

**A HISTORY OF EGYPT
FROM THE EARLIEST TIMES
TO THE XVITH DYNASTY**

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A History of Egypt from the Earliest Times to the XVth Dynasty by W. M. Flinders Petrie

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BY

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WITH NUMEROUS ILLUSTRATIONS

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- Vol. I. Dynasties I.-XVI. By W. M. F. PETRIE
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- Vol. IV. Ptolemaic Egypt.
- Vol. V. Roman Egypt. By J. G. MILNE
- Vol. VI. Arabic Egypt. By STANLEY LANE POOLE

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PREFACE

THE aim in producing the present history has been to place in the hands of students a book of reference which shall suffice for all ordinary purposes; while stating the information in such a form that any person who is likely to read such a work may grasp a general view of the course of one of the oldest civilisations of the world. A history that merely states the facts on the writer's authority may do well enough for the general reader; but for the student such writing is almost useless, and references are essential. In these pages every fact and every object has at least one authority stated for it, except where it rests on the author's personal observation. But it has not been needful to give more than one reference, usually the most accessible or useful, on each fact. Those who want to read up all the literature on any detail, will naturally refer to Wiedemann's *Geschichte*, which is an index to the subject so invaluable that no one can do much without it. And though every writer since that work has appeared must naturally be indebted to its pages, if dealing with Egyptian history or monuments, yet the present work is based on an actual

examination of every accessible book that is here quoted.

This history, however, does not aim at being a bibliography of the subject; nor has it seemed desirable to bring in theories or views which appear to have passed away, and not to need present attention. While endeavouring to notice everything that a student should bear in mind on each period, yet more space has been given in proportion to new facts or new theories, *pro* and *con*, than to those which will be already familiar to persons who have read works on the subject. Similarly, in the illustrations, it has been sought to give such as are not commonly known, wherever it was suitable to do so. In this way this work is not only complete in itself, but may serve as a supplement, brought down to date, to the other histories that have appeared. It will be found to provide illustrations, later information, and more chronological discussion than exists in the present histories of Brugsch, Wiedemann, or Meyer.

In the matter of chronology—the backbone of history—it is sought here to glean everything that can be noticed as to the internal history of each period. And on the still more difficult question of general chronology, an attempt has been made to give some main outline of it to assist the memory. Where dates are confessedly so uncertain, it may seem presumptuous to keep a running head-date to the pages; but yet it is better to thus assist the reader's ideas of the relative periods of different rulers, than to refuse any such help on the ground that it can only be approximate. In the last chapter the actual bases of our present chronology are fully stated; and it must always be remembered by the reader that the range of uncertainty may be about

a century in the earlier parts of this volume, diminishing perhaps to about a generation by the close of the volume. No greater accuracy than this is in the least professed in the numbers here assigned. But as their relation to one another over short periods is probably correct within a few years, it is needful to state them to the nearest year.

In the very vexed question of transliteration, a course has been followed which will probably not satisfy either of the extreme parties. The names are neither reduced to unpronounceable skeletons, nor are they dressed out in ornate vocalisation. The skeleton and comma system may be very well for purely philological purposes, but is a gratuitous obstacle to the reader who has not taken a preliminary course of such work; while the following of Greek and Coptic vocalisation renders it difficult to trace the word in hieroglyphics. Hence a system has been adopted very near to that which is most familiar to the English reader in other books.

Throughout this work I have received continual help from my constant friend, Mr. F. Ll. Griffith, whose special knowledge of the language has provided many new translations of texts here quoted, and whose familiarity with the literature has often been of great service to me.

This volume is but the first of a series which is intended to embrace the whole history of Egypt down to modern times. It is expected that three volumes will treat of the period of the Pharaohs, one volume of the Ptolemies, one volume of the Roman age, and one volume of Arabic Egypt. So far as practicable, the same system will be maintained throughout, though by different writers; and the aim of all will be to provide

a general history, with such fulness and precision as shall suffice for the use of students. The material is necessarily restricted here to the dynastic history; and there is no intention of including a history of art, civilisation, or literature, which would each require a volume as large as this.

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