

Review: Leonard Cottrell, *The Lost Pharaohs*, Pan Books, London, 1950 (1962 edn.)

Pages: 220

Egyptian History Rediscovered

A guide from the earliest times of Egypt as separated Upper and Lower Kingdoms, till its ignominious end as a Roman province in 50 BC.

Important Pharaoh's such as Akhnaten (the Heretic King who created a short-lived sun-disc cult), Thuthmosis II the Great, and of course Tutankhamun are covered.

There are also geographical and historical insights for the Bible: Thebes was once called No [Amun]; Tanis is Zoan; and King Shoshank/Shishak in Kings which sacked Jerusalem was a Libyan.

Numerous other details on language, pyramid construction, and funerary customs make this a great resource on Egyptology.

Introduction and Acknowledgements (pp. 7-12)

I) The Land and Its History (p. 13-30)

Egypt is 600 miles long and bounded by two ranges of naked limestone hills. To the south are granite rocks and mountains.

An Arab boatman: "Egypt is the gift of the Nile, and the Nile is the gift of the good God".

Ancient Egyptians believed their ancestors came from Punt (Somaliland).

Abyssinian mud is the source of Egyptian soil's fertility.

By recording the Nile over different seasons, Egyptians could predict the extent of the its annual flood.

The pre-Dynastic period had a Southern King ruling Upper Egypt, and a Northern One ruling the delta in Lower Egypt. c. 3,200 BC, Menes, a.k.a. Narmer, conquered the whole country.

Manethos (c305-285BC) wrote the first, but inaccurate, table of Egyptian dynasties in Greek.

Menes established his capitol at Memphis, near Cairo.

There were two dynasties 3200-2780 BC in the *Archaic Period*, in which there were frequent rebellions in the north.

The Old Kingdom (2780-2270 BC) centralised power, with kings said to be the Titans, or gods descended from Re.

Djoser built the first large stone structure, and Snofru the first true pyramid.

Cheops built the Great Pyramid of Giza.

Egypt was divided into provinces, or *nomes*.

Re was served by the priesthood of On.

In the Fifth Dynasty (2560-2420 BC), the king's name always included "re" as a suffix (Sahure, Neferirkere, Shepsekere, Nuserre), making them "Son of Re".

In the *Middle Empire* (2100-1700 BC), there was a hundred years of anarchy during which Asiatics invaded [possibly just after the Exodus and Pharaoh's defeat?]. Power then passed to the provincial nomarchs whose seat of power was in Hermonthis, Upper Egypt. At this time, Thebes was just a nearby small town but was destined for greatness.

The Middle Kingdom was Egypt's Feudal Age. The gold mines of Sinai were reopened. The Osiris cult also arose during this time.

Amun was the god of Thebes, which was changed to Amun-Re as a manifestation of Re.

The end of the Middle Kingdom was chaos when the Hyksos invaded for 150 years.

The *New Empire* (1555-712 BC) is considered Egypt's greatest imperial age.

Thutmose II was the greatest of Egypt's warrior kings.

During Amenhotep III's reign there arose a small cult of the Aten solar disc. His successor was Akhenaten who excluded all gods except the Aten, and moved his capital from Thebes to a newly built Tell-el-Amarna, mid-way to Cairo. He reigned there with his queen Nefertiti. After his death all images and names were struck from Egypt and he was labelled 'Heretic King'.

Sethi I and Ramesses II waged wars in Palestine; the latter was a devotee of Amun and built many temples, but he almost lost the Battle of Kadesh.

Ramesses III defeated the Libyans in the west and the enigmatic 'sea-peoples'.

In 1090 BC at the end of the Twentieth Dynasty the only Egyptian province was Nubia, Land of Kush.

Tomb walls in the acropolis of the Theban Hills depict the caverns of Duat (underworld) in which the dead travel in the sun-god's boat.

The Israelites controlled Palestine from the Twenty-First dynasty.

At the end of the Twenty-Fourth Dynasty (712 BC), Egypt was ruled by Libyan (e.g. Shoshenk, a.k.a., Shishak, King of Egypt), then Nubian kings.

The Assyrians under Ashurbanipal invaded Egypt and plundered Thebes. This is referenced by Nahum as "populous No" (Thebes).

Egypt's final defeat in Asia was at Carchemish at the hands of the Babylonians and King Nebuchadnezzar. Persia conquered the country in 525 BC under Cambyses, until Alexander the Great came in 332 BC, whose general Ptolemy founded the Ptolemaic line. Lastly, in 50 BC Egypt became a Roman province.

II) Arrival of the Egyptologist (pp. 31-43)

Limestone cliffs bordering the Nile provided abundant supply of easily-worked stone.

Necessity for *material* preservation is at the heart of Egyptian religion.

Hieroglyphs means "sacred signs".

Physicians in the Middle Ages believed powdered mummy was a valuable medicine.

The Jews of Alexandria would make fake mummies.

Boussard found an irregular-shaped stone at Rosetta in the Nile Delta.

Demotic is a modified shorthand of hieratic script.

In 1801, the Treaty of Capitulation stated Egyptian antiquities had to be handed over to the British, including the Rosetta stone. A portion of its Greek text:

"A copy of a decree passed by the General Council of Egyptian priests assembled at Memphis to celebrate the first commemoration of Ptolemy V, Epiphanes, King of all Egypt."

Dr Robert Young proved the stone had alphabetic hieroglyphs and an oval *cartouche* signified a proper or royal name.

The grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation keys to deciphering Rosetta are in the ancient Coptic tongue ("Copts" is simply the old name for Egyptian).

Grotesfend deciphered cuneiform in 1810.

III) Retreat of the Frontier (pp. 43-53)

Dynastic-age Egyptians were always buried stretched out on their backs.

The tomb of King Djer had rooms for 338 graves belonging to his household.

IV) Origin of the Pyramids (pp. 54-67)

The Egyptians only had the lever and inclined plane to build the pyramids.

Since each Egyptian King had several names, identification is difficult.

Bai meant “spirit”.

The spirit was said to be separate from but still dependant on the body, therefore it had to be preserved. There was a second spirit, *ka*, the dead person’s double.

The West was the home of the dead, so all burials were on the west bank of the Nile. The East was the home of the living.

The Greeks took Imhotep to be Aesculapius, the god of medicine.

Djoser’s pyramid could have been raised by a monarch who controlled a united country. His body was never found.

V) How and Why They Were Built (pp. 67-83)

Cheops was Snofru’s successor.

Gradual decrease in pyramid size is an indication of diminishing power of successive kings.

Herodotus visited Egypt in 450 BC and gleaned information from priests. E.g., on Cheops’ Great Pyramid at Giza: “A hundred thousand men laboured constantly and were relieved every three months. It took ten years to make the causeway for the conveyance of stones ... the Pyramid itself was twenty years in building ... it was built in steps ... inscription on the

pyramid recorded quantity of radishes, onions and garlic consumed by the labourers.”

It was covered in polished fine limestone and capped by a granite *pyramidon*. Nothing remains of the limestone casing.

The “accretion theory” holds that each king added a certain amount to his pyramid every year of his reign, therefore longer-reigning monarchs had larger pyramids [but the size of any pyramid is set *in advance*, so this makes little sense].

The architects may have sighted a star to determine positions.

Workmen used bronze tools with jewelled cutting points.

The ramp slope angle was fixed, so it was just made longer to reach higher.

During the three months of inundation in the year, men were unable to work their fields and so would be idle, a perfect excuse to undertake the pyramid-building.

A step pyramid may have been a stairway to heaven.

VI) Mother of Cheops (pp. 83-97)

VII) 'Thebes of the Hundred Gates' (pp. 97-104)

Thebes was once called No-Amun; it controlled the Nubian mountain gold routes and collected Sudanese produce.

Thebes was split into the city of the living on the east, and the dead on the west.

Amun is as a man wearing the royal *uraens* of cobra, and sometimes with a ram's head.

VIII) 'City of the Dead' (pp. 105-117)

Vizier Rekhmire served under Thutmose III (1493-1439 BC).

The sun god's boat is depicted as a scarab beetle preceded by serpents.

IX) The Royal Valley (pp. 117-129)

Meres-ger was the dreaded serpent goddess, the "Lover of Silence" which stood over Thebe's city of the dead.

No kings were buried in the Royal Valley after the Twentieth Dynasty (1200-1090 BC).

Sethi I, son of Rameses I was third king of the Nineteenth Dynasty (1305-1200 BC).

There is a scroll, *Book of what is in the Duat* [Underworld] in which the dead made negative confessions ("I have never done that"), and another, *Book of the Gates* which described twelve division of the underworld.

XI) The Lost Pharaohs (pp. 130-146)

Papyri rolls have survived from the Twentieth Dynasty describing trials of robbers. Parts (the *Amhert Papyrus*) were brought from Egypt by Lord Amhurst of Hackney.

Arab treasure seekers would split papyrus finds in two to maximise the sales price.

XII) The Greatest Discovery (pp. 147-153)

In 1817, Italian explorer Giovanni Belzoni wrote, "in the valley of Biban-el-Maluk there are no more tombs".

In 1898 however, Loret discovered Amenhophis II.

The obscure boy-king Tutankhamun succeeded Smenkhkare at the end of the Eighteenth Dynasty. His tomb had been conspicuously unaccounted for. The tomb entrance had plaster seal impressions of Tutankhamun and the Necropolis priests, however, there had been two successive openings with the Necropolis seal on the re-closed part of the door. This means thieves had previously entered it, but they were not entirely successful.

Howard Carter wrote, “Darkness and blank space, as far as an iron testing-rod could reach ... candle tests were applied as a precaution against possible foul gases.”

XII) All the World Wondered (pp. 154-169)

Carter: “Every excavation ... the things he finds are not his own property to treat as he pleases ... by carelessness ... he lessens the sum of knowledge that might have been obtained ... to be guilty of an archaeological crime.”

The king’s walking stick was covered in gold leaf on gesso [animal glue]. They cleaned it with a damp brush, sprayed it with celluloid in amyl acetate and treated it with melted paraffin wax.

Tutankhamun’s canopic chest was guarded by five delicate little golden goddesses ... [and] a great effigy of the jackal-god Anubis.

After visiting the tomb, Lord Carnarvon fell ill with fever by an infected wound and died 11/4/1/23 aged 57. The press attributed this to the mummy’s curse.

Heavy gold plaques bore welcoming speeches to the gods, addressed to the King as he entered the Underworld: “My beloved son [says Geb], inheritor of the throne of Osiris ... Nut says, ‘Thy members are firm’”.

Tutankhamun’s tomb contained no written documents.

He was succeeded by Ay, an elderly priest who had been an Atenist under Akhnaten.

XIII) Journey to Akhenaten (pp. 170-184)

Tel-el-Amarna was the city of Akhnaten the ‘Heretic King’. It was also called the ‘Horizon of the Disc’ (“I will make Akhetaten the City of the Horizon of the Disc”).

Secularists claim Akhnaten was the first monotheist.

A Theban princeling Amosis I founded the Eighteenth Dynasty by driving out the Asiatic Hyksos kings.

Thutmosis III was also called Menkheperre.

The kingdom of Mittani was an Aryan people situated within the bend of the Euphrates.

Amenophis III was the first Egyptian king to be worshipped as a god *in his own lifetime*. This was thought to be because he needed to set up a rival to Amun, whose priests were gaining power, and to have a universal god throughout the whole of the Empire.

Nefertiti means, “the beautiful woman has come”.

Amenophis means, “Amun is satisfied”.

Akhnaten means, “It is well with the Aten”. He had declared war on Amun and paid after death with his name struck from the records. He is depicted with a swollen head, elongated skull and long neck.

The Aten was said to have been the creator, but was morally neutral having no sense of good or evil.

XIV) City of the Sun-King (pp. 185-204)

Akhenaten was built, occupied, and deserted within a generation.

The port of Gebal (Byblos) had been loyal to Egypt since the Old Kingdom. Its governor Ribbadi wrote: “Aziru has fought my chiefs ... whom I dispatched to the city Simyra he caused to be seized . .the Amorites have gathered themselves ... give me soldiers!”

No help was sent and Simyra fell.

Akhnaten married his half-brother Smenkhaten to his daughter Meritaten and made Smenkhaten co-regent. They returned to Thebes, Akhnaten married his own daughter Ankhesenpaaten and had a daughter by her.

Nefertiti had Tutankhaten and married him to Ankhsenpaaten, but when he ascended the throne he changed his name to Tutankhamun, and his wife's

XV) The Future of Egyptology (pp. 204-214)

In 1887, an Arab woman digging at Amarna for *sebakh* (fertiliser), found piles of small baked clay tablets. She only realised till 150 were left they were genuine; these were the archives of the Egyptian Foreign Office.

From 1907 to 1914, a German expedition worked, discovering the limestone head of Nefertiti.

Europeans founded Egyptology [not Muslims, since they are stultified by Islam].

Tanis was the Zoan of the Bible and possible residence of Joseph.

XVI) The Reign of Akhnaten (pp. 215-218)