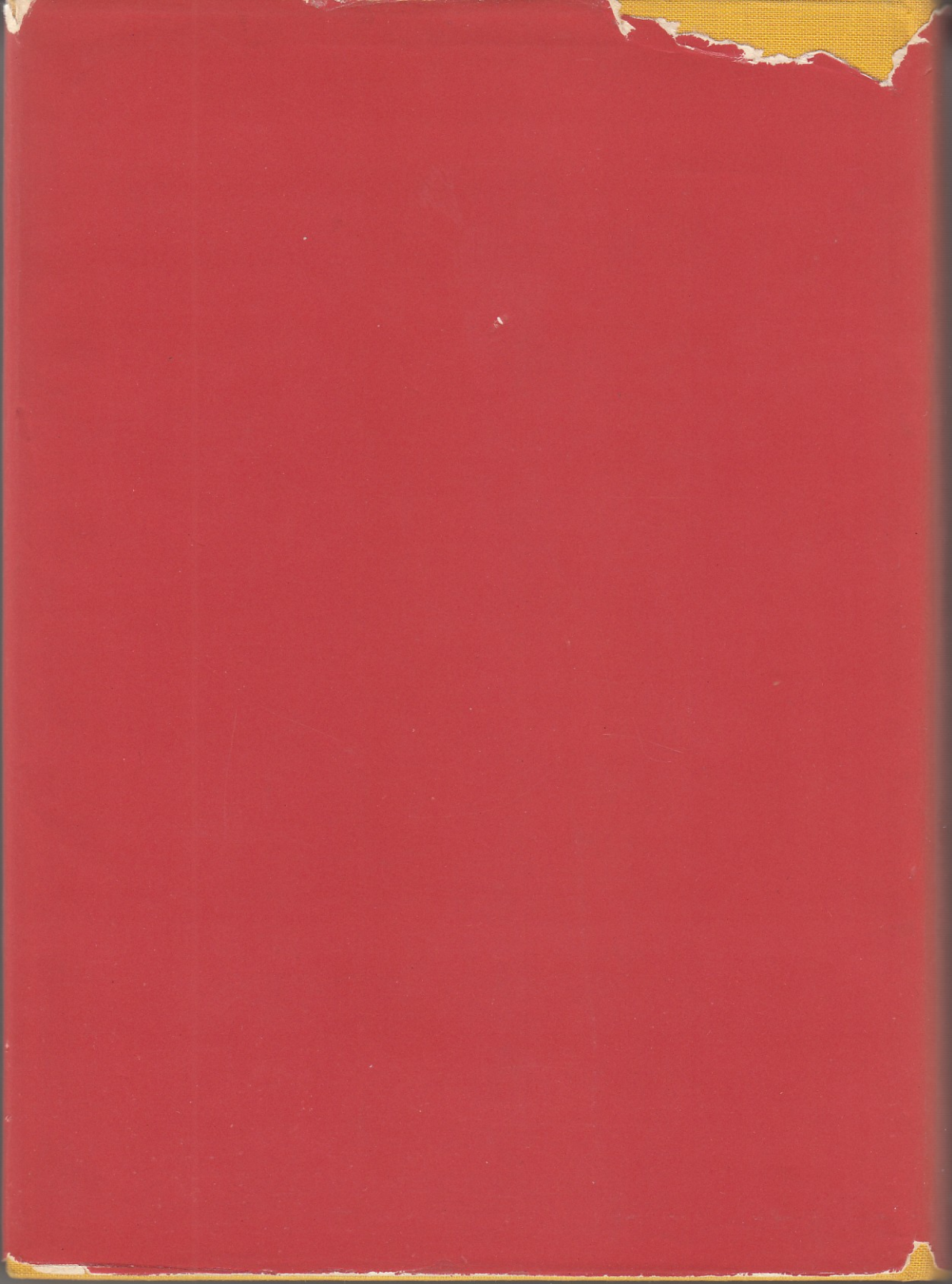


A DICTIONARY OF EGYPTIAN CIVILIZATION





A company of
Nubian archers.
Wooden model.
Asyut. First Inter-
mediate Period.
Cairo Museum.



by their victims. Educated men, including superior officers, give a gloomy picture of them in order to justify to their

students the old saying that the lot of a scribe is better than that of a soldier. When a young man became qualified

to be either a charioteer or a scribe, the most agreeable careers open to him were: colonial administration, service



A company of
spearmen. Woo-
den model. Asyut.
First Intermediate
Period. Cairo
Museum.



Birds in an acacia tree. Tomb of Khnumhotep, Beni Hasan. Mid-XIIIth Dynasty. From a copy by Nina M. Davies: Oriental Institute, Chicago.

carnation of goddesses (e.g. Nekhbet*), the buzzard, the kite, and at night the owl, barn-owl and sparrowhawk. Liked or disliked by the peasants (the poor sparrow was used as a hieroglyph



to represent both something small and something bad) the common field birds were as in modern days, crows, rooks, the elegant hoopoe, pigeons, swallows, and in winter time the oriole and



other birds of passage. In watery places the pied-kingfisher and a crowd of wading birds flourished—ibises*, lapwings, spoonbills, avocets, sandmartins (which are said to raid the mouths of crocodiles*), several herons, among them the cattle-egret, and the phoenix* (with his burning plumage), numerous varieties of duck, geese and other web-footed creatures (teal, pelican, cormorant, etc.).



Geese, ducks and pigeons were most commonly represented. They hang lifeless, tied in bundles or already trussed and roasted. Others are shown being removed from a fowling-net, ruffled and stunned. They have their wings cruelly crossed or they are put in a cage. While awaiting slaughter, the birds were fattened for the table. In thousands of back-yards belonging to nobles or temples birds were regularly hand-fed; among them were Nile geese, whose despotic gander terrorised the whole gaggle, the common goose, the grey goose and



Birds in a papyrus thicket. A fragment of a fowling scene. Tomb of the Royal Scribe Horemheb, Thebes. Reign of Thutmose IV.



GAMES AND TOYS. Tops, rattles, puppets (dancing dwarfs, crocodiles with movable jaws) and miniature battle-axes were among children's toys. Little girls played with baby-dolls in cradles (not only the fetish dolls which were supposed to help them to have large numbers of their own children when they grew up, but real little wooden dolls in their own little beds).

The girls in the harem* played ball-games skilfully and gracefully in order to divert their master. The older boys engaged in games of skill like those in our fair-grounds (fishing with a stick and shooting at a target) and several exercises of dexterity (a kind of hot-cockles), tight-rope walking, wrestling, running, jumping; all the sports were conducted according to the accepted rules. Among the games illustrated in the mastabas is a curious jumping game in which the obstacles are two of the players sitting in the dust. The meaning of this amusing scene remained unexplained until an Egyptian Egyptologist remembered that he had played such a game in his childhood.

Adults took an interest in sport* and lingered in the shade or in the street in the hope of a lucky break or of devising clever moves. The games they watched were 'serpent', the forerunner of the 'goose-game', the 'dog and the jackal' and *qumt* (an ancestor of tric-trac) which was played on a board of 30 squares.

J. Y.



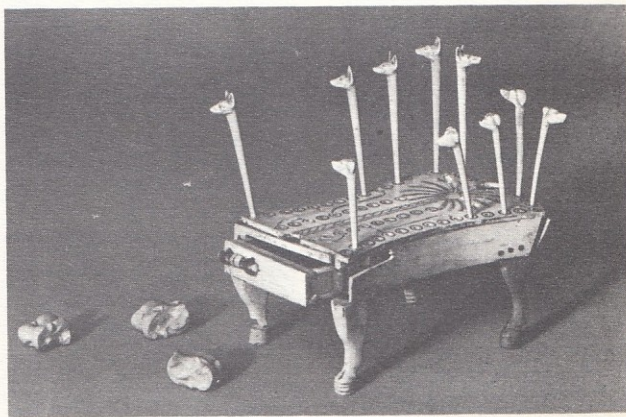
Rag doll.
Berlin Museum.

GARDENS. v. *Agriculture.*

GEB. Geb was a male divinity personifying the earth, husband of the goddess Nut* (the sky) from whom he was separated by Shu* (the atmosphere). According to Heliopolitan legends, Geb was one of the gods of the Ennead* who had been an earthly king before the advent of human-beings — the Pharaoh was in fact called 'Heir of Geb'. According to a late tradition Geb seized royal power from his aged father Shu. In early representations Geb is shown as a man with no particular attributes; later iconography shows him wearing a complicated crown.

S. S.

GIZA. The medieval town of Giza opposite Cairo has become a fine modern city but it will always owe its fame to



The game 'Dog and Jackal'. Wood, ebony and ivory. Thebes. Late XIIIth Dynasty. M.M.A., New York.



Musicians and dancers. Banqueting scene. From an unknown tomb, Thebes. XVIIIth Dynasty. British Museum.

ed a xxist Dynasty tomb. Working back from the dealers to their suppliers, Maspero and the Antiquities Service laid hands on Abd el-Rassul. Enquiries, interrogation, even the use of the 'third degree' by the moudir of Qena, failed to produce any result. However, after many months, when the official enquiries had proved useless, a dispute arose between the accomplices of Abd el-Rassul (his brothers) and one of them disclosed the whole affair. From July 5th to 11th, 1881, officials of the Antiquities Service visited the cachette, removed the treasures and took them to Luxor where the Museum boat soon came to collect them. 'As soon as the boat was loaded', wrote Maspero, 'it left for Bulaq with the cargo of kings. Then a strange thing happened. Between Luxor and Qufi, on both banks of the Nile, the peasant women, their hair disarranged, followed the boat, uttering cries of mourning and the men fired guns as though at



Figure of a girl playing a harp. Wood. XXVth Dynasty. British Museum.

a funeral'. A final misadventure awaited the royal mummies at the gates of Cairo. The scribe at the custom's post, who was a stickler for the rules like his ancestors, searched vainly in his registers for the proper tax to levy on this unexpected import. Being unable to find exactly what he was looking for, he applied to the kings, his ancestors, the tax which seemed to him the most appropriate: the levy which was made on dried fish! A final insult by a forgetful people.

s. s.

MUMMIFICATION. v. *Mummies.*

MUSIC. Diodorus' comment that 'the Egyptians considered it undignified to learn music' is contradicted by the picture of the vizir Mera* listening to chamber-music in the company of his wife. It must be recognised that, ordinarily, musical performances—however important their place in Egyptian life



Painted hieroglyphs. From the mastaba of Nefermaat, Meidum. Early IVth Dynasty. Cairo Museum.

and, in both cases, either from left to right or from right to left. Thus a hieroglyphic text may be arranged in four possible ways. The sequence in which the signs are to be read is indicated by the direction in which the living beings (human and animal) are facing, which is always towards the beginning of the inscription.

Hieroglyphic writing first appears at the beginning of the 1st Dynasty (c. 3100 B.C.). Almost from its inception the system gives the appearance of being fully developed (the progressive order according to which the elements of the writing have been explained here, though agreeing with our conceptions of what is logical, does not strictly follow the actual stages in the creation of the hieroglyphic script: all the elements appeared together at the same time). For more than 3000 years hieroglyphs were

used on Egyptian monuments; few objects were left uninscribed. The script was employed over a vast area covering the whole Egyptian Empire. It included not only the lower Nile valley but a large part of the Sudan, the western oases, Sinai and many other

parts of the Asiatic Near East.

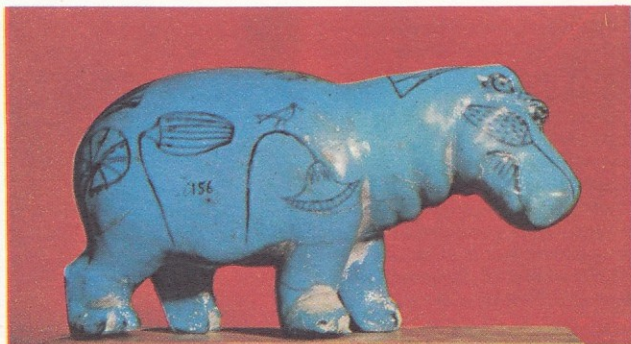
The various cursive scripts (hieratic* and demotic*) were adaptations for epistolary and administrative needs of hieroglyphs written on stone.

In the course of the 1st millennium B.C. the hieroglyphic system which had remained until then remarkably unchanged (except in a few minor details) began to become complicated; old signs took on new values or unaccustomed forms, and new signs came into use. The New Kingdom scribes were content with about 700 signs; in practice they used fewer. But under the Ptolemies thousands of signs were used on temple walls and sometimes the same sign could have 7, 8 or 9 different values depending on its context.

The last known hieroglyphic inscription, on the island of Philae*, is dated to August 24th 394 A.D. in the reign of Theodosius.

s. s.

HIPPOPOTAMUS. In hieroglyphs a picture of a hippopotamus means 'heavy', and with good reason. This herbivorous animal with a forbidding appearance is not dangerous. It is his greedy appetite which



Hippopotamus. Faience. Middle Kingdom. Cairo Museum.