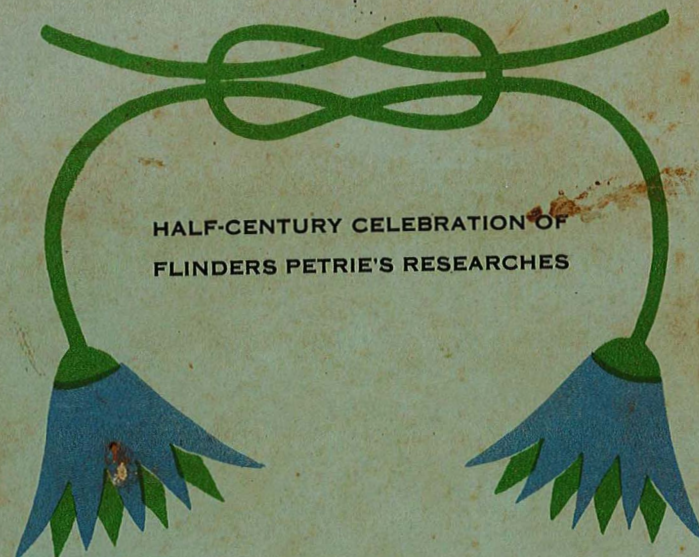


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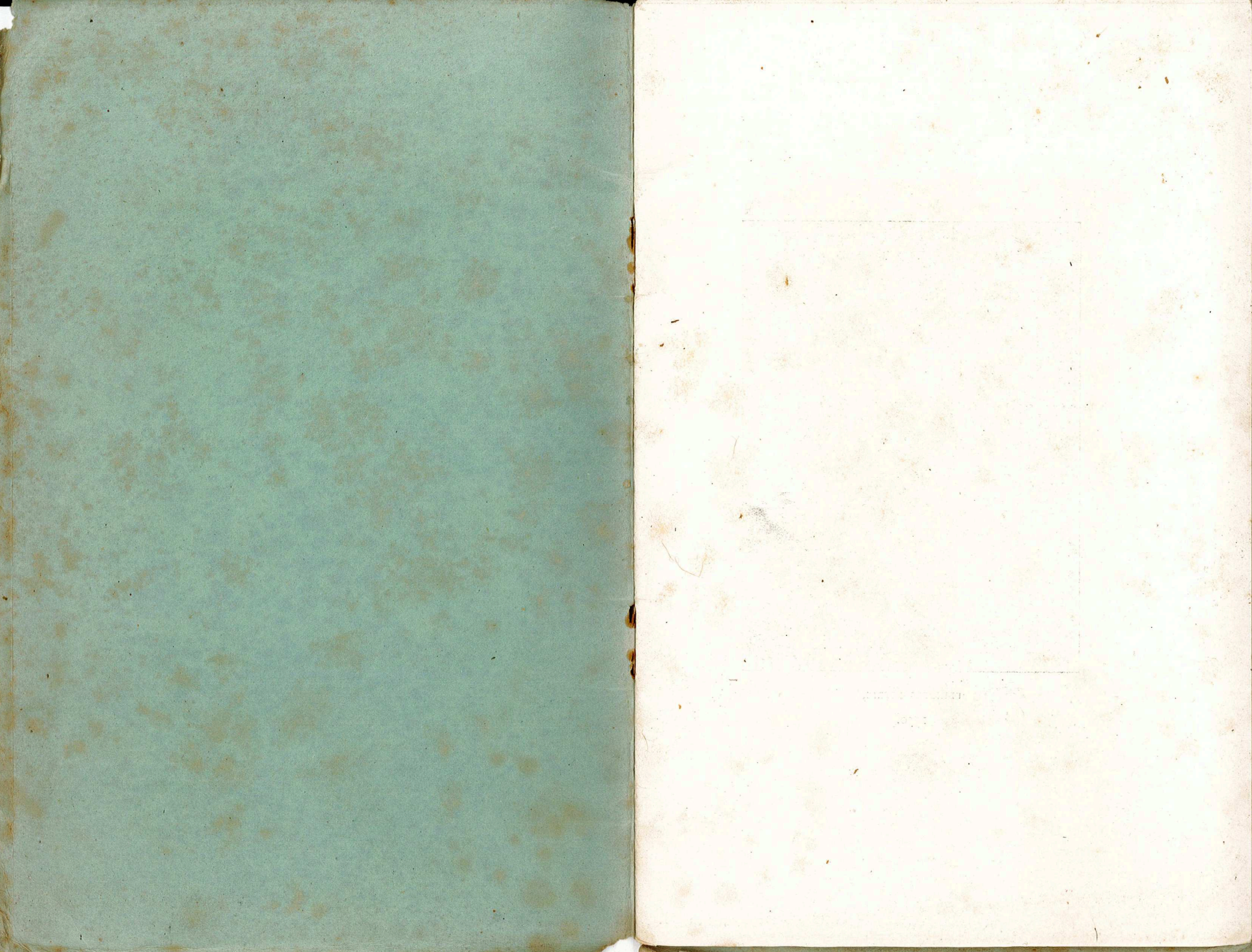
A VISION OF THE AGES

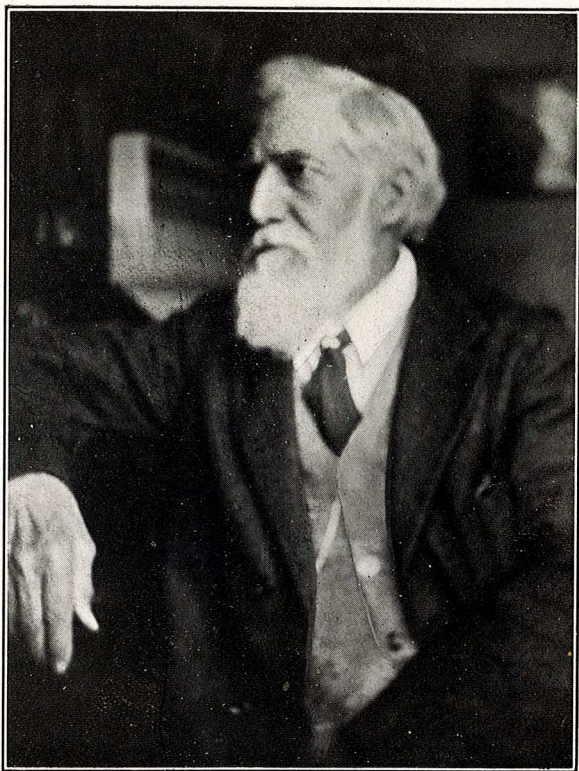
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A VISION OF THE AGES

FLINDERS PETRIE

Flinders Petrie

THE BRITISH SCHOOL OF
ARCHAEOLOGY IN EGYPT,
UNIVERSITY COLLEGE,
GOWER STREET, LONDON.

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

	PAGE
Flinders Petrie, 1930	<i>Frontispiece.</i>
Badarian desert, Upper Egypt	<i>facing</i> 1
Boat with cabins, painted on prehistoric vase. Univ. Coll.	3
Khufu (Cheops). Ivory statuette	4
Pepy I. Copper statue	7
Pectoral from treasure of Lahun	8
Uraeus, part of the royal insignia	8
Watch tower of the Hyksos, Beth-pelet	11
Painted pavement of Tell el Amarna	12
Two little princesses, daughters of Akhenaten	15
Reconstruction of fortress at Tahpanhes	16
The evolution of the Pyramid	20

The illustrations are all taken from Flinders Petrie's discoveries, in various researches.

Thanks are due to Dr. Robert Mond for generous help; to the Amalgamated Press for supplying five blocks reproduced here; to S.P.C.K.; to Messrs. Duckworth; and to Mrs. Newberry.

Also to Miss Olga Tufnell, for photographs, and for undertaking all the preparation for press.



From the high desert to the low. The Nile is seen on the horizon. Badarian man lived on this plain, and hunted on the plateau which extends without a break to the Red Sea. The settlements were first discovered near Qau, in the district of Badari, Upper Egypt. It is only recently that this earliest culture has been recognised.

A Vision of the Ages

I. BADARIAN. About 8000 B.C. ?

THE long valley of the Nile lay waste ; crocodiles and hippopotami wandered through the papyrus marshes, and man hardly claimed a footing. Then there pushed in from Asia a people versed in arts of manufacture, but clad in skins rather than linen. Their pottery was most skilfully designed, and fashioned with a smoothness and thinness never surpassed in later ages. They attacked the elephant and the hippopotamus, for ivory to carve into vessels. They knew how to shape stone beads and cover them with fine glaze. Their modelling of statuettes was of three types and showed that there were two races of invaders, over and above the aboriginal nomads who resembled Hottentots. They cultivated corn and stored it. Probably they brought in the worship of the corn-god Osiris, and framed the spells which preserved the memory of the lakes of fire and luxuriant fertility which they had left behind them in the Caucasus.

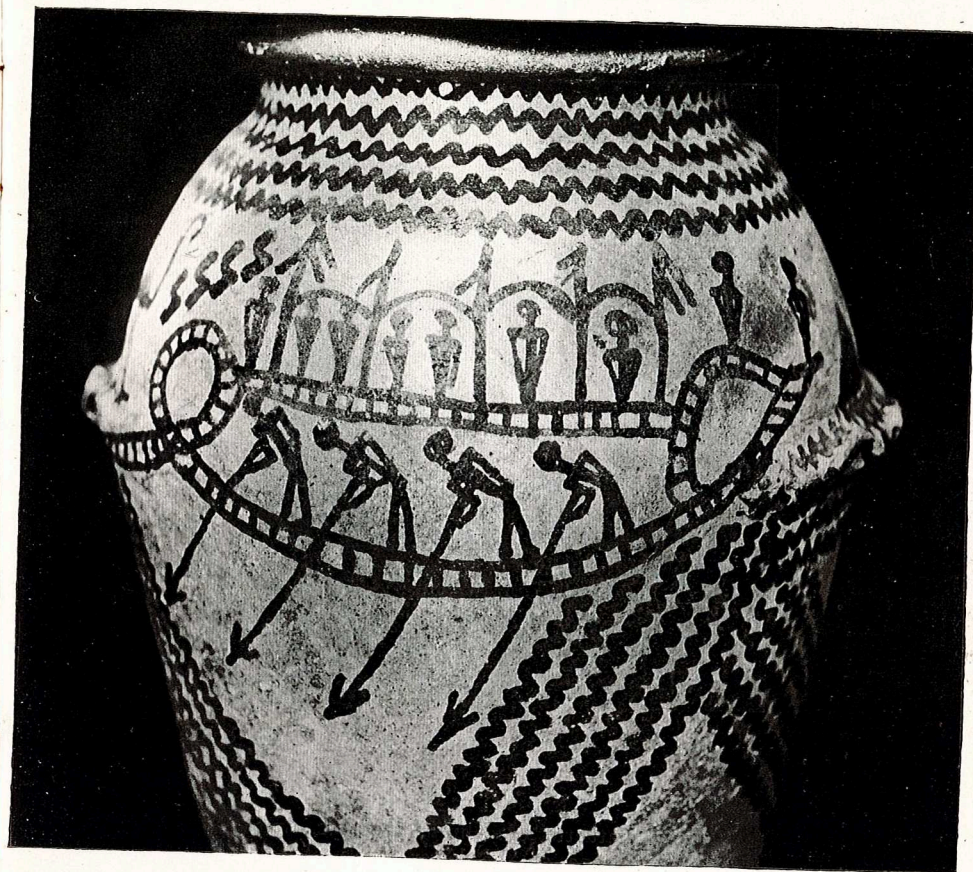
No doubt they were well content to reach so tranquil a goal and little imagined the riches and pomp of all those who would come after them. Like other peoples, they gradually dropped their best work, and in the new land they drifted downward in ease and peaceful leisure. Centuries passed, but they still kept to the notions of life which they had brought with them ; no new motives stirred their pulses and they slipped into inferior ways, until some more insisitive race should mingle with them and show them a new vista of life.

2. PREHISTORIC. About 6500—4500 B.C. ?

NOW the scene changes, the Westerners pour in. They pick up much of the decayed culture which they find in Egypt, and put new ideas and new spirit into it. Shipping plays a large part in their lives; vessels with cabins on them, and long rows of oars, carried their trafficking from port to port. They made much linen, and skins were little used. The finest skill was given to carving vases of the hardest stones; the desert was searched for the most beautiful rocks, which were wrought by hand into perfect forms. Gold, silver and copper were all in use for personal objects. The country was well explored, and the civilisation was alike in all parts; there was unanimity in the life which enabled a free interchange, and varied levels of wealth under a unified rule.

After some centuries of western influence, an eastern civilisation came in. Commerce grew wider, and larger shipping was used. Weights and balances came into use and much more copper for tools on a larger scale; lazuli was brought in from Persia. Anklets and bracelets of coloured beads or gold, long white linen skirts and face veils were used by women. Wigs were worn over shaved heads.

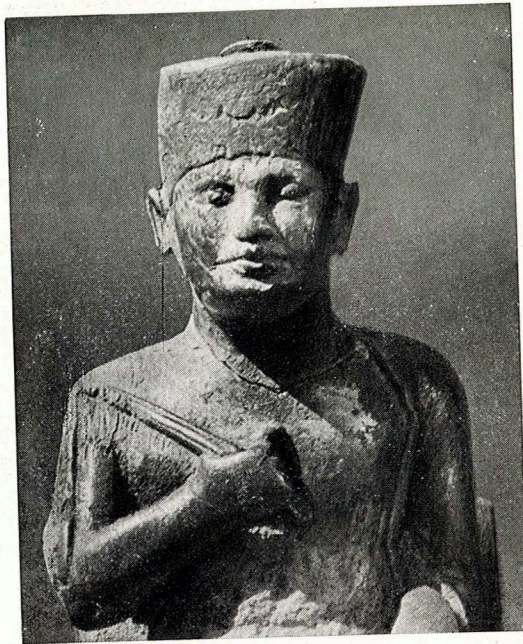
A serious change of civilisation came with the conquest by a seafaring people sailing up the Red Sea from the Persian Gulf, and bringing much of the early art of Iraq and Persia. They were depicted as black in contrast to the red of the Egyptians; their ships were of a new form. They picked up much of the style which they found in Egypt, and they finally united the country under one continuous rule.



Handmade pottery of decorated ware, Gerzean period, prehistoric. This buff pot is painted in red with a galley of unique design, plied by rowers; in the cabins above, passengers are seen.

3. IVTH DYNASTY

3800—3500 B.C.



The ivory statuette of Khufu, 3700 B.C., was discovered in one of the lower levels of ten stratified temples at Abydos. The seated figure was headless, until three weeks' sifting recovered the tiny head; it is enlarged here to four times the actual size. The side of the throne was inscribed with the name of Khufu, and it is the only portrait known.

AFTER the turmoil of five fresh civilisations had been poured into the land, Egypt attained at last its grandest age, that of the Pyramid builders. These pyramids, though surpassing the labours of any other age, are but a symbol of the mastery which Egypt attained in the powers of the mind. The sculpture of the period has the highest qualities of truth of expression; the views of life and conduct would do honour to any country now. The engineering work has not been paralleled till modern times.

The master mind that gave effect to all these great changes was that of Khufu—the king who could imagine and bring to perfection all this organization, who could frame the whole government of the country on the pattern that lasted for ages. He suppressed the priestly domination, and for sacrifice used little twists of clay instead of living animals. His face showed a terrible driving power, most like that of the great Justinian.

Egypt at this time grew the beginnings of literature, in the merry tales of the fat old magician Dedi, of the finding of the lost jewel in the lake, of the goddesses hiding the crowns which gave out sweet music. The nobles copied the grandeur of the kings, and built splendid tombs covered with sculptures which show the life and work of the people, recorded exquisitely in a style unrivalled in any later age.

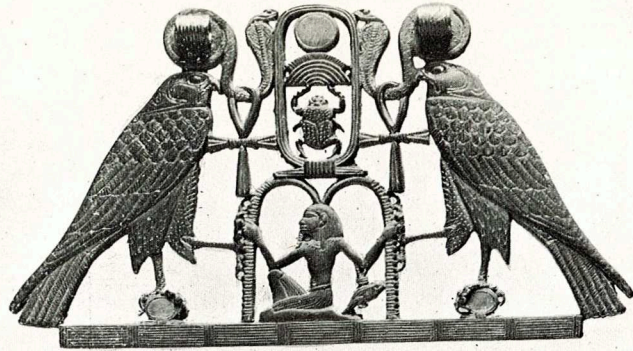
A diagram and note on the Great Pyramid will be found on pp. 20 and 21.

4. VITH DYNASTY, 3300—3100 B.C.

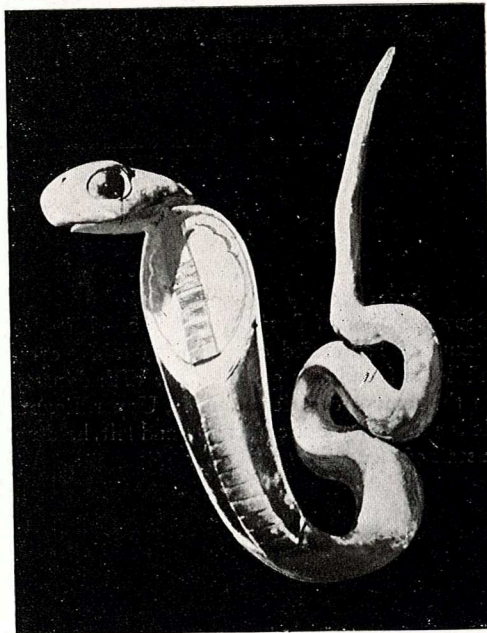
ALL the pomp of the pyramids faded; the later kings could not equal their great predecessors. Egypt expanded in foreign lands: on the north she fought the cities of southern Syria; on the south, searched the shore of the Nile far into the Sudan, and brought strange marvels from them; among these was one of the pygmy folk causing amazement to Pepy II, a child-king who had come to the throne at five years old. This little dwarf was the subject of a correspondence between the royal child and Herkhuf, a governor of the south, whom he commissioned to convey the dwarf to him, together with all the tribute he had collected. This dwarf, a *Deng*, was "a dancer of God (performing some remarkable religious dance ?) in the Land of Spirits, all his work being very excellent; therefore his majesty orders that when the Deng goes with Herkhuf, attendants shall watch him that he fall not in the water and shall sleep with him that he run not away, for his majesty loves to see this Deng more than all other tribute. And if Herkhuf keeps him safe and sound, he shall be . . . honoured . . . and all provisions and necessities are to be furnished for him on the journey to the court." Pepy lived for a century, and Egypt fell into decay in the lethargy of such a torpid reign. Syrian guards were recruited, and they saw that the land was good and the people luxurious. The end came inevitably when the Syrians flocked in and ruled the land for two or three centuries. Thus fell the Old Kingdom in Egypt.



Pepy^{II}, father of Pepy II, 3200 B.C. Life-size statue of hammered copper, with inlaid eyes. This was found in a group of the VIth dynasty in the temple of Hierakonpolis, Upper Egypt. It is a standing figure in crown and kilt, holding a staff of office.



Gold pectoral of Senusert II, 2400 B.C. It is perhaps the finest known example of Egyptian inlay, with 372 cut stones of turquoise, lazuli and carnelian.



Massive gold uraeus of Senusert II. The head was of lazuli and the eyes of garnet; the hood was inlaid with lazuli and turquoise. It had been left by plunderers in a dusty passage down in the brick pyramid of Senusert at Lahun. When found, it was the only piece of regalia known.

5. XIITH DYNASTY, 2500—2300 B.C.

THE Syrians had swept into Egypt and held it, and then the Libyans had pressed in from the west. After all this turmoil, it was a Nubian family, settled in the south, that regenerated the civilisation. Marrying into the old stock, they established the brilliant XIIth dynasty. The exquisite accuracy of the stone work and the bold conception of the monuments marked the greatness of the age. The refined splendour of the jewellery is shown in the Treasure of Lahun, to which the pectoral belongs. The Princess who owned this also had, in the provision for her future life, a great magic jar of alabaster, which would provide her with whatever she might desire from the earth or from the water. It was inscribed with the declaration "This is the begetter of all things living and there comes forth from it everything on which thou livest."

In this period literature was much expanded, tales of adventure and foreign lands were tempered by pessimism at the sight of the spoiled memorials of the past. Poetry was spaced in regularly balanced phrases. In every direction, art gained regulation and refinement, by yielding some of its force and vitality. It was a delightful age of tranquillity in Egypt—that peace which men think will last for ever, while it is being sapped by their own luxury. A long reign gave the usual opportunity for decay, and in a couple of centuries all was lost.

6. THE HYKSOS, 2300—1600 B.C.

THE Syrians again pushed into Egypt—the Shepherd Kings, called the Hyksos. These fierce nomads of Central Asia had swept across from the east and through Syria, without any arts of their own. They adopted what they found as they went along, and used indifferently the fine wares of Syria or of Egypt, of Cyprus or of Crète, as the Turks did in later ages. Yet, like many other fierce folk, they acquired the competence of those whom they over-ran, and the spread of knowledge appears in the treatises on mathematics and on medicine written in their age. Their civilisation was not a true growth, but only a parasitic acquirement, which decayed away. Their productions became poorer, and less fertile in result.

It was during the Hyksos rule that Abraham—another nomad prince—went down into Egypt. The hatred of the usurpers is reflected in Genesis. "For every shepherd is an abomination unto the Egyptians"; Egypt was bitterly irked by their dominance. At last an active Berber family in the South founded again a great kingdom, which drove the Hyksos back into Syria once more.



Beth-pelet, S. Palestine, Hyksos stronghold. A brick bastion on the south-west corner of the town, overlooking the Wady Ghuzzeh, where Abraham once fed his flocks. Beersheba lies in a hollow on the far distant wilderness.

Beth-pelet is now known as Tell Fara. Both this mound and Tell Jemmeh (Gerar) were positions of importance in Allenby's campaign, and the School of Egyptian Archaeology is continuing excavations on both sites.

7. XVIIITH DYNASTY

1600—1300 B.C.



Details from the painted pavement in Akhenaten's palace. They show a new art—that of animal life in rapid movement, and waving vegetation.

THE victorious XVIIIth dynasty came into being with Aahmes, a worthy descendant of the fair Libyans and the black queen and swarthy monarch who had given spirit to the Egyptian resistance. He thrust the Hyksos out of the land, and within a generation the Egyptians swept through all Syria and stood triumphant on the great river of the north—the Euphrates. Syria was no longer to be an enemy but a subject. The fresher air of the mountains put new energy into the Egyptians. No longer did they feel that the Nile was the sum of life; the Lebanon, the Orontes, the glorious variety of Crete, were looked on as the flower of existence. The plains of Palestine were laid low and gave tribute, to feed the host of captives who were brought into Egypt for the vast building of temples and palaces. The Egyptians feasted on “the grain, maize, oil, wine and fruit, all the good things of that country.” Within a century, luxury weakened power and the control of Syria declined.

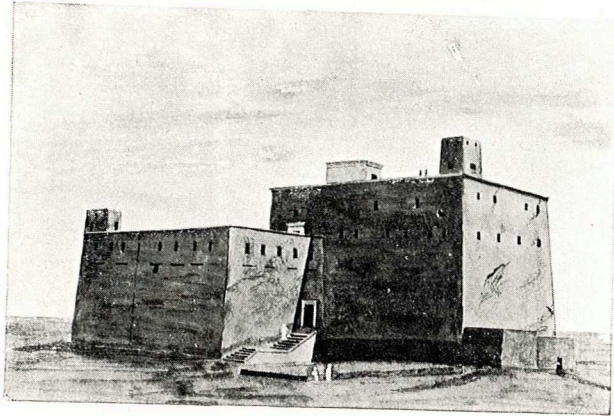
8. XVIIITH DYNASTY

THE Syrian influence on Egypt led to the great monotheist revolution of Nature worship, the adoration of the Sun, which later captivated Rome. The idealist Akhen-aten thought ethically; belief was everything to him, and nought else weighed against "living in truth." Syria revolted, it made no difference to his truth; his allies all perished, but his devotion to the Sun prevailed.

The strangest flower of all this civilisation was the new capital. The palaces and temple glittered with brilliant colours let into the white walls, the people wore muslin dress spangled with bright blue amulets, the rooms were painted gaily with green papyrus groves and vivacious court groups; the king was portrayed "in the truth," eating meat off a joint, or kissing the queen in his chariot, or dancing her on his knee; the populace made merry under the palace windows as largesse was showered on them. It was a gladsome world of ignoring the stern realities of life. Ten years of it brought Egypt to the dust. It took a generation of struggles and endeavour to grasp the helm of state once more.



Part of a wall-painting, 1370 B.C., from the palace of Akhenaten at Tell El Amarna; it is now in the Ashmolean Museum. Two little princesses, his daughters, are seated on cushions at the feet of the Queen. The train of her robe forms the background. The shape of their heads may be due to abnormal growth or to a strange style of hairdressing.



Reconstruction of the fortress of Daphnae, built by Psammetikhos for his Greek mercenaries. It is mentioned in the Old Testament as Tahpanhes, the refuge to which Jeremiah brought the exiled princesses from Jerusalem. The Lord bade Jeremiah: "Take great stones in thine hand, and hide them in the clay of the pavement which is at the entry of Pharaoh's house in Tahpanhes. . . ." The brick pavement at the entry remains there to this day.

9. XXVITH DYNASTY 650 B.C.—500 B.C.

EGYPT was again in the misery of decay. In the Delta a dozen kinglets wrestled for scraps of territory. They were organized in a feudal system as in the Middle Ages. They had a united worship in the great temple of Ptah the Creator at Memphis, where an old prophecy foretold that whoever made a libation from a brazen bowl should be supreme. The twelve kings, all helmeted, came to sacrifice—Pedubast of Tanis, Pedukhonsu of Mendes, Ka-amen-hotep of Sebennyto, Psamtek of Sais, Pekrur of Pasopd, Pedukhonsu of Athribis; also Onkh-hor of Nesut-henen, Tafnekht of Bubastis, Pramooone of Pimonkhrê, Eierhoreru of Busiris, Uerhue of Mer-atum, and Pimay of Heliopolis.

The high priest brought them out the golden bowls, but one was missing. Psamtek, however, took off his helmet and proffered it for the libation. *That* was the bronze bowl and the prophecy was fulfilled. Jealousy banished him. During his long exile he fell in with pirates, brazen-armed, and led them. Here were the "brazen men from the sea"—the prophesied conquerors—and, with their aid, he overcame all other rule and inaugurated the last great age of Egypt.

10. PTOLEMAIC PERIOD

300 B.C.—30 B.C.

FINALLY, one more figure emerges—that of the flower of the Macedonian rulers, who had imbibed the old spirit of Egyptian royalty. In that land, as the women of Ashanti now say, “it is the daughter of a queen who alone can transmit royal blood.” The heiress, therefore, was the only legitimate ruler: whoever might conquer the land, she was bound to marry him. The fact of rule necessitated the marriage, uniting law with force. When the young Ptolemies lived, Cleopatra must be the queen-wife, when Cæsar came, or Antony, or Augustus, the ruler must be accepted. It was only her brilliant and versatile nature that made her weather the storm. Ptolemaic queens had always lived to dominate—that was their only romance.

Cæsar the demagogue, and veteran of the greatest wars, at 52, and Cleopatra not yet 20, but more than his match, ruled Egypt and all the world. Her presence in Rome was very unpopular, and when the fatal treachery wrecked the peace of the world, she was but 24 or 25. Back to Egypt she must flee to rule her own kingdom.

After Philippi, when Antony rose to eastern power, Cleopatra was only 27, and she secured her position by capturing the rough visitor in the gay entrancement of her magnificent ship on the Cydnus. Once more she stood on the pinnacle of power, with all the world at her feet. For more

than two years she was the Empress of the East, supreme, the enchanter of the strong son of Hercules, who dealt with kings and kingdoms as he would.

Then came the end: Rome could not brook a rival. When at Actium the fatal balance turned against Antony, it was Cleopatra's duty to hasten back to her kingdom, and to be ready there to submit to the victorious Octavian. He, too astutely, wished to lead her captive in Rome, and he could resist her fascinations. Such fate could not be hers. Defeated though she was, the royal asp of Egypt could come to her aid in her last triumph over the power of Rome. The end of the long vista of Egyptian supremacy culminated in one of the greatest scenes in all history, unmatched and eternal in its fame.

FLINDERS PETRIE.

NOTE.

PYRAMID FACTS AND FANCIES.

“THE small piece of desert plateau opposite the village of Gizeh, though less than a mile across, may well claim to be the most remarkable piece of ground in the world. There may be seen the very beginning of architecture, the most enormous piles of building ever raised, the most accurate constructions known, the finest masonry and the employment of the most ingenious tools. . . . We shall look in vain for a more wonderful assemblage than the vast masses of the Pyramids, the ruddy walls and pillars of the granite temple, the titanic head of the Sphinx, the hundreds of tombs, and the shattered outlines of causeways, pavements and walls, that cover this earliest field of man's labours. “But these remains have an additional, though passing, interest in the present day, owing to the many attempts that have been made to theorise on the motives of their origin and construction. The Great Pyramid has lent its name as a sort of by-word for paradoxes; and, as moths to a candle, so are theorists attracted to it. The very fact that the subject was so generally familiar, and yet so little was accurately known about it, made it the more enticing; there were plenty of descriptions from which to choose, and yet most of them were so hazy that their support could be claimed for many varying theories.” (Pyramids and Temples of Gizeh, page 1.)

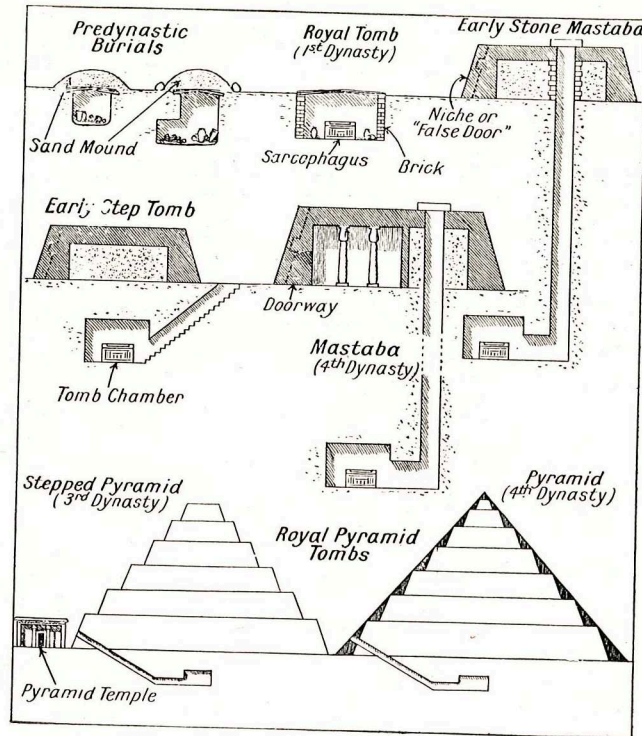


Diagram giving the stages from the simple grave to the royal store-chamber and on through the mastaba form to the stepped pyramid. The series culminates in the Great Pyramid of Gizeh.

This was published by Prof. Petrie in 1883, three years after his first season in Egypt. He had gone, at the suggestion of his father, to verify and examine the theories of Piazzi Smyth, but his own investigations led him to disprove these conclusions. Despite overwhelming evidence, the theories rife in 1880 are equally in favour to-day, so that a few extracts from his book, now out of print, may help to dispel the current idea that he in any way identifies himself with the prophetic messages evolved by others from his measurements.

Perhaps the plate reproduced here (by kind permission of the Editor of Harmsworth's "Universal History") gives the clearest idea of the evolution of a pyramid. The shallow graves of the pre-historic period were soon covered by sand and lost; later a heap of stones marked the site. Then a mastaba was formed, merely a square platform, another smaller one crowned it, and gradually the step pyramid was evolved. This, cased over with smooth blocks, formed a true pyramid.

A pyramid was, indeed, the form of burial-place most suitable to a desert country, where the sloping sides would repel the insistent advances of the sand. It was an imposing monument which could be looked on with pride and satisfaction—Aseskaf called his pyramid the "cool place" or "place of refreshing," a character of the rock-cut tombs most pleasing in such a climate.

As to the arguments so often quoted concerning labour and the difficulty of transporting stone from the eastern cliffs, some five miles away, the annual inundation of the Nile made it possible to overcome these obstacles. While the land was

flooded, the inhabitants, deprived of their agricultural employment, wandered on the high desert and subsisted as best they could. Regular work and pay would be welcomed, and it is known from Herodotos that the transport of stone to Gizeh on barges took place during three months of the inundation; 100,000 men worked in each party, and they were housed in barracks which have been discovered near the pyramids. These schemes solved a serious unemployment problem, and the peculiarity of the country may go far towards explaining the capacity of the Egyptians for executing such vast public works.

The wilderness of figures and diagrams, which support the divine message of the Pyramids, are based on certain facts. A volume on the subject, reviewed by Sir Flinders in "Nature," (Oct. 25, 1924), . . . "opens with many pages on the reflecting surfaces of the Great Pyramid, fixing accurately the days of the solstices and equinoxes. Now such porous limestone cannot be polished to reflect, or even to glitter; and a diffuse faint glare at best, without any definite limit, would be entirely useless to define a given day in the year, as here asserted. Then we read of one shadow on a face being only exact once in a century, and approximately every fourth year. As at that time of year the change of declination of the sun, by the shift of 0.242 day, from year to year is under 6'—less than a fifth of the sun's diameter—the difference between one year and another would be imperceptible to the eye.

"The theories here depend on the size of the pyramid base. This was really 9069 inches; the rock sockets into which the sides sloped down

below the base vary from 9119 to 9131 apart, according to their depth. To attain the theoretical base of 9141 inches, 10 inches is added to the longest (foundation) side without any authority whatever. The actual diameters across the pyramid show 9069 inches, but it is asserted that the sides were curved so as to bring out the corners to the amount required by the theorists.

"The historical treatment likewise depends on assertion. It is assumed that a year of 360 days was used concurrently with one of 365 days and during long ages a cycle of 103 years resulted. This is highly improbable, and there is no proof of such a mixture. The cycle of 103 years is then used in various forms, though no such cycle is known; the calendar is asserted to have been revised and altered, but there is no proof of it. We read of the 'fictitious chronology of the Egyptians' and 'Jewish chronological forgeries' when the records are not convenient."

Where the foundations are in air, it is needless to look more closely at the crowd of theories built upon them.

O. T.

HALF CENTURY CELEBRATION OF FLINDERS PETRIE'S RESEARCHES.

IN THE PAST FIFTY YEARS the expedition has discovered towns and temples, and many sites in Egypt and its borders.

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