

THE OSTRACON



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A BRIEF HISTORY OF NUBIA

By Anne M. Jennings

About the Author: Anne Jennings grew up in New York City and is a graduate of New York University where she studied psychology, art history, and English literature. She received her MA in anthropology and was employed as an instructor at the American Museum of Natural History. She taught in the Anthropology Department of California State University and received her Ph.D. from the University of California in Riverside in 1985. In 1990, she accepted a position as Community Outreach Coordinator at the Denver Museum of Natural History. During her three years with the Museum, she developed programs to increase the minority community's museum attendance at exhibits such as African-American Cultural Awareness, El Dia de Los Muertos, Native American Pow Wow, Coastal Peoples of Alaska, Cinco de Mayo, Kwanzaa, etc. Two years ago Jennings presented the ESS with a summary of her doctoral and post-doctoral studies of the village of West Aswan, Egypt. In 1993, Jennings left the DMNH and moved back to California.

Most books and articles about the histories of ancient Egypt and Nubia present them as separate entities, as if they had never intersected. However, this article will show that these Nile Valley cultures were intertwined in a symbiotic relationship that existed for centuries, and this makes their respective histories much more interesting. Therefore, much of the history of ancient Egypt is included in this summary which is ostensibly about ancient Nubia.

Geography: The modern Nubian homeland extends some 700 miles along the Nile River from the First Cataract near Aswan to the Fourth Cataract in the Republic of Sudan. In ancient times, however, the Old Nubian homeland extended all the way to the Sixth Cataract, south of the site of ancient Meroe, and almost

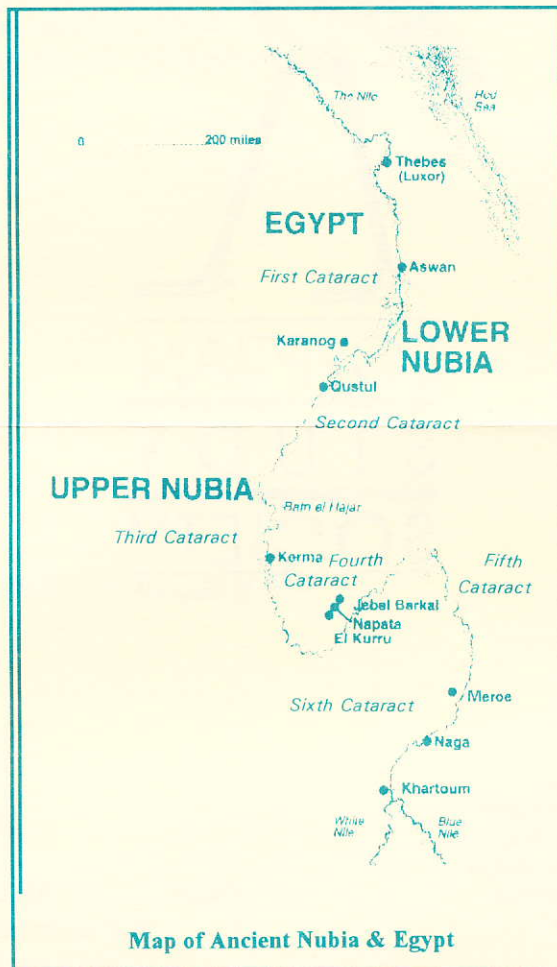
as far as modern Khartoum. The area now called New Nubia lies 20 miles to the north of Aswan, near the town of Kom Ombo, where almost 50,000 Nubians were resettled in 1964, just before the Aswan High Dam flooded the previous sites of their towns and villages. Because I did my fieldwork among the Kenuzi Nubians of Southern Egypt, the discussion of modern Nubia will focus on them. Most of my references for prehistoric and dynastic Nubia come from Wendorf and Adams.

Prehistory: The scientific investigation of early Nubian prehistory is still in its infancy. Systematic archeological exploration has focused mainly on the 300-mile area

between the First and Third Cataracts. Scientists agree that throughout the Pleistocene Epoch there were several periods of increased rain-fall in the Sahara, alternating with periods of desiccation. Typical Mediterranean flora and fauna, as well as giraffes, gazelles, elephants, hippopotami, and rhinoceros lived there during the moist, cool phases; people from the north and south were able to move into this area, which is now desert, to hunt and fish. When the Sahara Desert was formed in its final hot and dry phase, people began to concentrate in the Nile River Valley. Archeological evidence indicates that this Nile corridor has been continuously inhabited since the Late Paleolithic (24000-16000 BCE), and it is during this time that we see evidence of the beginnings of a uniquely Nubian culture (Wendorf).

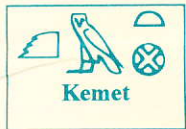
At the same time, the population of this area began what Wendorf calls the "Nilotic Adjustment" to the

micro-environment of the Nile Valley. Communities were small and compact, with occupations which were brief but repeated. There is evidence of a mixed economy based upon the hunting of large savanna and aquatic animals, fishing, and the gathering of wild grains. The Khartoum Mesolithic (7000 BCE) is characterized by the development of beautiful and sophisticated pottery before the beginnings of agriculture, at Shaheinab near modern Khartoum. Archeologists have also found similar ceramics further north along the Nile between the First



and Second Cataracts. Although there is evidence of the gathering of wild grain, hunting, fishing, and pottery-making, permanent village life, which was dependent on agriculture, developed later on. The earliest Neolithic site in Nubia has been dated to ca. 6000 BCE (Wendorf and Schild), but the archeological dates of this area are still uncertain, and they are being revised yearly.

Many educated Nubians and some Western scholars believe that prehistoric Nubian peoples were the major contributors to the civilization of ancient Egypt. They argue that the ancestral Nile Valley people migrated from the Nubian homeland, settled in what is now Upper Egypt (the area between Cairo and the First Cataract), and developed a lifestyle that combined agriculture, fishing, and animal husbandry. When Menes and his Upper Egyptian forces conquered those of Lower Egypt (ca. 3200 BCE), they assert that these migrants' descendants comprised Menes' forces. These conquerors, whose ancestors had migrated from Nubia generations before, then imposed their cultural values, religious cosmology, and system of government upon those whom they had conquered. Ultimately, this amalgamation gave rise to the legendary ancient Egyptian civilization - Kemet.



Certainly, when the Two Lands were unified, an independent state, which the ancient Egyptians called Ta-Seti, or "The Land of the Bow", already existed in Lower Nubia. This was the civilization which Adams called the *Nubian A Horizon*, and Reisner called the *A Group*. *A Horizon* sites are found in abundance throughout Lower Nubia. These people cultivated cereal grains, made distinctive black and red pottery, and buried their dead along with grave offerings. The graves show great differentiation in terms of wealth, which led Reisner to mistakenly hypothesize a *B Group* as an intrusive element. Graves of wealthy people contained many articles of Egyptian manufacture, such as faience beads, which suggested trade between the two areas. The graves also contained articles of local manufacture such as indigenous pottery, jewelry, ivory combs, and stone tools. Some sites also indicated that the inhabitants were transhumant [seasonal migration] while others show evidence of more permanent occupation, like houses with stone walls that had up to six rooms.

Relations with Egypt: By the time of the Old Kingdom in Egypt, Ta-Seti was considered enemy territory. The influence of Kemet on Nubia grew increasingly oppressive as the pharaoh consolidated his power and

enlarged his ambitions. The Land of the Bow was finally invaded and made an Egyptian colony.

The *C Horizon* culture appeared abruptly in Lower Nubia, following a period of several centuries when the region was impoverished and largely depopulated as a result of Egyptian imperialism. Around 2100 BCE, however, the central authority of the Egyptian state deteriorated [during the First Intermediate Period in Egypt], and Nubia was able to live in peace and prosperity for some 800 years. The archeological record shows a gradual increase in the size of Nubian settlements, some having stone walls and granaries. Graves from this period have tumuli [sepulchral mounds] and contain offerings, the largest of which included cattle skulls and clay models of cows. Most clothing was made of leather, and much of the art on pottery, rocks, and grave stelae is of cows, bulls, and herding activities. These people, called the *Wawat* by the ancient Egyptians, probably developed a lifestyle that combined agriculture, fishing, and animal husbandry similar to the one which was followed, until recently, by the transhumant "cattle complex" cultures of East Africa.

Over the centuries, the people who inhabited the lands south of the First Cataract evolved customs and languages different from those who lived north of it, although they were of the same ancestry. This natural evolution, coupled with the immigration and intermarriage of diverse peoples and cultures from other parts of Africa and Asia, eventually led them to view themselves as separate peoples. Ancient Kemet became a powerful nation-state by ca. 3000 BCE, while ancient Nubia and Kush flowered later on (as three separate kingdoms: Kerma ca. 2000-1500 BCE; Napata ca. 1000-600 BCE; and Meroe, ca. 270 BCE--AD 300). Throughout the centuries, Egypt and Nubia alternately traded and warred with each other. Egyptian hieroglyphic texts often mentioned the empire of Kush as one of its traditional enemies; Nubian mines supplied Egypt with her gold and Nubian captives became her slaves.

During Egypt's First Intermediate Period, the political equilibrium that had been maintained between the royal court and the provincial nomes was upset. The nomes in the south became stronger, and Theban nomarchs went to war against the northern "pharaohs" of the Tenth Dynasty. The result was two kingdoms, with the Tenth Dynasty kings in the north fighting the 11th Dynasty kings in the south. Finally, the third pharaoh of the 11th Dynasty, Mentuhotep Nebhepetre (a southerner who was

most probably Nubian), was victorious over the kings of the Tenth Dynasty and re-united the Two Lands of Kemet. This event marked the beginning of the Egyptian Middle Kingdom.

During the Middle Kingdom, the *C Horizon* culture of Nubia was perceived as a threat to Egyptian gold-mining activities in the deserts of northern Nubia. The first pharaoh of the 12th Dynasty, Amenemhet I, was from the southernmost nome, and may also have been a Nubian. Nevertheless, he and his descendants invaded Nubia and built a series of large mud-brick fortifications in the region of the Second Cataract. These forts were designed as garrisons to house troops monitoring river traffic and as collection posts for the gold.

To the south of the Second Cataract, another culture was developing near the town of Kerma. The Kerma civilization was probably the first flowering of the kingdom of Kush, which emerged as an independent self-governing state of considerable wealth and strength. As such, it attracted craftspeople, administrators, and soldiers from Kemet who settled at the royal court and in the surrounding countryside. During the political turmoil of the Egyptian Second Intermediate Period, Kush flourished. The state of Kerma was finally destroyed by the pharaoh Kamose and his immediate successors of the 18th Dynasty after the Two Lands of Egypt were once again reunited.

During the 18th Dynasty, Kemet became a colonial power in Nubia with the aim of assimilating the Nubians into the Egyptian culture. Nubian lands were appropriated by the state and the Nubian residents became peasants. Others were taken as prisoners of war and became slaves who were sent to the Egyptian royal courts and temples north of the First Cataract. Pharaohs formed alliances with some of the Kushite kings, giving them positions of authority within the Egyptian overlords' governmental bureaucracy. In order to further the process of colonization and assimilation, pharaohs often married Nubian princesses, while Nubian princes were sent to be educated at the courts of the pharaohs. The wars in Libya, Palestine, and Syria were financed by Nubian gold, and prisoners of those conflicts were often sent as slaves to the mines near the Second Cataract.

Even before the 18th Dynasty, Egyptian cultural elements had been spread into Nubia by priests, soldiers, traders, and travelers. Nubian culture was also spread to Kemet by Nubian peoples entering Egypt as well as by Egyptian travelers returning from Nubia. Thus, both societies

assimilated elements of one culture from the other. The priests of Amun in Thebes were especially influential in the royal courts of Kush; during the Egyptian Third Intermediate Period, when Kemet retreated out of Nubia, Kushite rulers continued to maintain these ties.

Egypt's Nubian Dynasty: The Nubian King Kashta was even confirmed as Pharaoh (and Patron of Amun, Defender of Thebes, etc.) and when he died (ca. 751 BCE), his son Piankhi assumed his titles. Piankhi spent the first 20 years of his reign in Napata, the capital city of Kush at this time. Napata boasted wealthy citizens due to its control of gold production and trade in cattle, hides, ebony, slaves, and other products from the south. Although there remain several royal monuments and pyramids, as well as some cemeteries scattered over a 15 mile area on both sides of the Nile near the Fourth Cataract, our knowledge about Napata remains limited. The Kushite monarchy appears to have been matrilineal, and there were at least five reigning queens. Kushite royal women had very high status, and queens' tombs in the royal cemeteries contained great wealth.

Piankhi invaded Kemet when the priests of Amun notified him that Thebes was being attacked by an army from the Delta; he used this as his excuse to continue northward until the whole of Egypt was united under his command. Although Piankhi assumed all of the titles of a pharaoh, he returned home to Napata after his conquests were over, and from this city he ruled Kemet for another ten years. Even though the Kushites ruled Kemet for only about 100 years, their achievements were considerable. They reunited Egypt, bringing order and stability for the first time in more than 300 years. They also brought about an economic and cultural revival and renewed veneration for ancient traditions, religion, literature, and the arts. The Kushites began to write their own history at this same time using Egyptian hieroglyphs.

The last Kushite pharaoh, Taharqa, was a ruler of great ability, but he came to the throne just as the forces of Assyria were massing to invade Egypt. After losing to Ashurbanipal, he retreated to Nubia. Although Kush remained strong and vital in Nubia for the next 1,000 years, the Kushites never again attempted to invade lands north of the First Cataract. Nor did these kings relinquish their pharaonic titles.

Meroe: The Meriotic period was the Golden Age of dynastic civilization in Nubia. While Meroe was only one of several important settlements in the area between the Fifth and Sixth Cataracts, it was the oldest and,

probably, the most important. Archeological excavations of the city itself -- its cemeteries, pyramids, and tombs -- have been limited in scope and much more work needs to be done. However, the culture of Meriotic times is better known than any earlier period in Nubia's ancient history.

Meriotic prosperity was based on agriculture and trade. The principal crops were millet and cotton, and the people kept cattle and goats as well. Meroe had three predominant industries: iron-working, ceramics, and weaving. The products of these industries were traded to Abyssinia, Arabia, Egypt, and the Mediterranean world. Nubia also received tropical goods such as ivory, ebony, and incense from its trade routes, which led into the interior of the African continent via the Blue and White Niles. Gold was mined extensively and goldsmithing was a well practiced art. The scribes' Meriotic script has not yet been translated. Meriotic religion was a fusion of Kushite and Egyptian beliefs, and the mortuary cult and its attendant rituals were very important.

In Meroe, one can see the development of urbanism in large cities, monumental architecture, and the growth of a powerful and wealthy middle class. Kush, in both its Napatan and Meriotic periods, was a political entity of remarkable stability with a monarchy that continued unbroken for almost 1,200 years. This is far longer than any of Egypt's stable periods.

Ancient Kush and pharaonic Kemet's symbiotic relationship, which involved the exchange of human knowledge and expertise, as well as gold, copper, ivory, and other material goods, lasted for almost 5,000 years. Nubians lived and farmed in the Nile valley, were administrators at the courts of pharaohs, priests and priestesses in Egyptian temples, and mercenaries in Egypt's armies. During times of dynastic upheaval in Kemet, Nile Valley peoples fled to the Kushite kingdoms. There they worked as craftspeople, administrators at court, clergy in the temples, and were soldiers of the southern armies. The periods of Nubia's greatest prosperity tended to come when Egypt was weak and vice-versa.

The Influence of Islam: Kush eventually broke up into smaller kingdoms: Nobatia, Makouria, and Alwa. These all became Christian in the sixth century AD and remained so for the next 700 years. At the time of the Arab conquest of Egypt in AD 642, General Amr ibn el-As sent a cavalry force of 20,000 troops to Nubia. After penetrating as far as Dongola, they were beaten back. A second battle of Dongola, in AD 651 to 652 was similarly disastrous for the invaders and it ended in a negotiated

truce -- the *Baqt*. This truce, which lasted for six centuries, set up a trading relationship between Egypt and Nubia specifying the exchange of wheat, barley, wine, horses, and linen from Egypt in return for 360 slaves per year from Nubia. The Baqt treaty was without precedent in the early history of Islam: "Alone among the world's peoples, the Nubians were excluded from both the Dar el-Islam (House of the Faithful) and the Dar el-Harb (House of the Enemy), the two categories into which the rest of the world was divided" (Adams, p.452). Throughout the years, individual Arabs, who were mainly traders, settled in northern Nubia and intermarried with the populace, but in general the Baqt freed Nubia from the threat of Islamic conquest for hundreds of years.

In the early Middle Ages, part of the Rabi tribe migrated from the Arabian peninsula to Upper Egypt, where they intermarried with the Beja. This pastoral group lived in the hills around the Red Sea. The resulting amalgamation, called the Beni Kanz, grew strong enough over the next century to challenge the authority of the central government in Cairo. The Beni Kanz were summarily beaten, and the survivors took refuge with the sedentary Nubian farmers who lived around Aswan. The Beni Kanz soon intermarried with the local Nubian population, and in time they became partly Nubianized in language and culture, although they retained their Islamic faith. The results of this intermarriage are the Kenzi Nubians, who in modern times occupied the northernmost part of Nubia, between Aswan and Maharraqa (ibid., p.523).

This kind of intermarriage ultimately and peacefully transformed the Nubians into Muslims. Even so, it is believed that, as with Christianity, it was mainly the elite who converted first, with the villagers holding out for a much longer time. In addition, since the Muslim invaders were always men who took Nubian women as wives, it was these latter who, remaining a stable and permanent force in the society, retained their own language and culture and passed it on to their children. Uxorilocality undoubtedly aided the maintenance of Nubian traditions, as women were not forced to leave their kin group and friends when they married one of the invaders.

From the 13th to the 14th centuries, Arab nomads in Egypt, expelled by the Mameluks, migrated to the Sudan. They also united with the pastoral tribes living east of the Christian Nubian kingdoms, gradually converting them to Islam. By the late 14th century, Dongola, having disintegrated due to internal troubles, had been overrun by Muslim pastoralists, and by the 15th century the last Christian kingdom in Nubia had been destroyed. Since



that time, Nubians have been Muslims. They are Sunni Muslims, following the Malki school of doctrinal interpretation.

Little is known about Nubian history from AD 1500 to 1800. Slave raids were a continuing fact of life for many villages.

However, those who could prove that they were Muslim escaped this horror, as the Muslim slave traders did not enslave other Muslims. The Kenuz were Muslim and, consequently, safe from these raids. The European travelers, Burckhardt (1819) and St. John (1832), reported on conditions which varied between extreme poverty and healthy growth in this area, mainly as a result of the differential raiding for slaves. Between 1880 and 1900, Great Britain assumed control in Egypt and the Sudan and finally ended the slave trade along the Nile. Egyptian Nubians, considered a relatively unimportant minority, were left free to pursue their own affairs for the next 50 or 60 years.

Modern-day conditions: Villages are oriented along the Nile, as close to the water as possible. Traditionally, the Nubian economy has involved a combination of subsistence farming, animal husbandry, and date production. But, because of the difficulty in farming the land, Nubian men have for centuries sought employment outside of Nubia, returning to their homeland only periodically. In pharaonic times they were often mercenaries; later on they were enslaved, and still later many became personal servants. Although today many Nubian men still work as servants such as waiters, hotel employees, and doormen, they are now entering the civil service and other professions in greater numbers each year.

The Nubian language is Sudanic (Greenberg) and is divided into three speech-groups: "For the first 145 kilometers south from Aswan, the dialect spoken is Kenuzi and the people call themselves Kenuz... The next reach, stretching 425 kilometers is occupied by Nubians who speak Mahasi, a language of several mutually intelligible dialects which is sometimes called Fadija. The last Nubian reach of about 150 kilometers is inhabited by persons who speak Dongolawi and call themselves Dangala" (Horton). The people of Egyptian Nubia, who are mostly Kenuz, were relocated when their homeland was flooded as a result of the construction of the Aswan High Dam in 1964. The erection of the first dam in 1903, and subsequent elevations in 1913 and 1933, crippled the agricultural system and gave impetus

to the migratory trend discussed above. In 1933, Nubian women began migrating between the countryside and the cities. By 1950 most of the Kenuz -- both male and female -- had left to settle in Egyptian cities, leaving only about 20% on the homeland. At the time of the resettlement, approximately 70,000 Egyptian Nubians were living outside of Nubia; and those who remained in the villages (mostly women, children, and old men) were overwhelmingly dependent upon remittances from the ones who had migrated away (Fernea and Kennedy).

Many Nubians returned to their homeland when the resettlement began, and approximately 50,000 were resettled in the 33 villages built for them near Kom Ombo. Not all Nubians moved from Aswan, however. Several villages, situated north of the High Dam, were in no danger of inundation and so were not evacuated.

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IMHOTEP: THE FIRST GREAT MAN OF HISTORY

By Loretta Ivory

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Loretta Ivory has been with the ESS since its founding. When asked what interested her most about Egypt, she immediately replied, "Strictly the Old Kingdom...the Pyramid Age is my time." Her research into ancient medicine inevitably led her to Imhotep. Ivory is currently developing a cable show that will present a broad spectrum of health-related issues. As a break from the serious world of health care, Ivory writes screen plays and science fiction. She draws upon ancient Egyptian culture, especially its religion, for her science fiction. Ivory quoted the syndicated cartoonist, Ashley Brilliant, to explain her philosophy on work and art: "I've given up my search for the truth to look for a really good fantasy."

IMHOTEP...The name might conjure visions of walking in palm-shaded courtyards with a feather-fanned perfumed princess, while reciting poetry to the accompaniment of a harp. The reality of being in this man's company must have been even more exotic and no less Hollywood.

Imhotep, living during the reigns of Djoser (Netjeri-khet) (2630-2611 BCE) and his successor Sekhemkhet (2611-2606 BCE) is truly the first great man of history and avatar of the Renaissance Man. He was the Seal-Bearer of the King, (vizier) Governor of the Capital, Royal Representative, Chief Judge, Director of the Great Mansion, Chief of All Works of The King in the South and North, Overseer of Royal Records, Chief Lector Priest, High Priest in Heliopolis. As if that were not enough to keep him off the streets at night, he was also a carpenter, sculptor, poet, musician, architect, astronomer, philosopher, son, father, husband, magician, and a physician of such renown that he became a god. One wonders if there was anything at which he did not excel!

To most students of ancient Egypt, Imhotep is known only as the architect of the Step Pyramid at Saqqara. This in and of itself assured him a place in history. Imhotep may have learned at least some of his architectural skills at his father's knee. Kanefer, Imhotep's father, was architect to Djoser's predecessor and probably the architect of Djoser's brick mastaba at Beit Khallaf north of Abydos, near the ancient Egyptian

capital of Thinis at Abydos. Later, Djoser moved the capital to Memphis on the west bank of the Nile, nearer the Delta in Lower Egypt.

At some point after the move, Imhotep succeeded his father as Royal Architect and began Djoser's funeral complex at Saqqara, two miles northwest of Memphis on the west bank. This complex boasted the first monument ever built in stone. Modern tourists still marvel at the extent of the complex and the grandeur of both its design and execution.

Let's digress and tour the facilities as ancient travelers. First, we would be dwarfed by the 30 foot high walls that Imhotep built to surround the central pyramid and its flanking buildings. The enclosure walls extend 1,790 feet in length by 910 feet wide. We would enter by the southeast gate, the only one of the 14 doorways that allows access. Past the doorway, a columned gallery leads to a small hall with a strangely constructed half-opened door. Behind this door is the great enclosure and ahead is the so-called Southern Tomb, while to the right is the great pyramid with its white limestone-covered sides and flat top 200 feet above our heads.

Behind are the two "B" shaped buildings associated with the heb sed court with its wall niches for the local gods of Upper and Lower Egypt. North of this special jubilee court is the House of the South and past that, to the northeast, the House of the North. Past the pyramid along the east side is the *serdab* [small, sealed chamber for the statue of the person for whom the tomb or pyramid was built] and the mortuary temple sits along the north base. Our tour of Imhotep's triumphal monument is complete as we are not permitted into the pink limestone burial chamber nor into any of the 11 burial shafts dug 110 feet into the bedrock. Perhaps the ancient six-layer plywood found in one of the shafts could have been the brain child of Imhotep himself.

Most people think of this great man as an architect -- but not me. I first learned of Imhotep while studying ancient medical practices. One begins to appreciate the scope of ancient medical practices from the six or so medical papyri that have been found. We might infer from Herodotus that Egyptian health care was in need of administrative reform. He claimed that each physician applied himself to one and only one disease (talk about too many specialists!). He did



admit that "all places abound in physicians," so perhaps access to care was not a problem. Note to gynecologists: your practice of old included beauty treatments like the banishment of wrinkles and cleaning and smoothing the skin!

The deification of Imhotep was a long process and not accompanied by any formal proclamations. While his funerary monument was in such disrepair as to be lost 600 years after his death, his name was already being used in prayers for healing intercessions.

From inscriptions in his temples, we know of two families that Imhotep "treated" successfully after his death and deification. One woman, who had been stricken with malaria, went to Imhotep's temple and prayed for a cure. The god Imhotep came to her in a dream and the remedies that he gave cured her. Her son fell sick with severe abdominal pain and fever and she took him to the temple. While he lay unconscious, the woman had a vision of Imhotep, clothed in shining raiment, who examined her son from head to foot and then vanished. The shock of seeing the god caused her to waken her son, who said that he had just had the same vision in his dream. Soon

afterwards the pain stopped and the boy was cured.

The other story tells of a young couple (Taimhotep and Psherenptah, a priest in Ptolemaic times) who, after having three daughters, wanted a son so much that the woman prayed to Imhotep for a miracle. Imhotep appeared to her husband in a dream and she subsequently conceived. On one of the feast days of Imhotep (there are six known feast days of Imhotep), she bore a son.

Imhotep's name, unlike other names that combined 'htp' and a god's name (i.e. Ptah-hotep meaning "Ptah is satisfied") is derived differently and translates to: "He who comes in Peace". In the time of war and political unrest in his ancient homeland, how miraculous indeed if "He who comes in Peace" were to come again.

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THE HISTORY OF EGYPTIAN HISTORY (AFTER HERODOTUS)

Prefaced, edited, and compiled
By William D. Petty

About the Author: Bill Petty is currently the President of the ESS and is therefore VERY active in the organization. In addition to his presidential duties, he created the very imaginative storyline for the Mummy Study Group's Murder Mystery Night and also served as the host for the event. Petty enjoys dipping into *old* (19th century) books about ancient Egypt and is a big fan of David Roberts, the artist who depicted many scenes of Egypt and her monuments during the early 1800's. ESS Members can look forward to what is sure to be a terrific lecture by Petty on Robert's life later this year.

PREFACE: Little was actually learned about Egyptian history from the time of Herodotus until Champollion discovered the translation of hieroglyphics in 1822. [See the Lecture Notes later in this issue on Dr. Hughes' Herodotus lecture.] Thus, when the following was written, the History of Egypt was still in the "Dark Ages". Published in Philadelphia by Carey and Sons in 1821, the book from which this article is compiled is titled:

A COMPLETE GENEALOGICAL, HISTORICAL, CHRONOLOGICAL, AND GEOGRAPHICAL ATLAS; BEING A GENERAL GUIDE TO ANCIENT AND MODERN HISTORY: EXHIBITING AN ACCURATE ACCOUNT OF THE ORIGIN, DESCENT, AND MARRIAGES OF THE PRINCIPAL ROYAL FAMILIES FROM THE EARLIEST AUTHENTIC RECORDS; TOGETHER WITH THE VARIOUS POSSESSIONS, WARS, CELEBRATED BATTLES, AND REMARKABLE EVENTS, TO THE YEAR 1821. ACCORDING TO THE PLAN OF LE SAGE GREATLY IMPROVED. THE WHOLE FORMING A COMPLETE SYSTEM OF HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHY
by M. Lavoisne (*LAVOISNE'S ATLAS* for short).

Other than rearrangement and use of italics and bold type, I have made only one change in the text. All dates in the *ATLAS* are given from the Biblical Creation of the World (in 4004 B.C.E. according to the author). For ease of reference, I have subtracted the author's dates from 4004 so that the dates shown here are in years BCE. For example, whereas the *ATLAS* gives the date of

Menes founding the Egyptian empire as 1662 A.M., I give the date as 2342 BCE. Remember, this book pre-dates the translation of hieroglyphs and the kings names may be unfamiliar. And so, Egyptian History as perceived in AD 1821.....

Introduction. History is very justly esteemed a considerable branch of polite literature: few accomplishments are more valued than an accurate knowledge of it. The ancients were so convinced of the importance of History, that they deified, and raised altars to it; gave it first place among the sciences, and esteemed it before all others. Incredible as this may appear in the present day, it is no exaggeration; Herodotus, Thucydides, and many others were loaded with honors equal to those conferred upon the most renowned Generals of their age.

It is acknowledged that the Chronology of the early ages has difficulties, which the most learned writers have acknowledged, without being able to solve them: there being no less than 132 opinions, or different modes of calculation of the years between the Creation of the World and the Nativity of Jesus Christ. In the intermediate space between these two most important events, there are, however, certain fixed points, from which the Chronologer may reckon backward or forward with very considerable precision. The fixed points just alluded to are denominated *Æras* or *Epochas*; and though they rather apply to the chronology of the country from whose history they are taken, they nevertheless admit of application to that of the world at large. The epochas of the early Assyrians and Egyptians are too much mixed with legendary exaggeration to admit of the least reliance being placed on them.

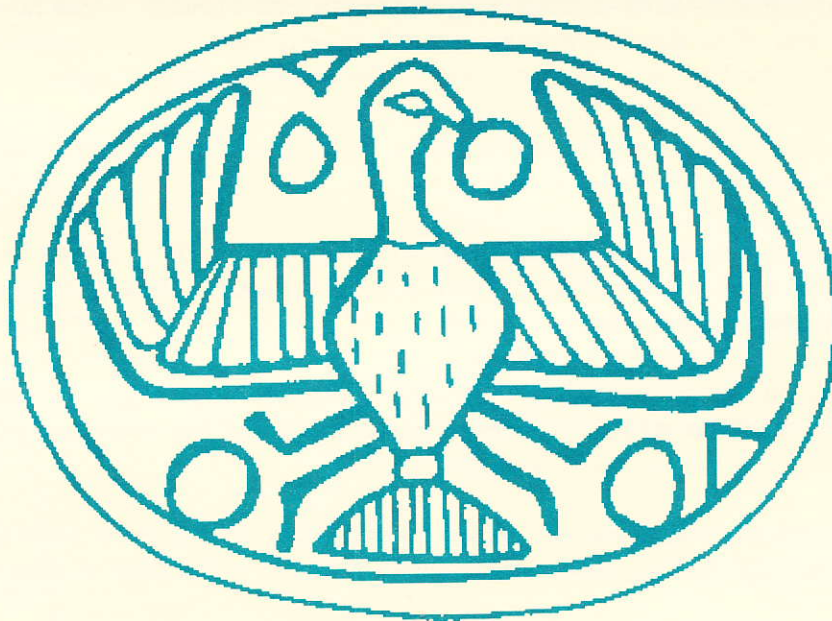
History Of Egypt. The monarchy of Egypt, if not the most ancient, at least dates its antiquity as high as any that have existed; but so obscure are its annals that scarcely anything can be ascertained respecting its first Kings. What is found in the ancient chronologers is so discordant, or mixed with fables, that truth can hardly be discovered. Some learned men have endeavored to remove the veil, among whom we have chosen Sir John Marsham, whose hypothesis, (for we can present nothing else) seems more probable than others, and agrees better with the Holy Scripture, the only ancient historical monument that can command belief.

- BCE**
- 4004 The Creation.
- 2347 Noah goes out of the Ark with his family.
- 2342 Menes is generally acknowledged as the founder of the Egyptian empire and is supposed to be the same as Misraim, the son of Ham, and the grandson of Noah. His children divide the land, and give rise to four kingdoms, which subsist separately during many centuries, and are successively united under the same yoke. They are known by the names Thebes, This, Memphis, and Heliopolis or Lower Egypt.
- 2307 Cerudes, the third son of Menes, reigns at Heliopolis 63 years.
- 2280 Athothes I reigns over Thebes and This. He is the same who was worshipped under the name of Mercury. He reigns 59 years, and after his death his two sons divide the kingdom. Tosorthros, from the knowledge he had of physic, is styled Esculapius. He invents the art of building and writing.
- 2192 Venephes builds pyramids; and a great famine prevails during his reign.
- 2123 Under Semempsis Egypt is afflicted by a dreadful plague.
- 2109 Cerperes builds the first and smallest of the three pyramids now extant.
- 2054 Suphis I builds the greatest pyramid, and writes some sacred books.
- 2002 Binothis enacts a law, entitling females to succeed to the throne.
- 1966 In the reign of Amesises, Abraham migrates into Egypt, with Sarah his wife, whom the King desires to take from him, in 1920.
- 1742 Under Ramesses-Menos, Joseph is brought to Egypt in 1728.
- 1723 Ramesses-Tubaete, whose dreams Joseph explains, and whose minister he is made in 1715.
- 1672 Nitocris, the most celebrated woman of her time, who reigns first at Memphis and six years afterward, unites the Kingdoms of Thebes and This to her dominions. The building of the third pyramid is attributed to her.
- 1655 Concharis is the last King of Heliopolis.
- 1650 Salatis, the first of the Shepherd Kings, conquers Lower Egypt at the head of 240,000 Arabs, and establishes the seat of his empire at Tanis. Great numbers of Egyptians migrate to Greece, Asia, and China. Joseph dies in the fifteenth year of his reign.
- 1587 Apachnas, the new King, mentioned in Scripture, who "knew not Joseph," tyrannizes over the Israelites, and compels them to build cities for him. In 1573 he orders all their male children to be drowned as soon as they are born; but Moses, saved from the water, is brought up by his daughter. At the age of 40, he emigrates from Egypt, and dwells in the land of Midian for 40 years.
- 1552 Apophis, after being severely chastised by the Lord, permits the Israelites to depart from Egypt; but afterward pursuing them is drowned in the Red Sea, with his armies, in 1491, having reigned 61 years.

BCE

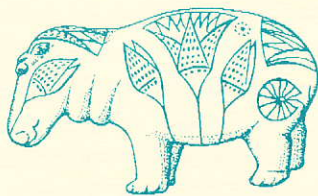
- 1485 Sesostriis, the famous conqueror, is thought to have lived about this time. Sir Isaac Newton identifies him with Osiris and the Grecian Bacchus.
- 1422 Moeris causes the celebrated lake, called by his name, to be dug, to receive the waters of the Nile when it overflowed too abundantly, and to water the country when the inundation proved deficient. He recovers the kingdom of Memphis from the Shepherd Kings.
- 1379 Siphsoas, called also Hermes Trismegistes, celebrated for his philosophical writings, adds five days to the year, which before consisted of only 360 days.
- 1374 Phruron, or Nilus, gives his name to the Nile, before called Egyptus, whence also the country derives its name.
- 1306 Amosis abolishes the practice of human sacrifices, and conquers Heliopolis, the ancient capital of Lower Egypt.
- 1208 Misphegmothosis, toward the end of his reign, obtains a great victory over Zet, the last of the Shepherd Kings, and obliges him to shut himself up in Avaris.
- 1183 Thummosis forces Zet to surrender, and to abandon Egypt.
- 1174 Amenophis II finally expels the Arabs, and reigns over all Egypt.
- 972 Shishak begins to reign; he goes to Asia, takes Jerusalem and plunders the temple.
- 913 Rhamses, a covetous Prince, collects immense treasures.
- 853 Amenophis IV, or Osymandius, is thought to be the same with Memnon, whose famous statue was said to utter a sound at the rising of the sun. The monument in which he is buried is much celebrated for its magnificence. His expedition against the Bactrians has perpetuated his fame in Persia and in Greece.
- 788 Thuoris loses his Asiatic possessions, and after his death, Egypt, reduced within its natural boundaries, is divided into many little kingdoms, for about 44 years.
- 727 Sabbacon, or So, a King of Ethiopia, conquers Egypt; kills Nechus, King of Sais, burns Bocchoris, another King, to death, and forces Anysis the Blind to retire into the morasses. Hoshea, King of Israel, seeks his assistance against Shalmaneser, King of Assyria.
- 705 Tharaca, called in Scripture Tirhakah, the last Ethiopian King, reigns 18 years, and makes war against Sennacherib, King of Assyria. After him there is an anarchy of two years, and an aristocracy of 12 Governors during 15 years.
- 670 Psammitichus, one of those Governors, expels his colleagues, by the aid of some Grecian soldiers. He protects trade, makes war against Assyrians, and consumes 29 years in the siege of Azotus, being the longest siege on record.
- 616 Pharaoh-Necho wages war against the Assyrians and Jews; kills Josiah King of Judah, captures Jerusalem, imprisons Jehohaz, and appoints Jehoiachim King. In his time, some mariners sail around Africa.
- 594 Apries, called in Scripture Pharaoh-Hophra, in the height of his pride, compares his power to that of the living God, but is conquered by Nebuchadnezzar, who reduces Egypt to the greatest distress. Apries is killed at Sais by order of Amasis, his successor.

- BCE**
- 569 Amasis governs with wisdom, and in some degree restores Egypt to its former splendor. Having refused to marry his daughter to Cambyses, a war is kindled between Persia and Egypt.
- 525 Psammenitus reigns only six months, before Egypt is conquered by Cambyses; after which it continues subject to the Persians during 112 years.
- 413 Amyrthaeus induces the Egyptians to revolt from the Persians and restores the kingdom. By the aid of the Greeks, the Egyptians withstand the efforts of the Persians to reconquer them.
- 363 Tachos, neglecting the advice of Agesilaus, King of Sparta, who comes to succour him, is defeated; whereupon the Egyptians, irritated at his defeat, dethrone him.
- 361 Nectanebis, the leader of the rebels, seizes the crown; but soon after, the Egyptians revolt, and imprison him in a town, whence he is delivered to Agesilaus.
- 350 The Persians again subject Egypt, and it remains in their hands till
332 when it is conquered by Alexander the Great.



Scarab seal design. British Museum 3681

LECTURE NOTES



Blue glazed hippo. Tomb of Senbi, Meir. Metropolitan Museum of Art, NY

BY STUART WIER

ESS Meeting November 1993

No lecture was presented at this meeting. Instead, after the general meeting with committee reports, members of the ESS study groups made presentations to encourage other members to expand their participation in the organization. Study groups are open to all members of the ESS with no requirements. Each group sets its own activities and meets at a location and time determined by its members. Study group activities include the following:

Hieroglyphs: Just starting up.

Art: The group is "currently stuck in the New Kingdom." They started in Pre-Dynastic times, and recently completed a tour of the Amarna period. Their current project is a reconstruction of an ancient Egyptian wall painting, using the proper techniques, and showing each step in the process in different parts of the wall.

Pyramids: This study group has five to ten members. In the past three years they have made two trips to Egypt and examined some 30 pyramids or significant ruins of pyramids. They presented the two-day *Pyramid Symposium* at the DMNH last May. Future plans are uncertain. They may plan a visit to European museums with Egyptian collections. "Anyone is welcome - even if you have only read the *Little Golden Book of Pyramids*."

Archeology and the Biblical Record: This is a fairly new group, having started in March, 1993. It offers a different approach to archeology, combining the scholarly (what is determined from scientific procedures) and the Biblical record. The recent article in *KMT* on the date of the Exodus is cited as an excellent example of work using both approaches. It was noted that "Pharaoh" is referred to over 270 times in the Bible, and there are over 600 references to Egypt in the Bible.

Mummy Group: The report on this group went something like this: Despite the name, there are no mummies in this group. They have made studies of mummies, but they are doing a lot of lively things and are not always dead serious. Their present undertaking is a reconstruction of an ancient Egyptian mummiform coffin in the DMNH collection. But there is no dead wood in the Mummy group. They are going to use as many authentic materials and techniques as possible, even to the extent of making copper tools. There was also a plan to mummify something to put in the coffin, but volunteerism is not what it used to be. Also in progress is a catalog of all mummies in U.S. museums; good response was received from every single museum queried (except the seemingly moribund Denver Art Museum). This group always tries to have fun, morgue or less. Recent *scholarly* activities included an examination of the cinematic record entitled *Abbott and Costello Meet the Mummy* and a murder mystery party. Participants in the party are sworn not to reveal the results, presumably on pain of death. Future activities should make even a mummy sit up and take notice.

Proposed study groups and current volunteer activities include the following:

Mythology Study Group: To study regional and national gods, rituals, and tales of ancient Egypt.

Docent Program: Last summer several members were weekend docents in the Egyptian exhibit at the DMNH, with four-hour shifts for two persons. It was lots of fun and very satisfying since the room was often filled with interested visitors. This program will be reactivated soon, and training is provided for anyone interested. Time commitments are flexible and changes are made to suit participants' needs.

Cataloging Museum artifacts: ESS members have been cataloging the Museum's Egyptian artifacts which have been in storage for a number of years. We hope they will soon go on display.

Serving on committees offers other opportunities for members to get involved. The following ESS committees and positions exist in the ESS: Finance, Hospitality, Programs, Study Groups, Trips, Membership, Ways and Means (fundraising), Marketing and Publicity, Keeper of the Scrolls (ESS archives), Publications (*THE OSTRACON & The Scribes' Palette*)

Get more out of the ESS -- GET INVOLVED!



HERODOTUS: THE FIRST "EXPERT" ON ANCIENT EGYPT

Presented by Dr. J. Donald Hughes

ESS Meeting, January 1994

"No country in the world possesses so many wonders."

The January speaker was Dr. Don Hughes, Professor of Ancient History at the University of Denver, ESS member, and source of several popular past programs for the ESS. Hughes has traveled throughout Egypt, is planning to guide a DMNH trip to Italy in the near future, and has recently published *PAN'S TRAVAIL, ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS OF THE GREEKS AND ROMANS* (Johns Hopkins University Press).

Hughes' presentation was an overview of the writings by Herodotus about Egypt. Herodotus was a Greek who visited Egypt around 440 BCE. He lived during the height of classical Greek civilization; the Persians were defeated in Greece in 479 BCE, and Socrates died in 399 BCE. Herodotus' entire *HISTORY* is his account of the wars of ancient Persia against the Greeks. This was a critical episode in the history of ancient Greece -- indeed of all Western civilization -- and Herodotus wrote "to preserve the great deeds of the Greeks and barbarians." (The Greek word barbarian means foreigner as much as it means uncivilized.) Herodotus traveled throughout much of the known world of his day, or at least the parts which had any influence on the Greeks. The Greeks supported a rebellion against Persian rule in Egypt which did not end until 449 BCE.

Herodotus traveled extensively in Egypt, talked to commoners and priests, and visited temples and monuments which are now only sad ruins or which, like the Labyrinth at the Faiyum, have vanished utterly. He was interested in other peoples and respected them -- and he loved a good story!

The writings of Herodotus were virtually the only information about ancient Egypt known to the world until the translation of ancient Egyptian writings began in the early 19th century when Champollion broke the code. Herodotus is regarded as the "Father of History," that is, the father of historical writing in the sense that we think of it. In his delight with fascinating local information, he sometimes erred by trusting others too much. He did sometimes remark "but I didn't really believe it," but the stories were just too good to leave out. He also said, "I trust the eyes", which any

good investigator would approve. His *HISTORY* rests largely on his own observations and the accounts of persons who lived in the places he visited. Unfortunately, some of that was hearsay or the sort of thing one hears from tour guides today. He observed the inscribed monuments but, of course, could not read them. There are nine books of Herodotus, and Book Two and part of Book Three pertain to Egypt. The first part of Book Two is a geographical account, next is a review of manners and customs, and then a historical outline.

In Egypt, Herodotus traveled from the Delta to Elephantine, visiting Memphis, the Pyramids, Heliopolis, the Faiyum, Thebes, and several other important locations and cities. He was there in flood season, reaching some normally dry sites by boat. Herodotus' descriptions of the geography of Egypt are largely correct, and he speculated about the causes of things such as the gradual filling of the Nile Valley with deposits of rich soil. That is why Herodotus called Egypt the "gift of the Nile," a phrase so apt that it is still in use. Herodotus also guessed about the origins of the Nile itself, and of the Nile flood which begins in midsummer, the opposite of other rivers, he noted. He dismissed melting snow, the true reason, since snow farther south than Upper Egypt seemed preposterous. There is evidence from Herodotus that some Greeks had seen the Niger, which was confused with the source of the Nile.

Herodotus' observations of manners and social customs are an amusing mix of things we now know to be true of ancient times from other evidence, the ridiculous (they sleep in towers to avoid gnats, but eat in the streets), and the puzzling. He found that Egypt was a land surpassing all others in wonders. The people were excessively religious and prone to be healthy. What can we make of some of his claims about which we are unsure today? Men let their beards grow to show mourning, unless their cat died, and then they shaved their eyebrows! Can that be? But he was right to report that cats and many other animals were mummified.

Herodotus stated that for each god of the Greeks, there was a corresponding Egyptian god; in fact, he said, "almost all the gods' names came to Greece from Egypt." There is some sense he felt the Greeks got their gods from Egypt. He equated Dionysus with Osiris, Demeter with Isis, Artemis with Bastet, Pan with Mendes, Heracles with Bes, Zeus with Amen-Re, and so on. Herodotus recounted many religious practices. All wild animals were sacred, especially the ibis and hawk. The penalty for killing a sacred animal was death. The Phoenix was said not to be just a bird of legend, but really came to Heliopolis every 500 years, where it

immolated itself and was reborn from the ashes. Persons eaten by crocodiles or drowned in the Nile were regarded as divine. We know this is true since some small temples, such as the Temple of Dendura at the New York Metropolitan Museum of Art, are dedicated to those who achieved divinity by drowning in the Nile.

Herodotus gave an extensive account of the history of Egypt, piecing it together as well as he could from what he heard. Some of it is instantly recognizable to students of ancient Egypt. Some information is ambiguous but perhaps associated with real persons and events, and some passages are merely pleasant stories, sometimes paralleled in other cultures.

His information is partly based on sources at the Temple of Ptah in Memphis, Egyptian Het-Ka-Ptah, now only a few stones, but a center of Egyptian life for millennia. The priests claimed there had been, up to that date, 331 monarchs, including 18 Ethiopians and one woman, thus emphasizing the longevity of Egyptian culture. Some of the accounts of the pharaohs suggest tantalizing possibilities for which there is no other evidence. Did Moeris (Amenemhet III) build pyramids in Lake Moeris? Did Sesostris (Senwosret III) conquer Scythia, or leave colonists far to the north in Colchis on the Black Sea, where Greeks later found the Golden Fleece? Were there 12 kings in the Third Intermediate Period? Did sailors of Nechos (Necho II) sail all the way around Africa? What remains of his canal from the Nile to the Red Sea -- a vision that was to take 2,500 years to come to fulfillment? Some of the information from the times closer to Herodotus' is from Greek sources and is quite correct.

Herodotus visited the Giza Pyramids and said he measured them. Those of us in the ESS are familiar with his account of how they were built. He does not mention the Sphinx. For me, one of the most fascinating places described by Herodotus is the Labyrinth. This vast structure, near Lake Moeris, was comprised of 3,000 rooms and 12 courts, tombs of kings, and over 1,000 underground chambers. The walls were covered with figures. All that remains of this extraordinary construction, what must have been a beautiful and amazing edifice, is the rubble of mudbrick walls, at least as far as we know.

There are several translations of Herodotus in print. Dr. Hughes recommends this commentary as you read: "Don't expect a straightforward narrative. Remember, he loved a good story, and the thread of the argument can be lost for several pages while we find out what happened to the clever thief who three times outwitted Pharaoh Rhampsinitus."



MATHEMATICAL MODELS OF PYRAMID BUILDING

Presented by James Lowdermilk

ESS Meeting, February 1994

The masonry pyramids of Egypt invariably strike the visitor with wonder and amazement, no matter what is known about them beforehand. In an attempt to come to terms with the size of these edifices, some newcomers turn to numbers. Napoleon himself stood before the Great Pyramid and computed its volume, finding it contained enough material to build a decent-sized wall all the way around France. Numbers continue to lure the modern visitor, and as James Lowdermilk showed, numbers still can provide insight about these most ancient and most unique structures. Lowdermilk is currently completing work for a Masters degree in mathematics from the University of Montana, and his thesis was the topic for this lecture. Lowdermilk (son of ESS members, Bob and Ann Lowdermilk) has traveled to Egypt with the ESS Pyramid Study Group more than once to examine all the remaining pyramids. He is remembered, among other things, for using his rock-climbing ability to reach the entrance of Snofru's Bent Pyramid, which still retains its smooth casing stones.

Lowdermilk concentrated his mathematical investigations on the Great Pyramid of Giza. In its original condition it was 481 feet high and 756 feet on each of the four sides of the base. The exterior shows some 211 horizontal layers of blocks. It was, of course, constructed by King Khufu during his 23 year reign just before 2500 BCE.

If Napoleon did his sums correctly, he found that the Great Pyramid's volume comes out to a nice round figure -- very close to two and a half million cubic meters. When you realize that a cubic meter of limestone weighs between 2½ and 3 tons, you comprehend that this was a tremendous undertaking, especially when assembled by human power alone. For most of us, numbers are just another way to express the inexpressible: the feeling of vast size which the pyramids create. With or without calculations, all visitors must ask themselves "How did they do that?"

Unfortunately, even investigators who have given a great deal of thought to the construction of the Great Pyramid

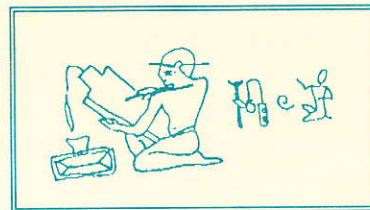
have not often gone much beyond the simple calculations of volume and mass. Jim Lowdermilk has shown that essential insights about construction of the pyramids can be determined simply from what is known about size, shape, mass, and the time available for construction. These insights do not answer all questions about pyramid construction, but they do provide valuable constraints for other questions, such as determining what lifting mechanisms might have been up to the job of pyramid construction.

I will not attempt to duplicate the detailed findings presented by Lowdermilk; those who are interested will doubtless turn to his thesis. Estimating the amount of useful work a man can do in a day and assuming that blocks were brought to the site by dragging on wooden sleds with a friction coefficient of 0.66, Lowdermilk found that the first layer of the pyramid could be made in 35 days, and that the entire structure could be completed in 2,300 days. This is possible, in his calculations, only if ramps were not used to raise the blocks up the pyramid -- they demand too much energy. Both straight-in ramps and spiral ramps are too demanding of energy with the amount of friction Lowdermilk postulated. Rather he proposed the use of the lifting machines described by Bob Lowdermilk (*Herodotus' Pyramid Machine Reinvented*, *KMT*, Vol. 2 No. 4, Winter 1991-1992). Lowdermilk determined that 90 such machines were needed on each of the four sides at the beginning of construction; as the pyramid rose, the number of vertical lifting paths decreased since the space along the top edge decreased. This is fine since the number of blocks needed for each layer also lessened. Given the assembly method proposed, Lowdermilk found that the maximum need for manpower was 16,000 men when the pyramid reached about level 108, about 250 feet up.

Sometimes -- all too rarely -- a scientific or engineering investigation proves to have a remarkable property which permits some kind of a solution even when no solution appears possible. What happens is that a way is found to circumvent missing information, and almost magically, important conclusions can be reached. Jim Lowdermilk's investigation of the Great Pyramid is one example. Previous investigators have concentrated on the difficult problem of what technique was used to raise the stone blocks to build the pyramid -- a problem which cannot be solved for certain unless appropriate records from the Old Kingdom are found. By concentrating on the pyramid's size, mass, shape, and the time used for construction, and making simple assumptions of friction and the work a man can do in a day, Jim Lowdermilk has shown that

important conclusions about rate of construction and manpower requirements can be made regardless of methods of construction. This is important work, and it shows that groups such as the ESS can make interesting contributions to the study of ancient Egypt.

HOUSE OF SCROLLS



MUSEUM REVIEWS

ANCIENT EGYPTIAN COLLECTIONS IN THE MUSEUMS OF BRITAIN

by David Pepper

Significant collections of Egyptian antiquities are found at the British Museum in London and at several universities and colleges located across the British Isles. I visited five of these collections during my recent trip to England, and each one is described below. The museums acquired most of these antiquities either as a result of archeological exploration or from bequests by private collectors.

British Museum, London: One of the main tourist attractions in central London, the British Museum on Great Russell Street in the Bloomsbury district, has many very important items on display. These include the Rosetta Stone, the Rhind Mathematical Papyrus, and part of the beard of the Sphinx at Giza. The collection is housed in about a dozen large rooms, displaying Pre-Dynastic, Old, Middle, and New Kingdom artifacts and items from the Late Period through Ptolemaic and early Christian times.

Entering the Egyptian section on the ground floor, the first object to see is the famous Rosetta Stone. Surrendered by the French after the capitulation of Alexandria in 1801, this object proved to be the key in the decipherment of ancient Egyptian hieroglyphic writing.

Spring 1994

Past the Rosetta Stone is a long gallery filled with large statuary, many of which were also the spoils of the war at Alexandria. The sculpture gallery is arranged in chronological order and contains an excellent collection of Old, Middle, and New Kingdom statues. Also arranged chronologically, the adjoining side rooms contain smaller items, frescoes, and objects of funerary art.

Upstairs, on the first floor, the collection continues with a half-dozen more rooms filled with antiquities. The displays are grouped thematically with two rooms dedicated to mummies and sarcophagi, a room displaying papyrus documents and ostraca writings, a room containing funerary objects, a room of items used in daily life, another filled with weapons of war, and a newly-opened room of Pre-Dynastic artifacts.

Petrie Museum, University College London: Although a little difficult to locate, this museum above the University College Library contains an excellent collection of pottery, jewelry, and small objects. These were mostly collected by Sir Flinders Petrie, his colleagues, and successors from 1884 to the present day.

Many items came from the various cemeteries excavated by the archeologists of University College. As research material, they tell a lot about the daily events in the lives of the people of ancient Egypt. Numerous cemeteries span many centuries of ancient Egyptian history; so a few feet from Pre-Dynastic discoveries, lay Old, Middle, and New Kingdom artifacts.

One of my favorite items in this collection is a pottery mouse trap that was broken and tossed into a rubbish heap. A modern reconstruction next to the smashed original shows us just how ingenious and resourceful the ancient Egyptians were. Also on display are well-preserved tomb stelae and frescoes, two monumental First Dynasty stone lions, and two Fifth Dynasty linen garments in excellent condition.

This museum, not often visited, is only a ten minute walk north of the British Museum.

Ashmolean Museum, Oxford University: The first Egyptian object was put on display at the Ashmolean Museum in 1683. The Egyptian collection resides in four large rooms, three of which bear the names of scholars who made special contributions to the Ashmolean: the famous archeologist Sir Flinders Petrie; Francis Llewellyn Griffith, the first professor of Egyptology at Oxford; and the Reverend Greville J. Chester, who

encouraged both of the former Egyptologists in their early careers.

The Petrie room exhibits artifacts from the scholar's 44 years of digging at 59 sites in Egypt, including Tell el Amarna, and Naqada. The Griffith room contains objects from several sites in Nubia, and the large shrine of Taharqa is the centerpiece of the room.

The Ashmolean has an excellent collection of well-preserved objects, and it surely merits the two-hour drive west from London.

Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge University: Like the Ashmolean Museum, the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge has several rooms organized by time period. The museum displays objects from the duration of Egyptian history, and it has particularly good displays of small objects from the Old and Middle Kingdoms.

There are sarcophagi from several burials, and the museum has a particularly good display from a Middle Kingdom burial complete with funerary boats and coffins. Several of the Old Kingdom stelae were particularly interesting, as was the ushabti box (like the one at the Denver Museum of Natural History) filled with 172 pottery figures, which were supervised by another 18 "overseer" ushabtis!

While many of the museum's artifacts came from Abydos, the museum has objects from an assortment of times and locales of ancient Egypt. It is also well worth the two-hour drive north from London.

Manchester Museum, Manchester University: An excellent collection of artifacts for everyday use from the Middle Kingdom towns of Kahun and Gurob were donated by the Manchester textile merchant, Jesse Haworth, in 1890. These artifacts were excavated by Sir William Flinders Petrie, under the subscription of the Egypt Exploration Fund, which was founded and run by Miss Amelia B. Edwards.

The Museum's Egyptian collection is housed in two large galleries. One contains several hundred artifacts from Kahun. The other deals with the Manchester Mummy Research Project, and a selection of mummies are displayed. Some of these have been unwrapped, while others have been left wrapped and CAT scanned. Facial reconstructions have been attempted, and two of the most interesting are of the Two Brothers of Rifeh. The museum has a fantastic display of objects from the intact

tomb of these two brothers who lived during the Middle Kingdom. The artifacts from their burial includes their bodies, coffins, and funerary furniture.

Another item of interest is a pectoral ornament found clutched in the hand of a tomb robber. The robber was found lying on top of a mummy which he was plundering; he had been killed when the roof caved-in during the robbery attempt.

Also exhibited are materials from the site of Tell el-Amarna. Manchester has some of the most important collections from this site, including glazed inlays and decorations from the royal palace and the king's gold seal ring. Manchester is a four-hour drive northwest of London, but the quality of the objects in its museum makes the visit very rewarding.

While these five museums contain the largest collections of Egyptian antiquities in Britain, there are still 14 other museums which also have substantial collections. The cities of Durham, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Liverpool, and others are listed as having major collections of ancient Egyptian artifacts. When planning a trip to Great Britain, be sure to include some of these impressive Egyptian galleries in your itinerary.

There are also significant displays closer to home: in Chicago, Boston, New York, San Francisco, et cetera. So take a camera, take notes, and take the time to enjoy these wonderful objects that are the magnificent legacy of ancient Egypt.....and report back to *THE OSTRACON!!*

THE DENVER MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

2001 Colorado Blvd.
Denver, CO 80205



EGYPTIAN
STUDY
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