



Egypt

Land of Moses, monuments and mummies



Clive and Amanda Anderson

Day One



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Series Editor: Brian H Edwards

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Right: Pyramids at Giza, one of the great wonders of the world



Ancient Egyptian society

The concept of Maat was all-encompassing for the ancient Egyptians. Religion, order and harmony were essential to a well-ordered society. That was why the list of maats and its translation in the central column of Egyptian. Maat is the way life would have been, but it was also a moral code that was followed with strictness in all aspects, and would be the perfect representation of Maat. In the Egyptian and Arabic Dynastic times (see Chronology on page 102), before the start of Upper and Lower Egypt, the rulers of Upper Egypt were called *nesut*, meaning 'he of the bow', a title like that, considered as 'King of Upper Egypt' or 'King of the South'. In contrast, the ruler of Lower Egypt was the *heh*, meaning 'he of the bow', because of the profile of his bow. The pharaohs of the Middle Kingdom (see Chronology on page 102), in the time of the 'New Kingdom', after the unification of Upper and Lower Egypt, the ruler was called *nesut*, which means 'he of the bow and the bow', which is conventionally translated as 'King of Upper and Lower Egypt' or 'King of the South and North'.

Maat was represented by a goddess with a feathered headdress. Egyptian deities were depicted as

human figures with animal heads. They protected the human race, but the gods were not gods. They were the souls of the deceased, and they lived in the afterlife. The gods were not gods, they were the souls of the deceased, and they lived in the afterlife. The gods were not gods, they were the souls of the deceased, and they lived in the afterlife.

become an anthropomorphic representation of the gods. The representation of gods was in the form of animals, but the gods were not animals, they were the souls of the deceased, and they lived in the afterlife.



Above: The King's mummy, one of the most important mummies in the world

Right and top: The pyramids at Giza, one of the great wonders of the world

The pyramids at Giza are the most famous of the three. They were built for the pharaoh Khufu, who lived around 2580 BC. The Great Pyramid is the largest of the three, and it is the only one that remains almost intact. The other two are the pyramids of Khafre and Menkaure.

They were built as tombs for the pharaohs and their queens. The pyramids were built by a large workforce of laborers, who were paid in food and clothing. The pyramids were built over a period of 20 years.

Egyptian Religion

The Egyptian religion was a polytheistic religion. It was based on the concept of Maat, which was the goddess of truth and justice. The gods were represented by human figures with animal heads. The most important gods were Osiris, Isis, Anubis, and Horus.

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○ Terror, temples and ancient texts

There is a temple of Amenhotep III on both sides of the Nile and was the 'Throne of the Gods', dedicated for thousands of years by Amenhotep III. In the end, Amenhotep III was buried in a tomb in the Valley of the Kings.

The temple was the center of the Egyptian religion. It was built by Amenhotep III, who lived around 1370 BC. The temple was dedicated to the god Amen, who was the god of the sun and fertility. The temple was built on a high platform, and it was surrounded by a wall.

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Above: The Temple of Amenhotep III in Luxor, Egypt

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Dedication: For Luke



'The blessed land'

Egypt, the fabled land of romance, intrigue, mystery and terror, but above all of fabulous wealth and glittering gold. Since Napoleon's invasion in the 1790s, and the incredible discovery of Tutankhamun's intact tomb in the Valley of the Kings in 1922, the world has been increasingly drawn to books, films, museums and exhibitions that focus on the land of the Pharaohs.

In the centre of a garden nestles a rectangular pool containing lotus and other exotic water plants. The air is filled with heady and fragrant perfumes intoxicating the senses, emanating from jasmine, oleander, mimosa and dwarf chrysanthemums. Encircling them are pomegranate, date palm and sycamore fig trees, all producing a magnificent effect. The palace of a king or the dwelling of a noble would have included numerous luxuries including beautiful gardens, where the owners could be indulged, with servants waiting on their every need. However, the harsh truth was that in the royal court intrigue was ever-

present and assassination a possibility; the battlefield was violent and all faced the reality of life under an unrelenting sun, where disease, danger, the displeasure of the gods, and an early death were all too common.

Here, the abundance of buildings, temples and royal mummies enable us to come face to face with the ancient Egyptians. But Egypt is not by any means a squeezed lemon. Who can tell how many more thrilling finds await the diligent archaeologist on site, or the historian in the museum or university? As these come to light, they will help to perpetuate interest in the 'blessed land', as it was known in ancient times; they will also fuel the knowledge of those who love and study the Bible, for Egypt played a major role in the story of the patriarchs and early Israel.

Through the pages of this Travel Guide, whether at home or in Egypt, we will explore this ancient world of beauty and mystery.

Facing page:

The River Nile has been enjoyed and used since earliest times





1 Red and Black lands

Egypt is the greatest oasis in the greatest desert in the world. In ancient times it stretched from the Mediterranean Sea in the north to the First Cataract at Aswan in the south, a distance of 1207 km (750 mi) by river

In Egypt, the River Nile glistens in the intense sunlight, whilst groves of dates, palms and tamarisk give protection to multitudes of bright flowers that bloom with rich and intense colour. The cliffs at the edge of the desert, seen to such good effect in the west at Luxor, glow and shine with deep and rich hues at sunrise and sunset. The night sky is ablaze with the glory of stars and planets.

The ancient Greeks were Egypt's first tourists and after 500 BC began to write about this strange land at a time when Egyptian civilization was drawing towards the close of its three thousand year existence. Alexander the Great, and his general Ptolemy, artificially preserved the culture in their own way. Under the Romans it faded rapidly and was stamped out completely by the Arab invaders of AD 639 to 646. The glories of Ancient Egypt were largely hidden from view for fourteen hundred years, from the fall of Rome to Napoleon's expedition of 1798. Then, in the early nineteenth century, explorers and the first diggers began to unearth the magnificence

of the ancient past—the land of myth became the land of wonder.

Egypt is on the northeast shoulder of Africa, bordered by the Mediterranean Sea to the north, which the ancient Egyptians called the 'Great Green', deserts to the south and west and the Red Sea to the east. It consists geographically of two areas, the northern one, including the Delta closest to the Mediterranean Sea, called Lower Egypt, and the southern area called Upper Egypt (Isaiah 11:11).



Above: Kemet, the black favoured land, and Deshret, the red feared land

Facing page: The Sphinx on the Giza plateau is one of the most famous landmarks in the whole world. The face of the sphinx is probably that of Djedefre a 4th Dynasty Pharaoh and son of Khufu

The river of life

The Greek geographer Hecataeus famously wrote that ‘Egypt is the gift of the Nile’. The Nile is like a strand of precious blue set against the tawny-coloured desert. Any vegetation that sprouted, and all livestock that grazed, were dependent on its waters for their existence. Almost one hundred years ago Rudyard Kipling wrote: ‘Going up the Nile is like running the gauntlet before eternity. Till one has seen it, one does not realise the amazing thinness of that little damp trickle of life that steals along undefeated through the jaws of established death. A rifle shot would cover the widest limits of cultivation; a bowshot would reach the narrower. The weight of the desert is on one, every day and every hour.’

That ‘little damp trickle’ is 6,670km (4,160mi) in length, making the River Nile the longest river in the world. The Nile has two main tributaries: the White Nile and the Blue Nile. The White Nile rises in the great lakes of Africa, and flows from southern Rwanda through Tanzania, Lake Victoria, Uganda and Southern

Sudan. The Blue Nile starts at Lake Tana in Ethiopia flowing into Sudan from the southeast and the two parts join near Khartoum the capital of Sudan. This means that less than a quarter of the Nile flows through Egypt, creating the fertile green valley from 1.6km (1mi) to 32km (20mi) in width through the desert. However the flow of water in ancient times was not always consistent and nilometers were set up to gauge the flow so as to help in ascertaining the prospects for a rich or poor harvest. This rise and fall is reflected in Amos 8:8.

The annual inundation usually occurred between the months of July and October, then the planting of crops could take place in the deep rich black mud and silt between November and February, yielding a harvest between March and June, when hopefully the whole process would begin again. If the river flow was not as expected it could result in flood or famine; either way, disaster would loom, especially if provision had not been made for this eventuality (Genesis 41:29–30). Water from the Nile was directed to the fields

Right: *The River Nile has been the life blood of the country since ancient times*



through channels of decreasing size, and the smallest could be opened or closed by moving mud with the foot. This explains the seemingly curious statement in Deuteronomy 11:10 about foot irrigation.

By the time of Ptolemy I, 305 to 285 BC, Egypt supported a population estimated to be seven million people. The land was rich and fertile, and difficult to attack when Egypt was at the height of her power; it would eventually provide Rome with a third of its corn.

The desert of death

In contrast to the lush river valley, the western desert had an evil reputation with hot dry winds blowing across the sand, which dealt with the unwary in dramatic fashion; more than one army was swallowed up, disappearing completely: Cambyses, the Persian king lost his army as

it marched to Siwa c 520 BC. However, the Delta—a triangle of low-lying green land about 150 miles in each direction from the river—and the coastal regions of Egypt, have high temperatures and humidity in the summer with heavy rains in the winter. A hot scorching wind called the *Khamsin* blows across the Delta between March and May, which in the days before air conditioning would leave people fatigued and irritable. Egypt's variable climate encouraged many diseases to flourish (Deuteronomy 7:15), and Moses warned the Israelites that if they were not faithful to God, he would afflict them with these diseases (Deuteronomy 28:60). Today, however, the climate of Egypt is beneficial to many, and the warm Mediterranean breezes give the country a year-round growing season making it a suitable place for the tourist.

Ancient names to describe Egypt

The ancient Egyptians gave various names to the Land:

Tawy = the two lands, upper and lower Egypt.

Ta Mery = the beloved land. The ancient people were not obsessed with death but desired the next life to be a perfect replica of this one, so the survival of the body was imperative for the soul to exist in the next life.

Kemet = the black

land. The black land after the inundation of the Nile when the black deposit was sown with seed and a harvest could then be guaranteed.

Deshret = the red land, the endless desert to the east and west. This is where the goddess Sekhmet dwelt, the place of fear and fire.

The dryness of arid wastelands along the Nile Valley naturally dried out human and animal remains, and mummification

developed naturally. The desolate regions surrounding Egypt established natural borders that were fairly easy to defend, and perilous to enter. Except in the Delta, where, if any walked away to the east or west from the river until they needed water, they would have died of thirst before they could walk back again for a drink, a fact not lost on the Hebrews (Exodus 17:3).

Right: *Pyramids are one of the great defining images of Egypt*



Ancient Egyptian society

The concept of *Maat* was all-important for the ancient Egyptians. Balance, order and harmony were essential to a well-oiled society. Hard work was the lot of many and is revealed in the mortal remains of Egyptians. Ideally the next life would have fields that were blessed with no pests or failed harvests, and would be the perfect representation of *Maat*. In Predynastic and early Dynastic times (see Glossary on page 112), before the union of Upper and Lower Egypt, the rulers of Upper Egypt were called *nesw*, meaning ‘he of the sedge’, a grass-like herb, translated as ‘King of Upper Egypt’ or ‘King of the South’. By contrast, the rulers of Lower Egypt used the title *bit*, meaning ‘he of the bee’, because of the proliferation of bees amongst the flowers, translated as ‘King of Lower Egypt’ or ‘King of the North’. In later times, after the union of Upper and Lower Egypt, the rulers used the title *nesw-bit*, which meant ‘he of the sedge and the bee’, which is conventionally translated as ‘King of Upper and Lower Egypt’ or ‘King of the South and North’.

Daily life was organised along a set pattern with Pharaonic Egypt being divided into forty-

two administrative districts or nomes. They considered the ben-ben stone, (see the Box: Noah and the ben-ben stone on page 111) replicated the place where the first rays of the sun hit the earth and it was pyramid in shape. It formed the top of Pyramids and Obelisks (see Glossary on page 112). Society followed this pattern, as it became an increasingly important symbol in the land.

The importance of *maat* can be seen in the order of society, the one responsible for maintaining or regaining *maat* was the king (pharaoh) and he was at the pinnacle of life on earth.



Above: *The King's authority revealed in the magnificent throne of Tutankhamun*

Noah and the ben-ben stone

As a sacred bird of the city of On (Heliopolis), the Egyptian benu-bird was the prototype for the Greek phoenix and was connected with the sun and rebirth. In the pyramid texts it appears as a yellow wagtail, but in the Book of the Dead (see page 92) it is represented as a kind of grey heron. According to the Heliopolitan Tradition, the world began as a watery chaos

called Nun, from which the sun god Atum ('the All' or the 'Complete One') emerged on a mound. Atum is said to have flown over the primeval waters as a bird, before coming to rest on a rock, or primeval mound (the ben-ben) that rose from the waters. The hieroglyphic script uses the image of a heron perched on a stick to write the word, 'flood,' and the benu-bird presides over the flood.

This myth could have been based on

the episode of Noah recorded in Genesis 8 where he sent out two birds, the raven and the dove, to determine if the worldwide flood had receded. This was a rebirth for the world, as everything apart from the Ark and its inhabitants had been destroyed. As the Ark came to rest on the mountains of Ararat (in modern day Turkey), the first view that Noah and his family had of the dry earth (Genesis 8:13) may have been a mountain peak—hence the pyramid shape?

Egyptian bureaucracy was complex, and the centre of the maze was the institution of kingship, so it was vitally important to have not only a strong king but also powerful, wise and cunning advisors to maintain the stability of the country.

Egyptian Religion

The State religion was concerned with maintaining the divine order of *maat* to keep chaos at bay. Temples and priests served as a perpetual reminder that order was to be maintained for the good of the people. Religion dominated every aspect of life, and as the pinnacle of society, the king came to be regarded as the son of the god Ra on earth, (see page 118 for the chief gods of Egypt) and the chief prophets

in the temples were among his most trusted advisors (Exodus 7:1–2).

Women, unusually for the ancient world, were on a legal equal footing with men, including wage earning. Another demonstration of the equality of the sexes was that men and women both wore makeup and earrings, (Exodus 32:2–4). Plenty of moisturiser was applied to the face and most people shaved



off all body hair to combat the problem of head lice, ticks and other afflictions. When Pharaoh (from *per-aa* Great House) commanded that Joseph was to be released from prison, to make himself acceptable at court Joseph shaved and changed his clothes (Genesis 41:14). The cost of clothes was prohibitive for most, so the majority of people owned only an over garment with a couple of changes of loincloth.



Above: Nilometers used to measure the flood levels of the river each year

Food and drink

Basic food came from or near the Nile, and meat could include goat, mutton or pork (though the latter not for the priests). The poorer end of society existed on bread, onions and other salad, whereas those with a better lifestyle could enjoy wildfowl, ducks and geese, with a favourite dish of the upper classes being crispy duck roasted in honey.

People drank water from wells or straight from the Nile (Exodus 7:24), though river water had to be drawn with care as, not only fish, but also hippopotamus, crocodile, and water snakes inhabited the Nile. At times the water was not only unpalatable but also dangerous as it contained many harmful organisms (unknown to the Egyptians) and residues. The young king Tutankhamun preferred white

wine, but most people drank beer, which meant they went through life in a slightly intoxicated state. It was brewed from barley and bread and had the consistency of vegetable soup so it had to be strained or drunk through a straw. Cough drops, mouthwash and chewing gum were also invented in Egypt.

The importance of Language

Arabic is the language used in Egypt today, although the picture language of the ancient Egyptians, known as hieroglyphics, is synonymous with its history. Ancient Egyptian is one of the oldest recorded languages (probably only Sumerian is older) and it has a documented history longer by far than any other. The work of the scribe was highly respected:

‘By day write with your fingers, recite by night. Befriend



Left: Palestine Railways train ticket from Haifa to Suez used by Corporal Harry Lambert on 11 January 1943

the scroll and the palette—it is more fulfilling than wine!’ Papyrus Lansing, from the New Kingdom.

Hieroglyphics.

Hieroglyphs are written in horizontal lines from right to left or left to right, downwards in columns, or curved around objects. Sometimes two sets of hieroglyphs will face each other. The direction in which to read an inscription often starts with a person, animal or bird, and the inscription would be read from the front of them.

Hieratic. This was used by the priests as an adaptation of the hieroglyphic script through most of its history, often used for administrative purposes and personal letters. For speed it was usually written in black ink (occasionally red to mark out a significant section), applied by means of a brush made out of a rush stem.

Demotic. This is the writing that the ordinary people used and the word means ‘of the people’. It can be traced from the Late Period down to late Roman times (c. 664BC to fifth century AD). Demotic is derived from the ancient Greek

demotika, meaning popular. The demotic record was used mainly for legal, administrative, and commercial purposes, although from the Ptolemaic period it was employed for literary, scientific and religious texts.

Coptic. This is the final stage of the language, after the old scripts went into decline during Egypt’s Roman and Christian periods. Coptic is derived from the Arabic *gubti* which is a corruption of the Greek *Aiguptious*, and simply means Egyptian. The Arabs used this term after the conquest of Egypt in the seventh century to denote the native inhabitants of the country, and it is still in use by the Copts.



Above: Tourists on a Nile cruise boat



Above: The train journey through the Red and Black land



Left: Hieroglyphics at Philae Temple

Bottom: Hieroglyphic writing from Luxor temple spelling out the name of Ramesses II

Through Egypt with the Bible

Egypt is mentioned throughout the Bible, from Genesis 12:10 to Revelation 11:8. According to Genesis 10:6 and 13, Mizraim the grandson of Noah and son of Ham is the ancestor of the Egyptians, and Mizraim is the name for Egypt in the Bible. In Arabic, Egypt is *Misr* after Mizraim,

although Psalm 105:23 also calls it 'the land of Ham'. Some writers have suggested that the founder of





Above: Aerial photo of a farmhouse on the west bank of the Nile at Luxor. The style of house has changed little over the millennia

Egypt's first dynasty, Menes, was the same as Mizraim.

Egypt had a profound influence on God's people, the Israelites, and is referred to geographically, symbolically and spiritually, as the place both of refuge and oppression. This duality is first seen in the book of Genesis when Abram (later Abraham) was struggling to survive in a time of famine, and he made the long journey into Egypt to escape the severest part of the famine. He visited the country as a place of refuge but it became a place of captivity and oppression, for whilst there, Abram feared for his life and reasoned that the King (probably Khety II) was going to take his wife Sarai (later Sarah) for himself. When it was discovered that she was not Abram's sister but his wife, they were allowed to leave unharmed, (Genesis 12:10–20).



Above: Camels used for long-distance travel (Genesis 12:16 and Exodus 9:3). This one is in the Sinai peninsular

Joseph, famous for his so called 'coat of many colours', and the great-grandson of Abraham, was sold into slavery by his jealous brothers for twenty shekels, the price of a slave in the Middle Kingdom. The traders brought him to Egypt and he was sold on to Potiphar the captain of the royal guard. Nevertheless, Joseph did extremely well in handling Potiphar's business matters, but Potiphar's wife endeavoured to take advantage of Joseph who refused to cooperate with her wishes; as a consequence he was unfairly thrown into jail. After many years he correctly interpreted the dream of the king (probably Sesostrius III) and was released and was eventually promoted to the second most important figure in the land, able to influence for good both state and family life (Genesis 37:12 to 47:12).

In the time of Joseph, Egypt was the great superpower in the region and, in the course of time, the Israelites settled in the Delta and were eventually enslaved. From here, under the leadership of Moses, they set out on the great Exodus from the land, (Exodus 12). As the ancient Egyptians followed a ten-day week, could the ten plagues have been directed at all areas and times of life? The Israelites, being in the land for 430 years would have become accustomed to this, so the seven-day principle had to be reinstated at Sinai (Exodus 20:8–11). The Exodus of the Hebrew people is undoubtedly the most famous event connected with Egypt, although they often yearned to return (Numbers 11:4 to 6). In later centuries alliances were made with the military might of Egypt's army in preference to relying on the strength and salvation promised by the Lord their God (for example see Isaiah 31:1).

The Bible deliberately draws attention to the special love Solomon had for the daughter of Pharaoh (1 Kings 3:1, 7:8, 9:16 and 24); she may have been the lady referred to in the Song of Solomon, (Song of Songs 1:4–7). An 'Egyptian papyrus column capital' in the Garden Tomb, Jerusalem, may have come from the Egyptian building that lies under the nave of the nearby basilica of St Etienne—could it

have been the tomb of Solomon's Egyptian Queen (2 Chronicles 8:11) ?

In the reign of Rome's greatest emperor Caesar Augustus,

Jesus of Nazareth, along with his family, found refuge in Egypt

(Matthew 2:13–18); perhaps the gifts of the Magi (Matthew 2:11) financed their journey, since gold was, and still is, an international currency, and incense was valuable for use

in the temples and homes alike, and myrrh was used both in medicine and the process of embalming. The fact that God



Top: The gold mummy mask of the General and High Priest Wendjebauendjed reveals the extraordinary care the ancient Egyptians took to preserve the dead

Above: Egyptian papyrus column capital in the Garden Tomb, Jerusalem, which may have come from the tomb of Solomon's Egyptian Queen



Above: Carvings of the different crowns of Egypt flanked by images defaced by early Christians to fulfil the requirements of the second commandment, Deuteronomy 5:8. From the temple at Dendera

had chosen Egypt as a safe place for his infant Son was a great source of pride to Egyptian Christians. According to legend, the holy family travelled as far south as Deir el-Maharraq, near Asyut. If they did, they would no doubt have travelled in sailing boats on the Nile.

Christianity in Egypt

The history of Christianity in Egypt can be traced a long way back. Tradition claims the apostle Mark brought Christianity to Egypt in the early part of the first century AD. Eusebius, Bishop of Caesarea, in his *Ecclesiastic History*, states that Mark first came to Egypt between the first

and third year of the reign of Emperor Claudius (Acts 18), which would be sometime between AD 41 and 44, and that he returned twenty years later to preach and evangelize (Mark 16:15). It is said that Mark's first convert in Alexandria was Anianus, a shoemaker who was later consecrated a bishop and became Patriarch of Alexandria after Mark's death. This succession of Patriarchs has remained unbroken down to the present day, making the Egyptian Christian, or Coptic, Church one of the oldest Christian churches in existence. Boutros-Boutros Ghali the former UN Secretary-General is an internationally renowned Copt.

Egyptology

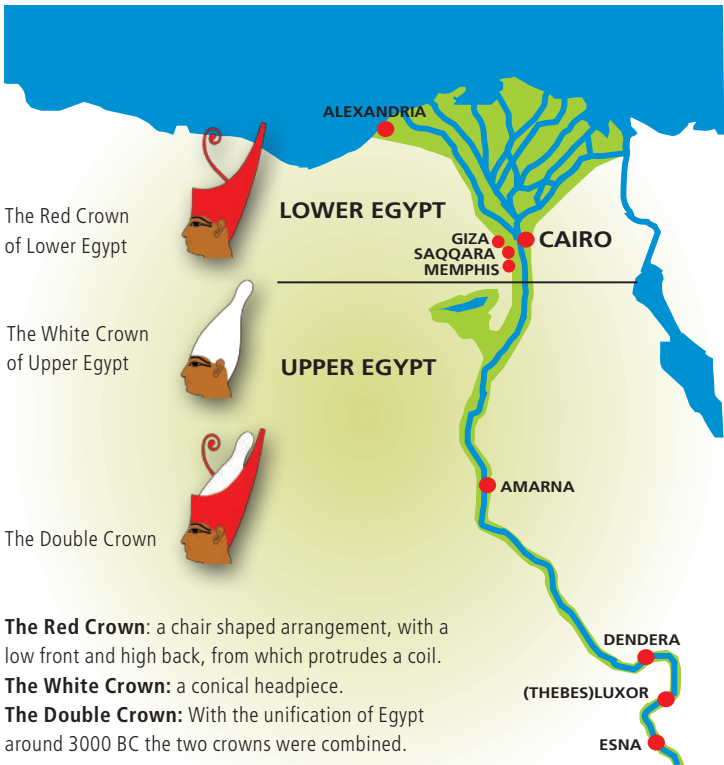
After Napoleon's scholars explored Egypt, Giovanni Belzoni and other entrepreneurs started to ship artefacts back to Europe and an explosion of interest was



Above: At Edfu market many items are displayed to attract the tourist and encourage them to take home a little bit of Egypt

kindled. The science of studying Egypt academically began in 1822 with the deciphering of the hieroglyphic script by Jean-François Champollion. He was developing the work of the Englishman Thomas Young, the inventor of the wave theory of light and the first modern scholar to translate the Demotic script, who had shown how the Greek royal name Ptolemaios was spelt out in Egyptian hieroglyphics on the Rosetta

Stone (see the next chapter). Then William Flinders Petrie and Howard Carter (discoverer of Tutankhamun's tomb) were instrumental in stirring the public's imagination followed by Hollywood's enthusiasm to depict Egypt as a land of wealth and mystery. Today, the many television programmes that highlight recent discoveries have resulted in the current general interest in Egyptology.



See the picture (page 17) for more Egyptian crowns

TRAVEL INFORMATION

Travel to and around Egypt is relatively easy, especially if you join a prearranged tour that will take the stress out of sightseeing. For example see www.dayone.co.uk Those who travel on their own, or in a small party, should plan well ahead. Take advice, as there are areas it is not wise for tourists to travel into, and regulations change regarding visa requirements and exit fees. Also, obtain adequate insurance cover for any medical or other needs.

Websites

Please note that many sites and museums in Egypt do not have websites at present. Egyptian Tourist Authority www.egypt.travel/sitemap.php



Above: Bird's are everywhere. This sparrow is in a crevice at Edfu Temple

Bird Watching

Egypt's strategic geographical position encourages migrant birds to pass through on their journeys between the breeding grounds of Europe and Asia and the wintering grounds of sub-Saharan Africa. For enthusiasts, the well-known 'bottleneck' at Suez is of international importance for birds of prey (Job 39:26) and storks (Leviticus 11:19), which concentrate in large numbers on spring and autumn migration. Even if you are not an ornithologist, a pair of binoculars will enhance the delights of any trip to Egypt.



Above: Egypt's Red Sea coast boasts many fine resorts including that of Sharm El-Sheikh

Scuba diving

Many Red Sea resorts are being developed to cater for the increasing numbers of tourists, and if it is possible to extend the visit after sightseeing, then a few days relaxing along the Red Sea is the best possible preparation before returning to the daily grind.

Eating out

In Cairo there are a variety of places to eat and most hotels will allow non residents into their restaurants. Elsewhere in Egypt there are a great many food stalls and a few coffee shops where the seasoned traveller would be happy to eat. If you are in doubt it is best to go to a hotel.

A GUIDE TO EGYPT



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