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described in the classical authors of Greece and Rome
between 70 B.C and A.D. 69*

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This thesis considers the references to Egypt by Greek and Roman writers between 70 B.C. and A.D. 69 in so far as they made any substantial judgment on the geography, climate, population, laws, customs and religion and their accounts of the cities, towns and villages and of the social structure of Egyptian society. Passing references in authors, chiefly poets, are noted only in so far as they have a bearing on these main considerations.

The important classical authors from the point of view of this thesis are Diodorus Siculus, Strabo and Dioscorides in Greek and Pomponⁿius Mela and Pliny the Elder in Latin.

The thesis is divided into three parts. Part One discusses the geography of Egypt and its chapters discuss position, extent and formation of the land (with an appendix on the Homeric statement about Pharos) surface relief, climate, deserts, oases, canals, flora and fauna and mineral resources. Part Two covers population, urban settlements, cities, towns and important villages, with special attention to the three ancient capitals - Memphis, Thebes and Alexandria.

Part Three is concerned with Egyptian society and discusses the antiquity of the Egyptians, their physical characteristics, behaviour and manners and goes on to consider their religion in its mythical and more metaphysical aspects and their veneration of sacred animals. Finally the structure of Egyptian society is considered - the rulers (Pharaohs, kings, prefects) the land tenure, the division of society into classes with particular reference to priests, warriors and peasants. The last chapter, before the conclusion, deals with laws and customs including burial customs.

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The Land and the Social Life of Ancient Egypt
as described in the Classical Authors of Greece
and Rome between 70 B.C. and A.D. 69.

by

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St. Cuthberts Society

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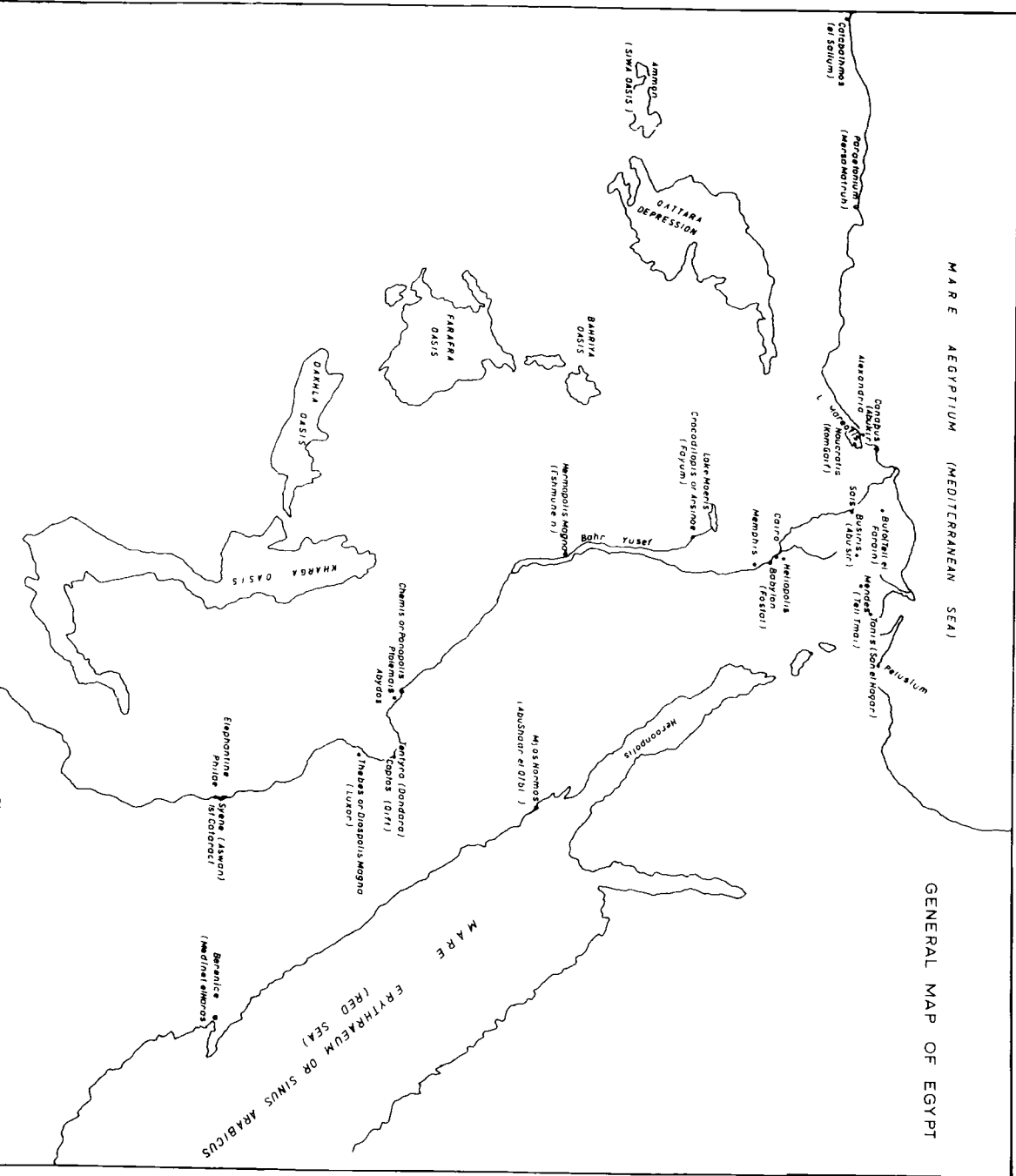
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Muhammad Abboudy Ibrahim.

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INTRODUCTION.

In attempting to write a thesis on Egypt as seen by the Classical authors, I have found it quite impossible to include, within the time and scope limited to this work, all those Greeks and Romans, from Homer onwards, who referred to Egypt in one way or another. It is for this reason that I deemed it very necessary and proper to choose a limited period to cover in writing this thesis. Thus I have chosen the period which begins with the year 70 B.C. and ends with A.D. 69. The period extending from 70 B.C. to 30 B.C. falls within the rule of the Ptolemaic Dynasty and it is a period of civil wars and dynastic squabbles. Conditions in Egypt, political, economic and social during that period were generally bad. These factors led to the intervention of Rome in the internal affairs of the country and finally to its conquest (30 B.C.) and subsequently to the subjugation of its people.

As for the period, which extends from the year 30 B.C. to A.D. 69, it falls within the Roman rule, and its main characteristics are stability in which the Egyptian people were kept very firmly under control. Besides this fake stability, there was on the whole economic prosperity, not for the benefit of the rightful people of Egypt, as one expects, but for the alien Romans.

As I could not include all the Classical authors ab ovo usque ad mala, in other words from Homer to the conquest of Egypt by the Arabs (A.D. 640), I was not able also to discuss all the information imparted to us by the Classical authors of the period of our own choice.

A phenomenon such as the rise of the Nile, which is in itself a very interesting topic for the ancients as it was discussed by practically all the major authors, is not discussed in this thesis, especially because the present writer has realised that this topic can be found discussed in greater detail by the French scholar Daniele Bonneau in a very recent book entitled 'La Crue du Nil'. I have also left undiscussed the history of the kings of Egypt and a few other topics.

I have divided this thesis into three parts. Part one discusses the geography of Egypt. This part includes a chapter on the position and extent of Egypt both geographical and political; another on the origin and formation of the land and a relevant appendix, which is concerned with the Homeric statement regarding the Island of Pharos. A third chapter describes the surface relief : the fertile land - the Delta and the Nile valley within the Egyptian territory, the course of the Nile in its Egyptian reaches, the deserts, the oases, the lakes, marshes and lagoons, the Canal of Sesostris (otherwise the Nile - Gulf of Suez and Red Sea Canal), the trade routes and the sea coasts. The

fourth chapter discusses the climate, the fifth the flora and fauna and the sixth the mineral resources.

Part Two is concerned with the population and the urban settlements of the population. It comprises chapter seven which discusses the number of the inhabitants of Egypt and the number of its cities, towns and important villages. Then follows a survey of some of the important towns and villages. This is followed by chapter eight which describes in greater detail the three main cities of Egypt, which were at one time the capitals of Egypt. These three are dealt with in their historical order : Memphis, Thebes, and Alexandria.

Part Three is given the title 'Egyptian Society' and it consists of four chapters. Chapter nine discusses the Egyptians, their antiquity, their physical characteristics, and their behaviour and manners. This is followed by chapter ten which describes the Egyptian religion in those of its aspects which are discussed by the Classical authors, namely the mythology or the metaphysics, and the sacred animals. Chapter eleven is concerned with the classes of the Egyptian society : the division of that society into several classes, and the occupations of the members of these classes and land tenure. This chapter then discusses the rulers of Egypt : Pharaohs, kings, and prefects, and finally the main classes of society in detail: the priests, the warriors and the peasants. Chapter twelve describes the laws and customs including

funerary customs.

Then follows a final summary and conclusion in which the main points raised by the Classical authors of our chosen period are discussed and assessed.

This study is based on the writings of several Classical authors, both Greek and Roman. But as we shall notice, the names of only a few of these authors will be mentioned constantly in this thesis. These we shall consider major authors as far as Egypt is concerned. Among these we mention the Greek Diodorus and Strabo, and the Latin Pliny the Elder and Pomponius Mela. On the other hand we shall bring in, whenever it is relevant, other authors of lesser importance as far as our subject is concerned.

It is interesting to notice, however, that all those authors of the latter group, with the exception of Dioscorides, are Roman. Among them we mention Cicero, the author of the book entitled 'de Bello Alexandrino', which came down to us among the works of Julius Caesar, Lucretius, Virgil, Ovid, Tibullus, Horace, Propertius, Livy, Sallust, Lucan, Quintus Curtius Rufus, Columella, Seneca, Varro and Tacitus.

I have also found that it would be useful to refer occasionally in our present work to the information imparted to us by the Jewish authors, namely Philo and Josephus, who wrote within our chosen period. For, as we shall see, Philo and Josephus left

some useful information regarding Alexandria and its inhabitants and also, but to a lesser extent, regarding the rest of the country, particularly its economic and political position in the Roman empire.

The Classical authors who wrote before the year 70 B.C., especially those whose works were used by the authors of our period, will also be referred to. Thus we shall mention Homer, Pindar, Hippocrates, Hecataeus of Miletus, Herodotus, Sophocles, Ephorus of Cyme, Strato of Lampsacus, Plato, Aristotle, Theophrastus, Erathosthenes, Isocrates, Hecataeus of Abdera, Hipparchus, Theocritus, Apollonius Rhodius, Agatharchides of Cnidus and a few others. We shall also refer to Plutarch and the Geographer Ptolemy who wrote after our chosen period.

As we shall observe, this work is mainly based on the accounts and statements of the four major authors above mentioned in addition to Dioscorides. But the other minor Classical authors as well as the Jewish writers and the papyrological evidence from the Graeco-Roman period will be cited, whenever it seems relevant.

The present writer acknowledges that he made full use of Dr. John Ball's excellent book 'Egypt in the Classical Geographers', Alan Gardiner's 'Ancient Egyptian Onomastica' in addition to his personal knowledge of the country, to identify the names of ancient towns, villages and localities. He confesses

also that he, like the Classical writers, and despite the fact that he is Egyptian, does not pretend to know the secrets of the ancient Egyptian language or rather languages. He, therefore, examined the validity and credibility of the information supplied by the Classical authors through what modern Egyptologists, who are the experts on that subject, are able to furnish, and relied to a lesser extent on his personal knowledge of the country and its people in modern times. The personal knowledge can be seen clearly shown when topics such as the geography of Egypt or customs and manners of the Egyptians and their attitude towards religion are discussed.

PART I

THE GEOGRAPHY OF EGYPT

CHAPTER I

THE POSITION AND EXTENT.

What is Egypt? Where does Egypt lie? Is Egypt the country inhabited by the Egyptians? Is Egypt the last stretch of the Nile Valley and the Delta or is she the Delta only? Does Egypt lie in Africa or in Asia or in both, or does it form a separate entity?

At different periods of her long history Egypt was ruled by different people; sometimes the rulers were Egyptians, sometimes foreign invaders. Among those foreigners who invaded Egypt were the Shepherd people, known as the Hyksus (1720-1575/6 B.C.), the Libyans (945-730 B.C.), the Ethiopians (730-664 B.C.), who were driven out by the Assyrians, who ruled Egypt through the Saitic Egyptian Kings, the Persians, who conquered Egypt twice (520-404 and 341-332 B.C.), the Macedonians (332-30 B.C.), and the Romans (30 B.C. - A.D.390). Diodorus, who mentioned rightly the fact that Egypt was ruled for the most part of her history by Egyptian kings, failed to mention all the foreign invaders with the exception of the Ethiopians, the Persians and the Macedonians, although he gave us the impression that he learned his facts from the Egyptian priests.⁽¹⁾

(1) Diod. 44.

It is necessary to distinguish between Egypt proper (the country inhabited by the Egyptians) and the Egyptian empire (including other territories inhabited by non-Egyptians).

As early as the 6th century B.C. the then known world was regarded by the Greeks as consisting of two large continents, Europe and Asia, the latter included Egypt and North Africa, then known as Libya. This was the view of such writers as Hecataeus of Miletus⁽²⁾ and Hippocrates⁽³⁾. According to Dr. Dicks⁽⁴⁾ this division of the world into two continents was apparently a recognition of the fact that Europe and Asia (the two halves of the world) differed greatly in temperature; but the division into three continents, Europe, Asia and Libya (Africa), was also known at Hecataeus of Miletus' time. But by the time of Herodotus the known world was regarded as consisting of three continents, Europe, Asia and Africa (Libya).⁽⁵⁾ The Nile was generally regarded as the boundary between Asia and Africa (Libya).⁽⁶⁾

(2) Hecataeus of Miletus (6th and 5th Century B.C.) in Ἡ Περὶ Ἑλλάδος. His statement mentioned by Dr. John Ball, Egypt in the Classical Geographers, p.9; Dr. D.R. Dicks, Hipparchus' Geographical Fragments, Introd. p.20, and E.H. Bunbury, a History of Ancient Geography, Vol. I, pp.145, 146.

(3) Hippocrates (469-399 B.C.) Aer.13 (περὶ Ἀέρων, ὕδατων, τοπων. On Air, Water, and Places (Localities)).

(4) Dicks, op.cit. Introd. pp. 20, 21.

(5) Hdt (C.490 - C.425 B.C.), 11. 16 & 1v. 45.

(6) Hdt, 11. 16 & 17.

Herodotus, however, held⁽⁷⁾ that if the Greek (and especially the Ionian) writers were correct, they should add a fourth continent (lit. "part"), the Nile Delta, since this was separated from Libya (Africa) by the Canopic mouth of the Nile and from Asia by the Pelusian mouth. In Herodotus' own view⁽⁸⁾ Egypt was the whole territory inhabited by the Egyptians just as Cilicia was the whole territory inhabited by the Cilicians, and there was no boundary between Asia and Libya other than the borders (*οἱ οὐρανοὶ*) of the Egyptians⁽⁹⁾. Herodotus adds⁽¹⁰⁾ that it was commonly held by

(7) Hdt, 11. 16.

(8) Hdt, 11. 17.

(9) Literally translated: "save the boundaries of the Egyptians". (cf. Loeb Cl. Lib. and Bude), but Dr. J. Ball (op.cit. p.12) concludes from Hdt's statement that the western limit of Egypt is the dividing line between Libya (Africa) and Asia, Egypt being entirely in Asia. On the other hand, How & Wells (A Commentary on Hdt, Vol. I pp.167,168 and 317) tell us that Hdt states (11. 17) two geographical positions in this chapter: (1) that Egypt is one and indivisible (not, as the view of the Greeks would imply, half in Asia and half in Africa); (2) that the boundaries of Asia and Africa are (not the Nile, but) the boundaries of Egypt. To which continent Hdt would assign Egypt he leaves uncertain. On Ch.39 of Bk. 1v, they tell us that Hdt, however, seems by combining Egypt with Syria to put them both in Asia. On the other hand, he does not count the Egyptians in this (i.e. continuation); and 41.2 he clearly makes Africa begin at the isthmus of Suez. In 11. 17.1 he makes the boundaries of Asia and Libya (Africa) those of Egypt, but does not say to which continent it belongs. On the whole, it is more probable that Hdt gave Egypt to Africa, but many maintain the contrary, but as he thought Africa a continuation of Asia, as being the exact position of Egypt seemed to him of little importance.

(10) Hdt, 11. 17.

the Greeks that the whole of Egypt from the cataract (i.e. the 1st cataract above Aswan) and the town of Elephantine as far as Kerkasorus was divided into two parts (one in Libya (Africa) and one in Asia) by the Nile which flowed from the cataract to the sea through the centre of Egypt; from the cataract as far as Kerkasorus the Nile had one channel but below that town the river splits into three branches: the Pelusian on the East, the Canopic on the West, and the third (regarded as the continuation of the main channel) running through the middle of the Delta, and it was called the Sebennytic mouth.

The idea that the world was divided into three continents, Africa (Libya), Asia and Europe, and that the Nile separated Asia and Africa (Libya) continued to be held by later writers. Before 70 B.C., the starting point of this work, it was held by Polybius⁽¹¹⁾, who has been criticized for failing to follow advances in geography and ignoring the fact that by his own time some geographers already regarded the Red Sea (known then as the Arabian Gulf) as the boundary between Africa (Libya) and Asia.⁽¹²⁾

The same idea also continued to be held by some classical authors after 70 B.C. It was held by Diodorus Siculus,⁽¹³⁾ who maintained that in its lower course the Nile was increasingly

(11) Polybius (C.203 - C.120 B.C.), Histories, III. 37.

(12) See F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. I, p.368, comm. on Ch.37 of Bk III, (Oxford 1957).

(13) Diod. (fl. C. 21 B.C.) 1. 32 & 11 21.

reduced in volume as its waters were drawn off to the two continents (Africa and Asia)⁽¹⁴⁾; by Strabo⁽¹⁵⁾ who maintained that Libya (Africa) had the form of a right-angled triangle, the base of which lay opposite to Greece and extended from Egypt and the Nile to Maurusia and the Pillars (Gibraltar), but who elsewhere regarded⁽¹⁶⁾ rivers as unsuitable boundaries; and by Pomponius Mela.⁽¹⁷⁾

The view that the world was divided into only two continents, Asia and Europe, also persisted longer. It was held by Varro⁽¹⁸⁾, Sallust⁽¹⁹⁾, who regarded the Catabathmos (mod. El-Sallum) as the region separating Egypt from Africa, and Lucan⁽²⁰⁾, who tells us that some held that Libya formed a third continent, but he, basing his judgement on the winds and the sky, regarded it as part of Europe. He apparently accepted the Nile and the Tanais as forming the boundary of Europe and so divided Egypt between Asia and Europe.

(14) See C.H. Oldfather, in Loeb, ed. of Diod. vol.I, p.105, n.2.

(15) Strabo, (64/63 B.C. - A.D. 21), I. 4. 7 & 17. 3. 1.

(16) Strabo, I. 4. 8.

(17) Pomponius Mela (fl. A.D. 37-41) *Chorographia*, Bk.I. l. 6 ff. (Teubner, ed. K.Frick 1880); cf. E.Bunbury, op.cit, Vol.II, pp. 353, 354.

(18) Varro (Marcus Terentius, 116-27 B.C.), de Lingua Latina, V. v.31.

(19) Sallust (86-C. 34 B.C.), Jugurtha, XVII, 3. 4.

(20) Lucan (A.D. 39 - A.D. 65), The Civil War IX. 411-417.

Several writers described⁽²¹⁾ Egypt as stretching from north to south, her lower part, called the Delta from its resemblance to the Greek letter Δ , embraced by the two outermost branches of the Nile. To some, this lower part alone was Egypt⁽²²⁾ and was regarded as an island bounded by the Mediterranean on the north, by the Pelusian mouth separating it from Asia on the east, and by the Canopic mouth separating it from Africa on the west.

Some writers, including Strabo⁽²³⁾ , Pomponius Mela⁽²⁴⁾ and Pliny⁽²⁵⁾ referred to Asia as adjoining Africa (Libya) and to Egypt as being the first country of Asia when one leaves Africa (Libya). Pliny, however, contradicts himself when he

(21) Pliny, N.H. v. 48, cf. Isocrates (436-338 B.C.) (Busiris 12) who states that the Egyptians inhabited an island (i.e. The Delta bounded on the east and the west by the Nile branches, and on the north by the Mediterranean Sea) cf. also Strabo, 17.1.4. who described the Delta as an island and Diod. I.30 "land's layout" and 33 "the Delta as an island".

(22) Pliny, N.H., loc.cit. in describing the extent of Egypt, Pliny refers to some authors before him as saying that Egypt is an island. He may be referring to Isocrates, loc.cit.

(23) Strabo, 2.5.26 & 33.

(24) Pomponius Mela, op.cit. Bk. I. ix. 49.

(25) Pliny, loc.cit.

states in the same place⁽²⁶⁾ that the Delta, being a triangular island, was separated from Africa by the Canopic branch of the Nile and from Asia by the Pelusian branch. Did he realise what he was writing about ? For how could he say that Asia was adjacent to Africa and that Egypt was the first part of the former after leaving the latter and, at the same time that the Delta, which made an integral part of Egypt, he made separated from Africa and Asia in the manner described above ? Surely he would have been more cautious like his Greek predecessor Herodotus to question the matter.⁽²⁷⁾ Strabo stated⁽²⁸⁾ that the shore of Africa (Libya) began at Alexandria, and the work entitled De Bello Alexandrino, which came down among the works of Julius Caesar, apparently contained a similar view since it said that half Alexandria belonged to Africa (Libya).⁽²⁹⁾

According to Strabo⁽³⁰⁾ some of the best of the geographers who separated Asia from Africa (Libya) regarded the Red

(26) Pliny, loc.cit.

(27) Hdt , loc.cit.

(28) Strabo, 2. 5. 33.

(29) (Julius Caesar) Bell. Alex. 14.

(30) Strabo, 1. 2. 28.

Sea (known then as "Sinus Arabicus) as a more natural boundary between the two continents than the Nile, because the isthmus⁽³¹⁾ is very narrow (its crossing involving a journey of only three or four days) whereas the Nile is a considerable distance from the Indian Ocean (Oceanus) so it does not separate Africa (Libya) as a whole from Asia.⁽³²⁾ Walbank suggested⁽³³⁾ that Ephorus may have first moved the boundary between Africa (Libya) and Asia from the Nile to the Red Sea.

To sum up what has been said, we can say that Egypt was regarded by some classical authors as forming part of Africa, by some part of Asia, by still others as divided between Africa and Asia. A fourth group considered the Delta a separate entity belonging neither to Africa nor Asia.

So much for the site of Egypt as regards the continents of the known world.

Now when we turn to Egypt itself we find that its position and general form are very much admired by almost all the classical writers who described that country. Diodorus, for instance, tells us⁽³⁴⁾ that the land of Egypt stretches in a general way from

(31) i.e. the isthmus that separated the Red Sea from the Mediterranean, along which the present Suez Canal has been cut.

(32) see n. 6. p.3.

(33) F.W. Walbank, op.cit. Vol. I. p.368, Comm. on Ch.37.

(34) Diod. I. 30, 31.

north to south, and in natural strength and beauty of landscape is reputed to excel in no small degree all other regions that have been formed into kingdoms.⁽³⁵⁾ For Egypt⁽³⁶⁾ is fortified on all sides, on the west by vast desert⁽³⁷⁾ which is arid⁽³⁸⁾ and full of wild beasts and highly dangerous to cross, on the south by the cataracts of the Nile and the mountains⁽³⁹⁾ flanking them, on the east partly by the river partly by the desert⁽⁴⁰⁾ and swamps of Barathara (i.e. pits), on the north by the sandy and marshy Mediterranean which is, with the exception of the harbour

(35) It is important to notice that when Diodorus visited Egypt (59 B.C.), it was still a monarchy, under the Ptolemaic Dynasty, whereas when Strabo, Pomponius Mela and Pliny were writing Egypt was no longer a monarchy, but an Imperial province under Roman rule.

(36) i.e. the inhabited part of Egypt, mainly the Nile valley and the Delta.

(37) i.e. the Western Desert which constitutes part of the Great Sahara of N. Africa.

(38) In fact, Diodorus is exaggerating here, because, as Strabo (17.1. 42) rightly says, the Western desert had, within the present Egyptian territory, a number of oases, which were inhabited, well supplied with water and other amenities of life, Siwa Oasis, for instance, the celebrated Ammon of the classical writers.

(39) i.e. the Nubian mountains.

(40) i.e. the Eastern Desert and the Sinai Desert.

of Pharos (i.e. Alexandria) almost harbourless. The land (i.e. the inhabited region which consisted of the Delta and the Nile Valley) is oblong in shape, having a coast line of two thousand stadia (370 kilometres) and extending inland about six thousand stadia (1,110 kilometres). Strabo says⁽⁴¹⁾ "briefly speaking Egypt (i.e. Egypt proper) consists of the river land (ἡ ποταμία, which could mean either a land irrigated by the water of the Nile or which is more probably a land silted up by the Nile), namely, the last stretch of the river land on either side of the Nile which, beginning at the boundaries of Ethiopia and extending to the vertex of the Delta, scarcely anywhere occupies a continuous habitable space as broad as three hundred stadia (35 kilometres)". This inhabited part of Egypt above the Delta Strabo compares⁽⁴²⁾ to a rolled-out bandage⁽⁴³⁾, it being, he maintains,

(41) Strabo, 17. 1. 4.

(42) Strabo, 17. 1. 4.

(43) This phrase is read by some other scholars as meaning "The inhabited part resembles a hand outstretched to full length", meaning both arm and hand, and thus referring to the Delta as well as to the stretch of the river land from Ethiopia and the vertex (see H.I. Jones, in Loeb. ed. of Strabo's Geography, Vol. VIII, pp. 16, 17. n.1.

merely a river land on both sides of the river and is flanked by the Western and Eastern Deserts, which extend from the region of Syene down to the Egyptian Sea (i.e. the Mediterranean). But the country beyond the mountains (i.e. the deserts), Strabo says,⁽⁴⁴⁾ is for a great distance uninhabited.

Diodorus⁽⁴⁵⁾ and Strabo⁽⁴⁶⁾ observed that this habitable region of Egypt, being a level plain, is covered by water and is turned to a lake, when the Nile is in flood, with the exception of the towns, villages and farm houses, which are built on natural hills or artificial mounds; the whole scene, both authors notice, comes to resemble islands; and in Diodorus' words, they resemble Cyclades islands.⁽⁴⁷⁾ The present writer observed that until recently such phenomena were repeated annually, during flood time in some parts of Upper Egypt, though after the completion of the construction of Aswan High Dam, such phenomena will disappear for ever.

If proper Egypt seems to some of the classical writers to consist only of the cultivable region, its geographical and, more

(44) Strabo, 17. 1. 4.

(45) Diod. I. 36.

(46) Strabo, 17. 1. 4.

(47) cf. Hdt. 11. 97. who described the scene in almost identical manner and who likened the towns during the inundation to the islands in the Aegean Sea.

important than that, its political definition for them is a different matter. Thus Strabo⁽⁴⁸⁾ informs us "the early writers gave the name Egypt to only the part of the country that was inhabited and watered by the Nile, beginning at the region of Syene (Aswan) and extending to the sea; but the later writers down to Strabo's own time have added on the eastern side approximately all the parts between the Arabian Gulf (Sinus Arabicus, the present Red Sea) and the Nile, and on the western side the parts extending as far as the oases, and on the sea coast the parts extending from the Canopic mouth to Catabathmos⁽⁴⁹⁾ (mod. El-Sallum) and the domains of the Cyrenaeeans. "For the Kings after Ptolemy",⁽⁵⁰⁾ Strabo adds, "became so powerful that they took possession of Cyrenaea (Κυρηναία)⁽⁵¹⁾ itself and even united Cyprus with Egypt. The Romans, who succeeded the Ptolemies (30 B.C.), separated these three territories, and made Egypt withdraw to its former limits". If we take what Strabo has just said we find that the fact that the Ptolemies extended their

(48) Strabo, 17. 1. 5.

(49) It is interesting to notice that El-Sallum the ancient Catabathmos, is still marking the western border-line of Egypt with Libya.

(50) i.e. Ptolemy Soter I, the general of Alexander the Great, and the founder of the Macedonian or Ptolemaic Dynasty, which ruled Egypt from 331 B.C. to 30 B.C.

(51) i.e. Cyrenaica situated west of Egypt.

sovereignty over a number of other regions is correct. Strabo, however, is not at all precise in stating that the kings after Ptolemy (ὅς ἀπὸ τοῦ Πτολεμαίου βασιλεὺς) and here he means Ptolemy Soter I, have conquered Cyrenaica, Cyprus and have annexed them to Egypt, rather than saying that Ptolemy Soter himself was the conqueror of these territories.⁽⁵²⁾ Strabo also forgets to mention that Ptolemy Soter himself annexed not only Cyrenaica⁽⁵³⁾ and Cyprus⁽⁵⁴⁾, but also other regions, in Asia, Asia Minor and the Aegean Sea. It is here that we find others, notably Diodorus, completing the shortcomings of Strabo. For Diodorus mentions⁽⁵⁵⁾ that Ptolemy Soter I occupied Crete, Syria and Phoenicia and annexed them to his Egyptian kingdom. He further adds⁽⁵⁶⁾ that Ptolemy Soter conquered Cyrene, Upper Syria, and other parts of Asia Minor, Cyprus and other islands of the Aegean

(52) E. Bevan, A History of Egypt, The Ptolemaic Dynasty, pp.22, 25. (London, 1927). see also: A.J. Toynbee, Hannibal's Legacy, vol. I. pp. 45, 46. London 1965.

(53) Cyrene or Cyrenaica was annexed to Egypt by Ptolemy Soter I towards the end of 332 B.C. (v. Bevan, op.cit. p.22).

(54) Cyprus' annexation to Egypt took place in 313 B.C. by Ptolemy Soter I, (also Bevan, op.cit. p.25).

(55) cf. also Polybius, The Histories, Bk. V. 34.

(56) Diod. XVIII. 43.

Sea. Strabo is also correct when he states that the Romans separated both Cyrene and Cyprus from Egypt.⁽⁵⁷⁾ Egypt itself by Strabo's time was a Roman province (Ἐπαρχία)⁽⁵⁸⁾, or rather an Imperial Province of Rome,⁽⁵⁹⁾ a province of special kind. Besides Diodorus and Strabo, Sallust⁽⁶⁰⁾ seems to be referring to the same idea that Egypt extended its sphere of influence to include Cyrenaica. Sallust⁽⁶¹⁾ maintains that the Carthaginians regarded the Altars of Philaeni (approx. Mukhtar) as marking the boundary between their empire and Egypt. It is clear, however, that the Romans, who occupied Egypt, stripped it of its former dominions, turned it into an imperial province as was mentioned above.

Catabathmos (mod. El-Sallum) was considered as marking the western borderline of Egypt⁽⁶²⁾ as indeed is the case at

(57) Diod. XIX. 79. see also H.L. Jones, in Loeb ed. of Strabo's Geography, Vol. VIII, p.23. n.2.

(58) Strabo, 17. 1. 12.

(59) cf. H.I. Bell, Egypt from Alexander the Great to The Arab Conquest, p.65. Oxford 1948, cf. also J.G. Milne, A History of Egypt under Roman Rule, p.2, London, 1924.

(60) Sallust (86 - C. 34 B.C.) Jugurtha, XIX. 3.

(61) Sallust, loc.cit.

(62) Strabo, 17.1.13, Sallust, loc.cit; Pomponius Mela, Chorographia, Bk. I. ix. 49.

present. Pliny,⁽⁶³⁾ who follows Pomponius Mela closely, is therefore not correct when he speaks of the lower part of Egypt, or the Delta, as being separated from Africa by the Canopic mouth, and from Asia by the Pelusian mouth, and that the region west of the Canopic mouth was called Libya Mareotis, and that east of the Pelusian mouth Arabia Petraea. In defining the extension of Egypt as described above, Pliny is definitely mistaken. But if he was speaking in human terms, then he is not mistaken, for the people west of the Delta by his time were not considered to be Egyptians but Mareotic, in other words they belonged to Libya Mareotis.⁽⁶⁴⁾

(63) Pliny, N.H.V. 47, 48.

(64) J. Lindsay, Daily Life in Roman Egypt, p. 147 cf. also Hdt . 11. 18, where he says other people of the cities of Marea and Apis, in the part of Egypt bordering on Libya (i.e. Africa) thought of themselves to have been not Egyptians but Libyans.

CHAPTER II

THE ORIGIN AND CHARACTER OF THE LAND OF

EGYPT.

Classical writers had various opinions as to the general character of Egypt but most agreed that Egypt proper (the Nile Valley and the Delta) was a newly acquired land or, as they put it, ποταμία, a river land.

Long before 70 B.C. the idea that the cultivated and inhabited part of Egypt is a newly acquired land have been held by various classical authors. It was held by Hecataeus of Miletus⁽¹⁾ (responsible for the famous saying, "Egypt is the gift of the Nile" ἔστι Αἰγυπτίῳ ἰσθμῷ ἐπικτητός τε γῆ καὶ δῶρον τοῦ ποταμοῦ Νεῖλου) and by Herodotus⁽²⁾ who quotes his predecessor Hecataeus of Miletus without acknowledgement,⁽³⁾ by Ephorus of Kyme,⁽⁴⁾ and by Aristotle.⁽⁵⁾ All, however, believed that the land of Egypt or at least most of it has been built up by the Nile (ποταμὸς χωστόν) from silt carried down during floods.

(1) Hecataeus of Miletus, wrote ὁ περίοδος γῆς (The circuit of the Earth) in F. Jacoby, F.G.H., Erster Teil Neudruck A.p. 39 (301 Hecataeus of Miletus).

(2) Hdt , 11. 5.

(3) cf. M.Cary, The Geographic Background of Greek and Roman History, p.207, n.4. (Oxford, 1949), Rawlinson, The Histories of Hdt, Vol. II p. 6.n.4.

(4) Ephorus of Kyme (C.405-330 B.C.) in F.Jacoby, F.G.H. II a. pp. 60, 61.

(5) Aristotle, Meteor, I. xiv. 352b.

Eratosthenes⁽⁶⁾ and Strato of Lampsacus⁽⁷⁾ seem to have held similar views.

This theory continued to be held by later writers. It was held by Diodorus, who states: "What is now (i.e. in his time) the land of Egypt was considered by the Egyptians themselves to have been sea when the universe was originally created⁽⁸⁾ and Thebes was the oldest part of Egypt".⁽⁹⁾ Diodorus further describes the phenomenon of the Nile flood, and how the Nile carries down mud from Ethiopia and deposits it to form the land of Egypt. He tells us that according to the Egyptians themselves the clearest proof that their land has been deposited by the Nile was provided at the mouths of the river, where, each year, as fresh mud accumulated at the river's mouths, the sea was seen to be forced back and the land to be extended by the deposition of silt.⁽¹⁰⁾

(6) Eratosthenes (C.255-194 B.C.) quoted by Strabo, 1.3.13.

(7) Strato of Lampsacus (Στρατων) (d. 270-268 B.C.) quoted by Strabo, 1.3.4.

(8) Diod. III. 3.

(9) Diod. 1.22. cf. also Hdt 1.5. Aristotle, Meteor,

(10) Diod. III. 3.

Strabo⁽¹¹⁾ traced the accounts given by his predecessors such as Homer, Herodotus, Eratosthenes, Hipparchus and Strato of Lampsacus concerning the origin of the land of Egypt and its creation. He found the statement of Homer⁽¹²⁾ concerning the island of Pharos, which, according to Homer, was 24 hours distant in the open sea sailing from the mainland, worthy of mention and, in Strabo's view⁽¹³⁾ this must not be discarded as wholly false and untrustworthy. For, in Strabo's opinion, Homer learned as a matter of common knowledge about the silting up of the land; and as in Menelaus' time the island was more distant from the mainland than it was in his (Homer's) own times, Homer added a distance many times as great as his own responsibility for the sake of the fabulous element. This fabulous element, Strabo adds, is told by Homer, not in ignorance of geography, but in order to give pleasure and enjoyment. Strabo,⁽¹⁴⁾ moreover, believed that Herodotus' statement⁽¹⁵⁾ that Egypt was a gift of the Nile, which Herodotus is believed to have borrowed from Hecataeus of Miletus without

(11) Strabo, I.

(12) Homer, Od. iv (δ), 454-359.

(13) Strabo, 1.2.30.

(14) Strabo, 1.2.23.

(15) Hdt . 11. 5.

acknowledgement,⁽¹⁶⁾ to have been perfectly true, and, in Strabo's opinion, even if that was not of the whole of Egypt, it was certainly true of the part embraced by the Delta. Strabo⁽¹⁷⁾ also quoted his predecessor Strato's account concerning the nature of the Lake Moeris (mod. Karoun) and the region about that of Ammon (Qattara Depression and Siwa Oasis) and other parts of northern and north-eastern Egypt. He stated⁽¹⁸⁾ clearly that from his observations of the state of Lake Moeris in the Arsinoite nome (mod. El-Fayum) he might surmise that Moeris was an open sea in size and resembled a sea in colour, and its shores, too, resembled those of a sea; so that one might make the same supposition about this region as about that of Ammon (Qattara Depression and Siwa Oasis), that, just as from the numerous evidences one might surmise that that temple (i.e. Ammon) had been in earlier times situated on the sea, so likewise those districts had been in earlier times on the sea. And Lower Egypt and the parts extending as far as Lake Sirbonis (Sebkhet El-Bardawil), had been sea - that sea having been confluent, perhaps with the Red Sea in the neighbourhood of Heroonopolis (Gulf

(16) see n.3. p.8

(17) Strabo, 1.3.4.

(18) Strabo, 17.1.35.

of Suez and the Aelanites Gulf (Gulf of Aqaba).⁽¹⁹⁾

A similar opinion seems to have been held by Apion of Oasis and Alexandria⁽²⁰⁾ who stated that the Nile had silted up the lower part of Egypt with its alluvium. He also quoted Herodotus' statement⁽²¹⁾ that Lower Egypt (i.e. the Delta) had been in the earlier times a sea, that, according to Herodotus, was very clear from the shells and fossils which were to be found around Memphis. This was also held by Pliny, who in one passage⁽²²⁾ stated that the greater part of Egypt was formed through the conveyance of soil (from Ethiopia) by the Nile. In another passage⁽²³⁾ Pliny stated where he followed Juba of Mauretania⁽²⁴⁾ that when Homer was writing even the land itself which was by his (Pliny's) time thought of as Egypt had not existed as such, while in his (Pliny's) time papyrus grew in the

(19) This theory of the confluent seas has been sharply criticized by Dr. Dicks (Hipparchus' Geographical Fragments, pp. 117, 118).

(20) Apion of Oasis and Alexandria (1st C.A.D.) wrote the Aegyptiaka : see F. Jacoby, F.G.H. Teil III. p.137

(21) Hdt , 11. 10, 11, 12.

(22) Pliny, N.H. 11. 201.

(23) Pliny, op.cit. XIII. 69, 70.

(24) Juba of Mauretania (C. 50 B.C. - C. A.D. 23).

Sebennytic and Saitic Nomes (both being in the Delta) of Egypt, the land having been subsequently heaped up by the Nile. Pliny, then, twice quoted Homer's statement concerning the Island of Pharos.⁽²⁵⁾ He also quoted or rather misquoted Herodotus' account⁽²⁶⁾ that as there has been (and still is) a gulf (the Red Sea and its two gulfs, the Suez and Aqaba) extending from south to north, where is new Egypt there was in earlier times another gulf extending from the Mediterranean southwards towards Ethiopia (Nubia). Pliny, however, was criticized by some modern commentators for his mistranslating the text of Herodotus.⁽²⁷⁾ For there is no mention in Herodotus' account, which we have already cited, of any sea covering Arabia, although he refers to something similar when he states that the Red Sea and the gulf of the Mediterranean which is now Egypt formerly nearly met, i.e. the line through which the Suez Canal has been cut was once a very narrow neck of land.

(25) See n.12. p. 9

(26) Hdt , II. 11.

(27) D.F. Campbell, Pliny N.H. II. 201, p.22. (Aberdeen University Studies, 118, 1942); Budé ed. of Pliny's N.H. II. 201. pp. 201. pp. 244, 245, f.n.

It was thus widely believed that Egypt proper (the Delta plus the valley at least as far as the Thebaid) was once under water. Some believed that even the isthmus between the Mediterranean and the Red Sea (or at least most of it) and part of the Western Desert (including Siwa Oasis and Qattara Depression) were also under the sea. It was also believed that the sea was forced to withdraw through various causes giving way for the creation of new land from the silt, which the Nile brings down annually during floodtime from Ethiopia.

The vast majority of modern scholars with the exception of a tiny group⁽²⁸⁾, agreed with the classical writers on the broad lines of the theory that part of the land of Egypt was formerly sea. This theory was held by Ball,⁽²⁹⁾ Hurst⁽³⁰⁾,

(28) Rawlinson (The Histories of Holt, Vol. II. p.6.n.4, p. 12.n.4), who seems to have doubts about the theory, comes to the conclusion that whatever form the valley may have had in the early ages of the world, it could not have been a gulf of the sea since Egypt was inhabited; Waddell (Holt II. note 4 on Ch.10. p.128) quotes A.W. Lawrence as saying that the theory is a mistake.

(29) J. Ball, Contributions to the Geography of Egypt. p.31. Cairo 1939. Ball was also quoted by W.B. Fisher, The Middle East, A Physical, Social and Regional Geography, pp. 455-56, London, 1950.

(30) Hurst, H.E., The Nile, p. 36 (London 1957, revised ed.) also quoted by Fisher, loc.cit.

Kees⁽³¹⁾, and Fisher⁽³²⁾. Fisher summarised the conclusion of Ball, Hurst and others on the Nile valley. He suggested that in the Miocene times the Mediterranean (or Tethys) extended as far inland as Cairo and Siwa, and a number of small streams drained northwards from the African tableland to this sea. Concerning the region of Ammon (Qattara Depression and Siwa Oasis) Rushdi Said⁽³³⁾ and Fisher⁽³⁴⁾ suggested that it was formed not by the withdrawal of the sea, as the classical writers believed, but by erosion of the softer strata either through aeolian wind action or by the solution of soluble rock measures.

(31) H. Kees, Ancient Egypt, A Cultural Topography, p.17
(London, 1962. Methuen).

(32) W.B. Fisher, loc.cit.

(33) Rushdi Said, New Light of the Origin of the Quattara Depression, Bulletin de la Societe de Geographie D'Egypte, Tome XXXI. p.42. Cairo 1960.

(34) W.B. Fisher, loc.cit.

APPENDIX TO CHAPTER II

HOMER ON PHAROS

In the course of this thesis different classical writers were quoted on the statement of Homer on the island of Pharos. Although we have mentioned part of Homer's statement, it seems appropriate here to give it in full. Homer says⁽¹⁾, "There is an island in the surging sea in front of Egypt, and men call it Pharos, distant as far as a hollow ship runs in a whole day when the shrill wind blows far behind it. Therein is a harbour with good anchorage, whence men launch the shapely ships into the sea, when they have drawn supplies of black water" :

ἡ δὲ οὖν ἔπειτ' αἴ τις ἐστὶ πολυκλύδῳ ἐνὶ πόντῳ
Αἰγυπτου προπάροιθε, Φάρον δέ ἐ· κικλήσκουσι,
τόσσον ἀνευθ' ὅσσον τε πανημερίη γλαφυρὴ νηὺς
ἦνυσεν, ἥλιγ' οὐρὸς ἐπιπνείησιν ὀπίσθενι
ἐν δὲ λιμὴν εὐορμος, ὅθεν τ' ἀπὸ νῆας εἰσάσ-
ῃς πόντον βάλλουσιν, ἀφυσσάμενοι μέλαν ὕδωρ'

(1) Homer, Od. IV. 354-359.

Now several of the classical writers mentioned Homer's statement. Homer was highly regarded by his fellow citizens and to most of them a man of much wisdom. His position in Greece was perhaps much more than that of Shakespeare in England. Strabo, for instance, who did not hide his feelings, showed himself enthusiastically as a staunch admirer of the great poet. Strabo, for this reason, made himself a defender of Homer's views concerning various topics and subjects against those who tried to prove that poets should not be depended on as paragons of truth. One of these opponents of poetry in the classical world, Plato, did not share the views of Strabo and others, who championed the cause of Homer. Plato many times⁽²⁾ tried to establish that poets, including Homer, do not compose their poetry by skill but by inspiration, therefore, what they compose is far from reality and truth. For this reason they (the poets) should not be taken as authorities on such matters as history, geography and other practical matters.

Eratosthenes, according to Strabo⁽³⁾, seems to be contradicting himself. For in one place he speaks of poets as mere entertainers and not instructors, and in another he (Eratosthenes) maintains that from the earliest times all the poets have been eager to display their knowledge of geography;

(2) Plato, *Ion*, 533 D. ; Plato, *Rep.* X, 598-601.

(3) Strabo, I, 2.3.

that Homer, for instance, made a place in his poems for everything that he had learned about the Ethiopians and the inhabitants of Egypt and Libya, and that he (Homer) has gone into superfluous detail in his account of Greece and the neighbouring countries; and he adds that Homer never lets fall an inappropriate epithet.

For Strabo, poets including Homer compose their poetry partly to instruct and partly to entertain; and their poetry includes facts and myths.⁽⁴⁾ In Strabo's opinion⁽⁵⁾ Homer is the first geographer. For assuredly Homer, Strabo says,⁽⁶⁾ has attributed knowledge to geography and all other matters, at least to Odysseus, whom he adorns beyond his fellows with every kind of excellence. Moreover, Strabo adds, not only does Homer thus possess wisdom (knowledge) about many matters, but all enlightened men⁽⁷⁾ cite the poet as a witness whose words are true, to prove that practical experience of this kind

(4) Surely not all the poets are good informers. Some poets, for instance, deliberately and through lack of knowledge disseminate wrong information. The Roman poets in their attitude towards the Egyptians cannot be described as impartial observers or fair conveyers of true facts.

(5) Strabo, I. 1.10.

(6) Strabo, I. 2.4.

(7) Strabo himself is included.

contributes in the highest degree to wisdom. Strabo believes⁽⁸⁾ too that Homer knows and clearly describes the remote ends of the inhabited earth and what surrounds it; and he is just as familiar with the regions of the Mediterranean Sea. Generally speaking, Strabo concluded⁽⁹⁾, it is wrong to place the poetry of Homer on the same level as that of other poets and to decline to rank him above them in any respect, and particularly in the subject of geography.

To such an extent, then, Strabo reveres Homer, an attitude not shared by all his fellow Greeks as we have already noticed.

The question which concerns us here is, how do the classical authors of our own period look at Homer's statement on the island of Pharos ?

For many a classical author quotes that statement. We ought for this purpose to include Aristotle whose teaching remained in his school. Aristotle, like the rest of the classical writers, takes Homer's statement as evidence to prove his theory about the silting up of the Delta. Thus he tells us: "This has been the case with Egypt. Here it is obvious that the land is continually getting drier and the whole country of Egypt is clearly

(8) Strabo, I. 1.10.

(9) Strabo, I. 2. 20.

a deposit of the Nile. We can see, however, that all the mouths of the Nile, except the one at Canopus, are obviously artificial and formed by the action of the Nile itself; and Egypt was nothing more than what is called Thebes ($\Theta\eta\beta\alpha\iota$) (perhaps in the sense of the Thebaid), as Homer⁽¹⁰⁾, too, proves this last point, though in relation to such changes he is comparatively modern: for Thebes is the place that he mentions, which implies that Memphis either didn't yet exist or at any rate was not a place of its present importance".⁽¹¹⁾

We have also mentioned Diodorus Siculus's reference to the Thebaid as being the oldest portion of Egypt,⁽¹²⁾ to the people of Egypt as being the earliest of all men,⁽¹³⁾ to the land of Egypt as having formerly been sea, and its silting up by the alluvium of the Nile,⁽¹⁴⁾ and finally to Pharos as being, in Diodorus' time, the only good harbour along the Egyptian coast of the Mediterranean.⁽¹⁵⁾ Diodorus, further⁽¹⁶⁾,

(10) Homer, Od. IV. 354ff.

(11) Aristotle, Meteor, I. xiv. 351b 28 - 352a 3. (Oxford Translation).

(12) Diod. I. 22.

(13) Diod. I. 50

(14) Diod. III. 3. (15) Diod. I. 69. (16) Diod. I. 31.

states that many Greeks, despite the (alleged) hostility of the Egyptians towards foreigners, visited Egypt and Homer was one of them. Diodorus therefore implies or seems to imply that Homer was acquainted with Egypt.

Pliny, though he comes later than Strabo, may be briefly discussed here. Pliny seems to believe in the same theory of Homer. Pliny more than once quotes his great Greek predecessor's statement. In one passage, he states, "the greater part of Egypt was heaped up from the Nile - the crossing from the island of Pharos to the coast; if we believe Homer⁽¹⁷⁾ having formerly taken twenty-four hours."⁽¹⁸⁾ In another he says, "we find in Homer that the use of writing tablets existed even before the Trojan period, but when Homer was writing even the land itself which was thought of in Pliny's day as Egypt did not exist as such, while in Pliny's time papyrus grew in the Sebennyitic and Saitic nomes of (Lower) Egypt".⁽¹⁹⁾ Pliny then mentions the process of the silting up of the land and Homer's statement on the island of Pharos.

(17) loc.cit.

(18) Pliny, N.H. 11. 201.

(19) Pliny, N.H. xiii. 69-70.

Nowhere were Strabo's extreme admiration and respect of Homer clearer than in trying to give a plausible interpretation to the latter's statement regarding the island of Pharos. Strabo discusses the matter in two passages and at length. In one passage he states "equally unjust is the reproach they cast upon Homer in the matter of the island of Pharos, because Homer says that it is 'in the open sea'

(πελαγίαν) - as though he said this in ignorance.

On the contrary one might use that statement as bearing witness to the fact that not one of the things which we have just been talking about regarding Egypt was unknown to the poet. You might convince yourself of it in the following way: Everybody who tells the story of his own travels is a braggart; to this class belonged Menelaus, who had ascended the Nile as far as Ethiopia, and had heard about the inundations of the Nile and the quantity of the alluvial soil which the river deposits upon the country, and about the large extent of the territory off its mouths which the river had already added to the continent by silting - so that Herodotus⁽²⁰⁾ was quite right in saying that the whole of Egypt is a gift of the River Nile ; and even if this is not true of the whole of Egypt, it certainly is true of

(20) Hdt , 11. 5.

the part embraced by the Delta, which is called Lower Egypt; and Menelaus was told that the island of Pharos had been 'in the open sea' in ancient times; so he falsely added that it was no longer 'in the open sea'. However, it was Homer who elaborated this story⁽²¹⁾." Strabo further says "the matter of the silting may be inferred not only from the risings of the river but also from what Homer says about Pharos. For the men who told Homer about Pharos - or rather, as Strabo would say, the common report that it was so and so far from the mainland - this report, he says, would not have got abroad falsified to such an extent as the distance which Homer gives, namely, a day's run for a ship but as for the rising and silting, it 's reasonable to suppose that the poet learned as a matter of common knowledge that they were such and such; and concluding from these facts that at the time of the visit of Menelaus the island was more distant from the mainland than it was in his own times, Homer himself added a distance many times as great on his own responsibility for the sake of the fabulous element. Moreover, the fabulous creations are not, he thinks, a sign of ignorance - not even those stories about Proteus and the Pygmies, nor are the potent effects of magic potions, nor any

(21) Strabo, I. 2. 23.

other such inventions of the poets; for these stories are told, not in ignorance of geography, but in order to give pleasure and enjoyment⁽²²⁾." Strabo, still wanting his argument to be more convincing, says "how does it come then that Pharos has water, when it is without water. Now, in the first place, it is not impossible that the source of the water has dried up,⁽²³⁾ and, in the second place, Homer does not say that the water came from the island, but merely that the launching of the ships took place thence - on account of the excellence of the harbour, but the water itself may have been drawn from the opposite mainland, since, in a way, the poet by implication confesses that, when he applied the term 'in the open sea' to Pharos, he did not use it in a literal sense, but as an hyperbolical or mythical statement".

(22) Strabo, I. 2.30.

(23) According to Strabo (17.1.6) the island seems to have had no sources of water or that the sources have dried up. For he says that there was an aqueduct which supplied the island with water from the mainland. The island, he adds, was inhabited but by Strabo's time it ceased to be so following its destruction by Julius Caesar. The unknown writer of the 'de Bello Alexandrino' tells us in Ch.5 that there was not one natural spring in the whole city, but later (op.cit. 8) he states that Caesar and his men fetched water from another place in the vicinity. This same writer says that when wells were dug, water was discovered.

In summarising the attitudes of the classical writers towards the statement of Homer on the island of Pharos thus so far discussed, we ought not to concern ourselves here with those who banished the poets and considered their information as unworthy of consideration and therefore cannot be depended on to give true facts and not just fictitious images. Aristotle and Pliny, for their part, wholeheartedly believed in the theory which says that at least the Delta or Lower Egypt was silted up by the action of the Nile. They also seem to have considered what Homer said concerning the island of Pharos true and corresponding to the actual facts as he knew them. At the same time, both took Homer's statement as evidence to support their arguments, without any attempt to criticize the credibility of such a statement or even to compare it with the true facts of their own times. Moreover, they seem to corroborate Homer's statement. Strabo, on the other hand, is a bit different from his two fellow writers. Out of his reverence to Homer he endeavours to find a plausible and acceptable interpretation to the words of Homer, using all his skill in twisting and quibbling with his words. Strabo came to the conclusion that Homer knew all about Egypt, including the distance that separates Pharos from the mainland. But if Homer knew all that, why did he not say the truth or the facts ? Strabo answered by saying that Homer added

the fabulous element for the sake of entertainment, when he gave the distance far greater than the actual fact.

Classical authors all, however, seem to have understood Homer's reference to the word 'Aegyptus' (*Αἴγυπτος*) in connection with the island of Pharos, to mean Egypt in the sense of the sea coast of the country. Now the question is either we should discard Homer's statement and consider it as an imaginative or fabulous piece of geography, or a mere traveller's tale, thus, agreeing in that with some modern scholars,⁽²⁴⁾ or else we try to look somewhere else other than Strabo's own interpretations of the words of Homer in order to find a satisfactory basis for that statement. We have already⁽²⁵⁾ referred to what competent modern scholars said concerning the question that the whole of Egypt or part of it was formerly under sea and we found how the majority of them agreed that the theory has a basis of truth. One of these modern scholars, Ball, suggests⁽²⁶⁾ that the total retreat of the coast line resulting

(24) W.B. Stanford, The Odyssey of Homer, Vol. I, 2nd Ed. p. 278. Cm. on lines 355-7 (London, 1961); A. Ernout, Pline L'Ancien, N.H. XIII., com. on Ch. 69, n. 4, pp. 92, 93; Rawlinson, The Histories of Hdt. Vol. II, p. 6, n.4.

(25) p. 23, 24.

(26) J. Ball, Contributions to the Geography of Egypt, p. 32.

from the 43-metre rise of the relative sea level between late Sebillian times and our own day has not been greater than about 11 kilometres is, of course, due to the continual growth of the deltaic deposits by deposition of silt. The eleven kilometres mentioned by Ball, plus the distance between Pharos to the present coast line will not certainly take that long time to cross by sailing, that is if we consider Homer referring to the conditions prevailing in the remote past.

Homer, when he spoke of Aigyptos (*Aἰγυπτος*) was possibly referring to Memphis, which was the capital of Egypt and could be used to mean the whole of Egypt.⁽²⁷⁾ For among the Romans⁽²⁸⁾ especially we find that they refer to Memphis when they actually mean the whole country of Egypt. Even today, we say London when we mean the U.K., or Cairo in the sense of Egypt. Or perhaps Homer meant by Aigyptos (*Aἰγυπτος*) Memphis. For Memphis was called 'Hikuptah' (i.e. The House of the Soul of Ptah) by the ancient Egyptians. According to a

(27) Dictionary of Egyptian Civilization, ed. Posener, p.75, s.v. Egypt.

(28) see M. Annaeus Lucanus (Lucan) The Civil War, VIII, 543-544; Horace Odes, III. xxvi. 10 ; Propertius Elegies, III. xi. 34 ;
H. Kees, Ancient Egypt, A Cultural Topography, p. 157.

plausible theory⁽²⁹⁾ the Greeks took the name 'Aiggyptos' (Αἴγυπτος) from this word (i.e. Hikuptah) extending the name of the most important part on the Nile to cover the whole kingdom as far as the 1st Cataract. There is a similar parallel at the present time, in that people from the provinces say that they are going to Misr (Arabic for Egypt) when they in fact mean Al-Kahira (Arabic for Cairo). In all cases if Homer meant by Egypt Memphis or vice versa, his estimate of the duration of the journey from Pharos to Memphis is not far from correct. But some modern scholars⁽³⁰⁾ do not agree with the idea that Homer means by Aiggyptos the coast line of Egypt or Memphis, but the Nile or rather its western-most branch, the Canopic. The distance between the Pharos and the Canopic mouth was certainly shorter than the distance of Homer. If Homer meant by Egypt the main channel of the Nile where it splits into several branches, he could be possibly correct. The final judgement, however, remains with Homer himself.

(29) A Dictionary of Egyptian Civilization, loc.cit ;
H. Kees, loc.cit ; J.M. White, Everyday Life in Ancient Egypt, p.33.

(30) Stanford, loc.cit ; Rawlinson, loc.cit.

CHAPTER III

SURFACE RELIEF

According to the classical authors Egypt was regarded as divided into two major regions, the habitable and cultivable area, which included the Delta and the valley; and the desert region, which included Western and Eastern Deserts, called by the classical authors the Libyan and Arabian respectively; the Eastern or Arabian Desert included Sinai.⁽¹⁾ The former region was fertile, productive and inhabited, whereas the latter was mainly arid, barren and largely uninhabited.⁽²⁾

The Valley and The Delta.

In the former pages we have touched on the valley and the delta. It remained to be said, however, that the classical writers⁽³⁾ almost without distinction who had written on Egypt, particularly the Greeks from Homer down to Strabo, were amazed by the fact that the land of Egypt was nicely shaped, fertile, productive, both in men, animals and other things, especially when they compared it with the conditions of their own country.⁽⁴⁾

(1) Diod. I. 30 ; Strabo, I.2.25; 17.1.4. 5.

(2) Strabo, 17.1.4.

(3) See, for instance, Diod. loc.cit.; Pomponius Mela, op.cit. I. ix. 49.

(4) See Strabo, 17.1.6.

This habitable and arable land of Egypt was said by the classical writers to be confined by two ranges of hilly deserts, to which we referred above. The creation and the formation of this part of the country was also a matter of comment as we mentioned earlier in this chapter. In all cases, the Nile, according to the classical authors, formed and shaped the land. For it runs from south to north. As soon as it leaves Ethiopia (Nubia) it enters Egypt at the cataract above Syene and Elephantine. From there to the apex of the delta it runs in a single channel, except where some island intervenes, of which the most noteworthy is that which comprises the Heracleotic Nome, or except where the river is diverted to a greater extent than usual by a canal into a large lake or a territory which it can water, as for instance in the case of the canal⁽⁵⁾ which waters the Asinoite Nome (mod. Fayum) and Lake Moeris (mod. Karoun) and of those which spread over Lake Mareotis (now Mariout).⁽⁶⁾ Strangely enough, Strabo wrongly described this single channel as a straight line. For although he described⁽⁷⁾ the great bend, which he rightly described as similar in shape to the letter 'N' in reverse, and which according to him was situated in Ethiopia, that is outside Egypt, he

(5) This canal is called now "Bahr Yousef" and it takes off at Dayrout north of Aslout in Upper Egypt.

(6) Strabo, 17.1.3, 4.

(7) Strabo, 17.1.2.

seemed to have not observed the great bend near Kena in Upper Egypt. Ironically enough, as Ball⁽⁸⁾ maintained, this bend was not mentioned by any of the classical geographers; and indeed the true course of the Nile in that part of Egypt was not known with accuracy until near the end of the last century, for owing to an assumed latitude at Hiw being mistaken by the Napoleonic cartographers for an observed one, the bend was incorrectly represented on the great French map of the country published in 1818. Diodorus did no better than the more accurate geographer Strabo. Diodorus stated⁽⁹⁾ "where the Nile enters Egypt, it flows not in a straight course, but in windings of every sort; for it twists now towards the east, now towards the west, and at times even towards the south, turning entirely back upon itself". Thus Diodorus' statement was in direct contradiction to that of Strabo's. In describing the course of the Nile in Egypt like that, Diodorus is not correct either. No winding of such a kind did exist in ancient times nor indeed in our own times. His description did not even correspond to the bend of Kena; it could only correspond to the windings of Ethiopia (Nubia), which he described in another passage.⁽¹⁰⁾ These bends were ascribed by Diodorus⁽¹¹⁾ and

(8) Ball, J., op.cit. p.57, n.+.

(9) Diod. I. 32.

(10) Diod. loc.cit.

(11) Diod. loc.cit.

implicitly by Strabo⁽¹²⁾ to the cataracts, which were brows of rocks obstructing the course of the Nile in Ethiopia (Nubia) and the region above Syene (Aswan) in Egypt. According to Diodorus,⁽¹³⁾ there were several cataracts across the course of the Nile, one of which was situated on the borders of Ethiopia (Nubia) and Egypt, and was regarded by Diodorus, as the largest cataract (ὁ μέγιστος Καταρᾶκτης). Strabo, while agreeing with his predecessor Diodorus on the site of that cataract, differed with him on its size, for he called it the small cataract (ὁ μικρὸς Καταρᾶκτης).⁽¹⁴⁾ These cataracts were also briefly mentioned by Cicero,⁽¹⁵⁾ Pomponius Mela⁽¹⁶⁾, Pliny⁽¹⁷⁾ and Lucan.⁽¹⁸⁾ The cataract mentioned by Diodorus and Strabo as situated on the borders of Egypt and Ethiopia, is now largely a long way off the borders. That cataract (Arabic "Shallal") is now known as the "First Cataract". Strabo also

(12) Strabo, 17.1.2.

(13) Diod. loc.cit.

(14) Strabo, 17.1.2., 3, 49.

(15) Cicero, De Re Publica, IV. xviii. 19.

(16) Pomponius Mela, op.cit. Bk. I. ix. 51.

(17) Pliny, N.H. v. 54.

(18) Lucan, op.cit. X. 311-331.

observed⁽¹⁹⁾ that there was an exceedingly level plain between Syene (Aswan) and Philae. This statement of Strabo may be true during his time, but it must be known that all the arable land beyond Aswan and within the Egyptian present territory have been completely and permanently submerged under the waters of the Nile following the construction of Aswan Dam at the beginning of this century.

The flow of the Nile into Egypt from where it passes the First Cataract to the Mediterranean was, according to some classical authors, unobstructed, smooth and navigable.⁽²⁰⁾ To some extent this statement is correct, but one must remember that during flood time the Nile grows turbulent, rapid and disturbed.

When it reaches the Delta, to which we referred before, the Nile splits and empties its waters into the Mediterranean from several outlets (*στοματα*). The number of the Nile's branches or mouths differs from one author to another, but from the writings of those who wrote during the 1st century B.C. and the 1st century A.D. the Nile seems to have

(19) Strabo, 17.1.50.

(20) Diodorus, I. 32, 34; Strabo, 17.1.4; Pomponius Mela, op.cit. I. ix, 51.

discharged its waters from seven mouths.⁽²¹⁾ Diodorus and Strabo stated that besides these seven natural and noteworthy mouths, there were others, which were artificial, in other words were dug by the hand of man, and were unimportant. Pliny, however, gave the number as sixteen, of which four were called artificial (falsa ora) by the Egyptians, the other twelve were called after towns in the Delta. Pliny said only seven were noteworthy.

The following are the names of the seven natural, or - according to Pliny⁽²²⁾ the best known mouths from west to east .-

a) Diodorus⁽²³⁾

1. Canobic	4. Phatnitic	7. Pelusiatic
2. Bolbitine	5. Mendesian	
3. Sebennyitic	6. Tanitic	

(21) Diodorus I. 33; Strabo, 17.1.18; Ovid, Metam I. 324; II. 255; V. 187; IX. 774; XV. 753; Propertius, Elegies. II.1.32; Pomponius Mela, op.cit. I. ix. 51; Virgil, Georgics, iv, 792; Aeneid, vi. 800.

(22) Pliny, N.H. V. 64.

(23) Diod. loc.cit.

b) Strabo⁽²⁴⁾:

1. Canobic	4. Phatnitic	7. Pelusiatic
2. Bolbitine	5. Mendesian	
3. Sebennytic	6. Tanitic	

c) Pomponius Mela:⁽²⁵⁾

1. Canopic	4. Phatmitic	7. Pelusiatic
2. Bolbitic	5. Mendesian	
3. Sebennytic	6. Catoptystic	

d) Pliny:⁽²⁶⁾

1. Canopic	4. Phatnitic	7. Pelusiatic
2. Bolbitine	5. Mendesic	
3. Sebennytic	6. Tanitic	

(24) Strabo, loc.cit.

(25) Pomponius Mela, loc.cit.

(26) Pliny, loc.cit.

Diodorus⁽²⁷⁾ and Strabo⁽²⁸⁾ also noted that the Canobic mouth was called by some "Heracleotic". Pliny,⁽²⁹⁾ besides his above-given list, said that there was another mouth next to the Canopic and it was mentioned instead of it; and it was called Naucratic, after the town of Naucratis, or Heracleotic.

Strabo also observed⁽³⁰⁾ that the Phatnitic mouth was the third largest after the Canobic and the Pelusiac. It is also noticeable that, in their spelling of the Canobic mouth, Pomponius Mela and Pliny differed from Diodorus and Strabo. Pomponius Mela is also observed to have spelt the name of the Phatnitic mouth differently from the others, and to have given the name "Cataptystic" to the mouth called by the others "Tanitic". Ball, quite plausibly, suggests⁽³¹⁾ that the name "Cataptystic", which means "catastrophic" or "abhorrent", might have been given to that branch in Pomponius Mela's time because of some disaster in its waters.

(27) Diod. loc.cit.

(28) Strabo. 17.1.4.

(29) Pliny, loc.cit.

(30) Strabo, 17.1.18.

(31) J.Ball, op.cit. p.71. n.+.

The arable and habitable part of Egypt, according to the classical authors, constitutes mainly of the Delta and valley. This region, they said, was created and shaped by the action of the Nile. It was for that reason that it was called the gift of the Nile, and was regarded, as we mentioned before⁽³²⁾, a river-land (ποταμια), as it was gradually silted up by the alluvium which the Nile carried down annually from Ethiopia.

According to Diodorus⁽³³⁾ and Strabo⁽³⁴⁾ the whole land (i.e. the arable land) submerges under the water of the Nile when it rises to overflow it; for the land is a low and a level plain, with the town, villages and other settlements being built on high ground, appearing above water level like islands. Pliny⁽³⁵⁾ seems to have stated the same idea.

We have already given the excellent description of the shape of the valley and the Delta as given by the great geographer, Strabo. It is interesting, however, to notice that the Delta was the region which was admired and well-described by most of the classical authors, Greek and Roman alike. Was it perhaps that it was in the Delta that most of the Greeks and, to a

(32) See p. 8ff.

(33) Diod. I. 36 and 38.

(34) Strabo, l. 25; 17.1.4.

(35) Pliny, N.H. V. 54.

lesser extent, the Romans, lived and worked, almost in the same way as to-day ? Was it because in the Delta that one of their first and best-known settlements, I mean Naucratis, was built ? It is no doubt that the Delta is the first region in Egypt that foreigners, like Greeks, come across when they visit the country. The Delta, moreover, was, as some classical authors have rightly stated⁽³⁶⁾, navigable, as it was intersected not only by natural and artificial outlets of the Nile but also by several other canals. It is for this reason, beside the fact that many Greeks (like to-day) inhabited the Delta, that some classical authors were able quite easily to tour it bit by bit and to observe its various aspects on the spot.

"The Delta", Diodorus stated, "is much like Sicily (Diodorus' own homeland) in shape, and its sides are each seven hundred and fifty stadia long and its base, where it is washed by the sea, thirteen hundred stadia. This island is intersected by many artificial canals and includes the fairest land in Egypt. For since it is alluvial soil and well watered, it produces many crops of every kind, in as much as the river by its annual rise regularly deposits on it fresh slime, and the inhabitants easily irrigate its whole area by means of a

(36) Diod. I. 33; Strabo, 17.1.4.

contrivance which was invented by Archimedes of Syracuse and is called after its shape, a screw (*κοχλίας*)".⁽³⁷⁾

One thing is a little obscure in Diodorus' statement quoted above, that is the use of the Archmedian screw to irrigate the land of the Delta. In his book Diodorus, like Strabo and Pliny, tells us of the complete inundation of the Delta and the valley by the water of the Nile. We know from the classical authors as well as from the personal observation of the present writer that when the land is inundated and as soon as the water of the Nile has receded, the peasants go around their fields and sow their seeds, with no need for further irrigation. Strabo, as we observed, made it clear that the land of the Delta and the valley was irrigated annually by the Nile. Either Diodorus is contradicting himself, as he sometimes does, or he might have witnessed the peasants irrigating their fields which were situated on higher ground in the manner he described. The method of artificial irrigation was perhaps true of Egypt south of the Delta and other high grounds in some parts of the Delta itself.

Strabo was not less brilliant and minute in his description of the land; to his description we referred in various

(37) Diod. I. 34

pages of this chapter. But Strabo was not only impressed by the fertility and the wealth of the Delta, but also⁽³⁸⁾ by the fertility and abundance of the Arsinoite Nome (now Fayum) which was mainly inhabited and owned by many of his own race, since the early days of the Ptolemaic Dynasty.

The fertilization of the land by the slime of the Nile, the fertility of the land, and its abundance and fecundity, were also mentioned briefly by Virgil, who stated that the Nile fertilizes green Egypt with black sand (*viridem Aegyptum nigra fecundat harena*⁽³⁹⁾), and that the Nile with its fertilizing water (lit. stream) flows again in the fields (*pingui flumine Nilus cum refluit campis*⁽⁴⁰⁾); by Pomponius Mela⁽⁴¹⁾ who maintained that Egypt is a land devoid of rain but strangely fertile and very generative in mankind and productive in other animals (*terra expers imbrium mire tamen fertilis et hominum aliorumque animalium perfecunda generatrix*) and that the Nile affects it (*Nilus efficit*); by the author of the book entitled De Bello Alexandrino⁽⁴²⁾ which came down to us among

(39) Virgil, Georgics, iv. 291.

(40) Virgil, Aeneid, . ix. 31, 32.

(41) Pomponius Mela, *op.cit.* . I. ix. 49.

(42) Incertus auctor, De Bello Alexandrino, 27.

Julius Caesar's works, who said that the Delta which was situated not so very far away from Alexandria, was perhaps the most excellent (nobilissima) spot in those regions; and by Pliny⁽⁴³⁾ who, apart from what was mentioned before concerning the land of Egypt, stated that when the Nile rises, it roams abroad over the whole of Egypt and inundates the land with a fertilizing flood.

The Desert.

The arable part, which constituted a very small fraction (in actual fact 3%) of the total area of Egypt, was bounded by vast desert regions.⁽⁴⁴⁾ These deserts extended from Ethiopia down to the Mediterranean.⁽⁴⁵⁾

On the western side of the valley and the Delta was situated a stretch of desert land called by the classical authors the Libyan (Western) Desert, and on the east was situated the Arabian (Eastern) Desert.⁽⁴⁶⁾

(43) Pliny, V. 54.

(44) Strabo, 1.2.25; 17.1.4.

(45) Ibid, Diod. 1. 29

(46) Diod. loc.cit; Strabo, loc.cit.

The Western or Libyan Desert was described by Diodorus⁽⁴⁷⁾ as full of wild beasts and extending along the border of Egypt for a long distance, and that, by reason of its lack of rain and want of every kind of food, it makes the passage through it not only toilsome but even highly dangerous. The impassability of the Western Desert was later recorded by Strabo⁽⁴⁸⁾, who mentioned the fate of a certain Persian king who wanted to reach Ammon through the desert with a huge army, but that he and his army perished without trace. The Western Desert, however, was not entirely without human life or vegetation as Diodorus seems to have believed. For the Western Desert contained a number of Oases as we are going to see later. Strabo⁽⁴⁹⁾ also recorded the fact that Egypt proper was surrounded on both sides by the Arabian (Eastern) and Libyan (Western) Deserts, and that the latter was a large desert.⁽⁵⁰⁾ He further described⁽⁵¹⁾ the Libyan (Western) Desert as waterless apart from the oases. Pliny did not mention the well-established

(47) Diod. loc.cit.

(48) Strabo, 17.1.54.

(49) Strabo, loc.cit.

(50) Strabo, 17.1.5.

(51) Strabo, 11. 5.33.

fact that Egypt was surrounded by desert land, but he was content to say⁽⁵²⁾ that at the town of Lycon (i.e. the town of wolves, mod. Asiout), the Thebaid Province or Nome was bounded by a mountain range (i.e. the Western or Libyan Desert); though later on he told us⁽⁵³⁾ that salt was found as far as the Oracle of Hammon (Ammon, in Siwa Oasis) through the parched deserts of Africa. Lucan,⁽⁵⁴⁾ too, mentioned the Western or Libyan desert, but the manner he described it is highly sensational and is therefore neither worthy of credibility nor can be taken as a scientific evidence.

The Western or Libyan Desert as a matter of fact was not entirely arid, inhospitable, rainless and without ground water. For in the middle of that desert and within the territory of Egypt many an oasis was and still is found. Nevertheless, it was in Strabo that we find the first definite mention of these oases. Strabo was told by Gnaeus Piso, who was once the Prefect of Egypt, that they resembled the spots on a leopard's skin⁽⁵⁵⁾ or islands in the open sea. He further added that they were surrounded by waterless⁷and desert land.⁽⁵⁶⁾

(52) Pliny, V. 61.

(53) Pliny, N.H. XXXI, 74. ,

(54) Lucan, op.cit. X. 311-331.

(55) Strabo, 2.5.33.

(56) Strabo, 17.1.5.

The Egyptians, he said, called such inhabited places "aoses" (*Αὐάσεις*)⁽⁵⁷⁾, i.e. Oases.⁽⁵⁸⁾ There was, according to Strabo⁽⁵⁹⁾, many an oasis in Libya (Africa) and three were situated close to Egypt (i.e. to Egypt proper. The Valley and the Delta) and were classed as subject to it. He placed⁽⁶⁰⁾ the first oasis (mod. el-Kharga) as opposite Abydos (mod. el-Araba el-Madfouna near el-Balyana); and that it was seven days' journey distant from Abydos through a desert; and it was a settlement which abounded in water and wine, and was sufficiently supplied with other things. The second oasis (mod. el-Bahariya) was that in the neighbourhood of the Lake Moeris (mod. Karoun); and the third (mod. Siwa) was that in the neighbourhood of the oracle in Ammon; and these, also, Strabo maintained, were noteworthy settlements. Strabo also recorded⁽⁶¹⁾ the well-known journey of Alexander the Great in which he followed the sea route from Alexandria to Paraetionium (mod. Marsa Matrouh) and from there he went to visit the renowned oracle

(57) Notice the remarkable resemblance between the word (*Αὐάσεις*) and the Arabic واحات, Wahat, pl. for واح and Wahah.

(58) Strabo, 17.1.5.

(59) Strabo, loc.cit.

(60) Strabo, 17.1.42.

(61) Strabo, 17.1.43

of Ammon, which Strabo observed was formerly held in great esteem but, in Strabo's time, it was nearly deserted. The Oases were also mentioned by Pliny⁽⁶²⁾ although with no detail like Strabo. Pliny mentioned among the nomes of Egypt in his time, two Oasite nomes which, he said, were situated on the African (Western) side of Egypt adjacent to the Memphite and Arsinoite (Fayum) nomes. These two Oasite nomes were also mentioned by the geographer Ptolemy about one century after Pliny, and were identified by Ball⁽⁶³⁾ as el-Kharga and el-Bahariya Oases. Of these only the latter is really adjacent to the Arsinoite nome.

The Eastern or Arabian Desert and the Sinai Peninsula were also described here and there by various classical authors. They were described by Diodorus who stated, in one passage,⁽⁶⁴⁾ that the Nile made its way along the desert, which divided Syria and Egypt, which was the best satrapy of all and one that had great revenues. That statement in particular does not amount to a serious and scientific evidence to prove that between Egypt and Syria there existed a wide stretch of desert, namely the Eastern Desert and the Sinai Peninsula. He⁽⁶⁵⁾

(62) Pliny, v. 50.

(63) J. Ball, op.cit. p. 123

(64) Diod. XVIII. 6.

(65) Diod. I. 57.

further mentioned that the region between Pelusium and Memphis was desert. But Diodorus had already told us earlier⁽⁶⁶⁾ that Egypt was protected on the east partly by the river (i.e. by the branches and canals) and partly by the desert and a swampy flat called Barathra (pits). For, he added, between Coele-Syria (Palestine) and Egypt there lay a lake (Lake Sirbonis, mod. Sabhket el-Bardawil), quite narrow, but marvellously deep. It was surrounded on all sides by great dunes, when there were constant south winds great quantities of sand were strewn over it.

They were also described by Strabo, who had spoken earlier⁽⁶⁷⁾ on the desert regions of Egypt including the Eastern or Arabian Desert. We have also referred⁽⁶⁸⁾ to the discussion of Strabo about the isthmus between the Red Sea and the Mediterranean. Strabo also mentioned⁽⁶⁹⁾ the Barathra, which, he said, was situated around Pelusium (Tell-el-Farama). Speaking about the region between Pelusium and the Red Sea, Strabo said,⁽⁷⁰⁾ "Here, too, Egypt was difficult to enter. The country between the Nile and the Arabian Gulf (the Red Sea) was Arabia (Petraea), and at its extremity was situated Pelusium; but the whole of it was

(66) p. 5.

(67) p. 6.

(68) pp. 4, 10.

(69) Strabo, 17.1.4.

(70) Ibid.

desert, and impassible for an army. The Eastern or Arabian Desert was also mentioned in the sensational poetry of Lucan.⁽⁷¹⁾ Strabo⁽⁷²⁾ and Pliny⁽⁷³⁾ also described the track or isthmus along which the famous trade route between the valley at Coptos (Qift) and the Red Sea (to Berenice and Myos Hotmos) was built through the desert. In that region no ground water was to be found, and rain was so scarce that they built cisterns for it and it had nothing growing there. Pliny also described⁽⁷⁴⁾ the Sinai Peninsula and the isthmus between the Red Sea and the Mediterranean, and he mentioned that there existed in his time three (trade) routes connecting the two seas, or the two worlds East and West. The region, one understands from Pliny, was mostly of a sandy nature, so that to find one's way one had to follow a line of reed fixed in the sand.

Besides the physical features we described above, the classical authors mentioned a number of lakes, marshes and lagoons. We have already mentioned Lake Moeris (Karun). It was described by Diodorus⁽⁷⁵⁾ who stated that it was excavated by King Moeris, after whom it was called, ten schoeni (i.e. ropes = 75 miles) above Memphis. There was a canal leading from the

(71) Lucan, op.cit. X. 311-331.

(72) Strabo, 17.1.45.

(73) Pliny, N.H. VI. 101-104.

(74) Pliny, op.cit. VI. 165.

(75) Diod. I. 51, 52.

Nile to the lake. That canal had, according to Diodorus, a length of eighty stadia (about 15 kilometres) and a width of three plethra (about 93 metres). Diodorus gave the circumference of the lake the same exaggerated figure of three thousand six hundred stadia (about 667 kilometres) as Herodotus⁽⁷⁶⁾ had previously given. The lake, Diodorus added, had continued to function as a combined flood-escape and reservoir down to his own days, a statement, in Ball's⁽⁷⁷⁾ view, of which the low levels of the Ptolemaic towns of the Faiyum conclusively establish the incorrectness. We have also mentioned⁽⁷⁸⁾ part of what Strabo had to say concerning that lake. Strabo, however, went on to say "on the right of the island, which contained the Heracleotic Nome, there was a canal which led into Libya to the Arsinoite Nome, so that the canal had two mouths, a part of the island intervening between the two."⁽⁷⁹⁾ On the lake itself Strabo told us,⁽⁸⁰⁾ "on account of its size and its depth, it is sufficient to bear the flood-tides at the risings of the Nile and not overflow into the inhabited and planted parts, and then, in the retirement of the river to return the excess water by the same canal at each of its two mouths, and,

(76) Hdt, 11. 149.

(77) J. Ball, op.cit. pp.51, 52.

(78) see p.10

(79) Strabo, 17.1.35.

(80) Strabo, 17.1.37.

both itself and the canal, to keep back an amount remaining that will be useful for irrigation. While these conditions are the work of nature, yet locks have been placed at both mouths of the canal, by which the engineers (lit. architects), regulate both the inflow and outflow of the water. These remarks of Strabo, Ball says,⁽⁸¹⁾ are of particular interest as informing us of the flourishing state of the lands that had only been reclaimed from Lake Moeris some three centuries before his time, and as mentioning the existence of the locks by which the flow of water into the province had been restricted in order to effect the reclamation. But he must have been mistaken in supposing that a return flow took place from the lake to the Nile in his days; for we have the strongest evidence in the sites of Ptolemaic towns that were situated around the lake, that the level of the lake surface was then below that of the Mediterranean, while the level of the Nile at the place where the canal connected with the river must have been more than twenty metres higher, so that although there could have been a flow from the river to the lake, there could not possibly have been a reverse one from the lake itself to the river, even at the season of low Nile. The lake was also

(81) Ball, op.cit. p. 61

briefly described by Pliny, who, in two different passages,⁽⁸²⁾ referred to the lake as if it were something of the by-gone past. For he said, "between Memphite and Arsinoite Nomes there was once a lake (lacus fuit) measuring 250 (or according to Mucianus's account 450) Roman miles, and 50 paces (250 feet) deep, an artificial sheet of water, called the Lake Moeris (Karun) after its builder, and its site was 62 Roman miles from Memphis. The use of the past tense (fuit) by Pliny in describing the lake made Ball⁽⁸³⁾ suggest ingeniously that it showed the diminished renown attached to Lake Moeris, after it had ceased to serve as a reservoir. One may conclude that the three classical authors who described the lake have left very interesting and useful pieces of information, but they were mistaken in their belief that the canal was a man's creation.⁽⁸⁴⁾ It is a natural depression like others in the Western deserts of Egypt, an overflow from the primordial

(82) Pliny, N.H. v. 50; xxxvi. 76.

(83) Ball, op.cit. p.61 n.

(84) see Pliny, N.H. ed. in Loeb ed translated by D.E. Eichholz, vol. x. p. 60. n. a; A Dict. of Egypt. Civil. Ed. Posener, p. 84, 85. s.v. Faiyum; J. Ball, Contributions To the Geography of Egypt, pp. 189, 190.

ocean.⁽⁸⁵⁾ Diodorus and Strabo were also wrong when they thought that there could have been a flow from the lake to the river, since as Ball and the common knowledge attest, the depression of the Faiyum is much lower than the sea level. The lake, however, has continued to exist to our day, and receive the extra flow of the Bahr Yousef (the ancient canal), which takes off at Daiyrut north of Asiout in Middle Egypt. The lake, however, has considerably diminished in size from past times, due partly to the process of reclaiming land from it,⁽⁸⁶⁾ and partly to the reduction in the inflow from the Nile and to evaporation.⁽⁸⁷⁾

(85) A Dict. of Egypt. Civil. loc.cit ; J. Ball (loc.cit) suggests that the only natural agency that can be conceived of as at all a likely one responsible for the hollowing-out of the Fayium Depression including the Lake Moeris (Karoun) is the wind in the Early Pleistocene times, in the same manner as in the rest of the oases and Qattara depression in the Western Desert.

(86) In the Ptolemaic era, especially in the reign of Ptolemy II, Philadelphus, large new tracts of land was won by reclaiming much of Lake Moeris (see E. Bevan, A History of Egypt, Ptolemaic Dynasty, p. 112.

(87) J. Ball, loc.cit.

Several classical authors also described Lake Mareia or Mareotis (mod. Mariout). It was described briefly by Diodorus who, in fact, did not mention the lake by name, but he spoke of Alexandria as situated between the Sea (Mediterranean) and the marsh (Lake Mareotis).⁽⁸⁸⁾ It was also briefly mentioned by the unknown author of the book entitled De Bello Alexandrino", who rightly said, "Alexandria had a narrowest part where it was most constricted by the barrier of marshland (i.e. Lake Mareotis lying to the south".⁽⁸⁹⁾ Like Diodorus and the author of De Bello Alexandrino, Strabo mentioned Lake Mareout in relation with the city of Alexandria, but unlike them his description of the lake was more detailed. Strabo,⁽⁹⁰⁾ however, stated that among the various advantages of the site of the city of Alexandria was that it was washed by two seas, on the north by the Egyptian Sea (that part of the Mediterranean lying off Egypt), and on the south by Lake Mareia, also called Mareotis (Mariout). Strabo gave the lake a breadth of more than one hundred and fifty stadia (28 kilometres) and the length of less

(88) Diod. xvii. 52.

(89) Incertus Auctor (Julius Caesar), De Bell. Alex. 1.

(90) Strabo, 17.1. 7, 14.

than three hundred (56 kilometres). According to Strabo, the lake contained eight islands; and all the shores round it are well inhabited; and the vintages in this region are so good that the Mareotic wine is racked off with a view to ageing it". (91)

This lake, Strabo added, is filled by many canals from the Nile, both from above and on the sides, and through these canals the imports are much larger than those from the sea, so that the harbour on the lake was, in fact, richer than that on the sea. Moreover, Diodorus⁽⁹²⁾ and Strabo⁽⁹³⁾ observed among the various advantages of the site of Alexandria the effect of the surrounding waters of the Mediterranean on the north and of Lake Mareotis on the south-west, together with the continuous flowing of north-westerly Etesian (Annual) winds during the summer and the timeliness of the rising of the Nile on the climate of Alexandria. These elements made the climate of the city mild and agreeable. The lake was also well described by Pliny,⁽⁹⁴⁾ who considered it as lying in Libya and on the south of the city (of Alexandria). The lake, Pliny added, carries traffic from the interior (i.e. the hinterland of Egypt)

(91) cf.

(92) Diod. loc.cit.

(93) Strabo, 17.1.7.

(94) Pliny, V. 62, 63.

by means of a canal from the Canopic mouth of the Nile, also it includes a considerable number of islands, being 30 Roman miles wide and 25 Roman miles in circumference according to Claudius Caesar,⁽⁹⁵⁾ while others, according to Pliny,⁽⁹⁶⁾ make it 40 schoemi (ropes) (150 Roman miles) and they gave the same figure for the breadth. Reading the accounts of Strabo and Pliny just mentioned, one observes some sharp differences between the two. For while they agreed on certain points as regards the lake, they disagreed on the number of canals, which flowed into the lake, and which were used for transport. For Strabo, on one hand, spoke of many canals leading from the Nile to the canal, both from above and on the sides, whereas Pliny, on the other, mentioned one canal only taking off from the Canopic mouth of the Nile. Have the rest of the canals, mentioned by Strabo, been put out of use for one reason or the other ? Pliny might have the answer. Both authors also gave different measurements for the lake.

Diodorus⁽⁹⁷⁾ further mentioned the existence of marshes and lakes along the Mediterranean coast. Strabo was more specific about that; for he spoke of a number of lakes in the northern part of the Delta. He mentioned in particular the existence, to the east of the Bolbitine branch and towards the

(95) Claudius Caesar, presumably the Emperor Claudius. See Pliny's First Book of his N.H.

(96) Pliny, loc.cit.

(97) Diod. 1. 31, 66.

Sebennytic, of two lakes, one of which was called Butice from the city of Butus (i.e. Buto).⁽⁹⁸⁾ Strabo also mentioned the existence of lakes, and large and continuous marshes, which contained many villages, between the Tanitic and Pelusiatic mouths. He also spoke⁽⁹⁹⁾ of Pelusium (Tell el-Farama), which he said had marshes lying round it, which by some was called Barathra (pits), and many ponds.

The canal connecting the Nile with the Gulf of Suez and the Red Sea was also a matter of great interest for various classical authors. The classical authors, however, neither agreed on who conceived and/or began the project of that canal, nor who completed it, not even whether the canal had ever been finished and put into use. According to Diodorus,⁽¹⁰⁰⁾ Neco, son of Psammetichus⁽¹⁰¹⁾ (610 - 595 B.C.) began the work and Darius the Persian succeeded to it, but he was deterred from carrying it further for he was told that since the bed of the Red Sea was higher than the land of Egypt,⁽¹⁰²⁾ it would submerge it. Later

(98) Strabo, 17.1.18.

(99) Strabo, 17. 1. 21.

(100) Diod. 1. 33.

(101) cf. Hdt, 11. 158.

(102) cf. Aristotle Meteor I. xiv. 352b.

Ptolemy (Philadelphus) II (C. 3rd C. B.C.) completed the work and put the canal into use. Strabo⁽¹⁰³⁾ maintained that the idea was conceived first by Sesostris before the Trojan War, who abandoned the undertaking because he was given the same notion we mentioned above,⁽¹⁰⁴⁾ though some⁽¹⁰⁵⁾ said by the son of Psammetichus (i.e. Necho II), who only began the work and then died and later by Darius I, who resumed the work but he too apparently abandoned the project because of the same false notion given above.⁽¹⁰⁶⁾ The Ptolemaic kings⁽¹⁰⁷⁾, Strabo added,⁽¹⁰⁸⁾ completed the work and put it into use. Pliny,⁽¹⁰⁹⁾ like Aristotle⁽¹¹⁰⁾ before him, told us what implied that up to his time the canal had never been completed. In his account Pliny agreed with Strabo that the plan for constructing the canal was conceived originally by Sesostris, King of Egypt, and later by the Persian King Darius and then by Ptolemy (Philadelphus) II, who,

(103) Strabo, 17.1.25.

(104) cf. Diod. 1. 33.

(105) cf. Hdt, 11. 158; Diod. loc.cit. (106) Strabo, 17.1.24.

(107) cf. Diod. loc.cit., who named Ptolemy (Philadelphus) II as the one who completed the work.

(108) Strabo. loc.cit.

(109) Pliny, N.H. vi. 165.

(110) Aristotle, loc.cit.

according to Pliny, did actually carry a trench 100 ft. broad and 30 ft. deep for a distance of $34\frac{1}{2}$ miles, as far as the Bitter Springs (mod. Bitter Lakes), but he too left the work unfinished either because he feared that the land would be inundated because of the belief that the (Red) Sea bed was higher than the land, or for fear lest the sea water would pollute the water of the Nile, Egypt's sole drinking water source.

In the absence of any material evidence, modern opinion,⁽¹¹¹⁾ however, is inclined to reject the idea put forward by some classical authors, that the legendary Sesostris was the originator of such a plan. The majority of modern scholars⁽¹¹²⁾ are, in fact, in favour of making Necho or Neco, the son of Psammetichus, the first man to have conceived the plan, carried it out, and put into use, primarily for economic as well as other reasons. To keep the canal always navigable and in constant use, further works of clearing it from silt became necessary under Darius I and Ptolemy Philadelphus. Some other modern scholars,⁽¹¹³⁾ however, apparently basing their judgement on the stelae set up by

(111) A Dict. of Egypt. Civil. ed Posenor, P.275, SV. Suez Canal; H. Kees, op.cit, Ancient Egypt, p. 113.

(112) A Dict. of Egypt. Civil. loc.cit.; M. Cary, The Geographical Background of the Greek and Roman History, pp. 213, 214; Cyril Aldred, The Egyptians, p.154 (An Ancient Peoples and Places Paperback, London 1963, Thames & Hudson).

(113) H. Kees, op.cit, pp. 113,; E. Drioton & J. Vandrin, Le Egypte, pp. 602, 603, 4th ed. aug. (Paris Univ. Press, 1962); C. Planque, Le Nile a l'Epoque. Pharaonique, p. 35ff. (Paris 1903).

Darius I on the banks of the canal and on the evidence supplied by Herodotus,⁽¹¹⁴⁾ have suggested that the work for the construction of the canal was begun by Necho or Neko and it was completed by Darius (and Xerxes).⁽¹¹⁵⁾

The classical writers also described the coasts of Egypt. For Egypt was and still is looking on two seas, the Mediterranean in the north and the Red Sea on the east.

The general impression one gets from the accounts of various classical authors is that the northern or Mediterranean coast of Egypt was almost harbourless, or one may say without good harbours. Diodorus, for instance, stated,⁽¹¹⁶⁾ "On the north Egypt is washed over its whole extent by waters which are practically harbourless, has for a defence before it the Egyptian Sea (i.e. the Mediterranean). The voyage along the coast of this sea is exceedingly long, and any landing is especially difficult; for from Paraetonium (Marsa Matrouh) in Libya as far as Jopec (Jaffa) in Coele-Syria (Palestine), a voyage along the sea coast of some five thousand stadia (675 kilometres), there is not to be found a safe harbour except Pharos (i.e. Alexandria). The remaining parts of the coast are either marshy or sandy". Strabo,

(114) Hdt, loc.cit.

(115) H. Kees, loc.cit.

(116) Diod. 1. 31.

in one passage⁽¹¹⁷⁾ described the Mediterranean coast of Egypt as harbourless (ἀλιμίνος παραλία). In another passage⁽¹¹⁸⁾ Strabo refuted the allegation made by Eratosthenes that the Egyptians were xenophobic, and he added that this false rumour has arisen from the fact that Egypt's northern coast was almost harbourless (and thus inhospitable), and even the one good harbour, namely the one at Pharos, was not safe for landing because the shepherds, who inhabited nearby, were pirates and attacked anybody who tried to anchor there.

The evidences of the classical writers as regards the lack of good harbourage on the Egyptian coast of the Mediterranean were supported by some modern scholars, by Milne⁽¹¹⁹⁾ who stated that Egypt was difficult of access, especially from Rome; the harbour of Alexandria was the only one suitable for large vessels on the Mediterranean; and by Cary⁽¹²⁰⁾ who, more specifically, told us that the Mediterranean sea front of Egypt, taken as a whole, is no more inviting than that of Palestine. "For the greater wind, and that stretch of it which lies between the arms of the Nile, is an alluvial marshland behind a fringe of

(117) Strabo, 17.1.53.

(118) Strabo, 17.1.19.

(119) J. Grafton Milne, A History of Egypt, Under Roman Rule, p. 121.

(120) M. Cary, The Geographical Background of Greek and Roman History, p. 213, (Oxford, 1949).

shoals. In 306 B.C. Demetrius the besieger (Polio^rcetes) after annihilating the Ptolemaic fleet off Cypriote Salamis, was unable to follow up his advantage with an invasion of Egypt, because the strength of the on-shore wind made a beach landing impossible". Cary further stated,⁽¹²¹⁾ "for the absence of good harbourage on the Delta coast (the port of Daphnea on the eastern (Pelusiatic) arm fell into disuse c. 600 B.C.).⁽¹²²⁾ compensation was found until the time of Alexander the Great in river ports, the most important of which was Naucratis on the westernmost (Canopic) branch of the Nile. This station, however, was not commodi^oous enough for the far sighted ambitions of Alexander, who selected a new site for a harbour on a shelf of firm ground beyond the western extremity of the Delta". There is no evidence, apart from Homer's reference⁽¹²³⁾ to the island of Pharos and Odysseus's landing there with his companions, to prove that the harbour region of Pharos was used regularly by seafarers before the time of Alexander. It was further suggested by H. Kees⁽¹²⁴⁾ that all attempts to prove the existence of an ancient Minoan trading base in the area of the harbour district of Alexandria had so far proved fruitless.

(121) M. Cary, op.cit. p. 214

(122) M. Cary, op.cit. p. 214, fn. 2

(123) Homer, Od. iv. (8), 354-359.

(124) H. Kees, op.cit. p. 140.

On the contrary, the eastern extremity of the Delta was used by the ancient Pharaohs for their military as well as merchant fleets. Cary⁽¹²⁵⁾ confirmed the point that as early as 3000 B.C. the Pharaohs of Egypt sent merchandise by bulk to and from Phoenicia by the sea route. The Egyptian war-lord Thothmes III, for instance, habitually used the sea route to convey his invading armies to Syria C. 1473 B.C., and it is not unlikely that the Ptolemies maintained their hold on Phoenicia by means of their fleets.⁽¹²⁶⁾ Nevertheless, the fact remains that ancient Egypt lacked good harbours on its northern coast, exactly as is the case today, except that after the construction of the Suez Canal, the 19th and 20th centuries' version of the ancient Nile - Red Sea canal, Egypt has been given besides Alexandria another port on the Mediterranean, namely Port Said, situated on the north end of the Suez Canal. As to the once flourishing port of Damietta, it is being renewed at present.

The eastern or Red Sea coast and the gulfs of Suez and Akaba were not less interestingly described by the classical writers. They were described by the three major classical writers, who are the basis of this study, I mean Diodorus, Strabo and Pliny. The descriptions of the Egyptian or Western coast of the Red Sea and

(125) Cary, op.cit. p.215.

(126) M. Cary, op.cit. p.215. fn. 1.

its two northern gulfs of these authors look amazingly almost identical, as if they were drawn from the same source.

Starting from the east, Diodorus told us⁽¹²⁷⁾ that the Leanite Gulf (The Gulf of Akaba) is bordered by numerous villages inhabited by the Nabataen Arabs. Going down the Gulf one comes to an island called the Island of Seals ^{ἡ νῆδος} (ξῆων Φωκων) perhaps Tiran Island, which is situated near a promontory (probably the modern Ras Muhammed⁽¹²⁸⁾). When one reaches the Gulf of Suez, one comes across the Garden of Palms, a fertile region with many water sources (probably the modern El-Tor). Diodorus⁽¹²⁹⁾ went on to describe the western coast of the Gulf of Suez and the Red Sea (Sinus Arabicus) starting from the north he mentioned the city of Arsinoe, then numerous streams with a bitter salty taste dropping from the cliffs into the sea (el-Ayn el Sukhna), then to a great plain above which towers like a mountain whose colour is like ruddle and blinds the sight of any who gazes steadfastly upon it for some time. At the edge of the skirts of the mountain there lies a harbour of Aphrodite, which has a winding entrance, and above this

(127) Diod. iii. 12, 43, who follows Agatharchides of Cindus almost literally. See: Agatharchides in C. Muller's Geographici Graeci Minores, Vol. I. pp. 167, 186; J. Ball, op.cit. p. 53.

(128) J. Ball, op.cit. p. 53. In identifying names the present writer depended mainly on Ball.

(129) Diod. loc.cit.

harbour are situated three islands, two of them abound in olive trees and are thickly shaded while the third is less so but contains a multitude of Meleagrides birds (guinea fowls). Next there is a very large gulf called Acathartus (*Ἀκάθαρτος*, Foul Bay) and by it is an exceedingly long peninsula, over the narrow neck of which men transport their ships to the opposite sea. Diodorus went on to say⁽¹³⁰⁾ that one next comes to the island of Ophiodes (i.e. snaky) from the fact that it was formerly full of snakes, but later it was cleared of these creatures (reptiles) by the kings of Alexandria (i.e. the Ptolemies) because they wanted to exploit the topaz of which the island abounds. Strabo⁽¹³¹⁾ more or less spoke in the same way on the Gulfs of the Akaba and Suez, to which he gave the names Aelanites, from the city Aelana (Akaba) at its head, from which there was a road leading to Gaza on the Mediterranean, and Gulf Heroonpolis, (Gulf of Suez), from which also another road led to Pelusium on the Mediterranean. Strabo⁽¹³²⁾ correctly stated that the road from Heroonpolis to Pelusium was shorter than the one from Aelana (Akaba) to Gaza. On the Red Sea coast of Egypt, Strabo⁽¹³³⁾ almost follows the same order. For after leaving Heroonpolis, he said,⁽¹³⁴⁾ one comes to

(130) Diod. loc.cit. (131) Strabo, 16. 2. 30,31,33; 17.1. 25, 35.

(132) Strabo, 16.2.30. (133) Strabo, 16.4.5., 6.

(134) Strabo, loc.cit.

another city with the name Arsinoe, also called Cleopatris, (mod.Suez), then to the springs of hot water, salty and bitter. Then the plain with the mountain of Red Colour (Gebel Hamrawain), Myos Hormos (Abu Shar el Qibli) also called Aphrodite's Harbour, at which the trade route referred to earlier⁽¹³⁵⁾, which links the Nile Valley at Coptos (Qift) with the Red Sea ends. This route was constructed in order that ~~Indiamen~~^{tradesmen} might avoid sailing from the beginning of the recess of Suez, which, according to Strabo,⁽¹³⁶⁾ was rough. Off Myos Hormos lie the three islands. Then the Acathartus Gulf (Foul Bay) which lies opposite Thebaid. On this gulf lies the city of Berenica (Madinet el-Harras). Finally one reaches the island of Ophiodes (Snaky = modern Zeberged or St.John's Island) where 'topazes' (really peridots) are found. Pliny also⁽¹³⁷⁾ described the gulfs of Akaba and Suez not very differently from the two others. The name of the Gulf of Akaba, according to Pliny, is either Aelanites or Laeainites, and that of Suez is called Gulf of Carandra or Heroonpolis, or Aeas by the Arabs. Leaving Heroonpolis, Pliny said, one comes to the harbour of Daneoi (the Arsinoe of Diodorus and Strabo), where the canal between the Gulf of Suez and Nile takes off. Then to the little town of Aenum, called by some Philoteriae (probably Marsa Gasus), and to the island of Sapirine

(135) p.23.

(136) Strabo, 17.1.45.

(137) Pliny, N.H. vi. 167ff. ; here Pliny follows Juba of Mauretania.

(Jubal) and Scytala (Shadwan); Myos Hormos (Abu Sha'r el-Quibli), where there is the spring called Fons Ainos (Bir Abu Sha'r); Mount Eos (Gebel Hamrawein); the island Iambi; Berenice (Medinet el-Harras) to which the trade from Coptos (Qift) leads; Mount Pentadactylus (i.e. Five Fingers, Gebel Faraid); some islands called Stenae Dirai (Narrow Necks); another group of islands called the Halonesi; Caradamine; and finally Topazos (the Ophodes of Diodorus and Strabo) which gave its name to the precious stone.

If Alexandria had served as the only port for the exports and imports of Egypt on the Mediterranean coast in the Ptolemaic and Roman eras, we find at least two or perhaps three ports on the other side, that is, on the Red Sea and Gulf of Suez coasts serving for trade with the countries of the East. It is interesting to know, however, that only Suez (the ancient Arsinoe or Cleopatra) is now the main port of Egypt on the Red Sea, the remaining ancient harbours under their modern names are not much used.

CHAPTER IV

CLIMATE

Although the climate of Egypt, like its many aspects, aroused the interest of many classical authors, Greek and Roman alike, unfortunately, it did not receive its adequate share in the writings of various Greek and Roman writers, perhaps because the climate of Egypt was so good that people did not bother to talk about it. The climatic conditions in Egypt were so good that Diodorus⁽¹⁾ went to the extreme of telling us that in Egypt men first came into existence, because of the favourable climate of the land and because of the nature of the Nile, for when moisture from the abundant rains, which fell among other peoples, was mingled with the intense heat which prevails in Egypt itself, it is reasonable to suppose that the air became very well tempered for the first generation of all living things.

(2)

Diodorus also claimed that the Egyptians reared their children without shoes or clothing because of the mild climate of their country. This is why, in Diodorus' view, children did not cost much to bring up and that is why Egypt surpassed all other countries in the number of population. With this large population Egypt was able to build many and great constructions and monuments.

(1) Diod. I.10; cf. also Aristotle, Meteor, I.xiv; Apoll.Rhod., Argonautica, iv. 268.

(2) Diod. I. 80.

If Diodorus, indeed, were to be brought up alive again, he would say that the dry climate of Egypt has preserved these old monuments to our own day. The heat and the nature of the Nile were also the theme of Strabo's statement,⁽³⁾ in which he followed Aristotle, that "one (Egyptian) woman actually bore seven children at once;⁽⁴⁾ and he, too, called the Nile highly productive and nourishing because of the moderate heat of the sun's rays, which, he maintained, leaves the nourishing element and evaporates merely the superfluous". The atmosphere (lit. air : aer) of Egypt was also described by Pliny⁽⁵⁾ as always warm. Pliny further stated⁽⁶⁾ that, "Egypt owed its fertility in corn to heat". But how ? Pliny did not say. Pliny,⁽⁷⁾ however, is quite correct when he said that the natural qualities of the localities carried great weight in this matter; for in Egypt they plant in every month in different places. One, however, does not understand Pliny's⁽⁸⁾ statement that in Egypt the flowers had very little perfume,

(3) Strabo, 15.1.22.

(4) It is interesting to notice that modern Egypt complains from the high rate increase of its population, as a result of the fertility of its women and men alike perhaps.

(5) Pliny, N.H. xvii. 15.

(6) Pliny, N.H. xvii. 31. (7) Pliny, N.H. xvii. 133.

(8) Pliny, N.H. xxi. 36.

because, he said, the atmosphere was misty and full of dew owing to the wide expanse of the river. What sort of flowers ? All the flowers ? Pliny did not make it clear.

The classical authors noticed quite correctly the difference in temperature between the north and the south of Egypt, and between the valley and the deserts. In this respect we received a variety of statements from different authors. Strabo⁽⁹⁾ for instance, observed rightly the salubrity and mildness of the climate of Alexandria, which he ascribed to various natural factors; the effect of the surrounding waters of the Mediterranean and Lake Mariout, the timeliness of the rise of the Nile and the continuous blowing of the north-westerly summer winds, which he called Etesian (Annual). He also⁽¹⁰⁾ quite correctly described the climatic conditions of the Eastern Desert or more specifically the isthmus between Coptos (Qift) in the Nile Valley and Myos Hormos on the Red Sea implying that it was hot and that due to heat by day all journeys along this track were made by night, and that travellers used the stars as their guides. Pliny⁽¹¹⁾ explicitly mentioned heat as the main reason for making journeys along the isthmus during the night. Pliny noticed the interest in which the Egyptians took in devising methods for weather forecasts. He

(9) Strabo, 17.1.22.

(10) Strabo, 17.1.45.

(11) Pliny, N.H. vi. 102.

told us⁽¹²⁾, "The Egyptians paid most attention to the moon's fourth day. It was believed," he maintained, "that if she rose bright and shone with clear brilliance, she portended fine weather, if red, wind, if dark, rain, for the next fortnight".

From the few references by the classical writers to the prevailing winds in Egypt, one gathers that the Etesian (Annual) winds, as they were called by the classical authors, received the lion's share. These winds (i.e. the Etesian) were mentioned by Diodorus in his survey on the possible causes of the rise of the Nile. Diodorus⁽¹³⁾ said that these winds blew when the Nile was in full flood and in summer time. They blew, he said, not only from the west and the north but also from the north west. He quite correctly came to the conclusion that they could not by any means be the cause of the Nile flood as Thales and others seemed to have believed. Lucretius,⁽¹⁴⁾ too, mentioned the Etesian winds, but he wrongly considered them as one possible cause for the rise of the Nile. They were also mistakenly considered by Pliny⁽¹⁵⁾ as one of the most probable causes of the phenomenon of the rise of the Nile. Pliny, on the other hand, left a very useful piece of information when he spoke on these winds

(12) Pliny, N.H. xviii. 311.

(13) Diod. I. 38, 39.

(14) Lucretius, De Rerum Natura, vi. 712-731.

(15) Pliny, N.H. v. 55.

and their effect on the navigation up the Nile and subsequently on trade. He stated⁽¹⁶⁾ that the journey from Julopolis,⁽¹⁷⁾ a town at two miles distance from Alexandria took 12 days (sailing) up the Nile to Coptos (Qift) when the Etesian (trade) winds were blowing. This statement of Pliny is interesting because up to the present time, sailing ships going up the Nile, that is to say to Upper Egypt, are driven by these winds against the current of the Nile, which is particularly strong during the summer, when the Nile is rising. As for ships sailing downstream, they are easily pushed by the current of the Nile. Nature, therefore, facilitates sailing up and down the river. We have already referred to Strabo's statement⁽¹⁸⁾ on the climate of Alexandria, and we mentioned the different natural factors, one of these natural factors, according to Strabo,⁽¹⁹⁾ was the Etesian winds, which blew in summer and when the Nile was in full flood. For the reason that they blew from vast seas they reduced the temperature of the city and in this way the Alexandrians passed a very pleasant time. Among other winds prevailing in Egypt Diodorus⁽²⁰⁾ mentioned winds blowing constantly from the south in Sinai. These winds, Diodorus said, were loaded

(16) Pliny, N.H. vi. 102.

(17) Julopolis is occupied now by the modern suburb of Bulkeley in Alexandria (J. Ball, op.cit. p.79).

(18) p. 35.

(19) Strabo, 17.1.22.

(20) Diod. I. 30.

with great quantities of sand. Strabo⁽²¹⁾ also spoke of a Sarapium⁽²²⁾ at Memphis (Meit Reheina) in a place so very sandy that dunes of sands were heaped up by the winds. He also mentioned⁽²³⁾ the south winds which were loaded with dust. Cicero, too, spoke⁽²⁴⁾ of the flying serpents which were brought into Egypt from the Libyan (Western) desert by the south-west wind. Strabo⁽²⁵⁾ further said, in describing the Acarthartus Gulf (Foul Bay on the Red Sea) that it was, like Myos Hormos (Abu Sha'r el-Qibli) situated opposite Thebais and was really "acathartus", i.e. "Foul", for it was roughened by reefs and submarine rocks, and, most of the time, by tempestuous winds.

The prevailing winds in Egypt, according to the classical authors, therefore, were the Egyptian monsoon northwesterly summer winds, which, apart from assisting the ships to sail up the Nile and against its current, were considered quite rightly as responsible for reducing summer heat in Egypt,⁽²⁶⁾ and by 'other

(21) Strabo, 17.1.32.

(22) The temple where the God Sarapis was worshipped.

(23) Strabo, 17.1.43.

(24) Cicero, Nat.Deor. I. xxxvi. 101.

(25) Strabo, 16.4.6.

(26) W.B. Fisher, The Middle East, a physical, social and regional geography, pp. 460, 461. (Methuen, London 1959), M. Cary, The Geographical Background of Greek and Roman History, p. 207 Oxford 1949; A.H. Keane, Africa, vol. I, p. 574, ff. London 1895.

wrongly as one of the most probable causes of the Nile flood. The other winds can be described as variable but mainly southerly or south-westerly winds and these were dust and sand loaded winds. They could safely be described as corresponding to the dreaded and pestiferous Khamseen winds, which blow infrequently but which do blow for a few days during spring.

Besides Diodorus⁽²⁷⁾ gave us a mythological story, though it contained a nucleus of truth, that when in Deucalions flood most living things were destroyed, it was probable that the inhabitants of Upper Egypt survived rather than any others, since their country was rainless for the most part. For according to Strabo,⁽²⁸⁾ who quoted his predecessors - such as Poseidonius of Apameia⁽²⁹⁾ and Aristobulus of Cessandreia,⁽³⁰⁾ no rain falls in the Thebais and the country round Syene (Aswan). But later Diodorus⁽³¹⁾ quoted Oenopides of Chios⁽³²⁾ as stating categorically that Egypt (as a whole) had no rain. Egypt was also described as having no rain by Ovid,⁽³³⁾ who said that Egypt was said to have lacked the rains that blessed its field; by

(27) Diod. I. 10 quoted from Hecat. Abd. fl. 300 B.C. and wrote the "Aegyptiaka".

(28) Strabo, XV. 1. 19; xvii. 1.5.

(29) For Poseidonius of Apameia, see F.Jacoby, F.G.H. Teil IIa Lief. 3 p.270.

(30) For Aristobulus of Cassandria, see F.Jacoby F.G.H. Teil II. Lief I. p. 780.

(31) Diod. I. 41.

(32) Oenopides of Chios, an astronomer and mathematician of the 5th C. B.C.

(33) Ovid. Ars Amatoria, I. 647.

Tibullus⁽³⁴⁾ who, addressing the Nile, as if it was a god, said, "because of you (O Nile) your Egypt never sues for showers, nor the parched blade bows to Jove the Rain-giver", and by Pomponius Mela⁽³⁵⁾ who expressed his surprise at Egypt, which, he said, though devoid of rain, was amazingly fertile, productive and abounding in men and other animals. Only Columella⁽³⁶⁾ correctly stated that rain was scarce in Egypt.

The Eastern Desert, or more specifically the isthmus between Coptos (Qift) and Myos Hormos (Abu Sha'r el-Qibli) was, according to Strabo,⁽³⁷⁾ a region where rain scarcely fell, nevertheless they built cisterns for it. Rain also occurred in the Western Desert according to the same classical author.⁽³⁸⁾ The most remarkable thing is that only from one of the classical authors, namely Horace,⁽³⁹⁾ that we were told that Egypt (lit. Memphis) had no snow.

(34) Tibullus, Triumph of Messala, I. vii. 25-26.

(35) Pomponius Mela, Chorographia, I. IX. 49.

(36) Columella, De Re Rustica, II. xi. 3.

(37) Strabo, 17.1.45.

(38) Strabo, 17.1.43.

(39) Horace (b. 65 B.C.), Odes. III. xxvi. 10.

According to almost all the classical writers, Egypt had no rain, with the exception of the Eastern and Western Deserts, where rain occurred. Comparing what the classical authors said concerning the absence of rain in Egypt with the actual facts, we find them going very far and exaggerating their statements, perhaps to make a complete and sharp contrast with the climatic conditions in their countries where rain occurred more than in Egypt and where they, unlike the Egyptians, depended to a great extent on rainfall in their daily needs. For Egypt does not lack rain as they wrongly stated. Judging from the present conditions in Egypt, which are presumably not different from those prevailing when the classical authors concerned were writing, we find that the northern coastal region belongs to the Mediterranean climate with a winter rainfall⁽⁴⁰⁾, while the rest of the country belongs to the continental climate. Consequently the rainfall differs in amount from north to south.⁽⁴¹⁾ For while Cairo receives winter rainfall which actually lasts for a very short time, Upper Egypt receives rain very rarely, once in every four or even five years⁵, and when rainfall occurs there, it, being so sudden and very heavy, causes floods and widespread destruction for man and other things. This is

(40) M. Cary, op.cit. p.207; H. Kees, op.cit. p.47; Encyc. Brit. Vol. 8.S.V. Egypt.

(41) M. Cary, loc.cit; Encyc. Brit. loc.cit.; H. Kees, loc.cit.

why rain was considered in the past and is still considered in the present time a curse by the people of Upper Egypt.⁽⁴²⁾ But Strabo is correct as far as the desert regions are concerned.⁽⁴³⁾ As regards Horace's statement that Egypt was devoid of snow, we find that a modern scholar contradicts⁽⁴⁴⁾ that statement by stating that in winter slight snow showers may spread as far south as Aswan, such a statement the present writer cannot support, for he has neither heard of nor seen snow showers occurring in Egypt; what he has witnessed was slight hail storms, but he, being not a climatologist and unacquainted with various types of snow, cannot draw the line between them.

(42) H. Kees, loc.cit. and also G.A. Wainwright, The Sky-Religion In Egypt, p.100 (Cambridge 1938).
Their words can be supported by the present writer's personal observations of the floods at Kena, in Upper Egypt, and its effect in 1954.

(43) H. Kees, op.cit. p. 22.

(44) W.B. Fisher, op.cit. p. 461.

CHAPTER V.

FLORA AND FAUNA

From the following account we shall observe that the flora of ancient Egypt had been well represented in the writing of the classical authors, not necessarily in all of them. We shall see also that Pliny and to some extent Diodorus will be the chief authors on whom we are going to depend in this chapter. We shall also notice that ancient Egypt seemed to have had various species of trees, bushes and other types of plants, perhaps more than the present day. The intensification of cultivation is possibly the main factor responsible for reducing the number of the wild flora in Egypt.⁽¹⁾ In ancient Egypt, like today, the flora was restricted by the vast expanse of arid desert and was to be found mainly near the Nile, in canals, marshes, round the springs of the oases of the Western Desert and also where rain falls in the deserts⁽²⁾. Since ancient Egypt had many sorts of plants and since many of these plants were briefly mentioned or lengthily described by various classical authors, it will be a laborious task, as Diodorus rightly put it,⁽³⁾ to mention all of them in the scope of this present work.

(1) Encyc. Brit. p.35. Vol. 8. S.V. Egypt.

(2) M. Rostovtzeff, The Social and Economic History of the Hellenistic World, Vol. I. p. 298, 299; Encycl.Brit. Vol.8. p.35 S.V. Egypt.

(3) Diod. I. 34, quoted from Hecataeus of Abdera.

The fact that the land of Egypt, unlike Greece, was a very productive land, was recognised by many classical authors; by Diodorus who said⁽⁴⁾, "since the Delta is alluvial soil and well watered, it produces many crops of every kind, in as much as the river (Nile) by its annual rise regularly deposits on it fresh slime". Diodorus further states⁽⁵⁾ "many other plants, capable of supplying men with the necessities of life, grow in Egypt in great abundance, but it would be a long task to tell about them". Diodorus went on to say⁽⁶⁾ "since the Nile has a gentle current, it carries down a great quantity of all kinds of earth, and, furthermore, gathers in stagnant pools in low places, marshes are found which abound in every kind of plant. For tubers of every flower grow in them and fruits and vegetables which grow on stalks, of a nature peculiar to the country, supplying an abundance sufficient to render the poor and the sick among the inhabitants self-sustaining. For not only do they afford a varied diet, ready at hand and abundant for all who need it, but they also furnish not a few of the other things which contribute to the necessities of life". Strabo⁽⁷⁾, too, told us that by nature the land of Egypt produces more fruit than do other lands, and still more when

(4) Diod. loc.cit.

(5) Diod. loc.cit.

(6) Diod. I. 35.

(7) Strabo, 17.1.3.

watered. Pliny also seems to have corroborated Diodorus and Strabo when he stated⁽⁸⁾, "most people use wild plants for food, especially the people of Egypt, a land very fruitful in crops, yet about the only one that could manage without them, so great an abundance of food does it get from plants". The self-sufficiency of Egypt was explicitly stressed by Strabo, who in one passage⁽⁹⁾ stated that the ancient Egyptians were indifferent to foreigners and did not want foreign imports because they were self-sufficient; and in another⁽¹⁰⁾ he described Egypt as inclined to peace from the outset because of its self sufficiency and inaccessibility. This claim of the self sufficiency is not entirely true; it is, in fact, a little exaggerated. It is true, however, that Egypt was to a greater extent self-sufficient. It was even one of the greatest exporters of the ancient countries of the Mediterranean despite its large population.⁽¹¹⁾ And despite the claim by the classical authors that Egypt had many kinds of trees, which is entirely true, this large number of trees was not adequate to the expanding needs of Egypt.⁽¹²⁾ Egypt, therefore, has always

(8) Pliny, N.H. XXI. 86.

(9) Strabo, 17.1.6.

(10) Strabo, 17.1.53.

(11) M. Cary, op.cit. p.212. cf. also H.I. Bell, Egypt from Alexander The Great To The Arab Conquest, p.50 (Oxford 1948).

(12) M. Rostovtzeff, The Social and Economic History of the Hellenistic World, Vol. I. pp. 298, 299, 300.

been in need of timber for the building of its fleets.⁽¹³⁾ It had to go and look for this timber in other lands. Indeed, Egypt had imported (and still imports) timber from Phoenicia and several other countries in Asia and Africa.⁽¹⁴⁾ Furthermore, the Ptolemaic Kings had taken other measures to ensure local supply of timber. Extensive tree-planting was carried out on the embankments by the administration.⁽¹⁵⁾ It was done probably by the compulsory labour of the population under the supervision of the administration and under the guarantee of special contractors. Trees and shrubs were first planted in nurseries and afterwards transplanted to the embankments. But the Ptolemies did not achieve complete success in acclimatizing trees suitable for ship-building, such as the larger conifers for the sedimentary soil of the Nile Valley is too powdery to give a firm hold to tree roots.⁽¹⁶⁾ Consequently, the Ptolemies, like the Pharaohs before them, continued to bring in their timber from abroad. The

(13) Ancient Egyptian Materials and Industries, A. Lucas, 4th Ed. revised by J.R. Harris, p. 429. London, 1962; M. Cary, op.cit. p.211; Pierre Montet, Eternal Egypt, p.109. Eng.trans. by Doreen Weightman, cf. also H.I. Bell, loc.cit.

(14) A. Lucas, loc.cit.; M.Cary, loc.cit.; Pierre Montet, loc.cit.; J. Lindsay, Daily Life In Roman Egypt, p.94, London (1963).

(15) Rostovtzeff, loc.cit.

(16) M. Cary, op.cit. p.211

Ptolemies had also taken other measures to protect the young trees against sheep and, of course, goats and other domestic animals.⁽¹⁷⁾ The cutting of the older trees and of the branches and the handling of fallen trees were also strictly regulated.⁽¹⁸⁾ The Ptolemaic regulations concerning cutting trees persisted under the Romans⁽¹⁹⁾. Even the use of privately owned trees were submitted to certain regulations, but there is not much evidence to support this view.⁽²⁰⁾ Egypt, therefore, was not a treeless country. Classical authors, such as Diodorus,⁽²¹⁾ Strabo⁽²²⁾ and Pliny⁽²³⁾ went even as far as to describe certain trees and plants as peculiar to Egypt. Forests or groves were not unknown in Ancient Egypt. Strabo⁽²⁴⁾ and Pliny⁽²⁵⁾

(17) Rostovtzeff, loc.cit.

(18) Rostovtzeff, loc.cit.; J. Lindsay, op.cit. p.94, and p. 331. n.12, where Lindsay cites several evidences.

(19) J. Lindsay op.cit, p.94.

(20) Rostovtzeff, loc.cit.

(21) Diod. I. 34.

(22) Strabo, 17.2.4.

(23) Pliny, N.H. xiii. 56; cf. also Theophrastus, H.P. iv. 11. 1.

(24) Strabo, 17.1.35.

(25) Pliny, N.H. xiii. 63. cf. also Theophrastus, H.P. iv. 2.8, where Pliny seems certain to have followed him verbatim.

mentioned the existence of a grove of acacia (*ἀκανθα*) in the Thebaid, in a district 300 stadia (or 40 Roman miles) distant from the Nile. Pliny⁽²⁶⁾ also mentioned another forest region round Memphis with huge plum-trees "prunus", that three men could not join hands round the trunk. Even today one can see many groves of palm trees all over the country, especially round villages and small settlements.⁽²⁷⁾ To the present writer's knowledge also there are at present in Egypt two man-made woods containing various species of trees, one at Kena and the other at Ouseem.

The persea (*περsea* or *περσεια*)⁽²⁸⁾ is among the trees said by Diodorus⁽²⁹⁾, Strabo⁽³⁰⁾, Dioscorides⁽³¹⁾ and Pliny⁽³²⁾ to have grown in ancient Egypt. Strabo told⁽³³⁾ us that it grew not only in Egypt but also in Ethiopia. Diodorus⁽³⁴⁾

(26) Pliny, xiii. 65.

(27) The present writer's personal observation.

(28) Mimusops Shemperi, Arabic. Labakh. (29) Diod. I. 34. quoted from Hecataeus of Abdera.

(30) Strabo, 17.2.4.

(31) Dioscorides, De Materia Medica, I. 187.

(32) Pliny, N.H. xiii. 60.

(33) Strabo, loc.cit.

(34) Diod. loc.cit.

maintained that it was originally introduced from Ethiopia by Cambyses, King of the Persians, when he conquered that region. Pliny, who followed Theophrastus,⁽³⁵⁾ almost word by word, seemed to have misunderstood his source; for while in one passage⁽³⁶⁾ he included the tree among the trees peculiar to Egypt, in another passage⁽³⁷⁾ he joined Dioscorides⁽³⁸⁾ in saying that some authorities maintained that the tree was transplanted from Persia, where it had poisonous nature, but after it had been introduced to Egypt it lost that nature and became safe. Modern scholars, however, generally agreed that the persea grew⁽³⁹⁾ and/or was extensively cultivated in ancient Egypt.⁽⁴⁰⁾ About the origin one modern scholar⁽⁴¹⁾ stated that it has been suggested that it had

(35) Theophrastus, H.P. III. iii. 4; iv. ii. 5,8,9.

(36) Pliny, N.H. XIII. 56, 60. (37) Pliny, N.H. XV, 44ff.

(38) Dioscorides, loc.cit.

(39) J.K. Jackson, Changes In The Climate And Vegetation Of The Sudan, Sudan Notes And Records, Vol.38. Double Number, Khartoum (1957), pp.56, 57.

(40) Rostovtzeff, loc.cit.; A. Lucas, op.cit. p.439, H. Kees, op.cit. p.80; A Dict. of Egypt. Civil. ed by Posener, p.89. S.V. Fauna and Flora.

(41) J.K. Jackson, loc.cit.

been originally introduced from the Somali coast (the ancient Punt) by an expedition sent by Queen Hatshepsut (C. 1500 B.C.) which brought back numerous living plants. The same author⁽⁴²⁾ has also stated that it seemed possible that in early dynastic times the persea might have grown wild in the Red Sea Hills, and had been domesticated from there.

The Classical authors, however, ascribed many uses to the persea; its fruits are eatable⁽⁴³⁾ and of medical use;⁽⁴⁴⁾ its leaves are also used for medicine⁽⁴⁵⁾ and its timber is good for making statues.⁽⁴⁶⁾ Surprisingly enough none of the classical authors mentioned the fact that the persea was a sacred tree.⁽⁴⁷⁾

(42) J.K.Jackson, loc.cit.

(43) Diod. loc.cit.; Strabo, loc.cit. ; Dioscorides, loc.cit. ; Pliny, N.H. XIII. 60 ; cf. also Theophrastus, H.P. IV. 11. 5.

(44) Dioscorides, loc.cit.

(45) Dioscorides, loc.cit.

(46) Pliny, N.H. XIII. 60 ; also Theophrastus, loc.cit. where he described the timber of persea as useful not only for making statues, but also beds and other things.

(47) See Pliny, N.H. In Loeb. ed. Vol.VII. p.528. Index Plantarum.

The sycamore tree⁽⁴⁸⁾, which is still found in Egypt, also grew in ancient Egypt.⁽⁴⁹⁾ The tree was described briefly by Diodorus⁽⁵⁰⁾ and by Strabo⁽⁵¹⁾ very briefly, and in great detail by Pliny,⁽⁵²⁾ who as a matter of fact drew most of his information about the flora of Egypt from Theophrastus. Pliny, who was following Theophrastus,⁽⁵³⁾ and Strabo⁽⁵⁴⁾ mentioned the sycamore among trees peculiar to Egypt, which is not true; for the tree was common to Egypt as well as to other countries. A. Ernout⁽⁵⁵⁾ suggested that the tree seemed to have originated from Abyssinia, but later it was naturalised in the Nile Valley since very remote ages. In the meantime the tree did not remain confined to these places only, but afterwards it spread into Palestine and the east where it can be found up to the present time.

(48) Ficus Sycomoros.

(49) Diod. I. 34, Strabo, 17.2.4; Pliny N.H. XIII. 56, 57; cf. also Theophrastus H.P. IV. 11. 1; For modern ref. v. A. Lucas op.cit. p.439, H. Kees, op.cit. p.80. A Dict. of Egypt. Civil. p.89, sv. Flora and Fauna; M. Rostovtzeff, loc.cit.

(50) Diod. loc.cit.

(51) Strabo, loc.cit.

(52) Pliny, loc.cit.

(53) Theophrastus, loc.cit.

(54) Strabo, loc.cit.

(55) A. Ernout, Pline L'Ancien, N.H. 13. on Ch.56, n.2. p.87, Budé.

The tree was correctly prized for its prolific production⁽⁵⁶⁾, for it was said by Pliny,⁽⁵⁷⁾ that it produced seven crops in summer and by Diodorus⁽⁵⁸⁾, all the year round. The fruit, Strabo said,⁽⁵⁹⁾, resembled a fig, but it was not as tasty as the fig. Another author⁽⁶⁰⁾ told us that because it produced all the year round, the poor found a ready source of food to turn to in need. The timber was also of great use⁽⁶¹⁾ (especially for ship building).⁽⁶²⁾ Like the persea, the sycamore was a sacred tree, for it was regarded as a manifestation of the sky-goddess,⁽⁶³⁾ but this point was also ignored by all the classical authors.

The black mulberry tree was surprisingly mentioned as growing in ancient Egypt (as is the case today) by Diodorus⁽⁶⁴⁾ only. Diodorus called it sycaminos and said that it bore the black mulberry (*Μορσιν*). It is understood that the fruit was eaten, though Diodorus did not mention that explicitly. Nothing was also

(56) Diod. loc.cit; Pliny, loc.cit; cf. also Theophrastus, loc.cit. This can be supported by the personal observation of the present writer.

(57) Pliny, loc.cit.

(58) Diod. loc.cit.

(59) Strabo, loc.cit., cf. also Theophrastus, loc.cit.

(60) Diod. loc.cit. (61) Pliny, loc.cit., cf. also Theophrastus, loc.cit.

(62) A. Lucas, op.cit. p. 439; Restovtzeff, loc.cit.

(63) A Dict. of Egypt. Civil. p. 89. S.V. Flora and Fauna.

(64) Diod. loc.cit.

mentioned about the use of its leaves as food for silkworms.

The celebrated date-palm tree, the most common tree of Egypt in the past and the present, was said by Strabo,⁽⁶⁵⁾ Dioscorides⁽⁶⁶⁾ and Pliny⁽⁶⁷⁾ to have grown in ancient Egypt. One can see, however, from the information received from the classical authors, that, like today, ancient Egypt possessed a variety of date-palms trees. According to Strabo,⁽⁶⁸⁾ the date-palm of Egypt was not of good species; and in the region of the Delta and Alexandria it produced fruit that was not good to eat; but the palm-tree in the Thebais was better than the rest. Strabo also mentioned that the Thebaic date was of two kinds, of which one was called the Caryotic. The Thebaic date was harder, but more agreeable to taste. Judging from the quality of the date of Egypt at present, one cannot help saying that Strabo is certainly wrong in stating that the date of Egypt was of bad species and that the dates of the Delta and Alexandria were not eatable at all. The Egyptian date, however, might not have been as good as the dates ~~of other parts~~ of the neighbouring countries, but

(65) Strabo, 17.1.51.

(66) Dioscorides, op.cit. I. 148.

(67) Pliny, N.H. XIII. 26 ff.

(68) Strabo, loc.cit.

what is certain is that it was not of bad quality. The date produced in the Delta and Alexandria was surely eatable, but I agree with Strabo that the date of the Thebaid was and still is of much better quality than the former. According to Dioscorides⁽⁶⁹⁾ the dates were eaten and also had medicinal properties. Pliny,⁽⁷⁰⁾ whose account on the various species of palm-dates was borrowed from Theophrastus, spoke in a more detailed method, some of the time confusing the date-palm with other kinds of palms such as the doum-palm which we are going to mention shortly. He ascribed many uses for the date-palm; the date was eaten and had medicinal properties; it was useful for making wines and for fattening pigs. The timber and other parts of the tree were useful for making various articles, for roofing, baskets, ropes, etc. In short, the palm-tree was as common in ancient Egypt as it is today, and of various species, and was also very useful as today, but it was never a staple product as it was and still is in Mesopotamia.⁽⁷¹⁾

The doum-palm (*Hyphoene Thebaica*), which belongs to the family of palm-trees, was also said⁽⁷²⁾ to have grown in ancient Egypt and is still to be found growing in Egypt at present, though only in the uppermost part of the country. Though the doum-palm

(69) Dioscorides, loc.cit.

(70) Pliny, loc.cit.

(71) M. Cary, op.cit. p. 211

(72) Dioscorides, op.cit. I. 149.

belonged to the palm-tree family, it was rightly distinguished from the date-palm (Arabic: Nakhla), the latter being single-trunked, while the former forked, having two or more trunks. The fruits were different in shape and in colour and in taste, and also in the characteristics of the timber and the shape of the leaves. The tree was (and still is, if found) very useful, the flesh of the fruit was eatable, for making wine and of medicinal properties; while the kernel inside was useful for making curtain rings, and the wood of the stem was very much in esteem and it was particularly so attractive to the Persians (i.e. during their rule of Egypt) that they made the feet of their couches out of it. The leaves, like those of the date-palms, were used for plaiting. The low-growing palm,⁽⁷³⁾ or dwarf-palm, was also said⁽⁷⁴⁾ to have grown in Egypt. Its nuclei were used in the same way as those of the doum-palm, for medicinal purposes. The dwarf-palm and its uses were also described by Theophrastus⁽⁷⁵⁾ and Pliny,⁽⁷⁶⁾ but no mention of its growing in Egypt was given by them. The Balanos or "Myrobalanum"⁽⁷⁷⁾

(73) The *Chaemaerops humilis*. (74) Dioscorides, op.cit. I. 149.

(75) Theophrastus, H.P. II. vi. 11.

(76) Pliny, N.H. XIII, 39; XXIV. 130.

(77) L.*Balanites aegyptiaca*, Arabic: el-Ban; Behen-nut or perfume nut.

was also said to have grown in Egypt.⁽⁷⁸⁾ According to some⁽⁷⁹⁾ the tree was peculiar to Egypt, but according to others it grew in other countries besides Egypt.⁽⁸⁰⁾ It grew mainly in the Thebaid⁽⁸¹⁾. The Thebaid kind was black in colour and was preferred for its large yield. It was also said, Pliny maintained, that the Egyptian nut was even more oleaginous and had a thicker shell of a reddish colour, and though it grew in marshy ground the plant was shorter and drier. The juice (or scent) was extracted from the shells, but the kernels were useful for medicines⁽⁸²⁾. The timber, Pliny added, although reliable, was not so highly valued, as a large proportion of it had a twisted grain, so it was only used for shipbuilding.⁽⁸³⁾

Pliny⁽⁸⁴⁾ apparently confusing his authorities, mentioned a species of palm- tree which he called "palma adipso"

(78) Pliny, N.H. XII. 100-102; XIII 61. cf. Theophrastus, H.P. IV. 11. 6.

(79) Theophrastus, H.P. IV. 11. 1.

(80) Pliny, N.H. XII. 100-102.

(81) Pliny, loc.cit.

(82) Pliny, loc.cit; cf. also Theophrastus loc.cit. who agreed with Pliny that the husk or shell is useful for unguent, but unlike Pliny he said that the fruit was useless, moreover, he did not mention the use of kernel for medicine.

(83) Pliny, loc.cit.

(84) Pliny, N.H. ; XII, 103.

(i.e. not thirsty) and which was used in the same way as a Myrobalanum, namely, for making unguents. For this was not a tree but a fruit of the Egyptian date-palm when it is unripe, and which was described by Dioscorides⁽⁸⁵⁾ as similar to the of Arabia, though a modern author⁽⁸⁶⁾ thought of it as the doum-palm, to which we referred earlier. Pliny⁽⁸⁷⁾ also fell into the same mistake when he spoke of the tree called elate, palma or spatula. Dioscorides⁽⁸⁸⁾ who described the Phoenix elate or Palma-Elate did not call it a tree but the skin or enclosure of the fruit of the date trees when it is less ripe. This fruit, of whatever tree may be, was used for producing unguent and for medicine.⁽⁸⁹⁾

The acacia tree or thorn (*ἄκαυθα, ἄκακία* acacia nilotica or aegyptiaca, spina, Arabic Sunt) also grew⁽⁹⁰⁾ and still grows in Egypt. Some described it as an Egyptian tree⁽⁹¹⁾ perhaps because of its being very common to that country. Strabo⁽⁹²⁾

(85) Dioscorides, op.cit. I. 148.

(86) A. Ernout, Pline L'Ancien N.H. XII. comm. on Ch.103, n.l. p.97, Bude.

(87) Pliny, N.H. XII. 134. (88) Dioscorides, op.cit. I. 150.

(89) Dioscorides, loc.cit ; Pliny, loc.cit.

(90) Strabo, 17.1.35; Dioscorides, op.cit. I. 133; Pliny, N.H. XIII 63; XXIV. 109, cf. also Theophrastus, H.P. IV. 11.8.

(91) Theophrastus, H.P. IV. 11. 1, cf. also Pliny, N.H. XIII. 56; 63, 44, who implicitly included the tree in the Egyptian trees.

(92) Strabo, loc.cit.

and Pliny⁽⁹³⁾ mentioned its growth in a forest region in the Thebaid. Pliny mentioned three kinds of acacias, the black, the white and the green, the first being strong and less liable to decay and thus used for the ribs of the ships, the white is weak and easily decays; and although the three kinds emit gum, the gum produced from the green acacia is much better than the rest. Strabo⁽⁹⁴⁾ and Dioscorides⁽⁹⁵⁾ on the other hand spoke of one kind of acacia only. The tree was and still is useful for many purposes. For besides the use of its timber for shipbuilding as mentioned before, its flowers, according to Pliny⁽⁹⁶⁾ were used for making garlands, and had medicinal properties. The juice extracted from the leaves⁽⁹⁷⁾ and the seeds⁽⁹⁸⁾ had medicinal properties. The gum, which was produced either of its own accord or through incision, was also used for medicine.⁽⁹⁹⁾ The seeds were also used instead of oak-galls for tanning leather.⁽¹⁰⁰⁾ It must be remembered that the acacia tree still provides useful timber for making many articles for the peasants; the seeds are still used for

(93) Pliny, N.H. XIII. 64; cf. Theophrastus H.P. IV. 11. 8.

(94) Strabo, loc.cit. (95) Dioscorides, loc.cit.

(96) Pliny, N.H. XIII. 63; cf. also Theophrastus, loc.cit.

(97) Dioscorides, loc.cit; Pliny, loc.cit.

(98) Dioscorides, loc.cit. (99) Dioscorides, loc.cit.

(100) Pliny, N.H. XIII. 63; cf. also Theophrastus, loc.cit.

tanning, the gum as adhesive; but they no longer use it for medicinal purposes.

The mimosa asperata, a spinous shrub and one of several kinds of acacias, was said by Pliny⁽¹⁰¹⁾, though not by name, to have grown in the region of Memphis in Egypt, but in his description of the tree and characteristics, he seemed to have been rather confused in translating Theophrastus.⁽¹⁰²⁾ In another passage⁽¹⁰³⁾ Pliny, following Apollodorus correctly described the shrub and called it aeschynomene (lit. sensitive), a name perfectly suited to the peculiar nature of that bush.

The oak tree (*ἡ δρὺς* - *L. quercus*) according to Pliny,⁽¹⁰⁴⁾ grew in the neighbourhood of the Thebaid. Nothing about the uses of the tree was recorded by the classical writers, though archaeological excavations showed the use of its timber for various purposes.⁽¹⁰⁵⁾

(101) Pliny, N.H. XIII. 65, cf. Theophrastus, H.P. IV. 11. 11

(102) Theophrastus, loc.cit.

(103) Pliny, N.H. XXIV. 167.

(104) Pliny, N.H. XIII. 64, cf. Theophrastus, H.P. IV. 11. 8.

(105) A. Lucas, op.cit, P. 438.

By the time of Strabo, olive-tree (ἡ ἐλαία - L *oliva*) growing seems to have been restricted to certain areas in Egypt. For he told us⁽¹⁰⁶⁾ that the Arsinoite nome (El-Fayum) alone was planted with olive trees that were large and full grown and bore fine fruit, and it would also produce good olive oil if the olives were carefully gathered. "But since they neglect this matter, although they make much oil it has a bad smell". The rest of Egypt, however, had no olive trees, with the exception of the gardens near Alexandria, which were sufficient for supplying olives, but furnished no oil. But Pliny,⁽¹⁰⁷⁾ who apparently followed Theophrastus,⁽¹⁰⁸⁾ stated that olive trees grew in the vicinity of the Thebaid.

Unlike their modern brethren, the ancient Egyptians were famous wine and beer drinkers. For they not only made wine from date as we mentioned before, but also from the fruit of the myxa, which was said by Pliny⁽¹⁰⁹⁾ to have grown in ancient Egypt from the fermented juice of the grape. The vine-tree (ἡ ἀμπελος) was described as having grown in ancient Egypt by Diodorus⁽¹¹⁰⁾ who

(106) Strabo, 17.1.35.

(107) Pliny, H.N. XIII. 64.

(108) Theophrastus, H.P. IV. 11. 8.

(109) Pliny, N.H. XIII. 51.

(110) Diod. 1.36.

stated that in Egypt the land planted with the vine, being irrigated as are the other fields, yielded an abundant supply of wine for the inhabitants, and by Strabo who, besides what he said⁽¹¹¹⁾ before about the Mareotic wine, mentioned⁽¹¹²⁾ that the Oasis (Kharga Oasis) lying opposite Abydus (Tell el-Amarna) in Libya (i.e. Western Desert) was abounding in (or of good) wine (ἐὺοὐνος), and by Pliny⁽¹¹³⁾ who stated that Egypt produced the "Sebennys" from the fact that it was made from grape which was grown in the Sebennytic nome in the Delta. This wine was held in esteem, being made from three famous grapes that grew there, the Thasian, probably so called because it had been introduced into Egypt from Thasos in the Aegean Sea,⁽¹¹⁴⁾ and described as being remarkable for its sweetness and laxative qualities, the soot or smoky grape, and the pine tree or pitchy grape. Horace,⁽¹¹⁵⁾ too, spoke of the Mareotic wine, when he described Cleopatra as a queen who lost her senses with Mareotic wine "(Cleopatrae) mentem lymphatum Mareotico." Wine made of grapes seemed, therefore, to have been the principal wine of the ancient

(111) see p. 62.

(112) Strabo, 17.1.42.

(113) Pliny, N.H. XIV. 74.

(114) A. Lucas, op.cit. p. 21.

(115) Horace, Odes, I. XXXVII. 14.

Egyptians. Evidence showing the vintage, the gathering of the grapes, wine pressing and drinking parties of the Egyptians was fully depicted on their monuments. These evidences¹ were summarised by A. Lucas.⁽¹¹⁶⁾ Another scholar,⁽¹¹⁷⁾ on the other hand, stated "while the Nile valley is almost ideal as an arable country, it is not well suited to the typical garden industry of the Mediterranean lands". Although the Greek of the Ptolemaic era raised the production of wine to a considerable volume, only a few brands such as the Mareotic vintage we referred to above could have been fit for royal table. Vine-trees gardens, however, are to be found everywhere in present-day Egypt, and though great quantities are produced yet only a little amount of wine is made locally due to religious practices.

The fig tree (*Ficus Carica*), which is a quite different tree from the *ficus sycomorus* above mentioned, was also cultivated in ancient Egypt. Pliny,⁽¹¹⁸⁾ referred to an excellent vinegar, which was of a better quality, made of Alexandrian fig, so called from its country of origin. Alexandrian fig belonged to the black fig family, but it had a cleft of whitish colour and was called the luxury fig. Evidences obtained from Egyptian monuments

(116) A. Lucas, op.cit. p.16 ff. (117) M. Cary, op.cit. p. 211.

(118) Pliny, N.H. XIV. 102; XV. 70. cf. Theophrastus, H.P. I. 111. 6. I. 1x. 5.

prove the cultivation and the use of fig in ancient Egypt⁽¹¹⁹⁾.

The fig tree, however, is still grown in Egypt and its fruit is eaten fresh or dried. Egypt also had the pomegranate (*Punicum granatum*)⁽¹²⁰⁾. The skin of its unripe fruit was especially used for dressing leather, and its flowers are useful both for medicine and for dyeing cloth; it has given its name to a special colour (i.e. *Punicus* "purple").⁽¹²¹⁾ It was suggested⁽¹²²⁾ that the fruit was used for producing wine in ancient Egypt, but it was not mentioned by the classical authors.

The river, the canals, the marshes of the Delta of Egypt supported the growth of a countless number of shrubs and plants. The most famous of these shrubs in Egypt, indeed in the whole world of antiquity, was the papyrus (ο ^{κα}πυρος or ^ββυβλος, *L. Cyperus Papyrus*). This shrub grew in ancient Egypt.⁽¹²³⁾ It was mentioned by Strabo⁽¹²⁴⁾ who stated that papyrus grew in the Egyptian marshes and lakes, and that it did not grow in large quantities in the region of Alexandria and westward (for it was not cultivated), but it grew in large quantities in the lower part of

(119) A. Lucas, op.cit. 443.

(120) Pliny, N.H. XIII. 112, 113. cf. also Theophrastus, H.P. II. 11. 7 ; III. 111. 2.

(121) Pliny, loc.cit.

(122) Lucas, op.cit. p.23.

(123) Strabo, 17.1.15; 17.2.4; Dioscorides, op.cit. I. 115, Pliny, N.H. XIII. 68-81. Ovid, Metam. XV, 753. cf. Hdt. 11. 92. Theophrastus, H.P. IV. viii. 3.

(124) Strabo, loc.cit.

the Delta. Strabo, furthermore, said that the shrub was peculiar to Egypt, for it grew only there and among the Indians. Pliny,⁽¹²⁵⁾ on the one hand, agreed with Strabo when he said that papyrus grew in the swamps of Egypt or else in the sluggish waters of the Nile, where they had overflowed and lay stagnant in pools, and he mentioned in particular the Sebennytic and Saitic Nomes in the Delta of Egypt as regions where papyrus grew by his time. Pliny⁽¹²⁶⁾ on the other hand, did mention other countries such as Syria as places where that shrub grew. Ovid,⁽¹²⁷⁾ poetically described the Nile as papyrifer (papyrus-producing), which meant either that papyrus grew in the Nile or that boats made of papyrus were seen sailing on the Nile. Whatever it may be, Ovid's statement cannot be taken literally.

Some classical authors⁽¹²⁸⁾ mentioned some of the uses of papyrus for several purposes. The root was eaten, and used as fuel and for making various utensils and vessels. Flowers were made into wreaths for statues of the gods. The stem itself was extremely useful; for boats were made from it; and from the rind were also made a variety of articles, such as sails, masts, a kind of raiment, coverlets, ropes and many other things, and was also used for food. The papyrus was also used for medicinal purposes⁽¹²⁹⁾.

(125) Pliny, loc.cit.

(127) Ovid, loc.cit.

(126) Pliny, N.H. XIII. 73.

(128) Pliny, N.H. XIII. 71 ff.;
VII 206. cf. Hdt, loc.cit.,
Theophrastus, loc.cit. Diod. I. 80.

(129) Dioscorides, loc.cit.

The principal use of papyrus, however, for which it enjoyed its most widespread fame in the ancient world, was for manufacturing writing material, better known as papyrus roll, which was the forerunner of modern paper, to which it gave its name.⁽¹³⁰⁾ It is here that we find the best contribution given by Pliny. For Pliny was the sole writer to describe minutely the method of manufacturing the papyrus rolls, on which, Pliny rightly said,⁽¹³¹⁾ civilization or, at all events, written records largely depended. For a modern opinion, corroborating Pliny's statement, says⁽¹³²⁾ that without papyrus from Egypt and the ingenuity of the Egyptians, it would have been less easy to transmit classical traditions.

The process of manufacturing papyrus sheets given by Pliny is as follows :-⁽¹³³⁾ Papyrus (i.e. the stem of the plant) is split with a needle into very thin strips made as broad as possible. Then it is woven on a board moistened with water from the Nile, muddy liquid supplying the effect of glue. First, an upright layer is smeared on the table, using the full length of papyrus available after the trimmings have been cut off at both

(130) Strabo, loc.cit. Dioscorides, loc.cit. Pliny, loc.cit.

(131) Pliny, N.H. XIII. 63, 70.

(132) A Dict. of Egypt. Civil. ed. by Posener, P. 208, s.v. "papyrus".

(133) Pliny, N.H. XIII. 74-81; cf. N. Lewis, L'Industrie du Papyrus

ends, and afterwards cross strips complete the lattice-work. The next step is to press it in presses, and the sheets are dried in the sun and then joined together, the next strip used always diminishing in quality down to the worst of all. There are never more than twenty sheets to a roll. This is not true. The process is smoothening out the roughness, which is done with a piece of ivory or shell, but this makes the lettering apt to fade, as owing to the polish given the paper does not take the ink so well, but has a shinier surface. The damping process if carelessly applied often causes difficulty in writing at first, and it can be detected by a blow with a mallet, or even by the musty smell if the process has been rather carelessly carried out. Spottiness also may be detected by the eye, but a bad porous strip found inserted in the middle of the pasted joins, owing to the sponginess of the papyrus, sucks up the ink and so can scarcely be detected except when the ink of a letter runs, so there is much opportunity for cheating. The consequence is that another task is added to the process of papyrus-weaving.

There were also various qualities or classes of papyrus rolls, with the best quality or class being in the centre of the plant (i.e. the bark), and so on in the order of its splitting up.⁽¹³⁴⁾ Strabo stated⁽¹³⁵⁾ that there were two kinds

(134) Pliny, N.H. XIII. 74.

(135) Strabo, 17.1.15.

of paper, one being inferior, and the other superior, that is, the Hieratica (i.e. the kind "devoted to sacred purposes") (ἡ μὲν χείρων ἡ δὲ βελτίων, ἡ ἱερατική). By the time of Pliny, however, papyrus manufacture had made strides for he mentioned several kinds of papyrus. Pliny⁽¹³⁶⁾ told us that the first (or the best) quality used to be called "hieratic papyrus" and was in early times devoted solely to books connected with religion,⁽¹³⁷⁾ but in a spirit of flattery it was given the name of Augustus, just as the second best was called 'Livia papyrus' after his consort, and thus the name 'hieratic' came down to the third class. The next quality was called 'amphithearic' from the place of its manufacture (the amphitheatre of Alexandria). Next to this comes the Saitic papyrus from the town of Sais, where it was produced in the greatest abundance, being made from shavings of the inferior quality, and the Taeneotic, from a neighbouring place, made from material still nearer the outside skin, in the case of which we reach a variety that was sold by more weight and not for its quality. As for what was called 'emporitic' papyrus, it was not good for writing but served to provide covers for documents and wrappers for merchandise, and subsequently took its name from the Greek word for a merchant (ἐμπορος). Strabo, moreover,

(136) Pliny, loc.cit.

(137) cf Strabo, loc.cit.

stated⁽¹³⁸⁾ that certain of those who wished to enhance the revenues adopted the shrewd practice (ἐντρέχεια, γλ. σοβὴ κακὴ ἐντρέχεια i.e. evil practice) of the Judaeans, which the latter had invented in the case of the palm tree (particularly the caryotic palm) and the balsam tree, for they did not allow the byblos (βυβλος, ἢ παπυρος) to grow in many places, and because of the scarcity they set a higher price on it and thus increased the revenues, though they injured the common use of the plant. Pliny seems also to have hinted on that kind of monopoly when he said⁽¹³⁹⁾ that according to Varro, when owing the rivalry between King Ptolemy and King Eumenes (of Pergamum) about their libraries, Ptolemy suppressed the export of papyrus (charta) parchment was invented at Pergamum. According to Strabo and Pliny therefore, there was a kind of monopoly in the manufacture of papyrus rolls, and subsequently there were monopolists. Who, then, were these monopolists, the Kings or some other individuals? To answer this question we must go back to the Pharaonic era. According to one modern author,⁽¹⁴⁰⁾ in the Pharaonic era, papyrus manufacture was a state monopoly, and even the Greek name of papyrus 'παπυρος' was supposed to have been derived from the old Egyptian papuro meaning "the royal".

(138) Strabo, 17.1.15.

(139) Pliny, N.H. XIII. 70.

(140) A Dict of Egypt. Civil. P. 206, S.V. Papyrus.

To come back to Strabo's assertion that there existed a kind of monopoly in the production of papyrus, Jones⁽¹⁴¹⁾ summarised the learned dispute, which arose among modern scholars on the interpretation of the words of Strabo, in the following : "Dr. F. Zucker shows that the Romans established a government monopoly of Egyptian papyrus; but his conclusion is that under the Ptolemies there was no such monopoly and that Strabo's words "some of those who wished to enhance the revenues, etc.", mean that "a number of large proprietors misused their power, and thus limiting the cultivation to their own advantage and to the injury of the public produced a rise in the price of papyrus", is vigorously opposed by Professor J.P. Mahaffy, who rightly understands Strabo to refer to "certain chancellors of the exchequer (*δοικηται*) who had to meet a sudden demand by raising money as best they could, "however, in a later article Zucker retracts his former interpretation of the passage, accepting Mahaffy's". Another scholar⁽¹⁴²⁾, taking Strabo's words mentioned above as evidence, stated that Alexandria became the principal book market of papyrus-rolls and by judicious thinning down of the reed-beds the stationers of that city were able to command monopoly prices.

(141) H.L. Jones, in Loeb. ed. of The Geography of Strabo, Vol. VIII. pp. 60, 61 n.2.

(142) M. Cary, op.cit. P. 211

Pliny⁽¹⁴³⁾ also quoted M. Varro as stating that the world owed the discovery of papyrus (*charta papyri*) to the victory of Alexander the Great, when he founded Alexandria in Egypt, before which time papyrus was not used. Does this statement correspond to the actual facts ? The evidence from the Egyptian monuments and replicas flatly refute such a statement⁽¹⁴⁴⁾. Modern authors are almost all agreed that the papyrus was used at a very early date by the Egyptians. One can also ask, if the Egyptians did not use papyrus before the advent of Alexander the Great, how on earth could the first quality papyrus according to Strabo and the third quality according to Pliny, be called "Hieratica" which, as the meaning of the word indicates, was devoted to the sacred writings of Egypt ? One modern scholar, namely, A. Ernout, says⁽¹⁴⁵⁾, "one does not know from which page of Varro Pliny quoted that statement". If he had read Varro exactly he was certainly wrong ! 'Papyrus', Ernout quoting P. Fournier added, had been used in Egypt of the Pharaohs^h more than 3000 years B.C.^t But it is certainly after the invasion of Egypt by Alexander the Great, Ernout maintained, that the use and the trade (of papyrus rolls) became widespread. Later on in this book,⁽¹⁴⁶⁾ however, Pliny questioned the truthfulness of Varro's statement by giving some examples to disprove it.

(143) Pliny, N.H. XIII. 69.

(144) A. Lucas, op.cit. P.140, A.Ernout, in the Bude ed. of Pliny's N.H. XIII 69. n.l. p.91.

(145) A. Ernout, loc.cit.

(146) Pliny, N.H. XIII. 84 ff.

A number of rushes and reeds were also mentioned by the classical authors as having grown in Egypt, but, unlike papyrus, they grew not only in marshy grounds but also in desert regions. Diodorus⁽¹⁴⁷⁾ spoke of reeds growing in the neighbourhood of the city of Rhinocolura (mod. el-'Arish), where prisoners used to cut them down and after having split them made long nets which they used for hunting quails. He further stated that the ancient Egyptians in the early stages of their history used these roots of reeds as an article of food, being eaten in different ways, raw, boiled or baked. According to the priests of Egypt, Diodorus said, "in the early stages of their civilization the Egyptians built their dwellings from reed, and up till Diodorus' time the herdsmen retained that custom". Pliny,⁽¹⁴⁸⁾ on the other hand, dwelt on this topic longer than Diodorus.¹ For he enumerated various species of reeds and rushes under the names of Calami (reeds), Harundines (arundo-reeds), Cypiros (gladiolus-rush) and cyperos (sweet rush), growing not in the Nile but in the isthmus between the Gulf of Suez and the Mediterranean. As the cypiros and cyperos grew in Egypt some confusion resulted, but Pliny clearly spoke of them as two distinct kinds of rushes. The reed, according to Pliny, was useful for war and peace, namely for making arrows, pens, fishing

(147) Diod. I. 10. 43, 60 & 80.

(148) Pliny, N.H. V. 44 & 166; VII 206; XVI 156-160; XXI 114-117.

rods and instruments, and Nile canoes, Rushes, Diodorus stated, were also useful for making the finer sort of wicker-work, and for the wick of lamps, the pith being especially useful. Cypiros and cyperos were also useful for medicine. A number of reeds and rushes still grow in Egypt.

Pliny,⁽¹⁴⁹⁾ also mentioned the Sari (cyperos auricomus) as growing in Egypt on the banks of the Nile. The plant was useful for food and as fuel. The plant, as a matter of fact, is one of some 600 species of 'cyperus'; perhaps a kind of papyrus, and if so it should have disappeared from Egypt like papyrus.⁽¹⁵⁰⁾ The plant called 'mnasion, malinthalles, anthallium' (L. cyperus esculentus) grew in Egypt in sandy places under ground (not) far from the Nile, and it still grows in Egypt and is called Hab-el-Aziz. It was useful for food and also was eaten by oxen and sheep.⁽¹⁵¹⁾

The famous shrub of ancient Egypt, Lotus (Λωτὸς - L. Nymphaea Stellata - Nile water lily was said to have grown in ancient Egypt by Diodorus,⁽¹⁵²⁾ who said that it grew in great

(149) Pliny, N.H. XIII. 128; cf. Theophrastus H.P. IV. viii. 5.

(150) A. Ernout, op.cit. comm. on ch. 128. n.l. pp. 110, 111.

(151) Pliny, N.H. 88, 175; cf. Theophrastus, H.P. IV. viii, 6, 12.

(152) Diod. I. 10, 34, 43.

profusion, by Dioscorides⁽¹⁵³⁾ and by Pliny⁽¹⁵⁴⁾, according to both of whom the plant grew chiefly in the plains after their inundation by the Nile. Strabo⁽¹⁵⁵⁾ also vaguely mentioned among things peculiar to Egypt, the Corseum, which, he said, was a relish somewhat like pepper, but slightly larger. Diodorus⁽¹⁵⁶⁾ also mentioned the corseum as a distinct plant and so also Theophrastus. The truth is that the corseum is nothing else but the root of the Lotus.⁽¹⁵⁷⁾ The plant, however, was very useful. From the seeds the ancient Egyptians made a very good bread,⁽¹⁵⁸⁾ which had medicinal properties,⁽¹⁵⁹⁾ the root was also eatable⁽¹⁶⁰⁾ and was used for medicinal purposes,⁽¹⁶¹⁾ and the peelings of the root were more useful than any other as fodder for fattening pigs.⁽¹⁶²⁾

(153) Dioscorides, op.cit. IV. 114.

(154) Pliny, N.H. XIII. 107. ff. cf. also Hdt. II, 92; Theophrastus op.cit. IV. viii. 9 ff.

(155) Strabo, 17.2.4. (156) Diodorus, I. 10.

(157) V. Liddle & Scott, Gr. Engl.Lex. S.V.

(158) Diod. I. 37, 43, Dioscorides, loc.cit.; Pliny, N.H. XIII. 108; XXII. 56, where he mistakenly called lotometra a plant, which is in fact a meal made from the reeds of white or blue lotus (v. Index Plantarum, Loeb. ed. of Pliny N.H. vol VII, p.518, s.v. lotometra), cf. also Theophrastus, H.P. IV. viii. 11.

(159) Pliny, N.H. XXII. 56.

(160) Diod. I. 10; Strabo, 17.2.4; Dioscorides, loc.cit; Pliny, N.H. XIII. 110.

(161) Dioscorides, loc.cit. (162) Pliny, loc.cit.

In short, the lotus or Nile water lily (*Nymphaea stellata*) which grew abundantly in ancient Egypt, and which was very useful, has continued to grow up till the present time in that country, but it can only be found in the Delta though never in the Nile itself.⁽¹⁶³⁾

Egypt also abounded and still is in oil-producing plants. We have already referred to the olive-oil tree⁽¹⁶⁴⁾ and the balanos.⁽¹⁶⁵⁾ The castor oil shrub was of particular interest to many a classical author⁽¹⁶⁶⁾ to the extent that some confusion arose about its name.⁽¹⁶⁷⁾ For it was called *kiki* (*κῑκῑ*) by some, *croton* (*κροτῶν*) by others, *Sibi* by others, *ricinus* by others, and wild *sesamum* still by others. The plant grew in great abundance⁽¹⁶⁸⁾ in ancient Egypt and still grows in the present time. The seeds were useful for producing oil, which, though of no use for food⁽¹⁶⁹⁾ was used in abundance as fuel for the lamps⁽¹⁷⁰⁾ and also by the

(163) Encyc. Brit. Vol. 8, P. 35. s.v. Egypt - Flora and Fauna.

(164) P. 102.

(165) P. 97 and 98.

(166) Diod. I. 34, quoted Hecataeus of Abdera; Strabo, 17.2.5; Dioscorides, op.cit. I. 38, IV. 164; Pliny N.H. XV 25; cf. Hdt. 11. 94.

(167) Dioscorides, loc.cit. Pliny, loc.cit.

(168) Pliny, loc.cit.

(169) Dioscorides, loc.cit; Pliny, loc.cit.

(170) Diod. loc.cit.; Strabo, loc.cit.; Dioscorides, loc.cit.; Pliny, loc.cit.

poorer classes and by those who did the heavier labour for anointing the body, for it has medicinal properties.⁽¹⁷¹⁾ The leaves, too, were useful for medicinal purposes.⁽¹⁷²⁾ Pliny,⁽¹⁷³⁾ also mentioned that the Egyptians obtained a very large amount of oil from radish seed (rephinus L) or from the blade of the grass called chrotinon (from *χρότος* grass) and likewise from gingelly (sesima) and from the nettle (urtica) called cindinum (from *κνίδη* nettle). Pliny, moreover, asked rhetorically what can be more harmful than the nettle ? Yet, he said,⁽¹⁷⁴⁾ this plant, to say nothing of its oil, simply abounds in remedies. Pliny, then, quoted Nicander's and Apollodrus' accounts on the use of the nettle for medicinal purposes.

Ancient Egypt, like modern Egypt, was a country famous for its flowers, which were abundant, fragrant and available all the year round. Some of the flowers they grew in ancient Egypt were mentioned by the classical authors.⁽¹⁷⁵⁾

(171) Strabo, loc.cit.; Dioscorides, loc.cit.

(172) Dioscrodies, loc.cit.

(173) Pliny, N.H. XV 30.

(174) Pliny, N.H. XXII. 31.

(175) Pliny, N.H. XXI. 36, 69; Diod. I. 17; Callexeinos of Rhodes (fl. c. 155 B.C). See F. Jacoby, F.G.H. III. Teil. C. p.166; Theophrastus, H.P. VI. viii, 5; Cato, De Re Rustata, VIII. 2; CXXXIII. 2.

Pliny⁽¹⁷⁶⁾ spoke of the flowers of Egypt as scentless or with little scent, except the myrtle which, in his view, is marvellously fragrant. Pliny⁽¹⁷⁷⁾ ascribed the lack of scent of the flowers to the atmosphere, which he said, "is misty and full of dew owing to the wide expanse of the river". The myrtle was also mentioned by Diodorus,⁽¹⁷⁸⁾ though he mentioned it in connection with mythology. For he told us that the myrtle, which the ancients ascribed to Aphrodite, grew in Egypt and is evergreen. Diodorus⁽¹⁷⁹⁾ also mentioned that the laurel, like the myrtle, grew in ancient Egypt and was evergreen. Pliny⁽¹⁸⁰⁾ moreover, mentioned several other flowers, such as roses, gillyflowers, violets, and a few others. One, however, need not say that the ancient Egyptians were real lovers of flowers perhaps more than their modern successors. The favourable climate and the fertile soil and the skill of its peasants were reasons for the abundance of flowers in Egypt.

(176) Pliny, loc.cit; cf. also Theophrastus, H.P. VI, viii. 5.

(177) Pliny, N.H. XXI. 36.

(178) Diod. I. 17; cf. Cato, loc.cit.

(179) Diod. loc.cit.

(180) Pliny, loc.cit.; cf. Theophrastus, loc.cit.

Egypt also had a variety of corn.⁽¹⁸¹⁾ It was mythologically said that wheat was growing wild and its discovery was ascribed to Isis or Menes, the first human King of Egypt.⁽¹⁸²⁾ At any rate, the wheat was later cultivated and has continued to be so up till now. Corn was the main crop of ancient Egypt, and despite the large number of its population it had a surplus which was exported to foreign countries.⁽¹⁸³⁾ And when Egypt became a Roman province, it played a very decisive part in the destiny of the empire, to the extent that Egypt could starve Rome, if she wished. Apropos of this point the Jewish writer Josephus wrote the following about Egypt and Alexandria : 'the tribute which Egypt yields to Rome in one month surpasses that which you (The Jews, who were addressed by Agrippa the designated King of Judea) pay in a year; besides money she sends wheat to feed Rome for four months of the year',⁽¹⁸⁴⁾ and the Latin historian Tacitus⁽¹⁸⁵⁾ told us what this meant; that anyone who took possession of Egypt, could control the grain supply of Italy. A

(181) Pliny, N.H. XIV. 149; XVIII. passim.

(182) Diod, I. 43, quoted from Hecataeus of Abdera.

(183) M. Cary, op.cit. p. 211.

(184) Josephus, Jewish War, II. 384-387.

(185) Tacitus, Histories, III. 8.

modern author Cary, comes in support of what Josephus and Tacitus have said, when he says⁽¹⁸⁶⁾, "the main crop of Egypt was wheat. By the fifth century B.C. if not before a surplus was available for export to Greece, and under the early Ptolemies the Nile valley became one of the principal granaries of the Aegean area.⁽¹⁸⁷⁾ Whether it contributed a regular supply to Rome in the Republican era is uncertain, but under the emperors it provided sufficient for the capital to subsist for three or four months of the year". The Egyptians used⁽¹⁸⁸⁾ (and still use) corn grains for making flour and subsequently bread. They also used the flour for manufacturing starch,⁽¹⁸⁹⁾ which was used in connection with the manufacture of papyrus.⁽¹⁹⁰⁾ No identification of starch or papyrus however, or another ancient Egyptian material can be traced.⁽¹⁹¹⁾ The flour was also used for making an intoxicating beverage.⁽¹⁹²⁾ It is worthy of

(186) M. Cary, loc.cit.

(187) cf. H.I.Bell, loc.cit.

(188) Diod. loc.cit.; Pliny, N.H. XVIII. 62.

(189) Pliny, N.H. XVIII. 77.

(190) Pliny, N.H. XIII. 85.

(191) A. Lucas, op.cit. p.8.

(192) Pliny, N.H. XVIII. 76, XIV, 149.

remark here to say that the land of corn of ancient times and its main exporter of the Mediterranean basin has become one of the largest importers of that same commodity; since the place of corn has been taken by cotton of which we are going to speak later.

The same thing can almost be said about barley, which grew also wild in Egypt⁽¹⁹³⁾ and then later it was cultivated.⁽¹⁹⁴⁾ It was used for making bread.⁽¹⁹⁵⁾ Many classical writers described beer which was made of barley.⁽¹⁹⁶⁾ Diodorus⁽¹⁹⁷⁾ described this beer as not much inferior to wine for smell and sweetness of taste. Strabo⁽¹⁹⁸⁾ said, "Barley beer is a preparation peculiar to the Egyptians. It was common among many tribes, but the mode of preparing it differed in each and that it was one of the principal drinks of Alexandria."⁽¹⁹⁹⁾ It was also mentioned by Pliny⁽²⁰⁰⁾ who, like Diodorus and Strabo, said that barley beer was very popular among the Egyptians. Barley still grows in Egypt now, but the beer or

(193) Diod. loc.cit.

(194) Diod. loc.cit; Pliny, N.H. XVIII, 60 and passim.

(195) Diod. loc.cit.

(196) Diod. I. 20,34. Strabo 17.2.5.
Pliny, N.H. XVIII. 75.

(197) Diod. loc.cit.

(198) Strabo, 17.2.5.

(199) Strabo 17.1.14.

(200) Pliny, N.H. XVIII. 75.

'Zuthos' as it is known among the classical authors, though it is still made by some poor people and is known as 'bouza', it is no longer a favourite drink in modern Egypt. Distilled beer from barley is now made on a larger scale, though the prohibition by the Islamic Religion against drinking prevents it from spreading.

The Egyptian bean ($\delta \text{Κυάμος}$ lat. Faba) was said to have grown wild and was also cultivated in ancient Egypt.⁽²⁰¹⁾ It belongs to the leguminous plants. The plant was one of the best known among the plants of ancient Egypt as is clear from the amount of information by the classical authors and as their interest shows. One notices also that there is some confusion among the classical authors about the characteristics of the plants. Some, for instance, called it $\delta \text{Αἰγυπτίος Κυάμος}$ ⁽²⁰²⁾ (Egyptian bean), and others κεβώριον .⁽²⁰³⁾ Nevertheless the Egyptian bean grew in great abundance in Egypt.⁽²⁰⁴⁾ Some said⁽²⁰⁵⁾ it is peculiar to Egypt, others said,⁽²⁰⁶⁾ it grew in other countries as well. The latter opinion, in fact, is right. The

(201) Diod. I. 34; Strabo, 17.1.15, Dioscorides, op.cit. II. 128; Pliny, N.H. XVIII. 117-122.

(202) Strabo, 17.1.15; Dioscorides, op.cit. II. 128.

(203) Diod. loc.cit.

(204) Diod. loc.cit.

(205) Strabo, loc.cit.

(206) Dioscorides, loc.cit.

beans are very useful for food for men⁽²⁰⁷⁾ and fodder for animals.⁽²⁰⁸⁾ They are also used for medicinal purposes.⁽²⁰⁹⁾ Pliny,⁽²¹⁰⁾ for one, described the plant and its use in detail, and said that in ancient rituals bean pottage has a sanctity of its own in sacrifice to the gods. It occupied a high place as a delicacy of the table, but it was thought to have a dulling effect on the senses, and also to cause sleeplessness, and it was banned by some Pythagoreans on that account - or, as others have reported, because the souls of the dead are contained in a bean, and at all events it was for that reason that beans were employed in memorial sacrifices to dead relatives. Moreover, according to Varro's account, it was partly for these reasons that a priest abstained from eating beans, though also because certain letters of gloomy omen are to be found inscribed on a bean. Diodorus, too, mentioned⁽²¹¹⁾ certain taboos in connection with eating beans, though he ascribed more rational reasons also for abstaining from eating beans.⁽²¹²⁾ The Ciborium or the pod was used as drinking cups. The leaves were

(207) Pliny, N.H. XVIII.117-122; Dioscorides, loc.cit.

(208) Pliny, loc.cit.

(209) Dioscorides, loc.cit.

(210) Pliny, loc.cit.

(211) Diod. I. 89.

(212) Herodotus too (11.37) mentioned some sort of a ban on eating beans. Herodotus, who wrongly stated that 'the Egyptians sow no beans in their country, said that if any grow, they will not eat them with raw or cooked; the priests cannot endure even to see them, considering beans an unclean kind of pulse'.

also used for making drinking cups and other vessels⁽²¹³⁾. In fact, Strabo said, the workshops of Alexandria were full of these leaves, where they were used as vessels and where the farmers drew a great income from selling them. Strabo also gave us an unusual story about the fields of beans and how they presented a delightful sight, and how people who wanted to hold a feast went there in cabin boats, shading themselves under the leaves of the plant, which are particularly large. Such a statement one neither understands nor agrees with, for how can such a short plant do this and how can its leaves shelter people from the sun, moreover, how on earth could the beans bear the movement of those feasting without being completely crushed under their feet ?

Lentil, according to Pliny,⁽²¹⁴⁾ was also sown and still is sown in Egypt. It belonged, like the Egyptian bean, to the leguminous plants. There were two kinds of lentil. It was and still is used for food and for medicinal properties. Flax (*Linum L.*) was also grown and still is cultivated in Egypt. Pliny⁽²¹⁵⁾ who is the only writer to mention it, referred only to its commercial side of growing in Egypt when he said "by its aid ... Egypt imported the merchandise of Arabia and India" and that it was from Egyptian flax that the greatest profits were derived.

(213) Strabo, 17.1.15.

(214) Pliny, N.H. XVIII. 123.

(215) Pliny, N.H. XIX. 7. 14.

From the very early history of Egypt flax has been grown in Egypt, and was used for many purposes.⁽²¹⁶⁾ Cotton, called by some gossypion, and by others xylon, was said by Pliny⁽²¹⁷⁾ to have grown in the upper part of Egypt in the vicinity of Arabia. Having described the shrub and its characteristics, he moved on to say, "from its silky fibre thread is spun. No kind of thread is more brillinatly white or makes a smoother fabric than this. Garments made of it were very much esteemed by the priests of Egypt". Commenting on Pliny's statement Lucas says, "Pliny,⁽²¹⁸⁾ however, is by no means a paragon of detailed accuracy". Modern authors⁽²¹⁹⁾ in general agreed that cotton was not acclimatized in Egypt before the Roman era, and even then it was not cultivated on a large scale. Cotton is mentioned in papyri as early as the second century A.D.⁽²²⁰⁾ The earliest cotton fabrics that can be traced in Egypt are of the Roman period from Karanog in Nubia. Cotton, therefore, was not that familiar to ancient Egyptians, whereas now and indeed for some time cotton has become Egypt's principal cash crop, thus replacing cotton.

(216) Lucas, op.cit. 142, 143. (217) Pliny, N.H. XIX. 14.

(218) A. Lucas, op.cit. 48.

(219) A. Lucas, loc.cit.; M. Cary, op.cit. pp. 22, 211.

(220) A. Lucas, op.cit. p. 148.

A large number of shrubs and various types of plants, which were useful for food and/or medicine and/or producing unguents and perfumes were mentioned by Pliny,⁽²²¹⁾ and Dioscorides⁽²²²⁾ as growing in Egypt. Among these plants we mentioned the tamarisk⁽²²³⁾ (*μυρική* L. *tamaris nilotica*), the frankincense-curse tree⁽²²⁴⁾ (*λιβανώτος* - L. *tus*) tree moss⁽²²⁵⁾ (*σφαγνός* - L. *Usnea spina*), the aspalathus⁽²²⁶⁾ (*spina-candida*), cat-thyme⁽²²⁷⁾ (Maron), Cypros⁽²²⁸⁾ (*Lawsonia alba* or *inermis* 'Henna'), colocasia,⁽²²⁹⁾ fennel-giant-shrub⁽²³⁰⁾ (*Ferula*), caper-tree⁽²³¹⁾ (*καπνάρης* L. *capparis spinosa*), Cnecos,⁽²³²⁾ cummin⁽²³³⁾ (*Cuminum*), savory and/or wild marjoram (*cunila*),⁽²³⁴⁾ mustard⁽²³⁵⁾ (*σίναπι* - *sinapi*) anise⁽²³⁶⁾ (*anisum*), Coriander⁽²³⁷⁾ (*coriandrum*), Seris or endive⁽²³⁸⁾ (*seris-chicorium*).

(221) Dioscorides, mostly in Bks. XII, XIII and XXI.

(222) Dioscorides, mostly in Bks. I, II and IV.

(223) Dioscorides, op.cit. I. 116; Pliny, N.H. XIII. 116.

(224) Pliny, N.H. XII. 56. (225) Pliny, N.H. XII. 108.

(226) Pliny, N.H. XII. 110. (227) Pliny, N.H. XXI. 111.

(228) Dioscorides, op.cit. I. 124; Pliny, N.H. XII. 109; XIII, 4,5,6.

(229) Pliny N.H. XXII. 87. (230) Pliny, N.H. XIII. 122-126.

(231) Pliny, N.H. XIII. 137. (232) Pliny, N.H. XXI. 90, 184.

(233) Pliny, N.H. XIX. 161. (234) Pliny, N.H. XIX. 165.

(235) Dioscorides, op.cit. II. 142, 184; Pliny, N.H. XIX. 170. 171.

(236) Pliny, N.H. XX 185, 195. (237) Pliny, N.H. XIX 170, 171, XX. 216-218.

(238) Dioscorides, op.cit. II. 160; Pliny N.H. XX. 73.

endive), chicory⁽²³⁹⁾ (wild endive) and many others. According to classical writers, generally speaking Egypt possessed many plants, which provided its inhabitants with practically all that they needed. This might seem to us a little bit exaggerated, but for the classical authors, particularly for the Greeks, the fertility of the soil of Egypt, its productivity did not sound exaggerated, especially when compared with the conditions prevailing in their own country. Strabo himself was quite frank in pointing out⁽²⁴⁰⁾ how the Greeks viewed the wealth of Egypt with covety and greed. Even up till the present time the Greeks still look at Egypt as a country of great fortunes.

Unlike the somewhat thorough covering of the flora of Egypt by the classical authors, the fauna is less well discussed by them. Indeed, apart from a few short accounts by Strabo on things peculiar to Egypt, including animals, and Strabo's and Diodorus' brief account on the animals of the Nile, we observe that most of the animals mentioned by the classical authors are more or less connected with their (the animals') positions as sacred animals, and to a lesser extent with their usefulness to mankind. Bearing this in mind, we shall find that many animals known to have been found in Egypt were not mentioned at all

(239) Pliny, N.H. XX 74, XXI 88.

(240) Strabo, 17.1.6.

by the classical authors, such as donkeys, hyenas, gazels, horses, foxes and many others. The classical authors, however, mentioned various animals and other creatures, domestic, domesticated and wild alike. And since most of the animals enumerated by the classical authors were sacred animals, of which we are going to speak later in this work, our description of the animals here will be brief.

Among the animals mentioned by classical authors were camels, which, according to Strabo⁽²⁴¹⁾ and Pliny⁽²⁴²⁾ were used for transport along the trade-route across the Arabian (Eastern) Desert, between Coptos (Qift) in the Nile Valley and Myos Hormos and Berenice on the Red Sea; cattle⁽²⁴³⁾ (i.e. cows and oxen) were considered among sacred animals, cows being sacred to Isis⁽²⁴⁴⁾ and Hathor (Aphrodite)⁽²⁴⁵⁾ and bulls were sacred to Osiris,⁽²⁴⁶⁾

(241) Strabo, 17.1.45.

(242) Pliny, N.H. VI. 102.

(243) Diod. I. 21, 36, 43, 87. Strabo, 17.1.22, 27, 31, 35.

(244) Diod. I. 11, cf. Hdt. 41.

(245) Strabo, 17.1.22, 35.

(246) Diod. I. 21, 85, 88. Strabo 17.1.31.

most famous of all Apis and Mnevis bulls, whose most important centre of worship were Memphis and Heliopolis respectively.⁽²⁴⁷⁾ Cows were also useful, for they, Diodorus said,⁽²⁴⁸⁾ bear workers (i.e. oxen) and plough the lighter soil. Elsewhere, Diodorus spoke⁽²⁴⁹⁾ of herds and flocks treading in the seeds, a scene also depicted by the ancient Egyptians on their monuments.⁽²⁵⁰⁾ Sheep were also sacred animals⁽²⁵¹⁾ and were useful for the people, because of the rich pasturage; they lamb twice and are twice shorn, thus providing by their wool both protection for the body and its decorous covering, while by their milk and cheese they furnish food that is both appetizing and abundant.⁽²⁵²⁾ There were also goats which were sacred,⁽²⁵³⁾ dogs,⁽²⁵⁴⁾ also sacred animals,⁽²⁵⁵⁾ for the dog is useful both for the hunt and for men's protection, and

(247) Strabo, 17.1.22, 27.

(248) Diod. I. 21, 86.

(249) Diod. I. 26.

(250) See a reproduction of the scene in J.H. Breasted, A History of Egypt, p. 92.

(251) Diod. I. 87, Strabo, 17.1.40.

(252) Diod. I. 36, 82.

(253) Diod. I. 84, 88; Strabo 17.1.19. (254) Pliny, N.H. VIII. 148.

(255) Diod. I. 87; Strabo, 17.1.40, Philo Legatio, XX, 139.

this is why they represent the god they call Anubis with a dog's head because a dog was the bodyguard of Osiris and Isis;⁽²⁵⁶⁾ cats, were also sacred animals,⁽²⁵⁷⁾ for the cat is useful against asps with their deadly bite and the other reptiles that sting.⁽²⁵⁸⁾

By the time the classical authors, concerned in this thesis, Egypt seems to have had not a great number of wild animals, exactly as is the case today especially if compared with the Sudan on its southern border. This state of affairs had already been stated by Herodotus in the middle of the fifth century B.C. Herodotus stated (II.65), "though Egypt has Libya on its borders, it is not a country of many animals".

"ἐστὶν ἡ Αἴγυπτος ὁμοῦρος τῇ Λιβύῃ οὐ μάλα θηριώδης".^{ἔστι}

Nevertheless, Diodorus stated⁽²⁶⁰⁾ that the desert regions of Egypt were full of wild beasts, a statement without doubt motivated by the love of exaggeration. He, moreover, spoke of wild beasts in the land apart from the desert. He speaks of them as encircled by the Nile flood. Classical authors mentioned the lion

(256) Diod. I. 87.

(257) Diod. I. 83,84,87; Strabo, 17.1.40, Cicero, Nat.Deor. I. XXXVI. 101.

(258) Diod. I. 87.

(259) Diod. I. 24, 30.

(260) Diod. I. 36.

as a sacred animals in certain parts of Egypt,⁽²⁶¹⁾ but they did not say whether Egypt did have lions or not. The fact, however, is that the lion, like other animals of tropical regions, had ceased to be found in Egypt many thousands of years ago.⁽²⁶²⁾ Egypt also had and still has, wolves, noticed by Pliny⁽²⁶³⁾ to be feeble and small, they are sacred animals;⁽²⁶⁴⁾ the ichneumon, which is said to be indige~~n~~ous to Egypt⁽²⁶⁵⁾ and is reported to be the deadliest enemy of the crocodile⁽²⁶⁶⁾ and the asp,⁽²⁶⁷⁾ both being dangerous to the safety of man, the ichneumon was for that reason honoured by the people;⁽²⁶⁸⁾ mice,⁽²⁶⁹⁾ among which the shrew mouse was said by Strabo⁽²⁷⁰⁾ to

(261) Diod. I. 84; Strabo, 17.1.40.

(262) See H.Kees, op.cit. pp.19, 20.

(263) Pliny, N.H. VIII. 80. cf. Hdt. 11. 67.

(264) Diod. I. 83, 88; Strabo 17.1.40, Philo, Legatio, XX, 139.

(265) Strabo, 17.2.4; Pliny, N.H. XIII. 88, 90. Philo, Legatio, loc.cit.

(266) Diod. I. 87; Strabo, 17.1.39; Pliny, N.H. VIII.88,90.

(267) Strabo, 17.1.39.

(268) Diod. I. 83, 87; Strabo, loc.cit., Cicero, Nat.Deor. I. xxxvi. 101.

(269) Pliny, N.H. VIII. 132; x. 186.

(270) Strabo, 17.1.40.

be a sacred animal. Egypt also possessed other species of animals and insects, such as locusts,⁽²⁷¹⁾ caterpillars,⁽²⁷²⁾ sand-burrowers,⁽²⁷³⁾ scorpions,⁽²⁷⁴⁾ and a multitude of reptiles⁽²⁷⁵⁾ such as horned serpents,⁽²⁷⁶⁾ snakes,⁽²⁷⁷⁾ and the asp, which was of two kinds and was said to be indigenous to the country and causes a quicker death.⁽²⁷⁸⁾ It was also stated that tape-worms and maw-worms had infested the ancient Egyptians.⁽²⁷⁹⁾

The Nile, the canals, the lakes and marshes of Egypt were also teeming with all sorts of animals.⁽²⁸⁰⁾ According

(271) Diod. I. 87.

(272) Diod. loc.cit.

(273) Strabo, 17.1.21.

(274) Diod. I. 87; Pliny, XI. 89.

(275) Strabo, 17.1.21.

(276) Diod. I. 87; Pliny, N.H. 75.

(277) Diod. loc.cit. Pliny, loc.cit. Cicero, loc.cit.

(278) Strabo, 17.1.39; 17.

(279) Pliny, N.H. XXVIII. 145.

(280) Diod. I. 35.

to Diodorus⁽²⁸¹⁾ the Nile contains every variety of fish and in numbers beyond belief; for it supplies the people of Egypt not only with abundant subsistence from the fish freshly caught, but it also yields an unfailing multitude for salting. Strabo⁽²⁸²⁾ agreed with Diodorus that the Nile contains many and different kinds of fish, but Strabo does not mention anything about the use of fish for food; but he speaks about the Nile as having fish with a special indigenous character and he gives a list of the best known fish of the Nile.⁽²⁸³⁾ Strabo mentions⁽²⁸⁴⁾ among these fish the ~~oxyrhynchus~~^{x n}, and the lepidotus or scale fish and the lates, all three were considered sacred. The Nile also had two big beasts, the crocodile, (^ς κροκόδειλος i.e. lizard) and the hippopotamus (lit. the horse of the river).⁽²⁸⁵⁾ The crocodile thrived not only in the river Nile⁽²⁸⁶⁾ but also in the

(281) Diod. I. 36.

(282) Strabo, 17.2.4.

(283) Strabo, 17.2.4.

(284) Strabo, 17.1.40, 17.2.4.

(285) Diod. I. 35.

(286) Diod. loc.cit. Pliny, N.H. VIII. 88-90, Cicero, Nat.Deor. I. xxxvi. 101.

canal (Bahr Yousef) leading from it to Lake Moeris (Karoun) and in Lake Moeris itself, where it was found in large numbers,⁽²⁸⁷⁾ because it was deemed a sacred animal by most of the Egyptian people⁽²⁸⁸⁾ and particularly by the people of the Arsinoite or Crocodilopolite Nome (mod. el-Fayum); the most famous centre of its consecration.⁽²⁸⁹⁾ Strabo⁽²⁹⁰⁾ relates as an eye-witness an account on the feeding of the crocodile, or Suchos, as the people of that region called him. In some other regions of Egypt, however, the crocodile was held in dishonour, particularly by the people of the Heracleopolite Nome,⁽²⁹¹⁾ who consecrated the deadliest enemy of the crocodile, the ichneumon, as we mentioned before, and by the people of Tentyra (mod. Dandara) who, as Strabo said,⁽²⁹²⁾ were expert in hunting and tracking the animals without fear, and by the people of Apollonopolis.⁽²⁹³⁾ The crocodiles however are no longer to be found in Egypt; indeed,

(287)

(288) Diod. I. 82,84,89; Strabo, 17.1.38,39. Cicero, loc.cit. Philo, Legatio, loc.cit.

(289) Strabo, loc.cit. cf. Hdt. 11. 69.

(290) Strabo 17.1.38.

(291) Strabo, 17.1.39.

(292) Strabo, 17.44.

(293) Strabo, 17.1.47.

it can only be found in Southern Sudan. Hippopotamuses were also numerous in the Nile,⁽²⁹⁴⁾ though, like the crocodile, they have disappeared from Egypt a long time ago. According to the classical writers of our period, this animal was not held in any particular honour by the Egyptians, on the contrary they hunted it and tracked it and destroyed it whenever they found it, because it was reported as an animal which did a great disservice to the people by destroying their fields, which are their livelihood.⁽²⁹⁵⁾ Dolphins were said⁽²⁹⁶⁾ to have entered the mouth of the Nile (from the sea) and the skunk was also found in Egypt and it was an animal of the Nile.⁽²⁹⁷⁾ The skunk was useful for medicine⁽²⁹⁸⁾, for it was an outstanding antidote against poisons, and also an aphrodisiac for males.⁽²⁹⁹⁾

In Egypt there were also a number of birds, such as quails,⁽³⁰⁰⁾ ibises,⁽³⁰¹⁾ which were considered sacred⁽³⁰²⁾ and,

(294) Diod. I. 35; Strabo, 15.1.45; Pliny, N.H. VIII. 95.

(295) Diod. loc.cit. But the classical authors are not correct for the hippopotamus was held sacred (see Pierre Montet, op.cit. p.149).

(296) Pliny, N.H. VIII. 91.

(297) Dioscorides, op.cit. II. 71. ; Pliny, N.H. VIII. 91.

(298) Dioscorides, loc.cit. (299) Pliny, loc.cit.

(300) Diod. I. 60.

(301) Diod. I. 83, 87; Strabo, 17.2.4. Cicero, Nat.Deor. I, xx1. 101. Pliny, N.H. VIII 97; X.75, cf. also Hdt. 11. 75, 76.

(302) Diod. loc.cit.; Strabo, 17.1.40.

according to Strabo,⁽³⁰³⁾ they were of two kinds, and they were found in large numbers. Diodorus said⁽³⁰⁴⁾ that the ibises were useful as a protector against the snakes, the locusts and the caterpillars. Strabo⁽³⁰⁵⁾ agreed⁽³⁰⁶⁾ partly with Diodorus in mentioning the services of the birds by saying that they single out every bareful animal and the refuse in the meat shops and bakeries, but he pointed out that they also have shortcomings in that they eat everything, are unclean, and can only with difficulty be kept away from things that are clean and must not suffer any defilement. The hawk or Hierax (ὁ ἱέραξ Αἰγυπτίος) was also found in Egypt,⁽³⁰⁷⁾ was considered sacred⁽³⁰⁸⁾ and, like the cat and ibis, was tamed, and according to Diodorus⁽³⁰⁹⁾ it was useful against deadly insects and was also used as a bird of omen. Egypt also possessed the night crow⁽³¹⁰⁾ (ὁ νυκτικόραξ), the

(303) Strabo, loc.cit. cf. also Hdt. 11. 76.

(304) Diod. I. 87.

(305) Strabo, loc.cit.

(306) Strabo, cf. also Hdt. 11.75. and Cicero. Nat. Deor. I. xxxvi. 101. who said similar things. But How & Wells (A Commentary On Herodotus, vol. I. p.204, comm. on. 11. ch.75 n.3.) doubts the validity of such a statement. They say that whether the sacred ibis really kills snakes or not is disputed, at all events the Greeks thought that it did.

(307) Strabo, 17.2.4.

(308) Diod. I.83, 87; Strabo, 17.1.40, 47.

(309) Diod. I. 87.

(310) Strabo, 17.2.4.

trochilus (Phivianus Aegyptius),⁽³¹¹⁾ the pigeon (Columba),⁽³¹²⁾
the plover (himantopus)⁽³¹³⁾ poultry and geese⁽³¹⁴⁾ and other
aquatic birds.⁽³¹⁵⁾ Diodorus gives us a very interesting account
of the skill and techniques with which the Egyptian herdsmen and
p^culterers surpassed those of other countries. He tells us,⁽³¹⁶⁾
"the herdsmen receive the care of animals from their fathers as
if by a law of inheritance, and follow a pastoral life all the
days of their existence. They have received, it is true, much
from their ancestors relative to the best care and feeding of
grazing animals, but to this they add not a little by reason of
their own interest in such matters; and the most astonishing fact
is that, by reason of their unusual application to such matters,
the men who have charge of poultry and geese, in addition to
producing them in a natural way known to all mankind, raise them
by their own hands, by virtue of a skill peculiar to them, in
numbers beyond telling; for they do not use the birds for hatching

(311) Pliny, N.H. VIII. 90.

(312) Pliny, N.H. X. 147.

(313) Pliny, N.H. X. 130.

(314) Diod. I. 74.

(315) Strabo, 17.1.25.

(316) Diod. loc.cit.

the eggs, but in effecting this themselves artificially by their own wit and skill in astounding manner they are not surpassed by the operations of nature.⁽³¹⁷⁾ The present writer observed the poulterers of modern Egypt using a similar artificial method to produce poultry, except that the modern technique is different from that mentioned by Diodorus.

(317) According to Aristotle (Hist. Anim. 6.2.) this artificial hatching was effected by burying the eggs in dung.

CHAPTER VI

MINERAL RESOURCES

Egypt also possessed a large number of minerals, including minerals of metallic nature, precious stones, building stones and other materials.

The best known and the most valuable metal found in ancient Egypt was gold. Its occurrence in Egypt was mentioned by Diodorus⁽¹⁾ who quoted Hecataeus of Abdera as stating, 'gold mines had been discovered in the Thebaid'. Further on Diodorus⁽²⁾ quoted Agatharchides of Cnidus⁽³⁾ (C. 116 B.C.) account on the occurrence of gold and the method of its mining in which he says, 'at the extremity of Egypt and in the contiguous territory of both Arabia and Ethiopia there lies a region which contains many large gold mines, where the gold is secured in great quantities with much suffering and at great expense. For the earth is naturally black and contains seams and veins of a marble (i.e. a quartz rock) which is unusually white and in brilliancy surpasses everything else which shines brightly by nature, and here

(1) Diod. I. 15.

(2) Diod. III. 12-14.

(3) Agatharchides of Cnidos, De Mari Erythraeo, V. 23 ff. (see K. Müller G.G.M. Vol. I. p. 123 ff.)

the overseers of the labour in the mines recover the gold with the aid of a multitude of workers. These workers were either convicted criminals, captives of war, or suspected criminals even if they were not convicted, and not only such persons but occasionally all their relatives'. Agatharchides' account as quoted by Diodorus then speaks in detail about the process of obtaining gold from the mines. The account also describes the immense suffering inflicted upon those wretched gold diggers, on which conditions Diodorus had this to say, "this working of the gold as it is carried on at the furthestmost borders of Egypt, is effected through all the extensive labours here described; for Nature herself, in Diodorus' opinion, makes it clear that whereas the production of gold is laborious, the guarding of it is difficult, the zest for it very great, and that its use is half-way between pleasure and pain". "The discovery of these gold mines in Egypt", according to Diodorus,⁽⁴⁾ "is very ancient having been made by the early kings". About the use of gold, Diodorus says⁽⁵⁾ that, "by the discovery of that metal as well as copper the Egyptians fashioned implements with which they killed the wild beasts and worked the soil, and thus in eager rivalry brought the country under cultivation, and they made images of the gods

(4) Diod. loc.cit.

(5) Diod. I. 15.

and magnificent gold chapels for their worship". Pliny,⁽⁶⁾ too, spoke of gold dug up from shafts which is called 'channeled' or 'trenched' gold. This gold, Pliny added, was found sticking to the grit of marble (*marmoris glareae inhaerens*, i.e. quartz rock), not in the way in which it gleams in the lapis lazuli (*sappiro*) of the East and the stone of Thebes (apparently some micaceous granite) and in other precious stones, but sparkling in the folds of the marble. These channels of veins wander to and fro along the sides of the shafts, which gives the gold its name; and the earth is held up by wooden props." The account of mining and working of gold given by Pliny is almost the same as that of Agartharchides which Diodorus quoted intact. Thus Pliny says, "The substance dug out is crushed, washed, fired and ground to a soft powder. The powder from the mortar is called the 'scudes' and the silver that comes out from the furnace the 'sweat', the dirt thrown out of the smelting furnace in the case of every metal is called 'scoria', slag. In the case of gold the scoria is pounded and fired a second time; the crucibles for this are made of *tasconium*, which is a white earth resembling clay. No other

(6) Pliny, N.H. XXXIII. 68.

earth can stand the blast of air, the fire, or the intensely hot material." Pliny did not state clearly in the above-cited account that this gold was found in Egypt, but the context makes it obvious that the reference is to Egypt.⁽⁷⁾ According to these three classical authors, therefore, gold was found in ancient Egypt and presumably in large quantities. Generally speaking, the information supplied concerning the mining and working of the gold from the quartz-rocks (or the marble rocks as the classical authors called them) was fairly accurate⁽⁸⁾. So, too, the regions where gold is to be found.⁽⁹⁾ In connection with this point Lucas says,⁽¹⁰⁾ "In Egypt, like many other countries, gold occurred both in alluvial sands and gravels, derived from the breaking down of gold-bearing rocks, the debris from which has been washed into water courses, not often dry, or in veins in quartz rock". "The gold bearing region of Egypt, which is immense", Lucas adds,⁽¹¹⁾ "lies between the Nile Valley

(7) The evidence for this can be deduced from the fact that Pliny compared the state of that gold with that of the lapis lazuli of the East and that of the Stone of the Thebaid, which is a region in Egypt. Moreover the description by Pliny of the state in which gold was found resembles the description of Diodorus mentioned above.

(8) A. Lucas, op.cit. p. 228.

(9) A. Lucas, op.cit. p. 224; E. Bevan, A History of Egypt, The Ptolemaic Dynasty, p.149 (London 1927); M. Cary, op.cit. p. 212.

(10) A. Lucas, loc.cit.

(11) A. Lucas, loc.cit.

and the Red Sea, chiefly in that part of the Eastern Desert stretching south from the Qena-Quseir road to the Sudan frontier, though several old workings beyond the confines of Egypt in the Sudan almost as far south as Dongola. The greater part of this territory is in Nubia (the Ethiopia of the classical authors) which is now partly belonging to Egypt and partly to the Sudan. "No occurrence of gold", Lucas states, "is known in Sinai, although the geological conditions are favourable and although some of the ancient texts might imply that gold was obtained from the region".

On the use of gold we have already mentioned Diodorus' account⁽¹²⁾ which, I think, cannot be treated seriously, despite the fact that like most of his accounts it bears a nucleus of truth. The uses of various metals for various purposes were of a very early date in Egypt. Diodorus does not, however, tell us which metal is used for this thing and which is used for another. Gold certainly was not used for making weapons or farming tools, except perhaps for gilding the handles of weapons. It might have been used also in connection with gilding and decorating the chapels of worship and also for making statues for their gods. Gold, however, was used for many other purposes; it was used in the

(12) See P. /

form of granules for decorative purposes; it was made into thin sheets for covering furniture, wooden coffins and other objects such as the rims of stone vessels, and for plating copper and silver; it was beaten into still thinner leaf for gilding, it was cast, beaten or cut into strips that were drawn into wire; it was coloured, soldered and burnished and, in fact, there are a few of the modern practices of gold working that were not known and employed in ancient Egypt, many of them at an early date.⁽¹³⁾ At the present time gold mining is not a flourishing industry in Egypt because of its uncommercial yield. The work is still concentrated in the Eastern Desert to the east of Kena Governorate in Upper Egypt.

Diodorus also mentioned⁽¹⁴⁾ the existence of copper mines in the same region where gold was to be found. Pliny added⁽¹⁵⁾ that Egypt had the blue pigment (caeruleum) which is a sand. This substance is, in fact, the azurite, a basic copper carbonate.⁽¹⁶⁾

(13) A Lucas, op.cit. pp. 230, 231.

(14) Diod. I. 15.

(15) Pliny, N.H. XXXIII. 161.

(16) A. Lucas, op.cit. p. 210; H. Rackham, Pliny, N.H. Loeb. ed, Vol. IX. P. 118.

According to Pliny there were three kinds of that substance in old days, the Egyptian being most esteemed. From blue (caeruleum), Pliny added, is made the substance called blue wash, which is produced by washing and grinding it. Pliny further mentioned⁽¹⁷⁾ chalcitis, from which, he said, various substances were obtained, including copper, sori, and misy. Pliny, however, only stated that the sori was obtained in Egypt, and that the Egyptian variety is the most highly commended. He only mentioned its use for medicinal properties. Misy and sori, like 'caeruleum', are but copper in various states. Sori and misy were also mentioned by Dioscorides⁽¹⁸⁾ as having been found in Egypt. Dioscorides also described the Egyptian misy and sori as the best of all varieties, and stressed their medicinal properties. Pliny also mentioned the use of copper (aes) for medicinal purposes. Earlier in this chapter we mentioned the employment of copper as given by Diodorus⁽¹⁹⁾ but it remains to be said that copper was more useful than even gold in that it was employed for many purposes. Copper was one of the earliest

(17) Pliny, N.H. XXXIV. 117-122.

(18) Dioscorides, op.cit. V. 117, 119.

(19) See P.140 and 141.

metals known to man, and in Egypt it was employed before gold as far back as Badarian and early predynastic times. The employment of copper by the ancient Egyptians was further supported by the finds of a large number of articles, which are well summarised by Lucas.⁽²⁰⁾ These articles include weapons, farming tools, ornaments, small objects and household utensils. All these various evidences seem to support the rather vague statement of Diodorus. Copper ores, however, were not only found in the Eastern Desert, as Diodorus said,⁽²¹⁾ but also in Sinai.⁽²²⁾ According to Lucas, the evidence for ancient copper mining and smelting by the Egyptians is twofold, first, the existence of ancient mines with ruins of mining settlements and ancient slag heaps and, secondly, inscriptions in the neighbourhood of mines left by mining expeditions.

From the classical authors we have no definite information on whether silver was found in ancient Egypt or not, except the reference given by Pliny⁽²³⁾ in which he said, "the Egyptians stained their silver so as to see the portraits of their god Anubis in their vessels; and they did not engrave but painted

(20) A. Lucas, op.cit. pp. 199, 200.

(21) Diod. loc.cit., see also M. Cary, op.cit. p. 212.

(22) A. Lucas, op.cit. pp. 201, 202.

(23) Pliny, N.H. XXXIII. 131.

their silver'. In the opinion of some modern authors and in view of the conditions of the present time, neither native silver nor silver ores occur in Egypt, though all Egyptian gold contains silver.⁽²⁴⁾ For that reason the ancient Egyptians (like their modern successors) had to import their silver from abroad, from Asia Minor, or perhaps from Spain.⁽²⁵⁾ In the opinion of Lucas⁽²⁶⁾ the description of Pliny suggests a form of niello, which is an alloy of silver and copper blackened by the sulphides of these metals. A few examples of niello, Lucas maintains, have been reported from ancient Egypt.

It is surprising that the classical authors of our period did not mention iron, though iron minerals are plenty in Egypt and at a very early date (predynastic times) an ore of iron (haematite) was fashioned into bends, amulets and small ornaments and certain compounds of iron, namely, ochres, siennas and umbers, but more particularly red and yellow ochres, were used as pigments.⁽²⁷⁾ The ores are found chiefly in the eastern desert and in Sinai and the ochres principally near Aswan and in the oases of the western desert.⁽²⁸⁾ Pliny, however, mentioned the⁽²⁹⁾ existence

(24) A. Lucas, op.cit. p. 245.

(25) M. Cary, op.cit. p. 212.

(26) A. Lucas, op.cit. p. 250.

(27) A. Lucas, op.cit. p. 235.

(28) A. Lucas, op.cit. pp. 235, 236 and the present writer's own personal information.

(29) Pliny, N.H. XXXV. 35.

of iron mines, when he spoke of the red ochres which was also mentioned by Dioscorides,⁽³⁰⁾ About the ochres and their employment to produce pigments we shall speak presently.

Classical authors also enumerated a number of pigments used by ancient Egyptians to give their buildings such a fresh and bright colour, which have astonishingly remained so up to the present time. We have already spoken of the staining of silver. Now among these pigments Pliny mentioned the 'sinopis',⁽³¹⁾ called after the city of Sinope in Pontus, its country of origin, and also the 'rubrica',⁽³²⁾ (i.e. the red earth). These were used for pigments. The Egyptian quality was the best. The sinopis and rubrica, however, were certainly red ochre.⁽³³⁾ Dioscorides⁽³⁴⁾ was obviously speaking of the red ochre when he mentioned the 'tektonike' (τεκτονική, lit. joiner's work), as his description of that substance and its use

(30) Dioscorides, op.cit. V. 112.

(31) Pliny, N.H. XXXV. 31.

(32) Pliny, N.H. XXXV. 35.

(33) A. Lucas, op.cit. p. 347; cf. also Rackham, Pliny's N.H. Vol IX. Loeb. ed. p. 283, n.h.

(34) Dioscorides, op.cit. V. 112.

is almost the same as that of Pliny. He also stated, like Pliny, that it was used to produce 'rubrica' (i.e. red earth). Pliny also noted⁽³⁵⁾ that apart from being manufactured, red ochre was also found in a native state in iron mines and he also stated that the red ochre was useful for medicinal purposes. Red ochre, however, was certainly used by the ancient Egyptians for the purposes mentioned by the classical authors.⁽³⁶⁾ Pliny⁽³⁷⁾ also mentioned a white pigment which he called 'paraetonium' after a place (i.e. Paraetonium, mod. Marsa Matrouh) in Egypt and that it was the most greasy of all the white colours and made the most tenacious for plasters because of its smoothness. This white pigment could be either calcium carbonate (whiting, chalk), or calcium sulphate (gypsum) as these were the only two white pigments known.⁽³⁸⁾ The use of white pigment for mural painting is known from the predynastic period.⁽³⁹⁾

(35) Pliny, loc.cit.

(36) A. Lucas, op.cit. p. 347, ff.

(37) Pliny, N.H. XXXV. 36.

(38) A. Lucas, op.cit. p. 349; Rackham, op.cit. p. 283. n.1.

(39) Lucas, op.cit. pp. 348, 349.

Pliny also mentioned⁽⁴⁰⁾ chalk, which he called 'Galactatis', also known as 'leucogaea' (white earth), 'leucographites' (white chalk) and 'synecthitis' (cohesive earth). Pliny told us that it was noteworthy for the fact that when rubbed between the fingers it exhibits a milky smear and flavour, and in rearing children it ensures wet nurses a plentiful flow of milk. The stone also has medicinal properties. 'Galactitis', however, according to Pliny, was produced by the Nile. Dioscorides⁽⁴¹⁾ also mentioned the chalk which he called 'Morochthos Lithos' (pipe clay - stone), though some call the substance 'Galaxia' or Leucographis. Chalk, Dioscorides added, was found in Egypt and was used there by linen manufacturers for whitening of the clothes, it being soft and melting and it has medicinal properties. Alum was also said by Pliny⁽⁴²⁾ to have been found in Egypt. He called the substance 'alumen' and described the Egyptian kind as the most esteemed. It was also mentioned by Dioscorides⁽⁴³⁾ who called it 'stuperia' and added that almost every kind of alum was found in the same mines in Egypt, for, he said, there were many kinds of alum.

(40) Pliny, N.H. XXXVII. 162.

(41) Dioscorides, op.cit. V. 152.

(42) Pliny, N.H. XXXV. 183, 184.

(43) Dioscorides, op.cit. V. 123.

Dioscorides and Pliny mentioned the use of alum for medicinal purposes. Pliny also stated that various kinds of alum were used for different purposes; for the white and liquid kind was most useful for dyeing woollens a bright colour, whereas the black kind was best for dark or sombre hues. Black alum was also used in cleaning gold.⁽⁴⁴⁾ Pliny also informed us that all alum is produced from water and slime, that is, a substance exuded by the earth. Strabo told us⁽⁴⁵⁾ that he had heard at Alexandria from the glass workers that there was in Egypt a kind of vitreous earth (ὑαλίνη γῆ) without which multicoloured and costly designs could not be executed, just as elsewhere different countries require different mixtures. This is presumably a kind of sand in which Egypt is very rich. The glass industry, however, has a very ancient history in Egypt and in Strabo's time Alexandria was one of the leading centres for glass manufacture in the ancient world.⁽⁴⁶⁾ Egypt, according to Strabo, Dioscorides and Pliny, also possessed natron. In this respect Strabo stated⁽⁴⁷⁾ that, 'above Momemphis one comes to two natron beds (νιτρικά)

(44) Pliny, loc.cit.

(45) Strabo, 16.2.25.

(46) Lucas, op.cit. 184. cf. also Bell, loc.cit.

(47) Strabo, 17.1.23.

which contain very large quantities of natron (νίτρον) and the Nitriotic Nome, and Pliny says, ⁽⁴⁸⁾ 'The natron beds (νιτρίαι) of Egypt used to be confined to the regions around Naucratis and Memphis, the beds around Memphis being inferior, because the heaps petrify and are turned into rock, from which vessels are made'. The location of the natron beds of Strabo is thought ⁽⁴⁹⁾ to be that of Wadi El-Natron, though it is not easy to state the exact positions of the localities mentioned by that author. Pliny's whole account of natron in Egypt is described by some as very confused and often unintelligible. ⁽⁵⁰⁾ His reference to natron beds around Naucratis is supposed to be to that of Barnugi and that around Memphis corresponds to Wadi El-Natron because though Wadi El-Natron is not very close to Memphis, it is difficult to believe that this important source should be ignored in favour of some small and insignificant place nearer to Memphis, even if such a source existed, which is doubtful. ⁽⁵¹⁾ Natron was also said by Dioscorides ⁽⁵²⁾, who called it (νίτρον ἄφρον) (i.e. the froth of the nation (lit. nitre), to have been found in Egypt, the

(48) Pliny, N.H. XXXI. 109.

(49) Lucas, op.cit. 265.

(50) Lucas, op.cit. 266.

(51) Lucas, loc.cit.

(52) Dioscorides, V. 131.

Egyptian quality being second best. Pliny mentions, too, that natron was prepared artificially in Egypt, a statement criticised and considered as largely wrong and most misleading.⁽⁵³⁾ Natron, according to Dioscorides was used for medicinal purposes; and to Pliny for several purposes. In ancient Egypt natron was used in purification ceremonies, especially for purifying the mouth; for making incense; for the manufacture of glass, glaze and possibly the blue and green frits used as pigments, which may be made either with or without alkali, but which are more easily made if alkali is present; for cooking; in medicine; for bleaching linen and in mummification.⁽⁵⁴⁾ Salt was also found in Egypt, according to Pliny,⁽⁵⁵⁾ who states "near Pelusium (Tel el-Farama) King Ptolemy found salt when he was making a camp, a fact that led afterwards to the discovery of salt by digging away sand in the rough tracts between Egypt and Arabia, as it was also found as far as the Oracle of Hammon (i.e. Amon, situated in the Qattara Depression and Siwa Oasis) through the parched desert of Africa. Pliny also says, that around Memphis salt was taken out of a lake and then dried in the sun. He further mentions that on the coast of Egypt (lit. around

(53) Lucas, op.cit.

(54) Lucas, op.cit. p. 276.

(55) Pliny, N.H. XXXI. 68, 74, 81.

Egypt) there were artificial salines for the extraction of salt from sea water. Dioscorides⁽⁵⁶⁾ and Pliny⁽⁵⁷⁾ also mention what they called 'flos salis' (i.e. flower of salt), which occurs in Egypt and is supposed to float down the Nile. In Lucas' opinion⁽⁵⁸⁾, the so-called flower of salt has so far not been identified, but it was certainly not patches of petroleum coming down from the white Nile, as suggested by Bailey. Pliny, however, does not mention the use of salt, but Diodorus says⁽⁵⁹⁾ that the Egyptians used it for preserving fish. Salt was used, as always, as a seasoning for food; and it was also used in mummification.⁽⁶⁰⁾

Egypt also possessed a considerable number of precious and semi-precious stones. Strabo⁽⁶¹⁾ mentioned the existence of emerald and beryl in the gold mines of Arabia. He further stated⁽⁶²⁾ that in the isthmus that extends between Coptos (Qift) in the Nile Valley and Berenice (Madinet el-Harras) on the

(56) Dioscorides, op.cit. V. 129.

(57) Pliny, loc.cit.

(58) Lucas, op.cit. pp. 268, 269.

(59) Diod. I. 36.

(60) Lucas, op.cit. P. 269.

(61) Strabo, 16.

(62) Strabo, 17.1.23.

Red Sea were the mines of smaragdus (emerald), and of other precious stones. These mines of smaragdus (or emeralds and beryls) were also mentioned by Pliny,⁽⁶³⁾ who told us that smaragdus (emerald or beryl) held the third rank among gemstones for several reasons, and that there were twelve kinds of smaragdus (beryl) among which the third order was given to the Egyptian. He moreover stated⁽⁶⁴⁾ that Ethiopian smaragdus, which, according to Juba were found a distance of twenty five days' journey from Coptos (Qift), came second in esteem after the Cyprian. Eichholz suggested⁽⁶⁵⁾ that the Ethiopian smaragdus were simply identical to the Egyptian emeralds mentioned above. According to Lucas⁽⁶⁶⁾ beryl (the ancient smaragdus) occurs in the Sikait-Zubara region of the Red Sea hills,⁽⁶⁷⁾ where there are extensive old workings, probably of Graeco-Roman age, and there is no evidence that the mines were worked in the reign of Amenhotpe III as stated by Wilkinson.

(63) Pliny, N.H. XXXVII. 62, 63, 65.

(64) Pliny, N.H. XXXVII, 69.

(65) Eichholz, Pliny's N.H. Vol. X. Loeb. ed. p. 215, n.f. and p. 218, n.b.

(66) Lucas, op.cit. P. 389.

(67) Eichholz, op.cit. P. 218, n.b.

Pliny also mentions⁽⁶⁸⁾ the occurrence in Egypt of the sard, a stone backed with gold foil. Lucas,⁽⁶⁹⁾ however, states that Pliny's mention of the sard occurring in Egypt is probably true. Peridot was, according to Strabo⁽⁷⁰⁾ and Pliny,⁽⁷¹⁾ who quotes Juba of Mauretania, to be found on an island of Topazos (Zeberged or St. John's Island), which is situated off the Egyptian coast of the Red Sea. Peridot belongs to the greenish stone. Egypt also had the azurite, a blue stone; the stone, which Pliny calls⁽⁷²⁾ 'cyanus' (i.e. 'dark blue stone'), a name, Pliny says, for a short time ago the Romans applied to an 'iaspis' owing to its colour. The Egyptian azurite comes third in esteem. Azurite, however, is a beautiful deep blue basic carbonate of copper that occurs in copper deposits and is found in both Sinai and the Eastern Desert, but it does not occur in any great amount; it was employed anciently in Egypt both as a source of metallic copper and as a pigment; until for the latter purpose it was displaced by an artificial blue frit, and

(68) Pliny, N.H. XXXVII. 106.

(69) Lucas, op.cit. P. 392.

(70) Strabo, 16.4.6.

(71) Pliny, N.H. XXXVII. 107. 108.

(72) Pliny, N.H. XXXVII. 111.

it is probable that it was used in the production of blue glaze.⁽⁷³⁾ A single instance of the use of azurite for beads has also been recorded. Amethyst, a purple-coloured stone was also found in Egypt.⁽⁷⁴⁾ According to Pliny⁽⁷⁵⁾, the 'paederos' (i.e. favourite) also is said to occur in Egypt and the dominant colour of that stone was sky blue and purple, and the green of 'smaragdus' is absent. Pliny further says⁽⁷⁶⁾ that white stones are headed by the 'paederos' (i.e. favourite), although one may ask to which colour one should assign a stone bearing a name that is so often bandied about among beautiful objects of different kinds that the mere term has become a guarantee of beauty. The Egyptian variety comes second in esteem and is called tenites (v.l. syenites). Eichholz says⁽⁷⁷⁾ that there is a coloured stone (a natural silica glass) known to Egyptologists; it bears a similar name, that is tenites, but syenites, Eichholz suggests may be the right reading. Thus Eichholz says that Pliny's description applies to amethyst and says that there are ancient amethyst workings not far from Aswan (anc. Syene). Lucas⁽⁷⁸⁾ too mentions these amethyst workings of Aswan which were the chief source of amethyst, and other workings from

(73) Lucas, op.cit. P. 210.

(74) Pliny, N.H. XXXVII. 121.

(75) Pliny, N.H. XXXVII. 84.

(76) Pliny, N.H. XXXVII, 129, 130.

(77) Eichholz, Pliny's N.H. Vol. X. Loeb. ed. P. 270. n.c.

(78) Lucas, op.cit. P. 389.

ancient Egypt in the Eastern and Western deserts were also discovered. Pliny⁽⁷⁹⁾ also mentioned the 'aromatitis', or 'aromatic stone' to have been found in Arabia and in Egypt near Philae. It is always stony, and since it has the colour and scent of myrrh it was much used by queens. Eichholz conjectures⁽⁸⁰⁾ that the stone is 'ambergris?'. Eichholz also suggests⁽⁸¹⁾ that the amber which Pliny⁽⁸²⁾ following Nicias said to have been made in Egypt, was no doubt ambergris ejected by the sperm of whales of the Indian Ocean. Lucas⁽⁸³⁾ on the other hand, thinks that Pliny's statement concerning the amber production in Egypt was not correct. Pliny also mentioned⁽⁸⁴⁾ the 'Aegyptilla' or 'little Egypt stone' by which Iacchus, Pliny says, understands a stone in which the white layer is traversed by bands of carnelian and black, but the term was commonly applied where there is a black ground and upper layer of blue. The stone, in Pliny's opinion, acquired its name from the country where it was found. The stone in question was identified by Eichholz⁽⁸⁵⁾ as Sardonyx and nicolo. Lucas states that Sardonyx probably also occurs in Egypt, though no mention of it

(79) Pliny, N.H. XXXVII. 145.

(80) Eichholz, op.cit. P. 283.

(81) Eichholz, op.cit. P. 191. n.c.

(82) Pliny, N.H. XXXVII. 36.

(83) Lucas, op.cit. P. 388.

(84) Pliny, N.H. XXXVII. 148.

(85) Eichholz, op.cit. P. 285.

can be found in the geological reports.⁽⁸⁶⁾ The Egyptian Thebes had the agate (achates in Latin), which lacked the red and white veins, but it again was effective against scorpions.⁽⁸⁷⁾ Agate occurs plentifully in Egypt, chiefly in the form of pebbles, but it has been found also in small quantity associated with jasper and chalcedony in a dyke rock at the head of Wadi Abu Gerida in the Eastern desert.⁽⁸⁸⁾ Pliny also mentioned⁽⁸⁹⁾ the 'balanites' or 'acorn stone', of which there are two kinds, one is greenish and the other like the corinthian bronze in its colour. The former comes from Coptos and the latter from the 'Troglodytes' (cave dwellers) country, and both are intersected through the middle by a bright red layer. Egypt also had the 'batrachites', or 'frog-stone' which also came from Coptos (Qift): one variety has a colour like that of a frog, a second is similar and also has veins, while a third is red mixed with black.⁽⁹⁰⁾ The 'corallis' (red jasper)⁽⁹¹⁾ Pliny stated⁽⁹²⁾, resembles vermillion and occurs at

(86) Lucas, op.cit. P. 387.

(87) Pliny, N.H. XXXVII. 141.

(88) Lucas, loc.cit.

(89) Pliny, N.H. XXXVII. 149.

(90) Pliny, N.H. XXXVII. 149.

(91) Eichholz, op.cit. P. 289.

(92) Pliny, N.H. XXXVII. 154.

Aswan. He also told us⁽⁹³⁾ that 'Cyitis' or 'pregnant stone (geode)⁽⁹⁴⁾ which is found in the neighbourhood of Coptos (Qift) is white and seems to be pregnant with another stone. If 'Cyitis' of Pliny is the jade of Lucas, then the stone did not occur in Egypt but in other countries, though several specimens of what may be nephrite or jadeite have been found in Egypt.⁽⁹⁵⁾ According to Pliny⁽⁹⁶⁾ also the 'phloginos' or 'flame coloured stone' resembles the yellow ochre of Attica and is found in Egypt. The Memphites stone or 'memphites lithos' according to Dioscorides⁽⁹⁷⁾ and Pliny⁽⁹⁸⁾ acquired its name from Memphis, its place of origin. Dioscorides described it as having a size of a pebble stone and Pliny said that it was like a gem. Both authors, however, mentioned the use of the stone for medicinal purposes. Eichholz⁽⁹⁹⁾ suggests that the stone may be the 'dolomite'. Lucas⁽¹⁰⁰⁾ casts his doubts on the nature of the 'memphites'. In this connection he says "whether all, or any, of these stones (i.e. the memphites) were marble in the modern sense is

(93) Pliny, N.H. XXXVII. 154.

(94) Eichholz, op.cit. P. 289.

(95) Lucas, op.cit. P. 396.

(96) Pliny, N.H. XXXVII. 179.

(97) Dioscorides, op.cit. V. 158.

(98) Pliny, N.H. XXXVI. 57.

(99) Eichholz, op.cit. P. 45.

(100) Lucas, op.cit. PP. 415.

uncertain, though if 'memphites' were indeed obtained from near Memphis, it was probably some sort of limestone, since no other kind of stone is known to occur in that locality. A very hard marbly white limestone was used for sculptures in the labyrinth. Pliny also referred⁽¹⁰¹⁾ to a red porphyry (rubet porphyrites) which occurs in Egypt and of which a variety mottled with white dots is known as 'leptopsephus'. The quarries supply masses of any size to be cut away. Statues of this stone were brought from Egypt to the emperor Claudius in Rome by his official agent Vitrasius Pollio, an innovation that did not meet with much approval, as no one has since followed his example. The stone in question is probably imperial porphyry.⁽¹⁰²⁾ Porphyry was used largely in the predynastic and early dynastic periods for making vessels, but the best known of porphyritic rocks quarried anciently is without doubt the beautiful fine-grained purple coloured rock (porfido rosso antico) often termed imperial porphyry, that was obtained from Egypt by the Romans from the first to the fourth century A.D. and employed extensively in Italy as an ornamental stone. This porphyry occurs in three localities in the Eastern Desert, one of these localities is Gebel al-Dokhan, from which the Romans obtained their supply.⁽¹⁰³⁾ The

(101) Pliny, N.H. XXXVI. 57.

(102) Lucas, op.cit. P. 417.

(103) Lucas, loc.cit.

Romans not only imported Egyptian porphyry to their country but also marble. Thus Seneca⁽¹⁰⁴⁾ told us that the Romans took delight in tall columns of veined marble brought either from Egyptians sands or from African deserts to hold up a colonnade or a dining hall large enough to contain a city crowd. Pliny also mentioned the Augustean and Tiberian marbles, which were found in Egypt during the reigns of Augustus (27 B.C. - A.D.14) and Tiberius (A.D. 14-37) respectively. Modern authors⁽¹⁰⁵⁾ are not certain about the nature of these stones, though Eichholz⁽¹⁰⁶⁾ says that they may have been varieties of coarse granite. Pliny also spoke of the onyx marble which, in one place,⁽¹⁰⁷⁾ where he called it onyx, though some called it alabastritis, he stated that it was said by the old Roman authorities to have occurred in the mountains of Arabia and nowhere else. He further stated⁽¹⁰⁸⁾ that it was found in Egypt round Thebes. In another statement⁽¹⁰⁹⁾ where he called the stone 'alabastritis', Pliny said

(104) L.A. Seneca, Epistulae Morales, CXV (on the Superficial Blessings) Ch.8.

(105) Lucas, op.cit. P. 415; Eichholz, op.cit. P.43, n.c.

(106) Eichholz, loc.cit.

(107) Pliny, N.H. XXXVI. 59.

(108) Pliny, N.H. XXXVI. 61. cf. Theophrastus on stones, XV.

(109) Pliny, N.H. XXXVII. 144.

that it was found in Alabastrum (Gr. Ἀλαβαστρον). From the vague reference to the position of Alabastrum by Pliny,⁽¹¹⁰⁾ Lucas⁽¹¹¹⁾ suggests that if it were anywhere near Hermopolis (El Ashmunein) it cannot have been far from Hatnub and these quarries, therefore, may have been known by repute to Pliny. According to Pliny, onyx marble (onyx or alabastritis) was used for several purposes; for making columns of large size for different buildings, for decorating,⁽¹¹²⁾ for making wine and unguent jars; for making the feet of couches and the frames of chairs; and for medicinal purposes. Pliny also stated⁽¹¹³⁾ that the Egyptians also discovered in Ethiopia (Nubia) what is called 'basanites', a stone which in colour and hardness resembles iron, hence they have given it that name.⁽¹¹⁴⁾ Eichholz, however, believes⁽¹¹⁵⁾ that the explanation of Pliny is forced, and that basanites is really a transliteration of the Egyptian word bhn (bekhen) and that bekhen was not basalt, but the greywacke of the Wadi Hammamat.⁽¹¹⁶⁾ Greywacke occurs in several places in the Eastern desert, though the principal and possibly the only ancient source of it was the neighbourhood of the Wadi Hammamat on the main road from Qena to Quseir, where there are

(111) Lucas, op.cit. (112) Pliny, N.H. XXXVI. 132, cf. also Athenaeus, V. 26.

(113) Pliny, N.H. XXXVI. 58.

(114) I.e. from 'βαβανος', 'touch stone'.

(115) Eichholz, op.cit. P. 45. n.c.

(116) Cf. Lucas, op.cit. P. 420.

extensive ancient quarries with more than 250 inscriptions ranging in date from the protodynastic period to the thirtieth dynasty.⁽¹¹⁷⁾ Pliny mentioned only one of several uses for basanites,⁽¹¹⁸⁾ namely, for making statues. For he said that a very large stone made of basanites was dedicated by the Emperor Vespasian in the temple of Peace (Pax), the subject of which was the Nile, with sixteen of the river god's children playing around him, these denoting the number of cubits reached by the river in rising at its highest desirable level; and that similar to this was the block stone in the shrine of Serapis at Thebes chosen for a statue of what is supposed to be Memnon⁽¹¹⁹⁾ and this is said to creak (Crepare) every day at dawn as soon as the sun's rays reach it.⁽¹²⁰⁾

Most important of all the mineral resources of Egypt are two particular stones, which are found in that country in inexhaustible quantities, namely, the granite and basalt, with both of which the most impressive and the most durable great construction of the ancient Egyptians were built. The use of granite, for instance, in the second of the three great pyramids, built by Khafre is referred to by Herodotus, who says "the lowest layer of it is

(117) Lucas, loc.cit.

(118) Lucas, op.cit. 419.

(119) The 'speaking' Memnon is one of two seated statues at Thebes, each at least 64 feet high, representing Amenopolis (Amenhotep) III of Dynasty XVIII.

(120) cf. also Strabo, 17.1.46. and Tacitus, Annal. II. 61.

variegated Ethiopian stone" and the granite facing of the pyramid of Mankaure is mentioned by several of the classical authors, thus Diodorus says, "The walls for fifteen stories high were of black stone (ἐκ μέλαρος λίθου) like that of Thebes, the rest was of the same stone with the other pyramids".⁽¹²¹⁾ Strabo states that "from the foundation nearly as far as the middle, it is built of black stone ... which is brought from a great distance for it comes from the mountains of Ethiopia, and being hard and difficult to be worked, the labour is attended with great expense",⁽¹²²⁾ and Pliny says "it is built of Ethiopian stone".⁽¹²³⁾ Diodorus also states⁽¹²⁴⁾ that beside the entrance (of Ramses II's⁽¹²⁵⁾ temple) are statues, each of a single stone from Syene. Pliny further mentions⁽¹²⁶⁾ the Thebaic stone which is mottled with gold spots and is found in a part of Africa that had been assigned to Egypt. This Pliny calls the 'Syenites', that is 'the stone of Syene' and is found in the neighbourhood of Syene in the Thebaid and in earlier times was known as 'pyrrhopoecilos' (i.e. spotted with red). From the 'Syenites' Pliny added⁽¹²⁷⁾ the famous obelisks or monoliths were made and it was also employed in the construction of certain parts of the Egyptian Labyrinth.⁽¹²⁸⁾ Granite was also used for making mortars⁽¹²⁹⁾ or

(121) Hdt. 11. 127.

(122) Strabo. 17.1.3.

(123) Pliny, N.H. XXXVI. 80.

(124) Diod. I. 47.

(125) Osymandes of Diodorus.

(126) Pliny, N.H. XXXVI. 63.

(127) Pliny, N.H. XXXVI. 64 ff.

(128) Pliny, N.H. XXXVI. 86.

(129) Strabo, loc.cit.

stones on which to grind eye salves.⁽¹³⁰⁾ Granite, however, is widely distributed in Egypt and occurs plentifully at Aswan, in the eastern desert and in Sinai to a small extent in the western desert.⁽¹³¹⁾ Pliny also states⁽¹³²⁾ "Theophrastus is our authority also for a translucent (tralucid) Egyptian stone said by him to be similar to Chian marble (lit. lapis, 'stone') such a stone may have existed in his time. Stones cease to be found and new ones are discovered in turn". In Theophrastus' statement quoted above, Pliny forgets to mention that the stone was black.⁽¹³³⁾ The stone is usually identified with obsidian, which does not occur in Egypt, and therefore more likely to be basalt, which may, when freshly hewn, display transparent crystals.⁽¹³⁴⁾

To conclude, one can say that Egypt was not lacking in mineral resources, it had plenty of metals, such as gold and the ores of copper, iron and only lacked the silver which had to be imported from abroad; it had a considerable number of precious and semi-precious stones such as peridot, opal, azurite, amethyst, emerald, beryl and many others; it had inexhaustible supplies of stones and other substances for building, decorating and so forth; its minerals, moreover, like its flora, were much used for medicinal purposes.

(130) Pliny, N.H. XXXVI. 63.

(131) Lucas, op.cit. 58.

(132) Pliny, N.H. XXXVI. 132.

(133) Theophrastus, On Stones, 7.

(134) Eichholz, op.cit. P. 107. n.d.

PART TWO

POPULATION AND URBAN SETTLEMENTS

OF THE POPULATION.

CHAPTER VII

POPULATION AND TOWNS.

The ancient Greek traveller, like the modern tourist, could not have failed to observe the densely populated arable areas of Egypt, namely, the Delta, or Lower Egypt, and the Nile Valley, or Upper Egypt. Thus Diodorus was told by the Egyptians that⁽¹⁾, "In multitude (or density) of population (Πολυανθρωπία) Egypt far surpassed of old all known regions of the inhabited world, and even in Diodorus' time was thought to have been second to none. The total population had been of old about seven million and the number has remained no less down to his time". Josephus, the Alexandrian Jewish writer, writing a little more than a century later, gives⁽²⁾ the population as 7,500,000, exclusive of Alexandria. Diodorus, however, states elsewhere⁽³⁾ that Alexandria had 300,000 free inhabitants.

«Καθ' ὃν γὰρ ἡμεῖς παρεβάλομεν χρόνον εἰς Ἀἴγυπτον,
ἐφάβαν οἱ τὰς ἀναγραφὰς ἔχοντες τῶν κατοικούντων
εἶναι τοὺς ἐν αὐτῇ διατρίβοντας ἑλευθέρους πλείους τῶν
τριάκοντα μυριάδων.»

(1) Diod. I. 31.

(2) Josephus, Jewish War, II. 385.

(3) Diod. 17. 52.

The difference, therefore, is not very great between the two authors, but it shows that the number of population has somewhat increased by the time of Josephus (b. A.D. 37-8). In the viewpoint of some modern scholars⁽⁴⁾, the estimates given by the classical authors for the number of people then living in Egypt were approximately correct. Bevan, for instance, who takes the number of 300,000 given by Diodorus above for the population of Alexandria as including the citizen-body only and excluding all the Egyptians and perhaps the Jews, though the question whether the Jews were, or were not included in the citizen-body is still debatable, states⁽⁵⁾ that the population at the end of the Ptolemaic period seems to have been about seven or eight million; it was probably at least as large under Ptolemy II. Another author, namely Oldfather⁽⁶⁾ says that U. Wilcken⁽⁷⁾ feels that the

(4) E. Bevan, A History of Egypt, The Ptolemaic Dynasty, P. 79;
C.H. Oldfather, Loeb Edition of Diodorus Siculus, Vol. I.
P. 105, nl;
M. Cary, The Geographic Background of the Greek and Roman History, P. 216.

(5) a. Bevan, op.cit. P. 97.

b. Bevan, loc.cit.

(6) Oldfather, loc.cit.

(7) U. Wilcken, Griechische Ostraka aus Aegypten und Nubien, I.
pp. 489 f.

sum of seven million given by Diodorus for the population of Egypt about the middle of the first century B.C. is approximately correct.

Different reasons as responsible for the density of the population of Egypt were put forward by different classical authors. We have already mentioned among these the mildness of the climate, the nature of the Nile, the fertility of Egypt's black soil, and the fertility of the Egyptian women. To these reasons Diodorus adds⁽⁸⁾ that because all the Egyptians, except the priests, could marry as many wives as they wished - a statement about which we have something to say later⁽⁹⁾ - they would have many children; and because all the Egyptians were required to bring up their children without having to incur much expense - such statement also is going to be discussed at a later place⁽¹⁰⁾ - the result of all that was that Egypt had such a large number of people. With this large number of people, Diodorus goes on to say,⁽¹¹⁾ the kings of Egypt were able to build huge, great and marvellous works, which have remained to them immortal monuments to their glory. One cannot deny, however, that most of the causes suggested as responsible for the density

(8) Diod. I. 80.

(9) See p. 574 ff

(10) See p. 588 ff

(11) Diod. I. 31 and 80.

of the population of Egypt were reasonable. Certainly the mild climate, the wealth of a country and the fertility of its human kind are sufficient reasons for densely populating that country. This is even true to the present time, as the problem of the population explosion is a real menace to the general welfare of the people of Egypt.

The seven or eight million souls mentioned above as inhabiting Egypt presumably occupied a considerable number of settlements, mainly cities, towns and villages, varying both in size and importance.

Long before our own period some of the classical authors spoke of the number of towns and important villages in Egypt. Thus Herodotus (mid 5th C. B.C.) said⁽¹²⁾ that the number of 'inhabited cities' in the time of Amasis (sixth century B.C.) was twenty thousand. Theocritus (b.c. 305 B.C.), is thought⁽¹³⁾ to have performed a feat of metrical jiggling when he gave the number of 33,333 for Theocritus said⁽¹⁴⁾: "The cities bulided therein are three hundreds and three thousands and three tens of thousands, and three twain and nines three, and in them the lord and master of all is proud Ptolemy".⁽¹⁵⁾ In our period, however,

(12) Hdt. 11. 177.

(13) Oldfather, op.cit. P. 103, n.2.

(14) Theocritus, xvii. 82. ff.

(15) Trans. Edmonds in Loeb. ed. and the Ptolemy meant here by Theocritus was Ptolemy II. Philadelphus.

Diodorus, after having described the density of population of Egypt, said⁽¹⁶⁾, "In ancient times Egypt had over eighteen thousand important villages and cities (κώμαι ἀξιολόγοι καὶ πόλεις) as can be seen entered in their sacred records, while under Ptolemy son of Lagus (i.e. Ptolemy I, Soter 323-283 B.C.) these were reckoned at over thirty thousand, this great number continuing down to Diodorus' own time". The number of over eighteen thousand of Diodorus in ancient times, therefore, differs from the 20 thousand of Herodotus under Amasis. Did Diodorus mean that he took his census from Egyptian sacred records ? It is a well known fact that Diodorus did not know Egyptian.⁽¹⁷⁾ Then where did he get his information ? Diodorus might have taken his census from an earlier author than himself, like Hecataeus of Abdera or Teos as Waddell ingeniously suggests⁽¹⁸⁾. For Hecataeus visited Egypt in the reign of Ptolemy I (Soter). It is also known that Diodorus used Hecataeus extensively.⁽¹⁹⁾

(16) Diod. I. 31.

(17) See W.G. Waddell, An Account of Egypt by Diodorus the Sicilian, P. 2 of the preparatory note. Off-print from the Bulletin of the Faculty of Arts, Univ. of Egypt, Vol. I, Parts I & II, 1933.

(18) Waddell, op.cit. P. 33, n.l.

(19) Waddell, op.cit. P. 2. Oldfather, op.cit. p. xxvi. of the Introduction.

Wilamowitz⁽²⁰⁾, who seems to agree broadly with Waddell, is quoted by Gow⁽²¹⁾ as suggesting that the number 18,000 was derived from Egyptian sources, the higher number (over 30 thousand) from Ptolemaic. A third modern scholar, C.H. Oldfather, suggests⁽²²⁾ that the 'over thirty thousand' of Diodorus may be approximately correct, if "villages" are included, although he may be using the figures given by Theocritus mentioned above. The thirty thousand are therefore generally accepted as correct, but whether these are cities, towns and villages, or villages only, it remains to be solved. Gow, however, says⁽²³⁾ that it is plain that a current estimate, no doubt of κῶμαι (villages) rather than πόλεις or ἄγρια (cities or towns); and Cary⁽²⁴⁾ seems to agree with him on that.

Pomponius Mela, who wrote in the first half of the first century A.D., surprisingly enough ignored, so to speak, the

(20) Herm. 33. 250.

(21) A.S.E. Gow : Theocritus, commentary, Vol. II. P. 338.

(22) Oldfather, op.cit. P. 103, n.2.

(23) Gow, loc.cit.

(24) M. Cary, op.cit. P. 216.

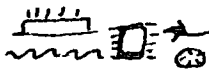
figures of towns and villages given before him by Theocritus and Diodorus, and was content to repeat⁽²⁵⁾ the figure given in the middle of the fifth century by Herodotus, namely, the figure of 20 thousand in the reign of Asmasis, but he added that in his time Egypt still had a large number of towns. But he did not say how many. In the second half of the first century A.D. Pliny, who seems certain to have copied Pomponius Mela, also repeated⁽²⁶⁾ the same figure of twenty thousand and added that in his time Egypt still had a very large number of towns, but of no importance.

Thus we see that although the figures of towns and villages of Egypt vary from one writer to another, they prove that Egypt had a very large number of towns and villages and subsequently it had a large number of people inhabiting these towns and villages.

The towns and important villages mentioned by name vary from one writer to another. Strabo, Pliny, Pomponius Mela and Diodorus and many others mention some of these settlements; but the best and the most thorough and systematic survey of towns and important villages, in my view, is no doubt the one given by Strabo, whose description of Egypt is topographical in nature.

(25) Pomponius Mela, Chorographia, I. ix. 60.

(26) Pliny, N.H. V. 60.

There are certain towns and notable villages which are given special treatment by some of the classical authors, because of a special interest or importance attached to them. There are towns and villages of historical, geographical, strategical, commercial or religious significance. Some towns and important villages in the course of time grew in importance, while others suffered from increasing neglect. Some grew at the expense of others; for instance, Alexandria grew at the expense of Naucratis both as a settlement for Greeks and as a port; and as the capital of Egypt it took the place of Memphis. There are old towns of Pharaonic origin, and a few later additions, notably Alexandria and Ptolemais founded by the Macedonians. It is also noticeable that when Diodorus and other classical authors wrote, the names of some of the Pharaonic towns, we do not yet know how many were either hellenized or were replaced altogether by new Greek names. The Egyptian  Mnb, for instance, was hellenized to 'Μέμφις' ⁽²⁷⁾, and it is interesting to know that the Egyptian Mnf has remained in use in Arabic up till now. The Egyptian níwt w3st nt 'Imn, hnwt n dmi nb 'W3sa, 'the city of Amun, mistress of every town' also was given the Greek names Θήβαι and Διὸς πόλις ⁽²⁸⁾.

(27) A.H. Gardiner, Ancient Egyptian Onomastica, Vol. II. p. 122.

(28) Ibid. p. 24.

The most important cities, towns and villages mentioned by the classical authors of our period, beginning from the south of Egypt, are Philae, mentioned by Diodorus⁽²⁹⁾ as one of many alleged resting places for the bodies of Osiris and Isis. Philae, according to Diodorus, is an island in the Nile, situated near the city of the same name, and marks the borderline between Egypt and Ethiopia (Nubia). Strabo also mentions⁽³⁰⁾ Philae and describes it as an island in the Nile situated a little above the (1st) Cataract, as a common settlement of Ethiopians and Egyptians. He also says that Philae is built like Elephantine and is equal to it in size; it has Egyptian temples and a place where a hawk is held in honour. Philae is also described wrongly⁽³¹⁾ by Pliny⁽³²⁾ as consisting of four islands situated opposite Syene, instead of a single island situated just above the Cataract. Moving north one comes to the island of Elephantine, described by Strabo⁽³³⁾ as an island in the Nile situated in front of Aswan (Syene) and as containing a city which

(29) Diod. I. 22. cf. also Strabo (17.1.23) who said that the people of Philae in particular claimed that the body of Osiris was resting in their island.

(30) Strabo, 17.1.49, 50.

(31) J. Ball, Egypt in the Classical Geographers, p. 75.

(32) Pliny^{N.H.} v. 59.

(33) Strabo, 17.1.48. Chorographia.

has a temple of Cnuphis and, like Memphis, a nilometer.

Elephantine was enumerated by Pomponius Mela⁽³⁴⁾ among the most remarkable (clarissima) cities of Egypt, but surprisingly enough he did not mention the fact that it is an island as well. It was also mentioned by Pliny⁽³⁵⁾ who called it "Elephantis" and described it correctly as an inhabited island four miles below the cataract; but he makes a curious mistake in saying that it was sixteen miles above Syene (Aswan) instead of opposite to it.⁽³⁶⁾ Pliny also described Elephantis as marking the extreme limit of navigation in Egypt and as the point of rendezvous for Ethiopian vessels, which were made collapsible for the purpose of portage on reaching the cataracts.

Then one comes to Syene, described by Strabo⁽³⁷⁾ as a city situated on the borders of Ethiopia and Egypt; it contained the well that marks the summer tropic (ἐν δὲ τῇ Συήνῃ καὶ τὸ φρέαρ ἔστι τὸ διασημαίνον τὰς θερινὰς τροπὰς) for the reason that this region lies under the tropic circle and causes the gnomons to cast no shadow at midday. In this respect

(34) Pomponius Mela, Chorographia, I. ix. 60.

(35) Pliny, N.H. v. 59.

(36) J. Ball, loc.cit.

(37) Strabo, 17.1.48.

Strabo is not far from correct, for Syene (Aswan) is slightly to the north of the Tropic (of Cancer), its latitude being $24^{\circ} 1'$.

In Aswan also, Strabo says, are stationed three cohorts (of the Roman) army as a guard (against marauders from the south).

(38)

Pomponius Mela, too, placed Syene (Aswan) among the most

illustrious (clarissima) cities of Egypt and Pliny⁽³⁹⁾ said that it

is the first place one arrives to within the Egyptian territory after leaving Ethiopia (Nubia). He described it as a peninsula a

mile in circuit in which, on the Arabian side (that is the eastern side of the river), the Camp (Castra) is situated. To which camp

Pliny is referring here is not clear. One suggestion is that he is most probably referring to the same place to which Strabo has

earlier referred⁽⁴⁰⁾; that is, to the garrison of the Roman army

at Aswan, where three cohorts of that army were stationed and which were still there when Pliny was writing.⁽⁴¹⁾ Syene and

Elephantine were also mentioned by Tacitus, when he was describing the tour which Germanicus made (A.D.19) to Egypt. Tacitus stated⁽⁴²⁾

that Germanicus in his itinerary starting from Alexandria and Canopus reached Syene and Elephantine once the limits of Roman Empire.

(38) Pomponius Mela, loc.cit.

(39) Pliny, loc. cit.

(40) See Strabo, loc.cit

(41) J. Lesquier, L'Armée Romaine D'Égypte D'Auguste À Dioclétien, p. 411. Le Caire, 1918.

(42) Tacitus, Annal. II. 61.

Travelling a considerable distance to the north one comes to perhaps the most renowned city of ancient Egypt, to Thebes or Diospolis (The City of Zeus), about which we shall speak in great detail later in this chapter.⁽⁴³⁾ Afterwards one arrives at Coptos (mod. Qift) one of the most commercial towns known in the ancient world. Diodorus, however, did not mention Coptos, perhaps because its importance as a centre for commerce does not fall within his own interest; but, as expected it was mentioned by Strabo⁽⁴⁴⁾, who described it as a city common to the Egyptians and the Arabians. From Coptos (Qift) the famous trade route across the Eastern Desert led to Myos Hormos (Abu Sha'r el-Qibbi) and Berenice (Madinet el-Harras) on the Red Sea. This trade route, according to Strabo, was constructed to carry merchandise along it, in order to avoid sailing from the innermost recess of the Red Sea, which was hard to navigate. So the utility of this plan, Strabo adds, was shown by experiment to be great, and by Strabo's time all the Indian merchandise, as well as the Arabian and such of the Ethiopians as is brought down by the Arabian Gulf (i.e. the Red Sea), is carried to Coptos, which is the emporium for such cargoes. By the time of Strabo Coptos

(43) See p. 235 to 260.

(44) Strabo, 16.4.42; 17.1.44 and 45.

was a place of high repute and people frequented it. Like Strabo, Pliny, too, pointed out⁽⁴⁵⁾ the importance of Coptos, a city situated near the Nile, as a market for Indian and Arabian merchandise, and mentioned the importance of its site at the western end of the Nile - Red Sea trade route.⁽⁴⁶⁾ On the other end of that route, that is, on the Red Sea Coast were situated two other cities with their shipping facilities, very important and well known in the Greco-Roman world as emporia. These were Myos Hormos (Abu Sha'r el Qibbi⁽⁴⁷⁾) and Berenice (Madinet el-Harras). Strabo on his part mentioned both Berenice⁽⁴⁸⁾ and Myos Hormos⁽⁴⁹⁾ as situated on the Red Sea end of that trade route. Berenice, Strabo said, was a city with no harbour, but on account of the favourable lie of the isthmus it has convenient landing places. As for Myos Hormos, Strabo added, it was a city containing the naval station for sailors. It was Myos Hormos, however, which by Strabo's time, like Coptos, had high repute and was frequented by peoples while the importance of Berenice as an emporium, Strabo seemed to have implied, was on the wane. By Pliny's time,

(45) Pliny, N.H. V. 60.

(46) Pliny, N.H. VI. 103.

(47) J. Ball, Egypt in the Classical Geographers, p. 50.

(48) Strabo, 16.1.5; 17.1.45. (49) Strabo, 2.5.12; 16.4.5. and 24; 17.1.45.

however, the situation seemed to have been reversed. For Pliny mentioned Myos Hormos⁽⁵⁰⁾ as if it was no longer of any commercial importance, whereas he described Berenice⁽⁵¹⁾ as a town with a harbour on the Red Sea and to which the Nile - Red Sea trade route ended.

We return to the Nile valley to resume our tour towards the north, we come to Tentyra (mod. Dandara) described by Strabo⁽⁵²⁾ as a city whose people, as compared with the other Egyptians, held in particular dishonour the crocodile and deemed it the most hateful of all animals. For this reason the Tentyritae destroyed the animal whenever they found it. Strabo, in this respect, related that when the crocodiles were brought to Rome for exhibition, they were attended by the Tentyritae; and when a reservoir and a kind of stage above one of the sides had been made for them, so that they could go out of the water and have a basking place in the sun, these men at one time, stepping into the water all together, would drag them in a net to the basking place so they could be seen by the spectators, and at another would pull them down again into the reservoir. The Tentyritae, however, worshipped

(50) Pliny, N.H. vi. 168.

(51) Pliny, N.H. vi. 103.

(52) Strabo, 17.1.44.

Aphrodite (the Egyptian Hathor); and at the back of her shrine was a temple of Isis. Pliny⁽⁵³⁾ counted Tentyra, which he called Tentyris, among the celebrated towns of Egypt. Like Tentyra on the western side of the Nile valley but further north is situated the ancient city of Abydos, a hellenized form of the ancient Egyptian  } bdw⁽⁵⁴⁾. Abydos, was originally ranked after Busiris in the Delta as Osiris' second city which then gradually came to the forefront as the chief of Egypt's holy sites, to which making pilgrimage was the early equivalent of making a Christian pilgrimage to Jerusalem or a Muslim pilgrimage to Mecca.⁽⁵⁵⁾ It is identified now with el-Araba el-Madfuna,⁽⁵⁶⁾ in the Governorate of Suhag. This ancient great holy city of Egypt had, like many Egyptian cities, suffered from neglect, so that by the time the classical authors were writing only its remains could be seen to tell of its glorious past. This is very

(53) Pliny, N.H. v. 60.

(54) A.H. Gardiner, op.cit. Vol. II. p. 36.

(55) J.M. White, Everyday life in Ancient Egypt, p. 34;
H. Kees, Ancient Egypt, p. 336 ff.

cf. also Wainwright, The Sky-Religion In Egypt, p. 99;

Cyril Aldred, The Egyptians, p. 39; J.Cerny, Ancient Egyptian Religion, p. 87 (London 1952).

(56) J. Ball, op.cit. p. 78.

clear from what the classical authors said about it. It is for its important position in the Pharaonic Egypt that they gave it special attention in their descriptions. Abydos was described by Strabo⁽⁵⁷⁾ as situated above (i.e. south of) Ptolemais, which we are going to mention afterwards. Strabo, then, says, that it appeared to have been a great city, second only to Thebes, but it was by Strabo's time only a small settlement. Apart from the fact that Abydos was once a great city, Strabo observed the most peculiar thing to the city, the building, which he, like other classical authors, called 'Memnonium'. Strabo described it as "a royal building, which is a remarkable structure built of solid stone, and of the same workmanship as that which he ascribed to the Labyrinth, though not multiplex; and also a fountain which lies at a great depth, so that one descends to it down vaulted galleries made up of monoliths of surpassing size and workmanship. There is a canal leading to the place from the great river; and in the neighbourhood of the canal is a grove of Egyptian acantha (acacia or Sunt) sacred to Apollo. But if, as they say, Memnon is called Ismandes (or Imandes as in Ch.37, which is perhaps an error for 'Mandes' who is identified with Maindes, or Amon-em-hat III, of the Twelfth Dynasty)⁽⁵⁸⁾ by

(57) Strabo, 17.1.42, 44.

(58) See H.L. Jones in Loeb ed of Strabo's Geography, Vol. VIII, p.105, n.1. where he quotes Sayce (The Egypt of the Hebrews, p.281).

the Egyptians, the Labyrinth might also be a Memnonium and a work of the same man who built both the Memnonia in Abydos and those in Thebes; for it is said that there also are some Memnonia in Thebes". The Memnonium, which Strabo has just described, was thought at the time of finding to be a grave of Osiris from its resemblance to the mythical grave of Osiris. This subterranean building, however, was built of sandstone and granite and it was intended to serve as a cenotaph for the cult-chapel of Sethos I Osiris in the temple in front of it.⁽⁵⁹⁾ Strabo, moreover, pointed out quite correctly that the people of Abydos held in honour Osiris⁽⁶⁰⁾. Pliny also mentioned Abydos among his remarkable cities of Egypt and he also remarked that it was famous for the palace of Memnon and the temple of Osiris. He placed the city in the interior of Libya (Africa, that is on the western side of the river) $7\frac{1}{2}$ miles from the river.

Leaving Abydos in our journey north, we come to a much more recently founded settlement, to Ptolemais, (Ptolemais Hermiou of Ptolemy) so called after its founder. It was the second Greek city after Alexandria to be founded by the Ptolemies after the conquest of Egypt by Alexander the Great of Macedon. It was founded on the site of a Pharaonic village called Psou, in the nome called

(59) H. Kees, op.cit. p. 247.

(60) H. Kees, op.cit. p. 336 ff.; J.M. White, op.cit. p. 34.;
A Dict. of Egypt. Civil. p. 202. s.v. Osiris.

after the ancient Egyptian city of Thinis (mod. Girga).⁽⁶¹⁾
Strabo passed by the city briefly, a fact^{which} shows where his
interests lie. He is surely not interested to see or describe
to his readers a Greek city (with the exception of Alexandria,
which occupied a special place in the hearts and minds of the
Greco-Roman authors) and the Greek way of life. Instead he was
more interested, as any foreigner, in the Egyptian cities and was
curious about the Egyptian people. This is obvious from his
lengthy description of Abydos, which immediately follows that
brief one of Ptolemais in his survey, and to which we have already
referred. In this respect Strabo is not different from his
modern European descendant. For when the latter goes to Egypt
his primary interest does not lie in seeing the modern quarters or
the twentieth century's establishments which more or less resemble
those of his homeland, but he is interested to see the replicas of
the past and those exotic things peculiar to the Orient. To
return to Strabo's description⁽⁶²⁾ of Ptolemais, we find him
saying that it was (by his time) the largest city in the Thebais
and was no smaller than Memphis, and he quite rightly added that
it had a government modelled on that of the Greeks.⁽⁶³⁾ This is

(61) For a full description of Ptolemais, see E. Bevan, A History of Egypt, The Ptolemaic Dynasty, p. 104 ff.

(62) Strabo, 17.1.42.

(63) E. Bevan, loc.cit.

also another example of how certain cities or towns in Greco-Roman Egypt grew at the expense of others. For Ptolemais was founded in Upper Egypt to be its Alexandria. It grew at the expense of Thebes, the centre for national resistance to alien rule, and of Abydos, the most venerated of all cities of ancient Egypt, until it overshadowed them as it is clear from Strabo's statement. Ptolemais was also mentioned by Pliny⁽⁶⁴⁾ among the celebrated cities of Egypt. Crossing the river from Ptolemais one comes to yet another well known settlement in ancient Egypt, I mean here the city called by the classical authors $\chi\epsilon\mu\mu\acute{\iota}\varsigma$, $\chi\epsilon\mu\mu\acute{\omega}$ or $\Pi\alpha\nu\acute{o}\varsigma\ \pi\acute{o}\lambda\iota\varsigma$, $\Pi\alpha\nu\acute{\omega}\nu\ \pi\acute{o}\lambda\iota\varsigma$ (Panopolis).

The first two names are just a distorted form of the ancient Egyptian $\overline{\text{P}}\text{T}\text{O}\ \text{Hnt-Mn}$ ⁽⁶⁵⁾ (the city of Min, the Egyptian god of fertility). As the majority of the Egyptian cities and towns were re-named under the Greco-Roman rule, Hnt-Mn was translated into the Greek $\Pi\alpha\nu\acute{\omega}\nu\ \pi\acute{o}\lambda\iota\varsigma$ apparently because of the similarity between the function of the Egyptian god of fertility, Min, and the Greek god, Pan. This point was adopted by Diodorus in his mythological account of the Egyptian religion. Diodorus tells us⁽⁶⁶⁾, "In his world-wide campaigns Osiris was accompanied

(64) Pliny, N.H. v. 61.

(65) Gardiner, op.cit. Vol. II. p. 40.

(66) Diod. I. 18.

by many of his associates including Pan, who was held in special honour by the Egyptians. For the inhabitants of the land had not only set up statues of him at every temple but had also named a city after him in the Thebaid, called by the Egyptians Chemmo (Χεμμώ), which when translated means city of Pan. This is, however, the mythological story of Chemmo or the city of Pan. Strabo passed by the place very quickly and he just mentioned⁽⁶⁷⁾ that Panopolis, which was situated between Aphroditopolis in the north and Ptolemais above-mentioned in the south, though it was situated on the other side of the Nile, was an old settlement of linen workers and stone workers (Πανῶν πόλις λινουργῶν καὶ λιθοργῶν κατοικία). Panopolis was also mentioned by Pliny,⁽⁶⁸⁾ who included it in the list of the notable cities of ancient Egypt. Travelling further north from the above mentioned site and crossing back to the western bank of the Nile, one comes to a very important site both strategically and commercially, to Hermopolis or, as the Romans called it, the town of Mercury. This town is often called Hermopolis Magna to distinguish it from the other towns with similar names. Strabo did not mention the town itself

(67) Strabo, 17.1.41.

(68) Pliny, N.H. v. 61.

but correctly spoke⁽⁶⁹⁾ of the Hermopolite garrison, a kind of toll-station for goods brought down from the Thebais (ἐστὶν Ἑρμopolite κῆ φυλα κῆ τελωνίον τῶν ἐκ τῆς Θηβαίδος καταφερόμενων).

Pliny, on the other hand, did mention⁽⁷⁰⁾ the town by name, when he called it 'oppidum Mercuri' and included it in his list of the notable towns, but he did not mention anything about the garrison or the toll station, which were mentioned earlier by Strabo.

The existence of a customs station at Hermopolis was further supported by E. Bevan, who tells us⁽⁷¹⁾ "in the matter of customs, not only had duties to be paid in the ports or frontier towns on goods imported into Egypt or goods exported, but we learn from Agatharchides that there was a customs house at Hermopolis, between upper and lower Egypt, and a papyrus (P. Hibeh, 80) shows internal traffic even between one nome and another burdened by customs." Moving still a considerable distance to the north but leaving the Nile valley for a moment we go to the region round Lake Moeris (Karoun) to the Fayum Governorate, known to the Greeks and the Romans as Crocodilopolite or Arsinoite Nome; its capital or metropolis was known to the classical authors as Crocodilopolis or Arsinoe. This city was mentioned by Diodorus

(69) Strabo, 17.1.41.

(70) Pliny, loc.cit.

(71) E. Bevan, op.cit. 151.

who, while relating the various reasons and origins of worship or consecration of the animals in Egypt, said⁽⁷²⁾ that one of the reasons or origins for worshipping the crocodile was that this animal was said by some to have saved Menas, one of the early kings of Egypt, from either drowning in Lake Moeris (L. Karoun) or otherwise from being devoured by his dogs, which were chasing him; and that Menas, wishing to show his gratitude to the beast for saving him, founded a city near the place and named it 'City of the Crocodiles' (Κροκοδείλων πόλις), and he commanded the inhabitants of the region to worship these animals as gods and dedicated the lake (Lake Moeris) to them for their sustenance; and in that place he also constructed his own tomb, erecting a pyramid with four sides, and built the Labyrinth which is admired by many". Elsewhere⁽⁷³⁾ in his work Diodorus ascribed the construction of the Labyrinth to yet another King, Mendes, or Marrus as was called by some. Here again we do not know for sure the source from which Diodorus borrowed his story, but all one can suggest is that either he borrowed from predecessors, most probably from Hecataeus of Teos or Abdera, or he might have heard that story during his visit to Egypt among many others current in his own time. After Diodorus came Strabo,

(72) Diod. I. 89.

(73) Diod. I. 61.

whose account concerning the Arsinoite Nome and Arsinoic city (Fayum) is based on his personal observations, hence one expects it to be more accurate than that of Diodorus. Strabo tells us⁽⁷⁴⁾ that the Arsinoite Nome was the most noteworthy of all in respect to its appearance, its fertility and its material development. The capital or the metropolis of Arsinoite Nome Strabo⁽⁷⁵⁾ called Arsinoe, and said that in earlier times it was called Crocodeilopolis, for the people in this Nome held in very great honour the crocodile. Strabo also said⁽⁷⁶⁾ that the Arsinoite Nome contained the Lake Moeris (Karoun) which we mentioned before,⁽⁷⁷⁾ and also the Labyrinth. Strabo, however, did not say clearly whether the Labyrinth was actually in the city of Arsinoe or not; but it seems that he implied that it was not in the city. Pliny also mentioned^(78a) the Arsinoite Nome and the Arsinoe town. He also mentioned Lake Moeris, on which he said the Labyrinth was constructed, and Crialon town, which Ball^(78b) identified with Arsinoe town mentioned before.

(74) Strabo, 17.1.35.

(75) Strabo, 17.1.38.

(76) Strabo, 17.1.35 and 37.

(77) See p. 56ff.

(78a) Pliny, N.H. v. 61.

(78b) Ball, op.cit. p. 79.

One notices in the above-mentioned accounts about Arsinoe that the Nome Arsinoe was applied both to the Nome and to its metropolis exactly in the same way as the name el-Fayum in the present time is applied equally to the governorate and its metropolis. There are also many examples of this sort both in ancient and modern Egypt alike. One also notices that though the name Arsinoe has replaced that of Crocodilopolis a long time before Diodorus, he still used the latter name, a mere carelessness on his part in my view. As a matter of fact, it was Ptolemy II, surnamed Philadelphus (283-245 B.C.) who replaced the name Crocodilopolis with Arsinoe, which was the name of his wife.⁽⁷⁹⁾ Strabo and Pliny had got it right, when they called the city Arsinoe, and the former carefully observed that it was formerly called Crocodilopolis. The change from Crocodilopolis to Arsinoe, however, did not affect in any way the status of the worship or consecration of the crocodile in this nome. For the people in this nome, Egyptians and Greek settlers alike, continued to worship the crocodile, under its Egyptian title 'Suchos'. This is in fact obvious from Strabo's account and it is also supported by modern authors.⁽⁸⁰⁾

(79) E. Bevan, A History of Egypt, The Ptolemaic Dynasty, p. 116; A Dict. of Egypt. Civil. p. 84, s.v. Faiyum.

(80) A Dict. of Egypt. Civil. loc.cit.

By-passing Memphis, the once great national capital of Egypt and which is situated to the west of the River Nile towards the north-east of Arsinoe, and about which we shall speak in greater detail later in the following chapter, we cross the Nile and come to another ancient town, to (the Egyptian) Babylon. According to Diodorus⁽⁸¹⁾, this settlement was founded by the war captives, brought from Babylonia (in Mesopotamia) by (the legendary) King Sesosis (Sesostris by other classical authors). Diodorus told us that these captives, having been brought to Egypt, revolted from the king, being unable to endure the hardships entailed by his works; and they, seizing a strong position on the banks of the river, maintained a warfare against the Egyptians and ravaged the neighbouring territory, but finally on being granted an amnesty, they established a colony on the spot, which they also named Babylon after their native land. Later Strabo, too, repeated a similar story to that of Diodorus about the origin of Babylon. Strabo's account, however, is rather shorter than Diodorus and it is too concise to be clear. Strabo said⁽⁸²⁾ that sailing up the Nile from Heliopolis one comes to Babylon, a stronghold, where some Babylonians had withdrawn in revolt and then successfully negotiated for permission from the kings to build a settlement.

(81) Diod. I. 56.

(82) Strabo, 17.1.30.

But before we go on giving the rest of Strabo's account concerning Babylon which is, incidentally, a rather important and interesting one, we ought to discuss the validity of the stories of Diodorus and Strabo concerning how (the Egyptian) Babylon came into existence and whether it is true that the Babylon captives founded it and called it after their place of origin. The question here is, from which source or sources Diodorus and Strabo took this story ? One cannot give a definite answer. All one can say is that the similarity between the stories of the two Greek authors suggests that they followed the same authority. It also suggests that they might have heard or learnt this story, one of many current stories in Egypt in the times of Diodorus and Strabo. A modern scholar, Gardiner, summarised his predecessors' views about the matter. Speaking of the etymology of **Βαβυλών** and of the relation of that place to Pi-Hacpy and to Old Cairo (Arabic Mīsr el'Atīqah), he said⁽⁸³⁾ "The etymology P(er)-hapu-l-on the of Hacpty of On (Heliopolis)' first appeared in print in Speigelberg, Randglossen, p. 39 (1904), where Sethe¹³ quoted as the author; he himself repeats and defends it (Urgeschichte, ch. 109 (1930)). It is probable that the Greek comparison with the great city of the Babylonians was due to the assonance presented by an Egyptian place-name, and assuredly

(83) Gardiner, op.cit. p. 143.

no better original has been suggested". The Egyptian Babylon was not only mentioned by Strabo and other classical authors but, as Gardiner showed, it was referred to in the papyri right down to the Byzantine times, when, as Bell has set forth in P. London, IV, p. XVIII, nn. 4. 5, the name was used inter-changeably with (the Arabic) Fostat⁽⁸⁴⁾, (from Latin fossatum), the other designation of Old Cairo. Unlike his predecessor Diodorus, Strabo was not content to tell us about the origin of Babylon only, but he also spoke of Babylon of his own time as an encampment of one of the three (Roman) legions that guard Egypt⁽⁸⁵⁾, and that water was conducted to Babylon from the Nile on a ridge by wheels and screws; and that one hundred and fifty prisoners were engaged in the work. From Babylon, Strabo said, one can clearly see the pyramids (of Giza) on the far (i.e. left) side of the river at Memphis, and they are near to it. Babylon itself in fact, according to Strabo⁽⁸⁶⁾ is near Memphis.

(84) Fostat was founded by 'Amr , the Muslim Arab Commander, when he conquered Egypt (A.D. 641).

(85) One of the other two was stationed in Alexandria.
(see J.G. Milne, A History of Egypt Under Roman Rule, p.171. London, 1924 - while the third was stationed in the Thebaid (see Abdullatif A. Aly, Egypt and the Roman Empire, in the Light of Papyri, Cairo 1960. pp. 44, 45. (Arabic).

(86) Strabo, 17.1.31.

Below Babylon is Heliopolis, the main centre for sun worship, the home of Re, and the renowned seat of learning. Diodorus mentioned the city of Heliopolis in various passages of his work,⁽⁸⁷⁾ but he nowhere gave any full or detailed description of it. He briefly told us⁽⁸⁸⁾ that the ~~(legendary)~~ King Sesosis, in order to fortify Egypt against foreign invasion particularly from the North East, from Syria and Arabia, erected a wall extending through the desert from Pelusium to Heliopolis; this road had a length of some fifteen hundred stades (200 miles). Diodorus also mentioned⁽⁸⁹⁾ that the Bull Mnevis was worshipped in Heliopolis. But Strabo spoke⁽⁹⁰⁾ elaborately of this city. He stated that, "The Heliopolite Nome is situated above (i.e. south of) the Bubastite Nome and that in Heliopolite Nome is Heliopolis which is situated upon a noteworthy mound. From Heliopolis one comes to the Nile above the Delta (that is to the main single channel of the Nile and to the Nile valley). Heliopolis is situated in Arabia (i.e. on the eastern side of the Nile). The city contains the temple of Helios⁽⁹¹⁾ (hence it was called Heliopolis),

(87) Diod. I. 57, 59, 84.

(88) Diod. I. 57.

(89) Diod. I. 84.

(90) Strabo, 17.1.27, 28, 29, 30.

(91) The Egyptian Ré.

and the ox Mnevis, which is kept in a kind of sanctuary and is regarded among the inhabitants as a god, as is Apis in Memphis. In front of the mound are lakes, which receive the overflow from the neighbouring canal". Once more as an eye-witness Strabo observed, as he did when he visited Abydos, that the once important and famous city, the seat of learning and religion, Heliopolis, was by his time, alas, no longer of its former glory and fame, or as Strabo put it, "The city is now entirely deserted; it contains the ancient temple constructed in the Egyptian manner, which affords many evidences of the madness and sacrilege of Cambyses, who partly by fire and partly by iron sought to outrage the temples, mutilating them and burning them on every side, just as he did with obelisks".

In his tour round the city Strabo was shown the remains of the city's past. He was shown the mutilated temples which he described rather minutely and in detail. Among other things he observed, with a critical eye, that although the Egyptian temples were huge and large, they were devoid of artistic beauty, a rather harsh judgement indeed. In this connection he told us after having described the plan for the construction of the Egyptian temples, "there is also a kind of hall with numerous columns (as at Memphis, for example), which is constructed in the barbaric manner; for, except, for the fact that the columns are large and numerous and form many rows, the hall

has nothing pleasing or picturesque, but is rather a display of vain toil ("

ἔστι δὲ τις πολύστυλος οἶκος, καθάπερ ἐν Μέρφει, βαρβαρικὴν ἔχων τὴν κατασκευὴν· πλὴν γὰρ τοῦ μεγάλων εἶναι καὶ πολλῶν καὶ πολυστίχων τῶν ἐτύλων οὐδὲν ἔχει χαιρίεν οὐδὲ γραφικόν, ἀλλὰ ματαιοπονίαν ἐμφαίνει μάλλον."

In Heliopolis Strabo also saw large houses in which the priests lived: for Strabo was told that this place in particular was in ancient times a settlement of priests who studied philosophy and astronomy; but both this organisation and its pursuits have by Strabo's time disappeared. At Heliopolis, in fact, no one was pointed out to Strabo as presiding over such pursuits, apart from those who performed the sacrifices and explained to strangers what pertained to the sacred rites. Strabo remarked sceptically as he often did, that, when Aelius Gallus the prefect, sailed up into Egypt, he was accompanied by a certain man from Alexandria, Chaeromon by name, who pretended to some knowledge of this kind but is generally ridiculed as a boaster and ignoramus ! At Heliopolis, Strabo said, the houses of the priests and schools of Plato and Eudoxus were pointed out to their company. These two Greek scholars went there with the sole purpose to study under the (Heliopolitan) priests, who excelled in their knowledge of the heavenly bodies. Lastly we come to Pliny,

whose reference to Heliopolis is very brief indeed, especially if compared with that of Strabo just cited. Pliny was merely writing a brief survey of the cities and towns of Egypt when he said,⁽⁹²⁾ "There is one place besides (the towns he mentioned) in the interior and bordering on the Arabian (i.e. Eastern) Desert which is of great renown, Heliopolis".

From Heliopolis we come to the cities and towns of the Delta. One of these towns, famous in ancient Egypt as a religious centre, is the town of Bubastis, which is situated in the Bubastite nome, adjacent to Heliopolite Nome described above. Bubastis was the centre for the worship of the cat-headed goddess Bast. In his mythological account of the Egyptian religion Diodorus⁽⁹³⁾ quoted some unidentified historians as saying that on the tomb of the Goddess Isis in the town of Nysa in Arabia was inscribed among other things that the city of Bubastus (*Βουβάστος*)⁽⁹⁴⁾ was built by the same goddess. He also mentioned it elsewhere⁽⁹⁴⁾ in his history. Strabo similarly did not speak very much of Bubastis. He only mentioned⁽⁹⁵⁾ that the city of Bubastis and the Bubastite Nome were near the vertex of the Delta and were situated

(92) Pliny, N.H. v. 61.

(93) Diod. I. 27.

(94) Diod. XVI, 49-51.

(95) Strabo, 17.1.27.

below Memphis. Pomponius Mela mentioned⁽⁹⁶⁾ it among the most celebrated cities of Egypt and Pliny did not mention it at all, although he mentioned^(97a) the Bubastite nome.

Among the celebrated towns of the Delta Naucratis deserves to be included. It is a unique city. For although it is one of three Greek cities in Egypt, namely, in chronological order, Naucratis, Alexandria and Ptolemais, it is unique in the sense that it is the only one of the three to have been founded in Egypt before the Greek or Macedonian era; unique in the sense that it was a city, inhabited mainly by a foreign community of Greek settlers^(97b), who were not invaders, conquerors or rulers; and moreover it was founded with the permission and the blessings of Egypt's national kings.^(98a)

It is to be regretted, however, that the classical writers of our period, who wrote about Naucratis, namely Strabo and Pliny, did not say very much about its history, its people, its cultural or commercial life. This may be due to the lack of interest on the part of the classical writers in Naucratis, whose position has already been taken by Alexandria.

(96) Pomponius Mela, Chorographia, I. ix. 60.

(97a) Pliny, N.H. v. 49.

(97b) E. Bevan, A History of Egypt, The Ptolemaic Dynasty, p.91

(98a) H. Kees, op.cit. P. 206, ff.; E. Drioton & J. Vandier, L'Egypte, p. 583. 4th ed. augmented (Paris, 1962).

(98b) Strabo, 17.1.18.

The city was mentioned by Strabo^(98b) who put the date of its foundation in the reign of Psammetichus. On how it was started Strabo said "in the time of Psammetichus (who lived in the time of Cyaxares the Mede) the Milesians with thirty ships, put in at the Bolbitine mouth (mod. Rosetta Mouth), and then disembarking, fortified with a wall the above-mentioned settlement, but in time they sailed up into the Saitic Nome, defeated the city of Inaros (Ἰναρών Πόλις) in a naval fight, and founded Naucratis, not far above Schedia". Almost four centuries and a half before Strabo, Herodotus said⁽⁹⁹⁾ that King Psammetichus, in his war against other Egyptian princes, was helped by Ionians and Carians, to whom, as a reward, he granted a site called The Camps, situated on the Pelusian mouth, but later they were removed from there to Memphis by King Amasis to be his guard against his own subjects. Herodotus further⁽¹⁰⁰⁾ spoke of Naucratis as having been in old times the only trading port in Egypt and that it was held in honour. Herodotus did not, however, say when the city was founded. A modern scholar, H. Kees⁽¹⁰¹⁾ who studied the matter, stated that Strabo placed the beginnings,

(98b) Strabo, 17.1.18.

(99) Hdt. II. 154.

(100) Hdt. II. 179.

(101) H. Kees, Ancient Egypt, A Cultural Topography, P.207.

though not the foundation of Naucratis in the reign of Psammetichus I (663-609 B.C.) but from the finds on the site, particularly the scarabs, such a date is too early. Kees therefore suggests that the foundation of Naucratis, should be dated somewhere at the beginning of the succeeding century, possibly in the reign of Psammetichus II (594-589 B.C.). Another modern author⁽¹⁰²⁾ seemed to agree with Strabo's date of the foundation of the city, thus he seems to disagree partly with Kees when he says that Naucratis was a commercial settlement founded by the Milesians under Psammetichus I (VIIth Century B.C.) This same author, however, agrees with Kees that Amasis made this city the only place in Egypt where the Greeks could trade freely.

Naucratis was also mentioned by Pliny⁽¹⁰³⁾ among the considerable towns in the Delta. Pliny also said that after Naucratis some people gave the name of Naucratic to the mouth called by the others the Heracleotic.

From what Strabo and Pliny said about Naucratis, we observe that neither of the two mentioned its importance either as a trading post, its position as a Greek city-state within the state of Egypt, or its importance as a remote outpost of the

(102) A Dict. of Egypt. Civil. p.182, s.v. Naucratis. cf. also E. Drington and J. Vandier, op.cit. p.583.

(103) Pliny, N.H. v. 64.

Hellenic culture in a foreign country. This raises the question whether this means that Naucratis was no longer a place of any considerable importance. Was its place as a trading post undermined by the foundation and consequently the growing importance of Alexandria ? It is my feeling that, as I said before in this chapter, Alexandria grew at the expense of Naucratis, as a main Greek settlement, as a trading post for exports and imports, as a principal centre for Greek cultural life. Its position, therefore, by the time of Strabo and Pliny, was certainly not as important as it was before Alexandria was founded. This fact perhaps atones for Naucratis having not received its fair share from Strabo and Pliny.

Modern scholars on the other hand are not fully agreed on the position and importance of Naucratis after the foundation of Alexandria. For while Kees⁽¹⁰⁴⁾ says that "although the Ptolemies, particularly Philadelphus, beautified Naucratis with new buildings such as the Hellenion, the economic importance of that city ended with the founding of Alexandria. This latter city, protected by the rocky island of Pharos, was the first sea-port constructed on the open coast of Egypt. Naucratis thus became superfluous as a harbour for imports and internal traffic descending the Nile came as far as Schedia nearer Alexandria; we

(104) H. Kees, op.cit. p. 210.

find another scholar⁽¹⁰⁵⁾ maintains that "Naucratis lost its importance when Alexandria was founded, although it continued to be an active commercial port. The only coinage known in Egypt was struck in bronze and silver at Naucratis. A third author, E. Bevan⁽¹⁰⁶⁾, summarizing the conclusions of other scholars such as Sir Flinders Petrie and Edgar, and the papyrus-finds, states that "although its commercial importance was reduced with the founding of Alexandria, Naucratis continued in a quiet way its life as a Greek city-state. It continued also as a flourishing port in Ptolemaic times, and it was trading with foreign regions such as Rhodes and others; and it was the chief port of call on inland voyages from Memphis to Alexandria, as well as a stopping place on the land route from Pelusium to the capital".

Leaving Naucratis and proceeding northward we come to Canabus, also spelt Canopus. Canopus was perhaps the most famous or perhaps the most notorious town in ~~Greco~~-Roman Egypt, for the pleasure life which its inhabitants and visitors led. The Canopic life was proverbial in the ancient world. For it was a licentious and merry-making life in the opinion of the classical authors as we shall observe.

(105) A Dict. of Egypt. Civil. p. 182 s.v. . Naucratis.

(106) E. Bevan, op.cit. pp. 90, 91.

Vergil spoke^(107a) of the Macedonian (Pellaea) people of Canopus as a lucky race, who lived by the wide and standing flood waters of Nile and who went the round of their own farmlands in little painted boats. Ovid, too, mentioned^(107b) Canopus, when he in fact meant the city of Alexandria,^(107c) in contrast with the Capitol, which referred to Rome. Indeed Canopus was frequently mentioned by the Roman writers instead of Alexandria, the Ptolemaic Capital of Egypt. The circumstances, in which the word Canopus was used, when Egypt and Rome were on bad terms, indicate in my view, that the purpose of the Roman writers, was political propaganda against Egypt. This is why they used Canopus, with its notorious reputation as far as the classical writers are concerned, to slander Egypt.

Canopus was again used by the very hostile propagandist and the most blistering satirist, Propertius in the place of Alexandria. Propertius spoke of Cleopatra the harlot queen of the incestuous Canopus "incesti meretrix regina Canopi".^(107d) Strabo⁽¹⁰⁸⁾ had more to say about Canopus. He not only described the site of the town but also the life of its people. In this

(107a) Vergil, Georg. VI. 287, 289.

(107b) Ovid, Metam. XV. 628.

(107c) cf. Abdullatif A. Ali, Egypt and the Roman Empire in the Light Of Papyri, p.32 n.5. (Arabic: Cairo 1960).

(107d) Propertius, III. 11.39. (108) Strabo, 17.1.17.

connection he told us that "Canopus is a city situated at a distance of one hundred and twenty stadia (16 R. miles) from Alexandria, if one goes on foot, and was named after Canopus, the pilot of Menelaus, who died there. It contains the temple of Sarapis, which is honoured with great reverence and effects such cures that even the most reputable men believe in it and sleep in it - themselves on their own behalf or others for them. Some writers go on to record the cures, and others the virtues of the oracles there." This is the serious part of the Canopic life as Strabo carefully observed. But he also observed there the other side of the Canopic life for which this town, as we said, was known. I mean here the life of merry-making, licentiousness, and revelry. On this point Strabo added to what he said before "But to balance all this (i.e. the religious and serious life) the crowd of revellers who go down from Alexandria by the canal⁽¹⁰⁹⁾ to the public festivals; for every day and every night is crowded with people on the boats who play the flute and dance without restraint and with extreme licentiousness, both men and women, and also with the people of Canopus itself, who have resorts situated close to the canal and adapted to relaxation and merry-making of this kind".

(109) Schedia canal, which leads from the Canopic mouth to Alexandria.

ἄντι πάντων δ' ἐστὶν δ τῶν πανηγυριστῶν ὄχλος
τῶν ἐκ τῆς Ἀλεξανδρείας κατιόντων τῇ δειώρυγι
πάντα γάρ ἡμέρα καὶ πάντα νύξ πληθύνει τῶν μὲν
ἐν τοῖς πλοιαρίοις καταυλουμένων καὶ κατορχουμένων
ἀνέδῃ μετὰ τῆς ἐσχάτης ἀκοῤασίας, καὶ ἀνδρῶν καὶ
γυναικῶν, τῶν δ' ἐν αὐτῇ τῇ Κανώβῃ καταγωγὰς
ἐχόντων, ἐπικειμένους τῇ δειώρυγι εὐφυνεῖς πρὸς
τὴν τοιαύτην ἀνέειν καὶ εὐωχίαν."

Seneca joined Strabo in telling us about the life of merry-making at Canopus, while overlooking the serious and solemn side of the Canopic life, as Strabo honestly described before. At any rate, Seneca said⁽¹¹⁰⁾ "Therefore, if he (i.e. the wise man) is contemplating withdrawal from the world, he will not select Canopus (although Canopus does not keep any man living simply. At Canopus luxury pampers itself to the utmost degree;)." But nothing could, however, be more insulting to the people of Canopus than the words of the obviously hostile the Roman Lucan (*Pharsalia* viii 538-544) when he described them as effeminate. One cannot help but describe it as nothing but a biased and prejudiced statement. Canopus was also mentioned by

(110) Seneca (Lucius Annaeus), Epist. Moral. Ll. 3.

Pliny⁽¹¹¹⁾, who said that the Canopic mouth of the Nile, one of the seven best known mouths, was called after it; and by Tacitus⁽¹¹²⁾ who stated that Germanicus (the nephew of the Emperor Tiberius) in his itinerary throughout Egypt (A.D. 19), which was disapproved (by the Emperor), sailed up the Nile starting from the town of Canopus - founded by the Spartans in memory of the helmsman so named, who was buried there in the days when Menelaus, homeward bound for Greece, was blown to a distant sea and the Libyan (African) coast.

From Tacitus' statement about Canopus we observe that he did not mention anything at all about the Canopic life. About Tacitus' statement that Canopus was founded by the Spartans, when accompanied by Menela^aus, and that it was called after the helmsman, who was buried there, one is not so sure whether this statement, which was also mentioned by Strabo, has any validity. One also does not know from which source Tacitus acquired his information. Even modern scholars, seem not quite sure about the origin of Canopus. Gardiner for instance, tells us⁽¹¹³⁾ that "Brugsch conjectured that Gnp, mentioned once in connection with the VIIth nome, was a writing of the Greek place-name , Canopus, though the Egyptian equivalent was Pr-gw³ti', found in demotic only; however, this guess is too uncertain to be of great

(111) Pliny, N.H. v. 64.

(112) Tacitus, Annal. II. 60.

(113) Gardiner, op.cit. p. 162.

service.

The life of pleasure and merry-making of Canopus, is further supported by the modern scholar Bevan,⁽¹¹⁴⁾ who quotes Strabo's observations above-mentioned. One could imagine from what the classical authors said about the Canopic life, which, as we said before, was proverbial that it must have seemed to them as the Parisian life of our own era about which we hear quite a lot, though one cannot testify such a statement through lack of personal observations.

On the Mediterranean coast of Egypt there are two towns very important in Egyptian history particularly for their strategic positions. These two towns were known to the classical authors as Paraetionium (mod. Marsa Matrouh) and Pelusium (mod. Tell-el-Farama).

Paraetionium is situated on the western section of the northern coast of Egypt and Pelusium on the east, more precisely on the north eastern corner of the triangular island known as the Delta.

The town of Paraetionium was mentioned by several classical authors; by the Latin poet Ovid⁽¹¹⁵⁾; by Diodorus⁽¹¹⁶⁾,

(114) E. Bevan, op.cit. p. 97.

(115) Ovid, Metam. IX. 773.

(116) Diod. I. 31.

by Strabo,⁽¹¹⁷⁾ who described the northern coast between Catabathmos (mod. El-Salloum) on the west to Alexandria on the east. In between is situated Paraetonium, the distance from which to Catabathmos, according to Strabo, if one sails in a straight course, is nine hundred stadia (120 R. miles or 167 kilometres), and that from which to Alexandria is about thirteen hundred stadia (C.173 R. miles or 241 kilometres). In Ball's opinion^{(118)a} these distances are shorter than the truth by some fifteen per cent, and six per cent, respectively, the shortest actual distance by sea from Sallum (Catabathmos) to Marsa Matrouh (Paraetonium) being about 203 kilometres or 1,094 stadia, and that from Marsa Matrouh to Alexandria (by a series of straight courses from Ras Alam el-Rum to Ras el-Hikma, thence to Ras el-Daba'a, and thence straight across the Arab Gulf to Alexandria) about 257 kilometres or 1,387 stadia.

About Paraetonium itself Strabo told us that "it is a city and large harbour of about forty stadia (slightly over 5 miles in circuit). Some call the city of Paraetonium, but others Ammonia".^{(118)b} Paraetonium was also mentioned by Pliny.^{(119)a}

(117) Strabo, 17.1.14.

(118a) J. Ball, Egypt in the Classical Geographers, p.67.

(118b) It might have received that name from the fact that it was one starting points for journeys leading to Siwa Oasis where the famous oracle of Ammon was situated. See n.119 b. infra.

(119a) Pliny, N.H. v. 39.

Thus the classical authors in general overlooked the importance of Paraetionium as defence line against intruders who either came by land from the west or by sea from the Mediterranean. Instead, several of the classical authors mentioned Pharos and Alexandria as defending Egypt against enemies from the sea.

Paraetionium was one starting point for journeys to the Siwah Oasis, Ammon Zues, as Strabo himself rightly indicated^(119b). It may well have been a Greek city.^(119c)

Pelusium, on the other hand, received the lion's share from the classical authors. Its position, geographical features, its relation with the Nile and its strategic importance for the defence of Egypt were all discussed in one way or the other and here and there by some of the classical writers. Pelusium has always been the fortress, which defended Egypt against its invaders from the East. If it resists the enemy, then Egypt is safe, and if it falls, then Egypt is in danger. Thus the author of 'De Bello Alexandrino' indicated its strategical position as a defence line on the Mediterranean where he informed us that 'Pharos and Pelusium are regarded as the keys, as it were, to the defence of the whole of Egypt, Pelusium guarding the overland

(119b) Strabo, 17.1.43.

(119c) Jones, Cities of The Eastern Roman Empire, p. 307; cf. also Restovtzeff, Social and Economic History of the Hellenistic World, Vol. I, p. 265.

approach (from the East), as Pharos defends the seaward one.⁽¹²⁰⁾ Another Latin author, Quintus Curtius (Rufus) stated⁽¹²¹⁾ that 'Amyntas, a Greek general, deserted from Alexander to the Persians - departed to Egypt, having captured Pelusium (Tell el-Farama), he moved his forces on to Memphis'. The same author also said⁽¹²²⁾ that 'Alexander entered Egypt also from Pelusium, then marched on to Memphis'. So we see that every foe, who tries to invade Egypt from the east, is bound to enter it from Pelusium. It is for this reason, however, that the rulers of Egypt, nationals or aliens, have always fortified this region and have stationed strong garrisons there to defend it. A modern scholar, H. Kees, supports this view when he says⁽¹²³⁾ that 'under the Ptolemies the eastern frontier was still a scene of unrest. Then, however, Paraetionium (Marsa Matruh) in the west and Pelusium in the east were the corner stones of the country's defence - the Romans graphically called them cornua. At these points Greek commanders kept watch over the frontiers'. Pelusium was also mentioned by Diodorus, who, as we said before⁽¹²⁴⁾ spoke⁽¹²⁵⁾ of the legendary King Sesosis and his achievements

(120) (Julius Caesar) de Bell. Alex. 26.

(121) Quintus Curtius (Rufus), History of Alexander, iv. 1. 30.

(122) Quintus Curtius (Rufus), op.cit. iv. vii. 3,4.

(123) H. Kees, Ancient Egypt, A Cultural Topography, pp. 205,206.

(124) See p. 195

(125) Diod. I. 57.

including the wall, which he erected from Memphis to Pelusium. In another place Diodorus spoke of Pelusium and its neighbourhood in greater detail. He joined both the author of the book entitled 'De Bello Alexandrino' and Quintus Curtius (Rufus) in pointing out the strategic position of Pelusium its importance as the front line for defence of Egypt, and the difficulty of approaching Egypt from that part of the country. He informed us⁽¹²⁶⁾ of how "Ochus the King of the Persians in his march to invade Egypt came across the marshes known as the Barathra or Pits which Diodorus described elaborately in his First Book (I. 30), and to which we referred earlier in this thesis. While crossing these marshy pits the King lost a portion of his army. Having passed through the Barathra with his army the King came to Pelusium, which is a city at the first mouth (i.e. from the east, known as the Pelusiatic mouth) at which the Nile debouches into the sea. Diodorus, then, went on to describe how the Persians encamped a short distance from Pelusium, while the Greeks then the allies of the Egyptians, encamped close to the town itself, while the Egyptians in the meantime were busy fortifying Pelusium during the truce allowed by the Persians". In this connection Diodorus said that "the Egyptians had already fortified well all the mouths of

(126) Diod. XVI. 46.

the Nile, particularly the one near Pelusium because it was the first and the most advantageously situated". Pelusium and its surroundings were also described by Strabo⁽¹²⁷⁾ who, like Diodorus before him, mentioned the fact that the region of Pelusium had marshes, known as Barathra or Pits and muddy ponds and that from that direction Egypt is difficult to enter. Pelusium, according to Strabo, occupies a site on the Pelusiatic mouth, and it is situated at the extremity of Arabia, a name given to the country between the Nile and the Red Sea, and it is also situated on the northern end of the isthmus between the Mediterranean and the Gulf of Heroonopolis (i.e. Gulf of Suez). It was also a terminus of a land route between the Red Sea and the Gulf of Suez.

The settlement of Pelusium, Strabo added, lies at a distance of more than twenty stadia (slightly over $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles) from the sea, and it has its name from the $\pi\eta\lambda\epsilon\varsigma$ (i.e. mud) and the muddy ponds. The etymological name of Pelusium, as given by Strabo, sounds very plausible, but could it not be that it came as a result of the similarity of sound between it and the Egyptian word Pi-Racmesse⁽¹²⁸⁾ (the water of Remesses) which was the name of the mouth of the Nile adjacent to Pelusium, rather

(127) Strabo, 17.1.17.

(128) Gardiner, Onomastica, Vol. II. p. 168 ff.

than it came from the Greek *πηλός* as Strabo stated ? Pelusium was also mentioned by Pliny⁽¹²⁹⁾ who said that it was one of the several towns in the Delta which gave its name to the easternmost mouth of the Nile, the Pelusiatic mouth⁽¹³⁰⁾ which separated the lower part of Egypt or the Delta from Arabia Petraea⁽¹³¹⁾.

Besides the cities, towns and important villages above mentioned there are several others worthy of consideration which are also mentioned by some of the classical authors. Among these we find Catabathmus⁽¹³²⁾ (mod. el-Saltum) which gained its reputation from being Egypt's westernmost town on the Mediterranean coast and as marking the frontier of Egypt with Cyrenaica; Sais⁽¹³³⁾ (Sa el-Hagar), which Strabo quite correctly referred to as the metropolis of the lower country (the Delta and its surroundings) (*ἡ Σαῖς, μητρόπολις τῆς κάτω χώρας*). For it was the capital city of King Psammetichus I (663-609), who expelled the Assyrians and founded the XXVIth Dynasty which ruled Egypt from Sais between 663-523 B.C.⁽¹³⁴⁾ Indeed, Strabo quite correctly said that Psammetichus' tomb (like the rest of the tombs of the kings of that dynasty), was to be found in the temple of Athena,⁽¹³⁵⁾

(129) Pliny, N.H. v. 68.

(130) Pliny, N.H. v. 64.

(131) Pliny, N.H. v. 48.

(132) Sallust, Jugurtha, xix. 3; Strabo, 17.i.14; Pliny, N.H. v. 32, 39.

(133) Diod. I. 28; Strabo, 17.i.18; Pliny, N.H. v. 64.

(134) E. Drioton and J. Vandier, L'Egypte, p. 574 ff. 4th ed. 1962;
A Dict. of Egypt. Civil. p. 24 g.s.v. Saite Period.

(135) A Dict of Egypt. Civil. loc.cit.

the Greek equivalent to the Egyptian Goddess Neith which, according to Strabo, was worshipped in Sais⁽¹³⁶⁾. Pliny, too, mentioned^(137a) Sais among the towns of the Delta and Pomponius Mela^(137b) considered it among the most celebrated towns of Egypt and he said it was situated at a distance from the sea (i.e. The Mediterranean).

In the middle of the Delta also is situated Busiris, (now Abu Sir Bana) the home of Osiris, most potent of all the gods.⁽¹³⁸⁾ Diodorus in his account about the origin of the worship or consecration of the Apis Bull gave the following reason for this worship : "some say that when Osiris died at the hands of Typhon (the Egyptian Seth) Isis collected the members of his body and put them in an ox (Bous), made of wood covered over with fine linen and because of this the city was called Bousiris (*Βουσῖρις*)".⁽¹³⁹⁾ This is surely a fabulous story, as it might have been one of many stories circulating around in ancient Egypt. For how could the Egyptians use the Greek word Bous to call their god, even if the story of the encasement of the body of Osiris had^{involved} been in an ox-hide. Therefore one must look for some other explanation for the origin of the appellation¹⁴².

(136) A Dict. of Egypt. Civil. loc.cit. J. Manchip^{White} op.cit. p.32.

(137a) Pliny, N.H. v. 64. (137b) Pomponius Mela, op.cit. I. ix. 60.

(138) J.M. White, op.cit. p.32.

(139) Diod. I. 85.

As a matter of fact the town was the home of Osiris, as we said before. It is not therefore entirely untrue that the place had received its name from its association with the cult of Osiris. It is here that we discover, as in many similar cases, that the Greek Βουβλίπυς is almost certainly taken from the Egyptian Pr-wsîr-nb Ddw, 'the House of Osiris, lord of Djedu', which is shortened to Pr-wsîr, 'House of Osiris' a name also survived in Assyrian Pusîru, in Coptic Boyclpt, where the Arabic equivalent is given as أبو صير أبو صير 'Būṣîr' or Abusir.⁽¹⁴⁰⁾ Strabo also mentioned the city of Busiris and the Busirite Nome. He related a little story in connection with the name Busiris. In this story Strabo⁽¹⁴¹⁾ said that 'according to Eratosthenes, the expulsion of foreigners is common to all barbarians, and yet the Egyptians are condemned for this fault because of the myths which have been circulated about Busiris in connection with the Busirite Nome, since the later writers wish falsely to malign the inhospitality of this place, although by heavens, no king or tyrant named Busiris ever existed; and, Eratosthenes says, the Poet's (Homer) words are also constantly cited - "to go to Egypt, long and painful journey" - the want of harbours contributing very much to this opinion, and also the fact that even the harbour which Egypt did have, the one at Pharos, gave no access, but was guarded by

(140) cf. Gardiner, Onomastica, Vol II. pp. 176, 177.

(141) Strabo, 17.1.19.

shepherds who were pirates and who attacked those who tried to bring ships to anchor there'. Here we see another current fabulous story about Busiris, which malignantly and falsely stamped ^{him} as inhospitable to foreigners. It is interesting to notice that Diodorus recorded ⁽¹⁴²⁾ a similar story concerning Osiris' treacherous murder by his brother Seth, the Greek Typhon, and how the latter was depicted red in colour. For the reason red oxen as well as red men, because of their resemblance to Typhon, were sacrificed, as they say, in ancient times by the kings at the tomb of Osiris; however, Diodorus added, only a few Egyptians are now (by his time) found red in colour (i.e. Red skinned), but the majority of such are non-Egyptians, and this is why the story spread among the Greeks of the slaying of foreigners by Busiris, although Busiris was not the name of the king but of the tomb of Osiris, which is called that in the language of the land (Pr-w~~sir~~, that is 'House of Osiris'). We can see, therefore, that although the two versions of the two authors about the Busirite myth are different from each other, they convey the same idea. Pliny also mentioned ⁽¹⁴³⁾ Busiris among the considerable towns of Lower Egypt.

(142) Diod. I. 88.

(143) Pliny, N.H. v. 64.

In the central Delta is also situated Mendes, (Tell-el-Rub') the centre for the worship of the ram-headed god Khnum. It was mentioned by Diodorus⁽¹⁴⁴⁾ as a place where the goat was held in honour; ~~by~~ Strabo⁽¹⁴⁵⁾ who said that at Mendes they worshipped Pan and, among animals, a he-goat and, as Pindar says⁽¹⁴⁶⁾ the he goats have intercourse with women there⁽¹⁴⁷⁾. "Mendes, along the crag of the sea, farthestmost horn of the Nile, where the goat-mounting he-goats, have intercourse with women". Mendes was also mentioned by Pliny⁽¹⁴⁸⁾ among the towns of the Delta that gave their names to the mouths of the Nile.

The two classical authors of our period, Diodorus and Strabo, together with their predecessors Herodotus and to a certain extent Pindar, agreed that Mendes was the place for the worship or consecration of the he-goat. Strabo, moreover, stated clearly that in Mendes they worshipped Pan. And as we know the Greeks implicitly identify Pan with the Egyptian god of fertility, Min, the patron of Ekhmin and Coptos (Qift).⁽¹⁴⁹⁾ This is also

(144) Diod. I. 84.

(145) Strabo, 17.1.19.

(146) Frag. 201 (215), Schroeder.

(147) See Hdt (11. 46), who also says that "In the Egyptian language both the he-goat and Pan are called 'Mendes'."

(148) Pliny, loc.cit.

(149) Diod. I. 18.

supported by modern scholars⁽¹⁵⁰⁾. On the other hand modern scholars⁽¹⁵¹⁾ tell us that in Mendes, Khnum, the ram-headed god was worshipped. How then can we reconcile these divergent and the almost contradictory statements ? Does the fact that Min (Pan) and Khnum were the gods of fertility and life-giving, have anything to do with this confusion in which the classical authors have fallen ? Indeed, Diodorus⁽¹⁵²⁾ in his account on the Egyptian religion, concerning which we shall have something to say later, pointed ~~to~~ the existence of such confusion.

On the eastern side of the Delta, near Lake Menzallah, is situated Tanis (San el-Hagar). I must confess here that when I was studying ~~the~~ ancient Egyptian history at school many of us who were then pupils had almost always confused Tanis with Sais, or rather their modern Arabic names San el-Hagar and Sa el-Hagar respectively.

Though Tanis was not mentioned at all by Diodorus it seems to have been a very important town in Greco-Roman Egypt⁽¹⁵³⁾. For Strabo⁽¹⁵⁴⁾ not only mentioned that Tanitic mouth, which some

(150) A Dict. of Egypt. Civil. p. 170 s.v. Min.

(151) J.M. White, op.cit. p. 32.

(152) Diod. I. 25.

(153) cf. A Dict. of Egypt. Civil. p. 279. s.v. Tanis.

(154) Strabo, 17.1.20.

called Saitic, and the Tanitic Nome, but he also described Tanis, as a large city in the nome (to which it gave its name). Pliny also mentioned⁽¹⁵⁵⁾ Tanis among the considerable towns in the region of the lower parts of the Nile (i.e. Lower Egypt), which gave their names to the seven best known mouths of the Nile.

(155) Pliny, N.H. v. 64.

CHAPTER VIII

THE THREE FAMOUS CAPITALS OF EGYPT

THE MAIN CITIES

In the previous pages we have surveyed the vast majority of the most important towns of ancient Egypt as they were conveyed to us by the classical authors of our period. We have, however, left out purposely three major cities, of which we are going to speak in great detail. These three cities, in chronological order, are Memphis, Thebes and Alexandria.

Why do we single these three cities out of all the others ? First of all, these three were considered by the classical authors to be the most important cities in ancient Egypt. For this reason Diodorus and Strabo described them at a greater length. Pliny also had a lot to say about Alexandria. Modern scholars also cannot disagree with the classical authors concerning the great importance attached to these three cities, for one reason at least that each was once the capital of Egypt. Another thing to be stressed here is that in the Greco-Roman era we have a very interesting picture of the three cities. As we look at the conditions of the three towns in that era, we see Thebes in ruins, Memphis was no longer the capital of Egypt, as

Alexandria had already taken over such an honour; instead we find that Memphis was the second city in Egypt after Alexandria; and that Alexandria was perhaps the largest city of the world at that time. A third fact is that the three cities are situated quite apart from each other, in three different positions in the country; Thebes is situated in Upper Egypt, Memphis between Upper and Lower Egypt, and Alexandria on the coast of Lower Egypt. In the following pages we are going to speak of the three cities at length and in chronological order, that is in their historical roles as capitals of Egypt.

Memphis (Meit Reheina).

Not far away from Cairo, the present capital of Egypt or the U.A.R., but on the opposite bank of the Nile, and not far from the apex of the Delta, but very close to the great Pyramids of Giza, is Memphis, the ancient capital of Egypt, after the two kingdoms of Egypt, Upper and Lower Egypt, had been united by Mena. Under the Greco-Roman rule Memphis continued to be the spiritual capital of that country, despite the fact that Alexandria became the actual capital city.

Memphis, moreover, was not only a capital but, like other important towns, also had a nome (Memphite Nome) named after it of which it was a metropolis. The facts concerning

Memphis as having been once the capital of Egypt, its fame, its position as one of the most considerable cities of Egypt, were emphasized by almost all the classical authors who mentioned the city.

As a symbol of its importance, Memphis was referred to by some classical authors, particularly by Roman authors, when they in fact meant the whole country of Egypt⁽¹⁾. Horace, for instance, spoke⁽²⁾ of Memphis as a place without snow, when he meant the whole of Egypt. This is clear from Horace's statement, for he mentioned Memphis together with Cyprus, which is a country and not a town. Another example is that of the Roman author Lucan, whose blistering satire is a clear testimony of the Roman's biased attitude towards Egypt and the Egyptians. Lucan spoke⁽³⁾ of Memphis the idolatrous, because the Egyptians worshipped the Bull Apis, and of Memphis the barbarous, because of Pompey's murder there. In both cases Lucan meant Egypt when he mentioned Memphis.

On the statement that Memphis had been in the old days the capital of ancient Egypt and its paramount fortress, one

(1) cf. Abdullatif A. Ali, op.cit. p.34. n.2.

(2) Horace, Odes, III. xxvi. 9 - 10.

(3) M. Annaeus Lucanus (Lucan), Civil War VIII, 477-479 & 538-544.

observes from the various accounts of the classical authors on this subject that the city was not of such great importance in Greco-Roman era as it was in the Pharaonic times. Thus in his lengthy but very interesting account, which is coincidentally a mixture of myths and facts, Diodorus said⁽⁴⁾ that "Memphis was founded by King Uchoreus, the eighth descendant of King Osymandyas (User-ma-Ra, that is Ramesses, II). It was the most renowned city of Egypt. For Uchoreus, chose the most favourable spot in all the land, where the Nile divides into branches to form the "Delta", ... and the result was that the city, excellently situated as it was at the gates of the Delta, continually controlled the commerce passing into Upper Egypt. Now he gave the city a circumference of one hundred and fifty stadia (20 R. miles) and made it remarkably strong and he adapted it to its purpose by constructing embankments to the south of the city to serve against the swelling of the Nile and also as a citadel against the attacks of enemies by land; and all around the other sides he dug a large and deep lake, which by taking up the force of the river and occupying all the space about the city except where the said embankment had been thrown up, gave it remarkable strength. And so happily did the founder of the city reckon upon the suitability of the site that practically all subsequent kings

(4) Diod. I. 50.

left Thebes and established both their palaces and official residence here. Consequently from this time Thebes began to wane and Memphis to increase, until the time of Alexander (the Great) the King; for after he had founded the city on the sea which bears his name (i.e. Alexandria) all the kings of Egypt after him concentrated their interest on the development of it."

On the monuments of the city Diodorus did not say much. He told us ⁽⁵⁾ that "King Uchoreus besides his aforementioned works, erected a palace, which, while not inferior to those of other nations, yet was no match for the grandeur of design and love of the beautiful shown by the kings who preceded him". Diodorus also added that "King Moeris, who succeeded to the throne of Egypt twelve generations after Uchoreus, the founder of Memphis, built the north propylae in there".

On the name of Memphis Diodorus informed us that "it was named, according to some, after the daughter of the king who founded it . They tell the story that she was loved by the River Nile, who had assumed the form of a bull, and gave birth to Aegyptos, a man famous among the people of Egypt for his virtue, from whom the entire land received its name (i.e. Egypt)"

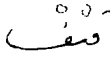
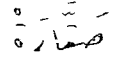
(5) Diod. I. 51.

In this account of Diodorus there are a few things worthy to be pointed out. First of all we observe that Diodorus concentrated his description mostly on Memphis of the Pharaohs and that he paid very little attention indeed to the state of affairs of the city in his own time. We also notice that he committed some gross historical errors, especially when he spoke of Memphis as flourishing at the expense of Thebes. For it is a well known fact that the glorious days of Thebes were to come many centuries after the existence of Memphis. Thus a modern scholar commenting on this point tell us⁽⁶⁾ that "in common with all the Greek writers, Diodorus knew nothing about the chronological development of Egyptian history. The great period of Thebes was to come with the Eighteenth Dynasty, after 1600 B.C., many centuries subsequent to the founding of Memphis".

About the mythological story related by Diodorus concerning the origin of the name of the city, we do not know the source from which Diodorus derived his information. This story might have sounded credible and plausible to his Greek readers, but to modern scholars it is not so. The modern scholar Gardiner tells us⁽⁷⁾ in this respect that 'Mnf', 'Memphis', a strange and

(6) C.H. Oldfather, Diodorus Library of Hist., Ed. (L.C.L). Vol. I, p. 179 n.1.

(7) Gardiner, Ancient Egyptian Onomastica. Vol. II. pp. 122, 123.

unique perversion of the normal writing mn-nfr doubtless reflecting the contemporary pronunciation, and combining with it some recollection of the rarer alternative Inbw' (the Walls) and of the name of the nome 'Inb-hd', 'The White Wall', the first of Lower Egypt, that of which Memphis was the capital". Gardiner in his excellent analysis cited the various forms which the name 'Memphis' has taken, in Assyrian, Coptic, Arabic,  Menf and the Greek Memphis. He then goes on to say that "The name Mn-nfr is derived from that of the pyramid of Piops I and of the town which that VIth Dynasty King built around it; these were called Ppy-mn-nfr 'Phlops is firm (by established) and well', and stood on the desert ridge opposite the modern village of  Sakkarah, some 2.5 to 3 km. due west of Mit Rahinah where the temple of Ptah and other great temples were situated. The name Memphis as applied to the great city centring around Mit Rahinah occurs perhaps no earlier than Dynasty XVIII; and it may have been not long before that date that the built-up area crept out to the site of Phlops I's pyramid". Another modern scholar, H. Kees, stated that "the city of Memphis was laid out at the start of Dynasty I^(7b)" and that 'it was the capital of the Old Kingdom'.^(7c)

(7b) H. Kees, op.cit. p. 24.

(7c) H. Kees, op.cit. p. 27.

Besides Diodorus many others mentioned but rather briefly the importance of Memphis as the past Pharaonic capital of Egypt, and also its position as a fortress for the defence of the country of which it was the capital city and its strategical position in peace and war. This was stressed by Diodorus himself when he said⁽⁸⁾ that "Memphis was the most strategically situated of the Egyptian cities", and Quintus Curtius (Rufus) implicitly referred⁽⁹⁾ to its strategical position, as he mentioned that as soon as Alexander and Egypt's other invaders captured Pelusium, the key town on the north-eastern corner of Egypt, they marched straight way towards Memphis. Again other Latin authors such as Pliny apparently also referring to the Pharaonic Memphis said⁽¹⁰⁾ that "Memphis, the former citadel of the king of Egypt". "Memphis, quondam arx Aegypti regum". Tacitus stated⁽¹¹⁾ that "Memphis, once a famous city and the bulwark of the Egyptian cities", "Memphim ..., inclutam olim et veteris Aegypti columnen". Pomponius Mela⁽¹²⁾ was only content to

(8) Diod. XV. 43.

(9) Quintus Curtius (Rufus), Hist of Alexander, IV. i. 30.

(10) Pliny, N.H. v. 50. (11) Tacitus, Hist. iv. 84.

(12) Pomponius Mela, Chorographia, I. ix. 60.

count Memphis among the most remarkable towns of Egypt.

The statement that Memphis was the fortress or citadel of Egypt and that it was fortified and well protected was doubted by some modern scholars. In this respect Kees told us⁽¹³⁾ that "In spite of its walls Memphis was never a real fortress. In all the many wars the Egyptians waged with the Ethiopians, Assyrians and Persians up to the arrival of Alexander, this important key-point almost invariably fell into the hands of the conquerors without any great resistance or long siege. The sole exception is the successful defence by the Persian garrison of the quarter containing the fortress during the rebellion of Inaros, as recorded by Thucydides (I. 104). The defence of the extensive suburbs of the city was clearly a problem beyond the capacity of the Egyptians".

It is in Strabo's account⁽¹⁴⁾ that we have the first-hand description of the Hellenistic Memphis. Unlike his predecessor Diodorus, Strabo's account is a factual survey of the city of his own era, a result of his personal observation, and is not therefore wrapped in mythology. Strabo's account of Memphis moreover has the advantage over that of Diodorus in that

(13) H. Kees, op.cit. p. 180.

(14) Strabo, 17.1.31, 32.

it is based on his personal observations and enquiry. Strabo spoke of Memphis as the royal residence of the Egyptians and described it as both a large and populous city, ranking second after Alexandria, and consisting of mixed races of people, like those who had settled together at Alexandria. He also seemed to corroborate Diodorus' statement before him, when he mentioned that there were lakes situated in front of the city and the palaces, which latter, though by his time in ruins and deserted, were situated on a height and extended down to the ground of the city below; and adjoining the city were a grove and a lake.

Thus Strabo stated (14a) :

ἡ Μέμφις αὕτη, τὸ βασιλεῖον τῶν
Αἰγυπτίων -- πόλις δ' ἐστὶ μεγάλη τε καὶ
εὐανδρος, δευτέρα μετὰ Ἀλεξάνδρειαν,
μυῖαδων ἀνδρῶν, καθάπερ καὶ τῶν ἐκεῖ
συνωκισμένων πρόκεινται δὲ καὶ λίμναι τῆς
πόλεως καὶ τῶν βασιλείων, αἵ νῦν μὲν
κατέσπασται καὶ ἐστὶν ἔργμα, ἵδρυται δ' ἐφ'
ὕψους καθήκοντα μέχρι τοῦ κάτω τῆς πόλεως
ἑτάφους· συνάπτει δ' ἄλλος αὐτῷ καὶ
λίμνη.

(14a) Strabo, 17.1.31.8.

On the important features of Memphis Strabo informed us that "It contains temples, one of which is that of Apis, who is the same as Osiris; it is here that the bull Apis is kept in a kind of sanctuary, being regarded as a god. In front of the sanctuary is situated a court, in which there is another sanctuary belonging to the bull's mother. "In Memphis", Strabo added, "there is not only the temple of Apis, which lies near the Hephaestium, but also the Hephaestium⁽¹⁵⁾ itself, which is a costly structure both in the size of its naos and in all other respects. In front, in the dromus, stands also a colossus made of one stone; and it is the custom to hold bull fights in the dromus, and certain men breed these bulls for the purpose, like horse-breeders; for the bulls set loose and join in combat, and the one that is regarded as victor gets a prize. And at Memphis there is also a temple of Aphrodite⁽¹⁶⁾ who is considered to be a Greek goddess, though some say that it is a temple of Selene (the Goddess of the Moon). There is also a

(15) The Temple of Hephaestus, a name given by the Greeks to Ptah.

(16) cf. also Hdt. II. 112, who refers to the temple of foreign Aphrodite at Memphis and identifies her with Helen; but Rawlinson (Hdt. Vol. II, p. 157, n.9) and Bevan (op.cit. pp. 108, 109) very plausibly identify her with Astrate the Phoenician and Syrian Aphrodite. Bevan (loc.cit) moreover, added that by the Ptolemaic era Astrate had almost ceased to be foreign, since many centuries before the Egyptians had adopted her, identifying her with Sekhmet, the daughter of Ptah.

Serapeum⁽¹⁷⁾ at Memphis, in a place so very sandy that dunes of sand are heaped up by the winds; and by these some of the sphinxes which Strabo saw were buried even to the head and others were only half visible !". Strabo also described⁽¹⁸⁾ elaborately the Great Pyramids of Giza which were not far away from Memphis on a mountain brow. Strabo told us that three of these pyramids are noteworthy; and two of these he considered among the seven wonders of the world, of which we do not know the rest.

We notice, then, that Strabo's account of Memphis is very informative and much more reliable than that of Diodorus. The two accounts at any rate are basically different, since they describe Memphis in two different periods.

Strabo's statement that Memphis by his time had many races living within it is very true. This is not a new thing to Memphis the capital of the country. In fact, it became a cosmopolitan city with the growth of the Empire.⁽¹⁹⁾ The oldest historical example of a whole settlement of prisoners-of-war named after their origin seems to have been the 'Field of the Hittites', established in the reign of Ay (of the eighteenth

(17) The temple of Serapis or Sarapis.

(18) Strabo, 17.1.33.

(19) H. Kees, op.cit. p. 179.

Dynasty) and therefore long before the great wars against the Hittites waged by the Rameside kings.⁽²⁰⁾ Even before the crossing of Alexander, there were bodies of Greeks and Carians mercenaries or the descendants of mercenaries - settled in Memphis under the Egyptian kings.⁽²¹⁾ They were called Hellomemphitae and Caromenphitae, and had probably inter-married with the Egyptians.⁽²²⁾ Indeed, Livy stated⁽²³⁾ that the Macedonians, following the conquests of Egypt and other countries, scattered throughout these countries had degenerated into Egyptians and other races.

The cosmopolitan nature of Memphis both before and during the time of Strabo is, therefore, supported by both the classical writers⁽²⁴⁾ as well as by modern scholars⁽²⁵⁾. It is further supported by the Ptolemaic papyri; which, besides the

(20) Ibid.

(21) Cf. E. Bevan, op.cit. pp.108, 109; H. Kees, op.cit. p.179.

(22) Bevan, loc.cit.

(23) Livy, XXXVIII. 17.

(24) Diodorus (I. 67) says that "When Amasis succeeded to the throne of Egypt, he removed the carians and Ionian mercenaries from the camps lying near the Pelusiatic mouth where they had been settled before moving to Memphis". Also Strabo, 17.1.32.

(25) Bevan, loc.cit; Kees, loc.cit; M. Rostovtzeff, Social and Economic History of the Hellenistic World, Vol. I, p. 264 (Oxford, 1941).

Greek and Carian quarter (for the foreign communities of Memphis were apparently locally separate in quarters of their own) have shown us a Syro-Persian and Phoenician-Egyptian quarters; and an inscription of the 2nd century B.C. shows us a politeuma of Idumaeen policeman at Memphis, which meets to pass resolutions in "the Upper temple of Apollo".⁽²⁶⁾ It was also supported by the presence at Memphis of foreign deities and cults in the city⁽²⁷⁾ to which the classical authors Herodotus⁽²⁸⁾ and Strabo⁽²⁹⁾ referred and which was supported by modern scholars.⁽³⁰⁾

To sum up what the classical authors said about Memphis we find that the city was founded in a strategic position, midway between Upper and Lower Egypt, to be the capital of the country and a very important commercial centre controlling the trade passing between the two halves of the country. Memphis, however, ceased to be the capital of the country after Alexander had conquered Egypt, but it continued to be the national capital

(26) Bevan, loc.cit.

(27) See n. 16 supra.

(28) Hdt. II. 112.

(29) Strabo, 17.1.31.

(30) Bevan, loc.cit; Kees, loc.cit; Rawlinson, loc.cit;

of the Egyptians, where Alexander was welcomed as a victor and crowned as a Pharaoh. Even the late Ptolemies were obliged, so to speak, to be crowned as Pharaohs at Memphis. The city had to accept a second position after Alexandria in the Greco-Roman period. It was also second in size and in population. It had a large population of mixed races, who brought with them the cults of their national deities.

Thebes (Luxor)

Once more we are faced with a historical discrepancy between the description of Thebes by Diodorus and that by Strabo. Before we come to the classical authors' statement we ought to introduce a few remarks.

In speaking of Thebes, we must distinguish between Thebes and Thebaid. The former term applies to the city of Thebes itself and its urban stretch, and the latter to a wider region, in other words to a larger geographical and administrative division. According to the definition of Pliny⁽³¹⁾, the Thebaid covered the area extending from the border of Egypt with Ethiopia (Nubia) to Lycopolis (the city of wolves, modern Aslout), in other words it covered the region which is known at

(31) Pliny, N.H. v. 49.

the present time as Upper Egypt and part of Middle Egypt. It was divided like the rest of Egypt, in Pliny's time, into prefectures for towns (Præfecturae oppidorum) called 'nomes' (from the Greek *Νομός*) - the Ombite, Apollonopolite, Hermonthite, Thinite, Phaturite, Coptite, Tentyrite, Diospolite, Antaeopolite, Aphoroditopolite and Lycopolite nomes. We have already also mentioned the widespread notion that the Thebaid was the oldest part of Egypt and that Egypt was once confined to this part. This theory was held, as we saw, by Diodorus⁽³²⁾ and Aristotle⁽³³⁾ before him. It seems also to have been held in the middle of the fifth century B.C. by Herodotus⁽³⁴⁾ who was told by the Egyptian authorities that before the reign of Menes, the first king of Dynasty I, the whole of Upper Egypt was a marsh with the exception of the Theban nome, that is the region which was termed as the Thebaid by the classical authors, and which have already been mentioned. In the opinion of Kees,⁽³⁵⁾ this story is probably unfounded and was invented to enhance the fame of the unifier of the two kingdoms, but it may contain an echo of a popular tradition that the decisive step for the regulation of the flood-water of the Nile was taken in Upper Egypt. For

(32) Diod. I. 22.

(33) Aristotle, Meteor, I. xiv. 351b.

(34) Hdt. II. 4.

(35) H. Kees, op.cit. p.24.

Herodotus subsequently talks⁽³⁶⁾ about the construction of dykes south of Memphis at the time when this city was laid out at the start of Dynasty I, suggesting that it was the problem of life and death for Egypt which was then being dealt with. In their excellent commentary on Herodotus, How and Wells tell us⁽³⁷⁾ that 'the legend is exaggerated; but it contained the truth that Lower Egypt remained a land of swamps far later than Upper Egypt'. It is therefore logical to go with the classical authors on that Upper Egypt is the oldest part of the country, or at least it dried up and was inhabited before the rest of the country.

Having mentioned briefly what the classical authors said about the Thebaid, we move on to Thebes, which is in fact our main concern here, for we are tackling the subject of the cities and towns of ancient Egypt.

The city of Thebes (mod. Luxor) is situated in the uppermost part of Egypt occupying a site on both sides of the Nile, but the main part is on the eastern side of the river. Among the Egyptians the city was most commonly known as 'Nu' or

(36) Hdt, II, 99.

(37) How and Wells, A Commentary on Herodotus, Vol. 1 (Bks. I-IV) Comm. on Bk. II, Ch. 4, n.3, pp. 519, 160.

'No' an abbreviated form of Nu-Amon (i.e. the city).⁽³⁸⁾ Among the classical authors⁽³⁹⁾ it was known as Thebes, but in the Greco-Roman period it seems to have also acquired the name Diospolis Διὸς/πóλις (the city of Zeus). For this is clear from Strabo's own statement in which he says⁽⁴⁰⁾ that "Thebes, now (i.e. by his time) called Diospolis". But the name 'Thebes' also apparently persisted side by side with Diospolis. Why did the classical authors call the city Diospolis? This question leads us to a wider issue, that is to the process of re-naming or giving Greek names to the Egyptian cities either by hellenizing their forms or by translating them from Egyptian into Greek. The name Diospolis, as given to Thebes or Nu, clearly falls within the category of those cities, whose names were translated from Egyptian into Greek. For 'Diospolis', as it stands, means, as we mentioned before, the 'City of Zeus'. Thus Diodorus wrote⁽⁴¹⁾ that "the Egyptians called the city Diospolis the Great, though the Greeks called it Thebes". For surely it would have been better for Diodorus to tell us that the Egyptians

(38) Gardiner, Onomastica, II. p. 25.

(39) Diod. I. 45; Strabo, 17.1.46; Pliny, N.H. v. 60; Pomponius Mela, Chorographia B.I. ix.59; Tacitus, Annal II.

(40) Strabo, loc.cit.

(41) Diod. loc.cit.

called it the 'city of Amon' (No-Amon) and that the Greeks termed it Diospolis (the city of Zeus), which is but the exact translation of the Egyptian name.⁽⁴²⁾ For as we all know the Greeks identified Amon, the chief deity at Thebes, and who became 'King of the Gods' following the supremacy of that city, with their Greek God Zeus⁽⁴³⁾ who was the chief god among the Greeks. Other examples can also be found in Panopolis, Hermopolis, Aphroditopolis, Appollonopolis, Heracleopolis and many others.⁽⁴⁴⁾ In order to distinguish this city from others with the same name, for there was at least one,⁽⁴⁵⁾ it was called the 'Great' (Gr. Διὸς πόλις ἡ Μεγάλη⁽⁴⁶⁾ - L. Diospolis Magna).⁽⁴⁷⁾

(42) cf. Gardiner, loc. cit.

(43) Diod. I. 25, Strabo, loc.cit. cf. E. Bevan, A History of Egypt, Ptolemaic Dynasty, p. 88.

(44) The best example is found in Strabo (17.1. passim).

(45) For examples Διὸς πόλις μικρά Lat. Diospolis Parva, the modern 'Hiw' in Upper Egypt. Strabo, 17.1.44.

(46) Diod. loc.cit.

(47) Pliny, loc.cit.

From the information imparted to us by the classical authors about it and from its remaining replicas we find that Thebes was paramount among the ancient Egyptian cities. It was the capital city of Egypt and indeed of the whole Egyptian Empire in its zenith. It acquired a great fame and its kings amassed enormous wealth from the lands they conquered. All this is reflected on the city and its everlasting and awe-inspiring monuments which have resisted the adverse effects of time and climate and which have remained to our day to tell of its glorious past. The classical writers who either briefly or at length described Thebes spoke in one way or the other of the city's history, its most noteworthy monuments, its wealth and strength, if we take the effects of time, climate and other natural or human factors into consideration, certainly saw and observed much more than we can see or observe today.

In order to introduce the statements of the classical authors of our period and to examine what they said about Thebes we ought to go back a few centuries to find one of the most celebrated statements in which the author, namely Homer, referred to the city, its wealth and strength. In his colossal work, the Iliad, the Bible of the ancient Greeks, Homer described the city in a rather interesting and colourful manner. His reference to the city, as we shall see, will be repeated, like many of his

statements, by most of the classical authors who mentioned Thebes as a testimony in support of their statements. This is why, we find it relevant here to quote Homer's statement in full. Homer tells us :⁽⁴⁸⁾

"Thebes of Egypt, where treasures in greatest store are laid up in men's houses - Thebes which is a city of one hundred gates where-from sally forth through each two hundred warrior^s with horses and carts (chariots)."

οὐδ' οὔσα Θήβας
Αἰγυπτίας, ὅθι πλεῖστα δόμοισι ἐν κτήματα κέϊται,
αἳ θ' ἑκατόμυλοι εἰσὶ, διγέσιοι δ' ἀν' ἑκάστας
ἄνέρε ἑξοιχνεύσει βὺν ἵπποισιν καὶ ὄχεσφιν.'

This statement of Homer suggests that the Greeks were well acquainted with Thebes at least as early as the time when Homer composed his poetry.

It is even found that the Greeks were acquainted with Egypt far much earlier than the time of Homer. As Leaf and Bayfield tell us⁽⁴⁹⁾, this knowledge of Egypt by the Greeks is now proved from external sources (i.e. outside the Iliad and the Odyssey), by the presence in Egypt of pottery of the Mykenaeen style at a date which must be some centuries anterior

(48) Homer, *Il.* ix. 381-384.

(49) W. Leaf and M.A. Bayfield, *The Iliad of Homer*, Vol. I. (Bks. I-XII). comm. on Bk. IX. 381-384, p. 464.

to that of the Iliad. Leaf and Bayfield, however, are completely mistaken when they make the period of glory for Thebes in the reigns of the kings of XXII dynasty, which date they put about 930 - 900 B.C. and they add that such dates would suit very well with that assigned to writing of such a statement. For Thebes' period of glory undoubtedly started with the Middle Kingdom. Thebes replaced Memphis beginning from the 2nd milleniumⁿ and particularly after the expulsion of the^k Hyksos (1580 B.C.) as the great political and religious centre and soon became the capital of the Empire.⁽⁵⁰⁾ Thebes, therefore, reached the zenith of its glory in the New Kingdom (1580-1085),⁽⁵¹⁾ a considerable time before that suggested by Leaf and Bayfield, which time corresponds to the reign of the Libyan rule in the Delta. One can safely say, however, that though the days of glory for Thebes were already gone by the time of Homer, the remains of those glorious days were at that time surviving to tell of the past of the city.

(50) A Dict. of Egypt, Civil. p. 282. s.v. Thebes.

(51) A Dict of Egypt, Civil. loc.cit.; A. Gardiner, Egypt of the Pharaohs, p. 177 ff; Cyril Aldred, The Egyptians, p.37 J.M. White, op.cit. p. 36.

Among those who repeated Homer's statement was Diodorus, who having done that said⁽⁵²⁾ that such a statement showed that even Homer knew about the city. About the one hundred gates, which the city is said to have had, Diodorus maintained that according to some these were not gates, but rather many propylaea in front of its temples. Yet Diodorus went on to say, twenty thousand chariots did in truth, as Diodorus was told,⁽⁵³⁾ pass out from it to war. Jon Manchip White seems to agree with the interpretation given to Diodorus. White says that Homer mistook for city gates the square and soaring archways of her temples. The phrase does, however, in White's opinion, convey something of the profound impression which the idea of the capital of imperial Egypt had made on the minds of the Greeks.

About the founder and the date of founding Thebes, Diodorus seemed uncertain. His information was rather of a mythological nature, supplied from the Egyptian folklore. In one passage he was told⁽⁵⁴⁾ that "the god Osiris founded in the Egyptian Thebaid a city with a hundred gates, which the men

(52) Diod. I. 45.

(53) J.M. White, op.cit. pp. 35, 36.

(54) Diod. I. 15.

of his day named after his mother, though later generations called it Diospolis, and some named it Thebes. There is no agreement, however, as to when this city was founded, not only among the historians, but even among the priests of Egypt themselves; for many writers say that Thebes was not founded by Osiris, but many years later by a certain king". This king Diodorus identified in a later passage⁽⁵⁵⁾ as a certain Busiris. As a matter of fact we should not blame Diodorus or any other writer for not knowing much about the origin of the city and subsequently about its founder. Even modern scholars are not sure either. One of them^(56a) admitted that we know very little of its early beginnings. We cannot say exactly how, or when the evidently Greek name was adopted, but Gardiner says^(56b) that most scholars are agreed that it must be due to comparison of the name of the great Boeotian town with some similarly sounding designation of the Egyptian city, and if so T-*api* 'the Harim' seems the least unlikely origin.

(55) Diod. I. 45.

(56a) Gardiner, op.cit. vol. II. p. 25.

(56b) A Dict. of Egypt. Civil. p. 282. s.v. Thebes.

The city's circuit, which Busiris made, according to Diodorus⁽⁵⁷⁾, was one hundred and forty stadia ($18\frac{1}{2}$ R. miles). "Busiris", Diodorus added, "adorned Thebes in marvellous fashion with great buildings and remarkable temples and dedicatory monuments of every kind; in the same way he caused the houses of private citizens to be constructed in some cases four stories high, in others five, and in general made it the most prosperous city, not only of Egypt but of the whole world. And since, by reason of the city's pre-eminent wealth and power, its fame has been spread abroad to every region, that even Homer spoke of it". Diodorus then gave Homer's statement and the interpretation as it was conveyed to him, which we have already mentioned.

Diodorus^(58a) was also informed that the city was lavishly adorned and decorated by the successive Kings of Egypt. Many temples, tombs and other great monuments were built. Towering above all was the tomb of Osymandyas^(58b) (which in another place Diodorus called a monument after Hecataeus of Abdera, whose

(57) Diod. loc.cit.

(58a) Diod. I. 46.

(58b) This is incorrect. Osym^andyas being a misinterpretation of Ramses II's prenomen, Usi^a-ma-Re. see A Dict of Egypt. Civil. p. 238 s.v. Rameseum; see also n. 61 . infra.

account of Thebes was here paraphrased by Diodorus.⁽⁵⁹⁾ This tomb was very lengthily described by Diodorus.⁽⁶⁰⁾ This tomb is but the great sanctuary erected by Ramesses II for his mortuary service and known to all as the Ramesseum.⁽⁶¹⁾

In the above-given account of Diodorus we notice that although he mentioned that the city had several monuments and although in his elaborate story on the tomb of Osymandyas he failed to mention the giant Colossi of Memnon, and especially the singing Memnon, which, as we shall see later, was mentioned by Strabo, Tacitus and Pliny.⁽⁶²⁾ Diodorus however, like Herodotus⁽⁶³⁾ before him, spoke⁽⁶⁴⁾ of the pillage and the destruction made by the Persians in the name of their king Cambyses, when he invaded Egypt (525 to 522 B.C.). He told us that Cambyses carried off to his country the valuables and burned down the temples. Even after that catastrophe, Diodorus added, Egypt, including Thebes, still retained a considerable wealth.

(59) cf. C.H.Oldfather's 'Loeb's Edition of Diodorus', Library of History, Vol. I. p. xvii (of the Introduction) and pp.166, 167, n.1.

(60) Diod. I. 47-49.

(61) C.H.Oldfather, op.cit. p.167, n.2, vid, n. 58b. supra.

(62) See pp.149, 260 and Pliny, N.H. XXXVI. 58.

(63) Hdt. 3.16 ff.

(64) Diod. I. 46.

The story of the pillage, destruction and excess against the Egyptian religion caused by the Persians, though undeniably occurred, ^(65a) is in the opinion of some modern scholars ^(65b) almost certainly much exaggerated, as the Greeks generally were not in favour of the Persians.

At the end of his account on the city Diodorus told us about the Thebans, their thought and their interests and activities. Regarding this he was told ⁽⁶⁶⁾ that they (i.e. the Thebans) were the earliest of all men and the first people among whom philosophy (or knowledge φιλοσοφία) and the exact science of stars were discovered, since their country enables to observe more distinctly than the others the risings and settings of the stars. Peculiar to them also is their ordering of the months and years.

οἱ δὲ Θηβαῖοι φασιν ἑαυτοὺς ἀρχαιοτάτους
εἶναι πάντων ἀνθρώπων, καὶ παρ' ἑαυτοῖς
πρώτοις φιλοσοφίας τε εὗρηθαι καὶ
τὴν ἐπ' ἀκριβὲς ἀστρολογίαν, ἅμα
καὶ τῆς χώρας αὐτοῖς

(65a) H.I. Bell, Cults and Creeds, p.51.

(65b) C.H.Oldfather (op.cit. p.165, n.1), who refers to Gray C.A.H. 4. pp.22-3, but says cf. Hall, *ibid*, pp.311-12. cf. also J.E.S.Evans, A Social and Economic History of an Egyptian Temple in the Greco-Roman Period, Yale Classical Studies XVII. 1961, pp.207, 208.

(66) Diod. I. 50.

συνεργούσης πρὸς τὸ τηλαυγέστερον ὄραν δὲ καὶ
τὰς ἐπιτολάς τε καὶ δύσεις τῶν ἄστρων, ἰδίως δὲ
καὶ τὰ περὶ τοὺς μῆνας αὐτοῖς καὶ τοὺς
ἐν αὐτοῖς διατετάχθαι.'

Speaking as an eye-witness, Strabo described Thebes of his own era. He left us a very interesting account of his impressions, when he visited the place in the company of his friend, Aelius Gallus, the Roman prefect of Egypt. Strabo informed⁽⁶⁷⁾ us that in his time Thebes was called Diospolis. He then repeated, like other classical authors, the words of their revered poet, Homer, to convey to his readers the glorious past of the great Egyptian city. Strabo added that "others too said things similar to those of Homer and that they made this city the metropolis of Egypt". "Even in his time", he went on to say, "traces of its magnitude are pointed out, extending as they do for a distance of eighty stadia (i.e. slightly over 10 R. miles) in length; and there are several temples". Strabo, like his predecessors Herodotus and Diodorus, recorded that most of the temples of Thebes were mutilated by Cambyses. He also pointed out

(67) Strabo, 17.1.46.

that "in his time, Thebes was no more than a collection of villages, a part of it on the eastern side of the river (i.e. on the eastern bank), where the city was, and a part on the far side of the river (i.e. on the western bank), where was the Memnonium". "Here are", Strabo added, "two colossi, which are near one another and are each made of a single stone; one of them is preserved, but the upper parts of the other, from the seat up, fell when an earthquake took place, so it is said. It is believed that once each day a noise, as of a slight blow, emanates from the part of the latter that remains on the throne and its base".

Λυννὶ δὲ Κωμηδὸν οὐνοικεῖται, μέρος μὲν τι
ἐν τῇ Ἀραβίᾳ, ἐν ἣ περ ἡ πόλις, μέρος δέ τι
καὶ ἐν τῇ περαίᾳ, ὅπου τὸ ΜΕΜΝΟΝΙΟΝ. ἐνταῦθα
δὲ δύοιν κολοσσῶν ὄντων μονολίθων
ἀλλήλων πλησίον, ὃ μὲν βύζεται, τοῦ δ' ἑτέρου
τὰ ἄνω μέρη τὰ ἀπὸ τῆς καθέδρας πέπτωκε
δεισμοῦ γεννηθέντος, ὥς φασι· πεπίστευται
δ', ὅτι ἅπαζ καθ' ἡμέραν ἑκάστην ψόφος,
ὥς ἂν πληγῆς οὐ μεγάλης, ἀποτελεῖται
ἀπὸ τοῦ μένοντος ἐν τῷ θρόνῳ καὶ τῇ
βάσει μερὸς·

Though he admitted that he together with Aelius Gallus and his associates, heard the sound, Strabo had his own doubts concerning the source of that sound.

Thus in the above-mentioned account of our great author, Strabo, two main points crop up. Firstly, having spoken in detail of the glorious past of Thebes, and mentioned its destroyed monuments and described the surviving ones, he observed that the city by his time grew, so to speak, unimportant, its people living in village-like settlements, close to each other "κωμῆδὸν συνακτῆται". Do the words of Strabo indicate that the city was in his time grew insignificant and its importance as the metropolis diminished or even vanished altogether ? To answer such a question one must go back to the words of Herodotus and Diodorus and also to what Strabo himself said earlier. We observe that the three of them lay the blame for the destruction and mutilation of the temples of the city on the Persians themselves, and particularly on their king, Cambyses. The classical authors seemed unaware of the fact that since the Libyan supremacy in Egypt (940 B.C.) Thebes was never again a royal residence, though it remained a spiritual centre.⁽⁶⁸⁾

(68) H. Kees, op.cit. p. 283.

They overlooked the fact that Thebes was abandoned as the capital of Egypt in favour of Sais (Sa el-Haggar) under the Saite kings⁽⁶⁹⁾. They also forgot that before the Saite kings, who transferred the capital from Thebes to their new capital Sais in the Delta, after they had expelled the Assyrians, Thebes was sacked by the Assyrians.⁽⁷⁰⁾ To come back to Strabo, we find that though he referred earlier⁽⁷¹⁾ to Ptolemais, in the Thebaid (which was founded in the Ptolemaic era), as the largest of the cities in the Thebaid, he did not say that founding that latter city was one of the major causes for the eclipse of Thebes's power and privilege.⁽⁷²⁾ Thebes recovered, however, some self-esteem for a time during the rebellion against Ptolemy V.⁽⁷³⁾ It again revolted under Ptolemy X, and was recaptured after a lengthy siege which wrought great damage.⁽⁷⁴⁾

(69) cf. H. Kees, op.cit. 285; A Dict of Egypt. Civil. p.249. s.v. Saite Period.

(70) Cyril Aldred, The Egyptians, pp.38, 39; A Dict of Egypt. Civil. p. 283, s.v. Thebes.

(71) Strabo, 17.1.42. See p.

(72) Cyril Aldred, loc.cit. cf. also Rostovtzeff (op.cit. 265) who says that Ptolemais was added by Ptolemy Soter to Alexandria as his southern capital to balance Thebes.

(73) Cyril Aldred, loc.cit.

(74) Cyril Aldred, loc.cit.
See also H.I.Bell, op.cit.
p.53.

Undeterred by its unlucky fate, it opposed the oppressive rule of the Romans in 30 B.C. and was thoroughly devastated for its pains.⁽⁷⁵⁾ All these calamities, which befell the great city of Amon Strabo passed over in silence. Whether his silence is deliberate or not we do not really know. What we know about his attitudes towards the different rulers of Egypt is that he detested and despised the Ptolemaic kings, especially the latter ones, contrary to his adulation and flattery for the Romans and their rule and rulers in Egypt, forgetting that though the Ptolemies were alien rulers, oppressive and despicable of the Egyptians, they at least kept the wealth inside Egypt; for under their rule Egypt was an independent monarchy and even an empire; whereas under the Romans Egypt was reduced to a status not better than a mere Roman province, ruled by prefects, who belonged to the equestrian order, and who executed the orders, which were issued to them from Rome. In short, under the Romans, Egypt was ruled not from Memphis, Thebes or even the Macedonian-built Alexandria, but from Rome. Egypt's wealth did not go to its people but to the people of Rome.

(75) Cyril Aldred, loc.cit.; cf. also J.G. Milne, A History of Egypt under Roman Rule, p. 5.

To return again to Strabo's statement we find a very interesting survey on the Greco-Roman Thebes, which survey is to the point. It is a very appropriate survey, as it deals with the statement of Strabo. The author of this survey is A. Bataille who, summarising his article, says⁽⁷⁶⁾:

"Bref, de façon plus complète que d'autres centres moins éloignés d'Alexandrie, le Fayoum, Oxyrhynchos, Hermoupolis par exemple Thèbes demeure elle-même; elle vit sur ses traditions et la conscience de son éminente dignité nationale.

Il va sans dire qu'un pareil état d'esprit ne pouvait manquer de se faire sentir dans la domaine politique. Et c'est la grande ville et à la région qu'elle commandait le rang encore enviable qu'elle passait, malgré tant de siècles de domination étrangère.

Les relations avec les souverains d'Alexandrie ne se sont pas gâtées tout de suite. Mais il est fort possible que les Lagides se soient, dès le début défiés des Thebains. Jusqu'au dernier tiers du 2^e siècle, la position administrative de Diospolis et des Memnonia paraît bien étrange. Si nous prenons à la lettre certaines données des textes grecs et démotiques, la ville de rive

(76) A. Bataille, Thèbes Gréco-Romaine, Chron. d'Egypte, No.51, Yr. 22. Jan. 1951, pp.342, 343, 347. Vol. 49-52, 1950-51.

droite aurait appartenu à une simple toparachie, le Péri-Thèbes, placée sous l'autorité du même stratège qu'une autre toparachie, celle de Pathyris. Peut-être même, à un certain moment, ces deux toparchies ont-elles formé un nome pathyrite, dont naturellement Thèbes n'aurait pas été le chef-lieu.

Est-ce à dire que Thèbes ne demeurait pas une ville relativement importante ? Évidemment si. Elle était toujours la métropole du Péri-Thèbes. Mais, Strabon, qui l'a visitée vers l'an 25 avant notre ère, écrit: *κωμηδὸν συνοικεῖται* ce qui paraît signifier que son habitat se présentait sous la forme de *κῶμαι* juxtaposées. En d'autres termes, les quartiers primitifs s'étaient pour ainsi dire resserrés sur eux-mêmes, parce que leur population avait diminué et l'on apercevait maintenant des solutions de continuité entre des agglomérations autrefois reliées les unes aux autres par des groupes d'immeubles".

A. Bataille, therefore, agreed with others on the dwindling position and the diminishing status of Thebes in the Greco-Roman period. The destruction of the city by successive rulers, Assyrians, Persians, Ptolemaics and Romans, added to that the transference of the capital from Thebes to Tanis, Bubastis and Sais in the Delta under the Libyan and Saite Kings, the building of the Hellenistic city Ptolemais under the Ptolemies,

and though these latters restored the sancturies of Thebes, which had been destroyed by the Persians⁽⁷⁷⁾ and Assyrians⁽⁷⁸⁾ when they discovered that political disturbances found support in Thebes constantly from the second century B.C., they favoured Armant at the expense of Thebes, its neighbour. Large parts of the West City were included in the administrative jurisdiction of Armant in particular the central area of the Memnonia from the walls of Djeme to the Ramesseum. The last Theban temples were thus erected in the soil of Armant.⁽⁷⁹⁾

At any rate this does not mean that Thebes has lost its importance entirely. For in the words of A. Bataille, which we have already quoted, Thebes always remained the metropolis of Peri-Thebes, despite what Strabo said about it. Strabo, however, acknowledged the importance of the city at least for its great historical past and for its remaining colossal and great monuments. Another modern scholar summarises the gradual and final decline of Thebes as a main political and religious centre, but the continuation of its fame and glory in the following. "The excessive power of Amun, the Assyrian invasion and the destruction which it brought resulted in irreparable harm to Thebes. After

(77) H. Kees, op.cit. pp. 285, 286.

(78) A. Bataille, op.cit. pp. 326, 327.

(79) H. Kees, loc.cit.

664 B.C. (the time when the Saite Dynasty moved the capital to Sais in the Delta) the great city declined never to rise again. But although the political capital was thenceforth situated in a Delta town, and although Amun lost his popularity to other gods, ruined Thebes remained the most gigantic of capitals expressing most vividly the glory of a great past. It is still the place where Egyptian architectural genius demonstrates its most enduring and successful results.⁽⁸⁰⁾ The city was during the Roman period (and still is today and will be in the future) the greatest tourist centre in Egypt, whose sights attracted famous visitors and pro consuls.⁽⁸¹⁾ Strabo himself, in the company of his friend the prefect of Egypt, Aclius Callus, and his associates,⁽⁸²⁾ Germanicus, too, and many others made the pilgrimage to Thebes.⁽⁸³⁾

Moreover the continuous rebellions which sprang from Thebes under many rulers indicate that Thebes continued to be the spearhead of national sentiments and uprisings against foreign oppressors and invaders⁽⁸⁴⁾.

(80) A Dict. of Egypt. Civil. pp. 282, 383, x.v. Thebes.

(81) H. Kees, op.cit. p. 286.

(82) Strabo, 17.1.46.

(83) Tacitus, Annal. II. 60; A. Bataille, op.cit. p. 349.

(84) Cyril Aldred, op.cit. p.37; Kees, op.cit. p.286, Milne, op.cit. p.5. H.I.Bell, loc.cit.

The second point in the account of Strabo is his observation of the sound which the broken colossus of Memnon made, about the source of its occurrence Strabo is a little bit extreme in his doubts. For the phenomenon of the sound emanating from the broken statue is not impossible to occur. By natural physical causes which have recently been demonstrated in the temples of Edfu and Karnak, the stone set up a vibration through internal action resulting from the sudden changes of humidity and temperature at dawn.⁽⁸⁵⁾

Strabo, at the end of his account described⁽⁸⁶⁾ the rest of the city's temples, obelisks and other monuments, and then he mentioned, but in a much more specific than Diodorus who wrote before him, that the Priests of Thebes (like those in Heliopolis) devoted their whole life and energy to the study of philosophy (or knowledge in general) and the science of the heavenly bodies, and he also told us that we owe the discovery of the solar calender to these studious priests. It is very interesting however, to notice here the striking resemblance between the occupations of these ancient Egyptian priests namely in engaging themselves in the study while at the same time looking

(85) A Dict of Egypt. Civil. p.165, s.v. Memnon, also cf. A.Bataille, op.cit. pp. 248, 249.

(86) Strabo, loc.cit.

after their religious duties of various branches of human knowledge and the medieval Christian and Muslim Arab religious orders.

Thebes was also mentioned by other classical authors; by Pomponius Mela⁽⁸⁷⁾, who included it in his list of the most celebrated cities of ancient Egypt, and who also repeated the Homeric famous phrase "Thebes the hundred-gated city", by Pliny, who, following his predecessor Pomponius Mela, in one passage⁽⁸⁸⁾ called the prescribed city "the Great City of Zeus (Diospolis Magna), and said that it was also called Thebes, renowned for the fame of its hundred gates a Homeric phrase favourite among the classical authors and he counted it among the remarkable cities of Egypt.

In another passage⁽⁸⁹⁾ Pliny told us that he read of a whole hanging town, Thebes in Egypt. The kings used to lead their armies in full array beneath it without being detected by any of the inhabitants. Commenting on this paragraph of Pliny, Eichholz very plausibly suggests⁽⁹⁰⁾ that the "hanging town" may have been inspired by the vast hypostyle halls of the temples at

(87) Pomponius Mela, De Chorographia, B.I. ix. 50.

(88) Pliny, N.H. V. 60.

(89) Pliny, N.H. XXXVI. 94.

(90) Eichholz, in the Loeb Edition of Pliny's Natural History, Vol. X. p. 75, n.b.

Karnak and Luxor". It occurs to me here to think that the idea of the "hanging town" of Pliny and the "hundred-gated Thebes" are very closely linked together. It is noteworthy to say that we (like Pliny) heard of the "hanging garden" in Persia. There is also up to the present time what is called the "Hanging Church" in old Cairo.

Thebes was also mentioned by the Roman historian Tacitus, when he described the tour of Germanicus in Egypt, which, he said, was disapproved (by Emperor Tiberius as it infringed the imperial order). Tacitus informed us ⁽⁹¹⁾ that "among the various renowned places visited by Germanicus was ancient Thebes with its vast remains. On piles of masonry (i.e. the Obelisks) the Egyptian letters (i.e. Hieroglyphic) still remained, embracing the tale of old magnificence and one of the senior priests, ordered to interpret his native tongue, related that "once the city contained seven hundred thousand men of military age, and with that army King Rhameses (Ramesses II, 1333 B.C. = Sesostris or Sesooeis of the other classical authors) conquered many nations and collected great revenues no less imposing than those which were in Tacitus' time exacted by the might of Parthia or by Roman power". A list of Ramses' conquests and revenues from these conquest were

(91) Tacitus, Annal. II. 60.

all inscribed on these pylons, so Tacitus said. Tacitus also told us⁽⁹²⁾ that among other Egyptian marvels that arrested the attention of Germanicus in special, was the stone Colossus of Memnon". Tacitus, like Strabo before him, stated⁽⁹³⁾ that "The Colossus of Memnon emits a vocal sound when touched by the rays of the sun", but unlike Strabo he did not express doubt or reservation either concerning the occurrence of such sound or its source. So much for Thebes the metropolis of ancient Egypt and its most renowned tourist attraction of the present time.

Alexandria : (Ἀλεξάνδρεια)

Alexandria is a city on the N. Coast of Egypt, situated to the West of the Delta and near the Canopic mouth of the Nile. The city was called after its founder, Alexander the Great of Macedon.⁽⁹⁴⁾ It was founded in 332 B.C.⁽⁹⁵⁾, in the same way as Naucratis and Ptolemais, on an ancient Egyptian site, namely the fishing village Rhakotis⁽⁹⁶⁾ and of the off-shore island of Pharos, which was linked

(92) Tacitus, loc.cit.

(93) Tacitus, op.cit. II. 61.

(94) Diod. x. I. 50. XVII. 52; Quintus Curtius (Rufus) History of Alexander, IV. viii. 1 ff. Pliny, N.H. V. 62. calls it Rhacotes.

(95) A Dict. of Egypt. Civil. p.6. s.v. Alexandria; Breccia, op.cit. p.16.

(96) Strabo, 17.1.6; cf. E. Breccia, Alexandria Ad Aegyptum, p.23; H.I. Bell, Cults and Creeds in Greco-Roman Egypt, pp.4, 5.

to the former with a causeway, known as the 'Heptastadion',⁽⁹⁷⁾
"Επταστάδιον" i.e. the seven-stades) from its length.

Following the death of Alexander and the partition of his empire into kingdoms, one of his generals Ptolemy Son of Lagos, later surnamed Soter (the Saviour) took possession of Egypt. Ptolemy I Soter took Alexandria as the capital of his own Egyptian kingdom,^(98a) and the city continued to be regarded so under his successors, under the Romans, and the Byzantines until the conquest of Egypt by the Muslim-Arabs under General Amr in 641 A.D., who transferred the capital, once again to the south, to the ancient fortress of Babylon, which is near the apex of the Delta and not far away from the ancient capital Memphis and its sister Heliopolis. There the Arabs established el-Fustat (from the Latin Fossatum), the forerunner of the modern capital, Cairo.

Alexandria was a very famous cultural and intellectual, and a very rich and important commercial centre of the Hellenistic world.^(98b) It housed perhaps the largest library in the ancient

(97) Strabo, loc.cit.

(98a) E. Breccia, Alexandria Ad Aegyptum, p.19 (Bergamo 1914);

(98b) At first Ptolemy I Soter took Memphis as his capital, perhaps because Alexandria was not yet finished and after he became secure he transferred his capital to Alexandria.

world and the famous Museum, where famous scientists, such as Archimedes had studied. It was also a very important religious centre in the Christian era, and still is the official residence of the Pope of the Coptic Orthodox Church. The city since its foundation grew bigger and bigger so that by 200 B.C. it was the largest city in the world⁽⁹⁹⁾ (later it was surpassed by Rome).⁽¹⁰⁰⁾

Alexandria has aroused the interests of almost all the classical writers, who wrote after its foundation. Some of them, such as Diodorus, Strabo and Pliny even gave it top priority in their work and described it with full details. Thus Strabo told⁽¹⁰¹⁾ us that 'since Alexandria and its neighbourhood constitute the largest and most important part of this subject, I shall begin with them', and Pliny stated⁽¹⁰²⁾ that 'justice requires that praise shall be bestowed on Alexandria'. Also in the book entitled 'De Bello Alexandrino', which has come down to us with the works of Julius Caesar, we find a rather interesting description of some aspects of the city in the course of the account on Caesar's war with the Alexandrians. Strabo's account, however, is no doubt, the longest, the most accurate, and the most detailed of all. Strabo, in fact,

(99) Breccia, op.cit. p.23, Rostovtzeff, op.cit. 415.

(100) Samuel Dill, Roman Society From Nero to Marcus Aurelius, p.567 (New York, 1957); Breccia, op.cit. pp.22, 23.

(101) Strabo, 17.1.6.

(102) Pliny, N.H. V. 62.

as he just told us, intended his account on Alexandria to be long and detailed. His description of the city's layout and its various features is unique if compared with those of other classical writers of our period.

The site and position of the city was very much praised by the classical authors. Alexander's foresight for choosing the place to build his everlasting city is very clear from its rapid growth and flourishing state in a comparatively short span. In his account on the city of Alexandria Strabo began by describing⁽¹⁰³⁾ the layout of the Island of Pharos, its physical features and its position as regards the opposite mainland. He described it as an oblong island, very close to the mainland and forming it with a harbour with two mouths (as a matter of fact they were two harbours); for the shore of the mainland forms a bay, since it thrusts two promontories into the open sea, and between these is situated the island, which closes the bay, for it lies lengthwise parallel to the shore. Of the extremities of Pharos, the eastern one lies closer to the mainland and to the promontory of Lachias opposite it, and thus makes the harbour narrow at the mouth. The entrance of this harbour has rocks which roughens the waves that strike them from the open sea. On the eastern extremity of the island also is a tower (the famous light-house of Alexandria, one of the wonders of the

(103) Strabo, loc.cit.

ancient world), which guides the ships to the entrance of the harbour, which is not easy to enter. The western mouth is also not easy to enter, though it does not need the same degree of care as the other one. This likewise forms a second harbour, that of Eunostus (Harbour of the happy return), which lies in front of the closed harbour which was dug artificially. As for the eastern harbour it is called the Great. The two harbours are, however, separated from each other in the innermost reaches by the Heptastadion, above mentioned, which connects Pharos with the main site of Alexandria. The Heptastadion forms a bridge extending from the mainland to the western portion of the island, and leaves open only two passages into the harbour of Eunostus, which are bridged over. The Heptastadion is not only a bridge between the island and the mainland but also an aqueduct, at least it was when Pharos was populated. But in these present times (i.e. in Strabo's time) it was deserted, apart from a few seamen living near the tower, after it had been laid waste by Julius Caesar in his war with the Alexandrians. As for the Great Harbour, Strabo observed⁽¹⁰⁴⁾ 'in addition to its being beautifully enclosed both by the embankment and by nature, it is not only so deep close to the shore that the largest ship can be moored at the steps, but also is cut up into several harbours'. It is worthwhile to mention here that it

(104) Strabo, loc.cit

is the western harbour, the one called Eunostus, which is used now as a harbour, while the eastern one, which was called the Great, is only used by fishing boats and by the sailing club of Alexandria.

Why did Alexander choose that particular place to build his city, and what did he aim for ? Strabo told⁽¹⁰⁵⁾ us in this connection that 'the earlier kings of the Egyptians being content with what they got, as their country was self-sufficient, and being in no need for foreign imports at all, and being prejudiced against all sea-farers, and particularly against the Greeks (for owing to scarcity of land of their own the Greeks were ravagers and coveters of that of others). "οἱ Ἕλληνες" προθηταὶ γὰρ ἦσαν καὶ ἐπιθυμηταὶ τῆς ἀλλοτρίας κατὰ πάντη γῆς

set a guard over this region and ordered it to keep away any who should approach and they gave them as a place of abode Rhacotis 'Ῥακῶτις' as it is called, which is now (i.e. in Strabo's time) that part of the city of the Alexandrians which lies above the ship-houses, but was that time a village, and they gave over the surrounding region to herdsmen (described elsewhere⁽¹⁰⁶⁾ by Strabo as pirates and as ready to attack anybody who tried to anchor his ship there), who likewise were able to prevent the approach of

(105) Strabo, loc.cit.

(106) Strabo, 17.1.19.

outsiders. But when Alexander visited the place and saw the advantages of the site, he resolved to fortify the city on the harbour'.

The Latin author Quintus Curtius (Rufus), who wrote after Strabo and under Claudius XII had a slightly different version from Strabo's. He told us,⁽¹⁰⁷⁾ "As he returned from Ammon (Siwa Oasis), Alexander the Great came to the Mareotic Lake, situated not far from the island of Pharos. Contemplating the nature of the place, he had decided at first to build a city on the island itself; then, as it was apparent that the island was not large enough for a great settlement, he chose for the city the present site (i.e. Rhakotis) of Alexandria, which derives its name from that of its founder".

But before Quintus Curtius (Rufus), Diodorus recorded⁽¹⁰⁸⁾ the following account on the history of the foundation of the city. "After he had returned from his visit to the oracle of Ammon, Alexander decided to found a great city in Egypt, and gave orders to the men left behind with this mission to build the city between the marsh and the sea". Quintus Curtius (Rufus) almost said the same thing as Diodorus, which suggests that either the former followed the latter or that both followed one source before them. Indeed

(107) Quintus Curtius (Rufus), History of Alexander, IV. viii.

(108) Diod. XVII. 521, 52. Plutarch (Alex. 26) puts the choice of the site before Alexander's visit to Siwa.

C. Bradford Welles tells us⁽¹⁰⁹⁾ that Diodorus and Curtius followed the tradition of Aristobulus (Arrian, 3.4.5) in placing the foundation of Alexandria after Alexander's visit to Siwa. Curtius however, added⁽¹¹⁰⁾ to what he said that 'the site of Alexandria embraced all the ground between the Lake (Mareotis) and the Sea (Mediterranean) and that Alexander instructed the men be left behind to take charge of building the city'.

We observe that in their accounts Diodorus⁽¹¹¹⁾ and Curtius⁽¹¹²⁾ spoke of Alexander as having instructed the men be left behind to carry on the mission of building the city without naming the men in question. Breccia, however, said⁽¹¹³⁾ that it was Cleomemenes of Naucratis, who^m Alexander, after the conquest of Egypt,^A put at the head of the financial administration (he was killed by Ptolemy in 322 B.C., the year in which the king died), who was left to supervise the rapid execution of the project. Moreover, the

(109) C. Bradford Welles, in Loeb ed. of Diodorus Siculus's Library of History, vol. VIII. p.267. n.2.

(110) Quintus Curtius (Rufus), loc.cit.

(111) Diod. loc.cit.

(112) Quintus Curtius (Rufus), loc.cit.

(113) Breccia, op.cit. p.17.

majority of the classical writers of our period, with the exception of Pliny, did not mention the name of architect or architects responsible for the design and construction of the city. Diodorus said what amounts to making Alexander by the plan of the city himself. For he stated⁽¹¹⁴⁾ that 'He (i.e. Alexander) laid out the site and traced the streets skilfully and ordered that the city should be called after him'. And Strabo the most reliable of all was also content to mention⁽¹¹⁵⁾ that architects marked the lines of the foundation of the city.

Strabo, however, related a very interesting story, which is unique among the writers of our period, concerning the history of the foundation of the city. For this reason we find that this story is worth quoting. Strabo told us⁽¹¹⁶⁾ that "writers record, as a sign of the good fortune that has since attended the city, an incident which occurred at the time of tracing the lines of the foundation: When the architects were marking the lines of the enclosure with chalk, the supply of chalk gave out; and when the king arrived, his stewards furnished a part of the barley-meal which had been prepared for the workmen, and by means of this the streets also, to a larger number than before, were laid out.

(114) Diod. XVII. 52.

(115) Strabo, 17.1.6.

(116) Strabo, loc.cit.

This occurrence, then, they are said to have interpreted as a good omen". (117)

ἡ δ' ὕστερον ἐπὶ κολουθηκυίας εὐδαιμονίας
τῇ πόλει μνημονεύουσί τι δημῆιον κατὰ τὴν
ὑπογραφὴν τοῦ κτίσματος συμβάντων τῶν γὰρ
ἀρχιτεκτόνων γῆ λευκῇ διασημασμένων τῇ
τοῦ περιβόλου γραμμῇ, ἐπιλιπούσης τῆς γῆς
καὶ τοῦ βασιλέως ἐπιόντος, οἱ διοικηταὶ τῶν
ἀλφίτων μέρος τῶν παρεσκευασμένων τοῖς
ἐργάταις παρέσχον δ' ὧν καὶ αἱ ὁδοὶ κατετμήθησαν
εἰς πλείους· τοῦτ' οὖν οἰωνίσθαι λέγονται πρὸς ἀγαθοῦ
γεγονός."

In his account just quoted Strabo implied that not one but a number of architects were responsible for the construction of the city, and, as we said, he did not give any names.

Pliny, the exception among the authors of our period, as we mentioned before, gave⁽¹¹⁸⁾ the name of the architect of Alexandria as Dinochares (or Deinohares), which is wrongly spelt.

(117) According to Plutarch (Alexander 26), birds of all kinds settled on the place like clouds and ate up all the barley meal with which the area had been marked out, so that Alexander was greatly disturbed at the omen; but the seers assured him that the omen was good. The barley-meal betokened an abundance of food (Ammianus Marcellinus 22.16.7).

(118) Pliny, loc.cit, VII. 125; (see also Plutarch 5.11) "all mss. and edd. of Pliny (Teubner and Loeb) give Dinohares (Deinchares) but the correct spelling is: "Dein^ocrates" see n.119. infra. ^A

For the correct spelling is "Deinokrates".⁽¹¹⁹⁾

Whatever it may be, and whether the construction of the city had started as soon as Alexander had chosen the site, the city did not take its full shape and did not become the first city of the world till the end of the reign of Ptolemy II Philadelphus.⁽¹²⁰⁾

In the statements of the classical and the Jewish authors, with whom we are concerned, regarding the city of Alexandria, we shall observe that Alexandria received the lion's share and that it was described more than any other city in Egypt, though technically speaking Alexandria was regarded as not in Egypt but adjacent to Egypt, "ad Aegyptum".⁽¹²¹⁾ Nevertheless, Egypt was ruled during the Greco-Roman period from that city. It must be remembered also that many classical authors, such as Diodorus, Strabo and the Jewish author Philo, and Josephus

(119) Val.Max. 1. 4, ext. 1 and Amm.Marc. xxii. 6. 7; see also Paul Wiss. vol. IV. 2. col. No. 2392. s.v. Deinokrates, H.I.Bell, Egypt from Alexander the Great to the Arab Conquest, p.51 (Oxford 1948); Ibid; Alexandria, JEA. vol. XIII. 1927. p.173.

(120) Bevan, op.cit. p.98, Breccia, op.cit. p.17; cf. also H.I.Bell, Alexandria, JEA. vol. XIII. 1927. p.173.

(121) Rostovtzeff, op.cit. pp. 415, 417; Bevan, op.cit. p.91; H.I. Bell, Alexander in Ad Aegyptum, JRS. vol. 36, 1946. pp. 130-132.

described the city as eye-witnesses, while those who did not have the chance to be in Egypt or to visit it were able either to draw from official records or from sources written by previous authors. In this last category fall both Pliny the Elder and Curtius Rufus. Pliny admittedly acknowledged as his sources for the contents of his Fifth Book of the Natural History, which contains his description of Alexandria, Pomponius Mela, Licinius Mucianus. Claudius Caesar (the Emperor), Callimachus and Polybius.

In the statements of our authors we shall also observe many things in common, such as the site, position and the extent of the city; its lay-out, and its plan. This striking similarity between the statements of the authors concerned may be ascribed to what we have already mentioned, that some authors visited the city and acquainted themselves with its conditions, while some others, who did not visit the city, were able to draw from official records and military documents and were also able to consult the writings of previous authors. The classical authors, however, are not entirely in full agreement regarding some aspects of the city, such as on the date of starting of the building of the city and on its architect or architects. The length of their statements was not the same, some statements such as Strabo's were very long and some were considerably shorter than Strabo's, such as Diodorus', Curtius Rufus', Philo's, Josephus' and Pliny's, and some others were as short as one sentence such as Pomponius Mela's

in which Alexandria was described as one of the most considerable towns of Egypt and as situated on the side of Africa, that is on the western side of the Delta.⁽¹²²⁾ Some authors described Alexandria in one continuous account such as Strabo, Diodorus, Curtius Rufus, Pliny and some others described it here and there in their works such as the author of the "De Bello Alexandrino" and Philo.

But the classical authors and their Jewish opposite numbers, were agreed, as we said, on some aspects of the city. They agreed that Alexandria was built on the instructions of Alexander the Great and was called after him. They were also in full agreement that Alexander had chosen that particular place to build Alexandria for its strategical importance. The majority of them also agreed that the shape of the city is like a chlamys (ὁ χλαμύς). This may refer to a cloak or a tape worn by a Macedonian soldier. Some also praised the city's position and the effect of the surrounding waters and the blowing of the Etesian winds in the summer on making the climate of the city pleasant and congenial for the happiness and convenience of its inhabitants.

Beginning with the Greek authors, we were told by Diodorus⁽¹²³⁾ that "Alexander decided to found a great city in Egypt,

(122) Pomponius Mela, op.cit. I. ix. 60.

(123) Diod. XVII. 52.

and gave orders to the men left behind with this mission to build the city between the marsh (i.e. Lake Mareia or Mariout) and the sea (i.e. the Mediterranean). He laid out the site and traced the streets skilfully and ordered that the city should be called after him Alexandria. It was conveniently situated near the harbour of Pharos, and by selecting the right angle of the streets, Alexander made the city open to the currents (lit. made to be breathed through by) the Etesian winds, so that these blow across a great expanse of sea, they cool the air of the town, and so provided its inhabitants with a moderate climate and good health. Alexander also laid out the walls so that they were ~~at~~ once exceedingly large and marvellously strong. Lying between a great marsh and the sea, it affords by land only two approaches, both narrow and very easily blocked."

About the shape of the city's plan Diodorus added that it is similar to a ~~chalmys~~ ^{chalmys}, and it is approximately bisected by an avenue remarkable for its size and beauty. From gate to gate it runs a distance of forty furlongs, (just over 5 miles), it is a plethron (100 feet) in width, and is bordered throughout its length with rich facade of houses and temples. Alexander gave orders to build a palace notable for its size and massiveness. And not only Alexander, but those who after him ruled Egypt (i.e. the Ptolemaic kings) down to Diodorus' time, with few exceptions have enlarged this with lavish additions. The city in general has

grown so much in later times that many reckon it to be the first city of the civilized world, and it is certainly far ahead of all the rest in elegance and extent and riches and luxury. The number of its inhabitants surpasses that of those in other cities. At the time when he was in Egypt, Diodorus added, those who kept the census returns of the population said that its free residents were more than three hundred thousand, and that the king received from the revenues of the country more than six thousand talents". Earlier in his First Book, ⁽¹²⁴⁾ Diodorus spoke of Alexandria ~~as~~ being generally reckoned as first or second city of the inhabited world, and that as soon as it was founded it took the honour away from Memphis, and Thebes to become the capital of Egypt and that the successive kings that ruled after Alexander added to its splendour and glory by building and constructing great and magnificent palaces, temples and other types of monuments.

In his account just cited Diodorus did not speak of either the people of Alexandria, its buildings or its social and political conditions, but he concentrated his account on mainly its position, its planning and the effect of these on the growth of the city and its climate. Nevertheless, his account, which was based on his personal observations, was of some importance, as Diodorus was the earliest of our authors to describe the city.

(124) Diod. I. 50.

Moreover, Diodorus was the only author of our period to state categorically that Alexandria was the first or the second city of the then civilized world as far as its size and the number of its population are concerned; and that it was definitely the first city of the world as regards elegance and splendour. Diodorus, as we saw, was also the only author to tell us of the number of either the free inhabitants or those who enjoyed the citizenship of Alexandria. Diodorus' views concerning these matters are, however, confirmed by modern scholars.

But Diodorus' account of Alexandria cannot be compared at all with the account of his successor Strabo, either in length or in accuracy. Strabo's account, as we mentioned before in this chapter, was the longest and the most comprehensive of all the others of our period, as Strabo himself intended it to be so. Strabo not only spoke of how Alexander conceived the idea of building a Hellenistic city in Egypt and of the site of that city, as Diodorus did, but he spoke also of the site of Alexandria in the pre-Alexandrian era, the layout of the island of Pharos, and its main features and its position as regards the mainland as we mentioned before, of the city's main site on the Egyptian village of Rhakotis, its main features, Alexandria's history and its relations with the Ptolemaic kings and its people. In short Strabo spoke of as many aspects of the city as one can hope for.

For we have already cited Strabo's account on the pre-Alexandrian site of Alexandria, on the island of Pharos and its main features and how it was joined with the main site of Alexandria by means of a mole, better known as the Heptastadium, and on the circumstances surrounded the building of the city.

Like Diodorus before him, but in more detail than Diodorus, Strabo spoke of the advantages of the city's site. "The advantages", Strabo stated, ⁽¹²⁵⁾"are various; for, first, the place is washed by two seas, on the north by the Egyptian Sea, as it is called, and on the south by Lake Mareia, also called Mareotis. This is filled by many canals from the Nile, both from above ($\alpha\upsilon\tau\omega\theta\epsilon\upsilon$) and on the sides, and through these canals the imports are much larger than those from the sea, so that the harbour on the lake was in fact richer than that on the sea; and here the exports from Alexandria also were larger than the imports; and anyone might judge, if he were at either Alexandria or Dicearchia ⁽¹²⁶⁾ and saw the merchant vessels both at their arrival and at their departure, how much heavier or lighter they sailed thither or thence".

Strabo further told ⁽¹²⁷⁾us that "among the happy advantages of the city, the greatest is the fact that this is the

(125) Strabo, 17.1.7.

(126) The Modern Puteoli (in Italy).

(127) Strabo, 17.1.13.

only place in all Egypt which is by nature well situated with reference to both things - both to commerce by sea, on account of the good harbours, and to commerce by land, because the river easily conveys and brings together everything into a place so situated - the greatest emporium in the inhabited world .

“τῆς δ' εὐκαιρίας τῆς κατὰ τὴν πόλιν τὸ μέγιστον
ἐστίν, ὅτι τῆς Αἰγύπτου πάσης μόνος ἐστὶν οὗτος ὁ
τόπος πρὸς ἄμφω πεφυκὼς εὖ, τὰ τε ἐκ θαλάττης
τὸ εὐλίμενον, καὶ τὰ ἐκ τῆς χώρας, ὅτι πάντα
διὰ ^{τὸ} ~~πρὸς ἄμφω πεφυκὼς εὖ~~ ^{τὰ τε ἐκ θαλάττης}
εὐμαρῶς ὁ ποταμὸς πορθμεύει συνάγει τε εἰς
τοιοῦτον χωρίον, ὅπερ μέγιστον ἐμπόριον τῆς οἴκου-
μένης ἐστίν.”

And as the trade flourished between East and West and large fleets could venture as far as India and the extremities of Ethiopia, and subsequently the importance of Alexandria as the worlds largest emporium increased. Thus Alexander alone was not only the receptacle of various goods of great value for the most part, but also the source of supply to the outside world." And in addition to the great value of the things brought down from both directions", Strabo added, ⁽¹²⁸⁾ "both into the harbour on the sea and into that on the lake, the salubrity of the air is also worthy of remark. And this likewise results from the fact that the land is washed by water on both sides and because of the timeliness of

(128) Strabo, 17.1.7.

the Nile's risings; for at Alexandria, at the beginning of summer, the Nile, being full, fills the lake also, and leaves no marshy matter to corrupt the rising vapours. At that time, also, the Etesian winds⁽¹²⁹⁾ blow from the north and from a vast sea, so that the Alexandrians pass their time most pleasantly in summer".

The description of the plan of the city by Strabo, is not unlike the descriptions of his fellow writers such as Diodorus and Pliny. On this subject Strabo told⁽¹³⁰⁾ us that "the shape of Alexandria is like a chlamys; it runs from east to west parallel to the sea. The streets are wide and spacious". These plus the city's public buildings and the palaces of the kings Strabo described rather elaborately more than any other author of our period, as his information regarding this subject is based on his personal observations. "The palaces of the kings", Strabo maintained⁽¹³¹⁾, "constitute one fourth or even one third of the total area of the city". And among the most remarkable public buildings, Strabo observed, is the Museum, which is more or less similar to a research centre or academy in modern times. Strabo described⁽¹³²⁾ the Museum "as forming part of the royal palaces; it

(129) The Egyptian Monsoon, which blows during the summer from the north-west.

(130) Strabo, 17.1.8.

(131) Ibid.

(132) Ibid.

has a public walk, an exedera with seats, and a large house, in which is the common mess-hall of the men of learning who share the Museum. This group of men not only hold property in common, but also have a priest in charge of the Museum, who formerly was appointed by the kings (i.e. The Ptolemies) but is now (i.e. in Strabo's time) appointed by Caesar". "In Alexandria", Strabo added,⁽¹³³⁾ "are also found the Sema⁽¹³⁴⁾ (v.l. Soma)⁽¹³⁵⁾ which is said to contain the burial-places of the kings (i.e. Ptolemaic kings), and Alexander's body in particular, the Poseideium⁽¹³⁶⁾, Caesarium,⁽¹³⁷⁾ Paneium,⁽¹³⁸⁾ which is situated in the suburb of Necropolis, and also the Sarapium.⁽¹³⁹⁾ There are also the Gymnasium, which is the most beautiful building, the Hippodrome and the theatre. And in the middle of Alexandria there are the courts of justice and the groves". Quoting the words of Homer,⁽¹⁴⁰⁾ (lit. the Poet) Strabo summarised his account and said⁽¹⁴¹⁾ "In Alexandria

(133) Ibid.

(134) i.e. the "Tomb".

(135) i.e. the "Body".

(136) Temple of Poseidon ~~on~~

(137) Sanctuary of Caesar, "This magnificent building, begun by the famous Cleopatra as a temple to Anthony, was completed after the Roman conquest as one in honour of Augustus". (H.I.Bell, Alexandria, JEA, vol. XIII. 1927. p.175).

(138) Sanctuary of Pan.

(139) Temple of Sarapis.

(140) Homer. Od. 17.266. (Concerning the palace of Odysseus).

(141) Strabo, loc.cit.

there was building upon building".

“ἐξ ἐτέρων ἕτερ’ ἐστίν.”

On the government of the city Strabo had also something to say. He told⁽¹⁴²⁾ us that "in Alexandria resided the prefects of Egypt, after it had become a Roman province. The prefect had the rank of the king; and subordinate to him is the administrator of justice, who has supreme authority over most of the law-suits; and another is the official called Idiologos (Procurator with financial responsibility), who inquires into all properties that are without owners and that ought to fall to Caesar".

ὁ δὲ μὲν οὖν πεμφθεὶς (ἰ.ε. ὁ ἐπαρχος) τὴν τοῦ βασιλέως ἔχει τάξιν ὑπ’ αὐτῷ δ’ ἐστὶν ὁ δικαιοδότης, ὁ τῶν πολλῶν κρίσεων κύριος ἄλλος δ’ ἐστὶν ὁ προσαγορευόμενος ἰδιόλογος, ὁ δὲ τῶν ἀδεσπότων καὶ τῶν εἰς Καίσαρα πίπτειν ὀφειλόντων ἐξεταστής ἐστι.”

Concluding his account on Alexandria Strabo spoke⁽¹⁴³⁾ of the people of Alexandria quoting the words of his predecessor the historian Polybius. On the people, of Alexandria we shall speak later in this chapter. Strabo was apparently reflecting his pro-Roman feelings and his general dislike and disarrangement of the government

(142) Strabo, 17.1.12.

(143) Strabo, loc.cit.

of the Ptolemaic kings, when he poured his praise on the Romans and his contempt and despise on the Ptolemies. He gave us the impression that Egypt was in chaos and in a mess when the Romans conquered (30 B.C.) it. And that they (the Romans) put things right. Thus having quoted Polybius' statement regarding the state of affairs in the city, which were not favourable at all, he stated⁽¹⁴⁴⁾ that "since the kings (i.e. the Ptolemies) were carrying on a bad government, the prosperity of the city was also vanishing on account of the prevailing lawlessness; but the Romans have, to the best of their ability, I might say, set most things right, having organised the city (i.e. Alexandria) and also the country (i.e. Egypt)".

Among the Latin authors who described Alexandria, we find the author of "de Bello Alexandrino", who spoke of some aspects of the city, such as its position, its planning, buildings and its people, but his description of the city and its people are found scattered throughout his treatise. The author of "de Bello Alexandrino" apparently speaking as an eye-witness said that, "Alexandria is situated partly in Africa and partly in Egypt"⁽¹⁴⁵⁾; and that "it is not far from the Delta of Egypt". The same author

(144) Strabo, 17.1.13.

(145) (Julius Caesar), de Bell.Alex. 14.

also referred to the strategic position of the island of Pharos. To this point we have already referred.⁽¹⁴⁶⁾ And like the rest of the classical authors of our period he spoke of the site of Alexandria as being confined by the Mediterranean on the north and Lake Mareot on the south. Thus he stated⁽¹⁴⁷⁾ that "Alexandria had a narrowest part where it was most constricted by the barrier of marshland (i.e. Lake Mareot)". On the buildings of the city he told us⁽¹⁴⁸⁾ that "Alexandria is well-nigh fire-proof, because its buildings contain no wooden joinery and are held together by an arched construction and are roofed with rough-cast or tiling (pavimenta)". The same author not only described the buildings but in a statement unique among our authors he informed us of the city's water supply. In this respect he stated⁽¹⁴⁹⁾, "practically the whole of Alexandria is undermined with subterranean conduits running from the Nile by which water is conducted into private houses; and this water in the course of time gradually settles down and becomes clear. This is what normally is used by the owners of mansions and their household, and although Nile water is muddy and causes many diseases, yet the rank and file of the common sort are perforce content with it, in as much as there is not one natural spring in the whole city".

(146) p. 210.

(147) Ibid. 1.

(148) Ibid.

(149) Ibid. 5.

Alexandria was also briefly described by Pliny,⁽¹⁵⁰⁾ of whose account we have just quoted part. In general he agreed with Diodorus and Strabo in that he gave the city a special treatment in his account on Egypt; that the city was built by Alexander and called after him, on the ancient Egyptian site of Rhakotis, and that its shape resembles a chlamys which is worn by a Macedonian soldier. He moreover spoke of Alexandria as having been built on the coast of the Egyptian sea (i.e. that part of the Mediterranean adjoining Egypt) on the side of Africa, thus agreeing with his predecessor Mela, whom he most probably quoted, and slightly disagreeing with the author of "de Bello Alexandrino" who, as we mentioned before, made Alexandria as being partly in Africa and partly in Egypt. Pliny also told us that Alexandria is situated 12 R. miles from the Canopic mouth (of the Nile) and adjoins Lake Mareot. He, uniquely among our authors, as we said, named the architect of the city as Dinochares (more correctly Deinocrates), who, he said, is famous for his talent in a variety of ways. The area which Alexandria covered, Pliny said, spread 15 R. miles in the shape just mentioned with indentations in its circumference and projecting corners on the right and left side, while at the same time a fifth of the site was devoted to the King's palace. On the means of

(150) Pliny, N.H. V. 62.

communication with the interior of Egypt, Pliny informed us that "Lake Mareot, which lies on the south side of the city, carries traffic from the interior by means of a canal from the Canopic mouth of the Nile.

"Mareotis lacus a meridiana urbis parte euripo e Canopico ostio mittit ex mediterraneo commercia".

Alexandria was also briefly described by Quintus Curtius (Rufus),⁽¹⁵¹⁾ whose statement on the city has already partly been mentioned. Besides what he said he gave the circuit of the city's walls as eighty stadia (slightly over 10 R. miles). The city was also very briefly mentioned by Pomponius Mela, whose one sentence statement has previously been cited.

In addition to the Greco-Roman authors, we have already mentioned, some Jewish authors contemporary to our authors had also something to say about the city of Alexandria and its peoples. One of these Jewish authors was Philon (30 B.C. - A.D. 45), commonly known as Philo Judaeus. Philo was the sole author within our period to tell us how the city was divided into quarters. In this respect he informed us⁽¹⁵²⁾ that "the city has five quarters named after the first letters of the (Greek) alphabet (i.e. $\alpha, \beta, \gamma, \delta$ and ϵ), two of these are called Jewish because most of the Jews

(151) Quintus Curtius (Rufus), loc.cit.

(152) Philo, in Flaccum, 55.

inhabit them (or perhaps "because most of the inhabitants are Jews", i.e. there are also Gentiles), though in the rest are not a few Jews scattered about".

It is true, however, that Alexandria was divided, as Philo said, into five quarters called after the first letters of the Greek alphabet,⁽¹⁵³⁾ but we are not sure that what Philo said that the two of these quarters were inhabited mainly by Jews or that most of the Jews of Alexandria inhabited them. What we are sure of is that the fourth quarter, better known as the Delta Quarter was inhabited mainly by the Jews and was thus known as the Jewish quarter.⁽¹⁵⁴⁾ It is also perfectly correct that the Jews not only favoured the Delta quarter as their stronghold in Alexandria, but some of them were also scattered about in the city; and that only in time of danger that most of them took refuge in the Delta quarter.

The other Jewish author in our period, who spoke of Alexandria and Egypt and of their inhabitants was the priest Josephus (b. A.D. 37-8). Unlike Philo, Josephus was not a native of Alexandria. Josephus part of whose statement we have already cited, spoke⁽¹⁵⁵⁾ of Alexandria as a centre for revolt and he described it as

(153) Bevan, op.cit. p.93; H.I. Bell, Egypt From Alexander The Great To The Arab Conquest, p.51, Ibid, Alexandria, JEA. vol. XIII, 1927, p.174.

(154) H.I. Bell, loc.cit. ; Bevan, op.cit. pp. 94, 113.

(155) Josephus, Jewish War II. 384-387.

so populous, so wealthy, and so vast ! The last attribute is a bit of an exaggeration of Josephus' part. He gave the city a length of thirty furlongs (approx. 4 miles) and a breadth of not less than ten stadia (approx. 1.1/3rd mile).

In the statements cited above, we observe that they do not agree entirely on the measurement of the city. For Diodorus, as we have seen, did not give the measurements of the city clearly, but spoke of the city as bisected by an avenue (most probably the Canopic Street), of which the length from gate to gate is forty stadia (over 5 miles), which could be the length of the city. Strabo and Philo gave the length of the city as 30 stadia (approx. 4 R. miles). The difference between the 40 stadia of Diodorus and the 30 of Strabo and Philo may be explained on the basis that Diodorus seemed to have included suburban districts on the east and west.⁽¹⁵⁶⁾ And while Strabo gave the breadth of the city as seven or eight stadia (approx. 1 R. mile), Diodorus gave no measurement for the breadth but again spoke of the remarkable avenue, above-mentioned, as being one plethron (i.e. 100 feet) in width.⁽¹⁵⁷⁾

(156) See H.L.Jones, in Loeb. ed. of Strabo's Geography, vol. VIII. pp. 32, 33. n.3.

(157) cf. Bevan, op.cit. 91.

On the inhabitants of Alexandria the classical and Jewish authors, with the exception of Strabo and Philo, did not say much. According to these two the city seemed to have been peopled by various races. But both authors did not mention all the races. Our information concerning this subject, would be, therefore, incomplete, unless we supplement it from other sources, such as the writers outside our period and the papyri and inscriptions and other kinds of documents. Alexandria was a cosmopolitan city, where there were people from every corner of the known world - Greeks from every part of the Mediterranean, (native ?) Egyptians, Italians, Romans, Jews, Syrians, Persians, Indians, negroes.⁽¹⁵⁸⁾ One would imagine, therefore, that the population of ancient Alexandria must have shown as many racial types as modern Cairo.

The information imparted to us by the classical and Jewish writers including even Strabo and Philo concerning the peoples of Alexandria was, as we know, incomplete. According to a well known fragment of Polybius,⁽¹⁵⁹⁾ to which we referred earlier in this thesis and which was quoted by Strabo,⁽¹⁶⁰⁾ three races

(158) Bevan, op.cit. pp. 97, 98. ; Breccia, op.cit. p.23 ;
Rostovtzeff, op.cit. p.418; H.I. Bell, Alexandria, JEA, vol.
XIII. 1927. pp. 173, 174.

(159) Polybius (203? - 120 B.C.), Hist. XXXIV. 14.

(160) Strabo, 17.1.12.

inhabited the city, first, the Egyptians or the indigenous population, who were quick-tempered and not inclined to civic life ?, and secondly, the mercenary class, who were severe and numerous and interactable (for by an ancient custom they could maintain foreign men-at-arms, who had been trained to rule rather to be ruled, on account of the worthlessness of the kings); and, third, the tribe of the Alexandrians, who also were not distinctly inclined to civil life, and for the same reasons, but still they were better than those others (i.e. the first class or the second), for even though they were mixed people, still they were Greeks by origin and mindful of the customs common to the Greeks. But this mass of people had also been blotted out, chiefly by (Ptolemy VII) Euergetes Physcon (i.e. Fatty) (145-116 B.C.) in whose time Polybius went to Alexandria (for, being opposed by facto^{ions}rs, Physcon more often sent the masses against the soldiers and thus caused their destruction)".

ὁ γοῦν Πολύβιος γεγονώς ἐν τῇ πόλει βδελύσσεται τὴν τότε κατάστασιν, καὶ φησὶ τρία γένη τὴν πόλιν οἰκεῖν τό τε Αἰγύπτιον καὶ ἐπικώριον φύλον, ὅξυ καὶ ἀπολιτικόν, καὶ τὸ μισθοφορικόν, βαρὺ καὶ πολὺ καὶ ἀνάγωγον ἐξ ἔθνους γὰρ παλαιοῦ ξένος ἔτρεφον τοὺς τὰ ὅπλα ἔχοντας, ἄρχειν μᾶλλον ἢ ἄρχεσθαι δεδιδαγμένους διὰ τὴν τῶν βασιλέων οὐδένειαν· τρίτον δ' ἦν γένος τὸ τῶν Ἀλεξανδρέων, οὐδ' αὐτὸ εὐκρινῶς πολιτικόν διὰ τὰς αὐτὰς αἰτίας, κρεῖττον δ' ἔκείνων ὁμῶς, καὶ γὰρ εἰ μισγάδες, Ἕλληνες ὁμῶς ἀνέκαθεν ἦσαν καὶ ἐμέμνητο.

τοῦ Κοινοῦ τῶν Ἑλλήνων ἔθους. ἡφανισμένου δὲ καὶ
τούτου τοῦ πλῆθους, μάλιστα ὑπὸ τοῦ Εὐεργέτου τοῦ
Φύσκωνος, καθ' ὃν ἦκεν εἰς τὴν Ἀλεξάνδρειαν ὁ
Πολύβιος (καταστασιαζόμενος γὰρ ὁ Φύσκων
πλεονάκεις τοῖς στρατιώταις ἐφίει τὰ πλῆθη καὶ διέφθειρε)."

And the Jew Philo told us that both Alexandria and the whole of
Egypt had two kinds of inhabitants, the Jews and the Egyptians
(lit. they).

Considering first the statement of Polybius just
quoted we find, as we have already pointed out, that modern authors
do not agree on whether the first tribe, namely the Egyptians, were
inclined to civil life or not. From the first look one can see
that since Polybius stated clearly that he was disgusted with
everything and everybody in Alexandria, he must have condemned the
whole lot of its inhabitants including the Egyptians. And the
Loeb edition's translation⁽¹⁶¹⁾ takes the words of Polybius as quoted
by Strabo to mean that the Egyptians were in fact not inclined to
civic life according to Polybius. But the majority of modern
scholars including E. Bevan,⁽¹⁶²⁾ and H.I. Bell,⁽¹⁶³⁾ and
Shuckburgh,⁽¹⁶⁴⁾ take the words of Polybius to mean that the Egyptians

(161) H.L. Jones, translator. (162) Bevan, op.cit. p. 100.

(163) H.I. Bell, op.cit. p.178.

(164) Shuckburgh, The Histories of Polybius, vol. II. p.492.

were "smart and civilized" and "not quick tempered (or acute) and not inclined to civic life" as the translator of Strabo in the Loeb takes it. In this respect Bevan maintained⁽¹⁶⁵⁾ that "amenable to civil life" seems to be the meaning of πολιτικόν in this passage. A difficulty has been felt in what is apparently a term of praise being applied to the native population. R. Kunze has suggested πολυδίκον, "litigious", as an emendation, and this is accepted by Lumbroso. But the later sentence οὐδ' αὐτὸ ἐὺ κρινῶς πολιτικόν implies that the word πολυπολιτικόν

has been used already. The contrast in the passage is between military violence and turbulence on the one hand, and conduct belonging to orderly civil life on the other. The Egyptians at Alexandria might be rogues and cheats, but they did not violate the order of the city; they were "civil" rogues, with the qualities and defects of the town gamin".

Whatever it may be, the Egyptian population of Alexandria was thrown into the bottom of the scale. They were strangers in the overwhelmingly Hellenic city, though it was planted in their own country. They were the least privileged community in the city and they did not have the privilege of the Alexandrian citizenship.⁽¹⁶⁶⁾

(165) Bevan, loc.cit.

(166) cf. Breccia, op.cit. p.25; Bevan, op.cit. pp.79,97,98;
H.I. Bell, op.cit. 174.

Taken as a whole the classification of the peoples of Alexandria by Polybius, who visited the city round 100 B.C. is obviously not exact, but a rough statement of the impression made by the crowd in the streets of Alexandria upon our author. (167) Polybius, for instance, though mentioning the mercenaries, said nothing of the regular army. He, moreover, forgot to mention the rest of the races of Alexandria, whom we listed above, such as the Jews, Syrians, Indians, Persians of the Epigone, and the negroes, nor could he distinguish between the various types of Greeks. We observe that he also spoke of the "Alexandrines" as "people of mixed blood" (μικτὰς εἰς), but it seems likely that what is meant here is that the citizen-body was a medley of Greeks of all kinds - Ionians, Dorians, Aeolians, Greeks from Hellas and Greeks from all the outlying cities east and west - not that it had an admixture of Egyptian blood. (168) But could not it be that the words of Polybius bear in themselves a nucleus of truth", that what he saw in the streets of Alexandria was a mixture of broadly three types of peoples distinguished with their appearance: the Egyptians, the mercenaries and the "Alexandrines" or rather the Hellenic by origin and the Hellenized by dress, appearance and culture. Moreover

(167) cf. Bevan, op.cit. 101.

(168) Bevan, op.cit. p. 98.

as the Roman Historian, Livy,⁽¹⁶⁹⁾ and the modern scholar H.I. Bell⁽¹⁷⁰⁾ maintained that there was a fusion among the various races, between the Greeks, the other Hellenized races and the Egyptians themselves. The Jews, whose status in Alexandria has not yet been ascertained, were in some respects classed with "the Alexandrines".⁽¹⁷¹⁾ It is also probable that by "Alexandrines" we are here to understand all resident Greeks, not members of the citizen-body only⁽¹⁷²⁾.

As regards Philo's above-mentioned statement, it is even less specific than the statement of Polybius. For it is surely inconceivable that the entire population of both Alexandria and the whole of Egypt were divided into only two types of inhabitants, namely the Jews and the Egyptians. It is clear that Philo here incorporated all the various types of races and communities into the Egyptians. This is however not correct at all at least as far as race and even language and culture are concerned, unless Philo meant that the Jews could be considered by themselves a community or politeuma as it was called in Greek distinct from the rest by at least one factor, namely religion, the Jewish religion, the correct one, while the rest could be considered all together as pagans in the eyes of Philo and his fellow Jews. This is in my view the only

(169) Livy, XXXVIII, xvii. 11.

(170) Bell, loc.cit.

(171) For the argument on this point
see Bevan, op.cit. pp.98, 100.

(172) Bevan, op.cit. p. 101.

possible interpretation for the words of Philo.

Ancient authors, classical as well as Jewish, in general did not speak favourably and enthusiastically of the Alexandrines of the period of our concern. From the statements of our authors the behaviour and manners of the Alexandrines seem quite often contradictory. Fickle, excitable, rebellious, unruly, at once industrious and pleasure-loving, flippant and sharp of tongue, irreverent yet subject to fierce bursts of religious fanaticism, and always liable to excesses of rage and cruelty, they were for centuries a thorn in the side of whatever power had the responsibility of keeping order. But as we shall see the majority of those who spoke of the character and the manners of the Alexandrines were Roman and Jewish authors. These two groups of writers as we have pointed out several times, were generally very hostile towards the Egyptians and the people of Alexandria in particular. We should not forget that, both before their occupation of Egypt and after they had occupied it, the Romans were not on friendly terms with the people of Egypt. Whether they were of Egyptian or of Hellenic origins. The relations between the Alexandrines and the Romans had certainly worsened after the occupation of Egypt by the latter.^(173a) As for the relations between

(173a) This is illustrated by the acts of the Pagan Martyrs (Acta Alexandrinorum, ed. H. Musurillo).

the people of Alexandria and the Jewish community in the city, these were never good, and in the period chosen for this thesis they reached to their worst.^(173b)

But before we cite some evidences illustrating the Roman and Jewish attitudes towards the Alexandrines, we should once more refer to the words of Polybius, which, as we said, were quoted by Strabo. We saw that Polybius had succeeded in speaking of the characteristics and manners of only the indigenous Egyptians, the mercenaries and the Alexandrians (i.e. those people who enjoyed the right of the citizenship of Alexandria), while he ignored the rest of the communities of the city. But Polybius' observations were more scientific than those of the others whether Romans or Jews. For, unlike the others, he made a clear distinction between three types of communities, who were different to a considerable extent from each other. The other Greek author of our period, namely Diodorus, did not say much of the Alexandrines, but he implicitly referred⁽¹⁷⁴⁾ to the religious fanaticism of the common folk of the city, which was characterised with lack of fear of any authority or power.

Strabo, on his part, recorded his own impression on the people of Alexandria not only by quoting Polybius as stated

(173b) See. H.I. Bell, op.cit. pp. 179, 180.

(174) Diod. I. 83. see p. 417.

above, but also by observing himself the Alexandrians on the spot. He spoke of two types of people with completely different attitudes. He saw⁽¹⁷⁵⁾ that from Alexandria some people travelled by boat to the notorious town of Canopus (now the suburb of Abu Kır) seeking cures in the temple of the Hellenistic god, Sarapis, while others went there to revel and enjoy the pleasure-life of Canopus. These words of Strabo imply, that in Alexandria there were found not only religious or superstitious people, from whichever angle you look at it, but also on the opposite side there were others who were pleasure-seekers. A fair statement I should think. For in every town, ancient and modern one finds these two categories of people.

When we come to the Roman authors the picture of the Alexandrians will appear blurred and marred by their intentionally biased and prejudiced statements. Nevertheless there are some exceptions.

The author of "de Bello Alexandrino" described⁽¹⁷⁶⁾ the people of Alexandria once as deceitful and treacherous, but further on he acknowledged to their credit that they were clever, very shrewd and very creative. Moreover, (like the Japanese of modern times), they could imitate others' inventions to the extent that they surpassed what they have imitated.

(175) Strabo, 17.1.17.

(176) (Julius Caesar), de Bell.Alex. passim.

Propertius, never fair in his satire against the Egyptians, agreed with the author of "de Bello Alexandrino" that the Alexandrians were deceitful. For directing his words to Alexandria he stated,⁽¹⁷⁷⁾: "Guilty Alexandria, land most skilled in guile".

Propertius' words like the author of "de Bello Alexandrino" and indeed all the Latin authors were a mere political propoganda directed against Egypt and the Egyptians.

Tacitus spoke of the conditions in Egypt, when he was writing, and including in Egypt Alexandria. He, referred⁽¹⁷⁸⁾ in this respect, to the rebellious nature of the Egyptians, to their religious fanaticism, to their superstition and their ignorance of laws and lack of acquaintance with civil magistrates (this statement of Tacitus, we shall discuss later in this thesis - see Chapter IX, "Manners and Behaviour").

The Jewish authors were not less hostile and biased towards the Egyptians in general and the Alexandrians in particular than their Roman counterparts. Thus the Jewish priest and author Josephus spoke more or less in the same tone as Tacitus when he described⁽¹⁷⁹⁾ Alexandria as "a centre for revolt" or "an incentive to revolt". This was why the Romans left an exceptionally large army

(177) Propertius, III. 11. 33.

(178) Tacitus, Hist. I. 11.

(179) Josephus, Jewish War, II. 384-387.

there to guard a city and the rest of Egypt. Philo the Alexandrian Jew, was extremely rude and hostile to the Alexandrians. For he threw against them all the bad attributes. In this respect he stated that the Alexandrians were ^a"promiscuous and unstable ^bable"; (180) ^c were adapt to flattery, imposture and hypocrisy, ready enough with ~~flaming~~ words but causing universal disaster with their loose and unbridled lips, (181); "A seed of evil in whose souls both the venom and the temper of the native crocodiles and asps were reproduced"; (182) "lazy and unoccupied, a multitude well practised in idle talk, who devoted their leisure to slandering and evil speaking"; (183) "polytheist, impious and godless". (184)

Generally speaking, the picture drawn of the Alexandrines by the Classical and Jewish authors, with very few exceptions, is not favourable to the Alexandrians at all. The statements are not only mostly biased against the Alexandrians, but they are also very general. For they do not distinguish between the manners of the various races or communities that inhabited the city, who were surely different from each other in many respects.

(180) Philo, The Embassy to Gains (Legatio), xviii. 120.

(181) Ibid. XXV. 162, 163. (182) Ibid, XXVI. 166.

(183) Philo, Flaccus, 33, 34.

(184) Philo, Legatio, XXV. 162, 163.

To conclude we can say that according to the classical and Jewish authors concerned Alexandria was conceived and planned by Alexander the Great, and was called after him. It was built, like the other Greek cities in Egypt, on an ancient Egyptian site, the fishing-village Rhakotis together with facing island of Pharos, to which it was linked by a mole, better known as the 'Heptastadion'. The city was built on a strategical position, both for defence and commerce. Although work started immediately after the site was chosen the city was not near its completion until the reign of Ptolemy II Philadelphus, in whose reign the city became the largest city in the world. And it was not only the biggest city in size but it was the chief commercial, industrial, intellectual, cultural and scientific centre of the known world. King after King added to its buildings. Later, however, it was surpassed in terms of size and population by Rome, and thus it was content with the second place. The city was full of public buildings and monuments, religious and secular. Most notable of all was the famous light-house on the Island of Pharos. This was considered one of the wonders of the ancient world. There are also the palaces of the Kings which covered one fourth of the site of the city according to some of the ancient authors, or even one third of it according to others. It had also the famous Museum and the Library, which constituted some sort of an science and arts academy and a University. There were also a number of temples and

precincts, among those were mentioned the Serapeum, Caesareum, Sema (or Soma) which was said to have contained the body of Alexander, the Hephaesteum and many others.

The city was divided into five quarters, which were called after the first five letters of the Greek alphabet. One of these quarters was the Delta quarter which was inhabited mainly by Jews who formed a large and strong community of their own with its synagogues and councils.

The Rhakotis or Western quarter was inhabited by Egyptians who were indigenous there, although some of them were persuaded to leave Canopus and to inhabit the predominantly Hellenic city. The eastern quarter was occupied by the Kings' palaces.

But the Classical and Jewish authors of our concern did not mention that Alexandria was organised, like every Greek city, in smaller social groups, namely into tribes (Phylai) and demes (demoi).

The inhabitants of Alexandria were of many races who flocked from every corner of the known world.

PART THREE

THE EGYPTIAN SOCIETY

CHAPTER IX

THE EGYPTIANS

The most ancient people ?

One question has always, in the past and in the present, obsessed scholars is to find out which country or region is the cradle of the first man and subsequently which people are the most ancient of mankind. Are these most ancient people Egyptians, Sumerians (Babylonians), or others ?

The majority of the Greeks seem to have believed in the antiquity of the Egyptians and of their well-established institutions. Thus we are all acquainted with the interesting story conveyed to us by Herodotus,⁽¹⁾ about the experiment made at the instruction of King Psammetichus of Egypt (C. 663-609 B.C.) to find out who the most ancient people are. The result of this experiment, however, as related by Herodotus, showed that the Phrygians and not the Egyptians are, in fact, the oldest people. We are also told by Plato⁽²⁾ how the Greek nation was taxed by the Egyptians with being in its infancy if compared with Egypt.

(1) Hdt. 11. 2.

(2) Plato, Timaeus, 22.B.

Aristotle, too, tells us⁽³⁾ that the Egyptians appear to be of all people the most ancient.

The theory that the Egyptians are the most ancient people persisted longer. It was held by Diodorus, who recorded a sort of mythological story in connection with the history of Egypt.⁽⁴⁾ He mentioned the belief that men appeared first in Egypt because of certain natural, favourable factors existent there. The following is the account given to Diodorus by the Egyptians:

"When in the beginning the universe came into being, men first came into existence in Egypt, both because of the favourable climate of that country and because of the nature of the Nile. For this stream, since it produces much life and provides a spontaneous supply of food, easily supports whatever living things have been engendered. As proof that animal life appeared first of all in their land they would offer the fact that even at Diodorus' day the soil of the Thebaid at certain times generates mice in such numbers and of such size as to astonish all who have witnessed the phenomenon; for some of them are fully formed as far as the breast and front feet and are able to move, while the rest of the body is unformed, the clod of earth still retaining its natural character. And from this fact it is manifest that, when

(3) Aristotle, Pol. vii. 10.8, 1329b.

(4) Diod. I. 10.

the world was first taking shape, the land of Egypt could better than any other have been the place where mankind came into being because of the well-tempered nature of its soil, for even at Diodorus' time, while the soil of no other country generates any such things, in it alone certain living creatures may be seen coming into being in a marvellous fashion."

"In general", the Egyptians told Diodorus, "if in the flood which occurred in the time of Deucalion most living things were destroyed, it is probable that the inhabitants of southern Egypt⁽⁵⁾ (or else: men living so far south as Egypt⁽⁶⁾)

οἱ κατὰ τὴν Αἴγυπτον ὑπὸ τὴν μεσημβρίαν κατοικοῦντες"

survived rather than any others, since their country is rainless for the most part or if, as some maintain, the destruction of living things was complete and the earth then brought forth again new forms of animals, nevertheless, even on such a supposition the first genesis of living things fittingly attaches to this country. For when the moisture from the abundant rains, which fell among other peoples, was mingled with the intense heat which prevails in Egypt itself, it is reasonable to suppose that the air

(5) C.H. Oldfather's translation in the Loeb edition.

(6) W.G. Waddell's translation in "The Bulletin of the Faculty of Arts, The University of Egypt, Vol. I, Part I, May 1933, under the Title: An Account of Egypt by Diodorus the Sicilian.

became very well tempered for the first generation of all living things. Indeed, even in Diodorus' time during the inundations of Egypt the generation of forms of animal life can clearly be seen taking place in the pools which remain the longest; for, whenever the river has begun to recede and the sun has thoroughly dried the surface of the slime, living animals, they say, take shape, some of them fully formed, but some only half so and still actually united with the very earth".

From the above-cited account of Diodorus arise two points; the first is that life could be spontaneously generated. The second is that Egypt is either the place where mankind first originated as a result of various favourable reasons or else it is the place where men could survive the natural calamities such as deluges. The first point is nothing but fabulous and marvellous. The story of half-formed mice being found still attached to the parent earth, Ball says⁽⁷⁾, is of course, an absurd one, and must have been either a pure invention or else, what is perhaps more likely, a fanciful interpretation of carelessly made observations. But the story, Ball adds, may not have seemed incredible to the Greeks, seeing that Anaximander (610 - 547 B.C.) is said by Censorinus (De Die

(7) J. Ball, Egypt in the Classical Geographers, pp.47, 48.

Natali, iv) to have taught that either fish, or animals very like fish, spring from heated water and earth, and that the human foetuses grew in the animals to a state of puberty, so that when at length they burst, men and women capable of nourishing themselves proceeded from them. At any rate, Ball maintains, no idea of questioning the accuracy of the observations on which the story was founded appears to have entered the minds of later writers of antiquity, for both the Geographer Pomponius Mela⁽⁸⁾ and the poet Ovid⁽⁹⁾ repeat the story of the spontaneous generation of mice as though it were fact; and even as recently as the seventeenth century of our own era we find Alexander Ross criticising Sir Thomas Browne for doubting the possibility of 'spontaneous generation' and saying 'let him go to Egypt, and there he will find the fields swarming with mice, begot of the mud of Nylus to the great calamities of the inhabitants'.⁽¹⁰⁾ Ball comes to the conclusion⁽¹¹⁾ that the theory that life could be spontaneously generated from non-living matter was widely held for many centuries after Diodorus' day, until it received its

(8) Pomponius Mela, Chorographia, I. ix.

(9) Ovid, Metamorphoses, I. 422-29.

(10)cf. also Henri Frankfort et alii, Before Philosophy, pp.59, 60. (A Pelican Book 1964).

(11)Ball, op.cit. p.46.

death blow in quite modern times from the researches of Pasteur and Tyndall. The theory that the Egyptians were the most ancient of mankind seems also to have been held by Pomponius Mela, who stated⁽¹²⁾ "vetustissimi ut praedicant hominum".

On the other point concerning the country of origin of mankind, the vast majority of the classical writers as we have already observed, seem to recognise the high relative antiquity of the Egyptian nation and, as is clear from Plato's account, the Egyptians were conscious of that. Herodotus, however, is the only exception to seem to indicate that there was some doubt about the matter because of his reference to Psammetichus's celebrated experiment.

The classical authors' belief is not devoid of truth. For they could have meant that Egypt is the country where the first monarchy with more or less recognised boundaries, was established, where a society was well organised with its highly advanced and very sophisticated institutions. We can find an echo for that in the words of a serious and well informed author like Strabo, who states,⁽¹³⁾ "from the outset the Egyptians have led a civic and cultivated life and have been settled in well known

(12) Pomponius Mela, op.cit. I. ix. 59.

(13) Strabo, 17.1.3.

regions, so that their organisations are a matter of comment"

In his commentary on Herodotus' story, Rawlinson says⁽¹⁴⁾, "the Egyptian claims to a high relative antiquity had, no doubt, a solid basis of truth. It is probable that a settled monarchy was established in Egypt earlier than in any other country. Babylonian history does not go back beyond 2286 B.C. Egyptian begins nearly 500 years earlier". This is now supported by such further evidences as we have since Rawlinson wrote, unless earlier Mesopotamian civilisation than the Babylonian must be considered; but it is doubtful if this was as settled a civilisation as the Egyptian civilisation.

(14) Rawlinson, The History of Herodotus, Vol. II, p.2. n.2.

The Egyptian Race and its Physical Characteristics.

The ancients were not unlike their modern descendants, aware and conscious of the differences existing among the various races of mankind. Thus the Greeks and Romans realised the differences between themselves and other peoples, including the Egyptians with whom we are concerned here. To which race, then, did the ancient Egyptians belong and what did they look like ? Unfortunately, not much has been said about these matters by the classical authors of our period.

Diodorus, for instance, says "only a few Egyptians were in his time found to be red-faced (*πυρροί*), the majority of such (red people) were non-Egyptians".⁽¹⁾ Propertius, a Roman poet, describes⁽²⁾ the Egyptians as swart^{hy} (fusci), thus, agreeing in that with the Peripatetic author responsible for the Physiognomics, which came down to us among the works of Aristotle.⁽³⁾

(1) Diod. I. 88. (quoted from Hecataeus of Abdera).

(2) Propertius, Elegies, II. xxxiii. 15.

(3) (Aristotle), Physiognomics, VI, 812a , 12.

The statements of Diodorus and Propertius do not apparently amount to a scientific investigation, nor in fact are they intended to be so. We should do both authors injustice if we consider their statements in this light. Instead they can be considered merely as travellers' observations. This applies especially to Diodorus who visited Egypt and saw for himself its people in their homeland.

Are Diodorus and Propertius correct in their respective statements ? One can safely say that though they are not scientists, one feels that their statements are not far from the truth.

A modern author, Cyril Aldred, says⁽⁴⁾, "The Egyptians appear to have been a slight race of medium height with long narrow skulls, brown skin and dark wavy hair, though their physical remains are scanty except in the south". Pierre Montet states⁽⁵⁾ "at the dawn of her history, Egypt's population in the Nile Valley was extremely mixed, and it remained so later". A third modern scholar maintains⁽⁶⁾ that "in ancient times, as at

(4) Cyril Aldred, Egypt to the End of the Old Kingdom, P. 22, Thames and Hudson 1965.

(5) Pierre Montet, Eternal Egypt, P.20. Engl. Trans. by Doreen Weightman (Wiedenfeld and Nicholson, London 1964). cf. also H.I. Bell, Cults and Creeds In Greco-Roman Egypt, p.3. (Liverpool 1954).

(6) A Dictionary of Egyptian Civilisation, ed. by Posener, p.237 s.v. Race.

present, the Europoids, predominating in the north, were mixed, even in the Theban region with negroids who predominated in the south. The races were fused on the banks of the Nile well before Pharaonic civilization came into being. In Pharaonic times, periods of weakness were marked by the infiltration of Libyans, Nubians and Asiatics; during periods of strength military colonists and foreign serfs were brought in. But these immigrants - who would possess anthropological similarities with the established population - did not have any marked effect on the autochthonous mass. The effects of later invasions and infiltrations (Greco-Macedonian colonists, Arab conquerors and immigrants and nomads from the Maghreb and the Sahara) were much more unobtrusive racially than in their political and cultural consequences."

This same scholar goes on to say "something which surprised the Greeks, and which strikes any visitor on arrival, is that this nation, in which the swarthiest whites and darkest skinned people have mixed, is the 'darkest' in the whole of the Near East. The colours of their skin range from the reddish-black of the Nubian to the yellow which the ancient artists always gave to the ladies; the tobacco-coloured skin of the inhabitants of Upper Egypt is burnt the darkest by the fierce sun. In some Theban tomb-models, for instance, the office-workers are painted yellow and the labourers brown".

Ancient and modern authors alike have therefore almost agreed on the question of the complexion of the ancient Egyptians in that they (the Egyptians) had different shades of colour.

In my opinion, Egypt, the cross-road between the continents of the ancient world, has always received wave after wave of foreigners, invaders or infiltrators flocking from almost all directions. It has always been able to absorb all those foreign elements into its indigenous population. As a result of this fusion of many races with their various physical characteristics, the colours of the skins of the Egyptians acquired different shades, depending naturally on the degree and the type of those with whom the Egyptians have been mixed. The result of all that, as some modern authors have already pointed out, is that the colours of the skins of the Egyptians up till the present time has ranged from the darkest in the south of the country to the fairest in the north. It is, however, quite true that the burning heat of the summer's sun has had a great effect on the colour of the skin of the people. This is very obvious if one looks at the colour of the fellah contrasted with that of the town dweller or even with his own wife, one will find that the colour of the skin of the peasant, especially those members of his body exposed to the sun, is very dark, whereas those of his wife or the town dwellers tend to be fairer, since they do not expose themselves to the sun.

The Egyptian Character and Manners:

The character, the behaviour and the manners of the ancient Egyptians were viewed from different angles by various classical authors of our period. In many cases we observe that the views and opinions expressed contradict one another or the actual facts. It is very interesting to notice the contrast between the views of the Greeks and of the Romans. The former showed remarkable desire and genuine interest using all possible means to know the Egyptians and their way of life. They also showed real sympathy and understanding and, to a certain extent, impartiality in their writings about the people of Egypt. The latter, in sharp contrast with the former, were mostly snobbish, contemptuous, ignorant and unsympathetic in their dealings with foreigners, including the Egyptians. In general, they were very hostile and biased against the Egyptians. Polybius (203? - 120 B.C.) for instance, is quoted by Strabo⁽¹⁾ as saying that when he (Polybius) visited Alexandria (181 - 180 B.C.) he was filled with disgust at the state of the city, which was then inhabited by three classes (or races): the first, the Egyptian or indigenous

(1) Strabo, 17.1.12.

stock of people, who were quick tempered and not inclined to civic life:, (τότε Αἰγύπτου καὶ ἐπιχώρου φύλον, ὃξὺ ἀπολιτικόν, . . .)

Other manuscripts, editions and translations, however, omit the negative in this clause and this makes the translation to be 'an acute and civilized race' (ὃξὺ καὶ πολιτικόν)⁽²⁾. But from the words of Polybius, one feels that he condemned the whole lot of the peoples of Alexandria; including the Egyptians. About two centuries after Polybius Tacitus writes,⁽³⁾ "Egypt, with the troops to keep it in order, has been managed from the time of the deified Augustus by Roman Knights (i.e. the prefects, who were appointed from the equestrian order) in place of their former Kings. It had seemed wise to keep this under the direct control of the imperial house a province which is difficult of access, productive of great harvests, but given to civil strife and sudden disturbances because of the fanaticism and superstition of its inhabitants, ignorant as they are of laws and unacquainted with civil magistrates".

(2) See Loeb Edition of Strabo's Geography, Vol.VIII. p.50. n. 23, p.51, n.1; Shuckburgh, The Histories of Polybius, Vol.II. p.492. H.I. Bell, Alexandria, J.E.A. VOL.XIII, 1927, p.178.

(3) Tacitus, Hist. I. n. cf. also Ibid. iv. 81, where he described Egypt as the most superstitious of nations.

These are two examples of how the Greeks and Romans viewed the Egyptians. If Polybius meant that the Egyptians were not inclined to civil life, as cited before, then Strabo himself is not in agreement with him. Since Strabo, as we know,⁽⁴⁾ praised the way the Egyptians organised themselves and their society. Again, the description of the Egyptians by Tacitus does not agree with what Diodorus and Strabo say about these people. Tacitus looked at Egypt and the Egyptians from a materialistic Roman point of view. He despises the people of Egypt, their customs, manners and their religion, but likes the products and great harvests of their country. He wants to exploit them, but wants them to turn a blind eye and to keep quiet and to be submissive to the injustices inflicted upon the oppressed masses of the Egyptians by the Roman rulers. Perhaps the vast majority of the Egyptians were ignorant of laws and unacquainted with civil magistrates of the Romans, but they were certainly not ignorant of their long-established laws and other institutions. Moreover, if what Polybius and Tacitus said were true, then one must remember that in Polybius' time and when Tacitus wrote, the Egyptians were, so to speak, foreigners in their own country, a forgotten lot, exploited people, and were

(4) See p. 306-7.

treated as an inferior class of people as the Jewish writer Philo, rightly pointed out,⁽⁵⁾ while those of Greek and/or Macedonian and later Roman origins were kings or prefects, rulers, noblemen, feudal landlords, generals and, in short, masters.⁽⁶⁾ This distressing condition of the Egyptians as underdogs and under-privileged race in their own homeland were to continue for some time to come until under the later Ptolemies they (the Egyptians) regained some of their former prestige, apparently as a result of their continuous struggle and rebellions against their foreign oppressors and following their emergence as victorious in the battle of Rafa (217 B.C.), which was their first participation in the wars of the Ptolemies.⁽⁷⁾ This improvement of the status and social conditions of the Egyptians was unfortunately stopped by the Romans after their invasion of Egypt (30 B.C.)⁽⁸⁾.

(5) cf. E. Bevan, A History of Egypt, The Ptolemaic Dynasty, p.79; cf. also, Erman, A Handbook of Egyptian Religion, p.203. (London, 1907).

(6) Philo, Flaccus, 80.

(7) H.I. Bell, Egypt From Alexander the Great to the Arab Conquest, p. 58, Oxford, 1948.

(8) E. Bevan, op.cit. p. 87.

It is also untrue that the Egyptians were cowardly as Lucan says⁽⁹⁾ or unwarlike as Strabo states.⁽¹⁰⁾ One should be careful, however, not to take Lucan seriously for he was not discussing a scientific theory or writing a factual description of Egypt; after all, he is a poet and generally poetry tends to be sensational. One must also take into consideration that like the majority of his countrymen, in his time Lucan was not in favour of Egypt and the Egyptians. Strabo, on his part, was a bit cautious and when he described the Egyptians of his own time as unwarlike, he qualified his statement by saying⁽¹¹⁾ that "Egypt was inclined to peace from the outset, because of the self-sufficiency of the country and of the difficulty of invasion by outsiders, being protected in all directions by natural barriers as described before⁽¹²⁾ and by the fact that its southern border was protected not only by

(9) M. Annaeus Lucanus (Lucan), Civil War, X. 53-54, 63-67; cf also (Aristotle) Physiognomics, vi. 812, a, 12 who considers cowardness connected with the colour of the skin, "those who are too swarthy are cowardly; this applies to the Egyptians and Ethiopians".

(10) Strabo, 17.1.53.

(11) Strabo, loc.cit.

(12) See p. 51ff.

natural obstacles but also by the fact that the peoples who inhabited the regions to the south were not numerous, besides they were nomad and unwarlike". These factors, however, made the Egyptians secure in their land. The fact that the countries neighbouring Egypt were neither united nor strong, and, therefore, they did not constitute a threat or danger to the peace and security of Egypt, has contributed to the peaceful nature of the Egyptian people. This, however, did not prevent the Egyptians from showing aggressive and warlike tendencies, whenever their country was threatened from outside, and their history is full of encounters with various invaders and infiltrators. In these encounters they showed remarkable courage and prowess. On this point a modern scholar, J.M. White, says⁽¹³⁾ "it may be true to say that a great warrior nation is only born as the result of a threat or challenge from another warrior nation on its borders. Thus the British and the Germans became warrior nations as a consequence of continual pressure from the French. But what pressure of this sort existed in the case of Egypt ? They were not intimidated by the presence of any powerful neighbours. The Bedouins of the eastern and western deserts were simple tribesmen; the Nubians lived far to the south in their own remote fastnesses; and for most of dynastic

(13) Jon Manchip White, Everyday Life in Ancient Egypt, pp.143, 144 (B.T. Batsford, London, 1963).

history there was little to fear from the peoples of the Eastern Mediterranean. The rise of the great nation states had not yet taken place; the desert of Sinai was an excellent natural barrier; the peoples of Palestine and Syria were small and divided, and provided a deep neutral zone between Egypt and her potential enemies".

The Egyptians' sense of gratitude for their benefactors and their respect shown to their parents and ancestors not only in their life-time but also after their death was also a matter of comment by some classical authors. In this respect Diodorus, known for his enthusiasm and admiration towards the Egypt of the Pharaohs, tells us,⁽¹⁴⁾ "The Egyptians, they say, surpass all other people, in showing gratitude for every benefaction; since they hold that the return of gratitude to benefactors is a very great resource in life; for it is clear that all men will want to bestow their benefactions preferably upon those whom they see will most honourably treasure up the favours they bestow. And it is apparently on these grounds that the Egyptians prostrate themselves before their kings and honour them as being very true gods, holding, on the one hand, that it was not without the influence of some

(14) Diod. I. 90.

divine providence that these men have attained to the supreme power, and feeling, also, that such as have the will and the strength to confer the greatest benefactions share in the divine nature". Diodorus also says,⁽¹⁵⁾ "it is a most sacred duty, in the eyes of the Egyptians, that they should be seen to honour their parents or ancestors all the more after they have passed to their eternal home".

The feelings of hostility towards the Egyptians are also very clear from what the majority of the Roman authors who wrote about Egypt and the Egyptians of their times. We have already mentioned a few examples of their satirical writings. But a few more examples here will not be out of place. We find Propertius saying,⁽¹⁶⁾ "guilty Alexandria, land most skilled in guile, and Memphis so often bloodstained with out (i.e. Roman) woe, where the sand robbed Pompey of his three triumphs". This hostile statement is paralleled by two others written by the unknown author of the book entitled 'de Bello Alexandrino' describing the war of Caesar against the Alexandrians, these were not in favour of the Alexandrians. For this author writes,⁽¹⁷⁾ "indeed when one gets to know both the breed and its feeding there can be no doubt whatever

(15) Diod. I. 93.

(16) Propertius, Elegies, III. xi. 43-45.

(17) (Julius Caesar), de Bell.Alex. 7.

that as a race they (i.e. the Alexandrians) are extremely prone to treachery". This same author also states⁽¹⁸⁾, "Caesar was well aware that they (the Alexandrians) were deceitful, always pretending something different from their real intentions". To which Egyptians the words of Propertius and the author of 'de Bello Alexandrino' were directed ? One suspects that they were aimed at those Alexandrians who were warring against the Romans, who were, in fact, mostly of foreign stock, mainly Greeks and Macedonians.

Hostile though the Romans were against the people of Egypt, they could not decry their good qualities. The author of 'de Bello Alexandrino' acknowledged the skill and the cleverness which distinguished the people of Alexandria. For he stated⁽¹⁹⁾. "highly productive and abundantly supplied as it was, the city furnished equipment of all kinds. The people themselves were clever and very shrewd, and no sooner had they seen what was being done by us (i.e. the Romans) than they would reproduce it with such cunning that it seemed it was our (Roman) men who had copied their works. Much also they invented on their account".

(18) Ibid, 22; cf. also Hdt. 11. 121, who says that according to the Pharaoh Rhampsinitus (Ramses) the Egyptians excelled all other nations in craft.

(19) (Julius Caesar), de Bell.Alex. 3.

The classical authors of our period, however, did not cover all the Egyptian character, but in many a passage they implied that Egyptians were content; cheerful, joyous, fond of pleasures, festivities and good life in general. The best proof of their joyous life is the number of feasts and festivals which they celebrated all the year round,⁽²⁰⁾ and also from the scenes which they depicted on their everlasting monuments, and finally from one's own observations of the present day Egyptians, whose fondness of jokes and joy is proverbial in the region where they live; the spirit of light heartedness does not quit them even under the most sad and distressing conditions. They were also extremely religious, clean and healthy. One can find evidence for that in their many religious observations and customs, and from their strict rules concerning food and cleanliness, as we are going to see in the later chapters of this thesis. The Egyptians were clearly law-abiding people, as is shown by the amount of laws they left to us, as we shall see when we describe their laws. But we do not know, however, how many laws they broke.

The Egyptians also had a distinct philosophy of the life here and in the hereafter. In this connection Diodorus

(20) Strabo, 17.1.17; L. Annaeus Seneca, Moral Letters, LI. 3; cf. also A Dictionary of Egyptian Civilisation, P. 250, s.v. 'Sexual Behaviour'; J. White, op.cit. P. 19.

said⁽²¹⁾, "The inhabitants of Egypt consider the period of this life to be of no account whatever, but place the greatest emphasis on the time after death when they will be remembered for their virtue, and while they give the name 'lodgings' (*καταλύσεις*) to the dwellings of the living, thus intimating that we dwell in them but a brief time, they call the tombs of the dead 'eternal homes' (*αἰδίοις οἴκους*) since the dead spend endless eternity in Hades; consequently they give less thought to the furnishings of their houses, but on the manner of their burials they do not forego any excess of zeal". One does not, however, know from whom Diodorus received such information. One perhaps thinks that he obtained it from Hecataeus of Abdera whom he extensively used. One must also ask whether all that Diodorus said corresponds to the actual facts. J. Černý^l says⁽²²⁾ that until the middle of the XVIIIth Dynasty, the prevalent opinion was that life after death was a simple replica of earthly existence. The words of Diodorus as regards the houses and tombs of the Egyptians are supported by Černý. Černý^l tells⁽²³⁾ us that the earthly house, including the king's palace, was built of some perishable material, sun-baked bricks, reeds or wood, the

(21) Diod. I. 51.

(22) Jaroslav Černý^l, Ancient Egyptian Religion, p.91 (London 1952).

(23) Černý^l, op.cit. p. 97.

permanence of both the temple and the tomb was assured by employing stone for their construction or by cutting them in the living rock. It is true that the Egyptians believed in the eternity of the soul, and that the death as only a transitional stage to the other life, which is everlasting, that they no doubt had taken great care to preserve their bodies through embalment and these by turn in well-built and well-furnished and well provided tombs. The clearest proof for that is that today we see the pyramids and other buildings, which were constructed solely for their burial, while we find that their houses have crumbled and disappeared long ago. The statement of Diodorus, on the other hand, should not be taken to mean that the Egyptians were preoccupied or obsessed with the life after death more than with life itself. For this is entirely against their nature, as one can see today. Indeed, they enjoyed every moment of their life in the manner which they thought in accordance with the rules of their society. They also believed in the continuity of life, that life does not end with the death of the person, but it continues in the hereafter in a different shape.

CHAPTER X

RELIGION

"The Egyptians", said Herodotus⁽¹⁾ in the middle of the 5th century B.C., "are beyond measure religious (or superstitious according to some modern translators) more than any other nation".

«Θεοσεβέες δὲ περιδοῶς ἔόντες μάλιστα πάντων ἀνθρώπων»

Almost four centuries after Herodotus, Diodorus⁽²⁾ was told that

"Egypt is the country where mythology places the origin of the gods", 'ἐπεὶ δὲ κατὰ τὴν Αἴγυπτον θεῶν τε

γενέσεις ὑπάρξαι μυθολογοῦντας!

How far are such statements correct ? Did the classical authors really understand the Egyptian religion ? Could the classical authors penetrate into the Egyptian places of worship and thus obtain a first hand knowledge of the Egyptian religious life ?

Some of these classical writers no doubt visited Egypt and penetrated deep into the country. Herodotus, Diodorus and Strabo all went to Egypt. The first and the third were known to have travelled widely into the country covering it from north to

(1) Hdt. ii. 37, cf. also Plutarch, de Iside et Osiride, 9.

(2) Diod. I. 9, quoting Hecataeus of Abdera.

south. They certainly observed (like modern travellers) the life of the people closely and with interest. They saw with astonishment the Egyptians meticulously and zealously practising their religious duties. Our authors were also impressed to watch the Egyptians paying much care and attention to their food and dress and general appearance. They admired their cleanliness and piety. They noticed also the important role which religion played in their life. They saw how the priestly order was so powerful and so wealthy. Were not the priests the elite of the country and its scientific and intellectual leaders ? In fact, not only in Pharaonic Egypt but throughout the history of the country these priests, who devoted a great deal of their time and most of their life in pursuing religion and learning, have played the leading role in the life of their country and they have always been in the forefront of the struggle against foreign rule. Briefly speaking, religion was not only important to the ancient Egyptians but also to their descendants. Their religion was their life.

To come back to the classical writers of our period, we observe that there are many differences among them in their observations, in the period which they describe, the amount of information they left, and in their attitude towards the religion of the Egyptians. To illustrate our argument, we ought not, for instance, to equate what Diodorus said with the account of Strabo.

For although both visited the country, their visits took place in two different times under two different regimes, the first under the late Ptolemies and the second under the early Romans. Diodorus devoted a great part of his First Book to "discussion of the Egyptian religion". Strabo did not do the same but he mentioned a certain worship or god or deity wherever it was relevant in his topographical work. We must also distinguish between those who visited the country such as Diodorus and Strabo, and consequently gained a first hand information and those who did not. Nor should we by any means equate what the Greeks said with what was said by their Roman counterparts. The Greeks as a whole were not hostile to Egypt and the Egyptians nor foreigners totally unacquainted with them. They were mostly sympathetic and understanding and even full of admiration towards the religion of Egypt, though they might have been sceptical towards certain matters; but they were unlike the Romans who were haughty, inimical and sarcastic. The writings of these latter were mostly marred in political propoganda and therefore can only be described as very biased. For the Romans the Egyptians were fanatic, idolatrous, superstitious and demented⁽³⁾. And they were impious, polytheistic

(3) M. Annaeus Lucanus (Lucan), The Civil War, viii, 538-544; Cicero, Tusc.Disput, V. xxvii. 78; Tacitus, Hist. I. 11.

and godless according to a Jewish writer⁽⁴⁾ contemporary to these Roman writers.

However, the question remains how much these classical writers were able to understand; in other words, how much truth is in their statements. It is not a simple matter for these authors to write about or speak of the religion of the Egyptians without knowing the geographical, social and political conditions under which its people live. Nor would any treatment of such a topic be complete without understanding the temperament and knowing the language of the people concerned. If some of the classical writers were able to visit Egypt and obtain first hand information on the geographical, political and social conditions of that country and also on the temperament of the people, none of these authors knew or pretended to have understood the Egyptian tongue. Perhaps they could understand or know a few words of the Egyptian language^(5a), exactly like modern tourists to Egypt when they can pick up a few Arabic words. But such a scanty knowledge presumably is not sufficient either to use it to study a certain topic or phenomenon or even to use it for conversation, despite the claim of Diodorus^(5b) that he associated himself with many of

(4) Philo, The Embassy to Gaius (or Legatio) xx. 163.

(5a) Pierre Montet, Eternal Egypt, p. 286

(5b) Diod. 111. 11.

the priests of Egypt. We cannot know whether they had known any Greek language or whether any interpreters were available. Besides, neither the ancient Egyptians were willing to divulge certain aspects of their religion to foreigners⁽⁶⁾ nor could these latter gain access to the inner parts of the Egyptian temples. This does not exclude the fact that some classical authors such as Strabo⁽⁷⁾ could enter a few temples, when these were most probably either in ruins or deserted. Thus these authors were deprived from either taking part in the religious service and rites or even from observing such services and rites. It is for these reasons that the information imparted to us by the classical authors is expected to be incomplete and lacking.

This leads us to the question of how far the writings of the classical writers correspond to the actual fact. I do not pretend here to know or understand the Egyptian languages either. But thanks to the great works of the industrious Egyptologists of various nationalities, races and creeds, (and to all of them I am, as an Egyptian, most grateful), we are able to have a much more authentic picture than that given by the classical writers, since

(6) Diod. I. 21.

(7) Strabo, 17.1.28.

modern authors were able to read the Egyptian writings and inscriptions in their original languages.

Viewing the various accounts given by different classical writers on the ancient Egyptian religion we shall see that their accounts differ considerably in length. The classical authors of our period moreover did not treat equally all the aspects of the Egyptian religion, as it was a manifold religion. For while the vast majority of these writers spoke briefly or lengthily of the animals' consecration, only Diodorus devoted a great part of his First Book to the treatment of the Egyptian mythology. Other aspects of the Egyptian religion such as the role of magic in religion were surprisingly totally overlooked by all of them.

A : Mythology

With the exception of Diodorus, who dared to take the risk, the classical authors of our period did not say much about the mythological aspect of the Egyptian religion. Strabo, for instance, was content to mention only the names of some of the cosmic gods and the centres of their worship. Our treatment of the mythology of Egypt, therefore will be mainly based on the account given to us by Diodorus.

In Diodorus' account the first thing we shall observe is that he frequently used the phrase "they say" " $\phi\alpha\sigma\iota\nu$ ", by that indicating that it was neither his opinion, nor his personal observation, but that he recorded what was said to him by his informants, namely the Egyptians. Introducing his account in the above mentioned manner, Diodorus, therefore, absolved himself from the responsibility for his statements, whether they were correct or not, corresponding to the actual facts or not; it does not concern him. It is clear from what he said in the preface of his work that what he was writing was no more than a summary and compilation of historical works written by his predecessors.⁽⁸⁾ This is why, as we said, he always used the phrase "they say" " $\phi\alpha\sigma\iota\nu$ " to introduce his account. For this reason his account must be dealt with in this light.

Having mentioned his above-listed statement, Diodorus then recorded⁽⁹⁾ what was said to him about Egypt as being the home of the first man, and the proofs for such claims were also given to him. He was further told^(10a) how the ancient Egyptians conceived the universe around them, its driving forces and the various elements of which it consists, its cosmic or celestial gods and its terrestrial or human ones.

(8) Diod. I.3.

(9) Diod. I. 10.

(10a) Diod. I. 11-27.

The story of the creation, which was given to Diodorus by the Egyptians, goes like this: "The people of Egypt long ago when they came into existence conceived that two gods were both eternal and first, namely the sun, which they called Osiris and the moon, to which they referred as Isis. Their names were appropriate to their functions. For Osiris when translated into Greek, means "many-eyed",^(10b) and properly so because in shedding his rays in every direction he surveys with many eyes, as it were, all land and sea. Osiris was also said to have been represented with the cloak of a fawn-skin (τὸ ἐνάματόν τῆς νεβρίδος) about his shoulders as imitating the sky spangled with stars. As for Isis, if her name is translated it means "ancient"^(10b) because her birth was from everlasting and ancient. Besides, she was represented with horns on her head, because of the appearance which she has to the eye when the moon is crescent shaped, and because among the Egyptians a cow is held sacred to her. The two deities, however, regulated the entire universe and contributed all the matters essential to the generation of all things. The sun (i.e. Osiris)

(10b) This is surely a very fanciful idea. In fact, the name 'Isis', for instance, comes from the Egyptian 'Eset', which means 'seat'; this Isis, as was suggested, was the personification of Osiris' throne. (J. Cerny, Ancient Egyptian Religion, p.84. (London, 1957). But J. Gwyn Griffiths (The Conflict of Horns and Seth, p.100 n.1) quotes Brugsch (Religion und Mythologie, 12) as showing that the explanations in Diodorus, I,11, are probably based on popular etymologies of the Egyptian names.

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contributed the fiery element (πυρῶδης) and the spirit (πνεῦμα), the moon (i.e. Isis) the wet (ὕγρὸς) and the dry (ξηρὸς), and both jointly the air (ἀήρ); and that these were the origin of everything. These five elements, the spirit, the fire, the wet, the dry and the air, were deemed gods by the Egyptians and were given names appropriate to their distinct natures and their contributions.

To the spirit they gave the name Zeus, as its name means in Greek and in like manner the fire was called Hephaestus, the earth Demeter, the wet Oceane, (also some Greeks such as Homer have taken it to be Oceanus, whom the Egyptians considered to be their river Nile, on which also their gods were born); and finally the air was called Athena. These five deities, the Egyptian account went on to say, visited the inhabited world, revealing themselves in various forms, in the forms of sacred animals, men or in other chapes, for as they are omnipotent they are capable of doing whatever they like. And Homer, in Diodorus' opinion, visited Egypt and acquainted himself with such accounts directly from the lips of its priests. Concluding his account on the celestial gods as given by the Egyptians, Diodorus said that "the genesis of the celestial gods is from eternity".⁽¹¹⁾

(11) Diod. I. 11-12.

"Besides these celestial or cosmic gods", the Egyptians told Diodorus, "there was yet another set of gods, who were terrestrial, having been once mortals, but on account of their sagacity and the good services they rendered to all, attained immortality, some of them having even been kings of Egypt. These were also given names, if translated into Greek, in some cases the same as those given to the celestial gods, while others have a distinct appellation, such as Helius, Cronus, Thea, Zeus, also called Ammon by some, Hera, Hephaestus, Hestia and finally Hermes.

There is no agreement on who was the first king of Egypt, of these terrestrial or human gods. Some said Helius, whose name is the same as that of the sun (helios), while others said Hephaestus, who was said to have discovered fire. Then Cronus became the ruler, and upon marrying his sister Rhea he begat Osiris and Isis, according to some writers of mythology, but according to the majority, Zeus and Hera, whose high achievements gave them dominion over the entire universe. From these last were sprung five gods, one born on each of the five days which the Egyptians intercalate; the names of these children were Osiris and Isis, and also Typhon, Apollo and Aphrodite; and Osiris when translated is Dionysus, and Isis is more similar to Demeter than to any other goddess".⁽¹²⁾ Later, however, Diodorus stated⁽¹³⁾

(12) Diod. I. 13.

(13) Diod. I. 25.

that "in general, there is a great disagreement over (the identification of) these gods. For the same goddess is called by some Isis, by others Demeter, by others Thesmophorus, by others Selene, by others Hera, while still others apply to her all these names. Osiris has been given the name Sarapis by some, Dionysus by others, Pluto by others, Ammon by others, Zeus by some and many have considered Pan to be the same god; and some say that Sarapis is the god whom the Greeks call Pluto".

Diodorus then went on to speak of Osiris' marriage to his sister, Isis, and his succession to the throne of Egypt, his achievements for the benefit of mankind in general, his deification and his death. Did Diodorus in fact reflect the Egyptian way of thinking ? Has he in reality mentioned what the Egyptians told him ? Was Diodorus' interpretations of the Egyptian mythological thought Egyptian ? The answer seems to be that it was not so. Gwyn Griffiths described⁽¹⁴⁾ it correctly as more Greek than Egyptian. There was a tendency among the Greeks as early as Herodotus to read Greek ideas into Egyptian religion⁽¹⁵⁾. The Greeks had quite often attempted to equate

(14) J. Gwyn Griffiths, The Conflict of Horus and Seth, p.100 (Liverpool Univ.Press, 1960).

(15) J. Gwyn Griffiths, Diodorus Siculus and the Myth of Osiris, 'Man', 1948, 97; E. Bevan, op.cit. pp.88, 89.

the two religions, their own and the Egyptian. They were also inclined to identify Egyptian gods with their own, and they seemed to have believed that the Egyptian gods were but the same as their gods.⁽¹⁶⁾ Did not the Greeks believe that Egypt was the origin of the gods and that their gods came to their country from there?⁽¹⁷⁾ The trend of equating and assimilating the two religions gained momentum after the conquest of Egypt by the Alexander the Great of Macedon and the events which followed on that conquest. Large numbers of Greeks flocked into Egypt carrying with them their national gods and religious ideas following the Ptolemaic take-over of the sovereignty over Egypt. The Ptolemies strengthened and encouraged that process of assimilation in their desire to establish a unified and strong kingdom of Egypt.^(18a) And what the Greeks of higher education learnt about the Egyptian religion from hellenized Egyptians was

(16) J.Gwyn Griffiths, loc.cit. ; cf. also Pierre Montet, op.cit. p.150; A.Erman, A Handbook of Egyptian Religion, p.175 (Engl.trans. by A.S.Griffith, London, 1907); E.Bevan, op.cit. pp. 88, 89.

(17) Diod. I. 23; cf. also Hdt. II. 50 ; and the modern scholar Samuel Dill, Roman Society from Nero to Marcus Aurelius, 1907, p.571 (New York 1957).

(18a)cf. Gwyn Griffiths, loc.cit.

often, no doubt, especially dressed up in a manner to make the Greek find in it a profound wisdom. Old crude mythology and primitive ritual was interpreted as embodying Greek philosophic ideas; Greek and Egyptian ideas were jumbled up together in a strange amalgam, very much as Theosophy today dresses up bits of Hinduism for Europeans by amalgamating them with ideas borrowed from Christianity. (18b)

But the presentation of the Egyptian religion by Diodorus was, to be fair to him, not wholly Greek. There were many things common between the religious thoughts of all nations in general and between the Egyptians and the Greeks in particular. (19a) The Egyptians as well as the Greeks, for instance, arranged some of their gods into couples. The Egyptians had Amon and Amaunet, Osiris and Isis, and Seth and Nephthys; and the Greeks had Cronus and Rhea, and Zeus and Hera. The two peoples had stories regarding the creation in many ways similar; and there were many things common in their imaginations. Because of all the above reasons the intermingling of the two religions was inevitable, and under the Ptolemies this trend was more or less a necessity. This was bound to produce a sort of confusion. Thus we find Diodorus,

(18b) E. Bevan, A History of Egypt, Ptolemaic Dynasty, p.89

(19a) Pierre Montet, op.cit. p.150.

Strabo and the majority of the classical authors using Greek names for the Egyptian gods, confusing oftentimes one with the other. For if Osiris happened to have possessed a certain function which another deity, say, Dionysus had, this would not necessarily make him identical with that deity. Nor could a deity like Sarapis (or Serapis), which was of a comparatively recent introduction as far as the authors of our period are concerned, be exactly the same as Osiris. It is true, however, that Sarapis had by the Greco-Roman era replaced Osiris to a great extent.^(19b) We can go on and on to show the confusion in which the classical writers had fallen, owing, in my belief, to their failure to understand fully the complicated Egyptian religion.

The most noticeable or rather the most strange thing in Diodorus' account, indeed, was his reference to the existence of two distinct sets of gods, the first group consisted of celestial, who originated from immortality, the second the terrestrial who were originally human beings, and some of them were even kings of Egypt, but were deified on account of their great and beneficial deeds. We observe here that Diodorus (or

(19b) J. Gwyn Griffiths, loc.cit.; cf. also A. Erman, op.cit. p.227; H.I. Bell, Cults and Creeds in Greco-Roman Egypt, p.19 (Liverpool, 1954).

perhaps those who told him) in the first part of the account, mentioned Osiris among the celestial gods. Both he and Isis were first, regulated the entire Universe, and were the origin of all gods and everything on this universe.

In the other half of the same account Diodorus included Osiris as well as Isis among the terrestrial gods, who were originally human beings, but because of their great deeds for the welfare of all men received immortality. Osiris was among the deified kings of Egypt.

Now we ought to ask ourselves whether Diodorus really meant that there were two distinct gods with the name Osiris, one celestial and another human. Or whether he in fact was relating two different versions of the same story, the one on astral or cosmic lines and the other on human lines. At the first glance one notices that Diodorus seemed to have implied that there were two distinct gods with the name Osiris, despite the fact that we do not know what he was intending to say. But one guesses that Diodorus was really giving two different interpretations of the same legend which he might have heard in two different places or read in two different sources, one on astral or cosmic lines and the other on human lines. In other words, one interpretation describes Osiris as a cosmic god and the other as a human god. This seems also to be the opinion of

some modern scholars.⁽²⁰⁾ For the Egyptians believed in the existence of but one Osiris, though they had created many legends about him.⁽²¹⁾

But it is perhaps worthy of remark here to say that Diodorus' account lays the stress on the second interpretation of the myth, namely, that Osiris was a human god and that he was also the king of Egypt.

The story of Osiris goes as follows⁽²²⁾: "Upon marrying his sister Isis, Osiris succeeded to the throne of Egypt and gained a great fame for his pioneer works in civilising and improving the quality of the life of man. He was said to have succeeded in making men give up devouring each other. For after his sister and wife Isis had discovered wheat, barley and other fruits of the earth, which were until then growing wild, he taught the people how to cultivate them." Agriculture in general, as it seems from Diodorus' account, was of great interest to Osiris. For it was he who discovered the vine, and it was he who taught his people to cultivate it and make wine from it. He was also said to have shown his fellow country-men how to control the

(20) J. Gwyn Griffiths, loc.cit.; *ibid.*, The Conflict of Horus and Seth, p.99 ff.

(21) A. Erman, op.cit. p. 36; Gwyn Griffiths, loc.cit.; Černý, op.cit. pp.84, 85.

(22) Diod. I. 13-20.

flood and inundation of the Nile by building dams and constructing embankments. It was also said that Osiris was the founder of the city of Diospolis (Luxor) in the Thebaid .

"After he had put the affairs of Egypt in order, he handed the supreme power in Egypt to Isis and left Hermes as her counsellor, and Heracles as general of all the land under his sway, while as governor he left Busiris to rule for him over those parts of Egypt which lie towards Phoenicia and border upon the sea and Antaeus over those adjoining Ethiopia and Libya, he set off with his army to make his world-wide campaign, accompanied by his brother, whom the Greeks called Apollo, and also by his two sons Anubis and Macedon, who were distinguished for their valour, the former wore a dog's skin and the latter the fore-parts of a wolf. He also took Pan, whom the Egyptians held in special honour. He took with him also Maron and Triptolemus, who were experienced in agriculture. In his campaign he visited many countries in Asia and Europe reaching as far as India and as far as Greece and Macedonia in the west. Finally he returned to Egypt where on account of his great deeds he was granted immortality, and when he died he joined the gods and received from Isis and Hermes sacrifices and every other highest honour. These also instituted rites for him and introduced many things of a mystic nature.'

As for the death of Osiris, there seemed to have been a very strict ban on divulging it. The priests of Osiris who knew the details from the earliest times refused to reveal anything about his death, but despite this some of them seemed at last to

have revealed some knowledge. The story, which they told, goes as follows: ⁽²³⁾ "When Osiris was ruling over Egypt as its lawful king he was murdered by his brother Typhon, a violent and impious man. Typhon then divided the body of Osiris into twenty-six pieces and gave one portion to each of the band of murderers as he wanted them all to share in the pollution and also to be steadfast supporters of his rule. But Isis with the aid of her son Horus avenged Osiris and having murdered Typhon and his accomplices she became queen over Egypt. The scattered pieces of Osiris, apart from his privates, were collected by Isis, who over each piece of the body fashioned out of spices and wax a human figure about the size of Osiris, wishing that Osiris should be honoured by all she summoned the priests of each region separately. She gave each group one of these images to bury in their region telling them that she entrusted them alone with the burial of Osiris. But according to some writers the bodies of Osiris and of his sister and wife Isis were resting at Memphis or Philae ?" ^(24a)

Taken as a whole Diodorus' account on the Egyptian mythology raises several points. Of these points we have already

(23) Diod. I. 21, 22.

(24a) See also Strabo, 17.1.23.

suggested that Diodorus in fact related two stories about the same god and that he could not have meant that there existed in Egypt two gods with the name Osiris. Thus if we consider that Diodorus meant one Osiris and that there were two stories about him, we should ask ourselves whether Osiris was a sun god or else a human god, who was once a king of Egypt. We must also ask why did Osiris have all these functions which seem oftentimes contradictory ? The answers to these questions are manifold.

The question of the origin of the nature of Osiris has long been debated by the Egyptologists. The whole question of the Osirian legend was summarised by a modern scholar in the following: (24) before he became a god recognised in the whole of Egypt, Osiris had very modest beginnings. What exactly did his first worshippers have in mind ? Undoubtedly, a god who was the embodiment of the fertility of the earth and plants. But this original character - albeit purely hypothetical - quickly gathered new attributes. Gradually, as his cult spread across the country, Osiris inherited the functions of the gods he eclipsed. (25) Thus at Busiris, for example, where we first detect him, he had already replaced a much older god, Andjty, who was, it seems, a god king and from whom

(24b) A Dict. of Egypt. Civil. pp. 201, 202, s.v. Osiris.

(25) cf. J. Černý, op.cit. p. 87; Wainwright, The Sky Religion in Egypt, pp. 98, 99.

Osiris borrowed certain elements of his legend which represented him as having been a king in very early times. His later struggle with Re of Heliopolis resulted in a compromise. He became a member of the Great Ennead, the son of Nut and Geb and the brother of Isis, Nephthys and Seth; Horus, originally a falcon-god of the sky, took on another aspect as the son of Osiris and Isis. His transition to Memphis and assimilation to Sokaris, a form of the forces of the underworld already associated with Ptah, emphasised those parts of his legend relating to his earthly sovereignty and at the same time gave him his first funerary associations. Then he was received at Abydos where he entirely superseded Khentamentiu, the god of the dead and the cemeteries. Having thus become the god of the after-life and guarantor of human resurrection, Osiris extended his realm to the whole of Egypt and eventually supplanted the solar religion with regard to the after-life. At the end of the Vth Dynasty, the dead king was already an Osiris; on the eve of the Middle Kingdom, every deceased person was also an Osiris.

With his multiple personality, gained through his successive territorial conquests. Osiris ruled over the after-life. His survival and resurrection, assured by the practice of mummification, opened up to humanity the prospect of eternal life in a new kingdom. But as a result of his transfer to Heliopolis he had acquired other attributes. He remained one of the stars illuminating the night, Orion in the southern sky, but was also the

moon. And Osiris, who had supplanted the sun in the beliefs about the after-life, became in the mythology of the time one of its aspects; he was a form of the night sun and reference is made to a 'double soul' with Re as one manifestation and Osiris as the other. Isis and Nephthys, who by their affection had brought about the resurrection of the dead god, became the goddesses who welcomed the sun at its rising; and the Greeks, who collected very late traces of his myth, stated that Osiris "was the sun".⁽²⁶⁾

The modern author of the above-given article, in my opinion, has summarised the whole argument about the nature of the god, his origin and his almost contradictory functions but he may nevertheless have made the opposite mistake to that made by Diodorus and claimed too much unity in his account of Osiris. For although there were not two gods (with the same name, Osiris), there probably were two distinct elements, one cosmic and one human, which existed separately and then came together.

In the first interpretation of Diodorus, where Osiris was counted among the cosmic gods, we find Diodorus not entirely correct in stating that Osiris was the sun-god, instead of making him the sun-god of the after-life, the night sun. This same modern author⁽²⁷⁾ thinks that the classical authors made Osiris the

(26) Diodorus, I. 11. cf. also Plutarch, de Iside /

(27) A Dict. of Egypt. Civil. p.202. s.v. Osiris.

sun, because they collected very late traces of his myth.

His multiple personality he gained from inheriting the functions of the gods he eclipsed as a result of the gradual spread of his cult into Egypt. But not all of what Diodorus said about Osiris corresponded to the truth. It is even thought that half of what Diodorus related about Osiris is derived from what the Greeks used to say about Dionysus.⁽²⁸⁾ He is clearly referring to Dionysus when he states that the god discovered the vine and the ivy, that he made a joyous procession through Ethiopia, where he met the Satyrs, through Macedonia and Thrace, and even as far as India and other nations of Asia.⁽²⁹⁾ Even the phallic rites which Diodorus ascribed to Osiris were probably those of Dionysus.⁽³⁰⁾ This confusion however, resulted from the syncretising tendency of Diodorus and his fellow Greek authors, for he was not the only one to identify the two gods with each other.⁽³¹⁾

(28) J. Gwyn Griffiths, Diodorus Siculus and the Myth of Osiris, 'Man', 1948, 97 and ibid, The Conflict of Horus and Seth, p. 100. n.6.

(29) Diod. I. 18-20.

(30) Diod. I. 22.

(31) See Hdt. II. 42; Plutarch, de Iside, 34.

On the question of the multiple personality of Osiris we have already spoken, but it remains to be asked whether he was a god by origin or human god. We have already also mentioned Diodorus' twofold interpretation of the myth, and his emphasis on the side, which described Osiris as a man and as a lawful king of Egypt who suffered death at the hands of his jealous brother Typhon (Seth). A very human story, which is one of the reasons for it having become the most popular myth in the Egyptian religion.^(32a) The story showed how a jealous brother, who was bidding for power, contrived to overthrow his brother, the lawful king of the land, by murdering him, helped by seventy-two supporters. There were many stories about the method Seth used in murdering Osiris, one story said that Osiris was persuaded to lie in a box, which Seth had cunningly made to fit the size of the body of Osiris. This box was afterwards to be thrown into the Nile; another said that he was drowned in the river,^(32b) and a third stated that Osiris was murdered by Seth and his associates and his body was cut into twenty-six pieces, and each piece was given to one group of Seth's accomplices. Diodorus, however, succeeded in giving the last story.

(32a) See n. 46 infra.

(32b) H. Kees, op.cit. p. 33. J.Gwyn Griffiths, The Origins of Osiris, pp.13, Hassan Sobhi Bakry, The Main Elements of the Osiris Legend, p.255ff, p.274ff. (Ph.D Thesis, Univ. of Durham, 1953); H.TE.Velde, Seth, God of Confusion, p.84. (Leiden, Brill, 1967), where he quotes Pyramid Texts (P yr 24d, 615d; 766d).

Elsewhere⁽³³⁾ in his account Diodorus mentioned that Horus, the son of Osiris and his avenger, was murdered by what he called the Titans, and he was found under the water. Diodorus also referred to Horus' resurrection through the magical powers of Isis. He stated⁽³⁴⁾ that, "Isis discovered the drug which gives immortality, by means of which she not only raised her son Horus from the dead, who had been conspired against by the Titans and had been found under the water, giving him his soul again, but also granted him immortality". The Egyptian texts, however, often describe the magical protection given to the child Horus by his mother Isis, but they never refer to his being killed.⁽³⁵⁾ As we mentioned earlier, the death of Osiris has sometimes been represented as being from drowning, and his resurrection is also described. It is thus suggested⁽³⁶⁾ that Diodorus might have here confused Osiris with his son.

(33) Diod. I. 20.

(34) Diod. I. 25.

(35) J. Gwyn Griffiths, The Conflict of Horus and Seth, p.101.

(36) Ibid.

Was Osiris originally a human king, who was deified ?
Diodorus' second interpretation of Osiris' myth suggested so, as
we have already said. The initial phase of the earthly monarchy
of Osiris is also referred to in the Egyptian texts without being
expanded very much.⁽³⁷⁾ Osiris, the heir of Geb on the earthly
throne, is mentioned and one of his epithets 'Unennefer', 'the
perpetually good being' may have given rise to the story of Osiris
giving civilization to mankind as we mentioned before. It has
already been said also that in his conquests inside Egypt, he had
already replaced a much older god, Andjty, who was, it seems, a
god-king and from whom Osiris borrowed certain elements of his
legend which represented him as having been a king in very early
times. J. Cerný gave⁽³⁹⁾ the two opposed opinions, which have been
formed among the Egyptologists as to the origin of Osiris. The
one interpretation described Osiris as a god of human origin and
that he was a king. The second saw in Osiris a personification of
the overflowing of the Nile and of the rebirth of vegetable life
which follows the floods. Such a conception of Osiris as a god of
vegetation was current in Egypt in all periods of her later history,

(37) A Dict. of Egypt. Civil. p. 203, s.v. OSIRIS; cf. also
A. Erman, op.cit. p. 36.

(38) see p. 340.

(39) J. Cerný, op.cit. pp. 84, 85.

and may have existed at the very moment when his name is first met with in written records. ✓ / Cerny went on to explain the two theories and other relevant matters, apparently without adopting either of them. The theory that Osiris was a god of vegetation is not new. For although Diodorus, on whose account this chapter is largely based, did not say expressly that Osiris was a god of vegetation or of the Nile, his second interpretation of the myth quite clearly indicated that Osiris the deified human king was mainly interested in agriculture, irrigation and other relevant matters. This, however, seems to be the opinion of Gwyn Griffiths.⁽⁴⁰⁾ Plutarch, who wrote his elaborate book "De Iside et Osiride", but who is not within our period, referred⁽⁴¹⁾ to Osiris, who is according to one view the Nile, uniting with earth, which is Isis. He later told us⁽⁴²⁾ also that the wiser of the (Egyptian) priests, nevertheless, are said to extend this interpretation and to call Osiris the source of all moisture and vegetation.

(40) J. Gwyn Griffiths, Diodorus Siculus and the Myth of Osiris, 'Man', 1948, 97.

(41) Plutarch, *de Iside*, 32, cf. 38.

(42) Plutarch, *de Iside*, 33, cf. 38.

The theory that Osiris was a god of vegetation, however, seems to be the most popular among modern scholars.⁽⁴³⁾

But what about the rival theory which claimed that Osiris was a human king of Egypt and that he was deified in return for his great and useful deeds, which theory, as we noticed, captured the interest and fascinated ancient and modern people alike.

Gwyn Griffiths, who studied this question, examined the writings of previous authors, said⁽⁴⁴⁾ that Sethe was credited with the authorship of the theory which said that Osiris began as a human king. But Gwyn Griffiths himself rejected this theory.⁽⁴⁵⁾

It seems most probable that there are in fact two sources for the later worship of Osiris that became so popular. There is some evidence for a king or prince whom the Greeks called Antaeus who ruled in the Delta in very early times and whose story was like that of the human Osiris. The Egyptians called him Andjty^e. He was a god as well as a king, who established himself in the Delta, but later,

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- (43) J. Gwyn Griffiths, loc.cit., who also quotes others; E. Drioton and J. Vandier, L'Egypte, p. 65 (Les Peuples D' L'Orient Mediterraneen II. 4th ed. aug. Paris 1962); S.H. Hooke, Middle Eastern Mythology, p. 67 (Pelican 1963) cf. Wainwright (The Sky Religion in Egypt, pp. 99, 100) who told us that Osiris personified fertility and the life-giving inundation of the Nile; and also J.M. White (op.cit. p. 167) who described Osiris as a god of the Nile. cf. also J. Gwyn Griffiths (op.cit. pp. 56, 114) who quotes Oric Bates (JEA. 2(1915) 207-208) in support of his theory
- (44) J. Gwyn Griffiths, loc.cit. that Osiris was a god of vegetation.
- (45) Ibid.

when Osiris defeated And^ejty he took from him his status and also widened his sphere of influence. This is the human side of the matter. On the cosmic side he was at first a deity in conflict with Re, but later there was a kind of divine compromise by which Re retained his status of god of the sun by day, while Osiris took the status of the god of the sun by night. Then he also became the moon-deity and combined the masculine and feminine elements. The Hermaphrodite conception is therefore Egyptian as well as Greek.

But the human element of the Osirian legend, one notices, was the main reason for its popularity both among the Egyptians and foreigners alike. The majority of modern authors seem to agree with this view.⁽⁴⁶⁾ One of the modern scholars says⁽⁴⁷⁾ in this respect "Osiris is probably the best known of all the Egyptian gods. He owes his fame partly to a devotion extending over two thousand years, as a result of which his sanctuaries were erected along the shores of the Mediterranean, and partly to the very human character of his legend. He has nothing in common with these gods, so numerous in the Egyptian pantheon, which are difficult to understand, complex beings which are, at one and the same time, elemental forces

(46) A. Erman, op.cit. pp. 35, 36; A Dict. of Egypt. Civil. p. 201 s.v. Osiris.

(47) A Dict. of Egypt. Civil. loc.cit.

and half human and half animal creatures dating from prehistoric times, whose strange appearance we find disconcerting. Osiris is for us simply someone of our own flesh who suffered treachery and death on earth and who was restored to life by the wifely devotion of Isis, triumphed over death, bringing to all humanity the assurance of eternal survival".

The popularity of the Osirian legend and religion was also ascribed to the publicity it gained at the hands of the classical authors.⁽⁴⁸⁾ Though these authors gave an authentic account of the legend of Osiris⁽⁴⁹⁾, their treatment of the Egyptian religion gave the impression that this legend represents Egyptian religion.⁽⁵⁰⁾ But the actual fact is that it was a very slow growth and that was not until quite late days that it had permeated nearly everything.^(51a) The reason for the misapprehension regarding the Egyptian religion especially in the non-Egyptological world was largely caused by the vague statements of the syncretizing classical writers. They of course perpetuated as much as they were able to

(48) Besides Diodorus, Herodotus and Plutarch spoke at length of the myth.

(49) A Dict. of Egypt. Civil. p. 202. s.v. Osiris.

(50) Wainwright, op.cit. p. 93.

(51a) Wainwright, op.cit. p. 93. cf. also A. Erman, op.cit. p. 36. A Dict. of Egypt. Civil. pp. 201, 202, s.v. Osiris.

gather and that unfortunately was only the religion as practised at the very end of Egyptian days. The impression was gained from that form of Isis-worship which spread over the Greco-Roman world during the first centuries of the Christian era. This was riddled with foreign philosophical and moralizing notions, and would no doubt have been quite unrecognisable to an Egyptian, certainly an Egyptian of an earlier age. To make confusion worse there is to be found embedded in these writings a number of isolated statements which refer to an earlier period^(51b) and our authors give them an explanation to make them fit with their own conceptions.

But the classical authors ignorant as they were of the language and the way of life of the Egyptians, could not have done better. Diodorus stated that what he was writing concerned the early period of the Egyptian history up to Amasis' time, though he did not always stick to this definition. He also admitted, what was already mentioned before, that he was summarising what had already been written by earlier authors. Nor did he pretend to have been an expert in this field.

The fact however, remains that to the non-Egyptologist reader of the classical authors Osiris' religion was the centre of the Egyptian religion. Herodotus spoke⁽⁵²⁾ of Osiris and Isis as

(51b) Diod. loc.cit. Tibullus, I. vii. 21-38. These two examples are sufficient to prove this theory.

(52) Hdt. II. 42.

the only two gods worshipped by all the Egyptians, Diodorus' account we have already given, and Plutarch elaborated the Osirian myth in his book entitled "On Isis and Osiris". All the three main writers who wrote about the myth, therefore prove our point.

What was the fate of Osiris and his cult during the Greco-Roman period ? Diodorus, as we know, wrote about the pre-Amasis times. Therefore we must look for evidence somewhere else, in Strabo and in the other authors of our period.

Strabo didn't, unfortunately, write an account on the Egyptian religion, but he gave references to the gods, which were worshipped in the time of his visit to Egypt, to their temples and to the places of their worship.

During the Greco-Roman period the cult of Osiris seems to have been universal all over Egypt. None of the classical writers of our period, however, says this expressly. Strabo for one referred to a number of temples, where Osiris was worshipped in particular places, in Memphis,⁽⁵³⁾ in the town of Acanthus, which was situated south of Memphis⁽⁵⁴⁾ and Abydos⁽⁵⁵⁾. Strabo, however, stated⁽⁵⁶⁾ that the Apis Bull, whose temple was in Memphis was the same as Osiris. Diodorus also seemed to have meant the

(53) Strabo, 17.1.31.

(54) Strabo, 17.1.35.

(55) Strabo, 17.1.44.

(56) Strabo, 17.1.31. cf. A. Mekhitarian, L'Egypte, p. 96.

when he stated⁽⁵⁷⁾ that the Apis Bull was consecrated to Osiris. Since these two writers⁽⁵⁸⁾, in addition to Pomponius Mela⁽⁵⁹⁾ and Lucan,^{(60)a} who referred to idolatrous Memphis which worshipped Apis, maintained that the worship of Apis was universal, therefore the cult of Osiris ought to have been universal, especially if we know that there was a re-emergence of Osiris as well as Horus. This re-emergence was no doubt associated with a general revival of Egyptian sentiment which is discernible in the course of the Roman period, due to the policy of oppression and discrimination conducted by the Roman rulers against the Egyptian people and their culture and in favour of the Greeks and Hellenic culture.^{(60)b}

But before we proceed to the question of the impact of the god Serapis on the Osirian cult, we ought to mention Lucan's and Tibullus' references to Osiris. Both poets mentioned Osiris in anger, in a satirical manner, and in a spirit of animosity and

(57) Diod. I. 21.

(58) Diod. loc.cit. Strabo (17.1.40) who mentioned that an ox was among the animals of universal worship in Egypt.

(59) Pomponius Mela, De Chorographia, I. ix. 58.

(60a) Lucan, The Civil War, viii. 477-479.

(60b) H.I. Bell, Cults and Creeds, p. 66.

hostility against Egypt. Therefore their references must be considered as mere political propaganda, consequently they ought to be approached with some degree of caution. Lucan's reference was brief and it did not convey much useful information. For after having mentioned⁽⁶¹⁾ Isis, he threatened, in the person of Gnaeus younger son of Pompey, to scatter the limbs of Osiris, which were swathed in linen, in public streets and Gnaeus also threatened "to lay the gods as fuel whereon to burn his father's head". This reference throws a little light on the subject of mummification, which will be discussed in a later chapter, but this reference is of some significance as it refers to the form in which Osiris was represented in the Greco-Roman period, that is in the form of a mummified person, thus indicating his function as the god of the underworld.⁽⁶²⁾ But before the reference given above Lucanus told us that "by mourning for Osiris, the Egyptians proved that he was mortal", thus he concluded that the Egyptians worshipped mortals, which meant that they were not gods, for true gods are immortal, thus he wanted to tax them (i.e. the Egyptians) as idolatrous as we already mentioned. This reference also is of relevance to the question whether Osiris began as god of vegetation or as a human

(61) Lucan, op.cit. ix. 159-161.

(62) Ibid. viii. 838.

king. To this question we have referred earlier in this chapter.

The poetic account of Tibullus⁽⁶³⁾ on Osiris was of a different nature from that of Lucan. It shared, however, with that of Lucan, the spirit of satire against the Egyptians, and in great parts it bore a striking resemblance to Diodorus' account on the civilising deeds achieved by Osiris for the benefit of mankind. But Tibullus's account contained a very useful piece of information unique among the classical authors of our period. For he was the only author of that period to state expressly that the Nile was sung and worshipped as their Osiris by the barbarous folk of Memphis, who were brought up to wail the ox of Memphis (i.e. Apis Bull). Thus Tibullus identified Osiris with the Nile and, moreover, he referred to the Nile as life-giving and that because of the Nile Egypt never sued for rain. Tibullus therefore ascribed to Osiris, the Nile god, the function of fertility.

Immediately after that Tibullus went on to give us the rest of his account in which he described the civilising works of Osiris, such an account can be described if one is permitted to use the current word, as a mini-version of Diodorus' account. In this respect, Tibullus told us that "it was Osiris' cunning hand that first made ploughs and vexed the young earth with the iron share. He first entrusted seed to the untried earth, and gathered fruits

(63) Tibullus. I. vii. 21-38.

from unknown trees. He showed how to join the young vine and the pole and how to crop its green foliage with the stern pruning hook. For him the ripe grape clusters, which rugged feed had crushed, first yielded up their pleasant tastes, their juice taught men to guide the voice through changing strains (i.e. to sing) and bade untutored limbs move in measured time (i.e. to dance)".

To this statement of Tibullus, poetic as it was, applies the accusation of causing misapprehension as regards Egyptian religion, an accusation which was thrown by Wainwright⁽⁶⁴⁾ against the classical authors who inserted in their writings statements which refer to an earlier period.

Reverting to the Osirian religion in the Hellenistic era, within which our chosen period of study falls, in order to see the impact of the introduction of the new god Serapis, we find not a single comprehensive account dealing with the matter. Diodorus' account on the Egyptian religion, which has already been given, was concerned, as we know, with the earlier period. Nevertheless, Diodorus told us that some writers had identified Osiris with Serapis.⁽⁶⁵⁾ Such a reference to Serapis, which was introduced by the Ptolemies,⁽⁶⁶⁾ showed, as we said before, that Diodorus didn't

(64) Wainwright, op.cit. p. 93.

(65) Diod. I. 25. cf. also Tacitus, Hist. iv. 84.

(66) E. Bevan, op.cit. p. 43 ff.; Bell, op.cit. p. 19 ff.

stick to his chosen period of study. Strabo, in whose references to things Egyptian, mentioned Osiris and Serapis separately as if there was no connection between the two. He mentioned, for instance, the existence in Memphis of a temple, where Apis Bull, which was Osiris, was worshipped⁽⁶⁷⁾ and of the Serapeum⁽⁶⁸⁾ (the temple where Serapis was worshipped). The Serapeum at Memphis and that of Alexandria, which was also mentioned by Strabo^{(69)a} and by Tacitus^{(69)b} were the chief centres of the Cult of Serapis.⁽⁷⁰⁾ Strabo also mentioned⁽⁷¹⁾ the existence of a Serapeum at Canopus. This Serapeum seemed to have attracted more than any other the attention and to have aroused the interest of Strabo⁽⁷²⁾ apparently because of what was going on there, as many people were reported by him to have gone there to seek cure from their disease and illness or a solution for their problems. He also mentioned the presence of a Serapeum in the Nitroite Nome⁽⁷³⁾ in Lower Egypt.

(67) Strabo, 17.1.31.

(68) Strabo, 17.1.32.

(69)a Strabo, 17.1.10.

(69)b Tacitus. Hist. iv. 81 ff.

(70) H.I. Bell, Cults and Creeds in Greco-Romans Egypt, p.19.

(71) Strabo, 17.1.17.

(72) Strabo, loc.cit.

(73) Strabo, 17.1.23.

Thus we see that although the references of Diodorus and Tacitus to Osiris as being identified with Serapis indicated that some sort of relationship existed between at least the functions of the two deities, Strabo's references showed that the two gods were different and their worship was also distinct.

This leads us to the question of the origin of Serapis. This question seems to have occupied the attention of both ancient and modern authors alike. The Roman historian, Tacitus⁽⁷⁵⁾ gave us a lengthy account on the god Serapis and his origin. He told us that "Serapis was worshipped by Egypt, the most superstitious of nations, before all others".^(76a) About his origin Tacitus said that the topic had not yet been generally treated by the Roman authors: But according to the story which was told by the Egyptian priests, the god was brought from Sinope in Pontus (on the Black Sea) by Ptolemy I Soter, who was the first of the Macedonians to put the power of Egypt on a firm foundation, when he was still giving the new city of Alexandria walls, temples and religious rites, after he was instructed to do so by a dream. A temple, befitting the size of the city, was erected (by Ptolemy Soter to Serapis) in the quarter called Rhakotis; (the original site of Alexandria and

(74) Tacitus, Hist. iv. 84.

(75) Tacitus, Hist. iv. 81-84.

(76a)cf. also Strabo, 17.1.17.

the quarter later to be inhabited by the Egyptians;) there had previously been on that spot an ancient shrine dedicated to Serapis and Isis. Such, Tacitus said, was the most popular account. But according to some the god was brought from Seleucia in Syria in the reign of Ptolemy III (Euergetes, 247-222 B.C.,); still others claimed that the same Ptolemy introduced the god, but the place from which he came was Memphis.^(76b) Many, Tacitus added, regarded the god himself as identical with Aesculapius, because he cured the sick^(77a); some, as Osiris^(77b) the oldest god among these peoples⁽⁷⁸⁾ the Egyptians still more identified him with Jupiter as the supreme lord of all things; the majority, however, arguing from the attributes of the god that were seen on his statue or from their conjecture, held him to have been Father Dis". Just from which

(76b) cf. The modern author, A. Mekhitarian (L'Egypte, p.96), who maintained that Serapis, the foreign god, was introduced into Egypt by Ptolemy II. i.e. Philadelphus.

(77a) Besides Tacitus, Strabo also (17.1.17) spoke of the cures affected by Serapis.

(77b) cf. Diod. I. 25.

(78) A Erman (op.cit. p.36) seems to confirm that statement, when he says that the most ancient form of religion at which we can arrive has been coloured and transformed by the Osirian legend, so much so, that we can almost distinguish it as an Osirian religion distinct from the belief of prehistoric times of which we have no record. cf.also J.Gwyn Griffiths (The Origin of Osiris, p.1) who quotes the Pyramid Texts to confirm the view concerning the antiquity of Osiris and his cult.

source did Tacitus draw his account ? Clifford H. Moore suggests⁽⁷⁹⁾ that Tacitus seemed to have drawn his from Manetho, who apparently played an important part in the reorganization of the cult of Serapis-Osiris.

The origin of Serapis cult has also been the subject of a great deal of learned controversy among modern scholars. The most probable account perhaps was the one deduced by Wilcken⁽⁸⁰⁾ from his researches on the Ptolemaic papyri.

Commenting on Tacitus' statement that the god was brought from Sinope on the Black Sea, E. Bevan said⁽⁸¹⁾ "in itself there is nothing unlikely in the story, but doubt has been thrown upon it by the fact that the temple of the mummified bulls near Memphis, or the region of desert hill where the temple was, was called Sinopion - so the Greeks transcribed some Egyptian name which cannot now be made out. If the worship of Sarapis at Alexandria was, at the outset, a worship of the deity of the Memphian Sinopion, it may be thought a confusion in the legend, when it makes the image of Sarapis brought from Sinope on the Black Sea. That there should be an accidental association of the god Sarapis with two places, far apart, of similar name seems to go beyond probability. Perhaps, however, the association was not accidental. Supposing it is true that the image

(79) Clifford, H. Moore in Loeb ed. of Tacitus' History, p.166, n.2.

(80) H.I. Bell, op.cit. p. 19; E. Bevan, op.cit. p. 41.

(81) E. Bevan, op.cit. p. 44.

of Sarapis was procured from Sinope, in consequence of a dream and that the people of antiquity really were guided in such matters by dreams, instances given by the papyri and inscriptions themselves are enough to attest - it may well be that the mind of the dreamer, when he was casting about for the right mode of presenting the god of the Sinopien to the Greeks, flew to Sinope just because of the association of sound. Whether the image was made originally for a temple in Sinope, or for Alexandria, it seems probable that the tradition which gave as its creator the well-known fourth century sculptor, Bryaxis, preserves a true fact".

Bevan, therefore, did not dismiss the whole story as entirely improbable. But he seems, like the majority of modern scholars, to have accepted the results of Wilcken concerning this subject, that the god Sarapis was Egyptian by origin and its cult was also Egyptian, and its places of origin was Memphis.

In this respect Bell, who studied Wilcken's researches, stated⁽⁸²⁾: "It seems clear that Sarapis was neither Shar-apsi; a cult name of the Babylonian Ea, nor any other foreign importation, but a humanized and Hellenized form of the local god of Memphis, that Oserapis whom we have met in the curse of Artemisia. Oserapis was the Apis Bull, who after death was identified with Osiris as Osiris-Apis, just as the Hesis, the sacred cow of Hathor, after death

(82) H.I. Bell, loc.cit.

became Isis. More exactly, according to Wilcken, he was not the single dead bull but the whole series, from the earliest to the latest".

We can say that the majority of the modern scholars are agreed that Sarapis and his cult were not introduced from abroad, but of local origin. They originated from Memphis, of which the Apis Bull, which was thought to have been the manifestation of the god Osiris, was the local deity.⁽⁸³⁾ The name Sarapis or Serapis thus came from the combination of Osiris and Apis or Hapi; and it came to us in its Hellenized form as Serapis or Sarapis.⁽⁸⁴⁾

Sarapis and his cult, therefore, by the Greco-Roman period replaced to some extent Osiris and his cult.⁽⁸⁵⁾ The creation of the new deity, Sarapis, was thought to have been prompted and encouraged by the shrewd Ptolemies to provide a meeting place for the Egyptians, the Greeks and other foreigners, and to create some sort of religious as well as political unity among all the many races inhabiting Egypt.⁽⁸⁶⁾

(83) See J. Gwyn Griffiths, Diodorus Siculus and the Myth of Osiris. "Man", 1948, 97.

(84) cf. Bell, loc.cit., Griffiths, loc.cit.

(85) J. Gwyn Griffiths, loc.cit. and cf. also H.I. Bell (op.cit. p.22) who said that the cult of Sarapis virtually replaced the cult of Osiris (in the Hellenistic era).

(86) cf. Bell, loc.cit., and p.22. E. Bevan, op.cit. p. 44 ff.

Sarapis, moreover, together with Isis and Anubis, of whom we are going to speak next, became of universal nature.⁽⁸⁷⁾

In the Egyptian religion, particularly in the Osirian legend, Isis was always mentioned side by side with Osiris. It is for this reason that we notice that much has already been said about this goddess in the course of the discussion of the myth of Osiris. In the account of Diodorus given above, we saw how she was mentioned together with Osiris as the two first and eternal celestial deities. She was then the moon when Osiris was the sun. And among the terrestrial gods or the gods of human origin, she and Osiris were destined as the sons of Zeus and Hera. They were sister and brother, and they were wife and husband. She ruled Egypt when Osiris went on his world-wide civilizing campaigns. And after he returned home and when he was treacherously murdered, she, assisted by Horus, her son by Osiris, to whom she gave birth posthumously, avenged Osiris. Having done that she took a vow never to marry another man and passed the remainder of her life reigning over the land with complete respect for the law and surpassing all sovereigns in benefactions to her subjects.⁽⁸⁸⁾ It is for this reason apparently that she was called Thesmophorus (i.e. Law giver).⁽⁸⁹⁾ So successful she was as a queen of Egypt that it was ordained that the queen should have greater

(87) J. Gwyn Griffiths, loc.cit. cf. also Bell, op.cit. p. 22.
cf. J.P.V.D.Balsdon, ed., The Romans, pp.204,205

(88) Diod. I. 22.

(89) Ibid. 14,

power and honour than the king.⁽⁹⁰⁾ This point we shall discuss in a later chapter. And because of her benefactions, like Osiris she was deified after her death and was buried, where Osiris was buried before, either near Memphis, the temple area of Hephaestus or on the island of Philae on the borders between Egypt and Ethiopia.⁽⁹¹⁾

Diodorus, however, was clearly contradicting himself, when later in his book he stated⁽⁹²⁾ that Horus the son of Osiris and Isis, succeeded to the throne of Egypt after Osiris. Or did Diodorus mean that Isis and her son Horus ruled Egypt jointly following the death of Osiris ? In order to reconcile the two conflicting statements of Diodorus, it is reasonable perhaps to suggest here that since Horus was only a child after his father's death, he could not rule; consequently he needed a regent to rule in his name, and in this case Isis was eligible for that post. We may also explain it allegorically (a method which is a favourite one of Dr.Gwyn Griffiths) that Isis by theory was only a personification of Osiris' throne, since the name Isis (Egyptian Eset) really means "seat".⁽⁹³⁾ It is therefore logical, according to Diodorus' account, that the throne was permanent in Egypt. For Isis according to the same account, did not accompany Osiris abroad, but remained in Egypt. It is therefore

(90) Ibid. 27.

(91) Ibid. 22. cf. Strabo, 17.1.23.

(92) Diod. I 25.

(93) J. Cerný, [✓] op.cit. p. 84.

reasonable also to suggest that when Osiris was murdered and his throne became vacant, his posthumous son Horus was the only rightful pretender for the throne. Hence as Horus was assisted by his right to the throne (Isis) he won the case against his usurper uncle Typhon (Seth).

The Egyptians, according to Diodorus,⁽⁹⁴⁾ ascribed to Isis the function of the goddess of healing. She cured the people through her great knowledge of the health-giving drugs, which she discovered and through her great knowledge and skill in the science of healing. She also cured the people by using the practice of incubation, that is through visiting the sick in their sleep.

Isis seems, therefore, to have shared the same function of healing as the god Sarapis, of whom we have already spoken, and with whom Isis was associated in the Greco-Roman period.

Diodorus gave an instance in which Isis proved her healing power. He told us that she could not only revive her son Horus, who was killed by the Titans, but also give him immortality. To this point we have already referred.

It was also mentioned before how Isis discovered wheat and barley and other fruits of the earth before which time they grew wild and were unknown to men. As proof of the discovery of these fruits,

(94) Diod. I. 25.

they offered the following ancient custom which they (the Egyptians) still observed (by Diodorus' time): Even yet at harvest time the people dedicated the first heads of the grain to be cut, and standing beside the sheaf beat themselves and called upon Isis, in this way rendering honour to the beneficial goddess. Moreover, in some cities during the Festival of Isis as well, stalks of wheat and barley were carried among other objects in the procession to commemorate Isis' discovery.⁽⁹⁵⁾

It is obvious here that Diodorus might have observed the festivals of Isis during his visit to Egypt. His account on these festivals, however, was another example of the syncretizing tendency, which coloured the Greek writings especially in the Hellenistic period. Diodorus must have noticed the resemblance between the Festival of Isis in Egypt and the Festival of Demeter or Ceres in Greece. He even often identified the two goddesses.⁽⁹⁶⁾

One of the most well known facts, which was very much publicised by the classical authors of our period, Greek and Roman alike, was the universality of the cult of Isis, and its spread far and wide, east and west. Even Diodorus, who as we know was writing about the Pharaonic period of Egypt, did not fail to mention this fact. In this respect he told us⁽⁹⁷⁾ that "practically the entire

(95) Diod. I. 14.

(96) Diod. I. 13, 14, 29, 96.

(97) Diod. I. 25.

inhabited world was their witness, in that it eagerly contributed to the honours of Isis because she manifested herself in healing". The universality of the cult of Isis was further mentioned by the Roman poet Lucan.⁽⁹⁸⁾

Some classical authors also mentioned the spread of the cult of Isis into particular countries. Thus Diodorus was told⁽⁹⁹⁾ that the origin of Isis was transferred by the Greeks to Argos in the myth which tells of Io who was changed into a heifer. The cult of Isis not only reached the Greek mainland, but it also invaded the Greek islands. Thus Ovid mentioned a Cretan praying to Isis. The Cretan said⁽¹⁰⁰⁾:

"O Isis, who dwellest in Paraetionium and the Mareotic fields and Pharos and the sevenfold waters of the Nile, help us, I pray, and heal our sore distress. Thee, goddess, thee and these thy symbols, once I saw and recognized them all - the clashing sound, thy train, the torches, (the rattling) of the sistra ! "

The cult of Isis had also invaded Rome and the Italian Peninsula on a large scale. In the massive amount of Latin literature, which was coloured with political propaganda for Rome against Egypt, with whom Rome was then on bad terms, the influence of Isis and her cult, seemed to have been very strong. Yet despite their reluctant

(98) Lucan, The Civil War, ix. 158-161; cf. Oxyrhynchus P. 1380.

(99) Diod. I. 24.

(100) Ovid, Metamor. ix. 773-794.

acceptance of these foreign deities and their cults, the Roman authors were clearly very resentful against such invasion of these foreign cults.

Resentment and hostility against foreign cults in Rome was expressed, for instance, by Lucan in various places.⁽¹⁰¹⁾ But the most hostile and satirical of all was Propertius, who in his lengthy poetic statement said :⁽¹⁰²⁾

"Once more those dismal (tristia) rites have returned to plague us: now for ten nights hath Cynthia sacrificed. And a curse upon the rites which the daughter of Inachus hath sent from the warm Nile to the matrons of Italy (matronis Ausonius) ! The goddess that so oft hath sundered such ardent lovers, who'er she may have been, was always a bitter goddess. Yet, Io, in truth thou didst't learn in thy secret loves with Jove what it is to tread many paths of wandering, when Juno bade thee wear horns upon thy girlish brow and lose thy speech in the harsh bellowings of kine, Ah ! how oft did'st thou gall thy mouth with oak-leaves, and in thy stall did'st chew once more the arbutus, on which thou had'st fed ! Hast thou become so haughty a goddess since Jupiter took away from thee thy wild shape. Hast thou not worshippers enough among the swart Egyptians ? Why did'st thou come such a long journey to Rome ?

(101) Lucan, The Civil War, vii. 831-838; ix. 158-161.

(102) Propertius II. xxxiii. 1-20.

What profits it thee that maids should sleep alone ? Nay, believe me, thy horns will sprout again, or we will chase thee, cruel goddess, from our city ! There ne'er was love lost, 'twixt Tiber and Nile".

The spread of Egyptian religion into foreign lands was not restricted to Isis and her cult only. For many other Egyptian gods, and their cults, especially those clearly associated with Isis, such as Sarapis, Anubis and Horus (Harpocrates), spread to these countries too. In this respect Lucan informed us :⁽¹⁰³⁾

"though we have admitted to Roman temples your Isis and your dogs (Anubises) half divine, the rattle (sistrum; that is Isis and her cult) which bids the worshipper wail, and the Osiris whom you prove to be mortal by mourning for him, yet you, Egypt, keep our dead prisoner (i.e. Pompey) in your dust !

The Egyptian gods not only invaded Italy with their cults, but they influenced the style of the Roman dresses. On this point Pliny stated :⁽¹⁰⁴⁾

"But nowadays even men are beginning to wear on their fingers a representation of Harpocrates⁽¹⁰⁵⁾ and other figures of Egyptian deities".

(103) Lucan, The Civil War, viii. 831-834.

(104) Pliny, N.H. xxxiii. 41.

(105) A Hellenized form of the Egyptian HR-P3-HRD, that is Horus the Child.

But the Egyptian gods and their cults not only invaded Italy and Greece, but also many other countries in Asia and Europe. Indeed as Diodorus and Lucan had already said the cult of Isis (and her associate gods and their cult) became universal. The universality of the cult of Isis and her associates is further supported by modern authors. In this respect H.I. Bell stated:⁽¹⁰⁶⁾

... "The cult of Sarapis (virtually replacing Osiris), together with Isis and their son Horus (usually called by the Greeks Harpocrates) eventually spread through the whole Greco-Roman world, reaching even far-away Britain; but its greatest development was in the Roman period".

And another modern author, Samuel Dill, maintained^(107a):

... "An influence so securely seated on the Palatine was sure to extend to the remotest parts of the Empire. If Isis could defy all the force of the Republican Government^(107b), what might she not do when emperors were enrolled in her priesthood, and imperial ministers, in correspondence with every prefecture from Britain to the Euphrates, were steeped in her mystic lore ?"

(106) H.I. Bell, op.cit. p. 22. cf. J.P.V.D.Balsdon, loc.cit.

(107a) Samuel Dill, op.cit. p. 568. cf. Jerome Carcopino, Daily Life in Ancient Rome, p.130.

(107b) cf. Muhammad Selim Salem, The Cult of Isis In Italy, pp.43 and 48ff. (Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, Liverpool Univ. 1937).¹

And a third, A. Erman, said :⁽¹⁰⁸⁾

"Throughout the wide Roman empire the worship of Isis and Osiris obtained zealous adherents".

But the spread of the Egyptian religion and its influence into the neighbouring countries goes back to a very early period. "The earliest trace of such influence", according to Erman⁽¹⁰⁹⁾, "has lately become known to us in Crete. On a stone vase, which dates from about the beginning of the twentieth century B.C., there is the representation of a festival celebrated in honour of a local god of harvest. The Cretan singers who are marching in this procession are led by a man who, as shown by his attire and his sistrum, is an Egyptian priest. Evidently he is officiating among the barbarians as a skilled musician !"

But our concern here is the time and the manner in which the cult of Isis and her associates spread into foreign countries. As far as Europe is concerned, some knowledge of these gods had long before been introduced by Egyptian sailors and merchants who had settled in the ports and great towns of the Mediterranean.⁽¹¹⁰⁾ According to the modern author, S. Dill,⁽¹¹¹⁾ the worship of Isis and Serapis (replacing Osiris), reckoning from the day when it established itself in the port of Athens, had a reign of more than

(108) A. Erman, op.cit. p. 239. (109) Ibid, p. 193.

(110) A. Erman, op.cit. p.239; Samuel Dill, op.cit., p. 260 ff.
cf. J.P.V.D.Balsdon, loc.cit.

(111) Samuel Dill, op.cit. p. 560.

seven centuries over the peoples of Europe. Its influence in the western provinces of the Roman Empire and in Rome may be roughly said to cover a period of 500 years".

The Isiac worship, it is said,⁽¹¹²⁾ had conquered the Greek world before it became a power in Italy. Thus we find that in the fourth century B.C., for instance, traders from the Nile having their temple of Isis at the Peiraeus, often that many temples were built in different places in Greece. The introduction of Isis' worship into Italy was of much later date than Greece. It was introduced there in the third century mainly by merchants, sailors and slaves.⁽¹¹³⁾

It is noteworthy to mention here that no reference was given by our classical authors to the spread of the Isiac religion into the Asian countries of the Near East, despite the fact that the references of Diodorus and Lucan, mentioned before, covered all the countries of the then-known world. The absence of references to specific countries outside Europe where Egyptian gods had spread may be ascribed to the fact that our authors were Europeans; in other words they were either Greek or Roman.

Beside Osiris and Isis, many other Egyptian gods were mentioned by our classical authors. A number of gods were mentioned

(112) *ibid.* cf. also, M. Selim Salem, *op.cit.* pp.26, 27.

(113) S. Dill, *op.cit.* p. 563. cf. J P.V D.Balsdon, *loc.cit.*

by Diodorus in his account on the Egyptian mythology. He mentioned Horus, the son of Osiris and Isis. According to Diodorus' information he was the helper of his mother Isis in avenging his father's Osiris death by killing Typhon (Seth)⁽¹¹⁴⁾ and he succeeded his father to the throne of Egypt.⁽¹¹⁵⁾ According to Diodorus also he was murdered by the Titans, but he was revived and immortalized by his mother, Isis, who procured the powers of healing and giving immortality.⁽¹¹⁶⁾ To all these points we have referred in the previous pages of this chapter. We have pointed out that there was some sort of confusion in Diodorus' account between Osiris and his son Horus. Another confusion is also to be found in Diodorus' account is that he described⁽¹¹⁷⁾ Apollo, who was identified by Diodorus himself among others as Horus⁽¹¹⁸⁾, as the brother of Osiris instead of his son.⁽¹¹⁹⁾

(120)

In the Hellenistic period Horus⁽¹²⁰⁾ was called Harpocrates (i.e. Horus the child) and was represented as a plump sucking infant⁽¹²¹⁾ with his finger on his lips⁽¹²²⁾, either as a sign of

(114) Diod. I. 21.

(115) Diod. I. 25.

(116) Diod. loc.cit.

(117) Diod. I. 17.

(118) Diod. I. 25, cf. Hdt. II. 47. cf. Pierre Montet, op.cit. p.150.

(119) cf. J. Gwyn Griffiths, The Conflict of Horus and Seth, p.101.

(120) Pliny, N.H. xxxIII. 41; cf. A.Erman, op.cit. p.218; H.I. Bell, op.cit. p.22.

(121) A.Erman. loc.cit.

(122) Ovid. Metam. ix. 684-694.
cf. E.Otto, Osiris und Amun, p.27.

silence⁽¹²³⁾ or because a child is generally seen sucking his finger.⁽¹²⁴⁾ Horus, together with his mother Isis and Sarapis (who has replaced Osiris) formed a trinity, whose cult spread far and wide in the Greco-Roman world⁽¹²⁵⁾ as we have already seen.

Another important god in the Greco-Roman era was Anubis, who was represented as a dog-headed man.⁽¹²⁶⁾ Anubis was mentioned by Diodorus⁽¹²⁷⁾ as a son of Osiris whom he accompanied in his world-wide civilizing tour, because he was reputed for his bravery, and he was wearing a dog skin. It is for this reason, Diodorus stated, that dogs were greatly honoured by the Egyptians. According to one modern author⁽¹²⁸⁾ "Anubis was variously honoured under four titles: He who belongs to the mummy wrappings; chief of the divine pavilion, where the mummification was performed, for he had embalmed Osiris and had become the patron of embalmers, Lord of Necropolis and He who is set on his mountain, for this black god led the deceased in the Other World and he watched over the tomb. He was embodied in the wild dog or jackal who roamed the cemeteries. Before Osiris rose to prominence Anubis was considered as the great

(123) Ibid.

(124) A. Erman, loc.cit. A. Dict. of Egypt. Civil. p.130, s.v. Horus.

(125) cf. Gwyn Griffiths, Diodorus Siculus and the Myth of Osiris, 'Man' 1948; 97; H.I.Bell, loc.cit.; Arpag Mekhitarian, L'Egypte pp.96, 97 (Paris, 1964).

(126) A. Dict. of Egypt. Civil. p.11, s.v. Anubis.

(127) Diod. I. 18.

(128) A Dict. of Egypt. Civil. p. 11 ff.

funerary god^{(128)a} and the prayers for survival carved on the walls of the oldest masterpiece were addressed to him".

As regards the statement of Diodorus that Anubis was the son of Osiris, A. Erman⁽¹²⁹⁾ seems to have accepted this view of Diodorus as correct, in as far as it referred to the later conceptions. For according to Plutarch⁽¹³⁰⁾ Anubis is the son of Osiris from Nephthys. But Erman, quoting another source says⁽¹³¹⁾ that according to an early conception he was one of four sons for Re.

As a direct reference to Anubis' position in the Greco-Roman period we find several classical writers mostly Latin mentioning him but in a rather derogatory manner. It was obvious that the Latin authors mentioned the Egyptian gods, in contrast with the Roman ones, in a period marked with a great hostility between Ptolemaic Egypt and Rome.

In this respect we find Virgil saying :⁽¹³²⁾

"... monstrous gods of all kinds and Anubis accompanied Cle^opatra (and Antonius) to Actium". And we notice that
L

(128)a cf. Wainwright, op.cit. 98.

(129) A. Erman, op.cit. p. 33. n.2.

(130) Plutarch, de Iside 14. (131) Mitt. aus der Oriental. Samml.
IX. II. 17.

(132) Virgil, Aen, viii. 698.

Propertius was the most insulting and satirical towards the Anubis when he said⁽¹³³⁾ "... (Cleopatra dared) to confront our Jupiter with Anubis, which barks like the dog". While Lucan on his part, as we mentioned before, was very resentful and most indignant because of the invasion of the Egyptian gods into Rome. He is observed saying:⁽¹³⁴⁾

"... we admitted into the temples of Rome Isis and the dogs (Anubises) half divine".

It remains to be said, however, that Anubis was one of the Egyptian gods whose cult spread into foreign countries in the company of Isis and her associates.⁽¹³⁵⁾ It is also noticeable from the statement of the Roman authors, cited above, that they regarded Isis, Osiris, Anubis, as if they were the national gods of Egypt, as the majority of these authors, as we noticed, contrasted these gods with the gods of their own. This is, in fact, very true, as far as the Hellenistic period in Egypt is concerned. For these gods, Isis, Osiris (or Sarapis), Horus the child or (Harpocrates) and Anubis were the most well-known of all the Egyptian gods and goddesses in that epoch.

(133) Propertius, iii. II. 41.

(134) Lucan, Civil War, viii. 831-32.

(135) J. Gwyn Griffiths, loc.cit.

The Sacred Animals.

The subject of the sacred animals in ancient Egypt attracted the attention and aroused the interest of the majority of the classical authors, perhaps more than any other side of the Egyptian civilization. It has raised and is still raising a great deal of learned discussions among modern scholars.

Did the ancient Egyptians ever worship animals ? And if so, did they worship these animals as an end in themselves or did they regard them in great honour because they were the tangible manifestations of some other deities beyond human comprehension ? Were all animals sacred in ancient Egypt, or particular ones ? Were the sacred animals honoured by all people, or were some of universal and some of local worship ? What were the origins and causes of such consecration given to sacred animals ?

We observed in the previous pages how the Greek authors regarded with great respect and admiration both the antiquity and the mysteriousness of the Egyptian religion, particularly its mythological aspect, despite the fact that these authors were not able to understand or comprehend fully the essence of that religion. This is, however, understandable for the reasons to which we have already referred and from the fact that they were people of different mentality. We also observed that the attitude of the Roman authors towards that religion was very different from the attitude of their Greek counterparts in that they treated the whole matter from a prejudiced position. Sarcasm and ridicule was their

treatment of everything Egyptian. From the monotheistic Jewish point of view, as we shall see, the Egyptian religion in its entirety was nothing but polytheism, godlessness and impiety.

As far as the sacred animals are concerned the attitude of the classical authors can be described as not very different from their respective attitudes as regards the other Egyptian matters. It is fair, however, to say that to our authors this aspect of the Egyptian religion was of more interest than the other aspects of that religion. The evidences for that are the great many statements which these authors have left. Furthermore, the keen interest which the classical authors showed in writing about this subject is clear from their statements. And if the subject of the sacred animals was of some interest to almost all the classical authors who wrote about Egypt, it was definitely of greater interest to those who visited the country and thus were able to see for themselves how the sacred animals were treated and looked after. For this reason the classical authors, especially those who visited Egypt stood on firmer ground when they spoke of this aspect than when they spoke of the mythology of that country.

To come back to the attitude of the classical authors to the sacred animals, we shall observe before all that here again the accounts of different classical writers vary in length. We shall see, however, that Diodorus' account is the largest of all and that it discusses in great details many points (of that aspect), especially the origin and causes of that worship and the origins and

causes of the worship of individual animals. It is for this reason that in our treatment of that subject we shall depend a great deal on what Diodorus said.

At the beginning of his account, Diodorus, who generally speaking, was a good example of the sympathetic attitude of the Greeks, stated :⁽¹⁾

"As regards the consecration of animals in Egypt, the practice naturally appears to many to be extraordinary and worthy of investigation. For the Egyptians venerate certain animals exceedingly, not only during their lifetime but even after their death, such as cats, ichneumons and dogs, and again, hawks and the birds which they call "ibises", as well as wolves and crocodiles and a number of other animals of that kind".

Ἡ περὶ δὲ τῶν ἀφιερωμένων ζώων κατ' Αἴγυπτον εἰκότως φαίνεται, πολλοῖς παράδοξον τὸ γινόμενον καὶ ζητήσεως ἄξιον δέβονται γὰρ ἓν ἡ τῶν ζώων Αἰγύπτῳ καθ' ὑπερβολὴν οὐ ζῶντα μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ τελευτήσαντα, οἷον αἰλούρους καὶ τοὺς ἰχνεύμονας καὶ κύνας, ἔτι δὲ οἰῶντας καὶ τὰς καλουμένας παρ' αὐτοῖς ἰβεις, πρὸς δὲ τοῦτοις τοὺς τε λύκους καὶ τοὺς κροκοδείλους καὶ ἕτερα τοιαῦτα πλείω.'

(1) Diod. I. 83.

The consecration of the sacred animals in Egypt for Diodorus and his fellow Greeks was only a question of amazement and was worthy of investigation. Why were the Greeks sympathetic and understanding ? And why were they only astonished and not contemptuous of the animals' consecration of Egypt ? Samuel Dill ingeniously explains that attitude of the Greeks. He tells us :⁽²⁾

"The animal cult of Egypt, indeed, was always a stumbling-block to Greeks and Romans. It moved the contempt and ridicule of comedian and satirist. It was an easy mark for the sneers^e of the crowd. Yet even the divinised dog or ibis could find skilful, if not convinced, defenders among the Greek eclectics, who lent all the forces of Hellenic ingenuity to the cause of antiquarianism in religion. Their native mythology was not without traces of zoolatry. Their own god of healing, who became so popular in all lands, was always connected in art and legend with the serpent. The serpent of the Acropolis, which daily ate the holy wafer, was the immemorial companion of the tutelary goddess of Athens. Had not Zeus, in his many amours, found an easy access to the fair victims of his love in animal forms ?".

For Latin authors it was a different matter. They treated the matter with scorn and sarcasm. Some of them were mild

(2) Samuel Dill, op.cit. p. 571

in their criticism. Thus Lucan describing a banquet given by Queen Cleopatra in honour of Julius Caesar spoke⁽³⁾ in a sarcastic manner of how "many birds and beasts were served that were divine in Egypt."

In one place Cicero stated⁽⁴⁾ the fact that "One would see first of all that in Egypt, famed as ever changeless, which preserves written records of the countless ages, a bull, which the Egyptians call Apis, is deemed a god, and many other monsters and animals of every sort are held sacred as divine". "... videat primum in illa incorrupta maxime gente Aegyptiorum, quae plurimorum saeculorum et eventorum memoriam litteris continet, bovem quendam putari deum, quem Apim Aegypti nominat, multaque alia portenta apud eosdem et cuiusque generis beluas numero consecrates deorum".

In another passage Cicero was more aggressive in his satire and sarcasm, when he stated :⁽⁵⁾

"... Who does not know the custom of the Egyptians ? Their minds are infected with degraded superstitions and they would sooner submit to any torment than injure an ibid or asp or cat or dog or crocodile, and even if they have unwittingly done

(3) Lucan, The Civil War, x. 158-159.

(4) Cicero, De Re Publica, III. ix. 14.

(5) Cicero, Tusc. Disp. V. xxvii. 78.

anything of the kind there is no penalty from which they would recoil ...".

"... Aegyptiorum morem quis ignorant ? Quorum imbutae mentes pravis erroribus quamvis carnificinam prius subierint quam ibim aut aspidem aut felem aut canem aut crocodilum violent, quorum etiam si imprudentes quidpiam fecerint, poenam nullam recusent".

In a third passage Cicero contrary to his two former statements, was clearly defending the cause of the animals' consecration in Egypt when he said :

"... Even the Egyptians, whom we laugh at, deified animals solely on the score of some utility which they derived from them". ... Ipsi qui inridentur Aegyptii nullam beluam nisi ob aliquam utilitatem quam ex caperent consecraverunt".

Cicero then mentioned few instances of consecrated animals. Concluding his statement he said :⁽⁶⁾

"I will make my point thus: these animals are at all events deified by the barbarians (i.e. the Egyptians !) for the benefits which they confer ...". Ita concludam, tamen beluas a barbaris propter beneficium consecratas ...". Cicero then compared the utility of the Egyptian gods with the utter uselessness of their Greco-Roman counterparts.

(6) Cicero, Nat. Deor. I. xxxvi. 101.

The Roman poet Propertius was not less harsh to the Egyptians in describing⁽⁷⁾ their dog-headed god Anubis as barking like a dog in the face of the Roman god Jupiter; nor was the historian Tacitus fair in saying⁽⁸⁾ that Egypt was the most superstitious of nations. But in another passage Tacitus was milder when he stated⁽⁹⁾ without comment that the Egyptians worshipped many animals and monstrous images. "... Aegyptii pleraque animalia effigiesque compositas venerantur".

The consecration of sacred animals in Egypt was briefly referred to by Pomponius Mela, who stated⁽¹⁰⁾ that the Egyptians worshipped the images of many animals and the animals themselves more. "Colunt effigies multorum animalium atque ipsa magis animalia".

If the Greek attitude to the Egyptian cult of sacred animals in Egypt was marked with sympathy, understanding and with a mixture of astonishment and amazement on their part, and if the Roman attitude, as we have just seen, was of sarcasm and contempt, the Jewish attitude was even more hostile and indignant. This the words of the Jewish writer Philo and the acts of the Jews

(7) Propertius, III. 11. 41.

(8) Tacitus, Hist. IV. 81.

(9) Tacitus, Hist. V. 5.

(10) Pomponius Mela, Chorographia, I. ix. 58.

could tell of themselves. Philo after speaking of the Ptolemaic kings as being regarded by the Egyptians as gods, which was rightly so, stated⁽¹¹⁾: "it was only natural that they (i.e. the Egyptians) who at any rate were men should be so regarded (in the previous paragraph Philo spoke of the Ptolemies being regarded as gods by the Egyptians) by those who deified dogs and wolves and lions and crocodiles and many other wild animals on the land, in the water and the air, for whom altars and temples and shrines and sacred precincts have been established through the whole of Egypt".

In another passage Philo was even more wild and satirical towards the Egyptians, when he told us :⁽¹²⁾

"How much reverence is paid by them (i.e. the Egyptians) to the title of God is shown by their having allowed it to be shared by the indigenous ibises and venomous snakes and among other ferocious wild beasts. It naturally followed that by this unrestricted use of the names apertaining to the God, while they deceived the little wits who do not see through Egyptian godlessness they stand condemned by those who understand their great folly or rather impiety".

(11) Philo, The Embassy to Gauls (Legatio) xx. 139.

(12) *ibid.* xx. 163.

The scorn and contempt, which the Jews showed towards the Egyptian religion, were conveyed to us by the words of Tacitus. Tacitus maintained⁽¹³⁾ that "the Jews sacrificed a ram apparently in derision of Ammon. They likewise offer the ox, because the Egyptians worship Apis".

Generally speaking, therefore, the attitude towards the cult of the sacred animals in Egypt differs from one group of particular nation to another, in other words the attitude of the Greeks differs from the attitude of the Romans, and the attitude of both is different from the attitude of the Jews.

Nevertheless there was a general agreement among the classical authors and the contemporary Jewish writers with whom we are concerned in this work that the Egyptians worshipped many animals. This fact was emphasised by Diodorus,⁽¹⁴⁾ Strabo,⁽¹⁵⁾ Cicero⁽¹⁶⁾, Pomponius Mela⁽¹⁷⁾ and by Philo.⁽¹⁸⁾ There were animals which enjoyed universal veneration, in other words they were the animals which were worshipped or greatly honoured all over Egypt, and there were others, which were worshipped or honoured locally,

(13) Tacitus, Hist. V. 4.

(14) Diod. loc.cit.

(15) Strabo, 17.1.40.

(16) Cicero, De Re Publica, III. ix. 14.

(17) Pomponius Mela, loc.cit.

(18) Philo, op.cit. xx. 139, 163.

that is in one place, town, or nome or perhaps in two or more nomes. The vast majority of the statements we received from the classical authors were of a general nature, and did not specify which gods were worshipped where and by which people. At any rate, Strabo was the only author who made the matter clear. For he gave us a list of the sacred animals, containing the ones which were worshipped universally and the others which were worshipped (19) locally. Strabo's list, however, did not seem to have intended to be comprehensive for he gave only some examples. But though it was brief, it was informative. Strabo stated, "In fact, certain animals are worshipped by all Egyptians in common, as, for example, three land animals, bull (Apis) and dog and cat⁽²⁰⁾, and two birds, hawk⁽²¹⁾ and ibis⁽²²⁾ and two aquatics, scale-fish⁽²³⁾ and oxyrhynchus, but there are other animals which are honoured by

(19) Strabo, loc.cit.

(20) cf. also Hdt. (ii. 66, 67), who implied that cats were honoured universally; cf. also How and Wells, op.cit. p. 200, com. on Hdt's Bk. ii. Ch. 67. n.1.

(21) cf. also Hdt. (ii. 65), who implied that this bird was honoured everywhere in Egypt; cf. How and Wells, loc.cit.

(22) cf. also Hdt. ii. 65, 75, cf. n. 21. supra.

(23) Hdt. ii. 72.

separate groups independently of the rest, as for example, a sheep by the Saitae and also by the Thebans; a latus, a fish of the Nile, by the Latopolitae, a lycus (the Egyptian Jackal, lit. wolf) by the Lycopolitae; a cynocephalus by the Hermopolitae; a cebus (i.e. long-tailed monkey) by the Babylonians who live near Memphis; an eagle by the Thebans; a lion by the Leontopolitae, a female and male goat by the Mendesians; a shrew-mouse by the Athribitae, and other animals by other peoples".

Ἔστιν αὖτε τινὰ μὲν τῶν ζώων ἅπαντες κοινῇ τιμῶσιν Αἰγύπτιοι, καθάπερ τῶν μὲν πεζῶν τρία, βούν, κύν, αἰλουργον, τῶν δὲ πτηγῶν δύο, ἱέρακα καὶ ἰβιν, τῶν δ' ἐν ὕδρων δύο, λεπιδωτὸν ἰχθύν καὶ ὀξύρυγχον· ἄλλα δ' ἔστιν, ἃ τιμῶσι καθ' ἑαυτοὺς ἕκαστοι, καθάπερ Σαῖται πρόβατον καὶ θηβαῖται, λάτον δὲ τῶν ἐν τῷ Μείλῳ τινὰ ἰχθύν Λατοπολίτας, λύκον τε Νυκοπολίτας, κυνοκέφαλον δ' Ἑρμοπολίτας, κῆβον δὲ Βαβυλωνίαι οἱ κατὰ ΜΕΜΦΙΝ ἄετὸν δὲ Θηβαῖοι, λέοντα δὲ Λεοντοπολίται αἶγα δὲ καὶ τράγον Μενδήδιοι, μυγαλὴν δ' Ἀθριβίται, ἄλλοι δ' ἄλλοι τι.

Besides this list Strabo mentioned here and there in his book on

Egypt the various animals and the places of their worship.

Pomponius Mela, ⁽²⁴⁾ whose entire account on things Egyptian is, in

(24) Pomponius Mela, loc.cit.

my view, a short summary of what Herodotus said; as the former's account and its contents resembled very much that of the latter, stated very briefly, as the nature of his work demanded, that "the Egyptians worshipped many images of the animals and the animals themselves more; some (people) worshipped some animals, others worshipped others". Pomponius Mela, however, did not say which animals were worshipped by which people. But he seemed to have agreed with his predecessor Strabo, on the universality of the worship of Apis, though Strabo did not mention Apis by name in his account cited above. But elsewhere⁽²⁵⁾ Strabo made it clear when he spoke of the Bull Apis, which he identified with Osiris and which was regarded as a god by the Egyptians.

But before Strabo and Pomponius Mela we find that Diodorus had already stated⁽²⁶⁾ that the worship as gods of Apis Bull of Memphis as well as Mnevis Bull of Heliopolis, both of which were consecrated to Osiris, because of the services they rendered in the field of agriculture, was introduced among all the Egyptians.

Regarding the sacred animals he mentioned in his account given above, Diodorus left us in the lurch. He did not say clearly whether all or some only of these animals were worshipped or

(25) Strabo, 17.1.31.

(26) Diod. I. 21. cf. *ibid.* 88.

honoured everywhere in Egypt, or whether some of them were worshipped on a national scale, while others on a local scale. The problem, however, is that the text of Diodorus implied that the animals he mentioned were venerated exceedingly by all the Egyptians. This, in fact, is not entirely true. It is true, however, that some of the animals he mentioned received universal worship or veneration. These included cats, dogs, hawks, and ibises.⁽²⁷⁾ These animals were consecrated to and were the manifestations of the Egyptian gods and goddesses Bast, Anubis, Horus and Thot respectively.

But some others of the sacred animals mentioned by Diodorus did not enjoy national reverence, such as the crocodile, which was venerated in some parts of Egypt and was hated in others.⁽²⁸⁾ Nevertheless, it seems that the crocodile was venerated by the majority of the Egyptians, as the words of Strabo⁽²⁹⁾ seemed to have implied. In this way Strabo seemed to have strengthened the argument of his predecessor Diodorus.^{WJ}

(27) For cats, hawks and ibises as having been worshipped by all the Egyptians, see How and Wells, loc.cit.

(28) The crocodile was greatly honoured in the region round Lake Moeris (mod. Lake Karoun), that is the Fayum Governorate (the Arsinoite or Crocodeilopolite Nome) and about Thebes, but it was held in dishonour, particularly by the Tentyritae and the people of Apollonopolis in the Thebaid. See Strabo, 17.1.38, 44, 47; cf. also Hdt. 11. 69.

(29) Strabo, 17.1.44.

To come back to the subject of the universality of the cult of Apis, we find that it was also attested by the words of the Roman poet, Lucan,⁽³⁰⁾ who spoke of Apis to whom Memphis gave birth, because Memphis in its turn meant Egypt. For it was a very usual custom among the Latin writers to refer to Memphis, when in fact, they meant the entire country of Egypt.⁽³¹⁾ After all, Memphis was by then the national capital of the Egyptians, even if Alexandria was the effective metropolis of the country.

The origin and the causes of the veneration accorded to the sacred animals in Egypt were a matter of a very interesting speculation among the classical authors and were a subject of learned discussions among modern scholars; and (who knows ?) this subject might have been disputed by the ancient Egyptians themselves, who themselves, as a modern scholar says,⁽³²⁾ did not understand the reasons for worshipping these animals.

(30) Lucan, Civil War, I. x. 477 ff.

(31) See p.36.

(32) W.G. Waddell, Herodotus, Book II, comm. on Ch. 65, n.l. p. 183. (Methuen, London, 1939).

Outside Diodorus, little can be found among the classical authors concerning the origin and the reasons for the worship or veneration accorded to the sacred animals. The inquisitive Herodotus, in his visit to Egypt, which occurred in the middle of the 5th century B.C., observed the way in which the people of Egypt, particularly the masses, regarded such animals. And although he reported many things of what he observed as an eye-witness concerning the sacred animals, he refrained out of religious reticence from telling us the origin and reasons for the worship of these animals.⁽³³⁾ But Rawlinson tells⁽³⁴⁾ us that "though Herodotus abstains from saying why the Egyptians held some animals sacred, he explains it in some degree by observing that Egypt did not abound in animals. It was therefore found necessary to ensure the preservation of some". Strabo, though comes after Diodorus, may be briefly discussed here. He, too, avoided discussing this topic, perhaps out of expediency, or because of the nature of his work. At any rate, Strabo briefly stated⁽³⁵⁾ that "the reasons which they (i.e. the Egyptians) give for such worship are not in agreement". The words of Strabo, in fact, explain very clearly the complexity of such worship and the diversity of its reasons.

(33) Hdt. 11. 65.

(34) Rawlinson, Hist. of Hdt. Vol. II. pp. 109, 110, n.6.

(35) Strabo, 17.1.40.

This however, leads us to the lengthy and detailed account of Diodorus, who is our main source of information among the classical authors consulted in this thesis, regarding the origin and the reasons for venerating the sacred animals. Here again, Diodorus repeated⁽³⁶⁾ his allegation that the Egyptian priests were required not to divulge the secrets of such worship. But the majority of the Egyptians, Diodorus said⁽³⁷⁾ gave the following reasons :

"The first reason", Diodorus remarked,⁽³⁸⁾ "is fabulous but was in accordance with the simplicity of primitive times". "This cause", as Diodorus was told by the Egyptians, "says that the gods, in their battle with lawless earth-born men or giants, having been outnumbered and overpowered by the latter, saved themselves by taking the shapes and disguising in the forms of the various animals. And after the gods established their power over the entire universe, they ordered the people, out of gratitude to their saviours, the animals, to revere them and maintain them in costly fashion". Earlier in his account on the mythology of Egypt, Diodorus referred⁽³⁹⁾ to something similar to what he has just said, though the circumstances in which the cosmic gods had taken the shapes of the men, animals and other objects were different. In the

(36) Diod. I. 85.

(37) Diod. loc.cit.

(38) Diod. loc.cit.

(39) Diod. I. 12.

same account Diodorus also quoted the much revered and the almost infallible (in the eyes of his fellow Greeks) Homer⁽⁴⁰⁾ to prove his theory. It is also interesting to observe that the Roman poet, Ovid, seemed to have grasped a similar idea when he stated⁽⁴¹⁾ "that the gods having been terrified by the earth-born men (or giants) led by Typhoeus or Typhon (the Egyptian God Seth) fled to Egypt where they hid themselves in the forms of animals of various kinds". But Plutarch, who is outside our period and who seemed to have grasped the same idea, reversed the matter when he told us⁽⁴²⁾ "it is said that Typhon (Seth) escaped Horus by turning into a crocodile" instead of making Horus escape Typhon ~~in the~~ form of an animal.

Thus we see that the idea that the gods taking the forms of animals or manifesting themselves in many forms of animate and inanimate objects was conceived from a very early history.

(40) Homer, *Od.* 17. 485-7. "... The gods, in strangers ^{form} alien lands,
Frequent the cities of men in ev'ry guise,
Observing their insolence and lawful ways".

(41) Ovid, *Metamor.* V. 318-331. Ovid, in fact, was speaking neither of the Egyptian religion and gods nor of the origins and the causes for worshipping the sacred animals in Egypt.

(42) Plutarch, *de Iside.* 50.

"The second cause", the account goes on to say⁽⁴³⁾ "is that after the early Egyptians had been defeated by their neighbours due to lack of order in their army, they conceived the idea of carrying standards before several divisions. On their lances they wrought figures of the animals which they worshipped later, and carried these figures on their lances, and by this device every man knew his place in the array. Having achieved victory over their enemies through good order, the Egyptians thought that this victory was achieved by these animals, and to show their gratitude to these animals, they established worship for them".

"The third cause", Diodorus was told,⁽⁴⁴⁾ "is that these animals were accorded worship because of the services they rendered to the community of man". Diodorus then followed that statement with a lengthy account⁽⁴⁵⁾ of the reasons for the worship of each individual animals as his Egyptian informants told him. He gave the reasons for worshipping these animals for their utility. Among these useful animals, which were accorded worship, he mentioned cows, sheep, dogs, cats, ichneumons, Apis and Mnevis Bulls, which were sacred to Osiris, and also wolves, goats, hawks, and ibises. The most surprising and inconceivable and indeed most

(43) Diod. I. 86.

(44) Diod. I. 87.

(45) Diod. I. 87-88.

puzzling to Diodorus, to the other classical authors and to most men, as Diodorus put it,⁽⁴⁶⁾ was the reason for deifying crocodiles. For how could one explain, Diodorus asked with real justification, the extreme veneration accorded to these beasts, when they eat the flesh of man ? The Egyptians as usual had a ready answer to offer. They told Diodorus that crocodiles were deified on the basis that these beasts, being numerous in the Nile, protected Egypt from being invaded from outside and also protected against the robbers who infested the deserts on both sides of the Nile Valley. Some others put forward yet another reason for worshipping crocodiles. This one says that Menas, one of the early Kings of Egypt, was saved from drowning in the Nile, by the crocodile. In order to show his gratitude to that animals, Menas commanded the people to worship it.

Diodorus in fact did not seem to have gone astray when he recorded the reasons for worshipping the crocodile. For the modern Egyptologist H. Kees stated⁽⁴⁷⁾ "that myths tell the story how the crocodile was a helper at unfortunate events in the world of the gods; he pulled out of the river and brought to land both the severed hands of Horus according to the 113th chapter of the Book of the Dead, and also the body of the drowned Osiris". Diodorus, therefore, grasped more or less the same idea, which was

(46) Diod. I. 89.

(47) H. Kees, op.cit. p.33.

contained in the mythology of Egypt. Another modern scholar suggested⁽⁴⁸⁾ that "the crocodile was sacred in places distant from the Nile, where the canals required deepening". Or this animal might have been worshipped because the crocodile, one of the more prominent denizens of the Nile, was the manifestation of Hapi, the god of that river.⁽⁴⁹⁾ The view that animals were deified for their utility to man was also adopted by Cicero, who told⁽⁵⁰⁾ us that "even the Egyptians, whom we (i.e. the Romans) laugh at, deified animals solely on the score of some utility which they derived from them; for instance, the ibis, being a tall bird with stiff legs and long horny beak, destroys a great quantity of snakes: it protects Egypt from plague, by killing and eating the flying serpents that are brought from the Libyan desert by the south-west wind, and so preventing them from harming the inhabitants by their bite while alive and their stench when dead. I might, Cicero added, "describe the utility of the ichneumon, the crocodile and the cat, but I do not wish to be tedious. I will make my point thus: these animals are at all events deified by the barbarians for the benefits which they confer".

A fourth cause was also put forward to Diodorus⁽⁵¹⁾ by the Egyptians, besides the three we have already mentioned, which

(48) Rawlinson, loc.cit.

(49) William A. Ward, The Spirit of Ancient Egypt, p.123 (Beirut, 1965).

(50) Cicero, Nat. Deor. I. xxxvi. 101. (51) Diod. I. 90.

said that "when men first gave up cannibalism, they formed separate groups and started warring among themselves. The stronger naturally, prevailed over the weaker; but later the weaker groups, taught by expediency, united and took for the device upon their standard one of the animals which were later made sacred; then, when those who were from time to time in fear flocked to this symbol, an organized body was formed which was not to be despised by any who attacked it. And when everybody did the same thing, the whole people came to be divided into organized bodies, and in the case of each the one which had been responsible for its safety was accorded honours like those belonging to the gods, as having rendered to them the greatest service possible; and this is why to this day the several groups of the Egyptians differ from each other in that each group honours the animals which it originally made sacred".

Diodorus further seemed to be giving a fifth reason for worshipping animals. His attention was attracted by the diversity of the religious customs of the Egyptians. This affair was explained to him in the following manner: "one of their wise (Diodorus ought to have said "cunning") kings divided the country into different regions and ordered the inhabitants of each region to revere a certain animal. In this way each region will have a sacred animal different from the others, the result will be that the people will never unite on account of their different

beliefs. This wise king had a purpose in mind, that he wanted to keep the people apart lest they, having united, should be able to revolt against him as they used to do under earlier kings". The worship of different sacred animals by different groups, "the Egyptians told Diodorus, "resulted also in the people being at odds with each other". (52)

In the reasons given above by Diodorus one observes some common elements uniting some or most of them. There is a clear similarity between the second and the fourth reasons, and even between these and the fifth reasons, if we may consider it so. The three reasons, above mentioned for instance, one notices, explains the diversity of the religious customs of the Egyptians, and the large number of sacred animals, despite the fact that Diodorus did not say so, at least regarding the second and the fourth reasons, for he mentioned that fact as regards the fifth. The second and the fourth reasons also clearly explain the fact that certain animals were venerated more than others, and in like manner they explain the supremacy of certain animals over the others. This ascendancy of a certain animal over another, or a group of animals over the other is explained by the fact that when the ruler of a certain town, nome or region overcame another region or the whole

(52) Diod. I. 89; cf. also Juvenal, Satires, xv, 33-45, who related as an eye-witness a battle between two regions in Upper Egypt, Ombos and Tentyra, as a result of their different attitudes to the consecration of certain animals. For while the one consecrated one animal, the other held the same animal in dishonour.

country, the sacred animal of the triumphant region also overcame the one of the conquered region. This does not necessarily mean that the triumphant sacred animal will replace the conquered one altogether. For the tolerant and conservative Egyptians, though ready to accept new ideas and gods, never discarded the old ones.⁽⁵³⁾ Thus the new will remain side by side with the old, in other words the new triumphant sacred animal will coexist with the conquered local one, but will remain on the top, that is superior to the other.

There are many examples ~~of~~^{of} sacred animals prevailing upon others, often having conquered them. The best example is Apis, the Bull of the Temple of Ptah of Memphis, which was by far the most popular among the sacred animals.⁽⁵⁴⁾ The celebrations relating to its selection, enthronement, and the public mourning relating to its death were the most solemn and most notable for their grandeur.⁽⁵⁵⁾ The ceremonies and public mourning were elaborately described by Diodorus⁽⁵⁶⁾ as he might have observed

(53) Henri Frankfort and others, Before Philosophy, pp. 40, 41. (Pelican 1964); J. Černý, op.cit. pp. 39, 40; H.I. Bell, Cults and Creeds, p. 10.

(54) A. Erman, op.cit. pp. 170, 171. cf. also E. Drioton and J. Vandier, L'Egypte, p78.

(55) A. Erman, loc.cit. ; E. Bevan, op.cit. 211.

(56) Diod. I. 84.

them personally. They were also described briefly by Pomponius Mela,⁽⁵⁷⁾ who almost certainly copied and summarized in a very awkward manner what had been written before him, most notably what had been written by Herodotus.

The cult of Apis arose during the early dynasties, but it increased in popularity until it reached its zenith in the Ptolemaic era. In this respect Arpag Mekhitarian, tells us :⁽⁵⁸⁾

"Le culte d'Apis remontait aux premières dynasties. Mais sa popularité croît à partir de la XVIII^e-XIX^e dynastie et atteint son apogée à l'époque Ptolémaïque. Identifié alors avec Osiris, il devient Osiris-Apis ou Osorapis et, par un de ces syncrétismes à la grecque, il est confondu - pour des raisons politiques - avec le dieu étranger Serapis suprême à Alexandrie comme à Memphis".

Another example is the cult of the cat. The cat, the symbol of the cat-headed Bast, the goddess of Bubastis in the Delta, rose to be the official deity of the kingdom under the Libyan Dynasty, which was founded by Sheshonk in about 950 B.C. that is during the period of confusion after the decline of the New Kingdom.⁽⁵⁹⁾ And a third example can also be found in the Falcon, the desert

(57) Pomponius Mela, op.cit. I. ix. 58.

(58) Arpag Mekhitarian, L'Egypte, p. 96.

(59) A. Erman, op.cit. p. 165.

hunter, which predominated the royal symbolism from the beginning of Egyptian history.⁽⁶⁰⁾ Besides, the Falcon was the personification of Horus, the symbol of the national kingship of Egypt.

Examining the reasons given by Diodorus once more one observes, in my view, that there were two main elements common among two or more of them. One of these elements is that the sacred animals were venerated because of their utility to men and gods alike. This element can be felt in nearly all the reasons given. Thus in the first we notice that the metaphysical gods were saved from being destroyed by the giants by the fact that the former took the shapes of animals, which later became sacred. In the second and the fourth, the sacred animals rendered their services, or at least were thought to have done so to those who took these animals as their emblems. Regarding the second reason, we do not need to add any further comment.

The second element is an allegorical one. We can observe quite clearly, especially in the first reason, the metaphysical gods manifesting themselves in the form of animals, or as in the second and the fourth reasons, when the people carved the images of the would-be sacred animals on their weapons, they saw and sensed in this act the presence of the metaphysical gods; the

(60) H. Kees, op.cit. pp. 24, 25; Gordon Childe, Social Evolution, p. 140. (Fontana Libr., Collins, 1963).

animals and their images being the material and physical incarnations of these metaphysical and invisible powers, to which we refer as gods.

The classical authors' information concerning the origin and causes for worshipping the sacred animals, therefore, can be summarised in the following :-

The sacred animals were worshipped because :

- a) The gods manifested themselves in the form of these animals, in other words this can be understood to mean that the sacred animals were no more than the manifestations or incarnations of the metaphysical gods. Thus Diodorus, after telling us⁽⁶¹⁾ that the Apis and Mnevis Bulls were consecrated to Osiris stated⁽⁶²⁾ that according to some Apis Bull was honoured because at the death of Osiris his soul passed into this animal, and therefore up to Diodorus' time it has always passed into its successors at the times of the manifestation of Osiris, but some maintained that when Osiris died at the hands of Typhon (Seth) Isis collected the members of his body and put them in an ox (Bous), made of wood covered over with fine linen.

τῆς δὲ τοῦ βοῦς τούτου τιμῆς αἰτίαν ἔνιοι φέρουσι
λέγοντες ὅτι τελευτήσαντος Ὀσίριδος εἰς τοῦτον ἡ
ψυχὴ μετέστη, καὶ διὰ ταῦτα διατελεῖ μέχρι τοῦ

(61) Diod. I. 21.

(62) Diod. I. 85.

νῦν αἰὲ κατὰ τὰς ἀναδείξεις αὐτοῦ μεθισταμένη
πρὸς τοὺς μετὰ γενεστέρους· ἔνιοι δὲ λέγουσι
τελευτήσαντος Ὀσίριδος ὅπῃ Τυφῶνος τὰ
μέλη συναγοῦσθαι τὴν Ἴσιν εἰς βούν ζυλίνην
ἐμβαλεῖν βύσσινά περιβλημένην.

Strabo, as we mentioned before, told us⁽⁶³⁾ that the Egyptians considered Apis the same as Osiris and conceived of him as a god. It is very interesting to notice that although there had been always a main centre for the worship of the sacred animal like Heliopolis for Mnevis Bull and Memphis for Apis, Strabo informed⁽⁶⁴⁾ us as regards Apis that there existed (in his time) representations of the same animal (i.e. bulls) in the rest of the country; these representations, according to Strabo, were not considered gods (as the one at Memphis) though they were held sacred. And according to Pomponius Mela⁽⁶⁵⁾ "Apis was rarely born, not through (normal) coitus with cattle, as they say, but in a divine manner and it was conceived by celestial fire".⁽⁶⁶⁾

"(Apis) raro nascitur nec coitu pecudis, ut aiunt, sed divinitus et caelesti igne conceptus".

(63) Strabo, 17.1.31.

(64) Strabo, 17.1.27.

(65) Pomponius Mela, op.cit. I. ix. 58.

(66) cf. Plutarch, de Iside. 43.

b) The sacred animals were honoured because of their utility. This view was, as we noticed before, mentioned among several causes related by Diodorus, and as the only cause by Cicero.

c) Or that their consecration originated from having been in ancient times the emblems of the various regions and nomes of Egypt.

Having mentioned what the classical authors, or more precisely what Diodorus and to a certain extent what Cicero said about the origins and reasons for worshipping or consecrating the sacred animals, we ought to ask whether the causes and origins put forward by the classical authors concerned correspond to the actual facts.

Once more one is faced with foreign visitors, albeit all of them were scholars in a wide sense, who mostly recorded their own observations or the observations of others who happened to have visited Egypt.

Now what was said by the classical authors on this topic contained a great deal of truth, in addition to a little bit of exaggeration. The classical authors presented the sacred animals as playing a very important part in the Egyptian religion, and according to Strabo they played a more important part than we should gather from Herodotus, who wrote almost four centuries before him, and Strabo professed to know⁽⁶⁷⁾ (as he was able to have entered

(67) Strabo, 17.1.28.

some Egyptian temples⁽⁶⁸⁾), that in the Egyptian temples taken as a whole, there were no statues of gods (lit. of human form), but only of sacred (lit. irrational) animals. Thus Strabo stated :

Ἰ μετὰ δὲ τὰ προπύλαια δ νεὼς πρόναον ἔχων
μέγα καὶ ἀξιόλογον, τὸν δὲ δηκὸν συμμετρον,
ξόανον δ' οὐδέν, ἢ οὐκ ἀνθρωπύμορφον,
ἀλλὰ τῶν ἀλόγων ζώων τινός.'

And Philo⁽⁶⁹⁾ who ridiculed the matter, spoke of the Egyptians as having established through the whole of Egypt altars, temples, shrines and sacred precincts for their deified animals, while ignoring all the other philosophical aspects of the Egyptian faith.

What are the reasons for the exaggeration on the part of the classical and Jewish authors ? The best explanation in my opinion, is the one given by Erman⁽⁷⁰⁾ that as foreigners the authors concerned would naturally observe the most peculiar features of the Egyptian faith. And it also cannot be doubted that the veneration of animals had actually increased and became more prominent since the time of Herodotus.⁽⁷¹⁾ It was particularly popular among the great mass of ordinary folk during the Roman period, and could easily arouse instant outbursts of fanaticism

(68) *ibid.*

(69) Philo, Legatio, XX. 139.

(70) A. Erman, *op.cit.* p.220 (71) A. Erman, *op.cit.* p. 200.

among these masses.⁽⁷²⁾

Reverting to the classical authors, we find that some, like Strabo,⁽⁷³⁾ were careful to point out and to distinguish between those animals which were worshipped and thus were regarded as gods as in the case of Apis in Memphis and Mnevis in Heliopolis, and those animals which were considered sacred like the bulls and cows outside Memphis and Heliopolis. The rest of the classical authors almost without exception maintained that the sacred animals themselves and even their images were the objects of worship.

The two classical views are quite right, as they were mostly based on personal observation and to some on inquiry and investigation. This surely sounds incomprehensive and contradictory. It is not so. For Strabo, who gave the first view, based his information not only on his personal observation but also on minute and critical inquiry, and his association and contacts were mostly with learned Greek as well as Egyptian persons of higher positions. Therefore, he is bound to obtain a rather clearer and a more accurate picture. The others based their information either on their personal observation of most probably the illiterate masses, who almost certainly took the matter of the

(72) H.I. Bell, Cults and Creeds, pp. 66, 67.

(73) Strabo, 17.1.22, 27, 31.

sacred animals rather more literally and who worshipped these animals as gods, or, as in the case of the majority of the Roman authors, on hearsay.

If the majority of the classical authors believed that the Egyptians as a whole worshipped and deified the sacred animals themselves and even their images rather than considering these sacred animals as the earthly representatives of the gods with whom they were associated, then they were surely not correct. All one can say is that their statements were rather generalized and exaggerated.

Modern scholars do not agree with what the classical authors had said in that the sacred animals themselves were the subject of worship and deification. They, however, admitted that the sacred animals were in fact respected, honoured and treated in an extremely exaggerated manner.⁽⁷⁴⁾ Moreover, it is also suggested⁽⁷⁵⁾ that the illiterate and common masses of the Egyptians took the matter of the sacred animals rather more literally, and thus treated these animals as gods. Hence comes the misunderstanding and misrepresentation of the cult of the sacred animals by the classical authors as well as the Jewish authors within our period. In this respect Jaroslav Černý comments:⁽⁷⁶⁾

(74) Cyril Aldred, op.cit. p.166. n.1. (75) J. Černý, op.cit. p.40.

(76) J. Černý, loc.cit.

"... It would be unfair to the Egyptians to conclude from the large number of their deities which first appear in the form of animals or inanimate objects that they considered these very animals or objects as gods. Such beliefs were imparted to them by other peoples of the ancient world, notably by the Greeks, and for such beliefs they were later ridiculed, despised and persecuted by Christians. It is obvious that no mind, however primitive, can consider objects, animals or even human beings as more than a visible manifestation or seat of an abstract divine force. The Egyptians, like other human beings, sought to get into contact with this supernatural force and saw that the best way to achieve this was by choosing some concrete and easily visualized rallying-point round which the attributes of personality could be grouped, to use Sir Alan Gardiner's words. It must, of course, be admitted that the illiterate and primitive Egyptian peasants may at all times have taken these personifications of divinity more literally than they were intended to. The conceptions held by the common people always tend to give material form to the more abstract ideas of those thinking and learned individuals who constitute the class which gives a more definite shape to rather vague religious feeling. Also for the purposes of art - and art was an important factor in Egypt - some material personification of deities was indispensable, and if the human bodies of gods kept the heads of various animals, this was certainly largely because it was a

convenient means of distinguishing their various personalities. That the head of the animal should in some way recall the qualities attributed to the god is only natural".

Similarly we find most of the modern scholars⁽⁷⁷⁾ agreeing with what Cerny has already said, that it was not the sacred animals, their images, or other objects which the Egyptians worshipped but rather the gods with whom the sacred animals were associated. But the view that one particular divinity had become associated with a certain animal was disputed by P. Montet, who tells⁽⁷⁸⁾ us that to say this was merely to push the problem one stage back.

The sacred animals, therefore, were no more than the physical manifestations of the metaphysical deities. That is one of the reasons given by modern scholars for worshipping or honouring the sacred animals.

Very close to that cause was the belief held by the Egyptians in transmigration of souls from one person to an animal. In this respect Cyril Aldred says⁽⁷⁹⁾ "... Since earliest days, the

(77) Barbara Mertz, Red Land, Black Land, Life in ancient Egypt, pp.260, 261 (London 1967); Henri Frankfort and others, Before Philosophy, p.73; William A.Ward, The Spirit of Ancient Egypt, p.123; (Khayats, Beirut, Lebanon 1965), H.I. Bell, Cults and Creeds, pp. 10, 11, 229.

(78) Pierre Montet, Eternal Egypt, p. 284.

(79) Cyril Aldred, op.cit. p.166. n.1; J.M.White, op.cit. pp.139, 131.

Egyptians had held that on death they could become effective spirits (akh~~u~~) assuming any desired shape. In the late period this seems to have been modified into a belief in the transmigration of souls, as reported by Herodotus. According to this idea, the soul passed through a definite cycle of rebirth from humans through animals and back to humans again. Such a belief would fully account for the exaggerated respect, not worship, accorded to certain animals in Greco-Romans days".

Another modern view⁽⁸⁰⁾ tells us that the Egyptians first vowed animals to their gods without adoring them as such, but in the age of the decadence of the Egyptian thought (from the Late Period onwards till it reached its grotesque proportion in the Greco-Roman period, as it is clear from the reports of the Greek and Roman as well as Jewish authors) and of a rigidity in their conservations, which became the weapon of nationalism against foreign invasion, it seems that the Egyptian population had taken refuge in excessive and childish cult of numerous animals.

A fourth opinion says that the sacred animals were worshipped and cared for because they were considered as the living incarnations of gods and goddesses,⁽⁸¹⁾ and because they were the

(80) Arpag Mekhitarian, L'Egypte, pp.93, 95 (Religions Du Monde Series, Paris, 1964); cf. also Cyril Aldred, op.cit. pp.165, 166.

(81) J. Drilaton and J.Vandier, L'Egypte, p.78; cf. also on n.77.

repositories of the beneficent or dangerous forms of the divine power, ⁽⁸²⁾ thus broadly agreeing with the classical authors over the consecration of the animals themselves. But the difference between the classical and the modern scholars, which is very considerable indeed, remains in the fact that the former, with few exceptions, failed to mention that these animals were not worshipped as such, but as incarnations and manifestations of the abstract deities.

The reason given by both Diodorus and Cicero that animals were honoured because of their utility also gained some supporters among modern scholars. One of the holders of such a view, Samuel Dill, tells us : ⁽⁸³⁾

"The divine virtues are only faintly imagined in animals which have their uses in the world. If all religion is only symbolism, why should not the multiform beneficence of the unseen powers be expressed in the form of creatures who give their service and companionship to man, as fitly as in lifeless bronze or marble ?" But the problem is that the same satisfactory reason cannot be found in all cases. ⁽⁸⁴⁾

(82) A Dict. of Egypt. Civil. p.249, s.v. sacred animals, cf. also S. Dill, op.cit. p.571.

(83) S. Dill, loc.cit.

(84) cf. Rawlinson, Hist of Hdt. Vol. II, pp. 109, 110. n.6. Comm. on Hdt. Bk. 11. Ch. 65.

The reason, which is very popular among many modern scholars,⁽⁸⁵⁾ is that the cult of the sacred animals originated from the very ancient history when the early Egyptians took for their standards the images of the various animals, so that everyone would know to which particular group or division they belonged.

Still others suggest that the cult of the sacred animals was associated with the kingship of Egypt.⁽⁸⁶⁾ In the days of glory particularly during the New Kingdom the kingship was closely identified with the military policies of the conquests abroad and keeping inviolate the borders of Egypt. It was a concept geared only to success and could but decline as the affairs of Egypt herself began to totter. New and vigorous races with superior weapons challenged successfully her military supremacy, dynastic squabbles, low Niles and increasing improvidence dealt the idea a mortal blow. In the Late Period the kingship became but a prize for which foreigners - Libyans, Ethiopians, Persians and the Greeks - fought each other. While the weight of traditional thought made it certain that there would always be tremendous respect paid to the kingship especially in court circles, the fact is that men turned more to the worship of gods in the form of kings, to Amun,

(85) Pierre Montet, op.cit. pp.142, 143, 284, 285; E. Drioton and J. Vandier, op.cit. p.78; Gordon Childe, Social Evolution, p.140 (Fontana Library, Collins, London, 1963).

(86) Cyril Aldred, op.cit. pp.165, 166, cf. also H. Kees, op.cit. pp.24, 25; Gordon Childe, loc.cit.

Re-Harakhte, and Osiris. Prayers were addressed to gods less and less through the intermediary of the king and more through the agency of the city god, while for the great mass of the people, as the cult of the god incarnate in the king declined, the worship of animals increased to grotesque proportions. The greatness of Ancient Egypt was indissolubly bound up with their kings who had created it; they rose and fell together.

Rawlinson⁽⁸⁷⁾ who rightly thinks that the view expressed by Diodorus and Cicero that animals were worshipped because of their utility is not found in all cases, attributes the worship of each individual animal or a group of animals to different and particular reasons.⁽⁸⁸⁾ He saw in the statement of Herodotus that Egypt was a country not abounding in (wild) animals, a clue to the question of the cult of the sacred animals. In this respect he says :⁽⁸⁹⁾

"Though Herodotus abstains from saying why the Egyptians held some animals sacred, he explains it in some degree by observing that Egypt did not abound in animals. It was therefore

(87) Rawlinson, loc.cit.

(88) cf. W.G. Waddell, (Herodotus' Book II, p. 183) who quotes A.W. Lawrence as saying that the reasons, probably diverse, for worshipping animals were not understood by the Egyptians themselves.

(89) Diod. I. 83-85.

found necessary to ensure the preservation of some, as in the case of cows and sheep and others were sacred in consequence of their being unwholesome food, as swine, and certain fish; and others from their utility in destroying noxious reptiles, as the cat, ichneumon, ibis, vulture; or for some particular purpose, as the crocodile was sacred in places distant from the Nile, where the canals required keeping up".

If Diodorus was the major source for our information on the subject of origin and causes of the sacred animals, within the period assigned to this thesis, he was also our chief author concerning all the various sides of this extraordinary and strange (as far as the classical authors are concerned) cult of the sacred animals.

Diodorus' lengthy account⁽⁹⁰⁾ on the care, protection and keeping of the sacred animals and all matters concerning them, seems to be based on his personal observation. Hence it looks quite clear, intelligible and well-informed.

He described as an eye-witness the extreme care and attention with which the ancient Egyptians treated their sacred animals. He also described the fabulous and unbelievable sums of money and lavish wealth that the people concerned spent on maintaining such a host of sacred animals. He related to his unbelieving Greek readers

(90) Diod. I. 83.

the festivals and mourning connected with the various sacred animals. He further showed us the extent of reverence and honour paid to these animals by the masses of the Egyptians. He told us of how dear were the sacred animals to the hearts and minds of the common folk of Egypt. To those people, Diodorus said, the sacred animals were dearer than even their kinsfolk and property. And when they made expeditions abroad, he added, they always ransomed these animals even at the expense of their comfort and need. The feelings of the common people of Egypt could not have been aroused more than with any dishonour or maltreatment that occurred to their most cherished sacred animals. This could easily produce waves of disturbances and outbursts of fanaticism on the part of the masses. In this respect Diodorus related as an eye-witness during his visit to Egypt an accident involving a Roman citizen, who killed a cat. As this took place, Diodorus observed,⁽⁹¹⁾ the common people rushed towards the wrong-doer and lynched him to death without waiting for trial. The multitude, Diodorus added, were neither persuaded away from the man by the official sent by the Ptolemaic king nor deterred by the fear and the might of Rome even though such an act had been an accident.

As for the punishment inflicted on the killer of a sacred animals, Diodorus told⁽⁹²⁾ us that "whoever intentionally kills

(91) Diod. I. 83.

(92) Ibid.

one of these animals is put to death, unless it be a cat or an abis that he kills; but if he kills one of these, whether intentionally or unintentionally, he is certainly put to death, for the common people gather in crowds and deal with the perpetrator most cruelly, sometimes doing this without waiting for a trial".

ὅς δ' ἂν τούτων τι τῶν ζώων ἐκὼν διαφθείρῃ
θανάτῳ περιπίπτει, πλὴν ἐὰν ἀλουργὸν ἢ τὴν ἰβιν
ἀποκτείνῃ· ταῦτα δὲ ἐάν τε ἐκὼν ἐάν τε ἄκων
ἀποκτείνῃ, πάντως θανάτῳ περιπίπτει, τῶν
ὄχλων συντρεχόντων καὶ τὸν πράξαντα δεινότατα
διατιθέντων, καὶ τοῦτ' ἐνίοτε πραττόντων ἄνευ κρίσεως·

Diodorus, who seemed to have copied Herodotus, or acquired his information as regards the same subject from the same source, was not as clear as his predecessor. For Diodorus was a bit vague, whereas, on the contrary, Herodotus was clearer and more specific than Diodorus. For the former said, ⁽⁹³⁾ "Whoever kills one of these creatures (i.e. sacred animals) with intention is punished with death; and if he kills by mischance he, pays whatever penalty the priests appoint. Whoever kills an ibis or a hawk, with intention or without, must die for it". Diodorus, therefore, seemed to have forgotten to mention the close which says "if he kills by mischance (any sacred animal with the exception of a hawk or an ibis)

(93) Hdt. 11. 65.

his penalty would be assessed by the priests". One also notices that whereas Herodotus made the hawk and the ibis his exception, Diodorus mentioned the cat in place of the hawk. The same cruel and dreadful fate inflicted on the person who killed a sacred animal knowingly or unknowingly was also mentioned by Cicero⁽⁹⁴⁾ and Pomponius Mela.⁽⁹⁵⁾ But the statements of both Cicero and Pomponius Mela were general and therefore less accurate than those of Herodotus and Diodorus.

The sacred animals were respected, honoured, and even worshipped not only during their life-time but also after death. For when the sacred animal died those concerned would bury and mourn it in a manner, described by Diodorus, as very lavish and exceedingly expensive and surpassing belief.

Diodorus dwelled⁽⁹⁶⁾ long on the subject of embalming, burying and mourning the deceased sacred animals, and Pomponius Mela⁽⁹⁷⁾ touched on that matter very briefly. But both authors singled out the great celebrations following the birth and enthronement of the Apis Bull and the solemn public mourning which followed its death. For in their view Apis was the most noteworthy among all the sacred animals for great honour and pompous celebrations during its life-time and lavish and expensive burial and extremely solemn mourning after death.

(94) Cicero, De Re Publica. III. ix. 14. (95) Pomponius Mela, op.cit. I. ix. 58.

(96) Diod. I. 83.

(97) Pomponius Mela, loc.cit.

To conclude this section on the most controversial and interesting aspect of the Egyptian religion one can say that it was not only controversial and puzzling for the ancient but also for modern authors as well. It was a difficult question, and no complete explanation and no final answer could easily be given, for such a cult, since the people concerned are no longer among us.

To the ancient Greeks the matter was surprising, strange, extraordinary and sometimes superstitious. But as a whole the Greeks showed some sympathy and understanding towards such cults, perhaps because their religion was not devoid of zoolatry. And although they were sometimes sceptical and cynical towards the cult of the sacred animals in Egypt, this cult could not fail but attract their attention and even their participation. The attraction this worship would have for Greeks is well shown by two late Ptolemaic inscriptions (Sammelbuch 8885 and 8886) which are dedications to the crocodile god of the Arsinoite nome, Souchos, by the ephebate - a purely Greek organization. (98a)

The Romans condemned this cult outright and attacked it in a very sarcastic and satirical manner. And despite public

(98a) See also E. Bevan (*op.cit.* p.88) who gives few examples of some members of the mixed Greco-Egyptians race as well as of pure Hellenic origin worshipping or consecrating Egyptian sacred animals. cf. Tarn and Griffith, Hellenistic civilisation, p.207.

discouragement and persecution of the Egyptian religion in Rome^(98b) the Romans could not resist the invasion of their land by the Egyptian ideas, that though Cicero attacked the Egyptians for worshipping the sacred animals, he could not but point out the good sides of that cult. The invasion of Italy by the Egyptian gods and goddesses, Isis and her companions, Serapis, Harpocrates, and the dog-headed god is also an indication that the Romans could not resist the temptations provided by such new deities including the sacred animal.

The attitude of the Jewish writers and of the Jews in general was even more hostile than the Roman one. It was also harshly persecuted by the Christians, and was almost completely wiped out by the process of the Islamisation of Egypt. But traces of the ancient cult of the sacred animals have always remained in Egypt, that one can see the illiterate Fellaheen (peasants) of Egypt abstaining from hurting or killing the ibis, by saying rather convincingly that this bird is very useful, as it kills all sorts of worms and other noxious creatures, which are harmful to the plants. The present writer saw a few years back in Egypt embalmed crocodiles being hanged on the doors of a few houses, but could not know the origin or the purpose of such an act. All one can say is that this may be a replica of the ancient days when these animals

(98b) M.Selim Salem, loc.cit.

were consecrated, and that the habit continued to be practised without the people realizing its significance. But the present author cannot find a justification for the statement by How and Wells⁽⁹⁹⁾ that cats are still to this day honoured all over Egypt. I have never come across any person who does so.

(99) How and Wells, Commentary on Herodotus, Vol. I. p.200;
Comm. on Hdt's Bk. 11. Ch.67. n.1.

CHAPTER XI.

PEOPLES AND PROFESSIONS

THE PHARAOH, KING OR PREFECT.

What we have said concerning the previous Chapters of this work can easily apply to this one also, namely that the Classical as well as the Jewish authors of our concern differ in one way or the other in their attitude and approach to the study of Egypt and the Egyptians. The topics which interest them and which are subsequently discussed by them, and the period chosen for their study are also often different.

Egypt, according to Diodorus⁽¹⁾ and as we know, was ruled for several millennia by national rulers, better known as Pharaohs⁽²⁾. But there were some intervals of

(1) Diod. I.44. who simply called them kings. The term Pharaoh which came down to us in the biblical languages, originates from the Egyptian expression per-aa or per-o, the great house, in other words the royal palace. This term, though originally referred to the palace, later ~~it~~ came to be applied to its master. (By a similar process 'Sublime Porte' came to mean the government of the Ottoman Sultan; and in the present time we refer to Buckingham Palace when we mean the Queen of the U.K.)(see Pierre Montet, op.cit. p.32; A Dict.of Egypt.Civil. p.212 s.v. Pharaoh; J.Manchip White, op.cit. pp.114,115).

(2) Diod. loc.cit. see n.l. supra.

foreign rule, of the Hyksos, Ethiopians, Persians, Macedonians and others.

The year 332 was a turning point, or as far as the Egyptians are concerned, a setback in the national independence of Egypt.⁽³⁾ For from that date onwards Egypt ceased to be for the Egyptians. In this year Alexander the Great of Macedon invaded Egypt, where, it was said, he was welcomed as a Pharaoh, and a god, being the son of Amon⁽⁴⁾ (identified by the Greeks with Zeus), or perhaps of Nectanebo, the last national king of Egypt prior to the second Persian invasion.⁽⁵⁾ After the death of Alexander and the subsequent disintegration of his vast and great empire, Ptolemy, the son of a certain Lagos, and one of the prominent generals of Alexander and a close friend, took the possession of Egypt and succeeded in consolidating his authority over that country, and made it his own kingdom, a personal property acquired by the force of arms.⁽⁶⁾

(3) E. Bevan, op.cit. p.79.

(4) Ibid., p.12 ff; H.I.Bell, Egypt From Alexander the Great to The Arab Conquest, p.30

(5) Bevan, op.cit. p.3.

(6) At the beginning of his rule (323 B.C.) Ptolemy I Soter was only a satrap of Egypt, being then part of the Macedonian Empire, but later (305 B.C.) Ptolemy declared Egypt an independent kingdom with himself as its first king. For Egypt as a personal property of Ptolemy I Soter won by the force of arms see Diod.XVIII.39. cf. also Tarn and Griffiths, Hellenistic Civilisation, p.187; M.Rostovtzeff, The Social and Economic History of the Hellenistic World, p.267.

Ptolemy, son of Lagos, later to be known as Ptolemy I Soter (i.e. the Saviour) founded in Egypt the Ptolemaic dynasty, which ruled Egypt for nearly three centuries (323 - 30 B.C.), and whose kings were called the Ptolemies.^(7a)

If Alexander's conquest of Egypt in the year 332 and the subsequent establishment of the Ptolemaic rule there is considered the end of an era in which Egypt was ruled by national rulers, the same event could be considered the last phase of Egypt being an independent state. For by the collapse of the Ptolemaic rule, which was much weakened and greatly shaken by internal strife among the Ptolemies themselves and also by the weakness and corruption of these kings, as the result of the Roman conquest of Egypt by Augustus (30 B.C.), Egypt became no better than a Roman province. The Romans subsequently became the new masters of Egypt thus replacing the Ptolemies. It is true that Egypt was not an ordinary Roman province. It was a unique province.^(7b) It was one of the richest, and the wealthiest, if not the richest and wealthiest of all, provinces of the whole

(7a) They were also called the Lagidae, from Lagus (Lagos or Laagos) the Father of the First Ptolemy. The name Lagides was not commonly used by the ancients, but it is the common practice of French scholars today to speak of the Ptolemies as "Les Lagides", see Bevan, op.cit. p.20 and f.n.4 in the same page.

(7b) H.I.Bell, Egypt From Alexander the Great to the Arab Conquest, pp.65, 67.

Roman Empire.⁽⁸⁾ It was also a major supplier of cheap (free?) wheat to the hungry masses of Rome.⁽⁹⁾ One of the ancient authors, namely the Jewish priest Josephus even told us that Egypt supplied to Rome wheat which sufficed for four months of the year.⁽¹⁰⁾ Egypt was, and still is, a country of the highest strategic importance of all. Needless to say that it has always controlled traffic and trade between East and West. It is for these reasons that Egypt held a special position in the Roman Empire. It did not only fall within the jurisdiction of the Roman Senate which was true of several other provinces, but it was ruled by men, who were sent to represent the Emperor and to be directly responsible before him and these Roman rulers of Egypt did not belong to the class of the Senate members but to the Equestrian order, that is they were knights or "equites". The rulers of Egypt in the Roman era were called prefects (Lat. Praefecti).

In brief, Egypt's rulers were either national Pharaohs when Egypt was independent; foreign kings when Egypt was ruled by foreign elements, in which we include the Ptolemies; or Roman prefects, when Egypt was conquered and annexed to the Roman Empire.

(8) Tacitus, Hist., III. 8; cf. also Diod. XVIII.6.

(9) Tacitus, Annals, II. 59; cf. also M.Cary, op.cit. p.211, Cyril Aldred, op.cit. p.18.

(10) Josephus, Jewish War, II. 386.

The point, which we have several times stressed, that the periods of study of the various classical authors are different, is in respect to this chapter very apparent, especially if we compare what Diodorus said with what the others, all the others, said.

Now to take Diodorus first, we shall find that, as he stated,⁽¹¹⁾ his interest lies not in the current affairs of his own time, but in the Pharaonic period, more specifically in the period stretching from the beginning of Egyptian history to the reign of Amasis. Diodorus, therefore, was little concerned with the period from Amasis to his own time. And, as we know, he visited Egypt at the end of the Ptolemaic era, when the authority of the inefficient and impotent Ptolemies were loosing ground, the conditions that led to the direct intervention of the rising Rome in the internal affairs of Egypt and to the final collapse of the Ptolemaic era and the conquest of Egypt by Rome.

Diodorus was not concerned with all that. Instead he spoke of the Pharaonic past of Egypt, including of course its divine Pharaohs. His account of the Pharaohs is very long and very interesting. Diodorus spoke, as he stated,⁽¹²⁾ on the main customs touching the early kings (i.e. the Pharaohs). And about

(11) Diod., I. 42.

(12) Diod. I. 72.

his source he clearly said⁽¹³⁾ that after going through what other previous authors, such as Herodotus, had written, he found that these authors had invented marvellous tales and fictitious myths for the delectation of their readers. These tales and myths, Diodorus, as he told us,⁽¹⁴⁾ omitted, and chose only what appeared in the written records of the priests of Egypt and what passed his scrutiny. But one should ask Diodorus himself, how could he consult the Egyptian records without actually knowing himself the Egyptian language ? Were these records translated into Greek ? How could he verify and check the validity of his own information ? Did the priests of Egypt, with whom he is said to have associated himself, know Greek ? Diodorus himself did not clarify this matter. The only possibility open for us is therefore to suggest that Diodorus might have consulted some records written by some educated and/or Hellenized Egyptians such as the Egyptian priest Manetho, who is known to have compiled in Greek a History of Egypt.⁽¹⁵⁾ On the whole Diodorus' account on the Egyptian affairs shows that he had tried his best to get to know the facts and as a result of his attempt he seems to be well-informed.

(13) Diod. I. 69.

(14) Ibid.

(15) H.I. Bell, op.cit. p.37.

Be that as it may, Diodorus related to us the most important customs or matters touching the early Pharaohs of Egypt, whom incidentally he did not call Pharaohs, but simply kings. Moreover, Diodorus mentioned some other information here and there in his work bearing on the question of the method the Egyptians used to choose their kings and the origin of the brother-sister marriage among members of the royal family and also some hints, though rather indirect ones, on the origin of the rule by which kingship was transferred through the female line.

Diodorus did not refer at all to the childhood of the would-be Pharaoh or to his upbringing. But he spoke of the way the Egyptians appointed their kings. In this respect Diodorus stated ⁽¹⁶⁾ expressly that 'kingship in early times was bestowed, not upon the sons of their former rulers, but upon such as conferred the greatest and most numerous benefits upon the peoples, whether it be that the inhabitants in this way sought to provoke their kings to useful service for the benefit of all, or that they have in very truth received an account to this effect in their sacred writings'. Diodorus, however, did not say whether this process continued to be practised in later times. He seemed

(16) Diod. I. 43. For the full statement of Diodorus see Chapter IX, The Egyptian Society, Manners and Behaviour.

to have indicated⁽¹⁷⁾ on the contrary that this system of choosing the best men among them to be their kings was replaced by the hereditary system.

The statement that the early kings of Egypt were appointed from among the people and that they were not the sons of their former rulers might be correct as far as the pre-dynastic era in Egypt is concerned, that ^Sit when the regional or district chiefs could only be chosen for their own personal merits, such as courage or wisdom and not because they were the sons of chiefs. This is also true of the New Kingdom, when a crisis was ended in favour of appointing a king not because of his right as a legitimate successor to the throne but because of his own personal merits.⁽¹⁸⁾ But this democratic procedure was certainly not used in the Dynastic period of the Egyptian history, when the son normally succeeded his father.⁽¹⁹⁾ And Diodorus himself, though, like all the classical authors, he was ignorant of the Egyptian history,⁽²⁰⁾ gave a number of instances.⁽²¹⁾ By tradition, the

(17) Diod. I. 45.

(18) E.Drioton and J.Vandier, L'Egypte, p.454.

(19) H.Kees, op.cit. p.63; Henri Frankfort, Ancient Egyptian Religion, p.102; E.Drioton and J.Vandier, L'Egypte, p.453; Pierre Montet, op.cit. p.38; Cyril Aldred, op.cit. p.166.

(20) Cf. C.H.Oldfather, in Loeb ed. of Diodorus' Libr. of Hist., vol. I. p.179. n.1.

(21) Ibid. and passim.

Egyptian kingship, like property, was transferred through the female line and not through the male line.⁽²²⁾ It is therefore very important that the heir apparent of the throne of Egypt should not only be the son of the king, but equally important that he should be the son of a princess with royal blood.⁽²³⁾ When by chance, the only male child of the king was a son of a concubine, it was indispensable that he should marry a royal princess to obtain the right of ascending to the throne.⁽²⁴⁾ On the other hand the throne of Egypt was not always occupied through legitimate succession, that is to say by the son of the king.⁽²⁵⁾ For many a time it became vacant to be filled by the nearest kin of the king. It even often happened that the throne was taken over by force of arms by an ambitious commoner,⁽²⁶⁾ mainly from the military and also from the priestly college.⁽²⁷⁾

(22) E.Drioton and J.Vandier, loc.cit., Jon Manchip White, op.cit. p.116, Cyril Aldred, op.cit. p.166; Barbara Mertz, Red Land, Black Land, pp.79, 80.

(23) E.Drioton and J.Vandier, loc.cit.

(24) Ibid; Cyril Aldred, loc.cit.

(25) H.Kees, op.cit. p.202; A Dict.of Egypt.Civil. p.215. s.v. Pharaoh; Pierre Montet, op.cit., pp.57, 58, 59.

(26) As for example Amasis (Ahmose II of the XXVith Dynasty who reigned from 569-526 B.C.) who overthrew Apries. (Diod. I. 68; cf. also Hdt. II. 169).

(27) H.Kees, loc.cit.; Pierre Montet, loc.cit.

The general rule was, therefore, that the kingship in Egypt was hereditary, in other words the son normally succeeded his father to the throne, provided that the son was not only the son of his father the king, but that at the same time he must be the son of a princess with the royal blood running in her veins. Moreover, the hereditary nature of kingship in Egypt is not new to ancient Egypt. For it goes back to the mythological era, when the rulers of Egypt were not human kings but gods. This fact was given to Diodorus by the Egyptians and he mentioned⁽²⁸⁾ it in his account on the mythology of Egypt, to which we have referred in the previous Chapter (Chapter X, Religion, Mythology), and he also mentioned it elsewhere.⁽²⁹⁾ We shall also have something more to say concerning the divine nature of the Egyptian monarchy shortly in this Chapter.

Not all the rulers of ancient Egypt were males, as we may think, but some were females. Few royal princesses found in themselves the required qualifications and abilities to retain the throne for themselves instead of conferring it on a male who might prove a worthless or impotent monarch, and the Egyptian history is

(28) Diod. I. 13 ff.

(29) Diod. I. 44.

full of such kings; in this way these female rulers or queens provided exceptions to the general rule. The history of Egypt knew a few, but very able queens such as Hatshepsut (1504-1483 B.C.) and the last Cleopatra (51-30 B.C.) and many others.⁽³⁰⁾ Diodorus did not refer to Egypt as having been ruled by women, though, as we have already seen (see Chapter X, Religion, Mythology), he mentioned the case of Isis, who ruled Egypt very successfully both when her husband and brother Osiris was abroad after his death. But this instance is confined to the rule of Egypt by gods. It is in the Roman poet, Lucan that we find a direct reference to Egypt as having been ruled by women as queens. Thus Lucan poetically said:⁽³¹⁾ "Cleopatra (i.e. the famous or last Cleopatra) was not the first woman to rule the cities of the Nile: Egypt was accustomed to put up with a queen and made no distinction of sex".

If the Egyptian monarchy originated from ancient tradition when gods and deified kings ruled the country then it must have had a divine nature. In his account of the mythology of Egypt,⁽³²⁾ and elsewhere,⁽³³⁾ Diodorus informed us that according to

(30) cf. Cyril Aldred, op.cit. p.167; Barbara Mertz, Red Land, Black Lane, The World of the Ancient Egyptians, p.81 (London, 1967).

(31) Lucan, op.cit. X. 90-92.

(32) Diod. I. 13 ff.

(33) Diod. I. 44.

the Egyptian account, Egypt was ruled by successive generations of gods, deified mortals and heroes, with Horus being the last in these series of god kings. Horus as we know, became the king of Egypt after his father Osiris departed from among men. (34)

Later on, however, Diodorus was more explicit in speaking of the divine king, when he was told that the Egyptians, surpassed all other peoples in showing their gratitude to their benefactors.

It is for these reasons that they were seen prostrating themselves before their kings and honouring them as being in very truth gods,

or as Diodorus put (35) it: "διὰ δὲ τὰς αὐτὰς αἰτίας

δοκονεῖν Αἰγύπτιοι τοὺς ἑαυτῶν βασιλεῖς
προσκυνεῖν τε καὶ τιμᾶν ᾧς πρὸς ἀληθείας
ὄντας θεούς."

Diodorus, therefore, was saying that the ancient Egyptians treated and considered their Pharaohs as gods. Is this true ? The answer to this question is simply, yes but. The Egyptians did in fact consider their Pharaohs gods incarnate or gods

(34) Diod. I. 25, cf. also H. Kees, op.cit. p.63; Henri Frankfort, Ancient Egyptian Religion, p.102; Cyril Aldred, op.cit. p.162; A Dict. of Egypt. Civil. p.212 s.v. Pharaoh.

(35) Diod. I. 90. see also Chapter IX, The Egyptians, Manners and Behaviour.

in their own right.⁽³⁶⁾ The Pharaoh was the actual child of the supreme god.⁽³⁷⁾ The unlimited powers of the Pharaoh and his super human faculties could be listed at even greater length, but it is obvious that he was indeed a god.⁽³⁸⁾ In the temple of Hatshepsut at Deir el Bahari and of Amenophis III at Luxor pictures are preserved explaining why the birth of a king is the birth of a god.⁽³⁹⁾ And on a statue-base from the Step Pyramid, Djoser is shown treading down nine bows symbolising the neighbours of Egypt, and being worshipped by submissive lapwing representing the Egyptian populace.⁽⁴⁰⁾ At this early stage, there is no distinction between the peoples of Egypt and those of adjacent land^s who are all prostrate beneath the Pharaoh as an omnipotent god.⁽⁴¹⁾ The disproportionate sizes of the King, his

(36) Pierre Montet, op.cit. p.32; H.Kees, op.cit. p.61 ; Cyril Aldred, op.cit. p.157ff.; A Dict.of Egypt.Civil. p.212 s.v. Pharaoh; J.Manchip White, op.cit. p.113ff; Henri Frankfort, op.cit. pp.52,103; Henri Frankfort and Others, Before Philosophy, pp.73,74.; Walter Wolf, Kulturgeschichte des Alten Agypten, p.157 (Stuttgart, 1962); Legacy of Egypt, p.199; R.H.Barrow, The Romans, p.148; Rostovtzeff, op.cit. pp.267,268; H.I.Bell, Cults and Creeds, p.37; Georges Posener, De La Divinite Du Pharaon, (Paris, 1960).

(37) A Dict. of Egypt. Civil. loc.cit.

(38) Ibid. p.215. s.v. Pharaoh. (39) Ibid. p.212. s.v. Pharaoh.

(40) Cyril Aldred, op.cit. p.159.

(41) Ibid. p.160; cf. also Henri Frankfort and Others, Before Philosophy, p.85 (Pelican 1964); Pierre Montet, op.cit. p.46.

subjects, and even the image of the god, upon these early monuments clearly show that the Pharaoh is to be regarded as a universal god in his own right rather than the human agent of a god.⁽⁴²⁾ This concept of the Pharaoh as the god Horus incarnate reached its fullest development in the Early Old Kingdom, and probably the Step Pyramid and the pyramids at Giza stand as its greatest memorials when the entire nation undertook the tremendous activity involved in raising and equipping these giant monuments not for the sole benefit of their human ruler, but to ensure the persistence of their greatest divinity with which their very existence was identified.⁽⁴³⁾

But the concept of the king as the supreme god incarnate was sadly weakened during the First Intermediate Period when the exclusiveness of the Pharaoh was replaced by a multiplicity of local kinglets who boasted less of their divinity than of their ability to preserve their people by their temporal might.⁽⁴⁴⁾ The status of king as god was gradually weakened. For if we take the New Kingdom we find that during that period the

(42) Cyril Aldred, op.cit. p.160.

(43) Ibid. pp.162, 161.

(44) Ibid. p.162.

kingship was closely identified with the military policies of conquest abroad and keeping inviolate the borders of Egypt. It was a concept geared only to success and could but decline as the affairs of Egypt herself began to totter.⁽⁴⁵⁾ One should not also forget the fact that in his own eyes and in the eyes of his own subjects the Pharaoh was, after all, a man,⁽⁴⁶⁾ the supreme human being in the Egyptian state. This attitude of the people towards their Pharaohs is illustrated by the information supplied both by the Egyptian sources and by the Classical authors. The annals of the Egyptian kings are full of harem conspiracies, plots, depositions and murders.⁽⁴⁸⁾ And if we were to believe Herodotus,⁽⁴⁹⁾ Diodorus,⁽⁵⁰⁾ Pliny,⁽⁵¹⁾ and the Egyptian story tellers, who informed Herodotus and other classical authors, the popular belief

(45) Ibid. pp.165, 166.

(46) A Dict.of Egypt.Civil. p.215 s.v. Pharaoh.

(47) Ibid.

(48) Pierre Montet, op.cit. pp.57,58; A.Dict.of Egypt.Civil. p.215, s.v. Pharaoh; cf. also H.Kees, op.cit. p.202.

(49) Hdt. II. 121, 126ff.

(50) Diod. I. 64.

(51) Pliny, N.H. XXXVI. 79.

in the king's divinity was hardly stronger.⁽⁵²⁾ The information supplied by Herodotus about Rhampsinitus, Cheops, Chephren and Menkaura was not invented, but based on what he had actually heard at Memphis and throughout his travels. Cheops shut the temples and imposed every sort of hardship on the people in order to build his pyramid.⁽⁵³⁾ As he was running short of money he is supposed to have put his daughter into a brothel and collected the proceeds. Rhampsinitus had also used this highly convenient method, not to get money but to find a criminal; the princess had to induce her visitors to say what was the most ingenious and villaneous act they had committed. It is true, however, that Cheops, Chephren and Ramses II - if it is Ramses II the narrator is referring to under the name of Rhampsinitus - are among the greatest builders of Egyptian antiquity.

The declining image of the Pharaohs in the eyes of their subjects can also be easily inferred from the fact that the Egyptian Pharaohs of the Late Period depended so heavily on foreign mercenaries,⁽⁵⁴⁾ whose main function was to control and suppress the masses. Psammetichus, Apries and Amasis all used

(52) cf. Pierre Montet, *op.cit.* p.58.

(53) *Ibid.*

(54) Diod. I. 66, 67, 68. ; cf. Hdt. II. 152ff.

extensively foreign mercenaries to protect them against their dissatisfied people, and not because the Egyptian people did not make good fighters as some ancient and modern authors claim. This fact is testified by the Classical authors themselves. For according to some of them Egyptian soldiers rallied in support of Amasis, a general in the Egyptian army, and proclaimed him their leader and afterwards the king of Egypt in place of Apries with whom they were dissatisfied because of their belief that he sent them in foreign lands in order to get rid of them and because of his dependence on, and partiality towards foreign mercenaries. And when the battle occurred between Apries and his mercenaries on one side and Amasis and his Egyptian troops on the other, the result was a victory for the latter.

Another custom touching the Pharaoh referred to by Diodorus is the marriage of the Pharaoh. Though we are going to discuss marriage-customs in Egypt in detail in the following chapter of this thesis, the marriage of the first men of Egypt, the symbol of the nation and its creator, the divine Pharaoh, deserves a brief discussion here.

Diodorus, uniquely among our authors mentioned⁽⁵⁶⁾ that brother-sister marriage in ancient Egypt had originated from

(55) Diod. loc.cit., cf. Hdt. II. 169.

(56) Diod. I. 27.

the successful marriage of the deified royal couple, Osiris and Isis. He also stated⁽⁵⁷⁾ that as the queen of Egypt, both during the absence of Osiris abroad and after his death, Isis was such a very good ruler that it was ordained that the queen (in Egypt) should have greater power and honour than the king.

This statement of Diodorus, which like most of his statements contains some elements of truth, presents two points. One that the Pharaoh married his sister. Second that the queen, for the reasons mentioned by Diodorus or rather given to him by the Egyptians, enjoyed more power and honour than the king. Monuments, inscriptions and modern scholars all agreed with Diodorus on the first point, that brother-sister marriage was commonly practised by members of the royal family in Ancient Egypt.⁽⁵⁸⁾ This kind of marriage was granted to members of the royal family for practical considerations as well as for religious reasons. For as we mentioned earlier in this chapter, the throne, like property, in Ancient Egypt was transferred through the female line and not

(57) Ibid

(58) Pierre Montet, op.cit. p.48; A Dict.of Egypt. Civil. p.159. s.v. Marriage; Jaroslav Černý, Consanguineous Marriage In Pharaonic Egypt, J.E.A. 40. 1954, p.23-29; J.Manchip White, op.cit. 116; J.Lindsay, Daily Life In Roman Egypt, p.19; Gordon Childe, Social Evolution, p.141 (Fontana, London, 1963).

through the male line.⁽⁵⁹⁾ It is for this reason that the crown prince, who married usually in childhood, married his sister, who was the potential heiress, to secure his right to the throne. Moreover, the prince carried in his veins the actual blood of the sun-god Ra, and it was important that this divine liquid should not be diluted; so he preserved its purity and potency by marrying a member of his family, and if for one reason or the other he did not marry one of his royal family, he still married a princess of a vanishing royal family or a foreign royal family.⁽⁶⁰⁾ To preserve the purity of his royal blood and to secure his right to the throne, and as the throne was by an ancient custom inherited by a female, the prince, the would-be Pharaoh, married his sister. Sometimes for the same considerations he married his half-sister, cousin or even daughter, in short every woman who could possibly lay claim to the throne.⁽⁶¹⁾ In so doing, the future Pharaoh caught two birds with one stone, preserved the purity of his divine royal blood, followed the tradition originated

(59) E.Drioton and J.Vandier, *op.cit.* p.453; J. Manchip White, *op.cit.* pp.116, 117.

(60) J. Manchip White, *loc.cit.*; Pierre Montet, *op.cit.* p.49.

(61) J. Manchip White, *loc.cit.*

from the divine marriage of Osiris and Isis and also secured his right to the throne.

If we look into the lengthy account of Diodorus⁽⁶²⁾ on the Pharaohs of Egypt, we find that at the outset of that account Diodorus presented the Pharaohs as being all with few exceptions, democratic and never absolute kings in a bad sense nor dictators ruling by decree. The Pharaohs, according to Diodorus, respected the laws and ruled by them. Thus Diodorus said⁽⁶³⁾ that, "the life which the kings of the Egyptians (lit. them) lived was not like that of the men who enjoy autocratic power and in all matters do exactly as they please without being held to account, but all their acts were regulated by prescriptions set forth in laws", "οἱ βασιλεῖς αὐτῶν βίον εἶχον οὐχ ὅμοιον τοῖς ἄλλοις τοῖς ἐν μοναρχικαῖς ἐξουσίαις οὖσι καὶ πάντα πράττουσι κατὰ τὴν ἑαυτῶν προαίρεσιν ἀνυπευθύνως, ἀλλ' ἦν ἅπαντα τεταγμένα νόμων ἐπιταγαῖς,"

(62) Diod. I. 70-72.

(63) Diod. I. 70 ; cf. also Ibid, 71, 72.

These words of Diodorus are significant. His statement that the Egyptian Pharaohs were democratic and that they ruled according to the law is perfectly correct. Diodorus realised the fact that though they were kings, absolute kings and heads of the administration,⁽⁶⁴⁾ and theoretically the owners of the country and the people,⁽⁶⁵⁾ the Pharaohs nevertheless respected the law and ruled by its prescriptions. Diodorus is quite right also in pointing out that the Pharaohs tried to be benevolent, beneficent and modest in their attitude towards their subjects.⁽⁶⁶⁾ This benevolent and good attitude of the Pharaohs towards their people was not only motivated by their desire to behave in accordance with Maat or the "power of cosmic order" and to please the gods⁽⁶⁷⁾, but also as Diodorus said⁽⁶⁸⁾ in their

(64) Pierre Montet, op.cit. p.67; J.Manchip White, op.cit. pp.113, 117.; E.Drioton and J.Vandier, op.cit. p.454, A Dict.of Egypt.Civil. p.215. s.v. Pharaoh; Henri Frankfort, Ancient Egyptian Religion, pp.33ff and 47,48,103; Cyril Aldred, op.cit. pp.160, 161.

(65) H.Kees, op.cit. p.61; Pierre Montet, op.cit. p.63.

(66) Cyril Aldred, op.cit. pp.160, 161; A Dict.of Egypt.Civil p.215, s.v. Pharaoh; J.Manchip White, op.cit. pp.117, 118; Henri Frankfort, op.cit. pp.47, 48; Pierre Montet, op.cit. p.62.

(67) Pierre Montet, op.cit. p.62, Henri Frankfort, op.cit. p.53ff.

(68) Diod. I. 72.

desire to gain the love and respect of their subjects in their life and after death. The Pharaoh's benevolent, beneficent and modest character does not clash in any way with his nature as a god feared, respected and greatly honoured.

Not only the administrative or public acts of the Pharaoh were regulated by prescriptions set forth in laws, but also those that ^{had} to do with the way in which he spent his time from day to day, and with the food he ate. [^](69) In brief the whole life of the Pharaoh, public and private, was organised and regulated for him by laws and traditions, and to put it more plainly, the Pharaoh, though he was Egypt, was not a free man, or as Diodorus put ⁽⁷⁰⁾ it: "For there was a set time not only for his holding audiences or rendering judgements, but even for his taking a walk, bathing, and sleeping with his wife, and in a word, for every act of his life".

σοὺ γὰρ μόνον τοῦ χρηματίζειν ἢ κρίνειν ἦν καὶ εὖ
ὠρισμένος, ἀλλὰ καὶ τοῦ περιπατῆσαι καὶ λούεσθαι
καὶ κοιμηθῆναι μετὰ τῆς γυναίκος καὶ καθόλου
τῶν κατὰ τὸν βίον πραττομένων πάντων.

(69) Diod. loc.cit.

(70) Ibid.

From the above-quoted statements of Diodorus we observe that the life of the Pharaoh, public and private, was not free, in other words the Pharaoh was a prisoner of his own post even if he had taken it of his own will. His life was, therefore, too busy, if compared with his life in childhood, which he spent in company of other royal children and others of noble families. ... "As a boy", J.M. White says, ⁽⁷¹⁾ "the would-be Pharaoh's life was comparatively carefree. He could not foresee the cruel prison of protocol in which he would one day be shut up. He played with companions, and was taught to swim, to ride, and to shoot with his miniature bow and arrow. ⁽⁷²⁾ As soon as he was old enough he entered the army to serve a military apprenticeship, in company with the sons of noblemen and foreign princes who had been sent to Egypt to be educated. When the time eventually came for him to mount the throne, he would be changed from a pampered and lively princeling into a withdrawn and frightening god".

This life of the Pharaoh as above described seemed strange to Diodorus. Diodorus was still more surprised to find that the Pharaoh was neither allowed to rule nor to pass a

(71) J. Manchip White, op.cit. p.115

(72) cf. Pierre Montet, op.cit. 37.

judgement on any individual according to his own will, or as he thought best, since he might be motivated in this event by his feelings and passions, good or ill; but he (the Pharaoh) was only permitted to rule in accordance with what laws and traditions stipulated.⁽⁷³⁾ To our satisfaction this shows that Diodorus realised and knew the weaknesses and shortcomings of men including those of the divine Pharaoh, who was, after all, a man, and "humanum est errare", as the Latin proverb says.

If the majority of the Pharaohs of Egypt were democratic, benevolent, modest, just and beneficent, a few of them were not.⁽⁷⁴⁾ Diodorus, for one, mentioned⁽⁷⁵⁾ that some of the Pharaohs such as Khufu, Khafra and Amasis unlike the others were harsh, oppressive and unjust. But as a whole, we venture to say, Egypt was commonly fortunate in her Pharaohs.⁽⁷⁶⁾ She

(73) Ibid.

(74) Pierre Montet, op.cit. p.58

(75) Diod. I. 60, 64; cf. also Pliny, N.H. XXXVI. 79; Hdt. II. 121, 126ff.

(76) J. Manchip White, op.cit. pp.117, 118; Pierre Montet, op.cit. p.62.

produced some remarkably able, patient and far-sighted rulers. If the kings of Egypt were gods, they were hard-working gods. The sheer weight of the burden that rested on their shoulders, the sheer scale of the challenge, evoked a corresponding response. On the whole the throne of Horus was probably never disgraced by monsters such as Cambyses or Nero.⁽⁷⁷⁾

Diodorus told us⁽⁷⁸⁾ more of the daily life of the Pharaoh, how the Pharaoh, as soon as he woke up in the morning, prepared himself adequately. He acquainted himself with what was going on throughout his kingdom, by reading the dispatches sent to him from every corner of his domain. In short Diodorus meant to say, which is quite correct,⁽⁷⁹⁾ that the Pharaoh was well-informed of his kingdom and of its inhabitants. For it was the king's duty to get to know his subjects and to show himself to them. The Annals of the Old Kingdom refer on several occasions to visits to the palace at Elephantine. Amenemhat I declares that, after his accession to the throne, he travelled as far as Elephantine and then went in the opposite direction to the Delta marshes. Many more instances shown on the

(77) Pierre Montet, loc.cit.

(78) Diod. I. 70.

(79) Pierre Montet, op.cit. pp.46, 48; Henri Frankfort and Others, Before Philosophy, p.86; J.Manchip White, op.cit. pp.117, 118.

monuments or engraved on the rocks commemorate a visit made by such and such sovereign to this or that district and tells of the Pharaohs as getting in close touch and well-informed of his own subjects.

After acquainting himself with the affairs of his kingdom the Pharaoh prepared himself to sacrifice to the gods. He bathed and bedecked his body with rich garments and the insignia of his office before he actually started sacrificing to the gods. The rites and acts of sacrifice were minutely described by Diodorus⁽⁸⁰⁾, as if he witnessed such rituals in action, and they are extremely interesting.

Finally Diodorus described very elaborately and interestingly the public mournings which followed the death of the Pharaoh. In this respect Diodorus stated,⁽⁸¹⁾ "The Egyptian ceremonies which followed upon the death of a king afforded no small proof of the goodwill of the people towards their rulers; for the fact that the honour which they paid was to one who was insensible of it constituted an authentic testimony of its simplicity". Diodorus then described how the public mourning was conducted and how all the people of Egypt united in their grief and sorrow for him, rending their garments, closing

(80) Diod. loc.cit.

(81) Diod. I. 72.

the temples, stopping the sacrifices, and celebrating no festivals for seventy-two days. All these and many more acts of deep grief and sorrow were made by all the people of Egypt, that even their private affairs were also affected by such a catastrophe which befell their country. Indeed the death of the Pharaoh was always regarded as a shattering and earth-shaking event.⁽⁸²⁾ For Pharaoh was Egypt and Egypt was Pharaoh, they rose and fell together.⁽⁸³⁾

This was not all. For during the seventy-two days of grief and mourning preparations were going ahead for the public burial of the Pharaoh. This was also described by Diodorus⁽⁸⁴⁾ in detail. All the deeds of the Pharaoh, during his reign, good or bad were read publicly before the assembling crowds who might approve of the Pharaoh's burial if he was a good ruler, but if not they would clamour and protest against his burial. Diodorus⁽⁸⁵⁾ gave us two instances of two kings Khufu and Khafra who were deprived of public burial for their unjust and harsh rule.

To summarise the Pharaohs of Egypt, generally speaking, were firstly and chosen for their own personal merits,

(82) J.Manchip White, op.cit. pp.120,121.; Pierre Montet, op.cit. p.38.

(83) Cyril Aldred, op.cit. p.166.

(84) Diod. loc.cit.; cf.
Pierre Montet, loc.cit.

(85) Diod. I. 64.

but later kingship became hereditary with the son of the former ruler as the heir apparent. But because the office, like property, was transferred through female line and not through male line, the royal prince had to marry a royal princess, particularly the one who was most certainly going to inherit the throne. It is for this practical reason and to preserve the purity of his royal divine blood that the would-be Pharaoh married quite often his sister, half-sister, cousin and even daughter. The crown prince for the same considerations also even married one of the princesses of a vanishing royal family or of a foreign royal family. The king was a god. For he was the heir of the throne of Re, Osiris and Horus. But at the same time he was a man, the supreme man in the kingdom. He was respected, honoured and feared. He was absolute ruler, but he was generally democratic, benevolent, modest and beneficent. He was also well-informed of the affairs of his own people.

If these were the qualities of the national rulers or Pharaohs of Egypt, what were the Ptolemies like ? Diodorus was not much help on these rulers. It is here that we turn to other ancient authors, particularly to Strabo and the Jewish author, Philo.

Strabo, who, as we saw, was interested in the affairs of Egypt of his own time, described⁽⁸⁶⁾ the Ptolemies,

(86) Strabo, 17.1.11.

with the exception of the first three, as being corrupted by luxurious living, and as administering the affairs of government badly, but worst of all are the fourth, seventh, and the last, Auletes (i.e. Flute-player). Strabo then went on to describe the conditions under the Ptolemies, particularly under the later ones, which paved the way to the Roman invasion of Egypt. He dwelt on this topic quite lengthily and concluded⁽⁸⁷⁾ that things under the Ptolemies were bad and extremely chaotic and that lawlessness and corruption were prevailing. The account of Strabo clearly showed his contemptuous attitude towards the rule of the kings and his very pro-Roman attitude. It showed also, I think, that Strabo was not only against the Ptolemies and in favour of the Romans, but also that he was for republicanism and against royalism.

The Ptolemies seemed also definitely to have retained many things from the Pharaonic era. According to Strabo, who gave⁽⁸⁸⁾ us a list of the names of most of the Ptolemies, kingship under the Ptolemies continued to be hereditary exactly in the same way as it was under the national kings of Egypt. This is obviously quite correct. And according to Philo the Jew⁽⁸⁹⁾

(87) Strabo, 17.1.11,12,13; cf. H.I.Bell, op.cit. 67.

(88) Strabo, 17.1.11.

(89) Philo, The Embassy To Gains (Legation). XX. 138,

the Ptolemies (like the Pharaohs) were regarded acknowledged written and spoken of by their subjects as gods.⁽⁹⁰⁾

Not only kingship was hereditary, that son succeed his father, and not only the Ptolemies were regarded as gods, but they also retained the brother-sister marriage, which they inherited from the Pharaohs.⁽⁹¹⁾ We have a very good example of the marriage of Ptolemy II Philadelphus to his sister Arsinoe, after whom many towns, places and even streets in Alexandria were called. This marriage, which though it was contrary to the Greek laws and customs,⁽⁹²⁾ was much celebrated and hailed as a divine marriage and was compared by several Alexandrian writers and poets,⁽⁹³⁾ ignorant, as they were, of the history and affairs of Egypt and the Egyptians, with sheer flattery, with the marriage of the Greek gods, Zeus and his sister Hera.

(90) E.Bevan, op.cit. p.127ff. and p.182, cf. also H.I.Bell, Egypt from Alexander the Great to the Arab Conquest, p.34; Tarn and Griffith, Hellenistic Civilisation, pp.188, 201; M.Rostovtzeff, The Social and Economic History of the Hellenistic World, vol.I, pp.267, 268; cf. also R.H.Barrow, The Romans, pp.147, 148 (Pelican, 1961). J.A.S.Evans, A Social and Economic History of an Egyptian Temple in the Greco-Roman Period, Yale Classical Studies XVII. pp.150, 151. (Yale Univ.Press 1961).

(91) E.Bevan, op.cit. pp.158, 159; J.Lindsay, loc.cit.

(92) E.Bevan, op.cit. p.158.

(93) See for instance Theocritus, Idylls, XVII.

In short the Ptolemies, at least superficially and in order to please and placate the rebellious Egyptians, posed as Pharaohs, and they endeavoured to convince the Egyptians that they were true Pharaohs. In fact they forced themselves on the peoples. They also induced the priests of Egypt to force this desire on the masses. In this respect Bevan tells⁽⁹⁴⁾ us: "Besides what the priests had to pay the alien king in money or in kind, they were required to give continual expressions of loyalty. Every year (till Ptolemy V dispensed them) they had to send deputations to Alexandria to do homage. In each temple the king was given the status of an associated god (synnaos) with the Egyptian deities to whom the temple was consecrated. The priests had to engrave on the temple walls representations of their Macedonian kings and queens in the garb and posture of Egyptian Pharaohs, as actual gods, and accompany them with hieroglyphic inscriptions, in which the consecrated titles belonging to the old native kings were heaped upon them, and their piety and benevolence declared in stone of eternity".

Further evidences in support of these facts are also provided by the papyri,^(95a) and by the inscriptions and scenes on the monuments.

(94) E.Bevan, op.cit. p.182.

(95a)e.g. F.Preisigke, Sammelbuch, vols.I-II.

We have spoken at the outset of this chapter on the status and position of Egypt under the Roman rule. We observed that it became ~~no better than~~ a Roman province, although it was treated by the Romans as a province of special kind, because of its strategic position, the nature of its people, and st more important of all because it was one of the wealthiest provinces of the Roman empire and one of two major suppliers of the cheap wheat to the Roman metropolis, the other supplier being North Africa, or as we call it now Al-Maghreb. The position of Egypt in the Roman Empire was summarised by Strabo⁽⁹⁵⁾ as follows: "Egypt is now (i.e. by Strabo's time) a province (Ἐπαρχία, L. Provincia); and it not only pays considerable tribute, but also is governed by prudent men - the prefects who are sent there from time to time. Now he who is sent has the rank of the king".

Ἐπαρχία δὲ νῦν ἐστὶ, φόρους μὲν τελούσα
ἀξιολογούς, ὑπὸ σωφρόνων δὲ ἀνδρῶν
δωσκούμενη τῶν πεμπομένων ἐπαρχῶν ἀεί.
ὁ μὲν οὖν πεμφθεὶς τὴν τοῦ βασιλέως ἔχει τάξιν.

(95b) Strabo, 17.1.12.

Tacitus was more specific than Strabo in defining the status of the Roman prefects of Egypt and the reason for the presence of an exceptionally large contingent of Roman troops there and also the reason why Egypt was put directly under the control of the imperial house. In this respect we have Tacitus himself to tell⁽⁹⁶⁾ us that, "Egypt, with the troops to keep it in order, has been managed from the time of the deified Augustus by Roman knights (equites) in place of their former kings. It had seemed wise to keep thus under the direct control of the imperial house a province which is difficult of access, productive of great harvests, but given to civil strife and sudden disturbances because of the fanaticism and superstition of its inhabitants, ignorant as they are of laws and unacquainted with civil magistrates". In more than one place⁽⁹⁷⁾ Tacitus referred to the vital importance of Egypt and its unique character and position.

What concerns us here, however, is the status of the prefects of Egypt, who were said by Strabo⁽⁹⁸⁾ to have the rank of the kings, or in place of Egypt's former king **S** as Tacitus

(96) Tacitus, Hist. I. 11; cf. H.I.Bell, op.cit. p.66.

(97) Tacitus, Hist. III. 8 ; ibid. Annals, II. 59.

(98) Strabo, loc.cit.

put⁽⁹⁹⁾ it. Did Strabo mean that the prefects had the same status as the kings or did he mean that they were, like the kings before them, at the top of the country's administration ? I am personally inclined to take Strabo to mean the latter. For it is inconceivable that Strabo, who was not only well-informed of the affairs of that period when he visited Egypt, but was a very close and personal friend of Aelius Gallus the Roman prefect of Egypt, who was appointed by Augustus Octavianus, did not recognise the difference between the status of the king and that of the prefect. The kings were the owners of the country and its peoples, they had their own country and were free from outside control unlike the prefects. Moreover, they were treated as gods, while the prefects were not.⁽¹⁰⁰⁾ The prefects, as Tacitus rightly implied,⁽¹⁰¹⁾

(99) Tacitus, Hist. I. 11.

(100) However, the prefect was subject to the taboo against sailing on the Nile when in flood, just as the Pharaohs had been. See Pliny (N.H. V. 57) who says: "Cum (Nilus) crescit, reges aut praefectos navigare eo nefas indicatum est". cf. also H.I. Bell, Egypt From Alexander the Great to the Arab Conquest, p.67 ; D.Bonneau, La Crue Du Nil, p.309 (Paris, 1964).

(101) Ibid.

were no more the agents and emissaries of the Roman emperors sent there to rule in their name and on their behalf and were directly responsible to them.

The prefects were the viceroys of the emperors in Egypt, while the place of the Pharaohs was taken over by the emperors. To the Egyptians the emperors were the Pharaohs, 'Lords of the two lands', represented on the monuments with the usual divine attributes⁽¹⁰²⁾. In short the emperors were regarded as gods as Tacitus rightly said.⁽¹⁰³⁾

CLASSES:

The ancient Egyptian society, like all other societies of the ancient world, consisted of several classes or, to use a more modern term, social groups.

For besides the king, of whom we have already spoken, and who was at the top of the society, there were landlords, priests, warriors, administrators, peasants, hunters, shepherds, artisans, craftsmen and many others.

In the following pages we shall observe that the classical authors are not in full agreement on the number of classes the Egyptian society did actually have. For while some divide the

(102) H.I.Bell, op.cit. p.67; cf. also R.H.Barrow, loc.cit.

(103) Tacitus, loc.cit.

society into few but major classes, others go into details and divide it into classes and sub-classes.

Prior to the year 70 B.C., the starting point of the period chosen for this thesis, some authors, such as Herodotus (c. 480 - c. 425 B.C.) divide⁽¹⁾ the Egyptian society into seven distinct classes - the priests, the warriors, the cowherds, the swineherds, the tradesmen, the interpreters, and the boatmen. Plato (c. 429 - 347 B.C.) divides⁽²⁾ it into six - the priests, artificers, shepherds, huntsmen, husbandmen and soldiers.

Diodorus, the first among the Classical authors of our period, compares⁽³⁾ the division into classes of the Athenian society with the divisions of the Egyptian society. He gives the resemblance between the divisions of the two societies concerned as one of several places of evidence to prove that the Athenians were by origin Egyptians having emigrated from Sais (Sa el-Hagar) in Lower Egypt. In this respect Diodorus says⁽⁴⁾ that, "according to the Egyptians the body politic of the Athenians had the same classification and division of the people as is found in Egypt, where the citizens are divided into three orders (lit. parts): the first Athenian class consisted of the "eupatrids" (οἱ εὐπατριῖδες), as they were

(1) Hdt. II. 164.

(2) Plato, Timaeus, 24E.

(3) Diodorus, I. 28. For the division of the Athenian Society into Classes see Aristotle, Athenaion Politeia, 14.

(4) Ibid.

called, being those who were such as had received the best education and were held worthy of the highest honour, as is the case with the priests of Egypt; the second was that of the "geomoroi" (οἱ γεωμόροι, i.e. holders of a share of land), who were expected to possess arms and to serve in defence of the state, like those in Egypt who are known as husbandmen (οἱ γεωργοί) and supply the warriors; and the last class was reckoned to be that of the "demiurgoi" (οἱ δημιουργοί, i.e. workers for the people), who practise the mechanical arts and render only the most menial services to the state, this class among the Egyptians having a similar function". Later in his work⁽⁵⁾ however, Diodorus gives the number of classes of the Egyptian society as five - the priests, warriors, herdsmen, husbandmen, and artisans.

The first question one is inclined to ask here is how do we reconcile the two statements of Diodorus above-quoted? From the first glance we observe that he mentions the priests in both statements. He also mentions "the husbandmen" (οἱ γεωργοί) in both statements. But while he says that "the husbandmen" in the first statement were not only landholders but also supplied the warriors, he described "the husbandmen" in the second as the land-tillers. In this case these latter group were but workers for the kings, priests and the warriors, from whom they rented the land. The husbandmen of Diodorus' first statement, therefore correspond to "the warriors" of the second. For Diodorus mentions in the second

(5) Diod. I. 73, 74.

statement that the warriors held one third of the land of Egypt. We can say, therefore, that according to Diodorus the Egyptian society was divided into broadly three classes - priests, warriors, and the working class which included husbandmen, herdsman, artisans and the like.

Strabo gives the number of classes as three - soldiers, farmers, and priests. In this respect Strabo states, ⁽⁶⁾: "When the Egyptians appointed a king they divided the people into three classes, and they called one class soldiers, another farmers, and another priests; and the last class had the care of things sacred and the other two of things relating to man; and some had charge of the affairs of war, and others of all the affairs of peace, both tilling soil and following trades, from which sources the revenues were gathered for the king".

Ὡ βασιλέα γὰρ ἀποδείξαντες τριχῇ τὸ πλῆθος,
διείλον, καὶ τοὺς μὲν στρατιώτας ἐκάλεσαν, τοὺς
δὲ γεωργοὺς, τοὺς δὲ ἱερέας· καὶ τοὺς μὲν τῶν
ἱερῶν ἐπιμελητάς, τοὺς δὲ ἄλλους τῶν περὶ τὸν
ἄνθρωπον καὶ τοὺς μὲν τὰ ἐν τῇ πολέμῳ, τοὺς δ'
ὅσα ἐν εἰρήνῃ, γῆν τε καὶ τεχνὰς ἐργαζομένους,
ἀφ' ὧν περ καὶ αἱ πρόσοδοι δυνήγοντο τῇ βασιλείῃ.

(6) Strabo, 17.1.3.

For while he clearly defines the functions of the priests as looking after religious as well as intellectual affairs, he does not clearly define the functions of each of the other two classes; but he tells us that these two were responsible for matters relating to man; some were in charge of affairs of war, others of all affairs of peace, but both tilling soil and following trades (or crafts). And though Strabo speaks of the soldiers and husbandmen as two distinct classes, he gives them joint responsibility and confuses their functions in the society. Strabo therefore incorporated into two classes - the warriors and husbandmen, the four classes - warriors, herdsmen, husbandmen, and artisans mentioned by Diodorus. Diodorus and Strabo are therefore not in full agreement on either the number of classes or the function of each individual class. Neither author tells us of other classes or professions. For to which class belong the administrators and other civil servants ? Which class provide the corps of this important profession ? Is it the priestly class, or the land-holders class, or other class ? What about interpreters, teachers, huntsmen, and boatmen ? Moreover, if the classes mentioned by Diodorus referred to the free citizens only, was there any class or classes comprising of slaves and freedmen ? Diodorus does not say. Where did the foreign settlers stand ? Did they constitute a class or classes of their own ? Neither Diodorus nor Strabo threw light on that.

The following tables show the classes of the Egyptian society according to the various Classical authors.

a) Before the year 70 B.C. :

Herodotus (II.164).	Plato (Timaeus, 24E).
priests	priests
warriors	warriors
cowherds	shepherds
swineherds	artificers
tradesmen	huntsmen
interpreters	husbandmen
boatmen	

b) After the year 70 B.C. :

Diodorus I (I.28).	Diodorus II (I.73,74)	Strabo (17.1.3).
Ath. eupatrids (= E.priests)	priests	priests
Ath. geomoroi (= E. husbandmen)	warriors	warriors
Ath. demiurgoi	husbandmen	husbandmen
	herdsmen	
	artisans	

According to the classical authors, therefore, the Egyptian society was divided into classes, which in turn defined the profession and occupation to which individual members belonged. But were these classes clearly defined, in other words were they separated from each other like castes ? Could a person, who was a member of one of these classes, join another, if he was able to do so ?

Did the son automatically belong to his father's class, and subsequently did the son inherit or follow his father's profession ? Strabo, on his part, declined to answer any of these questions specifically; although from his division of the Egyptian society into classes and from his definition of the functions of the members of these classes, as quoted before, he seems to have indicated, especially as far as the warriors and husbandmen are concerned, that they were not entirely separated from each other. Diodorus gave us more information regarding the questions we have just put forward. He made it clear that professions in ancient Egypt were hereditary, in other words son inherited his father's profession or office and followed in his steps.⁽⁷⁾ Moreover, he spoke⁽⁸⁾ of the specialization in professions and crafts and that members of these crafts were not allowed to engage in other work. He spoke of the priests and the warriors, with whom we are going to deal later. He also spoke of the skill and techniques used by the Egyptian herdsmen and poulterers. Such a statement was already mentioned.⁽⁹⁾ Diodorus further told us more of the crafts and how they were perfected in ancient Egypt. In this respect he stated⁽¹⁰⁾: "Furthermore, one may see that the crafts are diligently cultivated and brought to their proper development,

(7) Diod. I. 73,74.

(8) Diod. I. 74.

(9) See pp. 137, 138.

(10) Diod. loc.cit.

for they are the only people where all the craftsmen are forbidden to follow any other occupation or belong to any other class of citizens than those stipulated by the laws and handed down to them from their parents, the result being that neither ill-will towards a teacher nor political distractions nor any other thing interfered with their interest in their work. For whereas among all other peoples it can be observed that the artisans are distracted in mind by many things, and through the desire to advance themselves do not stick exclusively to their own occupation, for some try their hands at agriculture, some dabble in trade, and some cling to two or three crafts, and in states, having a democratic form of government vast numbers of them, trooping to the meetings of the Assembly, ruin the work of the government, while they make a profit for themselves at the expense of others who pay them their wage, yet among the Egyptians if any artisan should take part in public affairs or pursue several crafts he is severely punished". ' Ἀλλὰ μὲν καὶ τὰς

τέχνας ἰδεῖν ἔστι παρὰ τοῖς Αἰγυπτίοις μάλιστα δια-
πεπονημένας καὶ πρὸς τὸ καθήκον τέλος διηκριβω-
μένας· παρὰ μόνοις γὰρ τοῦτοις οἱ δημιουργοὶ
πάντες οὔτι ἐργασίας ἄλλης οὔτε πολιτικῆς τάξεως
μεταλαμβάνειν ἔωντα πλὴν τῆς ἐκ τῶν νόμων
ὠρισμένης καὶ παρὰ τῶν γονέων παραδεδομένης,
ὥστε μήτε διδασκάλου φθόνον μήτε πολιτικοῦς περι-
άσασμους μήτ' ἄλλο μηδὲν ἐμποδίζειν αὐτῶν τὴν
εἰς ταῦτα σπουδὴν· πρῶτα μὲν γὰρ τοῖς ἄλλοις

ἴδεῖν ἔστι τοὺς τεχνίτας περὶ πολλὰ τῇ διανοίᾳ
περιδωμένους καὶ διὰ τὴν πλεονεξίαν μὴ
μένοντας τὸ παράπαν ἐπὶ τῆς ἰδίας ἐργασίας.
οἱ μὲν γὰρ ἐφάπτονται γεωργίας, οἳ δ' ἐμπορίας κοινω-
~~νοῦσιν~~ ^{νοῦσιν} ~~ἐργασίας~~, οἳ δὲ δυοῖν ἢ τριῶν τεχνῶν ἀτέχονται, πλείστοι
δ' ἐν ταῖς δημοκρατουμέναις πόλεσιν εἰς τὰς ἐκκλησί-
ων τρέχοντες τὴν μὲν πολιτείαν λυμαίνονται, τὸ δὲ
λυσιτελεῖς περιποιοῦνται παρὰ τῶν μισθοδοτούντων.
παρὰ δὲ τοῖς Αἰγυπτίοις, εἴ τις τῶν τεχνιτῶν μετὰσχοι
τῆς πολιτείας ἢ τέχνης πλείους ἐργάσαιο
μεγάλαις περιπίπτει τιμωρίαις."

From the above mentioned we observe, therefore,
that while Diodorus spoke of the classes as distinct from each
others and that members of each class were not permitted by
conventions and law either to engage themselves in more than one
profession at the same time⁽¹¹⁾ or even to participate in public
affairs, as it was the actual customs in countries with a democratic
system of government. Strabo, as we said before, was less clear.
At the same time he seems to have indicated the contrary to that
of Diodorus. Now the question is which of the two is right ?

Before we answer this question we ought to state
here that Ancient Egypt, like many ancient and also modern

(11) cf. Plato, Timaeus, 24 A - B.

agricultural societies, had two sorts of societies, in other words the ancient Egyptian society had two main divisions, based mainly on economic and intellectual positions. These two divisions of the society one can call them upper and lower classes, more clearly the wealthy and educated class and the poor and uneducated and semi-educated class. These two sections of the society were widely separated.^(11a) The first section or division included priests, high-ranking officers of the armed forces, big land-holders, administrators and the like, while the other included junior white collar workers, artisans, peasants, and the rest of the working class.

To come back to the question of who was correct of the two classical authors, Diodorus and Strabo, we shall find that the statements of both contained an element of truth. For if the statement of Strabo was a little vague, the statement of Diodorus was generalized and exaggerated. We are not sure, however, if there existed in Egypt any such law which prescribed that each person should not change his profession or try his hand at something else, nor are we sure that each individual was not permitted by some sort of law to engage himself in more than one profession at the same time. But Plato, however, who was writing about three centuries

(11a) J.M.White, op.cit. 152; cf. also Tarn and Griffith (Hellenistic Civilisation p.197/8) who speak of the conditions of the Egyptian Society in the Hellenistic Period.

before Diodorus seems to support Diodorus' statement quoted above. For he tells (Timaeus, 24 A - B) us of how the various classes of the Egyptian society were separated from each other and of how the adherents of each class were not permitted by law either to mingle with each other or to participate in activities other than those relevant to their class. Herodotus too (middle of 5th century B.C.) informed us (II.177) of a law said to have been made by King Amasis, which prescribed that every Egyptian should yearly declare his means of livelihood to the ruler of his province, and, failing so to do or to prove that he had a just way of life, be punished with death. But Herodotus did not say whether this law meant that every person should not be engaged in two professions at the same time nor did he tell us that by doing so a person was considered as infringing the law and thus was liable to punishment.

Diodorus was exaggerating when he gave his lengthy statement in which he told us that son followed father's profession and one was not allowed either to take up two professions at one time or to change his profession. Evidences, however come in support of Diodorus in as far as that by convention and tradition (exactly like today among the peasantry and craftsmen⁽¹²⁾) son followed his father's profession.⁽¹³⁾ But though this was common it was not a

(12) The present writer's personal observation.

(13) H.Kees, op.cit. p.63; A Dict. of Egypt.Civil. p.224.s.v. Priests Cyril Aldred, op.cit., pp.175-7; J.Manchip White, op.cit. p.126.

rule. And as one modern author puts it :⁽¹⁴⁾ "The Egyptians liked continuity in a profession. One of their dearest wishes was to see a son following his father's profession". Education (like today) on the other hand, enabled people to opt for a profession perhaps entirely different from his father's profession,⁽¹⁵⁾ exactly as in the case of the writer of this thesis. Education also opened many opportunities for those who aspired to change their profession or to raise themselves socially from a lower class to an upper class.⁽¹⁶⁾ A modestly educated person thus could not only choose a different profession from his father's but could also change his own career, and subsequently his social status and his class.⁽¹⁷⁾ In this respect Cyril Aldred stated:⁽¹⁸⁾ "When the scribe had graduated from school he had his foot on the first rung of a career in the higher ranks of the Army, the Treasury, or the Palace. He might become anything according to his talents, from the king's private secretary to the village letter-writer and petty attorney. It would

(14) A. Dict. of Egypt. Civil., loc.cit.

(15) Cyril Aldred, loc.cit. Jon Manchip White, op.cit. p.152.

(16) Ibid.

(17) Ibid.

(18) Cyril Aldred, loc.cit.

help, of course, if he could follow his father in his chosen occupation, but occasionally a man from humble circumstances was able to rise by merit to a position of authority. Some of the higher officers of State during the New Kingdom boast of their lowly birth, and though in most cases they exaggerate in order to flatter the king who had advanced them, nevertheless such a factotum as Sennemut did come from modest antecedents, his father having only a vague, and probably posthumous, title of 'worthy'".

We should also add here that a class, like that of the peasants had, almost a free time during the inundation season.⁽¹⁹⁾ These people, as we know, were employed in other works, such as building pyramids, temples and other public works, exactly like unskilled workers in every time and in every country. The implication of Diodorus' statement that the Egyptians specialised^a in certain professions or crafts seems also to be a bit exaggerated and generalised. Specialisation certainly was needed in particular fields such as in medicine, art and the like.⁽²⁰⁾ But a trained civil servant could occupy different posts and engage in various fields as in the case of Rekhmira.⁽²¹⁾ Thus Pierre Montet stated⁽²²⁾:

(19) Diod. I. 36.

(20) Pliny, N.H. XXVI. 4; XXIX. 93, cf. also Hdt. II. 84; Cyril Aldred, loc.cit.

(21) J.M.White, op.cit. pp.126, 152.

(22) Pierre Montet, op.cit. pp.67, 68.

"The Egyptians do not appear to have thought that officials should specialise in one particular field, such as public works, military affairs, book-keeping, the maintenance of law and order or the administration of justice. Uni, one of the best known of the high ranking officials under the Old Kingdom, practised almost every profession ... Officials were under the king's command; he could set them any task he chose if he thought them capable of doing the work efficiently". Many other examples show that a person in some cases could, if he tried, change his whole career or his social background.

We conclude then by saying that the ancient Egyptian society, like many other societies, possessed two major divisions or classes, each being in turn divided into small classes and sub-classes. The gap between the two major divisions, as always, was wide. But these classes were not castes, strictly speaking, they were not rigidly separated. And although by convention and custom, a son usually followed in his father's steps, a person could, especially after a certain training, take up another profession perhaps entirely different from his father's. A son of a peasant for instance, could be an army officer or an engineer or something else. Specialisation, though required, as always, in some highly technical and complicated fields, was not always insisted upon.

The question of land tenure in Ancient Egypt was also of great interest to the classical authors, particularly to Diodorus

and Strabo. No wonder since arable land was and still is of great value and importance in Egypt.

The economy of Ancient Egypt depended entirely on the products of its very fertile land. As regards the system of land possession in Ancient Egypt, namely in the Pharaonic era, Diodorus stated⁽²³⁾ that the whole country was divided into three equal^(23a) parts; the first was held by the priests, the second by the king, and the third by the warriors. Thus he clearly indicated that only the three categories above mentioned owned the land, whereas the rest of the Egyptian community, which naturally included the peasantry, were landless. Strabo,⁽²⁴⁾ on his part, agreed partly with Diodorus, when he divided the land into three equal parts, but he differed with the latter on those who owned the three portions. According to Strabo these three parts were held by the priests, warriors, and the farmers respectively. Thus, unlike Diodorus, Strabo excluded the king from land possession. But from which source or sources did the king draw his revenues ? Diodorus told us⁽²⁵⁾ that "the king got his revenues from his share of the land. Out of these revenues he paid the cost of his war,

(23) Diod. I. 73.

(23a) He presumably means equal parts, but he does not say so.

(24) Strabo, 17.1.3.

(25) Diod. loc.cit.

supported the splendour of his court, and rewarded with fitting gifts any who had distinguished themselves; and he did not swamp the private citizens by taxation, since his income from these revenues gave him a great plenty". But according to Strabo,⁽²⁶⁾ who seems to have implied that the king did not own land, the king obtained his revenues from the products of the land, which was tilled by the warriors and the farmers, and also from trades, which these two classes followed. It is difficult, however, to believe that Strabo did not know very well that the Pharaoh did in fact own a great percentage of the land, unless of course Strabo meant, which is more likely, that the warriors and the farmers tilled the land in behalf of the king. This matter was not made clear by Strabo.

The statement of Diodorus that the Pharaoh of Egypt held one third of the land, while the remaining two thirds were held by the priests and warriors respectively is far from correct. It is true, however, that the king, the priests and the warriors held most of, if not all, the land. If the estimates given above by Diodorus are not correct, who owned the land then, and how much land was owned by the king, the priests, and the warriors respectively ? Did the rest of the population also hold private property ?

In the previous pages we saw how the Pharaohs, and after them the Ptolemies were considered gods, the supreme gods, and

(26) Strabo, loc.cit.

the descendants of Amon-Ra, Osiris and Horus. At the same time they were regarded as the supreme human kings in the State, and also as the State itself. They were also the chief priests, the intermediary between the gods and men. They, moreover, were the absolute monarchs, the centres of administration and the sources of all laws. The Pharaohs, the masters of the two lands (i.e. Upper and Lower Egypt) considered everything in Egypt - people and live-stock, buildings and land and the like - belonged to them.⁽²⁷⁾ Technically speaking the Pharaohs were the sole owners of the land.⁽²⁸⁾ But they could, if they wished, grant anything to anybody or any institution.⁽²⁹⁾ They could give land or other property, and they in fact did, to members of their families, to their favourite associates, to those who excelled in certain fields, either in war or peace, and to the guardians of the houses of god, the priests, to maintain these places of worship. On the other hand these estates and property, which were granted to institutions or individuals, continued to be technically part of the royal property. In that case the Pharaohs could take them back, whenever they decided to do so.⁽³⁰⁾

(27) Pierre Montet, op.cit. p.63; cf. H.Kees, op.cit. p.62.

(28) H.Kees, op.cit. p.61, cf. also A.C.Johnson, Egypt and the Roman Empire, pp.67, 87.

(29) H.Kees, op.cit. p.62, Pierre Montet, loc.cit.

(30) H.Kees, loc.cit.

The king was undoubtedly the biggest landowner in the country.⁽³¹⁾ Pierre Montet who gives us a list with the royal estates of Snofru, the founder of the Fourth Dynasty in Egypt tells us of the methods by which that king enlarged his estates. Thus Pierre Montet says,⁽³²⁾ : " Snofru no doubt confiscated the royal domain which had belonged to his predecessor. It is possible that he enlarged it by adding land reclaimed from the marshes, and waste land made cultivable by draining and irrigation, he alone being in a position to begin such operations and carry them to a successful conclusion". Other methods were suggested by Pierre Montet as having been used by the kings to acquire more land. In this respect the same author states,⁽³³⁾ that "It would seem that the king constantly acquired new estates - sometimes by taking over the property of men who had been condemned to death, or by keeping up property from people who had lost their wealth. We can draw evidence from the Bible on this point: during the period of the ill-favoured kine , landowners came to Joseph, who was Pharaoh's trusted adviser, and handed over their estates in exchange for food. After the Hyksos had been driven out of Egypt, there was a fresh distribution of land. Pharaoh kept for himself some of the estates confiscated from those who had collaborated with the invaders, and he shared out the rest

(31) Pierre Montet, loc.cit.

(32) Ibid.

(33) Ibid. cf. also A.C.Johnson, op.cit. p.67.

among his royal soldiers". These methods and ways used by King Snofru to enlarge his constantly expanding estates might have also been used by many other kings.

We come to the conclusion then that the royal estates were not static, but always fluctuated.⁽³⁴⁾ But so far as one can tell, the extent of these estates could not be known exactly.⁽³⁵⁾

The statements that the priests held one third of the total land of Egypt as mentioned by Diodorus and Strabo is also not accurate. This estimate is a bit of an exaggeration. Nevertheless it conveys a very important fact that the priestly order was a very powerful and influential sector of the Egyptian society, next only to the king. Perhaps it was they who had told Diodorus that they owned such and such land to impress him. Modern scholars, such as H.Kees, P.Montet and Oldfather, seem not to accept the estimate given by Diodorus at its face value. In this respect Kees tells⁽³⁶⁾ us that "the inventories in the Great Harris Papyrus do not permit of any comparison with the statement of Diodorus. Our only source of knowledge of the total landed possessions of a temple is the inventory, compiled at a later date,

(34) Pierre Montet, op.cit. pp.65, 66.

(35) Pierre Montet, op.cit. p.63.

(36) Kees, H, op.cit. p.67.

of the lands possessed by the temple of Horus at Edfu, a provincial temple in the upper Thebaid situated in poor country. According to this source, in the reign of the last Egyptian king, Nectanebos II, this temple owned 13,209 arouras of land, i.e. 8,806 acres, in the four nomes of the upper Thebaid, of which 5,660 arouras were of what was called 'new land', that is insular land, and 7,548 of irrigated land which was in reality 'upland'. The bulk of the land lay in the nome of Edfu while the high proportion of insular land is characteristic for the narrow valley of the Nile. It includes the land surrounded by canals in the area subject to the inundation.

A similar picture of the conditions of land ownership in the district north of Hermopolis is contained in the tax lists preserved in the Wilbour Papyrus which was written 10 years, after the death of Ramesses III".

Thus H.Kees did not find any evidence to support Diodorus statement nor any to disprove it. According to Pierre Montet⁽³⁷⁾ by the time of Ramesses III temple land comprised nearly one-tenth of the whole of Egypt, apart from other landed property such as gardens, workshops and towns; but according to C.H. Oldfather,⁽³⁸⁾ who based his statement on the Harris Papyrus of the

(37) Pierre Montet, op.cit. p.65.

(38) C.H.Oldfather in the Loeb ed. of Diodorus' Library of History, vol. I. pp.250, 251, n.2.

twelfth century B.C., the priests owned at that time about two per cent of the population and some fifteen per cent of the land, not to mention property of other nature, and their power materially increased in the succeeding centuries.

Thus we observe that the modern authors' statements cited above do not support Diodorus' statement, the source of which we do not know. We observe also that temple or priests' land did not remain static, but, like royal estates, it fluctuated in a manner depending on acquisition and loss in various ages and under different conditions and regimes. Certain kings like Ramesses III favoured the priests and enabled them to acquire tremendous wealth.⁽³⁹⁾ Not only kings bestowed lands and other kinds of property on the priesthood, but also private individuals.⁽⁴⁰⁾ Moreover, the technical skill, which the priesthood possessed, gave them the ability to bring new lands under cultivation.⁽⁴¹⁾ Accordingly the wealth, and subsequently the power of the temples and of the temple rulers grew. The property of the priests and the temples, even with the support of the king, were not always safe and secure.⁽⁴²⁾ Therefore the priests had to defend them with great

(39) Pierre Montet, op.cit. p.65, cf. also H.Kees, op.cit. p.62.

(40) H.Kees, op.cit. pp.68, 69.

(41) A.C.Johnson, op.cit. p.67.

(42) Pierre Montet, op.cit. p.65.

tenacity against many and various enemies who had designs on them - the destitute in troubled times, soldiers, foreigners and even neighbours. Yet after every period of impoverishment, there was always some pious and clever man who brought his influence to bear, and by dint of cunning and patience, restored the fortunes of his god.

Besides the royal estates and the temple land, there was also a large part of the country which was owned by private individuals - governors of the provinces, noblemen, army men and small land-holders.⁽⁴³⁾ Privately administered estates, on the other hand, came back to the state in the form of taxes, which were levied according to the yields of these estates.⁽⁴⁴⁾

In short the land of Egypt was divided between the king, the temples, and private individuals. It was subject to constant fluctuations owing to the special needs of the king, to wars and disturbances and, in less troubled times, to circumstances which made the fortunes of some and brought ruin to others.

So far we have discussed the classes and land tenure in Egypt of the Pharaohs. And despite the fact that Diodorus and even strangely enough Strabo did not speak either of the classes or land tenure in Hellenistic Egypt, a few words will not be out of

(43) Pierre Montet, *op.cit.* pp.65, 66; H.Kees, *op.cit.* p.72, 73.
cf also. Rostovtzeff, *op.cit.* pp.289, 290.

(44) Pierre Montet, *loc.cit.*

place here.

After the conquest of Egypt by Alexander the Great and the subsequent events of establishing a Macedonian monarchy in the valley and the Delta of the Nile, large numbers of Macedonians and Greeks from all parts of the Greek world flocked to Egypt, either voluntarily seeking fortunes, or induced and brought in by the high pay of the wealthy Ptolemies. These large numbers of Greeks and Hellenised peoples plus other races from other countries of the Mediterranean and from countries as far as India had certainly made their impact on the indigenous population. They affected the social structure of the society quite considerably. On the surface, however, the Egyptian society was also divided, in the Greco-Roman period, into two major classes, the upper i.e. the wealthy class, and the lower, or the poor class.⁽⁴⁵⁾ These two sections or classes, were also, as in the Pharaonic era, widely separated by their economic and cultural conditions.⁽⁴⁶⁾ The upper stratum of the Egyptian society of the Hellenistic era, which supplied the bureaucracy, comprised the Egyptian priestly order (which continued to a greater extent to be wealthy, powerful and influential, during most of the Ptolemaic era), the cleruchs (who were tending to form a military aristocracy, and who almost replaced

(45) Tarn and Griffith, op.cit. p.197.

(46) Ibid.

the Egyptian class of the "machimoi ", (i.e. warriors), the civilian occupiers of 'private' land, and the Greeks of the three cities (i.e. Naucratis, Alexandria, and Ptolemais); the lower consisted of the vast mass of "fellahin" (i.e. peasants) who had no education, were poor and had a neglected lot.⁽⁴⁷⁾

Thus we see that the Egyptian society had suffered a great deal and shocking upheaval owing to the influx into the country of large numbers, mainly Macedonians and other Greeks. These foreigners as a matter of fact started to come to Egypt long before Alexander the Great, particularly under the king of the Late Periods, such as Psammetichus, Apries, and Amasis.⁽⁴⁸⁾ These kings employed these foreign immigrants as mercenaries to guard them against their ^sdisatisfied subjects as we mentioned earlier in this chapter. But the numbers of these immigrants swelled a great deal under the Ptolemies, who also employed them as mercenaries, and who granted them land, especially in the Fayum.⁽⁴⁹⁾

We also observe that the Egyptians continued to be their own masters only in the field of religion.⁽⁵⁰⁾ The general

(47) Ibid; cf. also Rostovtzeff, pp.266-7.

(48) Diod. I.67.

(49) E. Bevan, loc.cit. cf. also Tarn and Griffith, p.207.

(50) Ibid. p.80.

administration was taken over mainly by the Macedonians and Greeks,⁽⁵¹⁾ though we have a little evidence for Egyptian high administrators under the late Ptolemies, who owing to various reasons found it necessary to employ Egyptians in their administration.⁽⁵²⁾ Under the Romans, the advancement of the Egyptian element was stopped, and the administration was continued to be practised by Greeks in addition to the new masters the Romans.⁽⁵³⁾

As for the land, we find that the royal estates were taken over by first the Ptolemies and then by the Roman Emperors.⁽⁵⁴⁾ So also the temple land.⁽⁵⁵⁾ The Ptolemies and the Roman Emperors were, like the Pharaohs before them, the theoretical owners of Egypt, its land and people.⁽⁵⁶⁾ They preserved a great

(51) Ibid, p.80.

(52) Polyb. xxxi. 8; OGIS 132, P.Lond II p.13, Lefebvre, Le Tombeau de Petosiris (Cairo, 1924).

(53) Bevan, loc.cit.; cf also Tarn and Griffith, p.207.

(54) Tarn and Griffith, op.cit. pp.187, 188; A.C.Johnson, op.cit. p.67.

(55) Ibid.

(56) About the Ptolemies see: M.Rostovtzeff, op.cit. pp.267, 268, 271; Tarn and Griffith, loc.cit., About the Roman Emperors see: Jerome Carcopino, Daily Life in Ancient Rome, p.68.

deal of the land for themselves, and granted the rest to the temples and their custodians, to the cleruchs, and other members of the administration. Thus clearly speaking in the Hellenistic era the land was divided into two main parts, land in land, which was the royal land (γῆ βασιλική) and land in grant 'γῆ ἐν ἀφέσει', which fell into four classes : (a) temple land 'γῆ ἱερὰ ἢ ἱερὰ προοδος', (b) cleruch land 'γῆ κληρουχική', (c) gift land, 'γῆ ἐν δωρεά', and (d) the so called private land 'κτῆματα and γῆ ἰδιόκτητος' (57).

(57) M. Rostovtzeff, op.cit. pp. 276, 277, Tarn and Griffiths, loc.cit.

THE PRIESTS.

In the previous chapter we saw how religion was a very important matter for the Egyptians and how it played a great role in shaping the thought and the life of the people. We also observed in the previous pages of this chapter the extent and the size of the land and other properties, which the places of worship possessed, and from which the most important, influential and powerful class of the Egyptian society, namely the priesthood, drew their revenues. We have also mentioned here and there in the course of this thesis some aspects which bear directly on the priests - their life and occupations.⁽¹⁾

The priests, as we saw before, were mentioned first among the classes of the society by Diodorus and Strabo. Throughout the long history of Egypt, both in the Pharaonic days and during the Greco Roman period the priests were in the forefront of the Egyptian people. How wealthy, powerful and influential were the priests is shown by the classical as well as by modern authors. Diodorus expressly told⁽²⁾ us that "the priests were accorded the greatest veneration by the people of Egypt both because these were in charge of the worship of the gods and because

(1) See especially Chapter VII under Heliopolis and Chapter VIII under Thebes.

(2) Diod. I. 73, cf. also Ibid, 28 and 70.

by virtue of their education they brought to bear a higher intelligence than others".

This statement of Diodorus is perfectly true, as he himself observed by himself the attitude of the Egyptian people towards their much reverend leaders. Diodorus, moreover, stated:⁽³⁾ "For, speaking generally, the priests are the first to deliberate upon the most important matters and are always at the King's side, sometimes as his assistants, sometimes to propose measures and give instructions; and they also, by their knowledge of astrology and of divination, forecast future events, and read to the King, out of the records of acts preserved in their sacred books, those which can be of assistance, They also pay no taxes of any kind, and in repute and in power are second after the King". In other passages of his work Diodorus also referred, though rather indirectly, to the power, influence and prestige of the Egyptian priest by class. In his account on the mythology of Egypt, Diodorus spoke⁽⁴⁾ of how Isis entrusted to the priests alone the secrets relating to the whereabouts of the remains of Osiris, and how she granted one third of the total land of Egypt to them. This Diodorus did not say without some sort of truth behind it. Isis, the deified queen of Egypt, like other kings and queens of Egypt favoured the priests.⁽⁵⁾ We may

(3) Ibid.

(4) Diod. I. 21.

(5) Pierre Montet, op.cit. p.65; A.Erman, op.cit. pp.181,182.

compare the story conveyed to us by Diodorus⁽⁶⁾ regarding the Ethiopian King, Sabaco,⁽⁷⁾ who had a "vision" in a dream, in which he was told by the god of Thebes (i.e. Amon) that he would not be able to reign over Egypt in happiness or for any great length of time, unless he should cut the bodies of all the priests in twain and accompanied by his retinue, pass through the very midst of them. This king Sabaco did not do and subsequently, as Diodorus said, he abdicated the throne owing to his excessive piety. This allegorical story of Diodorus concerning King Sabaco refers, in my view, to the power and influence of the trouble-makers, the priests. This view can easily be supported by many pieces of evidence which show that the priests in general and those of Thebes in particular were a thorn in the back and the throat of foreign rulers; since as we mentioned before the priests, like religious personnel of Al-Azhar of modern Egypt, were the national leaders of the people, especially in the time of crisis and in case of the absence of a national leader.⁽⁸⁾

(6) Diod. I. 65.

(7) Shabaka (c. 712 - c. 700 B.C.), the first king of the twenty fifth dynasty.

(8) cf. H.I. Bell, Cults and Creeds, Ibid, Egypt from Alexander the Great, pp.68,69, cf. also J.A.S.Evans, A Social and Economic History of An Egyptian Temple in Greco-Romans Period p.151. Yale Classical studies, XVII. Yale Univ.Press 1961; H.Kees, op.cit. pp.279,280; M. Rostovtzeff, op.cit. pp.265, 266; Bevan, op.cit. p.80.

Besides Diodorus, Strabo, too, referred⁽⁹⁾ to the great influence and prestige of the priests, when he stated that they were companions of the King.

According to Diodorus⁽¹⁰⁾ the priesthood was, like other professions, hereditary, that is the son of the priest followed in his father's steps. Diodorus' view⁽¹¹⁾ was that it had been always the custom that the honours paid to the gods should never be changed, but should ever be performed by the same men and in the same manner, and that fathers had passed on the same manners of life which they always lived to their descendants.

This statement of Diodorus, which is also corroborated by Herodotus⁽¹²⁾ before him, though not very far from the truth, is also generalised and a little bit exaggerated. It is true, however, as we said earlier in this chapter, that the Egyptians, conservative as they were, liked continuity in a profession . It

(9) Strabo, 17.1.3.

(10) Diod. I. 73, 88.

(11) Ibid.

(12) Hdt. II. 37.

is for this reason, apparently, as well as for their desire that their professions should be diligently perfected through continuity, as Diodorus said⁽¹³⁾ that we find offices in general and the office of priest in particular, were frequently hereditary.⁽¹⁴⁾ Hence the Egyptian texts give many instances of veritable 'dynasties' of priests.⁽¹⁵⁾ Moreover the office of the priest was highly specialised and the priesthood was not an easy profession as it required a hard and arduous training and a wider knowledge.⁽¹⁶⁾ Nevertheless, the priesthood was not always, strictly speaking, hereditary.⁽¹⁷⁾ For a man could equally well become a priest by cooption, without priestly forbears, either by buying his office or by royal favour.⁽¹⁸⁾ In this latter way the king was able to keep a check on the sometimes alarming power of the priesthood.⁽¹⁹⁾ This might be compared, I

(13) Diod. I. 74.

(14) Pierre Montet, op.cit. p.146; A Dict. of Egypt. Civil. p.224 s.v. Priests; A.Erman, op.cit. pp.180,181, H.Kees, op.cit. pp.279,280.

(15) A Dict. of Egypt. Civil. loc.cit.; H.Kees, op.cit. pp.279, 280.

(16) cf. Pierre Montet, loc.cit., and also A.Erman, loc.cit.; Cyril Aldred, op.cit. p.177.

(17) A Dict. of Egypt. Civil. loc.cit.

(18) Ibid.

(19) Ibid.

think, with the story about a modern dictatorial prime minister of a certain country, who had always kept his ministers in check by letting them know very little because he never kept them for a very long time in office.

As to what sort of qualifications were required for a man to become a priest and how he was trained, besides being a son of a priest, Diodorus and the others did not say much. One exception is, however, the statement given by Diodorus concerning the education of the sons of the priests. In this respect Diodorus said⁽²⁰⁾: "In the education of their sons the priests teach them two kinds of writing, that which is called "sacred" and that which is used in the more general instruction.⁽²¹⁾ Geometry⁽²²⁾ and arithmetic are given special attention. For the river, by changing the face of the country each year in manifold ways, gives rise to many and varied disputes between neighbours over their boundary lines, and these disputes cannot be easily tested out with any exactness unless a geometer works out the truth scientifically by the application of his experience. And

(20) Diod. I.81.

(21) There were, in fact, three kinds of Egyptian writing, (1) the hieroglyphic, (2) the hieratic, and (3) the demotic, the last being that in general use in the time of Diodorus. In common with Herodotus (II.36), Diodorus fails to distinguish between the first and second (Commentary by Oldfather, op.cit. pp.276,277 n.1. But according to another modern author (A Dict.of Egypt. Civil. p.120. s.v. Hieratic) Diodorus seems to be correct in his observations as to the fact that by his time there were only two modes of writing, the hieroglyphic and the demotic which gradually replaced hieratic in all its current uses.

(22) Here "geometry" is used in its original meaning, "measurement of the earth", and "geometer" below means "surveyor".

Arithmetic is serviceable with reference to the business affairs connected with making a living and also in applying the principles of geometry, and likewise is of no small assistance to students of astrology as well".

Thus it is clear that those children of the priests will grow up no doubt equipped with a very wide knowledge and with many skills much more than the children of the vast majority of the common people, whose knowledge of reading and writing, as Diodorus puts it,⁽²³⁾ was superficial.

If the priests were taught from their childhood in the manner above described, how did they use their multiple knowledge and various skills ? Did their functions and duties resemble the functions and duties of the priests of our time, in other words were their duties confined to religion and the services rendered to the gods only ? Classical authors as well as modern scholars all agreed that the priests of ancient Egypt practised many professions besides their religious duties. This in addition to what Diodorus and Strabo said about the functions of the priests of Heliopolis and Thebes, which we have already quoted in earlier chapters,⁽²⁴⁾ and to what Diodorus has already stated, which we have also just quoted in this chapter, Diodorus said,⁽²⁵⁾ that,

(23) Diod. I. 81.

(24) See n.l. of this Chapter.

(25) Diod. I. 28.

the Egyptian priests, who observed the stars, were physicists and astrologers, and Strabo added,⁽²⁶⁾ in corroboration of Diodorus that the priests devoted themselves both to philosophy and astronomy.^(26a)

From the statement of Diodorus on the education of the priests and from his other statements together with Strabo's statements, all of which we have already quoted, we gather that the priests were not just the servants of the gods, but as the recognised learned and intellectual elite of the Egyptian society, they provided their country with the highly technical and skilled staff required for its complex administration. Thus unlike their Greek or modern Christian counterparts, the Egyptian priests were not an entirely exclusive elite,⁽²⁷⁾ except of course in few cases in which they were shackled by religious taboos and prohibitions regarding their dress, food and cleanliness.⁽²⁸⁾ In this they were like their Roman opposite members, members of eminent families, and in the case of Egypt mainly of priestly families particularly

(26) Strabo, 17.1.3.

(26a) Aristotle speaks of the leisure necessary to develop these studies as belonging to a hereditary class; like the Egyptian priests (Metaphysics A 681 b23).

(27) A Dict.of Egypt. Civil., p.224, s.v. Priests.

(28) cf. Hdt. II. 37, 81 ; A.Erman, op.cit., pp.180, 181.

chosen.⁽²⁹⁾ More important than that they were normally men active and prominent in public life. The Egyptian priests, therefore, engaged themselves in various activities and practised many professions as it is clear from evidences supplied by Classical⁽³⁰⁾ as well as modern⁽³¹⁾ authors. Thus besides being the servants of the gods they occupied all sorts of offices in the administration philosophers, teachers, astronomers, physicists, physicians, engineers, politicians, and clerks, they also worked as fortune tellers, sooth sayers, embalmers and they even worked on their lands.

In this respect J.M. White says:⁽³²⁾

"If you had visited an Egyptian temple, you would have been aware that you were visiting a state within a state, like a mediaeval monastery. The informal atmosphere of much of Egyptian religion was reflected in the busy air of these teaching power-houses of Egyptian activity. You would not have been surprised to see ordained priests, their robes tucked round their waists, ploughing the fields, threshing the corn or tending the bees. As in the case of the Roman Catholic orders, some bodies of priests were bustling and practical, others were scholarly and

(29) cf. J.P.V.D. Balsdon, ed., The Romans, p.193. (The New Thinker's Library, London, 1965), E.Drioton and J.Vandier, op.cit. p.93.

(30) See Diod. I. 28, 73, Strabo, 17.1.3; and also Chapters VII under 'Heliopolis' and Chapter VIII under Thebes.

(31) J.M.White, op.cit. pp.131,132,140; A Dict.of Egypt. Civil. pp. 223,224,225. s.v. Priests; Cyril Aldred, op.cit. p.177

(32) J.M. White, loc.cit.

contemplative. Some of the priests would be sitting cross-legged with their rows of small pupils, imparting the secrets of a smooth and well shaped hand, others would be poring over tindery scrolls in the cool, dim House of Life, as the library was called; others would be discussing a problem in astronomy or a novel method of dosing a fever or setting a broken limb. There were literally thousands of priests in Egypt, and together with the members of the civil bureaucracy they practised the skills which in our own society are carried on by separate professions".

Though Diodorus considered, as we saw before, the physicists, the philosophers, the astronomers, priests, and he was supported regarding the two latter by Strabo, he did not tell us in which category he placed the physicians, teachers, engineers, politicians and other administrators. In fact the administrators as a class were not at all large and were aided by military and priestly officials who were rather the top administrators than the subordinate ones. He also clearly did not consider the embalmers priests, perhaps because their work did not bear directly on religious matters. He rather considered⁽³³⁾ them skilled artisans who had received this professional knowledge as a family tradition. Diodorus further⁽³⁴⁾ added regarding this section of the community

(33) Diod. I. 91.

(34) Ibid.

that the men called embalmers, however, were deemed worthy of every honour and consideration, associating with the priests and even coming and going in the temples without hindrance, as being undefiled.

οἱ ταριχευταὶ δὲ καλούμενοι πάσης μὲν τέμης
καὶ πολυωρίας ἀξιοῦνται, τοῖς τε ἱερεῦσι συνόντες
καὶ τὰς εἰς ἱερὸν εἰσόδους ἀκωλύτως ὥς
καθαροὶ ποιοῦνται!

But the fact that the embalmers were allowed to enter the temples without hindrance, which was a privilege reserved for the priestly order only, since the general masses were not allowed the same⁽³⁵⁾, then they must have been part of the priestly body, perhaps a lower grade of the priests.⁽³⁶⁾ This might count for Diodorus' statement that the embalmers were associated with the priests, and instead of considering them priests of an inferior class.

Diodorus, however, did not tell us much about the priests or their training, religious duties,⁽³⁷⁾ as Herodotus did before him, taboos, inhibitions and mode of life. He did not speak also of the various classes of the priestly order, except that he mentioned⁽³⁸⁾ the high priest, who stood beside the king and presided over public ceremonies and religious duties.

(35) A Dict. of Egypt. Civil. p.224, s.v. Priests and p.281. s.v. Temples.

(36) *Ibid.* pp.224, 225; J.M.White, *op.cit.*, pp.136, 137.

(37) *Hdt.* II. 37; cf. also Plutarch, de Iside et Osiride, 3ff.

(38) *Diod.* I. 70.

The fact that Diodorus and Strabo agreed as we noticed, that the Egyptian priests were learned in various fields; this did not seem to be the opinion of Tacitus, who wrote in the 2nd century A.D. For Tacitus told⁽³⁹⁾ us that, "the priests of Egypt, used to interpret visions. It was their business. They knew little of foreign countries". This view of Tacitus that the priests of Egypt were little acquainted with foreign countries was not shared by the Greek author Plato (c.429-347 B.C.).⁽⁴⁰⁾ If Tacitus is right this reflects a great change in the Egyptian priesthood, which must have taken place by the early Roman period. It might reflect the introduction of more Roman officials and tax-collectors.

The statement of Diodorus,⁽⁴¹⁾ that the priests of Egypt were exempt from taxation and free from every kind of service to the state, is supported by modern authors.⁽⁴²⁾

To summarise, the priests of Egypt constituted the first class in the Egyptian community. They were the most powerful and influential group in the country next to the king. Their influence and power were illustrated by their constant threat to the throne of national kings and foreign alike. They were feared

(39) Tacitus, Hist. iv.83. (40) Plato, Timaeus, 21 E ff.

(41) Diod. I. 28, 73.

(42) H.Kees, op.cit. p.158; Pierre Montet, p.14.

and respected by most of the rulers of Egypt national and foreigners. They were so powerful that they seized the throne for themselves and established a theocratical dictatorship. They possessed a great percentage of the land, which was granted to them by the grace of the Pharaohs, and on the products of which they maintained their religious institutions and they themselves lived. They were the most educated and learned Egyptians extremely honoured and respected by their fellow citizens, of whom they became national heroes, against foreign oppressors. There were thousands of priests living on the temple land in Egypt, and not all of them were engaged in religious liturgies, but many of them were civil administrators and practised various professions as we mentioned before. The priests were exempt from taxes and free from liturgies. The priesthood itself, which was a very highly specialised profession and which required a hard training and a wider knowledge of various aspects of religious and secular affairs as well, was frequently hereditary in other words the son of a priest followed his father's professions. (42a)

If the Classical authors of our period with the exception of a few did not say much about the priests in the Greco-Roman period, it would be appropriate here to mention a few things.

(42a) This did not exclude the fact that the priesthood was often obtained through cooption, either by buying the office or by a royal favour.

By the conquest of Egypt by the Macedonians, which put an end once and for all to the rule of Egypt by its people, the picture of the Egyptian society was altered completely. The Greco-Macedonian races which came into Egypt with the invaders took on a position on the top of the Egyptian society, while the Egyptian people were treated as colonised and second class citizens.⁽⁴³⁾ Nevertheless, the Egyptians were their own masters in one aspect, that is religion.⁽⁴⁴⁾ The Egyptian priests retained their position as the custodians of the religion. And though the early Ptolemies interfered very little in the working of the priests, even this social group suffered a great deal as a result of the Ptolemaic rule.⁽⁴⁵⁾ The early Ptolemies being well aware of the influence and power of the religious order, imposed several measures to curb this influence and prestige.⁽⁴⁶⁾ They took over the administration of the sacred or temple land as one of these measures.⁽⁴⁷⁾

But the situation after the battle of Raphia, in which the Egyptian warriors proved their courage and strength, was a signal for an Egyptian revival and come-back.⁽⁴⁸⁾ The Egyptians

(43) E.Bevan, *op.cit.* p.79 ff.

(44) *Ibid.*

(45) Tarn and Griffith, *op.cit.* p.201.

(46) H.I.Bell, Cults and Creeds, p.52ff; Tarn and Griffith, *loc.cit.*

(47) Tarn and Griffith, *loc.cit.*; A.C.Johnson, *op.cit.* p.67;
H.I.Bell, Cults and Creeds, p.54;

(48) Tarn and Griffith, *op.cit.* p.205; H.I.Bell, Cults and Creeds, pp.53-54.

from that time onward became on the offensive and the Greco-Macedonians on the defensive.⁽⁴⁹⁾ Like the other sections of the Egyptian society the priests benefited from that revival. This is clear from the priestly decrees for Ptolemy IV after Raphia and for Ptolemy V (the Rosetta Stone), which show strong Egyptian colouring and influence.⁽⁵⁰⁾ The restoration of the priestly power and prestige is even more clear under Euergetes II, who greatly increased the powers, privileges and possessions of the priesthood in attempt to conciliate the natives.⁽⁵¹⁾ The statement of Lucan⁽⁵²⁾ in which he let the chief priest of Egypt to address Julius Caesar in the presence of Queen Cleopatra and in her palace, also supports the idea that the Egyptian priesthood regained its influence and prestige.

The multiple knowledge of the priests and their devotion to learning and excelling in several fields and their previous occupations seem also to have persisted under the Greco-Roman rule. This is supported by the statement of Tacitus, which we have already quoted, and the statement of Lucan, just referred to, in which the high priest of Egypt, at the court of Cleopatra, was addressed by Caesar as follows:

(49) Ibid

(50) Ibid

(51) Ibid

(52) Lucan, Civil War, X. 176-183.

"Sir, devoted as you are to the service of heaven (lit. sacred affairs), and, as your age proves, not unprotected by the gods, expound to me the origins of the Egyptian nation, the features of the land, the manners of the common people, your forms of worship and the shapes of your gods, reveal all that is engraved upon your ancient shrines, and disclose your gods who are willing that they should be known. If your ancestors taught their religion to Plato the Athenian, ~~was~~ ever a guest of yours more worthy than I to hear these things, was ever a mind more able to contain the world secrets ?".

Under the Romans the position of the priests was reversed and their prestige and influence regained under the late Ptolemies were once more lost. (53)

(53) Tarn and Griffith, op.cit. p.207; H.I.Bell, Egypt From Alexander ..., pp.68,69; Ibid., Cults and Creeds ..., p.54; cf. also A.C.Johnson, op.cit. p.67.

THE ARMED FORCES.

Since a very early date in its deep-rooted history Ancient Egypt enjoyed a worldwide fame for its wealth and strength. Thus we find that as early as the ninth century B.C. Homer, who was very much revered by his countrymen and the very much quoted by them, spoke in a poetic manner of the wealth of Egypt and its vast treasures, its fair plains and its magnificent capital Thebes of the hundred gates. He described how, when Odysseus and his countrymen ravaged Egypt, its fields and people, killing women and children without discrimination, as soon as the Egyptians heard the cry of war, they rushed out at dawn, and the whole plain was filled with infantrymen and charioteers with their flashing bronze (i.e. swords). Thus Homer said :-(1)

οἱ δὲ βοῆς αἰόντες ἄμ' ἡοὶ φαινομένηφιν
ἦλθον πλῆτο δὲ πᾶν πεδῖον πεξῶν τε καὶ
ἱππῶν
χαλκοῦ τε στεροπῆς '

We have already quoted Homer's well-known statement on Thebes (See Chapter VIII under Thebes).

(1) Homer, Od. XIV, 266-268.

If we were to believe Homer's statement quoted above, as the Greeks actually did, a statement, which is thought to be an echo of true historical events, then Egypt must have had a military strength, whether it was a regular army or a militia,^(1a) who were ever ready to take up arms at a very short notice and rise instantly to defend their country against ravagers and invaders such as the Greeks.⁽²⁾

Several Classical authors besides and after Homer such as Herodotus^(2a) and Plato⁽³⁾ mentioned at length or briefly something about the military capability of the Egyptian nation. Herodotus, for instance, had the fullest account among the Classical authors on the military class in Ancient Egypt.⁽⁴⁾ We, shall however, refer to Herodotus later in this chapter.

Despite the many factors which could make Egypt secure and easily protected against foreign invasions such as the natural barriers which surrounded Egypt from all directions namely the deserts both on the west and the east and the marshes and lagoons on the north and north east, the cataracts which made the invasion of Egypt from the south and via the Nile practically

(1a) cf. A.Bouche-Leclercq, Histoire Des Lagides, IV. p.2.

(2) Strabo, 17.1.6.

(2a) Hdt. II, 164,165,166,168.

(3) Plato, Tiameus, 24 A-C.

(4) Hdt loc.cit.

impossible, and the Mediterranean on the north,⁽⁵⁾ and despite the various precautions and measures taken by the various Pharaohs to defend their country, such as stationing garrisons on the strategic positions of Egypt and making the Delta and the valley impassable by intersecting it with canals.⁽⁶⁾ Egypt was not after all secure from foreign coveters, ravagers and invaders. Thus as we know Egypt was occupied by various foreign powers, Hyksos, Libyans, Sea-people, Assyrians, Ethiopians, Persians, Macedonians and Romans. And despite the peaceful nature of the Egyptians owing to their near self-sufficiency and their feeling of superiority over the surrounding peoples, they were forced to resort to arms to defend themselves and their homeland when they felt threatened from outside, and the Homeric statement quoted above is sufficient evidence. Strabo too referred⁽⁷⁾ to these facts. They also developed an aggressive policy as a protective measure, believing that the best policy for defence is to attack first to prevent an imminent danger.

(5) See Chapter III.

(6) Diod. I. 57; Strabo, 17.1.6.

(7) Strabo, loc.cit. and 53 (see Chapter IX, under Behaviour and Character).

Diodorus referred to warlike activities in Egypt and to the Egyptian warriors in various passages of his work. He referred to the Egyptian national warrior class⁽⁸⁾ and to the mercenaries.⁽⁹⁾ He also described⁽¹⁰⁾ in greater details the military strength of the legendary King Sesooosis (Sesostris of the other classical authors). He also quoted,⁽¹¹⁾ like the majority of the Classical authors, the statement of the poet (i.e. Homer) about Thebes and its wealth and military strength in the olden days.⁽¹²⁾

On the Egyptian national warrior class Diodorus had this to say:⁽¹³⁾ "The last part⁽¹⁴⁾ is held by the warriors, as they are called, who are subject to call for all military duties, the purpose being that those who hazard their lives may be most loyal to the country because of such allotment of land and thus may eagerly face the perils of war. For it would be absurd to entrust the safety of the entire nation to these men and yet have them possess in the country no property to fight for valuable enough to arouse their ardour. But the most important consideration

(8) Diod. I. 73.

(9) Diod. I. 66, 67.

(10) Diod. I. 54.

(11) Diod. I. 45.

(12) See Chapter VIII under Thebes.

(13) Diod. I. 73.

(14) i.e. the third part, the other two being held by the King and the priests respectively.

is the fact that, if they are well-to-do, they will readily beget children and thus so increase the population that the country will not need to call in any mercenary troops. And since their calling, like that of the priests, is hereditary, the warriors are incited to bravery by the distinguished records of their fathers and, inasmuch as they become zealous students of warfare from their boyhood up, they turn out to be invincible by reason of their daring and skill". Ἡ δὲ μερίδα τὴν

τελευταίαν ἔχουσιν οἱ μάχιμοι καλούμενοι καὶ πρὸς τὰς λειτουργίας τὰς εἰς τὴν στρατείαν ὑπακούοντες, ἔν' οἱ κινδυνεύοντες εὐνούσταται τῇ χώρᾳ διὰ τὴν κληρουχίαν οὗτοι προθύμως ἐπιδέχονται τὰ συμβαίνοντα κατὰ τοὺς πολέμους δεινά. ἄτοπον γὰρ ἦν τὴν μὲν τῶν ἁπάντων σωτηρίαν τούτοις ἐπιτρέπειν, ὑπὲρ οὗ δὲ ἀγωνιῶνται μηδὲν αὐτοῖς ὑπάρχειν κατὰ τὴν χώραν σπουδῆς ἄξιον. τὸ δὲ μέγιστον εὐπορουμένους αὐτοὺς ῥαδίως τεκνοποιήδαι, καὶ διὰ τοῦτο τὴν πολυανθρωπίαν κατασκευάδαι, ὥστε μὴ προσδεῖσθαι ξενικῆς δυνάμως τὴν χώραν. ὁμοίως δ' οὗτοι τὴν τάξιν ταύτην ἐκ προγόνων διαδεχόμεναι τὰς μὲν τῶν πατέρων ἀνδραγαθίας προτρέπονται πρὸς τὴν ἀνδρείαν, ἐκ παίδων δὲ ξηλωταὶ γινόμενοι τῶν πολέμων ἔργων ἀνίκητοι ταῖς τόλμας καὶ ταῖς ἐμπειρίας ἀποβαίνουσι.

Strabo too, like Diodorus, mentioned⁽¹⁵⁾ the warriors among the three main classes into which the Egyptian society was divided, and made them practise the art of war, and, together with the farmers, cultivate the land and follow the trades.

According to Diodorus and Strabo, then, there was a class of warriors among the several classes of the Egyptian society. The warriors held land, estimated by Diodorus⁽¹⁶⁾ as comprising one third of the total land of Egypt. According to Diodorus they owned the land but did not cultivate it;⁽¹⁷⁾ but according to Strabo,⁽¹⁸⁾ who did not make it clear that the warriors owned land, they together with the farmers cultivated the land for the king. Diodorus, moreover, described⁽¹⁹⁾ the profession of the warriors as hereditary like priesthood. Strabo did not make this clear either. If this practical attitude of the Egyptian Pharaohs, as well as their foreign successors the Ptolemies, was the motive behind granting the warriors allotments of land in order to win them to their sides to make them most loyal to their benefactors, in addition to make them

(15) Strabo, 17.1.3.

(16) Diod. loc.cit.

(17) Diod. I. 74.

(18) Strabo, loc.cit.

(19) Diod. I. 73.

i.e. the warriors, feel that they were fighting for their own interests, the reason for allowing the profession of the military to become hereditary was also, according to Diodorus,⁽²⁰⁾ to provide a warrior, who could be incited to bravery by the distinguished records of their fathers and, inasmuch as they become zealous students of warfare from their boyhood up, they turn out to be invincible by reason of their daring and skill.

The question now is, was there any professional standing army in ancient Egypt ? Did the members of this army, if it existed, constitute a class of their own separated from the other classes ? Was the profession of the warrior hereditary ? What obligations and privileges did the military have ?

All the Classical authors within our period, such as Diodorus⁽²¹⁾ and Strabo⁽²²⁾ and outside it, such as Herodotus⁽²³⁾ and Plato⁽²⁴⁾, clearly indicated that the warriors constituted a class of their own. Diodorus, supported by his predecessors Herodotus and Plato, made it clear also that the warriors devoted themselves solely to the affairs of war and nothing else.

(20) Diod. loc.cit.

(21) Ibid.

(22) Strabo, 17.13.

(23) Hdt. II. 164ff.

(24) Plato, Timaeus, 24.

Moreover, despite the fact that Diodorus said⁽²⁵⁾ that the warriors owned one of the three sections of the entire land of Egypt, he seems to have indicated⁽²⁶⁾ that they did not cultivate it, but they, like the kings and priests, rented it on moderate terms to the peasants to cultivate. But this view that the warriors practised the art of war only and did not participate in other activities, does not seem to agree with the words of Strabo cited before in this section. For Strabo clearly stated⁽²⁷⁾ that the warriors as a matter of fact not only practised the art of war but also took part in other purely civil activities such as agriculture and trades (τέχναι).

If, indeed, the warriors, as Diodorus supported by Herodotus and Plato, maintained, were not permitted by law to engage themselves in any other profession or activity than their sole occupation, training for war, how could we explain the statement of Strabo referred to above ? One must make it clear here, however, that though Strabo was generally writing about the affairs of his own days, he was obviously referring to the warriors of Pharaonic Egypt when he gave his above-cited statement.

(25) Diod. I. 73.

(26) Ibid. 74.

(27) Strabo, 17.1.3.

For, unlike his predecessors, namely Herodotus, Plato, and Diodorus, though he spoke of the Egyptian society and its three classes, Strabo did not say expressly that these classes were separated from each other. Thus he made the farmers and warriors jointly responsible for the affairs relating to man, both in war and in peace. But from the order of the classes according to Strabo, the warriors by themselves seem to have been responsible for the warlike activities, besides which they took part in other purely civil activities along with the farmers, perhaps when they were not on active service.

The military forces have been the subject of controversial, discussions among modern authors.⁽²⁸⁾ The problem with the Classical authors, and we have here in mind, Diodorus and Strabo in particular, is that they did not distinguish between the organisation and the functions of the Egyptian armed forces in the different periods of the Egyptian history. They did not take into consideration, for instance, the gradual development in the organisation and the equipments of the army, nor were they careful, as one might have expected, to point out that the size, the organisation, the equipments, or the role of

(28) R.O.Faulkner, Egyptian Military Organisation, JEA, vol.39, 1953, p.32ff; E.Drioton and J.Vandier, op.cit. p.455ff; Pierre Montet, op.cit. p.106; A Dict. of Egypt Civil, p.15ff; s.v. Army p.296ff. s.v. War, Barbara Mertz, Red Land, Black Land, pp.150,151 ; Bouche-Leclercq, Histoire Des Lagides, IV, pp.2,3 ; J.M. White, op.cit. p.144ff.

the army differed from one period to another, from the Old Kingdom, for instance, to the Middle Kingdom, and from the Old and Middle Kingdoms to the Empire. It is unfair, however, to require from the Classical authors, whose knowledge of the Egyptian history was very little, to write in great detail.

Another point must also be stressed here.

Egyptian armed forces were not just a regular professional army, as one may understand from the Classical authors. For if we go as far back as the Old Kingdom, we shall find that besides the professional standing army, whose presence at that early period is very much disputed by modern scholars,⁽²⁹⁾ there were other forms of military forces, such as the local militia, recruited and led by their regional notables, who were incorporated in the national regular army in emergency.⁽³⁰⁾ There were also others who constituted the bulk of the levies, who were called up under some system of national conscription, and who doubtless also received a measure of military training and who may perhaps have provided the garrisons for the frontier fortresses, but whose

(29) Ibid.

(30) Faulkner, op.cit. p.35 ; E.Drioton and J.Vandier, op.cit. p.455; Barbara Mertz, op.cit. p.150; A Dict of Egypt. Civil. p.15; Cyril Aldred, op.cit. p.171. Pierre Montet, loc. cit.

principal task it was to furnish the labour for public works.⁽³¹⁾ It has been suggested⁽³²⁾ that among the members of the standing army there might have been professional soldiers, in other words they did not practise any other professions besides their duty to be prepared for war. The position with the militia was different from that of the regular army. For the members of the former were probably consisted of conscripts who had completed their term of compulsory service and had returned to their normal occupations, but with a liability to be called up in an emergency,⁽³³⁾ like the reservists of our time.

Under the Middle Kingdom the picture had changed quite considerably, with the national regular army growing larger and larger and better organised and better equipped. But beside the national army there were still the levies, which were recruited by the rulers of the region at the request of the king.⁽³⁴⁾

(31) Faulkener, loc.cit. ; cf. also Barbara Mertz, loc.cit;

(32) Faulkner, loc.cit.

(33) Ibid.

(34) Faulkner, op.cit. p.36ff.

Under the Empire or the New Kingdom with the rise of the Eighteenth Dynasty, there was a revolutionary development in the military sphere. For following the invasion of the Hyksos and the ultimate expulsion of their hordes the Pharaohs of the New Kingdom having determined not to allow any invader to repeat the foreign domination, but to give Egypt its appropriate place in the world, built a first class military power.⁽³⁵⁾

We see, therefore, that the Egyptian national regular army grew from a small force under the Old Kingdom to a huge and highly developed and more efficiently trained and equipped one under the Empire. We observe also that from its early formation, some of the army's members were professional soldiers, whose sole occupation was training and preparing themselves for/and taking part in war; while others presumably were allowed to return to their normal activities.⁽³⁶⁾ This latter position applies also to the other forms of military forces such as the local militia.⁽³⁷⁾

Drioton and Vandier, who suggest⁽³⁸⁾ that under the Old and Middle Kingdoms there was no regular standing army, with

(35) Ibid. p.41ff ; E.Drioton and J.Vandier, op.cit. p.455; Cyril Aldred, op.cit. p.172; A Dict of Egypt Civil. p.16. s.v. Army.

(36) Faulkner, op.cit. p.35. (37) Ibid.

(38) E.Drioton and J. Vandier, op.cit. p.455.

the exception of a police force, recruited mainly from Nubia, and in case of war activities the kings instructed the nomarchs to furnish local militia, seem to agree with Diodorus' view that the soldiers constituted a class of their own among the other classes of the Egyptian society. Thus Drioton and Vandier tell⁽³⁹⁾ us that "after the war the soldiers were not discharged.

Having dispensed in the various garrisons across the length and the breadth of the Empire, they formed, in the country, a separate class of their own which was mentioned by an inscription of the time, besides those of the priests, royal serfs and artisans". The same authors seem also to agree with Diodorus when they state⁽⁴⁰⁾ that, "the warrior class was assuredly a privileged and a powerful class. The officers and soldiers were relatively rich. They not only took their share of the considerable booty, which was collected from the continuous campaigns in Asia and Nubia, but also, they were often rewarded with donations of lands; thus they came to form a new land aristocracy of military origin".

It seems from the views of various modern scholars that under the early periods of the Egyptian history, particularly the Old and Middle Kingdoms, the soldiers could either be professional soldiers, fighting being their sole occupation or

(39) Ibid. p.457.

(40) Ibid.

could go back to their normal professions after they had completed their compulsory military service. It seems also that the armed forces of the Old and Middle Kingdoms, which were amateurish in appearance if compared with those of the Empire, were responsible not only for military affairs, but also more probably for purely civil affairs, such as public works.⁽⁴¹⁾ But from the New Kingdom onwards the members of the armed forces came to form a warrior class of their own clearly separated from the other classes of the Egyptian society.⁽⁴²⁾ This explains and supports the statements of Herodotus,⁽⁴³⁾ Plato,⁽⁴⁴⁾ (both wrote in the Late Period) and of Diodorus,⁽⁴⁵⁾ (who wrote in the Late Ptolemaic era) that the warriors constituted a separate class of their own and that they were not allowed to participate in any other profession apart from the affairs of war.

The statement of Diodorus⁽⁴⁶⁾, which is corroborated too by Herodotus,⁽⁴⁷⁾ that the profession of the warrior was based on hereditary basis, is also supported by modern authors.⁽⁴⁸⁾

(41) A Dict. of Egypt, Civil. pp.15,16. s.v. Army; Cyril Aldred, op.cit. pp.171, 172.

(42) E.Drioton and J.Vandier, op.cit. p.457; How and Wells, A Commentary on Herodotus, Vol.I, pp.248,249; W.G.Waddell, Herodotus II, p.251; cf also, Rawlinson, History of Herodotus, vol. II, p.248. n.5; Bouche-Leclercq, op.cit. p.2.

(43) Hdt. II. 164,165,166. (44) Plato, loc.cit.

(45) Diod. I. 73. (46) Ibid. (47) Hdt. II. 166.

(48) J.G. Milne, A History of Egypt, Roman Period, p.174, Bouche-Leclercq, op.cit. p.2; How & Wells, loc.cit.

This theory also accords with what was said earlier when we spoke of the classes of the Egyptian society and of the priestly class, that the Egyptians preferred the sons to follow their fathers' profession.

The warriors, like the priests, though undoubtedly formed their own separate class, and though their profession was also very frequently hereditary, were not entirely an exclusive community.⁽⁴⁹⁾ For again, like the priests, the warrior could come from another class. The members of the regular professional army could not by any means defend the country on their own. Thus in an emergency, most of those eligible to carry arms were most probably conscripted. After the emergency was over, some of these recruits perhaps chose to stay on in the regular army.

Thus we may say that the warriors made a class of their own like other classes, and that their profession was generally hereditary, but sometimes a warrior's son could choose a different career from his father's. In other words a person who came from a warriors class could join another profession, and in like manner a person could join the warriors class without necessarily having forebears, members of that class.^(49a)

Another matter relevant to the warriors mentioned in greater detail by Diodorus⁽⁵⁰⁾ and briefly by Strabo⁽⁵¹⁾ is

(49) How & Wells, op.cit. pp.248,249; Waddell, loc.cit; Rawlinson, loc.cit.; cf. also Bouche-Leclercq, op.cit. p.2.

(49a) Ibid.

(50) Diod. I. 54, 73.

(51) Strabo, 17.1.3.

the privileges enjoyed by the warriors. In one passage Diodorus told us of the privileges granted to the commanders of the army by King Sesoosis (Sesootris of the other classical authors). Thus Diodorus said:⁽⁵²⁾ "Upon all these commanders (of his army) he (Sesoosis) bestowed allotments of the best land in Egypt, in order that, enjoying sufficient income and lacking nothing, they might sedulously practise the art of war.

ἑκάστῳ δὲ τοῖς προειρημένοις κατεκληρούχηθε
τὴν ἀρίστην τῆς χώρας, ὅπως ἔχοντες ἱκανὰς
προόδους καὶ μηδενὸς ἐνδεεῖς ὄντες
ἀσκῶσι τὰ περὶ τοῦς πολέμους.'

But in his second elaborate statement, which we have already quoted, at the beginning of this section, Diodorus spoke of a class of warriors possessing one third of the total (arable) land of Egypt, without making it clear whether the land, possessed by the warriors class, was considered as their private property or not. He also was not clear about whether this land was possessed by the officers and soldiers alike, or by the officers alone. Again how much land was possessed by each individual warrior, Diodorus did not say. He did not also tell us whether the

(52) Diod. I. 54.

warrior's privileges consisted of land only or there were other privileges and what were they if any.

Strabo's statement to which we also referred earlier in this section is even less clear than those of Diodorus. For though he spoke of the whole society as divided into the three classes above-mentioned and of the people in each nome as divided along the national line, and of the land as divided, alike into three equal parts, he did not say clearly whether these three equal parts of the land were held by the three classes of the society.

Thus we see that the privileges granted to the warriors, according to Diodorus, consisted of land. We observe also that Diodorus did not mention any other privileges, which might have been granted to the warriors in addition to land.

The curious and inquisitive predecessor of Diodorus, Herodotus (mid 5th Century B.C.) spoke of the privileges of the warrior class in a more clear and detailed account. In his account, where he divided the warriors' class into two groups the Kalasiris and the Hermotubies, Herodotus told⁽⁵³⁾ us that "the warriors were the only Egyptians, except the priests, who had special privileges: for each of them there was set apart an untaxed plot of twelve arourae."⁽⁵⁴⁾ These lands were set apart

(53) Hdt. II. 168.

(54) According to Hdt. (Ibid), the Egyptian aroura was a square of a hundred Egyptian cubits each way.

for all; it was never the same men who cultivated them, but each in turn. A thousand Kalasiris⁽⁵⁵⁾ and as many Hermotubies⁽⁵⁶⁾ were the King's annual bodyguard. These men, besides their lands, received each a daily provision of five minae's weight of roast grain, two minae of beef, and four cups of wine. These were gifts received by each bodyguard".

In general, modern scholars⁽⁵⁷⁾ supported the classical author's statements concerning the privileges enjoyed by the warriors. Indeed, as the Classical authors⁽⁵⁸⁾ asserted, the warriors together with the priests were the most privileged classes of the Egyptian society.⁽⁵⁹⁾ And as the warriors were so

(55) Hdt. says (II.166) that the Kalasiris warriors came from the nomes (i.e. provinces) of Thebes, Bubastis, Aphthis (mod. Atfih), Tanis, Mendes, Sebennys, Athribis, Pharbaithis, Thmuis, Onuphis, Anytis, Myecphoris (this last is an island over against the city of Bubastis).

(56) The Hermatubies, Hdt. says (II.165), came from the provinces of Busiris, Sais, Chemmis, and Papremis, the island called Prosopitis, and half of Natho.

(57) Pierre Montet, op.cit. p.107 ; E.Drioton and J. Vandier, op.cit. p.457 ; Bouche-Leclercq, op.cit. p.3 ; A Dict. of Egypt.Civil. p.18. s.v. Army ; Faulkner, op.cit. p.45 ; J.M. White, op.cit. p.146.

(58) Diod. I. 73. ; cf. also Hdt. II. 168.

(59) W.G. Waddell, op.cit. p.251 ; Drioton and Vandier, loc.cit.

wealthy, so powerful an elite and the best qualified to rule, they were able to take over the throne of Egypt for themselves. Thus Egyptian sources told us of many army officers as taking over as Egypt's sovereigns⁽⁶⁰⁾. And Classical authors such as Diodorus informed⁽⁶¹⁾ us of the story of the takeover of the throne by an army officer Amasis. To this story we have already referred earlier in this chapter (see under Pharaoh, King and Prefect).

The Classical authors of our period also discussed the use of mercenary troops in the Egyptian army.

In his statement above quoted Diodorus explaining the reasons of the granting of land allotments to the warriors, stated⁽⁶²⁾ that, "the most important consideration (for granting such allotments) is the fact that, if they (i.e. the warriors) are well-to-do, they will readily beget children and thus so increase the population that the country will not need to call in any mercenary troops".

(60) A Dict. of Egypt. Civil. p.18. s.v. Army, Cyril Aldred, op.cit. pp.173, 174, J.M.White, op.cit. p.145.

(61) Diod. I. 68, cf. Hdt. II. 161ff.

(62) Diod. I. 73.

This assumption of Diodorus may seem true in theory, but in reality the position was not so. The history of ancient Egypt is so filled with stories concerning the use and employment of foreign mercenaries, that even Diodorus himself told⁽⁶³⁾ us of the use of large numbers of Greek mercenaries from Caria and Ionia by King Psammetichus to overcome his rival princes and finally to establish his sovereignty over the entire country. Diodorus also informed⁽⁶⁴⁾ us of King Apries, as depending on foreign mercenaries in maintaining his grip over his own subjects, a fact that led to his ultimate overthrow by Amasis above-mentioned. Even Amasis, who emerged in his encounter with Apries, who was supported by the mercenaries, as the unchallenged national hero, followed suit, that is to say he himself, as Herodotus said,⁽⁶⁵⁾ became very fond of the Greeks and their cultures. Diodorus however, was not clear about that point, though he referred⁽⁶⁶⁾ to Amasis as having removed the mercenaries, who supported Psammetichus and who were settled by him in the region called The Camps, to Memphis. And though Diodorus did not say why Amasis did so, it is obvious that Amasis used these mercenaries as royal guards to protect him against his own people.

(63) Diod. I. 66, 67.

(64) Ibid. 68.

(65) Hdt. II. 178ff.

(66) Diod. I.67.

Diodorus also spoke of privileges enjoyed by foreign mercenaries. In this respect he told⁽⁶⁷⁾ us of how Psammetichus, after he had defeated his rival claimants depended in maintaining his grip on his empire on large mercenary forces, among whom he distributed notable gifts over and above their promised pay, and to whom he gave the region called The Camps to dwell in, and appertained to them much land in the region lying a little up the river from the Pelusiac mouth; they being subsequently removed thence by Amasis, and settled by him in Memphis.

The use of foreign mercenaries in Egypt by Psammetichus, Apries and other Pharaohs of Egypt and granting them privileges including land-allotments as mentioned by Diodorus and other classical authors, are confirmed by Egyptian sources⁽⁶⁸⁾ and are supported by modern scholars.⁽⁶⁹⁾ Moreover the use of

(67) Ibid.

(68) See, for example, a reproduction of a wooden model scene (Cairo Museum) depicting a company of Nubian archers, dated from the First Intermediate Period, appeared in A Dict. of Egypt. Civil. p.17.

(69) A Dict of Egypt.Civil. p.18 s.v. Army; Cyril Aldred, op.cit. p.172; E.Drioton and J.Vandier, op.cit. p.455; Pierre Montet, op.cit. pp.106,130,131, Hermann Kees, op.cit. pp.142, 143; Faulkner, op.cit. pp.44,45; Barbara Mertz, op.cit. p.159; W.S.Stevenson Smith, Ancient Egypt As Represented In The Museum of Fine Arts, pp.138,139 (3rd ed. Boston 1952); J.M. White, op.cit. pp.149, 150.

mercenaries from Greece was of a very early date long ago before Psammetichus.⁽⁷⁰⁾ This goes as far back as Amasis (Ahmose I), the liberator.⁽⁷¹⁾ The mercenaries, used by the Pharaohs, came not only from the Greek world, but from many other parts of the world, from ^LLybia, Nubia, Syria and from many parts of the Mediterranean world as far as Sardinia.⁽⁷²⁾

On the Egyptian warrior class, of which we have been speaking so far, not much has been said about it in the Greco-Roman period by the Classical authors of our concern with the exception of Diodorus' brief reference⁽⁷³⁾ to the presence of Egyptians in the army of Ptolemy I Soter in the battle of ^LRapha (217 B.C.), which Ptolemy fought against Demetrius son of ^LAntigonus. In that battle, which was won by Ptolemy, the Ptolemaic army, Diodorus stated, consisted of Macedonians, mercenaries and large numbers of Egyptians, of whom some carried the missiles and the other baggage but some were armed and serviceable for battle.

(70) Pierre Montet, loc.cit.

(71) Ibid.

(72) See note 69 supra.

(73) Diod. XIX. 80.

Thus we observe from Diodorus' statement that the Egyptians were used by Ptolemy in his army partly as combatants, partly as doing subordinate work such as carrying arms and baggage. In fact this is the first time that Ptolemy used Egyptians in his army, even if he did not entrust them with important tasks in his warlike activities. It is a well-known fact that the Ptolemies had replaced the ancient Egyptian warriors class with men of foreign descent mainly Macedonians and Greeks, to whom they granted land allotments.⁽⁷⁴⁾ The men who received from the Ptolemies such a plot of land were better known as Cleruchs (κληρουῦχοι). The income from this land was supposed to provide the warriors and their dependents with the means of subsistence. The Ptolemies, therefore, did not invent this method of maintaining a regular army, whose members were not paid in cash, as we may suppose, but in the form of land-holdings, but they maintained a Pharaonic tradition as we have already witnessed.

The preference of soldiers, of Macedonian, Greek and other foreign descent by the Ptolemies to the use of local Egyptians could not be maintained for long. For after the battle of Raphia above referred to there was a sudden but expected surge

(74) M. Rostovtzeff, op.cit. p.284; E.Bevan, op.cit. p.166.

in the national feeling of the Egyptians in general and those who were engaged directly in the battle, that is to say the warriors, in particular.⁽⁷⁵⁾ The battle of Rapha, if it did not force the Ptolemies, it did certainly convince them to alter their policy of excluding the Egyptians from forming a warrior class as they had traditionally done in favour of foreign elements. Thus the battle of Rapha marked the revival of the ancient Egyptian warrior class (μαχιμοι). These Egyptian machimoi were made cleruchs of smaller lots, and the Greek cleruchs began to be called Katoikoi for distinction later, Katoikoi and machimoi lost all racial meaning, and only meant men who held larger or smaller lots.

The Romans, however, who were alarmed at this Egyptian revival and the ultimate absorption of Egypt, as generally known, of the foreign element, deliberately suppressed this trend by every possible means as soon as they turned Egypt into a mere Roman province.⁽⁷⁶⁾ This included the suppression or rather the total abolition of the newly revived Egyptian warrior-class.

(75) Tarn and Griffith, op.cit. p.206.

(76) E. Bevan, op.cit. p.166.

THE PEASANTS:

The civilization of the Nile valley, like most of the well-known civilizations of the ancient world, was a product of an agricultural community, settled in a very fertile valley, who dwelt in towns and villages. The economy of ancient Egypt was basically an agricultural economy, hence agriculture was, like today, the occupation of the vast majority of the Egyptians. The total dependence of Egypt on agriculture has but very recently changed, after the expansion of its industries . It is from the above-mentioned facts that we observe that the peasants were the backbone of the economy of that country.⁽¹⁾

To come to the Classical authors we shall see that in Egypt, the scenery, water resources, and method of farming, presented a real contrast, exactly as Great Britain did to the present writer. Thus the scarcity of rainfall and the total dependence of Egypt on the Nile, the sole source of water, in getting adequate supplies of water for the needs of its people, its animal life and for the irrigation of its crops, was a real surprise and astonishment for the classical authors, when they

(1) cf. Pierre Montet, op.cit. p.79.

compared the conditions prevailing in Egypt with those of their respective countries, whether it was Greece or Italy, but especially Greece where the main source of water was and still is rain.

In our discussion of the classes of the Egyptian society as described by Diodorus and Strabo, we remember that we found a little bit of confusion in deciding what Diodorus meant by οἱ γεωμόμοι in his first statement⁽²⁾, but it is clear that he meant by that word, i.e. geomoroi, the land-holders, who, besides holding plots of lands, furnished personnel and military equipment required for war, and that he did not mean the peasants, who cultivated the land. Diodorus, however, quite clearly incorporated the peasants, in that same statement, in the class, which was known among the Athenians as "demiurgoi" (οἱ δημιούργοι) i.e. the workers. Diodorus, furthermore, made this clearer in his second statement,⁽³⁾ where he was directly speaking of the Egyptian society. In that statement Diodorus spoke of the class of husbandmen or peasants (οἱ γεωργοὶ) as clearly distinct, both from the class of the warriors, who were also land-holders, and from the other classes of minor

(2) Diod. I. 28.

(3) Diod. I. 74.

importance, such as the herdsmen and the artisans. On the peasants and their skill Diodorus told us the following:

"Now the husbandmen rent on moderate terms the arable land held by the king and the priests and the warriors, and spend their entire time in tilling the soil; and since from very infancy they are brought up in connection with the various tasks of farming, they are far more experienced in such matters than the husbandmen of any other nation; for of all mankind they acquire the most exact knowledge of the nature of the soil, the use of water in irrigation, the times of sowing and reaping, and the harvesting of the crops in general, some details of which they have learned from the observations of their ancestors and others in the school of their own experience".

οἱ μὲν οὖν γεωργοὶ μικροῦ τινοῦ τὴν καρποφόρον γῆν τὴν παρὰ τοῦ βασιλέως καὶ τῶν ἱερέων καὶ τῶν μαχίμων μισθούμενοι διατελοῦσι τὸν πάντα χρόνον περὶ τὴν ἐργασίαν ὄντες τῆς χώρας· ἐκ νηπίου δὲ συντρέφονται ταῖς γεωργικαῖς ἐπιμελείαις πολὺ προέχουσι τῶν παρὰ τοῖς ἄλλοις ἔθνεσι γεωργῶν ταῖς ἐμπειρίαις· καὶ γὰρ τὴν τῆς γῆς φύσιν καὶ τὴν τῶν ὕδατων ἐπίρρυσιν, ἔτι δὲ τοὺς καῖρόν τοῦ τε σπορέου καὶ τοῦ θερισμοῦ καὶ τῆς ἄλλης τῶν καρπῶν βυκομιδῆς ἀκριβέστατα πάντων γινώσκουσι, τὰ μὲν ἐκ τῆς τῶν προγόνων παρατηρήσεως μαθόντες, τὰ δ' ἐκ τῆς ἰδίας πείρας διδαχθέντες.

In his description of the classes of Egypt, which we have already quoted previously in this chapter,⁽⁴⁾ Strabo too, mentioned⁽⁵⁾ the farmers (*οἱ γεωργοὶ*), besides the priests and the warriors; but as we observed he confused the functions of the farmers with those of the warriors. Nevertheless, Strabo gave both the warriors and the farmers joint responsibility for tilling the land. He, moreover, left it unclear whether these two classes owned the land, which they cultivated, or not. But it seems from what Strabo indicated that they cultivated the land for the king (i.e. the Pharaoh). For Strabo stated that from the products of this land as well as from trades, which the farmers and the warriors practised, the Pharaoh drew his revenues.

Thus according to Diodorus the peasants of ancient Egypt did not own the land which they cultivated, but they rented it from its owners - the king, the priests and the warriors; in other words the peasants were land-tenants. As for Strabo we have already referred to his statement concerning the classes of Egypt with the peasantry included.

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(4) See under "Classes" and also "Warriors".

(5) Strabo, 17.1.3.

Thus if we were to believe Diodorus, there existed in ancient Egypt a class of peasants or husbandmen separate from the other classes. According to Diodorus these peasants seem to have owned no land, but their occupation was to cultivate the land, which they rented from its owners, the Pharaoh, the priests, and the warriors. Diodorus clearly therefore indicated that these peasants were neither serfs nor paid labourers, nor slaves, but land tenants. This is surely a generalisation and exaggeration on the part of Diodorus. For not all those who cultivated the land were tenants of these lands. Nor all the Egyptian peasants were without land or property. Many a peasant cultivated his small plot of land and his little garden.⁽⁶⁾ Many also owned their own houses, livestock and other properties.⁽⁷⁾ Small estates were granted from the New Kingdom onwards to veterans, mercenaries and serfs as rewards for their services to the Pharaohs.⁽⁸⁾ These estates were surely cultivated by their owners. Many tenants of the royal lands also became small land holders in the newly reclaimed areas.⁽⁹⁾ In the New Kingdom,

(6) J.M.White, op.cit. pp.162,163,166; Rostovtzeff, op.cit. p.289; Tarn & Griffiths, op.cit. p.187.

(7) Ibid.

(8) H.Kees, op.cit. pp.70,71.

(9) Ibid.

when the need for labourers became urgent, the system of employing paid labourers and slaves on the land was introduced.⁽¹⁰⁾ The great Crown domains and temple estates overcame the difficulty by employing prisoners of war.⁽¹¹⁾ Land was also cultivated by a group of citizens whom the Romans called the "obaerarii", namely those people who worked off a debt by labour. This seems to have been supported by Varro who, though speaking of agriculture in general terms, told⁽¹²⁾ us :

"All agriculture is carried on by men-slaves, or freemen, or both; by freemen, when they till the ground themselves; or hired hands, when the heavier farm operations such as the vintage and the haying are carried on by the hiring of freemen; and those whom our people (i.e. the Romans) called the 'obaerarii', and of whom there are still (in Varro's time) many in Asia, in Egypt, and in Illyricum".

The statement of Diodorus⁽¹³⁾ that the occupation of the peasantry, was like other occupations in ancient Egypt hereditary, was also generalised and slightly exaggerated. It is true however, as nowadays, that we find that the majority of the

(10) Ibid. p.73.

(11) Ibid.

(12) Varro (116-27 B.C.) De Re Rustica, I. xvii. 2.

(13) Diod. I. 74.

peasants, follow in their father's steps;⁽¹⁴⁾ in that they resemble the sons of the miners in Durham County. On the other hand, many a son of peasants, as also happens today, did not necessarily succeed their father's in their occupation.⁽¹⁵⁾ Nevertheless, the reasons given by Diodorus⁽¹⁶⁾ for making the occupation of the peasantry hereditary and his reference to the basic skill, knowledge and experience in the field of agriculture required from the would-be peasant are very convincing and on the whole very true.

The classical authors of our period were extremely impressed or perhaps over-impressed with the way the Egyptians ran the affairs of their country. This is very clear in the field of agriculture. For in that field the classical authors found a real contrast with things in their countries, the moderate climatic condition, the fertility of the soil, the nature of the Nile and the role it plays in aiding the peasant and lightening his labour, and most important of all the skill and expertise for which the Egyptian peasant has always been known. The three main classical authors of our period, Diodorus,⁽¹⁷⁾

(14) cf. A.C. Johnson, Egypt and the Roman Empire, p.87;
Kees, H., op.cit. pp.70, 71.

(15) cf. Johnson, op.cit. pp.87, 88.

(16) Diod. loc.cit.

(17) Diod. I. 36.

Strabo,⁽¹⁸⁾ and Pliny,⁽¹⁹⁾ agreed that farming in ancient Egypt both as far as labour supply, farmers and the actual processes were concerned was the easiest of all countries. In this they were not far from the truth.

About the role of the Nile as an aid to the peasant, the easy method of farming and the method of farming itself Diodorus, Strabo and Pliny left us three lengthy statements. In this respect Diodorus said :⁽²⁰⁾

"For since the water (of the flood,) comes with a gentle flow, they (i.e. the peasants) divert the river from their fields by small dams of earth, and then, by cutting these, as easily let the river in again upon the land whenever they think this to be advantageous. And in general the Nile contributed so greatly to the lightening of labour as well as to the profit of the inhabitants, that the majority of the farmers, as they begin work upon the areas of the land which are becoming dry, merely scatter their seed, turn their heads and flocks in on the fields,⁽²¹⁾

(18) Strabo, 17.1.3.

(19) Pliny, N.H. XVIII. 167-169.

(20) Diod. loc.cit.

(21) A monument of the Old Kingdom represents sheep treading in the seed (a reproduction of that scene appears in J.H.Breasted, A History of Egypt, p.92).

and after they have used these for trampling the seed in return after four or five months to harvest it, while some, applying light ploughs to the land turn over no more than the surface of the soil after its wetting and then gather great heaps of grain without much expense or exertion. For, generally speaking, every kind of labour among other peoples entails great expense and toil, but among the Egyptians alone is the harvest gathered in with very slight outlay of money and labour. Also the land planted with vine, being irrigated as are the other fields, yields an abundant supply of wine to the people. And those who allow the land, after it has been inundated, to be uncultivated and give it over to the flocks to graze upon, are rewarded with flocks which, because of the rich pasturage, lamb twice and are twice shorn every year."(22)

The account of Strabo concerning the peasants and their occupation is not really very different from the account of his predecessor above-cited. In that account where Strabo, like Diodorus, was also recording his personal observations he stated : (23)

'The activity of the people in connection with the river goes so far as to conquer nature through diligence. For by

(22) cf. Homer, Od. IV. 86.

(23) Strabo, loc.cit.

nature the land produces more fruit than do other lands, and still more when watered; and by nature the greater rise of the river waters more land; but diligence has oftentime, even when nature failed, availed to bring about the watering of as much land even at the time of the smaller rises of the river as at the greater rises, that is, through the means of canals and embankments".

Strabo further added :⁽²⁴⁾

"The water (of the flood) stays more than forty days in summer and then goes down gradually just as it rose; and in sixty days the plain is completely bared and the sooner the drying takes place, the sooner the ploughing and the sowing".

The third account of farming conditions in Egypt was given by Pliny. Pliny's account, one observes, is rather more detailed and more of a scientific nature than the other two of Diodorus and Strabo respectively. For though he was not recording his personal observations, Pliny depended in writing his work not only on the writing of previous authors, but also a great number of official documents, which were certainly available for his consultations in Rome of his own era. Pliny's account⁽²⁵⁾ goes as follows:

(24) Ibid.

(25) Pliny, loc.cit.

'In that country, the Nile plays the part of the farmer, beginning to overflow its banks at the new moon in midsummer, as we have said, at first gently and then more violently, as long as the sun is in the constellation of the Lion. Then when the sun is in the Scales it subsides. If it has not risen more than 18 feet, there is certain to be a famine, and likewise if it has exceeded 24 feet; for it retires more slowly in proportion as it has risen in greater flood, and prevents the sowing of seed. It used to be commonly believed that the custom was to begin sowing after the subsidence of the Nile and then to drive swine over the ground, pressing down the seed in the damp soil with their footprints, and I (i.e. Pliny) believe that in former days this was the common practice, and that at the present day also the sowing is done without much heavier labour, but nevertheless, it is certain that the seed is first scattered in the mud of the river after it has subsided and then ploughed in. This is done at the beginning of November, and afterwards, a few men stub up the weeds - their name for this process is botanismus (*βοτανισμός*), but the rest of the labourers only visit the fields a little before the first of April, taking a sickle with them. However, the harvest is completed in May, and the straw is never more than an ell long, as the subsoil is sand and the corn only gets its support from the mud".

In considering the statements of Diodorus, Strabo and Pliny above quoted, we find that they are strikingly similar. This similarity is not accidental, but it is most preferably due to the fact that Diodorus and Strabo observed these matters by themselves, whereas Pliny based his account not only on the writings of previous authors, as we have already stated, but also on official records. One also observes that neither Diodorus nor Strabo took into consideration the advances in the methods of farming, such as the change which had taken place, as Pliny rightly observed from letting animals tread the seed to ploughing the land. But what Diodorus, Strabo and Pliny said about farmers and farming in ancient Egypt is perfectly correct, as it corresponds to the actual facts. This was also supported by evidences furnished by scenes and engravings on the Egyptian monuments.⁽²⁶⁾ The conditions of farming in ancient Egypt, as nowadays, were no doubt easier than in other countries and easier than in Greece in particular. But farming was not as easy as Diodorus and Strabo stated. For as Pliny has rightly already told⁽²⁷⁾ us, sowing the seeds was not the end of the matter, but it required ploughing, hoeing, and other necessary works, such as

(26) See e.g. A Dict. of Egypt Civil. p.4. s.v. Agriculture; p.209. s.v. Peasant; J.M.White, op.cit. pp.165,166; cf. also P. Lond. 131 recto (reign of Vespasian).

(27) Pliny, loc.cit.

plucking up weeds, and guarding the crops against pests, whether in forms of insects or birds, and against thieves.⁽²⁸⁾ All these were essential to ensure a good crop and hence a good income for the hard-working Egyptian peasant. Moreover, if the Nile, with its overflowing waters, did make it easier for the peasant to cultivate his field with its waters, not all the land could be easily irrigated by the water of the Nile through inundation. For this applies to the lowland only. The higher places still needed to be irrigated through man-made devices. Thus Strabo told⁽²⁹⁾ us that to irrigate the higher grounds the Egyptians used a screw, which he termed ἡ κοχλία.⁽³⁰⁾ Diodorus too referred⁽³¹⁾ to that screw, which, he said, was invented by Archimedes of Syracuse.⁽³²⁾ Diodorus, however, surprisingly

(28) A Dict. of Egypt.Civil. pp.209, 210. s.v. Peasants; J.M. White, op.cit. p.167; Cyril Aldred, op.cit. pp.180,181.

(29) Strabo, 17.1.30,52.

(30) According to the description of Vitruvius (10.6) this was a screw with spiral channels, "like those of a snail shell", which turned within a wooden shaft. It was worked like the Shadouf, by man-power and did not raise the water so high as did the water-wheel, the Arabic Sakia, which latter is worked by animal-power.

(31) Diod. I. 34.

(32) Archimedes of Syracuse (c. 287-212B.C), the greatest mathematician of antiquity, and the astronomer, studied for some time in Alexandria.

said⁽³³⁾ that the entire land of the Nile Delta was irrigated easily by means of that Archimedean screw, instead of saying that only the higher grounds were irrigated in such manner. He might, however, have meant that this artificial manner of irrigation was used either when the Nile did not reach the required rise or more probably when the Nile was in the normal season, that is when it was not rising in order to get water from the river to the fields. The Archimedean screw can still be seen in use in modern Egypt and is not very different from the original one.

It is indeed very surprising that neither the Shadouf⁽³⁴⁾ nor the water-wheel "sakia" were mentioned by the classical authors of our period, though these instruments were widely used and even can still be seen in use up till the present time though rather rare. The "Shadouf", as it is called in Arabic was in common use in ancient Egypt after it had been invented in the New Kingdom, and it can be seen depicted on the ancient monuments.⁽³⁵⁾ As for the water-wheel or the Sakia as the Arabs call it, it was introduced during the Late Period.⁽³⁶⁾

(33) Diod. loc.cit.

(34) A drawing of the Shadruf appears in J.M.White, op.cit. p.166.

(35) Pierre Montet, op.cit. p.84. J.M.White, op.cit. p.166.

(36) Pierre Montet, op.cit. p.84.

For if the Archimedean screw could not lift the water to a high level, the Shaduf could raise the water to still higher levels, and the Sakia to a very high level.

The life of these millions of Egyptian peasants in particular and the entire people of Egypt at large, as it seems from what the Classical authors have so far said, was attuned to the rise and fall of the Nile. They were engaged in farming and tending their fields when the Nile had subsided. The picture of the whole country during the rise of the Nile on the other hand, changed completely. For during that time when the entire land, with the exception of towns, villages, farmhouses and higher places, was completely submerged under the water of the rising Nile, the masses having been relieved of their work on the land, Diodorus observed,⁽³⁷⁾ turned to recreation and feasts, which lasted all the time of the inundation, and enjoyed without hindrance every device of pleasure.

This picture of the life of the people of Egypt during flood-time as drawn by Diodorus, though not far from correct is a bit of an exaggeration as we shall point out later. But the words of Diodorus still have their echo up to the present time. The Egyptian peasants of the present time still celebrate

(37) Diod. I. 36.

most of their festivals and make their ceremonies in summer, that is to say when the Nile is rising and immediately after the peasants had completed harvesting. Wedding ceremonies in the countryside, for instance, are still performed during the inundation season and after harvesting time for two reasons : one already given by Diodorus, namely because the peasants were free from work on the land, and for financial reasons.

But this rosy picture of the life of the Egyptian peasant as drawn by the Classical authors is very much exaggerated. Perhaps Diodorus and his fellow classical authors were overimpressed by the comparatively carefree and happy life of the Egyptian peasant. But Diodorus forgot or rather it escaped his notice that the peasant's worries did not end with sitting at home or feasting during flood-time. The peasant was required to be always together with others, vigilant, guarding the embankments and dams, against possible floods, and subsequent destruction of towns, villages and life.⁽³⁸⁾ Furthermore the peasant took the opportunity to mend his old farming tools and/or make new ones.⁽³⁹⁾ It must be remembered also that the constructions of the Great

(38) Cyril Aldred, *op.cit.* p.179; J.M.White, *op.cit.* p.166.

(39) A Dict. of Egypt. Civil. p.209. s.v. Peasant.

Pyramids at Giza and many other colossal monuments such as temples were built during flood-time, when thousands of agricultural workers were available, after they had been relieved from work on the land.⁽⁴⁰⁾ Even during the agricultural seasons peasants and other agricultural labourers as nowadays were employed in public works, such as digging new canals, and clearing old ones, which might be silted up by the alluvium of the rising Nile.⁽⁴¹⁾ These canals were very essential for irrigation. Some peasants were also, as in the present time, employed in building dams and bridges to control the water of the overflowing Nile, in order to ensure the maximum utility of its water, and also to prevent the Nile from drowning the towns, and villages.⁽⁴²⁾

Thus we can say that the peasant was not entirely free from anxieties and he did not live a carefree life as Diodorus seemed to have gained the impression. For, like today the peasant had to worry about the safety of his crops, which might be attacked by pests, birds, animals, and other natural

(40) Cyril Aldred, loc.cit., J.M.White, loc.cit.

(41) Ibid. In the Roman period every peasant was compelled to serve for five days every year on the dyke corvee (See Sijpesteijn, Penthemoros certificates in Greco-Roman Egypt, 1964).

(42) Ibid.

causes such as strong winds, a sudden change in the climatic conditions. He had to worry also about the Nile, the sole source of water. For if the Nile does not rise to a certain sufficient height, there will be a famine. And if it rises more than is required, there will be certainly a flood and subsequently a disaster. But as the Egyptian peasant was and still is reputed for his hard work, he was and still is a man known for his constant cheerfulness and gaiety: He sings even when he is in trouble. In short the Egyptian peasant, like all of his fellow countrymen was and still is a man of a cheerful urbanity.⁽⁴³⁾

(43) A Dict. of Egypt. Civil. p.209. s.v. Peasant;
Cyril Aldred, *op.cit.* pp.179, 181; J.M. White, *op.cit.*
pp.166, 167.

CHAPTER XII.

LAWS AND CUSTOMS.

In a discussion with an Iraqi friend concerning the country where laws were first formulated and concerning the person who might be considered the first lawgiver, my friend insisted, perhaps with justification, that Sumer (mod. Iraq) was the birthplace of laws and that the Sumerian King Hammurabi (1791-1749 B.C.) was the first lawgiver. In the view of modern scholarship, however, the Egyptian law together with the Sumerian law, is the oldest legal system about which we have any information.⁽¹⁾

So far as the Classical authors of our period are concerned none of them, with the exception of Diodorus,⁽²⁾ wrote anything about the Egyptian law. Strabo, for instance, who was mainly concerned with Egypt of his own time referred briefly to the way the Egyptians, presumably of the Pharaonic era, handled their own affairs. Having compared the Egyptians with their

(1) Erwin Seidl, in 'The Legacy of Egypt', ed. by S.R.K.Glanville, p.198. The Egyptian law goes back, almost certainly, to the third millennium, but there are more discoveries in Sumeria.

(2) Diod. I. 75 ff. and 94, 95.

southern neighbours, the Ethiopians, Strabo said,⁽³⁾ that contrary to the Ethiopians, the Egyptians had from the outset organised their country in the best manner and that their organisations, therefore, were a matter of comment. Later in his book Strabo drew⁽⁴⁾ a comparison between the conditions of Egypt under the late Ptolemaic kings and how chaos and ^{of} lawlessness were prevailing and the conditions under the early Roman rule, where everything was put right and law, order and stability were established. Since Diodorus then was the only Classical author within our period to have written an account⁽⁵⁾ on the Egyptian administration of justice, laws and lawgivers, our discourse on these topics will be based solely on his account.

Introducing his account Diodorus told⁽⁶⁾ us that his main concern was to describe the laws and customs of the Pharaonic era from the beginning to the end of the reign of King Amasis. Many of these ancient laws and customs remained to his own time, as they had been accepted by the people. These customs and laws, moreover, aroused no little admiration among the Greeks, of whom many such as Homer, Orpheus, Solon and Pythagoras

(3) Strabo, 17.1.3.

(4) Strabo, 17.1.11,12,13.

(5) Diod. loc.cit.

(6) Diod. I. 69.

had gone to Egypt out of curiosity and to seek knowledge. Diodorus also clearly stated that he was writing a summary account of the customs of Egypt, both those which were especially strange and those which could be of most value to his readers. About his authorities Diodorus informed⁽⁷⁾ us:

'Now as for the stories invented by Herodotus and certain writers on Egyptian affairs, who deliberately preferred to the truth the telling of marvellous tales and the invention of myths for the delectation of their readers, these we shall omit, and we shall set forth only what appears in the written records of the priests of Egypt and has passed our careful scrutiny'.

The Egyptians told Diodorus⁽⁸⁾ that it was they who first discovered writing and the observation of the stars, who also discovered the basic principle, of geometry and most of the arts, and established the best laws. Thus Diodorus believed, or at least accepted as a true fact that the Egyptians were in fact the first of mankind to have made the best laws. To convince Diodorus the Egyptians indicated to him⁽⁹⁾ the best proof of all: this could be found in the fact that Egypt for more than four

(7) Ibid.

(8) Ibid.

(9) Ibid.

thousand seven hundred years was ruled over by kings of whom the majority were Egyptians, and that the land was the most prosperous of the whole inhabited world; for these things could never have been true of any people which did not enjoy most excellent customs and laws and the institutions which promote culture of every kind.

Diodorus devoted a great deal of his account to giving us a picture of the manner in which the Egyptians regarded justice and how justice itself was administered. He correctly remarked ^{on} the extreme interest the Egyptians took in seeing justice done. ⁽¹⁰⁾ Thus he told ⁽¹¹⁾ us :

'In their administration of justice the Egyptians also showed no merely casual interest, holding that the decisions of the courts exercise the greatest influence upon community life, and this in each of their two aspects.'

In order to administer justice in the best possible manner the Egyptians appointed the best men from the most important cities as judges over the whole land, and in that they did not fall short of the end which they had in mind. All in all, Diodorus said, thirty judges were appointed, ten from Heliopolis, ten from Thebes and

(10) The Legacy of Egypt, p.207.

(11) Diod. I.75.

ten from Memphis. The thirty chose the best one among them to be their chief justice, and in his stead the city concerned sent another judge. Allowances to provide for their needs, Diodorus⁽¹²⁾ said, were supplied by the King, to the judges sufficient for their maintenance, and many times as much to the chief justice.

The litigants were permitted to present their case to the court in writing only. For if they were allowed to defend their case in speaking, either party might becloud the justice of a case. 'For the Egyptians know', Diodorus maintained,⁽¹³⁾ 'that the clever devices of orators, the cunning witchery of their delivery, and the tears of the accused would influence many to overlook the severity of the laws and the strictness of truth; at any rate they were aware that men who are highly respected as judges are often carried away by the elequence of the advocates, either because they are deceived, or because they are won over by the speaker's charm, or because the emotion of pity has been aroused in them; but by having the parties to a suit present their pleas in writing, it was their opinion that the judgement, would be strict, only the bare facts being taken into account'.

Thus it seems from Diodorus' statement that the Egyptians were aware of human weaknesses, that justice should be administered in extreme coolness, away from deceiving devices such

(12) Ibid.

(13) Ibid.

as eloquence of the accuser or the pity aroused by the tears of the accused. It is for this reason that there was apparently no need for advocates or lawyers.⁽¹⁴⁾ Each party of the litigants stated his own case as best he could, occasionally calling upon witnesses.

Diodorus then proceeded to tell us of a number of laws dealing with certain crimes and the penalties exacted on those committing such crimes. Diodorus admitted⁽¹⁵⁾ that what he was writing was not a list of all the laws, but, as he put it,⁽¹⁶⁾ "such laws of the Egyptians as were especially old or took on an extraordinary form, or, in general, can be of help to lovers of reading".

Diodorus mentioned a number of laws, which prescribed the death penalty for committing certain crimes. Among these he mentioned the law relating to perjury. For the perjurer deserved the death penalty, on the ground that such a man was guilty of the two greatest transgressions - being impious towards the gods and overthrowing the mightiest pledge known among men.

(14) Pierre Montet, op.cit. p.71 ; A.Theodorides, 'The Concept of Law in Ancient Egypt', The Legacy of Egypt, 2nd ed - Forthcoming (unpublished).

(15) Diod. I. 77.

(16) Ibid.

Thus Diodorus said : (17)

πρῶτον μὲν οὖν κατὰ τῶν ἐπιόρκων θάνατος
ἦν παρ' αὐτοῖς τὸ πρόστιμον, ὥς δύο τὰ μέγιστα
ποιοῦντων ἀνομήματα, θεοῦς τε ἀσεβοῦντων
καὶ τὴν μεγίστην τῶν ἀνθρώποις
πίστιν ἀνατρεπόντων.⁽¹⁸⁾

If a person witnessed another person being killed or being subjected to any kind of violence and did not come to his aid if able to do so, he certainly received the death penalty, and if he could prove that he truly was not able to render help to the victim, he was required to give information against the bandits; and in case he failed to do so as the law required, it was required that he should receive as a kind of punishment a fixed number of strokes and should also be deprived of every kind of food for three days.⁽¹⁹⁾

(17) Ibid.

(18) cf. Euripides, Medea, 412-13 :
("a pledge given in the name of the gods no longer standing firm").

(19) Diod. loc.cit.

For those who brought false accusations against others the law stipulated that they should receive the penalty that would have been meted out to the accused persons had they been adjudged guilty.⁽²⁰⁾

The law dealing with income was also of particular interest. For the right way of life was all the Egyptians demanded and required. In this respect Diodorus⁽²¹⁾ told us :

'All Egyptians were also severally required to submit to the magistrates a written declaration of the sources of their livelihood, and any man making a false declaration or gaining an unlawful means of livelihood had to pay the death penalty. And it is said that Solon after his visit to Egypt, brought this law to Athens'.⁽²²⁾

It is interesting, however, to notice that Diodorus did not tell us who made this law. Herodotus, who made the same statement⁽²³⁾ almost four centuries before Diodorus ascribed the law concerned to King Amasis (569-526-5 B.C.).

(20) Ibid.

(21) Ibid.

(22) Plutarch (Solon 31) on the authority of Theophrastus,^o attributed a similar law, not to Solon, but to Peisistratus.

(23) Hdt. II. 177.

The intentional killing of a free man or a slave also stipulated the death penalty for the offender.⁽²⁴⁾ But in case of parents who had slain their children, though the laws did not prescribe death, yet the offenders had to hold the dead body in their arms for three successive days and nights, under the surveillance of a state guard.⁽²⁵⁾ But for children who had killed their parents they reserved an extraordinary punishment; for it was required that those found guilty of this crime should have pieces of flesh cut out of their bodies with sharp reeds and then be put on a bed of thorns and burned alive.⁽²⁶⁾ Pregnant women who had been condemned to death were not executed until they had been delivered.⁽²⁷⁾ The same law, according to Diodorus, has also been enacted by many Greek states. The above enumerated laws, which dealt with murder were thought, according to Diodorus, to have been the most successful.

Diodorus then went on to enumerate⁽²⁸⁾ other laws such as those concerned with military affairs. These made the

(24) Diod. loc.cit.

(25) Ibid.

(26) Ibid.

(27) Ibid.

(28) Diod. I. 78.

punishment of deserters or of any who disobeyed the command of their leaders, not death, but the uttermost disgrace; but if later on such men wiped out their disgrace by a display of manly courage, they were restored to their former freedom of speech. As for those who had disclosed military secrets to the enemy the law prescribed that their tongues should be cut out.

There were also laws which dealt with other social offences. These were unusually harsh too. In this respect, Diodorus told⁽²⁹⁾ us that in the case of counterfeiters or falsifiers of measures and weights and imitators of seals, and of official scribes who made false entries or erased items, and of any who adduced false documents, the laws ordered that both their hands should be cut off.

Severe also were, Diodorus added,⁽³⁰⁾ the Egyptian laws touching women. For if a man violated a free married woman, they stipulated that he be emasculated; but if a man committed adultery with the woman's consent, the laws ordered that the man should receive a thousand blows with the rod, and that the woman should have her nose cut off. But what about other sexual crimes such as those dealing with intercourse between unmarried people ? Were such things tolerated under the Egyptian laws ? Diodorus did not say.

(29) Ibid.

(30) Ibid. But there were other kinds of punishments, usually inflicted by husbands on their adulterous wives, such as burning at the stake, murdering and throwing to dogs, and also divorce (cf. A Dict. of Egypt. Civil., p.159, s.v. 'Marriage', Barber and Mertz, op.cit., p.75).

According to Diodorus therefore, criminal law and criminal procedure were really severe. The death penalty, physical torture and moral punishments were all frequent in ancient Egypt. Diodorus also seemed to have implied that such laws, though of old origin, had survived up to his time. Modern scholars, however, are not entirely in agreement on the nature of laws dealing with various crimes. For while some⁽³¹⁾ seem to suggest that criminal law was not really severe, others⁽³²⁾ think it to have been inhuman. The death penalty which was said by Diodorus to have been the standard punishment for committing certain crimes was of rare occurrence in Pharaonic Egypt according to some modern authors.⁽³³⁾ Thus J.M. White tells⁽³⁴⁾ us :

'Capital punishment was not a prominent feature of the Egyptian administration of justice, in spite of the fact that it existed in theory. It was such a rare event that Pharaoh himself was required to review the case and confirm the sentence'.

(31) J.M.White, op.cit. p.167 ; E.Bevan, op.cit. p.164.

(32) Erwin Seidl, in The Legacy of Egypt, p.206 (Oxford 1957), Pierre Montet, op.cit. p.72 ; cf. also Cyril Aldred, op.cit. p.185.

(33) See n.31 supra.

(34) J.M White, op.cit.

In the Ptolemaic era the death penalty for ordinary criminals was also rare in Egypt with the exception of Alexandria. In this respect Bevan states :⁽³⁵⁾

"Curiously enough, we seldom hear of ordinary criminals in the country being punished with death (in Alexandria, of course, executions were numerous in certain reigns; most of the Ptolemies killed remorselessly); but the ordinary criminal seems to have been punished by the confiscation of his goods". Bevan, however, quotes⁽³⁶⁾ a papyrological evidence of the occurrence of the death penalty in the Hellenistic era in the Fayum. In one of the Zeno Papyri⁽³⁷⁾ we find that Apollonius, the dioiketes, declares that if a certain man in the Fayum is convicted of having said what his accusers allege that he said (perhaps something treasonable) he will be "led around and hanged".^(37a) It was also punishable with death to make a false statement as to one's name or nationality.⁽³⁸⁾ It is also suggested by Bevan⁽³⁹⁾ that the Egyptian criminal law was never

(35) Bevan, loc.cit.

(36) Ibid.

(37) ⁿZero pap. 33, quoted by Bevan, loc.cit.

(37a) But see Turner, Essays in Honor of C. Bradford Welles, p.97-68 (1966).

(38) B.G.U. 1250, l. 11f. quoted by Bevan, loc.cit.

(39) Bevan, loc.cit.

inhumane if compared with the Roman or Carthaginian laws. For we never hear, for instance, of anything like crucifixion, so appallingly common in the sphere of Roman and Carthaginian rule. But Pierre Montet⁽⁴⁰⁾ and Erwin Seidl⁽⁴¹⁾ contend that extremely inhuman kinds of torture were used not only upon the accused but also upon independent witnesses.

Thus we conclude that, though the death penalty was rare occurrence in Egypt, other kinds of comparatively severe penalties such as corporal punishment and cutting off the noses or ears existed.⁽⁴²⁾

Besides the laws covering certain crimes and other social offences mentioned above, Diodorus recorded⁽⁴³⁾ other laws such as those governing contracts, which the Egyptians ascribed to one of their early kings, namely Bocchoris.⁽⁴⁴⁾ These prescribed that men who had borrowed money without signing a bond, if they denied the indebtedness, might take an oath to that effect

(40) P. Montet, loc.cit.

(41) E. Seidl, loc.cit.

(42) cf. Pierre Montet, loc.cit. ; Erwin Seidl, loc.cit ; J.M. White, loc.cit. ; Cyril Aldred, loc.cit.

(43) Diod. I. 79.

(44) The Egyptian name of Bocchoris was Bokenranef (c.726-c.712 B.C.), the second of the two kings of the Twenty fourth Dynasty - see The Cambridge Ancient History, 3. 276f.

and be cleared of the obligation. Nevertheless no one would swear such an oath without considering whether it really would help him in his relation with other citizens. For the Egyptians attached a great importance to the oath, that if a person was reputed to have taken many oaths people would lose confidence in him. And whoever lent money along with a written bond was forbidden to do more than double the principal from the interest.

'In the case of debtors', Diodorus further said,⁽⁴⁵⁾
'the lawgiver ruled that the repayment of loans could be exacted only from a man's estate, and under no condition did he allow the debtor's person to be subject to seizure, holding that whereas property should belong to those who had amassed it or had received it from some earlier holder by way of a gift, the bodies of citizens should belong to the state, to the end that the state might avail itself of the services which its citizens owed it, in times of both war and peace. For it would be absurd, he felt, that a soldier, at these moments perhaps when he was setting forth to fight for his fatherland, should be haled to prison by his creditor for an unpaid loan, and that the greed of private citizens should in this way endanger the safety of all'.

(45) Diod. loc.cit.

ἰστών δὲ ὀφειλόντων τὴν ἐκπραξιν τῶν
 δανείων ἐκ τῆς οὐδίας μόνον ἐποιήδατος τὸ
 δὲ δῶμα κατ' οὐδένα τρόπον εἶδεν ὑπάρχειν
 ἀγώγιμον, ἡγούμενος δεῖν εἶναι τὰς μὲν
 κτηήδεις τῶν ἐργαζομένων ἢ παρὰ κυρίου
 τινὸς ἐν δωρεαῖς λαβόντων, τὰ δὲ δώματα
 τῶν πόλεων, ἵνα τὰς καθηκούσας λειτουργίας
 ἔχωσιν αἱ πόλεις καὶ κατὰ πόλεμον καὶ
 κατ' εἰρήνην. ἄτοπον γὰρ τὸ στρατιώτην εἰς
 τὸν ὑπὲρ τῆς πατρίδος προϊόντα κίνδυνον,
 εἰ τυχοί, πρὸς δάνειον ὑπὸ τοῦ πιστεύσαντος
 ἀπάγεσθαι, καὶ τῆς τῶν ἰδιωτῶν πλεονεξίας,
 ἐνεκα κινδυνεύειν τὴν κοινὴν ἀπάντων δωτηρίαν.

This law seems in Diodorus' view⁽⁴⁶⁾ to have been also

transferred to Athens from Egypt by Solon.⁽⁴⁷⁾ Further on

Diodorus told⁽⁴⁸⁾ us of another custom among the Egyptians by

(46) Ibid.

(47) The famous Seisachthia ("ἡ δεισάχθεια i.e. shaking off of burdens) of Solon in 594 B.C. declared void existing pledges in land, granted freedom to all men enslaved for debt, and probably cancelled all debts which involved any form of personal servitude, by these measures effecting the complete freedom of all debt slaves or debt serfs in Attica (cf. Adcock in C.A.H. 4. p.376). For the law of Seisachthia in Athens see Aristotle, Ath.Pol. 6.

(48) Diod. I. 93.

which they put up the bodies of their deceased parents as security for a loan; and failure to repay such debts is attended with the deepest disgrace as well as with deprivation of burial at death.

If the Egyptians, therefore, according to Diodorus, did not tolerate that citizens should be seized for the debts and that repayments of loans should be exacted only from their estates, they accepted the dead bodies of their parents to be put for a loan. But in Hellenistic Egypt debtors were imprisoned, and there are many bitter appeals in the papyri from debtors (debtors often to the king) who declare that they are likely to die in confinement. (49)

The last law to have been mentioned by Diodorus (50) in his list was the one dealing with thieves, and was described by him as very peculiar. For it bade any who chose to follow this occupation to enter their names with the Chief of Thieves and by agreement to bring to him immediately the stolen articles, while any who had been robbed filed with him in like manner a list of all the missing articles, stating the place, the day, and the hour of the loss. And since by this method all lost articles were readily found, the owner who had lost anything had only to pay

(49) Bevan, loc.cit.

(50) Diod. I. 80.

one-fourth of its value in order to recover just what belonged to him. For as it was impossible to keep all mankind from stealing, Diodorus added, the lawgiver devised a scheme whereby every article lost would be recovered upon payment of a small ransom.

If such a law had in actual fact ever existed in ancient Egypt, then it would really have been very peculiar as Diodorus rightly described. Was it really true that thieves were organised in a body or a guild, which was recognised by the authorities ? And if so, did the various rulers of Egypt in fact tolerate such people practising their unlawful deeds ? For according to Diodorus himself,⁽⁵¹⁾ the country demanded from its citizens submission of an annual report stating their actual income and the source from which they drew such income; and moreover required that they should prove that they had acquired their income by just means if they failed to do so they were liable to the death penalty. How could such a country allow a group of its citizens, namely the thieves, to go without check practising their unlawful way of life and earning their livelihood through unjust means ? Surely this must have been unacceptable to the

(51) Diod. I. 77.

strong-handed Pharaohs of Egypt, who tried together with all their subjects to live in accordance with Maat or Cosmic order. Commenting on Diodorus' statement above-mentioned a modern author J. Lindsay tells⁽⁵²⁾ us :

'Certainly such systems would not have been tolerated by the Romans. But no doubt Diodorus is generalising from some old tale of a district with well-organised gangs'.

This is a very sensible opinion. For no respectable authority, unless it contains some corrupt personnel would allow gangs of thieves and other bands of criminals to operate with its knowledge and consent. This, however, does not exclude the possibility that such organised gangs of thieves and other criminals always existed under many regimes, as happens today in many countries of the world, but mostly without the knowledge of the government authorities. These gangs generally operate underground and in secrecy, either in big towns or far away in inaccessible regions, such as forests and deserts. There may well have been such organised gangs at the time of Diodorus himself was in Egypt. The country was then chaotic in the late Ptolemaic period. Besides the words of Diodorus⁽⁵³⁾ concerning

(52) J. Lindsay, Daily Life in Roman Egypt, p.143.

(53) Diod. I. 60.

the clipping of the noses of thieves by Actinas⁽⁵⁴⁾ are supported by some modern scholars such as Kees⁽⁵⁵⁾ and White.⁽⁵⁶⁾ Cutting off of his nose was not the only penalty of the thief. For in the New Kingdom we find that the thief had to pay a multiple of the value of the stolen chattels - a penalty which also can be paralleled in the Code of Hammurabi and in the oldest Roman law.⁽⁵⁷⁾

Diodorus also spoke⁽⁵⁸⁾ of the Egyptian lawgivers, who instituted what Diodorus termed, customs both unusual and strange. The first lawgiver was King Mneves (*Μνεύης* , obviously a corruption of the name of the famous King Menes or Mena, the unifier of Upper and Lower Egypt.) The second was Sasychis (Asychis of Herodotus), who was a man of unusual understanding. He not only made sundry additions to the existing laws, but also contributed to religious matters and to science, particularly geometry and astrology. A third was Sesoosis (Sesostris of other Classical authors), famous for his wars and

(54) C.H.Oldfather, (op.cit. p.207. n.2) tells us that A.Wiedemann (Agyptische Geschichte, p.582, n.1) thinks that Actinas is no more than a double of the Ethiopian Sabaco (Shabaka, c.712-c.700 B.C., the first king of the Twenty-fifth Dynasty.

(55) H.Kees, op.cit. p.73. (56) J.M.White, op.cit. p.167.

(57) Erwin Seidl, op.cit. p.206.

(58) Diod. I. 94, 95.

expeditions, who organised the rules governing the warrior class. A fourth king was ^CBacchoris, who, besides formulating the laws which governed contracts, to which we have referred above, drew up all the regulations which governed the kings. The fifth was King Amasis (Ahmose II, 569-526 B.C.), who paid attention to the laws, and who according to the Egyptian accounts, drew up the rules governing the nomarchs and the entire administration of Egypt. And because of his virtues and good deeds, Diodorus was told, the Egyptians conferred the throne of Egypt on him, although he was not of the royal descent. The sixth lawgiver to have been included by Diodorus, despite his foreign origin, was the Persian King, Darius, the father of Xerxes. To atone for the evil deeds committed against the Egyptians and their country by his predecessor, the impious and lawless Cambyses, Darius led a very pious righteous and virtuous life towards the Egyptian gods, and he even associated himself with their priests, with whom he engaged himself in the study of their theology and of the events recorded in their sacred books. Having learnt how the ancient Egyptian kings behaved towards their subjects he imitated them to the extent that the Egyptians looked at him as a god during his life-time, while after his death he was accorded equal honours with the ancient kings of Egypt who had ruled in the strictest accord with the laws.

Modern scholars, however, tend to agree with what Diodorus has already said about Darius and his deeds in Egypt. Drioton and Vandier say⁽⁵⁹⁾ that at the instructions of Darius the College of Priests at Sais was reconstructed and that he reorganised some of its laws. But Erwin Seidl suggests⁽⁶⁰⁾ that although the Greek tradition represents Darius as a great Egyptian legislator, the conquest of Egypt by the Persians did not bring with it any fundamental changes of the law.

Finally Diodorus told us of the change in the Egyptian law, which took place after the Macedonian conquest. In this respect he said :⁽⁶¹⁾ 'In later times, the Egyptians say, many institutions, which were regarded as good were changed, after the Macedonians had conquered and destroyed once and for all the kingship of the national line'.

Here again modern scholars⁽⁶²⁾ do not disagree in general with what Diodorus has already stated. The influx of many new races of Macedonians, Greeks and others, to Egypt, was

(59) E.Drioton and J.Vandier, op.cit. pp.601, 602.

(60) Erwin Seidl, op.cit. p.210.

(61) Diod. I. 96.

(62) E.Bevan, op.cit. pp.157, 158 ; Tarn and Griffith, op.cit. pp.186, 187.

bound to bring about a change in the legal system of the country.⁽⁶³⁾ The Greco-Macedonian citizens in Egypt were subject to the Greek law, whereas the Egyptians were subject to their own national law.⁽⁶⁴⁾ Gradually, however, the mixture between the two different peoples, namely the Egyptians and those of foreign descent made the laws of the two peoples affect each other.⁽⁶⁵⁾ But on the whole the Ptolemies did not try to destroy altogether the Egyptian laws and institutions.⁽⁶⁶⁾ In this respect Bevan informs us :⁽⁶⁷⁾

'The Egypt into which the Greeks came was a land which had its native system of laws and customs going back to the remote antiquity; the Greeks brought with them another system of laws and customs of their own. Both Egyptians and Greeks were subject to a despotic master, residing at Alexandria ... It was the policy of the Ptolemies to allow the Egyptians, so far as was compatible with the new government, to go on living under their traditional laws and customs - what the Greeks called "the laws of the country" (οἱ τῆς χώρας νόμοι) in contrast with

(63) Ibid. (64) Ibid and E.Seidl, op.cit. p.210.

(65) Bevan, loc.cit; cf. also E.Seidl, op.cit. pp.210, 211.

(66) Bevan, loc.cit. E. Seidl, op.cit. p.212; M.Rostovtzeff, op.cit. 290.

(67) Bevan, loc.cit.

politikoi nomoi ("civic laws") ordained by the King for those who had the status of "citizens", i.e. the Greeks. For the Greeks in their relations to each other, only the "civic laws" of the king could come into consideration; in framing them the new ruler would be mainly guided by Greek ideas.

There were thus two systems of law in operation in Ptolemaic Egypt, side by side. It could hardly be but that, as time went on, each to some extent modified the other - especially as a mixture of blood between the two peoples took place, and in many disputes one party was Greek and the other party Egyptian. Such mutual modification can be traced, for instance, in marriage law'.

Besides the laws mentioned by Diodorus in the previous pages, Diodorus, Strabo and Pomponius Mela recorded a number of the Egyptian customs. As we remember, Diodorus stated⁽⁶⁸⁾ that what he was writing of the laws and customs of Egypt was just a summary account of the strange and the unusual customs and also the customs which might be of interest to his readers. Diodorus⁽⁶⁹⁾

(68) Diod. I. 69.

(69) Ibid.

and Strabo⁽⁷⁰⁾, like their predecessor Herodotus, and the Greeks in general⁽⁷¹⁾ also admired very much the Egyptian customs. We also observe that Diodorus stated⁽⁷²⁾ that many of the ancient customs among the Egyptians were still accepted by the people in Diodorus' time. Diodorus, however, did not say why such customs continued from the early days to his own times. Was it due to the reputed conversation of the Egyptians and their desire to preserve the past and never discard it, while accepting the new ? Or was it due to the fact that the Egyptians found these old customs good, that they preserved them ? Or did they, as Diodorus stated, want to preserve the customs and traditions of their ancestors, whom they wished to be seen respecting not only during their life but also after death ? One's own guessing is that it was due to all these reasons combined.⁽⁷³⁾

Diodorus also stressed and maintained, like Herodotus before him,⁽⁷⁴⁾ the conception that the Egyptians, according to their account, had adopted peculiar and diverse customs as regards every matter. Thus he said :⁽⁷⁵⁾

(70) Strabo, 17.1.3.

(71) Diod. loc.cit.

(72) Ibid.

(73) cf. Cyril Aldred, op.cit. p.186ff; Henri Frankfort et alia^s, Before Philosophy, pp.40, 41.

(74) Hdt. II. 35. Herodotus said "The Egyptians had adopted customs and laws contrary to those of all other nations".

(75) Diod. I. 89.

‘ παραπλήγῃα δὲ καὶ περὶ τῶν ἄλλων λέγουσιν, ’

And once more Diodorus apologised to his readers that he could not write about all these customs and their diversity or as he put it : 'it would be a long task to set forth the details concerning these customs'.

In Diodorus' view⁽⁷⁶⁾ this diversity of the customs of the Egyptians was to their advantage. And to clarify this Diodorus gave⁽⁷⁷⁾ the example of the diversity as regards both religion and food. For while some believed in a certain god or honoured a certain sacred animal, others held that same god or sacred animal in disregard. And while some ate a certain article of food such as Egyptian beans, or lentils, other abhorred even the sight of that very article and abstained from touching it. For, though Egypt produced (and still produces) many kinds of food, the people wanted to demonstrate that men should be taught to deny themselves things that are useful, and that if all ate of everything, the supply of no article of consumption would hold out.

This explanation given to Diodorus by the Egyptians is fairly convincing. But Diodorus failed to realise that the

(76) Ibid.

(77) Ibid.

climate of Egypt as well as the nature of the country in general are also different not only from other countries but also from one place to another within Egypt itself, and Herodotus, whom Diodorus outrightly accused of the falsification of truth and of the invention of fancy tales with the purpose of amusing his readers, proved to be much more correct and accurate than Diodorus in pointing out⁽⁷⁸⁾ the importance of the climatic conditions prevailing in Egypt. Moreover the well-known Egyptian characteristic of accepting the new without discarding the old, and the impact of the many races which came to Egypt in the time of war or peace, must be taken into consideration in this respect.⁽⁷⁹⁾

This diversity of customs within Egypt can still be easily and clearly noticed today. For the customs of Upper Egypt are not similar to those of Lower Egypt, nor the customs of one province in Upper or Lower Egypt are like those of the adjacent province. More than that, from the observations of the present writer even the customs of one village differ from those of its neighbour in the same district. To illustrate our argument we shall observe for instance that while the coastal people of Egypt

(78) Hdt. loc.cit.

(79) Cyril Aldred, loc.cit.

eat rice and fish as their staple food, the rest of the country uses bread as its staple food. Again the availability of a certain commodity, the economic conditions and the class to which the individual or groups of people belong determine the adoption of certain customs and habits.

But one should be very careful not to go along with everything the Classical authors said. One must point out here that the Classical authors in general tended to generalise and exaggerate, whenever they tried to draw a comparison, as they did for instance between the laws and customs of Egypt with those of other nations in antiquity. Thus it is not entirely true that all the Egyptian customs and habits were different from those of other peoples, and certainly not from those of the ancient Greeks themselves, who were, like modern Greeks today, in a very close contact and relation with the Egyptians. And Diodorus himself was not really very different from his fellow classical authors in that he wrote to inform as well as to amuse his readers. On the other hand it has always been the case that people look at others and their way of life from their own angle and try to compare the others with themselves as Waddell⁽⁸⁰⁾ very rightly points out.

In the previous chapters of this thesis we have mentioned here and there some of the customs and habits of the

(80) W.G. Waddell, Herodotus II, p.157.

ancient Egyptians as related to us by the classical authors. Yet the classical authors still mentioned many more of these customs in their accounts. A few customs were connected with the family, the basic unit of the Egyptian society. First of all we shall see from what the classical authors wrote that the ancient Egyptian woman was prominent in her society and that she procured a very important status, a status that was unique in the ancient world.

Among the laws and customs touching the family in general and woman-kind in particular some were mentioned in a statement made by Diodorus, to which we have already made a brief reference in the previous chapter.⁽⁸¹⁾ In that statement Diodorus mentioned⁽⁸²⁾ that the Egyptians, as their account went, permitted brother and sister marriage in that they followed the very successful marriage of Osiris to his sister Isis.

First of all was brother-sister marriage practised by all the Egyptians without distinction as Diodorus clearly indicated ? And was he referring by that statement to the actual customs of Pharaonic Egypt or Ptolemaic Egypt ?

(81) See Chapter XI under Pharaoh, King or Prefect.

(82) Diod. I. 27.

In a previous chapter⁽⁸³⁾ also we observed that the Pharaoh usually, but not always, married his sister, for religious as well as for practical reasons. Modern scholars⁽⁸⁴⁾ agree unanimously that brother-sister marriage was fairly common among the Pharaohs of Egypt and also among the Ptolemaic kings who succeeded them. If, therefore, brother-sister marriage was permitted to members of the royal family, was it equally permitted to the people of Egypt in general ? This topic has stimulated a great deal of discussions among modern scholars. But the subject was made difficult by two main factors. One is that we do not possess a full list of all marriages among the ancient Egyptians, and secondly it is difficult because of the Egyptian habits of calling the wife sister and the husband brother,⁽⁸⁵⁾ though there

(83) see note 81 supra.

(84) J.Cerny, Consanguineous Marriages In Pharaonic Egypt, JEA, vol.40,1954. p.29 ; Pierre Montet, op.cit. pp.48,49; A Dict of Egypt.Civil, p.159, s.v. Marriage; Barbara Mertz, Red Land, Black Land, The World of The Ancient Egyptians; pp.76,77 ; Hombert and Priaux, Les mariage/consanguins dans l'Egypte romaine, in Collection Latomus, II, Hommages a Joseph Bidez et a Franz Cumont (Brussels, 1949), p.135 ff., J.Lindsay, Daily Life In Roman Egypt, p.19; Mustafa El-Amir, Monogamy, Polygamy, Endogamy and Consanguinity in Ancient Egyptian Marriage, BIFAO, 62, 1964, p.106^A.

(85) Barbara Mertz, loc.cit., J.Cerny, op.cit. p.23ff. A Dict. of Egypt. Civil; loc.cit.

is no evidence for that before the New Kingdom⁽⁸⁶⁾. Brother sister marriage was, however, the subject of a very scholarly and definitive article by J.Černý[✓] on Consanguineous Marriages in Pharaonic Egypt. After his thorough investigations of the lists of marriages inscribed mainly on stelae, J. Cerny came to the conclusion⁽⁸⁷⁾ that :

'Outside the royal families we know of certain occurrences of consanguineous marriage in the Twenty-second Dynasty and two practically certain cases in the Middle Kingdom. There are further two possible, though not very probable, Middle Egyptian instances. One Twentieth-Dynasty case is doubtful. We thus see that consanguineous marriages were possible,^u
[^] but could hardly be termed common. Moreover, in all cases the best we can prove is that the married couple were half-brother and half-sister, that is children either of the same father or of the same mother. We have no certain instance of a marriage between full brother and sister !

— The opinion of J.Černý[✓] above-mentioned, which is also supported by a few others,⁽⁸⁸⁾ does not seem to agree with

(86) J. Černý[✓], op.cit. p.26.

(87) Ibid. p.29.

(88) Barbara Mertz, loc.cit.; Hombert and Preaux, loc.cit. ; J. Lindsay, loc.cit. Wiedeman, Hieratische Texte aus den Museen zu Berlin und Paris, (Leipzig, 1879). p 15.

yet another opinion. For according to that latter opinion⁽⁸⁹⁾ brother-sister marriage was a luxury, conceded only to the royal family, and it was carried out with sanctions, but it was not practised by the general public of the Egyptians.

If we consider that Diodorus was referring to the marriage customs in Pharaonic Egypt, he was certainly exaggerating and very much generalising.⁽⁹⁰⁾ But Diodorus' statement might, on the other hand, be applicable to the Hellenistic era as Cerný[✓] reasonably suggests.⁽⁹¹⁾ For if he was referring to the Hellenistic era, then he was right. Since it is suggested by a modern scholar⁽⁹²⁾ that consanguineous marriages between brothers and sisters were widespread in that era. It is also suggested by some others⁽⁹³⁾ that in the Hellenistic era such marriages were not only confined to the Egyptians but to some extent it spread to the Greeks in Egypt (apart from the royal family which continued the ancient traditions of the Pharaohs) as a result of

(89) Pierre Montet, loc.cit. ; A Dict. of Egypt. Civil., loc.cit. J. Gwyn Griffiths, The Origins of Osiris, p.135, Ibid., Y Fflam I (1947), 59 (in Welsh); Pierre Montet, La vie quotidienne en Egypte (Paris 1948), p.53.

(90) cf. How and Wells, op.cit. p.181.

(91) J. Cerný[✓], op.cit. p.24.

(92) Ibid. p.23.

(93) cf. Bevan, op.cit. p.158; Tarn & Griffiths, op.cit. p.207.

them coming under the influence of the Egyptians, and become so common among them, that Rome subsequently had to stop it, but it is hard to get data on this point from the contemporary papyri.⁽⁹⁴⁾

Under the Romans brother-sister marriages became even commoner among the Egyptian public,⁽⁹⁵⁾ though Romans in Egypt were not permitted to practise such marriages,⁽⁹⁶⁾ and for this reason Rome tried to combat the influence of such Egyptian customs on its citizens as well as on the Greeks in Egypt⁽⁹⁷⁾ in its effort to stop the Egyptian influence and its due effects on the foreign residents. But evidences too support the existence of brother and sister marriages among the people in general were not to be found till the Roman era.⁽⁹⁸⁾

Thus from what has been said we conclude :-

(a) In the Pharaonic period brother-sister marriage was fairly common among the royal families and it was carried out with

(94) This is made difficult because it was regular to call a wife or husband 'sister' or 'brother' without implying any blood relationship at all.

(95) J.Lindsay, op.cit. p.20; J.Cerny[✓], op.cit. p.23; cf. also H.Thierfelder, Die Geschwisterehe in hellenistisch-romische Aegypten, (Munster 1960).

(96) J. Lindsay, op.cit. p.20.

(97) Tarn & Griffith, loc.cit.
J.Lindsay, loc.cit.

(98) J. Lindsay, op.cit. p.19.

sanctions. But as for the masses were concerned it rarely existed among them, and only marriages between half-brothers and half-sisters have so far been confirmed.

(b) The Ptolemaic royal family followed the Pharaonic tradition for as they were concerned, and allowed the people in general to enjoy the same privilege. Even the Greeks in Egypt seemed to have adopted the Egyptian tradition.

(c) The Romans allowed the Egyptians to continue to live by their laws and traditions, including brother-sister marriage, while in the meantime they did not permit such marriage to be practised by Romans in Egypt, and they also tried to stop the Greeks in Egypt from doing so.

Another custom also relating to marriage customs was the one mentioned by Diodorus, in which he stated⁽⁹⁹⁾ the following :-

'In accordance with the marriage customs of the Egyptians the priests have but one wife, but any other man takes as many as he may determine.

Γαμοῦσι δὲ παρ' Αἰγυπτίοις οἱ μὲν ἱερεῖς
μίαν, τῶν δ' ἄλλων ὅσας ἂν ἕκαστος προαίρηται.'

(99) Diod. I. 80.

The first thing we observe in Diodorus' above stated statement is that it contradicts what Herodotus had said almost four centuries before. For Herodotus stated⁽¹⁰⁰⁾ that the prevailing custom in his own time was monogamy. Secondly Diodorus failed to tell us whether the Pharaohs or Kings were monogamous or polygamous.

It is also agreed unanimously among modern scholars⁽¹⁰¹⁾ that the Pharaohs were from the first polygamous for various reasons : for practical reasons, as for instance, to attain the right to succeed to the throne of Egypt, and for political ones so as, for example, to accept a princess as wife sent to the Pharaoh as a gift from another sovereign, in order to strengthen existing relations or to improve old ones. For there was neither law nor custom prohibiting the king having two or more wives at the same time, or enjoying himself as he thought fit.⁽¹⁰²⁾ Thus Ramses II, for instance, had nearly 200 children by his wives.⁽¹⁰³⁾ What Diodorus said about the priests, that no one of them could have more than one wife, is perfectly correct.⁽¹⁰⁴⁾

(100) Hdt. II. 92.

(101) Pierre Montet, op.cit. p.99, A Dict.of Egypt.Civil., p.159, s.v. Marriage; How & Wells, op.cit. p.212; J.M.White, op.cit. pp.116,117; Edgerton, A Clause in Marriage settlements in A.Z. 64/59, quoted by Mustafa El-Amir, Monogamy, Polygamy, Endogamy and Consanguinity In Ancient Egyptian Marriage, BIFAO. 62, 1964, p.103.

(102) Pierre Montet, loc.cit. (103) How & Wells, loc.cit.

(104) Ibid.

Concerning the nobles and the wealthy we are not quite sure nor modern scholars (are) in full agreement on the matter. The question whether they were, like their kings, polygamous or not is still debatable. A large proportion of modern scholars suggest that the nobles and wealthy, like the Pharaohs, were polygamous.⁽¹⁰⁵⁾ Another minority group represented by Rawlinson,⁽¹⁰⁶⁾ who is writing a long time ago, and Waddell⁽¹⁰⁷⁾, who seems less sure, as we shall see shortly, denied emphatically the existence of polygamy among the class of the nobility and wealthy and indeed among all the classes of the Egyptian society (with the exception of the Pharaohs). Thus in one statement Waddell tells⁽¹⁰⁸⁾ us :-

'Although not a legal obligation, monogamy was in fact the usual practice among the Egyptians of all classes'.

(105) A Dict. of Egypt. Civil, loc.cit.; How & Wells, loc.cit; C.H.Oldfather, op.cit. p.212. n.1.

(106) Rawlinson, op.cit. p.148, n.9.

(107) Waddell, op.cit. p.204.

(108) Ibid; cf. also Edgerton, loc.cit.

But in a second statement Waddell clearly contradicts what he has already pronounced. For he, commenting on Diodorus' statement says:⁽¹⁰⁹⁾

'Nevertheless, monogamy seems to have been the rule in Egypt, except for the Kings and wealthy men'.

The people of Egypt at large, as it seems from all the evidence provided⁽¹¹⁰⁾ usually practised monogamy, even though it was not a legal obligation.⁽¹¹¹⁾ The reason perhaps, the present author ventures to suggest, was mainly economic rather than anything else.⁽¹¹²⁾ One also cannot imagine, as one can tell from the nature of the modern Egyptian woman, how her own ancient sister could ever tolerate sharing her husband with another woman. A third reason for rejecting the system of polygamy is this :

(109) Waddell, An account of Egypt by Diodorus the Sicilian, The Bulletin of the Faculty of Arts, Univ, of Egypt. Vol.I. Part II. p.198. n.2.

(110) How & Wells, loc.cit; W.G.Waddell, loc.cit; Ibid., Herodotus II, p.04; C.H.Oldfather, loc.cit. Rawlinson, loc. cit.

(111) Waddell, loc.cit.; cf. also Barbara Mertz, op.cit. p.74.

(112) One can draw a parallel from modern Egypt where the vast majority are muslims. For though Islam does not object against a man having a second wife, provided certain convincing reasons for granting such licence were provided, one can hardly find men practising polygamy, mainly for the reasons given by the present writer.

how could a woman, like the ancient Egyptian, who was enjoying privileges that exceeded not only those of her husband as Diodorus himself said,⁽¹¹³⁾ but also those privileges which were granted to all other women in antiquity as proved by modern scholars,⁽¹¹⁴⁾ accept such a system, which is a clear indication of the inferiority of her sex.

It is difficult, however, to reconcile polygamy and superiority of women-folk as Diodorus had shown.⁽¹¹⁵⁾

In short the Pharaohs practised polygamy; the wealthy and the noble were either polygamous, like the kings, according to the majority opinion of modern scholars, or monogamous according to the minority opinion; but the priests and the masses were definitely monogamous.

One of the things that gained the admiration of the Classical authors and caused their astonishment was the important role which the Egyptian woman played in the affairs of her own country and the privileges, which she enjoyed, exceeding in that all other women in the ancient world. Thus we are all acquainted

(113) Diod. I. 27; cf. also Sophocles, Oedipus at Colonus, 337ff. Hdt. II.35; Pomponious Mela, Chorographia, I. ix. 57.

(114) Barbara Mertz, op.cit. 75; Gardiner, Egypt of the Pharaohs, p.318; J. Lindsay, op.cit. pp.33, 71, 317; Bevan, op.cit. p.158.

(115) Diod. loc.cit.; Ibid, I. 80.

with Isis in the Egyptian mythology⁽¹¹⁶⁾ and with several queens, such as Hatschepsut, in the Pharaonic era, and Cleopatra, in the Hellenistic, who played a very important role. Several statements, given by various Classical authors, indicated quite clearly that women played a very important role in Egypt. In this respect Diodorus said⁽¹¹⁷⁾ that because of Isis having proved so successful a queen it was ordained that the queen should have greater power and honour than the king and that among private persons the wife should enjoy authority over her husband, the husbands agreeing in the marriage contract that they will be obedient in all things to their wives. In the previous chapter⁽¹¹⁸⁾ we have also referred to Lucan statement in which the famous Cleopatra told Julius Caesar, to his astonishment, that she would not be the first woman to rule Egypt, for that country was accustomed to putting up with a queen and made no distinction of sex. And Pomponius Mela, in his short account on Egypt, gave⁽¹¹⁹⁾ a brief but rather unintelligent translation of what Herodotus had said⁽¹²⁰⁾ before, that (in Egypt) women went to the market and

(116) See Diod.I. 11ff; Plutarch, de Iside et Osiride.

(117) Diod. I. 27.

(118) See Under Pharaoh, King or Prefect.

(119) Pomponious Mela, loc.cit.

(120) Hdt. loc.cit.; cf. also Sophocles, loc.cit.

were engaged in business, while their men stayed behind to look after their daily provisions (lit.spinning) and their homes.

The statements of the three Classical authors above mentioned indicated without the shadow of a doubt that the Egyptian women of antiquity not only ~~were~~ treated as equal to the men but even held a superior place and enjoyed more privileges than they did.

Did/ what the Classical authors said, correspond to the actual facts ? Modern scholars all agreed that such statements pronounced by the Classical authors were in fact very much exaggerated and that their authors being fond of antithesis (i.e. between what they saw in Egypt and what they had at home), had indulged in the marvellous at the expense of truth. (121)

The question of women marketing and men staying at home is an exaggeration and generalisation too. It is an instance of confining to one sex what applies to both; and the sculptures show that sedentary occupations were more followed by women than by men. (122) It is true, however, that women

(121) W.G.Waddell, Herodotus II, pp.157, 158; Rawlinson, op.cit. p.54. n.8.

(122) Rawlinson, loc.cit.

marketing and men weaving are figured on the monuments, but these are the exceptions.⁽¹²³⁾ Again women might be singers, dancers, or musicians and in these capacities they are depicted entertaining guests at private banquets.⁽¹²⁴⁾ Wives also played a considerable part in watching the work on the land in the absence of their husbands as well as ordering houses.⁽¹²⁵⁾ We get the impression of many tough old ladies like Eudaimonis, and of wives who had a mind of their own and were capable of carrying on their husbands' work when necessary.⁽¹²⁶⁾ But, for the most part, women's place was in the home.

It is not true also what Petrie said⁽¹²⁷⁾ that "women marketing ..." is true at the present time in the northern country which was familiar to the Greeks. That cannot be testified by the present writer. For here again Petrie might have been misled by what he saw in one place to the extent of generalising

(123) Waddell, loc.cit. , How and Wells, op.cit. p.180.

(124) Barbara Mertz, op.cit. p.72.

(125) J. Lindsay, op.cit. p.33.

(126) Barbara Mertz, loc.cit.

(127) F.Petrie, Social Life, p. 28, quoted by Waddell, op.cit. p.158.

it to cover the whole of the northern country. It is true, however, that some women of the poor classes do, for economic reasons, help their husbands in their work on the land, or go to the market when their men are busy in the fields. Dr. Mohamed Awad also quotes⁽¹²⁸⁾ G.W. Murray,⁽¹²⁹⁾ as describing the Bedouins of the desert in the following:

'The male Arab (i.e. Aaraabi, Bedouin) is quite content to pass the day smoking, chatting, and drinking coffee. Herding the camels is his only office. All the work of erecting tents, looking after sheep and goats and bringing water, he leaves to his woman'.

If women, as we have already observed, had received better treatment in Egypt than elsewhere in the ancient world, is it true that women, as Diodorus said,⁽¹³⁰⁾ were superior to men and that they enjoyed authority over their husbands and that men agreed in the marriage contract to be subordinate to them ?

(128) Mohamed 'Awad, Settlement of Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Tribal Groups in the Middle East, Bulletin de la Societe de Geographie d'Egypte, Tome, XXXII. 1959, pp.14,15.

(129) G.W. Murray, Sons of Ishmael, p.60 (London, 1935).

(130) Diod. I. 27.

In some cases, as for instance inheritance, women seemed to be more privileged than men. We saw⁽¹³¹⁾ how kingship could only be obtained through female line and that the king, in order to ascend the throne, had to marry the female of the royal family who could claim the right for succession.⁽¹³²⁾ It is this fact which is perhaps lies behind the statement of Diodorus⁽¹³³⁾ that the queen should have greater power and honour than the king, exactly as the fact that among ordinary people the right of inheritance was transferred through female is the reason for Diodorus' statement⁽¹³⁴⁾ regarding the authority of the woman over the man. And while woman's share of inheritance was half that of the man according to Roman law,⁽¹³⁵⁾ and indeed according to Islamic law,⁽¹³⁶⁾ and while among the Greeks her rights stopped with the dowry, she was entitled to equal succession among the Egyptians.⁽¹³⁷⁾ Besides woman's ownership of the land was deeply

(131) See Chapter XI, under Pharaohs, King or Prefect.

(132) This theory has been recently challenged by Barbara Mertz, (op.cit., pp.79-80).

(133) Diod. loc.cit.

(134) Ibid.

(135) J.Lindsay, op.cit.

(136) The present writer's view.

(137) J.Lindsay, op.cit., 125.

rooted in Egyptian tradition.⁽¹³⁸⁾ It is also suggested⁽¹³⁹⁾ that while the Greco-Roman family system in general had been built upon the principle of father-power 'paterna potestas', the Egyptian had a long tradition of being based on mother-power 'materna potestas'.

In some cases a woman could state the terms of marriage.⁽¹⁴⁰⁾ She could also choose her husband freely, as a person sui juris (not, as in Greek law, under guardianship), separate from him whenever she liked or, if he divorced her, might claim for herself the sum stipulated by the husband, as her dowry, in the marriage contract.⁽¹⁴¹⁾

All the evidences put forward, therefore, indicate that the ancient Egyptian woman was in a much better position than her sisters in other parts of the ancient world. And she had more privileges than them.

(138) Ibid.

(139) Ibid. p.71.

(140) Ibid. p.23 and see also notes on 'Marriages' 13.p.317. where Lindsay cites some papyrological evidences.

(141) E. Bevan, op.cit. p.158 ; cf. P.W.Pestman, Marriage and Matrimonial property in Ancient Egypt, 1961.

Women's position, however, was reduced under the Greco-Roman regimes,⁽¹⁴²⁾ due to the introduction into Egypt of the laws of the new master; for under these latter laws women did not receive the better treatment to which they were accustomed under the laws of the Pharaohs.

Among the Egyptians there were many other customs, some of which were also relating to the family. In his account of the Egyptian customs, in which he almost translated literally what Herodotus had written⁽¹⁴³⁾ before him, Pomponius Mela stated :⁽¹⁴⁴⁾

'If the parents were in need, it was the duty of their daughters (lit.women) to look after them, whereas sons (lit.men) need not'. 'Parentes cum egent, illis (i.e. feminis) necesse est, his (i.e. viris) liberum est alere'.⁽¹⁴⁵⁾

This statement at the first glance sounds very strange and contrary to the general custom of mankind. It is a clear example of the Classical authors' fondness of antithesis,

(142) Ibid. pp.158,159.

(143) See especially Hdt. II. 35,36.

(144) Pomponius Mela, op.cit. I. ix. 57.

(145) cf. Hdt. (II.35) who stated : 'τρέφειν τοὺς τοκέας τοῖσι μὲν πασὶ οὐδεμία ἀνάγκη μὴ βουλευμένοισι, τῇσι δὲ θυγατράσι πάσα ἀνάγκη καὶ μὴ βουλευμένοι.''

as we have already said before in this chapter, and their inclination to contrast everything Egyptian with its Greek and Roman equivalent. For in Greece, for instance, the law of Solon stipulated that anybody who neglected to support his parents, should be deprived of his civic rights. 'εάν τις μή

τρέφῃ τοὺς γονέας, ἀτίμος ἔστω.'

(146)

It is a well-known fact that in Egypt the duty of seeing to a parent's grave was certainly imposed on sons;⁽¹⁴⁷⁾ as Herodotus⁽¹⁴⁸⁾ indicated in his work. But if we go along, as some modern scholars⁽¹⁴⁹⁾ in fact did, with the Classical author's statements concerning the position of women in Egypt, and how she was land-holder, business-woman, market-goer and more important how property was transferred through female-line only, then one finds no contradiction in what the Classical authors said. Thus it is perfectly reasonable to suggest

(146) Quoted by Diod. Laert. 1. 55. See How and Wells, op.cit., pp.180,181. , W.G.Waddell, op.cit., p.158.

(147) How and Wells, loc.cit., Rawlinson, op.cit., p.58. n.5.

(148) Hdt. 11. 136.

(149) W.G.Waddell, loc.cit., where he quotes F.Petrie (Social Life, pp.74, 110, 120); J.M.White, pp. 115, 116. op.cit., see also n. 132.

that if daughters were the rightful heiresses of their parents, they should be compelled to maintain their needy parents.⁽¹⁵⁰⁾ But one's own guess is that if Egyptian men and women were both entitled to inherit their deceased parents' property, then both of them should be responsible for their parents in case of need.⁽¹⁵¹⁾ But we shall not be surprised, if we know that the aim of the Classical authors was to draw a striking contrast between the important position the Egyptian woman occupied with the inferior status in which the Greek woman was placed.⁽¹⁵²⁾

We conclude therefore that though the duty of seeing to the parents' needs fell normally on the shoulders of their sons, as indeed it happens in present day Egypt, it was equally quite possible that in the absence of a son, the daughter, being an heiress, should logically undertake such a task. We should not forget that the ancient Egyptian woman was after all independent to a considerable extent.

Diodorus and Strabo also observed the Egyptian attitude towards children and how parents were required to treat their children and bring them up, in a manner strikingly different

(150) W.G.Waddell, loc.cit.

(151) cf. H.Kees, op.cit. p.63.

(152) Ibid ; Rawlinson, op.cit. p.53. n.7. ; Barbara Mertz, op.cit. p.75.

from that of Greece. Thus in a lengthy statement Diodorus said : (153)

'The Egyptians are required to raise all their children in order to increase the population, on the ground that large numbers are the greatest factor in increasing the prosperity of both country and cities. Nor do they hold any child a bastard, even though he was born of a slave mother'. '... καὶ τὰ γεννώμενα πάντα τρέφουσιν ἐξ ἀνάγκης ἕνεκα τῆς πολυανθρωπίας, ὥς ταύτης μέγιστα συμβαλλομένης πρὸς εὐδαιμονίαν χώρας τε καὶ πόλεων, νόθον δ' οὐδὲνα τῶν γεννηθέντων νομίζουσιν, οὐδ' ἂν ἐξ ἀργυρωνήτου μητρὸς γεννηθῇ.'

Strabo almost exactly as Diodorus but very briefly stated : (154) 'One of the customs most zealously observed among the Egyptians is this, that they rear every child that is born'.

Diodorus and Strabo, therefore, agreed that the Egyptians reared every child, but they differed as regards whether it was by law that the Egyptians were required to rear children or whether it was on a voluntary basis. For Diodorus, the rearing of children was a question of a law and was a 'must', whereas for Strabo it was a mere custom despite the fact that it was most zealously observed.

(153) Diod. I. 80.

(154) Strabo, 17.2.5.

Is it true therefore that the Egyptians were required by a kind of law or custom to rear their children ? And if so, did they abide by such law or custom and never expose any of their children ?

C.H.Oldfather⁽¹⁵⁵⁾ seems to agree with Diodorus and Strabo that while the exposure of children was still practised among some Greeks⁽¹⁵⁶⁾ in Diodorus' day, it was forbidden in Egypt. In denying the occurrence of the exposure of children by the Egyptians, in Ptolemaic Egypt, Oldfather is certainly mistaken. As for Diodorus' and Strabo's statement they were a little bit exaggerated. For according to some modern scholars⁽¹⁵⁷⁾ and the papyrological evidence⁽¹⁵⁸⁾ we have from Ptolemaic Egypt, exposure of children occurred. By the second century B.C. it occurred frequently, due to poverty, and it was one of the causes responsible for preventing a large increase in the village population and thus gave it a certain degree of stability.

Among the customs which was thought to have been observed by the ancient Egyptians, and which is still observed by

(155) C.H.Oldfather, op.cit. p.275. n.2.

(156) Exposure of children also occurred in Rome (see Jerome Carcopino,, Daily Life In Ancient Rome, p.77).

(157) Tarn & Griffith, op.cit. p.200 ; A.C.Johnson, op.cit. p.87.

(158) Select Papyri. Trans by Hunt & Edgar, I. no.105 (P.Oxy. 744. 1.B.C.).

the muslim majority of modern Egypt, was circumcision (τὸ περιτέμνειν). Diodorus⁽¹⁵⁹⁾ and Strabo,⁽¹⁶⁰⁾ like Herodotus⁽¹⁶¹⁾ before them, mentioned its existence in Egypt. In this respect Diodorus said⁽¹⁶²⁾ that the Egyptians circumcised their male children, and Strabo maintained⁽¹⁶³⁾ that they not only circumcised their males, but also excise (ἐκτεμνειν) females. Diodorus and Strabo maintained also that circumcision was practised not only by the Egyptians but also by those who according to them learnt the custom from them, such as the Colchians⁽¹⁶⁴⁾ and the Jews.⁽¹⁶⁵⁾

Now the question is : was the custom of circumcision practised by the Egyptians ? And if so, did they circumcise males and excise females as well ? Was it a universal custom or was it confined to the children of a certain class or of more classes ?

The Classical authors, Diodorus and Strabo, together with Herodotus before them, as we saw, emphasised the universality of the custom among all the Egyptians. But the Jewish writer,

(159) Diod. I. 28, 55.

(160) Strabo, 17.2.5.

(161) Hdt. II. 36,37,104.

(162) Diod. loc.cit.

(163) Strabo, loc.cit.

(164) Diod. loc.cit., cf. also Hdt. loc.cit.

(165) Diod., loc.cit. ; Strabo, loc.cit. ; cf. also Hdt. loc.cit.

Josephus, maintained⁽¹⁶⁶⁾ that only the Egyptian priests were circumcised.

Modern scholars however, are also divided regarding the matter. For while some suggest that circumcision was a universal practice, others think that at one stage of the Egyptian history it was practised universally, but later it was confined to the priestly class; still a third opinion maintains that circumcision was always confined to the priests.

The first view, which suggests the universality of the habit among the Egyptians and which is adopted by How and Wells⁽¹⁶⁷⁾ says that the Classical authors Herodotus, together with Diodorus and Strabo were probably right in maintaining that all the Egyptians were circumcised. How and Wells also say⁽¹⁶⁸⁾ that the majority of scholars seem to interpret the Egyptian evidence, which is comparatively scanty and which is well summarised by Hastings,⁽¹⁶⁹⁾ as showing that the rite was general in Egypt ; some other scholars, however, think it refers only to priests.

(166) Josephus, C.Ap. II. 13.

(167) How and Wells, op.cit. pp.181, 182.

(168) Ibid.

(169) Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, ed. by James Hastings, Vol.III. p.670-676. s.v. Circumcision.

How and Wells refer⁽¹⁷⁰⁾ again to the universality of the custom.

The second opinion is adopted by Erman who states⁽¹⁷¹⁾ that the practice of circumcision, which at one time had been universal among the Egyptians, although without any great importance being attached to it, had by the Hellenistic period become a custom of the priests; only by permission of a high-priest might it by that time be performed on the children belonging to their families, and only after the elders of the classes of priests had testified that the child had no defect that would disqualify him as a priest.⁽¹⁷²⁾ This same view is also shared by Jean Yoyotte⁽¹⁷³⁾. This fact perhaps lies behind the statement of Josephus above quoted that only the priests were circumcised, especially if we notice that Josephus was writing about his own time, i.e. the Roman era.

The third view is adopted by Waddell,⁽¹⁷⁴⁾ who quotes A.W.Lawrence as saying that circumcision was by no means such a

(170) How and Wells, op.cit. appendix IX. p.414.

(171) A.Erman, op.cit. p.223.

(172) In the Roman Period, Egyptian priests had to get special permission to have their children circumcised: e.g. Select Papyri, vol.II. no.338. p.388. In restricting the practise of the rite of circumcision among those who, by being circumcised, would be qualified to join the priestly college, the Romans, in my view, were able to reduce the number of the priests and thus could easily curb their influence.

(173) A Dict. of Egypt. Civil. pp.45,46. s.v. Circumcision.

(174) W.G.Waddell, op.cit. p.215.

general rite among the Egyptians, as it was almost, if not entirely, confined to the priests.

To conclude there is no agreement on the practice of circumcision either between the Classical authors and the contemporary Jewish author Josephus on the one hand, or between modern authors themselves on the other. Nevertheless the majority of both the Classical authors and modern scholars agree that the practice was universal at one stage in the Egyptian history. On the other hand almost all modern scholars agree that circumcision was a sine quo non for the priestly order and that all those engaged in temple service must have been circumcised. But whether other classes of the Egyptian society usually practised circumcision or not, nobody can possibly decide.

The statement that females were also excised which was only mentioned by Strabo is correct.⁽¹⁷⁵⁾ This custom was still found until recent times, which in my view, ^{is} a remnant from the past, when it was stopped by law and was declared prohibited. As for males, among muslim Egyptians, circumcision is universally practised.

A further custom is described by Pomponius Mela who said :⁽¹⁷⁶⁾

(175) Hastings' Encycl. of Religion and Ethics, vol.III. p.667 s.v. Circumcision (Introductory).

(176) Pomponius Mela, op.cit. I. ix. 57.

'Egyptian women carried their loads on their shoulder, men on their heads'. 'Onera illae (i.e. Feminae) umeris hi (i.e. Viri) capitibus accipiunt'.

This statement is also a translation of what Herodotus said⁽¹⁷⁷⁾ before and is also motivated by the love of contrast and antithesis on the part of the Classical authors concerned.⁽¹⁷⁸⁾ This observation of Herodotus shows that a general conclusion is drawn from particular and rare cases.⁽¹⁷⁹⁾ For men almost always carried loads on their shoulders, or on a yoke, as can be seen in present day Egypt.⁽¹⁸⁰⁾ An exception is only found in the case of the baker who carried his load on his head,⁽¹⁸¹⁾ as indeed at present.⁽¹⁸²⁾ Fellahin women in fact always carried their loads on their heads,⁽¹⁸³⁾ with the exception of carrying their babies, whom they carried on

(177) Hdt. II. 3 5.

(178) How & Wells, op.cit. p.180. n.3. ; the present writer's view.

(179) Rawlinson, op.cit. pp.54 & 55. n.2 ; Waddell, loc.cit. ; How & Wells, loc.cit. ; the present writer's view.

(180) Rawlinson, loc.cit. ; the present writer's personal observation.

(181) O.T.Gen. xi.16, quoted by How & Wells, loc.cit. and Waddell, loc.cit. ; the Holy Quraan, Joseph's Surah.

(182) The present writer's personal observation.

(183) Ibid.

their shoulders as can be seen today in Egypt.⁽¹⁸⁴⁾ What Herodotus and Pomponius Mela, said then applies to exceptional cases,⁽¹⁸⁵⁾ like the baker and the Fellah woman when she carried her baby, and also the fact that the hieroglyph for 'carry' depicts a man with a load on his head.⁽¹⁸⁶⁾ But this is a poor justification for the statements of both Herodotus and Pomponius Mela.

A further custom among the Egyptians mentioned by Pomponius Mela,⁽¹⁸⁷⁾ who once more repeated Herodotus' words,⁽¹⁸⁸⁾ but in an obscure Latin translation, said that the Egyptians mixed mud with their hands and kneaded dough with their feet. Strabo too mentioned the same custom. He corroborated Herodotus when he said :⁽¹⁸⁹⁾

'The statement of Herodotus is also true, that is an Egyptian custom to knead mud with their hands, but suet for bread making with their feet'.

(184) How & Wells, loc.cit. ; Waddell, loc.cit. ; the present writer's personal observation.

(185) Waddell, loc.cit. ; How & Wells, loc.cit., the present writer's viewpoint; Rawlinson, loc.cit.

(186) Waddell, loc.cit.

(187) Pomponius Mela, op.cit. I.IX.57.

(188) Hdt. II. 36.

(189) Strabo, 17.2.5.

Some modern scholars⁽¹⁹⁰⁾ consider the statements made by Herodotus, Strabo, who observed the custom, and by Mela who followed Herodotus, correct, except that they, as usual, generalised the phenomenon. For in the view of these modern scholars⁽¹⁹¹⁾ the three Classical authors were right in stating that among the Egyptians kneading was done by feet, as is shown on the monuments, but the work was also done by hand. They first kneaded dough with their feet, then they fashioned it in loaves and/or cakes with the hands.⁽¹⁹²⁾ As for mud it was true, as Herodotus, Strabo, and Pomponius Mela stated, that it was collected, mixed, or picked up by hand,⁽¹⁹³⁾ as is still done by some Fellahin,⁽¹⁹⁴⁾ but it was also done and still is done with a hoe as we see in the representation of the brick-makers at Thebes.⁽¹⁹⁵⁾ The present writer, however, cannot find any justification for How and Wells statement⁽¹⁹⁶⁾ that kneading is still done with the feet in the south (i.e. south of Egypt).

(190) cf. How & Wells, op.cit. p.181. n.3 ; Rawlinson, op.cit. p.59. n.9.

(191) Ibid.

(192) Ibid.

(193) Ibid. (194) The present writer's personal observation.

(195) Rawlinson, loc.cit. ; the present writer's personal observation.

(196) How and Wells, loc.cit.

For although he comes from this part of Egypt, the present writer knows of nothing of such a kind, he has, however, heard about it (i.e. kneading dough with the feet) as How and Wells perhaps did.

Pomponius Mela further mentioned other customs, where he also translated Herodotus.⁽¹⁹⁷⁾ He told⁽¹⁹⁸⁾ us that the Egyptians ate publicly and outside their own houses, but they made water inside their dwellings (lit. they like their food publicly and outside their shelters and render unseemly things inside their dwellings). 'Cibos palam et extra tecta sua capiunt, obscena intimis aedium'.

As in other cases Pomponius Mela and his authority, Herodotus, are here, generalising the custom. Some modern scholars⁽¹⁹⁹⁾ and the present writer agrees with them, suggest that Herodotus (and this can very well apply to Mela) saw the poor Egyptians eating outside their doors. Modern scholars⁽²⁰⁰⁾ also maintain that Egyptian upper classes certainly did not eat out of doors. One indeed can still see some Egyptian Fellahin sitting outside their

(197) Pomponius Mela, loc.cit.

(198) Hdt. II. 35.

(199) cf. How and Wells, op.cit. p.180 n.3 ; Rawlinson, op.cit. p.55. n.3.

(200) ibid.

eating, as they do not find anything wrong with such a habit.

As for the statement that the Egyptians urinated ~~on~~^{inside} their homes, Waddell⁽²⁰¹⁾ thinks that scarcity of water must have made sanitation difficult in Egypt as compared with Crete and other places. But at Tell el-Amarna in Dynasty XVIII there were earth closets,⁽²⁰²⁾ and easing-stools have also been found dating as early as Dynasty IX.⁽²⁰³⁾ If, however, we compare the conditions of sanitation in ancient Egypt as described by the Classical authors with the conditions in modern Egypt, we shall find that things have changed drastically. But the Fellahin, in case they do not have toilet facilities at home, usually make water in the fields, while their women do the same thing inside their homes in a special vessel to be thrown outside in the fields.

Like his predecessor Herodotus,⁽²⁰⁴⁾ Pomponius observed⁽²⁰⁵⁾ with astonishment that the Egyptian mode of writing

(201) W.G. Waddell, op.cit. p.158. n.13.

(202) Waddell, (loc.cit), quoting A.W. Lawrence.

(203) Waddell (loc.cit) quoting Petrie, Social Life, p.100. and saying cf. O.T. Deuteronomy xxiii.13.

(204) Pomponius Mela, loc.cit.

(205) Hdt. (II.36) says : 'The Greeks write and calculate by moving the hand from left to right; the Egyptians do contrariwise; yet they say that their way of writing is towards the right, and the Greek way towards the left'.

was different from those of the Romans and the Greeks. Thus he said, 'the Egyptians write wrongly' (lit. they make use of their letters or alphabet perversely', 'Suis litteris perverse utuntur'. This view of the Classical authors regarding the way the ancient Egyptians wrote resembles very well the view expressed by their European descendants regarding the way we write our Arabic language for instance.

Thus like his modern European descendant, Pomponius Mela, together with other Classical authors, was astonished to discover and observe that the Egyptians, of ancient times, like their descendants of modern times, wrote from right to left, in that they wrote the opposite way from Greek and Latin. For this reason Pomponius Mela and other Classical authors considered the Egyptian mode of writing wrong, whereas theirs was right. But like modern Europeans, Classical authors forgot that the oldest form of Greek inscription was written first from right to left, like the Phoenician mode of writing,⁽²⁰⁶⁾ from which the Greeks themselves have borrowed their alphabet;⁽²⁰⁷⁾ and likewise the other form known as the 'Βουστροφῆδον', which was still used in the 6th century B.C., and which was written alternately from right to left and left to right, as oxen turn in ploughing.⁽²⁰⁸⁾ Thus if

(206) How & Wells, op.cit. p.182. n.2., Waddell, op.cit. p.160; Rawlinson, op.cit. p.60. n.4.

(207) Rawlinson, loc.cit.

(208) How & Wells, loc.cit. ; Waddell, loc.cit.

the Greeks and Romans believed that the Egyptian way of writing was wrong, whereas theirs were right, then they were mistaken. For it was the Egyptian way which was the original and the natural one. 'To right from right to left', Rawlinson comments, ⁽²⁰⁹⁾ 'seems the natural mode of writing', for though we have always been accustomed to write from left to right, we invariably use our pencil, in shading a drawing, from right to left, in spite of all our previous habit, and even our down-strokes in writing are all from right to left. The Arabs say "it is more reasonable to see where the pen is coming, than to see where it is going". It was continued by the Etruscans, the early imitators of the Greeks, to a very late period'. And though the Egyptians, Dr.Brugsch very ingeniously observes, ⁽²¹⁰⁾ wrote generally from right to left, they drew the individual signs usually beginning on the left. ⁽²¹¹⁾

If the Classical authors had expressed their astonishment at the peculiarities of the customs of the Egyptians in general, they marvelled most at their customs with respect to the dead. Thus Diodorus said : ⁽²¹²⁾

(209) Rawlinson, loc.cit.

(210) Dr. Brugsch (Gram.Demot. pp.15,16), quoted by Rawlinson, loc.cit.

(211) How & Wells, loc.cit; Waddell, loc.cit; Rawlinson, loc.cit.

(212) Diod. I.91.

'But not least will a man marvel at the peculiarity of the customs of the Egyptians when he learns of their usages with respect to the dead'.

But we should not be surprised ourselves at the feeling of astonishment and bewilderment expressed by the different Classical authors towards things Egyptian, especially if we realise that Diodorus like a number of Classical authors, such as Herodotus, Hecataeus of Abdera and Strabo, had witnessed with their own eyes some of the Egyptian customs and habits on the spot and had found in them a sharp contrast with those at home. It is for this reason more than any other that we shall find a striking similarity in the descriptions of the different Classical authors particularly those which related to the customs and habits of the Egyptians.

Thus Diodorus,⁽²¹³⁾ Cicero,⁽²¹⁴⁾ Pomponius Mela,⁽²¹⁵⁾ Tacitus,⁽²¹⁶⁾ Pliny,⁽²¹⁷⁾ all observed, perhaps to their surprise, that the Egyptians embalmed their dead and buried them. The Jews, according to Tacitus⁽²¹⁸⁾, followed the Egyptian customs in that they buried their dead rather than cremating them. Pomponius Mela⁽²¹⁹⁾ made it clear that the Egyptians were not permitted to

(213) Diod. 91-93. (214) Cicero, Tusc. Disp. I. XLV. 108.

(215) Pomponius Mela, op.cit. I. IX. 57. (216) Tacitus, Hist., V.5.

(217) Pliny, N.H. XVI. 52. (218) Tacitus, loc.cit.

(219) Pomponius Mela, loc.cit.

cremate their dead. It is also interesting to notice that Cicero and Pomponius Mela mentioned the burying custom of the Egyptians in contrast with the act of cremating the dead bodies which was the usual procedure in Rome.⁽²²⁰⁾ It is also worth mentioning here that not only Jews bury the bodies of their dead, but Muslims, too, up to the present times bury their dead, since they are not allowed to embalm or cremate them.

On the manner and the way the Egyptians mourned and buried their deceased kinsmen Diodorus spoke at length and Pomponius Mela described the affair briefly.

We have already in the previous chapter referred⁽²²¹⁾ to the public mourning which followed the death of the Pharaoh, who was considered by the Egyptian people the dearest of all their belongings and dearer than their children and property. The public mourning of the Pharaoh was however a model of all mournings as it was done on a large and a lavish scale befitting the first man of Egypt and its divine ruler, whose death was regarded a shattering disaster.

As to how the Egyptians mourned their kinsmen Diodorus like Herodotus⁽²²²⁾ before him, has observed⁽²²³⁾ the

(220) See Lucan, op.cit. IX. 161; cf. also Samuel Dill, op.cit. p.576.

(221) See Chapter XI under, Pharaoh, King or Prefect.

(222) Hdt. II. 85.

(223) Diod. I. 91.

following :

'Whenever anyone⁽²²⁴⁾ dies among the Egyptians, all his relatives and friends,⁽²²⁵⁾ plastering their heads with mud, roam about the city lamenting, until the body receives burial. Nay more, during that time they indulge in neither baths, nor wine, nor in any other food worth mentioning, nor do they put on bright clothing'.

Pomponius Mela described the mourning of the dead very briefly. He stated⁽²²⁶⁾ that 'when one of their kinsmen dies they (i.e. the Egyptians) smear themselves with mud and beat their breasts, to show their grief'.

Now the question is, did the Egyptians really mourn their dead in the manner and to the extent described by the Classical authors of our period ? Who covered themselves or their heads with mud, men and women or women alone ? Who beat their breasts, men and women or women only ? And finally who tore their dresses men and women or men alone ?

Thanks to the Egyptian fondness of depicting scenes of their daily life, we still have on their monuments scenes often representing the Egyptians weeping and throwing dust on their

(224) Hdt. (loc.cit.) says : a man of note.

(225) Hdt. (loc.cit.) says : 'all the women kind ... with all the women of their kin'.

(226) Pomponius Mela, op.cit. I. IX. 57.

heads, tearing their garments, and beating their breasts.⁽²²⁷⁾ What the Classical authors said therefore concerning the manner in which the ancient Egyptians mourned their dead is largely true. The present writer saw that Fellahin women still lament their dead in the ancient manner, they cry loudly, singing dirges and besmear themselves top to bottom with mud and dust, and men on their part join in lamenting and tear their garments and tie themselves with ropes. Both sexes also abstain for a considerable time from many joys of life. These practices, however, like many customs and traditions of old, are dying away very rapidly owing mainly to the fast spread of education and also to the Islamic teachings, which discourage very much such things and describe them as acts practised only by the pagans. Indeed such practices of mourning, as How and Wells⁽²²⁸⁾ and Rawlinson⁽²²⁹⁾ rightly stated, are nothing but the replica of the past. It shows the sense of continuity in Egypt and also the well-known Egyptian conservatism.

The embalming was and is still a very fascinating topic because its being unique in ancient Egypt. Diodorus, being very much fascinated and interested in the matter,

(227) How & Wells, op.cit. p.208; Rawlinson, op.cit. p.138.n.7. see a representation of women mourners (Tomb of Ramose, Thebes, Reign of Amenophis III) in A Dict.of Egypt. Civil. p.59.

(228) How & Wells, loc.cit.

(229) Rawlinson, loc.cit.

described it at length. For like Herodotus⁽²³⁰⁾ before him, he told⁽²³¹⁾ us that there were three kinds of burials, or embalming as Herodotus described them, the most expensive, the medium, and the most humble. The men who were employed in embalming were called embalmers (οἱ ταριχευταὶ) and were skilled artisans, who have received this professional knowledge as a family tradition.⁽²³²⁾ Diodorus referred⁽²³³⁾ to the position of the embalmers in the Egyptian society; to this we have already referred in the previous chapter.⁽²³⁴⁾

On the actual act of embalming Diodorus said⁽²³⁵⁾ that when the embalmers made a contract with the relatives of the deceased man they took the dead body. The first person to deal with the dead body was the scribe (ὁ γραμματεὺς), as he was called, who, when the body had been laid on the ground, circumscribed on the left flank the extent of the incision; then the one called the slitter cut the flesh, as the law commanded. After the body had been slit open one of the embalmers thrust his hand through the opening in the corpse into the trunk and extracted everything but the kidneys and heart, and another one

(230) Hdt. II. 85-89.

(231) Diod. loc.cit.

(232) Ibid.

(233) Ibid.

(234) See Chapter XI. under Priests.

(235) Diod. loc.cit.

cleansed each of the viscera, washing them in palm wine and spices. And in general, they carefully dressed the whole body for over thirty days, first with cedar oil and certain other preparations, and then with myrrh, cinnamon, and such spices as have the faculty not only of preserving it for a long time but also of giving it a fragrant odour. After the body had been thus treated, it was handed back to the relatives of the deceased, every member of it having been preserved intact, in such a manner that even the hair on the eyelids and brows remained, the entire appearance of the body was unchanged, and the cast of its shape was recognizable.

Pomponius Mela too referred⁽²³⁶⁾ to the operation of embalming very briefly when he said that the Egyptians were not allowed to cremate dead bodies or to bury them, but had these bodies skilfully embalmed by sprinkling juices of herbs inside their entrails. Thus Pomponius Mela said :⁽²³⁷⁾

'Mortuos fimo oblitiplangunt nec cremare aut fodere fas putant, verum arte medicatos inter penetralia conlocant'.

Pliny also mentioned⁽²³⁸⁾ embalming, but without elaborating on the subject. Pliny's contribution, however, is his mention⁽²³⁹⁾ of

(236) Pomponius Mela, loc.cit.

(237) Ibid.

(238) Pliny, N.H. XVI. 52.

(239) Ibid.

tar (bitumen) which he said is so strong that in Egypt it was used for embalming the bodies of the dead.

In the account of Diodorus on the embalming quoted above we notice that though it was a lengthy and detailed account, some important details were lacking. Thus we find in Herodotus account,⁽²⁴⁰⁾ which is less detailed than that of Diodorus, what fills the gap left in the account of the latter. Diodorus, for instance, did not mention that if the Egyptians chose the most perfect way of embalming, obviously the one described by him, they first drew out part of the brain through the nostrils with an iron hook, and injected certain drugs into the rest. Diodorus did not elaborate much on the step following the devisceration, as Herodotus did before him. For while Diodorus said that the body was carefully dressed for thirty days before it was handed back to the relatives of the deceased, Herodotus said that they concealed the body for seventy days, embalmed in saltpetre, as no longer was allowed for the embalming than that; and when the seventy days were over they washed the body and wrapped the whole of it in bandages of fine linen cloth, anointed with gum, which the Egyptians mostly used instead of glue.

(240) Hdt. loc.cit.

Herodotus too supplemented Diodorus's account when he told us of how the body, having been embalmed as above described, and handed over to the relatives of the deceased, was encased into a manlike wooden figure hollowed by those relatives. And when this wooden figure was shut up, it was preserved in a coffin-chamber, placed erect against a wall. Diodorus however, mentioned the last fact concerning the interment of the body and its preservation in a costly chamber prepared especially for such purpose.

Now the question is why did the Egyptians mummify their dead and preserve their bodies contrary to the customs of Rome and other nations ? Secondly were they the only people in the ancient world to have embalmed their dead and preserved their mummified bodies ? The Classical writers of our period did not speak clearly of such matters. But from the statements above-cited we see that the Classical authors in general and the Roman ones in particular observed that the Egyptian funerary customs were very different from those of Greece and Rome. And, as we saw before, Pomponius Mela⁽²⁴¹⁾ made it clear that the Egyptians (unlike the Romans) were not permitted to cremate their dead. He went even further to say that they were not allowed to bury them either. But one should be careful here to point out that Pomponius Mela meant

(241) Pomponius Mela, loc.cit.

by 'bury' (fodere) the ordinary form of burial, whereby the body was placed into a grave as Muslims and other peoples do in the present times. Pomponius Mela, therefore, did not consider mummifying the body and preserving it burial, but something else quite different. Tacitus, whose statement we have already quoted⁽²⁴²⁾, stated that the Jews adopted the Egyptian customs regarding their dead. For in Tacitus words, they embalmed and hid (condere) the dead body rather than cremating it (thus unlike the Romans). Tacitus however, is not right in saying that. It is true, however, that the Jews did not cremate their dead but bury them,⁽²⁴³⁾ exactly as Muslims do. In preparing the body for burial, the Jews like Muslims, having washed the corpse, scented it with aromatic substances.⁽²⁴⁴⁾ The body then is wrapped in a linen cloth; a napkin is placed on the head and the feet and bands are bound round with little bands. But this sort of embalming is very different from that practised by the Egyptians, though certain people among the Jews devote considerable sums to the purchase of funeral spices.⁽²⁴⁵⁾

(242) See n.216 of this chapter.

(243) W.Corswant, A Dictionary Of Life In Bible Times, p.130. s.v. Funeral. (Translated from the French by A.Heathcote, England 1960).

(244) Ibid.

(245) Ibid.

Why did then the Egyptians bother to embalm and preserve dead bodies ? Diodorus seemed to have thrown out out only a faint light on that matter. For he told us⁽²⁴⁶⁾ that the fact that the Egyptians could preserve the dead bodies of their deceased intact in the manner described explained why many Egyptians kept the bodies of their ancestors in costly chambers and gazed face to face upon those who died many generations before their own birth, so that, as they looked upon the stature and proportions and the features of the countenance of each, they experienced a strange enjoyment, as though they had lived with those on whom they gazed.

But could not the purpose of mummification be due to the Egyptian belief that death does not mark the end of life but the beginning of an intermediary stage after which man will live eternally and thus his body must be preserved and not destroyed ?⁽²⁴⁷⁾ One must also bear in mind that the dry climate of Egypt had helped its people to develop the art of embalming.⁽²⁴⁸⁾

After he spoke of the operation of embalming Diodorus described⁽²⁴⁹⁾ what happened to the body before its final journey

(246) Diod. I. 91.

(247) A Dict. of Egypt. Civil. p.177. s.v. Mummies; Henri Frankfort, Ancient Egyptian Religion, p.93.

(248) cf. for instance, A Dict. of Egypt. Civil. loc.cit.

(249) Diod. I. 92.

to its resting-place. He described how the dead was judged and his deeds in life were examined before his body received burial. And in order that this was to be done the deceased must be proved to have conducted a good life, otherwise he would not receive burial. Diodorus also told us that it was of extreme importance to the Egyptians that their bodies as well as those of their relatives and friends should receive burial.

Diodorus also hinted at the existence of the cult of the dead. Thus he said⁽²⁵⁰⁾ that it was a most sacred duty, in the eyes of the Egyptians, that they should be seen to honour their parents or ancestors all the more after they had passed to their eternal home. It was apparently for that reason that sons or even the sons of sons paid back the debts of their deceased parents or ancestors in order that the latter might receive burials and also that the former could receive equal respect after their death.

(250) Diod. I. 93.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

When we come to the writing of a summary and a conclusion of what we have already discussed, we find that in the course of this thesis several points have emerged from the detailed discussions.

The Classical writers of our chosen period (70 B.C. - A.D. 69) did not all write at the same time or under the same political and social conditions. For if we take Diodorus, for instance, we shall realise that he wrote under the late Ptolemaic rule, when Egypt was passing through a difficult time and when the affairs of that country were in fact in a state of chaos. Strabo wrote under the early Roman rule, when stability and peace (pax Romana) were prevailing in Egypt, despite the fact that it was a stability of repression and not, as one may expect, of freewill, and the peace was just a fake peace based on force and the strength of arms and on nothing else.

A further difficulty in assessing the evidence these writers provide arises from the fact that the periods which they discussed or made reference to were not always the same. For taking Diodorus once more as an instance, we find that he told us quite categorically that the period of his concern began from the beginning of the Egyptian history to the death of Amasis

(Ahmose II 570-526 B.C). Strabo was mainly interested in the affairs of Egypt of his own time.

Not only were the periods of their interest different, the nature and the contents of the works of the Classical authors and the things they referred to were different too. We must distinguish therefore between the social history of Diodorus, the topographical geography of Strabo, and the encyclopaedic work of Pliny the Elder. Remarkable contrasts were also to be found between mere passing references such as those given by various prose-writers and poets, short essays or accounts such as those written by Pomponius Mela, and the almost complete monographs devoted solely to Egypt such as those left by Diodorus and Strabo. A distinction is also to be made between books, brief accounts or references which discuss many aspects concerning Egypt such as those of Diodorus and Strabo and books or references that discuss one particular aspect or topic only such as that of Dioscorides.

The question that one might ask here is : how did the Classical authors concerned collect their information ? The answer to this question is manifold. In this respect we find a real contrast in the way and the means through which our authors collected their information. For whereas some, such as the Jewish writer Philo, had the opportunity to live in Alexandria,

which was adjacent to Egypt (ad Aegyptum), or to visit the country concerned and thus got acquainted with the country and its people, as Diodorus and Strabo both did, others were not able to see the country for themselves and so they had to rely in writing their works or making their passing references, on heresay and/or the writing of previous authors and/or official documents. In this category we may include Pomponius Mela, Pliny the Elder and the Jewish author Josephus. It is not, however, surprising on many of the matters discussed to find a striking similarity between the statements of the various Classical authors. This is due either to the fact that the same phenomenon, such as the rise of the Nile and the scene of the valley and the Delta during that time, or custom, such as funerary customs or circumcision, observed by different authors or to the interdependence of the various authors on the writings of each other. A clear example of the Classical writer's interdependence in their writings can be best illustrated by the fact that almost all of those, who wrote about Egypt after Homer, quoted his well-known statement concerning the island of Pharos (see Appendix to Chapter II). Another example is found in that most of those who wrote after Hecataeus of Miletus (late 6th and early 5th centuries B.C.), followed the theory, which was ascribed to him, that Egypt was a gift of the Nile, and that country, (i.e. Egypt proper, the Delta

and the Nile valley) was created by the silt which the Nile deposited annually, the entire fertile land or at least a great proportion of it was submerged under the sea-water (see Chapter II, The Origin and the Formation of the Land).

Moreover, a line ought to be drawn also between the serious works of Diodorus, Strabo, Dioscorides, Pomponius Mela, Pliny and the like, and the mostly prejudiced and often sensational statements which were primarily designed for hostile political propaganda, such as the accounts and references of the Roman poets particularly those relating to the Roman war with Cleopatra and to the cult of the sacred animals, and the accounts of the Jewish writers as those regarding the people of Alexandria and the veneration of the sacred animals. We must also distinguish between serious accounts in prose authors and poetic ones. These two types ought not to be considered as on equal footing in any assessment of validity or credibility.

A great divergence and real contrast can also be seen between the writings of the Greeks and those of their Roman counterparts. The Greeks were acquainted with Egypt and familiar with the Egyptians more than any other nation of the ancient world was acquainted with them, with the possible exception of the Nubians, who have always been in close contact with the Egyptians. The Greek civilization more than others had been influenced and to a great extent enriched through contact with the Egyptian

civilization. The Greeks, more than others, had and still have many things in common with the Egyptians. Whenever a Greek went in Egypt he could, more easily than others, make himself at home. It is for these reasons that one expects the Greeks to be sympathetic and understanding in their approach to Egyptian affairs. And as a matter of fact they were.

The opposite is correct with the Romans, whose country was not in close contact with Egypt either so much or so early as the Greeks were. Thus the Romans on the whole, were much less knowledgeable as far as Egypt was concerned than the Greeks. One also sensed that they were generally less understanding to, unsympathetic, extremely hostile towards and excessively prejudiced against the Egyptians. One should not then expect those, whose country was for most of the time on bad terms with Egypt, to speak enthusiastically and to utter any word in favour of the latter. As for the writings of the Jewish authors of the period in concern they were not very different from those their Roman opposite numbers. One should also not forget to point out that the mentality of the Egyptians on one side and those of the Romans and the Jews on the other were quite different. Religions, customs, behaviours and attitudes to life in general were also very different.

The trend among the Classical authors in general, however, was that they tried to look at Egypt and the affairs of its people from their own angle. Thus when they judged things Egyptian

they could not at all dissasociate themselves from their own predjudices. They judged these Egyptian things from Greek, Roman or Jewish points of view. They used their own measures and standards. One can see this attitude is clearly represented in their writing concerning religion and customs. We find that the Greek writers in particular were generally inclined to interpret Egyptian beliefs and thoughts and to understand them in Greek terms. The narration of the Osirian myth, for instance, was full of Greek interpretations and ideas. When Diodorus wanted to describe the Delta, he compared its shape with that of his own homeland Sicily, and when Diodorus and Strabo described scene ^s during the rise of the Nile, they ~~link~~^{likened} the towns, villages and other higher places, which emerged on the top of the floodwaters, which covered the whole inhabited country, ~~with~~^{to} the cyclades islands in the Aegean Sea, and when they saw the most famous denizen of the Nile, the crocodile, the Greeks called it crocodile (δ κροκόδειλος, i.e. lizard). The Roman prejudiced attitude is best shown in their references to the veneration of the sacred animals in Egypt. And the Jewish prejudice can be best seen in their regarding the Egyptians as impious and polytheists, because the latter from the Jewish view-point shared the name of God, the one, with those of their deified kings and venerated sacred animals. ⁽¹⁾

(1) See p. 386

The Classical authors found Egypt a country very different from their own. Its climate, the Nile and its rising time, the shape of the country, and the way of life of its own people were also very different. The Classical authors who saw in these matters a real contrast with those at home, showed themselves to have been very fond of contrast and antitheses. They were often driven far away from the actual evidence of the facts in a desire to show that there was always a contrast existing between Greece or Rome and them. For instance, if a Classical author happened to have witnessed or heard about one incident, or observed a certain custom practised in a certain place by a certain person or a group of persons, he would rush in passing judgement that such and such was made or practised by the people in general. This is very clear in their descriptions of such customs and usages of the Egyptians, as carrying loads and the eating habits. (2)

Previously it has been mentioned that some of the Classical authors such as Diodorus, used their personal observations and/or the writings of previous authors and/or official records. Others consulted the writings of previous authors only. Still others, such as Pliny, drew their accounts from official sources in addition to making full use of the writings of previous writers.

(2) See pp. 594, 595, 597, 598.

Thus if we take Diodorus in order to know from which sources he collected his information, we find him telling⁽³⁾ us quite categorically that he had associated himself with many of the priests of Egypt, who were considered its most cultured and learned men, and that after he had inquired carefully of them about each matter and tested the stories of the historians, he composed his account so as to accord with the opinions on which they had most fully agreed. In another passage Diodorus reiterated⁽⁴⁾ his pledge that he would omit the stories invented by Herodotus and others who deliberately preferred to the truth the telling of marvellous tales and the invention of myths for the delectation of their readers, and he would set forth only what appeared in the written records of the priests of Egypt and had passed Diodorus' own careful scrutiny.

But how could Diodorus check the validity and the truthfulness of information passed to him by the priests, especially if we know that he, like all the Classical writers, could not understand the Egyptian language,⁽⁵⁾ in which the Egyptian records were written ? Was Diodorus hinting here at the work which was written in Greek by the Egyptian priest Manetho under the first Ptolemies ?

(3) Diod. III. 11.

(4) Diod. I. 69.

(5) Cf. Pierre Montet, op.cit. pp.285, 286.

No doubt Diodorus met some Egyptian priests and conversed with them. But he did not seem to have escaped the same accusation which he hurled against Herodotus and others, namely that they no doubt with good faith falsified the facts and invented myths in order to entertain their readers. For the account of Diodorus himself is not without fabulous stories and marvellous tales. Diodorus' account on the history of the Pharaohs of Egypt,⁽⁶⁾ for instance, is full of gross errors, since he, like other Classical authors, was totally ignorant of the history of the country concerned.⁽⁷⁾ He was no better in his account on the history of Egypt than his predecessor Herodotus; for he could have made use of the work of the Egyptian Manetho above-mentioned, but surprisingly he did not do so. Nevertheless, Diodorus' own contribution to our knowledge of the social life of Egypt of his own time is extremely useful, especially if we take into consideration that the period in which Diodorus wrote his work is not particularly rich with scenes of the daily life of the Egyptians, which might be depicted on the monuments of that era. For when Diodorus wrote about the customs, the habits

(6) Diod. I. 43-69.

(7) cf. C.H.Oldfather, op.cit. p.179. n.1 ; Pierre Montet, op.cit. p.283 ; W.G.Waddell, Herodotus II, Introduction, p.10 ; and J.G.Wilkinson, Manners and Customs of the Ancient Egyptians, vol.I. p.ix of the Preface (London 1837).

and the characteristics of the Egyptians, he was clearly recording his own personal observations.⁽⁸⁾ It is for this reason that in that respect Diodorus was more accurate than when he spoke of the history of Egypt for example. Diodorus not only collected his information by word of mouth through his conversations with the Egyptian priests, and from his personal observations, but he also made an extensive use of the writings of other previous Greek authors, particularly of Hecataeus of Abdera, who visited Egypt in the time of Ptolemy I Soter and who wrote a book on the history of Egypt known as 'Agyptiaka'.⁽⁹⁾

Like the vast majority of the Greeks, Diodorus was fond of Egypt and things Egyptian. He proved to be a great admirer of that country, its people and institutions. He ascribed to Egypt the oldest history in the world and made its people the most ancient among [other] nations. He was particularly an admirer of the antiquity of its religion, and institutions.⁽¹⁰⁾ He made Egypt the source of religious ideas, of arts and sciences.⁽¹¹⁾ He praised⁽¹²⁾ its monarchical system and contrasted it with the democratic systems of the Greek city-states, of which latter he

(8) See e.g. Diod. I. 83. For this instance see p. 417 of this thesis.

(9) cf. e.g. E. Bevan, op.cit. pp. 84, 85.

(10) See e.g. Diod. I. 69, 74. (11) Diod. I. 9, 50, 69.

(12) Diod. I. 70 ff.

was contemptuous and disapproving. On this matter we shall have something to say later. But in his praise of the country, its people and its affairs, Diodorus exaggerated a great deal too much.

Strabo was a quite different person. He was known for his pro-Roman attitude. He praised their administration of Egypt and described it as efficient and he described the affairs of Egypt under the Romans as very satisfactory.⁽¹³⁾ He told us that under the Roman regime Egypt underwent a period of tranquility, stability and it was remarkable for its prosperity, especially if compared with its conditions under the late Ptolemies, where class, inter-rivalries between the Ptolemies and civil wars were prevailing, and instability and insecurity were also predominating, and economic conditions were very bad.^{(14)a} This state of affairs was due to the inefficiency, incompetence and weakness of the late Ptolemies.^{(14)b} In short, Egypt was ruled in Strabo's words, with drunken violence and only the strong hand of Augustus could save that country from that condition. Here again Strabo, owing to his blind admiration of the Romans, forgot to realise that the Romans did not put everything right

(13) Strabo, 17.1.13.

(14a) Strabo, 17,1. 11,12,13.

(14b) Ibid.

and did not make Egypt prosper for the sake and benefit of its own rightful people, but for the people of Rome, who turned Egypt into a grain-store or a granary of Rome.⁽¹⁵⁾ Their rule, which was based on repression was not liked by the Egyptians, who were more hostile to the Romans than even to the Ptolemies, who, despite their shortcomings, kept the products of the country within its territory and did not permit the carrying away abroad of the products of the country to the entire benefit of other peoples. Strabo was, as it seems, indifferent to the Egyptians, though at the outset of his book on Egypt,⁽¹⁶⁾ he praised the way the Egyptians conducted the affairs of their own country from the early dawn of their history, and in more than one place⁽¹⁷⁾ he defended them against the alleged, but well publicised, charge that the Egyptians were so xenophobic that they killed any foreigner who dared to come into their country.

The method of Strabo's monograph on Egypt is, as we said before, topographical, unlike those of other Classical authors, such as Diodorus's book. Strabo's book describes places and towns and their main features. It is based mostly or perhaps

(15) see e.g. Tacitus, Annals. II.59; cf. also M.Cary, op.cit. pp.216, 217; J.Lindsay, op.cit. p.247.

(16) Strabo, 17.1.3.

(17) See e.g. Strabo, 17.1.19.

entirely on the personal observations of the geographer Strabo, which he made in the course of his journey across the length and breadth of Egypt in the company of Aelius Gallus, the Roman prefect in Egypt, and a good friend of the geographer. As a whole the observations of the author are correct and accurate. Unlike other Classical authors Strabo used his critical talent. He did not take everything told him for granted, as for instance when he was shown around Thebes. When he saw the two famous Colossi of Memnon, he did not believe that the broken colossus could issue a sound without some sort of human trick, though on that point Strabo was proved wrong, as we have shown earlier in this thesis.⁽¹⁸⁾ He also criticised the Egyptian style of architecture.⁽¹⁹⁾

Pliny's method of writing was very different from the other Classical authors. For unlike Herodotus, Hecataeus of Abdera, Diodorus and Strabo, he did not describe Egypt in one continuous account. He rather divided his work into topics, and referred to Egypt accordingly under each topic. Pliny did not collect his information from personal observation, but drew it entirely from the writing of previous writers, whose names he listed in his first book, and from official

(18) See p. 257.

(19) Strabo, 17.1.28.

records. Compared with Strabo's, his description of the country is considerably poorer, and shorter by far.

Pliny has failed wholly to give any geographical picture of the country, easy as it was to have done so in a region with so peculiar a natural formation.⁽²⁰⁾ He has however introduced some useful and interesting details with regard to the inundation of the Nile, and its effects on the surrounding country, according to the height it attained in different years.⁽²¹⁾ He also recorded some useful and accurate information on the method of agriculture in Egypt, and the country's flora, fauna and minerals. But though his information and the method of dealing with it was of a scientific nature, he failed to correlate and arrange it. His enumeration of the Nomes of Egypt, which has the air of being derived from an official source, is of value to the topographer, but like most of his work it is devoid of any attempt at geographical arrangement.⁽²²⁾

Pomponius Mela's account on Egypt is much shorter than for instance those of Diodorus and Strabo. His account is mainly concerned with the geography of Egypt, its position as regards the then known-world and the continents and the neighbouring countries,

(20) See E.H.Bunbury, A History of Ancient Geography, vol.II. p.437.

(21) Pliny, N.H. V. 51-59.

(22) cf. Bunbury, loc.cit.

its extent, the course of the Nile, the main towns of the country and finally a very concise and condensed survey of some of the customs and mores of the Egyptians.

His account on the customs and a few other things he just copied and translated very unintelligently the things which Herodotus had written almost five centuries before, without taking into consideration the changes, which had taken place in Egypt since Herodotus had written his work. We should not forget to mention here that Pomponius Mela was one of the authors, on whose writing Pliny depended, particularly in the field of geography. Pomponius Mela was also one of those who did not have the opportunity to visit Egypt and to observe things on the spot. For this reason he relied on the writing of previous writers and on official Roman records.

After these general considerations we may examine some points in detail.

There is no agreement among the Classical authors on how many continents the world they knew consisted of or on the dividing line between these continents.⁽²³⁾ Accordingly there is no agreement on the position of Egypt as regards these continents and where it belongs.⁽²⁴⁾

A further point of disagreement among the Classical authors is concerned with the term applied to the country. The

(23) p.3ff.

(24) Ibid.

territory of Egypt was also a matter of dispute among the Classical authors. Some applied the term Egypt to the geographical entity of the country which strictly speaking, was inhabited by the Egyptians, whereas others applied the term to a wider region, which included some of Egypt's domains outside the well-defined territory of the country. (25)

Some points of disagreement are found between Pliny on one hand and the rest on the other Classical authors on the name of the first cataract at Aswan and also on the actual numbers of the Nile's mouths. (26) Pliny's large number of the mouths of the Nile might have included the large canals which were dug by the hand of man. (26b) As for the course of the Nile we find that neither Diodorus nor Strabo, who described the Nile, observed the great bend of the Nile at Kena. (27) Relating to the Nile also is the problem of irrigating the land. (28) One of the artificial methods of irrigation was (and still is) the Archimedean screw, which was mentioned by both Diodorus and Strabo. It is surprising

(25) Ibid.

(26a) p.40ff.

(26b) p.43ff.

(27) p.39ff.

(28) p.48 and p.535,536.

that both authors forgot to mention the use of the Shadouf and the Sakia (Water-well), which were widely used in ancient Egypt. On the use of the Archimedean screw there is a bit of obscurity or perhaps a contradiction, which has arisen from Diodorus statement's as regards the watering of the land of the Delta.

Another point worth mentioning here is that the Delta received more attention from the Classical authors than the rest of the country.

On the problem of the origin of the idea of digging between the Nile and the Red Sea, we found the views expressed by the various Classical authors differ sharply.⁽²⁹⁾

Unlike other topics concerning Egypt, the climate of Egypt did not receive its fair share of attention :⁽³⁰⁾ For none of the Classical authors was interested in writing a complete and systematic account on the climate of the country. Regarding their statements on the climate we observe that the majority of them were mistaken in calling Egypt a country without rain. This is one example of their inclination to exaggerate and show that there always existed a contrast between Greece or Rome on one side and Egypt on the other.

The Classical authors were not equally interested in writing on the flora of Egypt.⁽³¹⁾ Only Pliny and Dioscorides both

(29) p.64ff.

(30) p.75ff.

(31) p.85ff.

of whom mainly followed Theophrastus, have left two considerably useful lists of the various types of plants of that country. Sometimes, however, Pliny confused his authority. But Diodorus and Strabo also mentioned some plants, though they were not primarily interested in that subject.

Pliny's most useful contribution to our knowledge is his account on the papyrus and the manufacture of papyrus rolls.⁽³²⁾ Pliny and Strabo also mentioned the various types of papyrus rolls and the existence of some sort of monopoly not only in the growing of the plant but also in its industry.⁽³³⁾ Dioscorides was mainly interested in mentioning the plants which were useful for their food and/or medicine.

As with other topics, not all the Classical authors were interested in the fauna of Egypt.^(33b) There is a complete absence of a systematic treatment of the subject concerned. Thus we find that Diodorus and Strabo concentrated very much on scared animals, though, to be fair, Strabo gave a very brief but useful list of the various animals of Egypt and especially the various kinds of fish, which were to be found in the Nile. Dioscorides and Pomponius Mela ignored the matter and Pliny surprisingly mentioned but few animals.

(32) p.107ff.

(33) p.110ff

(33b)p.127ff.

The Classical authors also did not say much about the mineral resources of Egypt apart from the list of some of the minerals which were described by Pliny and also Dioscorides.⁽³⁴⁾ Diodorus and Strabo's contributions to our knowledge of the minerals of Egypt is very meagre indeed. Even when Diodorus mentioned the existence of the mines of gold and copper in Egypt in the Thebaid he failed to refer to the fact that copper ores were also found in Sinai. Diodorus' above mentioned reference to gold and copper and their uses is of a little scientific value. But Diodorus' lengthy discussion on the mining and working of gold in the Eastern Desert of Egypt, which is taken entirely from Agatharchides of Cnidos, is of extreme value.⁽³⁵⁾ The strange thing is that iron, which was and still is one of the most important minerals and which is to be found in large quantities in Egypt, is not mentioned by any of the Classical authors, with the exception of Pliny's reference to mine ores in connection with red ochre.

The most interesting and useful description is the one concerned with pigments or painting materials.⁽³⁶⁾ The Classical authors, particularly Pliny and Dioscorides threw a considerable light on the manufacture of these materials. For such pigments or painting materials are after all ^{what} made the ancient monuments look

(34) p.139ff.

(35) p.141ff.

(36) p.148ff.

amazingly new till the present day. The Classical authors' information in that matter is of a very great value and service to the archaeologist and the art-lover.

Although almost all the Classical authors mentioned in one way or other some of the towns and the important villages of ancient Egypt,⁽³⁷⁾ the fact remains that in Strabo's account of that country we have the best, the most informative, and the most accurate and detailed description of the topic concerned. No doubt this is because Strabo's account is topographical in nature and is based on his personal observation.

On the subject of towns and villages we observe also a remarkable divergence in the interests of the Classical writers of our chosen period. The interests of Strabo and Pliny, for instance, were different from those of Diodorus in that the former two were primarily concerned with such matters, whereas the third was almost completely uninterested in them. A further point which needs to be stressed here is, that Strabo and the others did not fail to notice the conditions to which the once flourishing and prosperous cities and towns of Egypt⁽³⁸⁾ had reached and how newly built towns had replaced other older towns.⁽³⁹⁾ One observes also that the Greek authors sometimes added a Greek flexional ending to

(37) p.171ff.

(38) e.g. Abydos. See from p.182 to p.184 Thebes. see from p.235 to p.260.

(39) e.g. Ptolema^{is}_{es} grew and flourished at the expense of both Abydos and Thebes.

the Egyptian name of the town after it has been translated. Other names of towns were slightly adapted to approximate to Greek names or to universally recognised barbaric names (e.g. Thebes and Babylon). One also notices that the majority of the Egyptian towns were designated by an expression consisting of $\pi\omicron\lambda\iota\varsigma$ (without actually being a city in a strict sense) and the name of the divinity⁽⁴⁰⁾ or the name of the animals venerated in the locality.⁽⁴¹⁾

Like modern tourists, the ancients in general and the Classical authors in particular were interested not in the Hellenistic cities and towns (with the exception of Alexandria) but in the pure Pharaonic towns and villages. A clear example is shown by Strabo's detailed description of Abydos, which was by Strabo's time deserted and insignificant while he passed by Ptolemais quite quickly.

The Roman authors, with the exception of Pomponius Mela, Pliny and Tacitus, referred to the towns of Egypt in a very peculiar manner. As we saw earlier in this thesis⁽⁴²⁾ some of them referred to Canopus deliberately, because of its notorious reputation, instead of Alexandria, the then metropolis of Egypt.

(40) e.g. Hermopolis, Apollonopolis, Aphroditopolis, Diosopolis, and the like.

(41) e.g. Crocodeolopolis, Lycopolis etc.

(42) p.204.

Their purpose in doing that was not to describe cities and towns in a serious manner but to disseminate hostile political propoganda against the Egyptians in order to blacken them.

On the subject of race, physical characteristics and behaviour, we find surprisingly little among the Classical authors. The reason perhaps is that the Greeks or Romans did not find anything peculiar about such matters worthy of reporting. But on the whole the Greeks were aware that the Egyptians were more ancient than themselves.

It is in the religion of the Egyptians that we notice the Classical writers were particularly interested and we find that all of them without exception referred to that subject in one way or the other. Nevertheless, on the mythology or the metaphysical aspect of the Egyptian religion credit goes to Diodorus for his lengthy account. For other Classical authors referred to that aspect of the Egyptian religion very briefly. The aspect which received the lion's share from the Classical authors, Greek and Roman, without distinction, is the cult of the sacred animals. The reason for the publicity, which was gained by the cult of the sacred animals abroad was perhaps due to the fact that that side of the religion appeared to the Greeks very strange and to the Romans even more so.

But if the mythology and the cult of the sacred animals were the only two sides of the Egyptian religion that attracted the attentions of the Greco-Roman writers, this does not

mean that the Egyptian religion consisted of these two aspects only. For it was a religion of many aspects. Thus we notice, for instance, the role of magic in that religion was surprisingly totally forgotten.

The discussion of the Egyptian religion, particularly the cult of the sacred animals provides us with a good example of the sharp contrast between the views of the Greeks and those of the Romans, expressed as regards the Egyptian religion.

The knowledge of the Classical authors on the religious ideas of the Egyptian was confused as they could not understand them because of the authors' inclination to syncretize and to equate the Egyptian religion with Greek religion, and because the Classical authors wrote mostly about the religion which was practised at the very end of the Egyptian period when everything seemed to be in a state of confusion, and also because many writers such as Diodorus were referring to the earlier period, while others such as Strabo, were referring to the time of the Greco-Roman period. On the other hand, the Classical authors, with few exceptions, were better informed about the great religious festivals and the oracles.⁽⁴³⁾ For while they could not enter the Egyptian temples and thus were not able to gain a deep real

(43) cf. Pierre Montet, op.cit. pp.283, 284.

understanding of the religious thought, besides their ignorance owing to the language difficulty, they, or rather most of them, were able to see for themselves or to be told by others about the religious festivals and the oracles.

A further point to be noticed from the discussion of the Egyptian religion as presented by the Classical writers is that the Egyptian gods with the exception of only a few, were identified with Greek ones⁽⁴⁴⁾ and thus, like the Egyptian towns, they were given Greek names. Also remarkable is the tendency of the Greek authors to interpret the Egyptian religious and philosophical ideas as though they were Greek ideas. That is again because of their syncretizing tendencies.

In their discussion of the classes of the Egyptian society Diodorus and Strabo were not entirely in agreement either on the division or the number or even the functions of these classes. But it is clear from Diodorus' and Strabo's statements about the classes that the priests and the warriors were the two most important classes of that society, after the royal family, as they were the most wealthy, powerful, influential and learned classes.

One also noticed that Diodorus praised very highly the Egyptian system of government and in particular the monarchical

(44) e.g. Amon was called Zeus and Thot was identified with Hermes and so forth. cf. also Pierre Montet, loc.cit.

system and its well-divided society, and the clear definition of each class, which by turn defined the occupation of each person who belonged to any of these classes. He praised more than any other thing the very strict rules that governed these classes. For speaking as an aristocrat Diodorus, as it seems from what he said, was not in favour of the way the Athenian democracy with which he compared the Egyptian system of Government worked and the extent to which the masses participated in the working of the government and in taking decisions. Moreover he seems to have ~~favoured~~^{preferred} the monarchical system of Egypt to the democracies of Greece. This attitude of Diodorus fits very much with the current trend in the Hellenistic era to find justifications and evidences in support of the monarchical system.^C (45)

The laws of Egypt were described only by Diodorus and the customs were a matter of real interest to several Classical authors, especially Diodorus and Strabo, who recorded their personal observations, and Pomponius Mela, who drew his account on the customs almost entirely from what Herodotus had written five centuries before.

The Egyptian customs and habits seemed very peculiar to the Classical authors, and everything the Egyptians did or said

(45) cf. M.Rostovtzeff, op.cit. vol.I. p.268.

appeared to be opposite to the way the Greek, or the Romans did or said things. It is in their descriptions of the customs of the Egyptians that we find a further example of the Greek and Roman writers' love of contrasts and their tendency for generalising and exaggerating.

In commenting on the value of what the Classical authors said about Egypt and the Egyptians we shall not find better way to end our thesis than by quoting the words of the modern Egyptologist Pierre Montet.⁽⁴⁶⁾

'Taken as a whole, the evidence supplied by the Classical writers was extremely valuable to the first Egyptologists and is still very useful today. Since we now have direct sources of information at our disposal the problem is no longer the same as it used to be. We no longer accept the evidence of these authors without checking it carefully. There are points on which we have to accept it provisionally, such as it is, and we can do this all the more confidently since it has proved reliable in some other connections'.

(46) Pierre Montet, *op.cit.* pp.285, 286.

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I have used the basic classical lexicons and encyclopaedias in preparing this thesis, and I have also made use of the relevant material in the Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, ed. J.Hastings and also in a A Dictionary of Life in the Bible Times, by W.Corswant (translated from the French by A.Heathcote, 1960). The article on Egypt in the Encyclopaedia Britannica (Current edition) by H.S.Dughton and Air-Commander K.C.Buss has been helpful. In Pauly-Wissowa-Kroll Real-Encyclopadie I have found the articles on Deinocrates (by Fabricius) and on Pharos (by Polaschek and Reinke) particularly useful.

In the Egyptological field I am also indebted to A Dictionary of Egyptian Civilisation edited by Georges Posener (Eng. trans. London, Methuen, 1962); and in connection of the flora of Egypt I have found Students' Flora of Egypt, by Vivi Tackholm; vernacular names by M.Drar (Cairo, Anglo-Egyptian Bookshop, 1956) very helpful.

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