Domination</i>	332 B.C.-395 A.D.

# THE ROSICRUCIAN ORDER, AMORC

## *Purpose and Work of the Order*

The Rosicrucian Order, AMORC, is a philosophical and initiatic tradition. As students progress in their studies, they are initiated into the next level or degree.

Rosicrucians are men and women around the world who study the laws of nature in order to live in harmony with them. Individuals study the Rosicrucian lessons in the privacy of their own homes on subjects such as the nature of the soul, developing intuition, classical Greek philosophy, energy centers in the body, and self-healing techniques.

The Rosicrucian tradition encourages each student to discover the wisdom, compassion, strength, and peace that already reside within each of us.

[www.rosicrucian.org](http://www.rosicrucian.org)