

*ORIGIN AND SIGNIFICANCE*



*OF*

*THE*

*GREAT PYRAMID*

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THE GREAT PYRAMID.

BY  
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## P R E F A C E .

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THE subject treated of in the following pages has during the last few years attracted much attention, thanks to the influence of Prof. C. Piazzì Smyth's important work, "Life and Work at the Great Pyramid." It was to test, by the light of history, the conclusion accepted by that writer as to the inspired origin of the Great Pyramid that I entered upon a consideration of the subject. That such an origin was required by the facts, I did not suppose, but the conviction was forced on me that the structure had much more importance, viewed as a scientific and religious monument, than was generally conceded. I found nothing, however, to show that either

its design or its construction necessitated Divine intervention. I was led to the conclusion, nevertheless, that the builders of the Great Pyramid intended to perpetuate certain scientific ideas, and, moreover, that they had a religious motive in its erection. There is little doubt, indeed, that it is a monument of Sabaism—the worship of the heavenly host, which had a wide extension in the ancient world, and with which “Serpent worship” was intimately connected. The importance of the Great Pyramid as a religico-scientific structure is still further increased if, as is not improbable, it was intended to mark the substitution of an astronomy based on the passage of the sun through the twelve signs of the Zodiac for the lunar astronomy which preceded it. My endeavour has been to state fairly the historical conditions of the problem considered, and to point

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out the direction in which its solution must be sought. With the question as to the original source from which the wisdom of the Ancients, of which the Great Pyramid is so wonderful a monument, was derived, these pages are not concerned.

The Serpent, enclosed in a pyramid, given on the cover, is taken from a gem figured in Matter's "Histoire Critique du Gnosticism," *planche* II B, figure 2. It is there said to be the Solar Chnouphis or Agathodemon—Christos, with the seven sons of Sophia (Wisdom), the seven planetary genii.

The substance of this little work was read as a Paper before the Hull Literary Club on the 13th March, 1882.

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CHAPTER I.

THE ASTRONOMICAL THEORY.

THE GREEKS of the time of Alexander the Great were so impressed with the magnitude or splendour of certain edifices, that they spoke of them as the seven wonders of the world. Among these, the first place was given to the Pyramids of Egypt, and pre-eminently to those of Ghizeh, which are situate a few miles from Cairo, and in the neighbourhood of ancient Memphis. The Pyramids of Ghizeh form a group of nine, consisting of three large ones, known as the Pyramid of Cheops, or the Great Pyramid; that of Cephren; and that of Mycerinus, which is inferior in size to either of the others. The six other pyramids of the Ghizeh group are much smaller,

and are supposed to be the tombs of female relatives of the kings who constructed the larger ones. From the term "Great" applied to the largest pyramid, it might be thought that it far exceeds in size any of the others. As a fact, however, the Pyramid of Cephren is not very much smaller than that of Cheops, which was about 756 feet square at the base and 480 feet high, as against 707 feet 9 inches the extreme length of the sides, and 454 the height, of the Second Pyramid. Moreover, the construction of the two pyramids was, according to Col. Vyse, carried on upon the same principles. This is true more especially of the general design and external characters of the buildings, which in their internal features, however, differ considerably. The position of the chambers, and the inclination of the passages of the Great Pyramid are exceptional, and, judging from these peculiarities and from certain scientific facts supposed to be embodied in it, several modern writers have affirmed that the design for the Great Pyramid must have been derived from an inspired source. The originator of this theory was John Taylor who in 1859, published a book on the subject

\* "The Great Pyramid: Why was it built? and who built it?"

and as in recent years it has attracted considerable attention, chiefly through its adoption by the author of "Life and Work at the Great Pyramid," Prof. C. Piazzi Smyth, the Astronomer Royal of Scotland, and as the scientific facts on which it is based are admittedly true, it is necessary to consider the theory.

In the first place, the Great Pyramid is said to embody in its form and proportions certain facts as to the size and shape of the earth. Thus, John Taylor says that the builders of the Great Pyramid "imagined the earth to be a sphere, and as they knew that the radius of a circle must bear a certain proportion to its circumference, they built a four-sided pyramid of such a height in proportion to its base that its perpendicular would be the radius of a sphere equal to the perimeter of the base." This shape is supposed to have reference to an important astronomical fact, seeing that "the vertical height of the Great Pyramid multiplied by 10 to the 9th power ( $10^9$ ) tells the mean distance of the sun from the earth—that is, one thousand million times the pyramid's height, or 91,840,000 miles." \* More-

\* Mr. Proctor regards this fact as a mere coincidence, although he deems it probable that the smaller unit of measurement used

over, the Great Pyramid is thought to supply a standard of linear measure, based on the length of the polar axis of the earth. Assuming this length to be 500,500,000 of our inches, the 500-millionth of that axis (omitting fractions) will be one inch. Of these inches, 25 or 25.025 of our inches would form a cubit or longer standard, the ten millionth part of the semi-axis of the globe in length, which is the measure of the sacred cubit of the ancient Hebrews. This cubit of 25 earth inches is contained in each side of the Great Pyramid as many times as there are days in the year, and the inch itself "is contained separately and independently in the entire perimeter of the Great Pyramid's base just one hundred times for each day of the year." The inch is also said to be the "representative of a year in the reckoning of the passage floor lines as charts of history, also in the diagonals of the pyramid's base taken as a measure of the precessional cycle."

The Great Pyramid is found, moreover, to furnish an important weight and capacity mea-

by the Great Pyramid builders was intended to have a relation to the earth's diameter, as stated in the text.—"Myths and Marvels of Astronomy" (Ed. 1880), pp. 66, 73.

sure having relation to the mean density or specific gravity of the earth. These earth-measures are said to be reproduced in the Coffin preserved in the large or so-called King's Chamber of the Great Pyramid, the internal capacity of which vessel is just four times the measure of an English *quarter* of wheat. The Great Pyramid was thus, according to the holders of the inspiration theory, originally designed as a perfect and complete metrological monument. This conclusion is thought to be supported by the great astronomical knowledge possessed by the builders, who were aware, not only of the shape and rotatory motion of the earth, but also of its distance from the sun. They were able, further, to do what was found so difficult up to a comparatively recent date—to fix with precision the position of the four cardinal points, as is shewn by the fact that the pyramid stands due North, South, East, and West.

The Great Pyramid is thus seen to be an important *astronomical* monument, and it is no less remarkable in relation to certain *chronological* facts. It is supposed to perpetuate the great cycle founded on the precession of the equinoxes. This sidereal year is equal to 25,868

of our years, and the two diagonals of the pyramid's base taken together are said to measure just the same number of inches. It is thought, moreover, that by means of this cycle the date of the erection of the pyramid can be ascertained. Assuming that the long narrow downward passage leading from the entrance was directed towards the pole star of the pyramid builders, astronomers have shown that in the year 2,170 B.C. the passage pointed to Alpha Draconis, the then pole star, at its lower culmination, at the same time that the Pleiades, particularly Alcyone, the centre of the group, were on the same meridian above. This relative position of Alpha Draconis and Alcyone being an extraordinary one, as it could not occur again for a whole sidereal year, it is thought to mark the date of the building of the Great Pyramid.\* It should be mentioned, however, that the date named is not the only possible one. Mr. Richard A. Proctor the astronomer, after stating that the Pole-star was in the required position about 3,350 B.C., as well as in 2,170 B.C., says "either of

\* I have taken the opinions of the Pyramidalists from the 9th edition of an ingenious work by Dr. Seiss, of Philadelphia, entitled "A. Miracle in Stone."

these would correspond with the position of the descending passage in the Great Pyramid; but Egyptologists tell us there can absolutely be no doubt that the later epoch is far too late." He adds: "If then we regard the slant passage as intended to bear on the Pole-star at its sub-polar passage, we get the date of the pyramid assigned as about 3,350 years B.C., with a probable limit of error of not more than 200 years either way, and perhaps of only fifty years."\*

The testimony of Mr. Proctor is important as he has recently performed very valuable work in pointing out the true astronomical meaning of the passages and galleries which distinguish the internal structure of the Great Pyramid from that of other pyramids. We may now accept the view that the former has been erected with an astronomical purpose, although its measurements may not have all the significance sometimes assigned to them.

Mr. Proctor, while admitting the existence of many of the curious coincidences on which the theory of the inspired origin of the Great

\* *Knowledge* Vol. i. pp. 242-400. This agrees very well with one of the dates given by Diodorus, but 2,170 B.C. is a preferable date on grounds which will be referred to *infra*.



Pyramid is based, gives an entirely different explanation of them. He declares, indeed, "that they are *mere* coincidences, and that they would still remain if the pyramid had no existence." The fact that they exist, and are in themselves so singular, shows simply how little value there is in the argument from mere coincidence.\* In support of this opinion, Mr. Proctor refers to "the multitude of relations, independent of the pyramid, which have turned up while Pyramid-ists have been endeavouring to connect the pyramid with the solar system." "These coincidences," he says, "are altogether more curious than any coincidence between the Pyramid and astronomical numbers: the former are as close and remarkable as they are real; the latter, which are only imaginary, have only been established by the process which schoolboys call 'fudging,' and now new measures have left the work to be done all over again."† The new measures here referred to show that the base of the pyramid is

\* They must, however, have been more than mere coincidences if the builders of the pyramid had the astronomical knowledge displayed in its perfect orientation and in its other admitted astronomical features. See *infra*.

† See Mr. Petrie's letter to *The Academy*, Dec. 17, 1881. Mr. Proctor's views are taken from *Knowledge*, Vol. i. unless otherwise stated.

several feet shorter than had been supposed, and this will necessitate a change in the pyramid inch and in the length of the cubit on which the astronomical relations of the Great Pyramid were based.

Mr. Proctor's own explanation of the peculiar features which distinguish the internal construction of the Great Pyramid from that of the other pyramids is very ingenious, and probably conclusive. He says, we see "in all the Egyptian pyramids the evidence of an astronomical plan; and in the Great Pyramid we find evidence that such a plan was carried out with great skill, and with an attention to points of detail which shows that, for some reason or other, the edifice was required to be most carefully built in a special astronomical position." Moreover, to obtain such accuracy, it was made to serve, while being built, "the purpose of an astronomical observatory." To this end, "the builders of the Great Pyramid used the passages which they made within it to determine the proper position of each part of it, up to the so-called King's Chamber, at least, and probably higher." The slant descending passage was directed to the position of the Pole-star when it was due north and at

its lowest, for the purpose of obtaining true orientation. As layer after layer of the building was placed, this passage was carried towards the north until it reached the northern face of the Pyramid. Here it was compelled to terminate and another mode of observing the Pole-star had to be used. This was effected by making a fresh passage "in such a direction as to contain the rays from the Pole-star after reflection at a horizontal surface, such as that of still water." The reflecting surface required was obtained by plugging the descending passage and pouring in water so as to partially fill the angle thus formed, from which the rays would be reflected up the ascending passage. Mr. Proctor remarks that thus far the pyramid builders had "been working with manifest reference to the meridional plane, just as an astronomer of our own time would; and it looks very much, even from what we have already seen, as though they had considered this plane for the same reason that the modern astronomer considers it—viz., because this is the plane in which all the heavenly bodies culminate, or attain the middle and highest point of their passage from the eastern to the western horizon." Mr. Proctor adds that at the point where the

Grand Gallery commences all doubt ceases. "The astronomical nature of the builder's purpose becomes here as clear and certain as already the astronomical nature of their methods had been. For from here upwards the small ascending passage is changed to one of great height, so as to command a long vertical space of the heavens, precisely as a modern astronomer sets his transit circle to sweep the vertical meridian." This Grand Gallery shows that it was intended for astronomical observations by its double character. Its walls, taken as wholes, are aslant, but every part of the them is absolutely vertical, as would be required by an astronomer if his observations were to be of value. To facilitate these observations, long slant stone ramps or banks are placed at each side of the gallery the whole of its length, with holes in them at equal distances for the purpose of receiving movable seats. Regarded as a kind of architectural transit instrument, the Great Gallery would, says Mr. Proctor, "have to be carried to a certain height, and there open out on the level to which the pyramid had then attained, the sides and top being carried up until the southernmost end of the gallery was completed." At that end commences the so-called

Antechamber, and the floor of this chamber and of the King's Chamber, then not walled in, would serve to station a time indicator and the watchers "appointed to mark the passage of time in some way, and to note also the instants when the observer or observers in the Great Gallery signalled the beginning or end of transit across the gallery's field of view." Mr. Proctor concludes an interesting chapter on this subject by saying, "if a telescopist of our time will try to plan out a method of determining the declinations and right ascensions of stars (say for the purpose of forming a trustworthy star chart or catalogue), without using a telescope, by using such an observing place as the Great Gallery, he will see how much might be done, so far as equatorial and zodiacal stars were concerned; and they are altogether the most important, even now, and were still more so in the days when the stars in their courses were supposed to rule the fates of men and nations." In a further article, Mr. Proctor gives a view of the Pyramid observatory, showing the object end of the great observing tube. In that article he says, "the astronomers who observed from the Great Pyramid doubtless made many more observations off the meridian



than on it . . . They no doubt often used astrolabes and similar instruments to determine the position of stars, planets, comets, etc., when off the meridian, with reference to stars whose places were already determined by the use of their great meridional instrument. But all those observations were regulated by, and derived their value from, the work done in the Great Ascending Gallery. The modern astronomer sees that this was the only way in which exact observations of the heavenly bodies all over the starsphere could possibly have been made; and seeing the extreme care, the most marvellous pains, which the astronomers of the Great Pyramid took to secure good meridional work, the astronomer recognizes in them fellow workers."

Mr. Proctor very properly assumes, however, that the builder of the Great Pyramid had something more than a scientific purpose in its erection, something beyond even its use as a tomb. That purpose is to be gathered from the fact that "the astronomy of the time of Cheops was essentially astrology, and astrology a most important part of religion." The Great Pyramid was erected as a place from which the heavenly

bodies could be observed, and their movements were observed and studied that Cheops might know what was to happen, and learn the times and seasons which were likely to be fortunate or unfortunate for him or his race. "As an astrological edifice," says Mr. Proctor, "a gigantic horoscope for him and for him only, we can understand its purport, much though we may marvel at the vast expenditure of care, labour, and treasure at which it was erected. Granted full faith in astrology (and we know there was such faith), it was worth while to build even such a structure as the Great Pyramid; just as, granted the ideas of Egyptians about burial, we can understand the erection of so mighty a mass, and all save its special astronomical character. Of no other theory, I venture to say, than that which combines these two strange but most marked characteristics of the Egyptian mind, can this be said."

Mr. Proctor gives a figure, taken from Raphael's "Astrology," representing the ordinary horoscope and its relations to "a horizontal, carefully-oriented square plane surface, such as the top of the pyramid was, with just such direction lines as would naturally be used on such a platform";

and, apart from the reasons assigned by him for the differences in size\* between the Pyramids of Cheops, and those of Cephren, his brother, and Mycerinus and Asychis, his son and grandson, Mr. Proctor has conclusively established the astrological purpose of the Great Pyramid. Elsewhere, he says, "remembering the mysterious influence which astrologers ascribed to special numbers, figures, positions, and so forth, the care with which the Great Pyramid was so proportioned as to indicate particular astronomical and mathematical relations is at once explained. The four sides of the square base were carefully placed with reference to the cardinal points, precisely like the four sides of the ordinary square scheme of nativity. The eastern side faced the Ascendant, the southern faced the Mid-heaven, the western faced the Descendant, and the northern faced the *Imum Cœli*. Again, we can understand that the architects would have made a circuit of the base correspond in length with the number of days in the year—a relation which, according to Prof. P. Smyth, is fulfilled in this manner, that the four sides contain one hundred times as many

\* The size of each Pyramid is usually supposed to denote the length of the reign of the Monarch by whom it was constructed.



pyramid inches as there are days in the year. The pyramid inch again is itself mystically connected with astronomical relations, for its length is equal to the five hundred millionth part of the earth's diameter, to a degree of exactness corresponding well with what we might expect Chaldean astronomers to attain. . . . It is not [indeed] at all certain that the sacred cubit bore any reference to the earth's dimensions, but this seems tolerably well made out—that the sacred cubit was about 25 inches in length, and that the circuit of the pyramid's base contained a hundred inches for every day of the year. Relations such as these are precisely what we might expect to find in buildings having an astrological significance. Similarly, it would correspond well with the mysticism of astrology that the pyramid should be so proportioned as to make the height be the radius of a circle whose circumference would equal the circuit of the pyramid's base. Again, that long slant tunnel leading downwards from the pyramid's northern face, would at once find a meaning in this astrological theory. The slant tunnel pointed to the pole-star of Cheops's time, when due north below the true pole of the heavens. This circumstance

had no observational utility. It could afford no indication of time, because a pole-star moves very slowly, and the pole-star of Cheops's day must have been in view through that tunnel for more than an hour at a time. But, apart from the mystical significance which an astrologer would attribute to such a relation, it may be shown that this slant tunnel is precisely what the astrologer would require in order to get the horoscope correctly.\* Mr. Proctor supports his view as to the astrological object of the pyramid by reference to the fact that in the account given by Ebn Abd Al Hôkm of the contents of the Pyramids of Ghizeh, those assigned to the East or Great Pyramid "relate entirely to astrology and associated mysteries."† The Arab writer, or rather the earlier historian, Masoudi, whose account he repeats, says, "in the eastern pyramid were inscribed the heavenly spheres, and figures representing the stars and planets in the forms in which they were worshipped. The king also deposited the instruments and the thuribula with which his forefathers had sacrificed to the stars,

\* "Myths and Marvels of Astronomy" (Ed. 1880), p. 101.

† Ditto, p. 103.

and their circles ; together with the history and chronicles of time past, of that which is to come, and of every future event which would take place in Egypt.”\*

The connection of astrology with the Great Pyramid is thus confirmed by ancient testimony, but this does not support the notion that the chief object of its erection was astrological. An early Arab writer, Jafer Ben Mohammed Balkhi, who was himself an astrologer, says that the pyramids were built for refuge against an approaching destruction of every created being, by submersion or by fire, which was foreseen by wise men previous to the flood.† The founder of the Great Pyramid had undoubtedly a more permanent object in its erection than its use as a horoscope for the benefit of himself and his family. Mr. Proctor speaks of the religious observances associated with astrological observations. These, being made by priests, were religious in character, and in all probability the priests who made them “professed a religion differing little from pure Sabaism, or the worship

\* See Appendix II.

† Vyse, “Operations at the Pyramids of Gizeh,” Vol. .  
p. 319.

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of the heavenly host," of which astrology was the natural offspring. Religion has here a secondary character, however, and it is quite subsidiary to the astrological purpose with which the pyramid is supposed to have been erected. The reverse of this would be nearer the truth, and it will be hereafter shown that whatever may have been its temporary purpose, its primary object was religious.

## CHAPTER II.

## EARLY EGYPTIAN CIVILIZATION.

NOTWITHSTANDING the religious object of the erection of the Great Pyramid, there is no ground for supposing that its erection required the aid of Divine inspiration or guidance. Prof. Smyth affirms however, that the Great Pyramid measures are quite different from those used by the ancient Egyptians. They were the sacred measures of the Hebrews, but this people could not, according to Prof. Smyth, have been its builders, as they were dwellers in tents. Nor, on the same authority, were the Egyptians more competent. Their wisdom was not sufficient to enable them to design the Great Pyramid. The civilization of the Egyptians, moreover, had a sudden beginning, so that they could not have gradually acquired the necessary scientific knowledge for such a purpose. Prof. Smyth further asserts that there is no evidence of the existence of

an earlier race who could have designed the Great Pyramid, and he affirms that it was erected by a people foreign to the land of Egypt, whom he calls Cushites or Chaldeans, under Divine guidance.\*

It is evident that the real argument of those who hold the theory of divine inspiration in relation to the Great Pyramid is the supposed absence of any people who could by their own knowledge design the structure. Dr. Seiss, who finds a reference to the pyramid in the Book of Job, says as to this ancient book, "In it we find a familiarity with writing, engraving in stone, mining, metallurgy, building, shipping, natural history, astronomy, and science in general, showing an advanced, organised, and exalted state of society, answering exactly to what pertains above all to the sons of Joktan, whose descendants spread themselves from Upper Arabia to the South Seas, and from the Persian Gulf to the Pillars of Hercules, tracking their course as the first teachers of our modern world with the greatest monuments that antiquity contains."†

\* "Life and Work at the Great Pyramid," Vol. iii. pp. 465, *seq.*, 521 *seq.*

† "A Miracle in Stone," p. 210.

According to Dr. Seiss, the Joktanites were the true Arabians, and they, and not the Cushites, were the highly cultured people who erected those great monuments. This writer, moreover, sees in Job the son of Joktan, and he suggests the identity of the Patriarch with the Philition, whose name is associated by Herodotus with the erection of the Great Pyramid. It will be thought that as the Joktanites had the scientific qualifications necessary for the erection of the Great Pyramid, there is no occasion to call in the aid of divine inspiration. Not so Dr. Seiss, who terms this great structure "a miracle in stone, a petrification of wisdom and truth revealed of God, preserved among his people from the foundation of the world, and thus memorialised by impulse and aid from Him."\*

It is evident, however, that Dr. Seiss admits too much. If the Joktanites had the scientific knowledge ascribed to them, they could have built the Great Pyramid without divine guidance. How this knowledge was originally acquired is another question, and one which does not now concern us. Prof. Smyth, who ascribes the building of the pyramid to the influence of the

\* "A Miracle in Stone," p. 226.

Cushites, makes an equally fatal admission. He says, "The spirit, then, of the Egyptians at the building of the Great Pyramid was the same which marked them, both at the oppression of the children of Israel afterwards, and, in conjunction with other peoples, at the building of the Tower of Babel before. In so far as the Egyptians could accomplish it in their new work on the banks of the Nile, and as they flattered themselves, too, for ages that they had accomplished it even to the full,—the Great Pyramid was a resurgence in a new land, and with a community speaking a new language, of their thwarted ideas in another place; but through the humble agency of the shepherd Philition their labours were made really to tell against themselves."\* The reference made in this passage to the Tower of Babel is important. This building appears to have struck the imagination of the ancient world by its magnitude as much as the Great Pyramid has since done, and we may well suppose that a people who could rear the one could erect the other without supernatural aid. Moreover, if, as Prof. Smyth supposes, the Egyptians sought to carry out in the later

\* "Life and Work at the Great Pyramid," Vol. iii. p. 530.



building the ideas which they with other peoples had attempted to embody in the Tower of Babel, there does not appear to be any object in calling in such aid either for the designing or the erection of the Great Pyramid.

It will be objected, however, that the Babylonian Tower could not have formed the model for the great Egyptian edifice, as they were of different construction; and that, as the Great Pyramid was not only the largest but the earliest of the pyramids, its design could not have been derived from the former through intermediate structures. This argument would doubtless have great force if it were founded on fact. In reality, however, the Pyramids of Ghizeh, although the largest, are not the earliest Egyptian monuments of this description.\* The best modern authorities believe that the great Pyramid of Sakkarah was erected by one of the kings of the First Dynasty, whereas the Pyramids of Ghizeh belong to the Fourth Dynasty. If that was so, the fact is of great importance, since the design of the Sakkarah pyramid, as shown by its name of

\* Sir J. Gardner Wilkinson ascribes the Pyramid of Abousetr to Shuré (Soris), the immediate predecessor of Cheops, according to Manetho. (*See Appendix II.*)

Pyramid of Degrees, evidently approaches that of the Tower of Babel. It might well have formed the original on which the design of the Great Pyramid of Ghizeh was modelled, notwithstanding that the internal features of the two buildings differ considerably. The peculiarity of the Great Pyramid is that its chambers and passages are chiefly formed in the structure itself, instead of being cut out of the rock on which the building is erected. Sir J. Gardner Wilkinson affirms, indeed, but not very correctly, that the passages of the Second Pyramid are very similar to those of the Great Pyramid; and Prof. Smyth remarks on the analogy between the Sepulchral Room of the one and the so-called King's Chamber of the other structure. This latter authority thinks the analogy not real, however, as the King's Chamber is "140 feet above the ground outside and in the midst of worked masonry,—or in a position where no pyramid was ever yet known to have any chamber or to bury a man; while the large chamber of the Second Pyramid is excavated in rock, and has its floor below the level of the ground outside,—or in a position suitable to burying." The shape and position of the sarcophagus

in this burial chamber, as compared with the coffer of the Great Pyramid, are said to weaken still further the analogy, which Prof. Smyth considers to be finally disposed of by the fact, not to be overlooked, that "while the chamber of the Second Pyramid is directly led *to* by the leading of the entrance passage and its conspicuously lined walls, the King's Chamber of the Great Pyramid is just as directly led *away from* by the entrance-passage there, which seems rather to have been a blind and shield to it, and a diversion to all who would come to seek for that remarkable chamber. . . . Hence *the* chamber in the Great Pyramid, which is truly the representative of the larger one in the Second Pyramid, can be no other than that usually despised, but nevertheless very large, subterranean chamber which is excavated in the rock at the bottom of the long entrance passage, and equally with the chambers excavated in other pyramids must have been intended to be easily discovered, and looked on as sepulchral, while the so-called King's Chamber of the Great Pyramid stands absolutely unique."\* From this point of view, it might probably be said that the

\* "Life and Work," etc., Vol. I. p. 268.

Great Pyramid was, like other structures of the same kind, intended for a sepulchral monument, but that it had some other aim, denoted by the various chambers and passages which mark its peculiar internal construction. As a fact, however, the subterranean chamber of the Great Pyramid was never completely excavated, from which perhaps may have arisen the tradition that, owing to the opposition of the people, the body of Cheops, the royal builder, was not after all deposited in the tomb prepared for it.

It is only in comparatively modern times that any doubt has been thrown on the sepulchral aim of the Great Pyramid, and we will see what light antiquity throws on the subject. But first as to the period of its erection and the social and political condition which prevailed in Egypt at that epoch. The building of the Pyramids of Ghizeh is universally ascribed to the Fourth Dynasty, and that of the Great Pyramid in particular to Khoufou or Souphis, commonly known as Cheops, the first king of the dynasty. M. Lenormant, in the ninth edition of his important work on the "Ancient History of the East," states, that "the first reigns of the Fourth Dynasty marked the culminating point of the primitive

history of Egypt. The splendour and the internal richness of the country would appear to have been immense under these princes, and are sufficiently attested by their prodigious constructions. The limits of the kingdom extended as far as the first cataract; the capital was always at Man-nofri, or Memphis, and the centre of the life of the empire was in its environs."\* The Egyptian monarchy was founded by Mena or Menes, who built the royal city of Man-nofri, that is, the "good place," or "good port," and whose dynasty occupied the throne for 253 years. The kings of the Second Dynasty, which probably also belonged to the family of Menes, reigned during a period of 302 years, and it was succeeded by a native Memphite dynasty which endured for 214 years. The Egyptian monarchy had thus existed for more than 750 years before the commencement of the Fourth Dynasty, a period which was amply sufficient for the development of the scientific and artistic knowledge necessary for the construction of even the Great Pyramid itself. An English Egyptologist, Dr. S. Birch, has given a very interesting account of the attainments of Egyptian civilization at that epoch. He says,

\* Tom. ii. p. 71.

“Architecture, as represented by the Pyramids, had become an advanced science, and reflected the geometric and theoretical knowledge of mathematics which their form and structure described for all future ages. The technical masonry was unrivalled, the finish admirable and unsurpassed by any later efforts of the Egyptian architect. The hardest materials, such as the granite of Syene, were hewn into the requisite form of the truest proportions, while the softer but more beautiful alabaster had been discovered and worked. In sculpture a canon of proportion had been discovered and laid down for the human figure, and granite, diorite, and other hard stones conquered and moulded into shape by the efforts of the chisel. The statue of Kephren is equal, if not superior, to the subsequent efforts of Egyptian sculpture, while in the features is clearly to be recognised a portrait of the monarch, showing that the power of producing excellent representations of the living form in all its details existed . . . In wood even greater excellence was attained, for in that material the sculptor developed all his power. The wooden statue of the Museum of Boulaq is an unrivalled work of ancient art . . . The bas-

reliefs of the tombs are executed with a minute detail . . . The graphic system of writing was complete; the language perfectly represented by the hieroglyphs, which presented to the eye a lively picture on the painted wall of tomb or sepulchre; while the inscriptions show that the religion of the country was already reduced to a system, and the seasons marked by a regular calendar of festivals. The political organization had also attained a considerable degree of refinement. The court of Memphis swarmed with sacerdotal personages, prophets and prophetesses of the gods, and priests attached to the personal worship of the monarch. Scribes and secretaries were attached to the Pharaoh, superintendents were set over every branch of the public service. In private life the Egyptian lord led a charmed life—his estate was cultivated by slaves, his household full of domestics; the barber, the waiting-maid, the nurse, appear as necessary adjuncts to his household as the steward who presided over the distribution and the clerk who checked the expenses of his daily life. Each priest or noble had in his establishment all the trades necessary for his ease and comfort—the glass-blower, the gold-worker, the potter, the

tailor, the baker, and the butler. His leisure or *ennui* was charmed by the acrobat and the dancer, the harpist and the singer; games of chance and skill were played either by him or in his presence. The chief occupation of the period, or at all events that most often represented in the tombs, was inspection of the farm." After particularizing the domesticated animals possessed by the noble of the Fourth Dynasty, the food he ate, and the dress he wore, Dr. Birch continues, "Simple, but elegant, furniture ministered to his requirements. Stools, chairs, footstools, couches, and headrests, or wooden pillows—the use of these rests is still retained in Africa,—appear in the furniture of his elegantly-built house . . . He enjoyed all the pleasures of existence, and delighted more in the arts of peace than war."\*

This view of early Egyptian society agrees with the statements of other writers. M. Lenormant affirms that the representations on a tomb of one of the great officers under the Third Dynasty show us the Egyptian civilization as completely organized as it was at the date of the conquest by the Persians, or of that by the Macedonians, with a physiognomy perfectly in-

\* "Ancient History from the Monuments."—*Egypt*, pp. 42—46.



dividual and the marks of a long anterior existence. The inhabitants of the valley of the Nile had then not only the same species of domestic animals as those which they took with them in their migrations, but certain species of indigenous mammalia which we find only in a savage state, although the only beast of burden is the ass, neither the horse nor the camel being yet known. According to Sir J. Gardner Wilkinson, indeed, the Egyptians of the Fourth Dynasty had "the same settled habits as in later times. We see no primitive mode of life; no barbarous customs; not even the habit, so slowly abandoned by all peoples, of wearing arms when not in military service, nor any archaic art."\*

But what was the condition of the Egyptian civilization 750 years earlier, at the commencement of the first Memphite Dynasty? Menes, the founder of the dynasty, is said to have diverted the ancient course of the Nile, and to have constructed a colossal dam to keep back the river, so as to form a site for his capital—a work which still continues to regulate the waters of that region. The city of Memphis with the

\* Rawlinson's "Herodotus," vol. ii. p. 344.

neighbouring towns became, says M. Lenormant, quoting M. Maspero, "the home of Egyptian civilization. It was at Memphis that literature developed and flourished; at Memphis, in the palace of the kings, that the exact sciences were cultivated with the greatest care; at Memphis, finally, that the plastic arts produced their *chefs d'œuvre*." The immediate successor of Menes began the construction of the palace at Memphis, and is reputed to have composed books on medicine.\*

The name of the succeeding monarch is given as the constructor of one of the pyramids of Sakkarah. During the reign of the fifth monarch of the dynasty, several chapters of the Book of the Dead are said to have been found, and also a treatise of medicine, of which the text has been preserved to us in the medical papyrus at Berlin. Menes himself is referred to in official history as the perfect type of a monarch, a constructor, a legislator, and a conqueror. The priests, whose power he had broken, represented him as a corrupter of the simplicity of primitive manners, and the introducer of habits of luxury and effeminacy, among them being

\* Tom. ii, p. 58.

that of reclining on a bed or couch at meals.\* To one of his successors, the second king of the Second Dynasty, is ascribed the erection of the Great Pyramid of Sakkarah, known as the Pyramid of Degrees, which must have long preceded the larger structure at Ghizeh. The form, and especially the underground arrangement of the former structure, are evidence of its great antiquity, as they reproduce many of the features of the Egyptian tombs of the early Memphite period. These consist of a deep pit, leading to an underground chamber, and surmounted by a building which serves in great measure to conceal the entrance to the proper tomb. The Pyramid of Degrees is formed of a series of such buildings of decreasing size, placed one above the other, the ground beneath it being excavated in various places, so as to form numerous passages and chambers to be used for sepulchral purposes. The same general plan is found in the Second Pyramid of Ghizeh, but in the latter the deep pit is replaced by the long slanting passage.

The civilization which found its home at Memphis might thus well have originated the

\* Tom. ii. p. 58, *seq.*

science necessary for the formation of the Great Pyramid. The erection of this building is, indeed, supposed by M. Lenormant to have been preceded several centuries by that of the Sphinx, the image of the reclining Sun-god, and also of the neighbouring temple, the structure of which is described as prodigious even by the side of the Pyramids. An inscription of the time of Khoufou, or Cheops,\* speaks of this temple as having been accidentally discovered buried in the sand of the desert, and the Sphinx appears to have had need of repair during the reign of the same monarch. But we cannot suppose the civilization of the founders of Memphis to have been suddenly acquired. The overthrow of the priestly power, which Menes accomplished, requires the prior existence of a culture differing perhaps little, except in its milder and more peaceful character, from that which afterwards developed itself in the Memphite region. Sir J. Gardner Wilkinson, says, indeed, that all the facts lead to the conclusion that the Egyptians had already "made very great progress in the arts of civilization be-

\* It should be mentioned, however, that Egyptologists are not agreed in supposing this inscription to be contemporaneous with Cheops.

## CHAPTER III.

## THE TOMB THEORY.

DURING how many centuries before the foundation of the monarchy by Menes the Egyptian culture had been developing, we do not know, but we cannot doubt that under Cheops it was well able to give origin to the Great Pyramid, the construction of which must be regarded as the chief glory of his reign. We have now to consider, from the testimony of ancient writers, what was the object of that gigantic structure. From the inscriptions, it would seem to have been called "the Great Temple of Shofo," and with its precinct to have been dedicated at one time to the worship of that king. We are, however, dependent entirely on the Greek writers for any account of its construction. Herodotus, who lived in the 5th century before Christ, states that the founder of the Great Pyramid, Cheops, was a prince whose crimes and tyranny rendered

his name odious, even to posterity. He closed all the temples and forbade the Egyptians to perform sacrifices ; after which he made them all work for him. Some were employed to cut stones in the quarries of the so-called Arabian Hills, on the east side of the Nile, and to convey them to the other side of the river, whence the stones were dragged to the Libyan hills ; 100,000 men were thus employed at a time, and they were relieved by an equal number every three months. The construction of the causeway for the transport of the stones occupied ten years, which was exclusive of the time spent in levelling the hill on which the Pyramids stand, and in making the subterranean chambers intended for the tomb. The building of the pyramid itself occupied twenty years. After describing the mode of construction, Herodotus states that on the exterior was engraved in Egyptian characters the sum expended in supplying the workmen with food, amounting to 1,600 talents, equal to £200,000 sterling. After other statements, the historian continues, "Cheops, having reigned 50 years, died, and was succeeded by his brother Cephren, who followed the example of his predecessor. Among other monuments he also

built a pyramid, but much less in size than that of Cheops. . . . It has neither underground chambers nor any canal flowing into it from the Nile, like the other, where the tomb of its founder is placed in an island surrounded by water."\* The Greek writer adds that the priests informed him that Cephren reigned 56 years, so that "the Egyptians were overwhelmed for 106 years with every kind of oppression, and the temples continued to be closed during the whole time. Indeed, they have such an aversion for the memory of these two princes that they will not even mention their names, and for this reason they call the Pyramids after the shepherd Philitis, who at the time of their erection used to feed his flocks near this spot." Herodotus concludes by referring to the erection of the Third Pyramid, which he ascribes to Mycerinus, the son of Cheops. This monarch, disapproving of the conduct of his father, "ordered the temples to be opened, and permitted the people, who had been oppressed by a long series of cruelties, to

\* In connection with this statement it may be remarked, that from ancient inscriptions it appears that during the reign of Amenemha III. of the Twelfth Dynasty, the average height of the inundations from the Nile was 24 feet greater than at present. (See Duncker's "History of Antiquity," Vol. i. p. 105.)

return to their work and their religious duties; and administering justice with great equity, he was looked upon by the Egyptians as superior to all the kings who had ever ruled the country."

The next Greek writer whose description of the pyramids of Ghizeh is preserved to us, is Diodorus, who lived about the beginning of the Christian era. He gives the name Chemmis, or Chembis, as that of the builder of the Great Pyramid, which had lasted to his time at least 1,000 years, or "as some say, upwards of 3,400 years," and the whole structure was then uninjured. The building, he says, was by means of mounds (inclined planes), machines not having yet been invented. In this statement he differs from Herodotus, whose account is not otherwise contradicted. After referring to the erection of the Second Pyramid by Cephren, Diodorus says: "Of the two kings who raised these monuments for themselves, neither one nor the other was destined to be buried therein. The people who had endured so much fatigue in building them, and had been oppressed by their cruelty and violence, threatened to drag their bodies from their tombs and tear them to pieces, so that these princes at their death ordered their friends



to bury them privately in some other secret place." Strabo, writing at about the same date, remarks that the pyramids were the sepulchres of kings, and he adds, what is not mentioned by the earlier writers quoted, that "near the centre of the sides is a stone which can be taken out, from which a passage leads to the tomb." Finally, Pliny the Roman historian, who lived about 100 years later, refers to the Egyptian pyramids, which he describes as being an "idle and silly display of royal wealth." The three largest pyramids he affirms were all built in 68 years and 4 months. He refers to the supposed use of mounds in their erection, but as these had disappeared he mentions another suggestion, that bridges were made of mud bricks, which, when the work was completed, were used to build private houses. Pliny adds to the details given by other writers, that within the Great Pyramid is a well 86 cubits (129 feet) deep.

It is evident from the agreement of the descriptions given by Herodotus and other Greek writers with the facts, that they must have derived them from well-informed sources. The entrance to the Great Pyramid mentioned by Strabo, near the centre of the side, was discovered

by Col. Vyse, and the well referred to by Pliny is a remarkable feature of the building. No excavation or structure answering to the subterranean chamber upon an island surrounded by water from the Nile described by Herodotus, has yet been discovered, but Col. Vyse seemed to think nevertheless that it actually exists. The outer casing of the Great Pyramid having been removed, the inscription in the Egyptian character seen by Herodotus must have disappeared, but those modern writers who ascribe the erection of that structure to divine inspiration suppose it to have been unique in being entirely without inscriptions. The statement of Herodotus is, however, confirmed by various Arab authors, who, according to Dr. Sprenger, "have given the same accounts of the Pyramids, with little or no variation, for above 1000 years." It appears from Masoudi, one of the earliest of these authors, that the pyramids were covered with continuous inscriptions, and he relates the Coptic tradition that the builder ordered the prophecies of the priests to be inscribed on columns and upon the large stones of the pyramids, and written accounts of their wisdom and acquirements in arts and sciences to be depicted on

them.\* It is impossible now to ascertain how far this statement was correct, but Col. Vyse found the cartouche of Cheops (Suphis) in the rubbish near the Great Pyramid, and recently a piece of the casing has been discovered showing remains of a Greek inscription, which is the more valuable as, says the discoverer, "nothing besides a few fragments with single letters had been previously discovered of the many inscriptions that existed on the casing." †

As the accounts given by the ancient Greek writers are true in so many particulars, we cannot doubt that they have correctly reported what they had heard as to the object with which the Pyramids were erected. They all agree in declaring them to be the tombs of the kings by whom they had been built, although, according to Diodorus, the Egyptian priests asserted that neither Cheops nor Cephren were actually buried in the pyramids which are ascribed to them. That this story was an invention, however, may be assumed from its not being mentioned by

\* Vyse, Vol. ii., 324—8.

† Mr. Petrie's letter in *The Academy*. M. de Sacy refers with approval to the statements of Abd Allatif and other Arab writers, that the surfaces of the two great pyramids were covered with inscriptions. (See Vyse, Vol. ii. p. 342).

Herodotus, although he refers to the aversion which the Egyptians had for the memory of those kings, and accounts for it by their oppressive conduct, and the closing of the temples during the continuance of their reigns. If the sacred places were actually closed, we should have a sufficient reason for the hatred of the memory of Cheops and Cephren exhibited by the Egyptian priests; a hatred which led them afterwards to declare that the people would not allow their bodies to be deposited in the monuments prepared for them.

It has been often pointed out that it is extremely improbable Cephren would have been at the trouble and expense of erecting a gigantic pyramid for his tomb if the body of his predecessor, Cheops, had not been deposited in the pyramid tomb prepared for its reception. There is some reason to believe, however, that these two monarchs, who were brothers, reigned during the same period, a warrant for which belief is found in the statement of Pliny that the three largest pyramids were all erected in 68 years and 4 months.\* It is possible, indeed, that the priests

\* Wilkinson says that the Great Pyramid was built by Suphis I. (Cheops), and his brother Suphis II. (Num Shufu), while Cephren (Shafra of the Fifth Dynasty), was the founder of the Second Pyramid.—Rawlinson's "Herodotus," Vol. ii. p. 346.

knew of the absence of any corpse, not only from the rock-cut chamber, but also from the coffer in the so-called King's Chamber, and that they invented the story of the people's hatred to account for such absence. Some ground for the belief in the irreligion of Cheops and Cephren may perhaps be found in the fact that their names were not preceded by that of Osiris, as was the case with their successor Mycerinus.\* "Among the ancient Egyptians, the departed soul," says Dr. Ebers, "if it were found pure and faithful, became absolutely one with the universal soul whence it was derived, and received the same name, Osiris."† It is true that Dr. Ebers denies that Cheops and Cephren were wicked contemners of the god, on the ground that "as long as Egypt was governed by independent sovereigns, there were prophets or priests of the Osirian or deceased Cheops,‡ and of the other principal pyramid builders, who conducted the worship in the fallen temple of Isis, and who

\* Vyse, Vol. ii. p. 95. Dr. Birch says that the coffin of this monarch marks a new religious development in the annals of Egypt.—"Egypt," p. 41.

† "Egypt," Vol. ii., p. 132.

‡ A religious work, called "The Sacred Book," was ascribed to him by the Greek writers.

usually belonged to the oldest families of Memphis." This is consistent, however, with the fact of the deceased monarchs having worshipped a "strange" god and given him priority over Osiris, which would be sufficient to stamp them in the eyes of the orthodox priests as enemies of the Gods of Egypt.

But is there any evidence besides the statements of Greek writers that the Great Pyramid was really used as the tomb of Cheops or any other person? That it was thus used, might perhaps be inferred from the fact, sometimes forgotten, that it is situate in a vast necropolis. M. Perrot in his "*Histoire de l'Art*," remarks that "the nobles of Egypt, all those who had assisted in the work of the monarchy and received a reflection of its glory, grouped themselves as near as possible around the prince they had served. Distributed thus by reigns and quarters, the private tombs lie close together, all furnished with steles which preserve the name of the dead, most of them ornamented with bas-reliefs painted in brilliant colours, some even decorated with statues placed before their façade."\* We know that the smallest

\* Tom. i. p. 244. Abd Allatif mentions that there were formerly at Ghizeh a considerable number of small pyramids,

of the three Great Pyramids was the tomb of its builder Mycerinus or Men-ke-ra, as Col. Vyse found in the burial chamber a basalt sarcophagus, with the lid of its wooden coffin having on it in hieroglyphs an address to the deceased monarch, as identified with Osiris.\* Vyse states that great precautions had been taken to conceal the position of the sarcophagus, and he doubted whether the real tombs had been discovered in the two larger pyramids.† He adds that the three larger pyramids were all intended for the same purpose, and their construction was carried on upon the same principles. The sarcophagus of the Second Pyramid has no inscription, and is, according to Belzoni, not larger than is necessary for the wooden case of an embalmed human body.‡ It is true that a piece of bone, supposed to be that of an ox, was found in this sarcophagus, but it may not have had anything to do with the original burial, as the Arab writers say nothing apparently of the discovery which were destroyed by Karakousch, an Emir in the army of Salaheddin Youssef, to supply materials for the building of the walls and citadel of Cairo. (See Vyse, "Operations" etc., Vol. ii. p. 336.)

\* Tom. i., Vol. ii. p. 94.

† Ditto, p. 104.

‡ Ditto, p. 298.

in this pyramid of any human or other remains, when it was opened by their countrymen. As to the Great Pyramid, if we are to believe those writers, an embalmed human body was actually discovered in the so-called King's Chamber when it was opened by the Caliph Mamoon. This is said to have taken place in the year 820 A.D., and the Arab historian, Abd-el-Hôkm, relates that "a statue resembling a man was found in the sarcophagus, and in the statue (mummy case) was a body with a breastplate of gold and jewels, bearing characters written with a pen which no one understood."\* Alkaisi gives much the same story, and he adds that the case stood at the door of the king's palace at Cairo in the year 511—that is, 1133 A.D.† It may be doubted, however, whether this had anything to do with the Great Pyramid. Dr. Ebers mentions that in the middle of the 15th century, "an Emir caused the destruction of the much admired 'green shrine,' which was formed out of a single block of a stone as hard as iron, and ornamented with figures and inscriptions. It was smashed to pieces." He adds, "the golden statue, with

\* Wilkinson's "Hand-Book (Egypt)," p. 168.

† Vyse, Vol. ii. p. 333.



eyes of precious stones, which had once been enshrined in this marvel of art—dedicated probably to the Moon-god Chonsu—had long before disappeared.\* In this shrine and statue we have no doubt the case and body mentioned by Abd-el-Hôkm, as Alkaisi when referring to these speaks of an image of a man in green-stone, containing a body in golden armour with a large ruby overhead.

It must be admitted, therefore, that there is no reliable evidence of any human body having been found in the Great Pyramid. Nevertheless this is not any proof that the building was *not* used as a tomb. The Arab writer Abd Allatif refers to an early statement that when the Persians conquered Egypt they took away great riches from the Pyramids, which were the sepulchres of the kings,† and, therefore, no doubt the receptacle of their treasures. Moreover, according to Sir Gardner Wilkinson, the Egyptians themselves had in many instances plundered the tombs of Thebes,‡ and he seems to think that the Great Pyramid met with the same fate at their hands.

\* "Egypt" (Eng. Ed.), Vol. i. p. 125.

† Vyse, Vol. ii. p. 345.

‡ "Hand-Book (Egypt)," p. 168.

The Meydoom Pyramid, which is said to be that of the last king of the Third Dynasty, has been recently opened, and inscriptions have been found showing that it had been opened before the Twentieth Dynasty.\* M. Lenormant states that the priestly legend as to the popular hatred of the builders of the two Great Pyramids, had at least a real historical foundation. He says: "Everything seems to indicate that the end of the Fourth Dynasty, immediately after the princes constructors of the great pyramids, was a time of revolutions and of troubles caused by the preceding oppression.† The comparison of the list of Manetho and of the monuments of the necropolis of Sakkarah reveal during this period violent competitions. The splendid statues of Kha-f-Râ (Cephren) in diorite, in rose granite, in alabaster, and in basalt, which decorated the temple near the Great Sphinx, have been found in pieces in a well where they had been precipitated in a revolutionary movement, evidently but little posterior to his reign. These statues,

\* Miss Amelia B. Edwards, *The Academy* for Jan. 7th, 1882.

† May there not have been a religious cause, connected with a difference of race, such as the opposition, hereafter referred to, between Seth and Osiris?

moreover, of which some represent him in the vigour of manhood, and the others in a state of advanced age, confirm the tradition which attributed to him a reign of 50 years."\* Remains of this character have not yet been found in association with the Great Pyramid, notwithstanding the tradition as to its being the tomb of Cheops, and the fact that it became dedicated to his worship.

It is not at all improbable that the bodies of both Cephren and Cheops were removed from their resting places during the commotions which occurred at the end of the Fourth Dynasty. As to the latter monarch, at least, it is not necessary to suppose that he was buried in the so-called King's Chamber or in the cave below the base of the pyramid. A more likely place for the purpose would be the niche in the east wall of the Queen's Chamber, where Maillet,† who in 1692 described it as being three feet deep, eight feet high, and three feet wide, supposed the mummy of the queen to have been placed upright. The niche appears, however, to have an inner shelf, on which the embalmed corpse may have been

\* Tom ii. p. 73.

† Vyse, "Operations," etc., Vol. ii. p. 226.

laid. The Queen's Chamber is stated, however, by Edrysty\* to have had an empty "vessel," such as the sarcophagus of the King's Chamber, so that if the niche were used for another purpose the body of Cheops may still have been there deposited. It appears, indeed, that according to some ancient inscriptions, the Pyramids were regarded as sepulchral temples, and priests were appointed for the service of the princes who were buried there, and had attained to the divine nature. A tomb found at Sakkarah belonged to "a priest of Chufu and Chafra."†

\* Vyse, Vol. ii. p. 334. May not the Eighth Pyramid, which tradition assigns as the tomb of the daughter of Cheops, have been that of his wife? The masonry has much resemblance to that of the Great Pyramid. Vol. ii. p. 70.

† Duncker, "History of Antiquity," Vol. i. p. 99.

## CHAPTER IV.

## THE RELIGIOUS THEORY.

THE Great Pyramid was intended to be something more than the tomb or even a temple in honour of Cheops. The astronomical character of many of the chief features of the structure confirms this view, and it is supported by the arguments used by Mr. Proctor to establish its connection with astrological observances. The pyramid had, indeed, a religious character of its own, which probably supplied the primary object of its erection. It is true that Mr. Proctor remarks that it is not "easy to understand why any building at all, except an astronomical observatory, should be placed so that its four faces front the four cardinal points." He says, however, that "a temple devoted to Sun-worship, and generally to the heavenly bodies, might be built in that way. For it is to be noticed that the

peculiar figure and position of the Pyramids would bring about the following relations : when the sun rose and set south of the east and west points, or (speaking generally) between the autumn and the spring equinoxes, the rays of the rising and setting sun illuminated the southern face of the pyramid ; whereas, during the rest of the year, that is, during the six months between the spring and autumn equinoxes, the rays of the rising and setting sun illuminated the northern face. Again, all the year round the sun's rays passed from the eastern to the western face at solar noon. And, lastly, during seven months and a half of each year, namely, for three months and three quarters before and after Midsummer, the noon rays of the sun fell on all four faces of the pyramid, or, according to a Peruvian expression (so Smyth avers) the sun shone on the pyramid 'with all his rays.'" Such conditions as these might have been regarded as very suitable for a temple devoted to Sun-worship. And yet Mr. Proctor declares that the temple theory is as untenable as the tomb theory, on the ground, first, that the pyramid form is unsuited for all "the ordinary requirements of a temple of worship," and, secondly, that it gives no expla-

nation of the fact that each king built a pyramid, and each king only one.\*

These objections would, however, present no difficulty if the temple theory were restricted to the Great Pyramid, the other pyramids being probably intended only for the tombs of their founders. That the erection of the former had a distinctly religious purpose can hardly be denied. What that purpose was may be gathered from the statements of certain Arab writers. Thus Soyuti mentions from earlier writers that the Sabæans made pilgrimages to the Pyramids and had opened one of them, and that they sacrificed hens and black calves, and burnt incense. He says also that Seth took possession of Egypt, and his son was Hermes, and that he introduced Sabaism, which inculcated, among other things, a pilgrimage to the Pyramids. He adds that, according to some accounts, one pyramid is the tomb of Seth.† An earlier writer, Eddin Ahmed Ben Yahya, does not refer to Seth, but he says that each pyramid was consecrated to a star, and that the Sabæans performed religious pilgrimages to the greatest

\* "Myths and Marvels of Astronomy," p. 89.

† See Vyse, "Operations," etc., Vol. ii. p. 358.

and also visited the others. He observes that every pyramid presents the form of a lantern surrounded by equilateral sides, which indicates that it was sacred to a star.\* Abd Allatif, who wrote nearly 200 years earlier, also refers to the pilgrimages made to the Pyramids, and he affirms that he had read in ancient Sabæan books that one pyramid was the tomb of Agathodæmon, and the other of Hermes.† Agathodæmon was none other than Seth, and according to some writers Hermes was his son.‡

A modern author, Mr. Palgrave, states that frequent enquiries were made of him in Oman regarding the Egyptian Pyramids, a memory, he thinks, derived from old Sabæan times.§ This traveller remarks elsewhere that the Arab writers give us the following information as to the ancient Sabæans. "That they worshipped the seven planets, and pre-eminently the sun; that they observed a fast of thirty days, set apart in the early spring, before the vernal

\* Vyse, "Operations," Vol. ii. p. 349. According to the Platonists, a pyramid is the *figure* of fire.

† Vyse, vol. ii., p. 342.

‡ See Appendix I. for various ancient references to Seth and Hermes, as given by Dr. Sprenger.

Vol. ii. p. 264.



equinox ; that their chief annual feast coincided with the entrance of the sun in the sign of Aries (a fact which supposes a solar, not lunar, computation of the months) ; that they had a special veneration for the two great pyramids of Egypt, believed by them to be the sepulchres of Seth and Idrus (Enoch) ; that their stated prayers recurred seven times a day . . . and that during their devotions they turned their faces towards the north ; lastly, that they possessed a book, or code of laws, ascribed to Seth himself (in what language, unhappily, it is not said), and believed to contain the dogmas and institutions of that primeval patriarch." Mr. Palgrave adds, that two points of great importance seem to have distinguished the ancient form of Sabaism : one, the absence of image-idols and idolatry ; the other, the absence of any priestly caste.\* These points are, indeed, of great importance, and if it can be shown that the two great pyramids had really anything to do with Sabaism, it is not surprising that their founders were regarded with hatred by the Egyptian priests. The builder of the Third Pyramid, Mycerinus, was not so regarded, however, and

\* Vyse, vol. ii. p. 258.

perhaps, therefore, he may be referred to in the legend which spoke of one of the pyramids of Ghizeh as the tomb of Hermes. This personage was not only the son of Seth, but probably also the same as Thoth, the Egyptian god of Wisdom ; and to the reign of Mycerinus was assigned the discovery of a mystical text, which formed the most profound passage in the Book of the Dead. M. Lenormant states that numerous legends of the discoveries of books of a supernatural and divine origin were current among the Egyptians, who generally placed them under the earliest dynasties.\*

We have already had occasion to notice that the city of Memphis, near which the Pyramids were situated, was founded by Menes, who established a political and military monarchy on the ruins of the priestly authority. Prior to his reign, the priests had exercised supreme power, the chief seat of which was in the middle part of Upper Egypt. In this region, says Lenormant, was situate Abydos, the principal centre of the worship of Osiris, whose tomb was there shown, the only worship which was common to all Egypt ; Thebes, which boasted itself to have

\* " *Histoire Ancienne de l'Orient*," 9th edition, Tom. ii. p. 74.

been the birth-place of the same god ; Tentyris, the favorite abode of the goddess Hathor ; Deb or Edfou, where Har-m-akhouti, with his son Har-houd, are supposed to have assembled the army with which they combatted Set or Typhon.\* Set or Seth is thus brought into connection with the Egyptian mythology, and he occupies a remarkable position in relation to it. "Seth was at one time," says Bunsen, "a great god, universally adored throughout Egypt, who conferred on the sovereigns of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Dynasties the symbols of life and power. The most glorious monarch of the latter dynasty Sethos, derives his name from this deity. But, subsequently, in the course of the Twentieth Dynasty, he is suddenly treated as an evil demon, inasmuch that his effigies and name are obliterated on all the monuments and inscriptions that could be reached." The hatred of the Osirian priests to the worship of Seth, which this conduct betokens, cannot, however, have had a sudden rise. It must have been merely the culmination of a feeling similar to that which led to the detestation in which the memory of Cheops and Cephren was held. It was, indeed, probably

\* Tom. ii. p. 55.

connected with the hatred of the Pyramid builders, if we may judge from the position occupied by the god Seth. According to Bunsen, this deity was the primitive god of Northern Egypt and Palestine, and appears as the background of religious consciousness among the Semites. Moreover, his genealogy as "the Seth of Genesis, the father of Enoch (the man) must be considered as originally running parallel with that derived from the Elohim, Adam's father."\* Seth, therefore, is not only the primitive god of the Semites, but also their semi-divine ancestor. We have here, probably, the explanation of a fact mentioned by Herodotus, who, after speaking of the aversion of the Egyptians for the memory of Cheops and Cephren, says, "they will not even mention their names, and for this reason they call the Pyramids after the Shepherd Philitis, who at the time of their erection used to feed his flocks near the spot." The occupation of a keeper of sheep was an abomination to the Egyptians, and if a shepherd prince dwelt near Memphis there must have been some very powerful reason for his doing so. That there was a religious reason we may infer from the

\* *God in History*, Vol i., pp. 233-4.

stories related to Herodotus by the priests, who told him that the temples were closed during the reigns of Cheops and Cephren. M. Lenormant has, indeed, shown that this statement cannot have been correct, as an inscription preserved in the Museum at Boulak enumerates the temples built by Cheops, the pious foundations made by him, and his splendid offerings to the gods,\* thus confirming the opinion expressed by Dr. Ebers. Nevertheless, there may have been some ground for the accusation of impiety made against Cheops, and it was probably his recognition of the supremacy of a god foreign to the strictly Egyptian Pantheon, which might be quite consistent with his continuing to show respect for the native gods. Who the strange deity was may probably be determined by the nationality of Philitis, whose name is mentioned in connection with the Pyramids, although they may have been erected long before his time; unless indeed the name stands for a people and not merely an individual. M. Büdenger † ingeniously identifies Philitis with Salatis, the first Hyksos king, and Prof. Duncker states that the name of the former

\* Tom ii., p. 72.

† Quoted in Duncker's "History of Antiquity," Vol. i. p. 98 n.

points to a Semitic tribe for the Hyksos, "and one immediately bordering on Egypt on the Syrian coast—the Philistines (Pelischtim), from whom the whole Syrian coast was called by the Greeks Palæstina."\* The first Hyksos king fixed his residence at Memphis in the neighbourhood of the great pyramids, which had perhaps already become connected with the shepherd princes, and among a people who were probably prepared to receive him as a friend rather than as an enemy. M. Lenormant remarks that the Delta, and especially its eastern part, "appeared to have been inhabited from the highest antiquity by a population somewhat different from that of the rest of Egypt—of a more Asiatic character, and probably mixed in a certain measure with Semitic elements." That region, before even the foundation of Memphis by Menes, was for Egypt "the cradle of the worship of more important deities, who took a leading place in the national Pantheon, but in their origin were connected with the cycle of Euphratico-Syrian divinities." One of those deities was Hathor; the other was Set, "the special god of the northern country—in opposition to Horus, the god of the southern

\* Duncker, Vol. i. p. 127.

country—of whose name the Soutekh of the Shepherds and of the Kheta is only an enlarged form ; whom we find adored under the name of Schita in several parts of Assyria ; and whom it is perhaps necessary to compare with the antediluvian patriarch Scheth (Seth) in the narrative of Genesis.\* We see thus that not only was Set (Seth) by his name Soutekh the national god of the Hyksos, but he was also the chief deity of the semi-Semitic population of the Memphitic region in which that shepherd race established itself. It is not surprising, therefore, that the hatred of the native Egyptians for the Hyksos was afterwards entertained in an intensified form towards the god whom they adored, although previously, as the special deity of Lower Egypt, he had been recognised as the Agathodæmon.

The Hyksos and their congeners of Northern Egypt, however, were probably more closely connected with the ancient Cushite race, referred to by Arab tradition as the people of Ad, than with the pure Semitic stock. The Arabian branch of that race was thought to have become extinct before the establishment of the later Arabs in the peninsula. Remnants of it, however, are still

\* *Histoire Ancienne de l'Orient*, Tom. ii. p. 147.

to be found in the territory between the Hedjaz and Yemen, and also in the Hadramaut and Mahrah, between Yemen and Oman, where a large number of independent tribes exist.\* The religion of these tribes was down to a comparatively recent period star-worship, and their ancestors, the people of Ad, were adherents of the Sabaism which was so widely spread in the ancient world. To this cult the Hyksos belonged, as shown by the identification of their god Sou-tekh with the Seth of the Sabæans. The race connection between the population of Lower Egypt and the Hyksos, with the position occupied by Seth as the national deity, agree with the fact of Sabaism being the religion also of the northern Egyptians. Dr. Tiele, remarks that "star-worship was not unknown to the Semites, but the highly-developed astrology and magic which we find among the Babylonians and Assyrians were derived from the Akkadians," to whom the early population of Arabia, known as the people of Ad, were related. That early race, moreover, furnished the Babylonians with the

\* M. Vivien de Saint-Martin, in his "Nouveau Dictionnaire de Geographie Universelle,"—art. *Arabie*. And see the "Preliminary Discourse," in Sale's "Koran," as to the tribe of Ad, and other early peoples of Arabia.



models on which their temples were built, "namely, in the form of terraced pyramids, such as were erected also in Elam, and among the oldest inhabitants of Media and India, to which class belonged the famous Tower of Babel."\* The Great Pyramid of Egypt may well, therefore, have been a monument of star-worship, dedicated to the god Seth.

Nor is this conclusion, that the Great Pyramid was intimately associated with the worship of Seth, inconsistent with the fact that it appears to have been sometimes referred to by the Egyptians as the tomb of Osiris.† This opinion is connected with the myth of Osiris and Isis in its later form, which introduces Seth (Typhon) as the great enemy of Osiris. According to Bunsen, however, this form was not known earlier than the 13th or 14th century B.C., so that the Great Pyramid would not be spoken of as the tomb of Osiris before that date. It could not have been thus regarded originally, as we know that neither Cheops nor Cephren received the name of Osiris, an honour which was conferred by the Egyptian priests on the later monarch, Mycerinus, owing

\* "Outlines of the History of Religion" (Eng. Trans.), p. 75.

† Dupuis, "L'Origine de tous les Cultes," Tom. i. p. 424.

to his great benevolence and justice—or, shall we say, his orthodox religious views. The learned Dupuis expresses the opinion that the Agathodæmon, or Good Spirit, whom the Sabæans believed to repose under the pyramid, was in reality Osiris, the benevolent god of Nature. The Agathodæmon of the early Egyptians was, however Seth, the special deity of Northern Egypt, and we shall not be wrong in supposing the Great Pyramid to have been erected by the Sabæans in his honour.

In so doing, we explain perfectly the scientific features which have been traced in the structure. The worshippers of the heavenly host would, undoubtedly, in so grand a religious monument as the Great Pyramid, embody all the astronomical knowledge they possessed, and this must have been considerable. The Arabian historian, Abulfaraj, as quoted by Dupuis,\* says that the religion of the Chaldeans and of the Sabæans was the same, and that the former were distinguished by their astronomical observations and studied the nature of the stars and their secret influences. Nor was this true merely of the later Chaldeans. Mr. Proctor remarks, that “no one

\* Tom. i. p. 7.

who considers the wonderful accuracy with which, nearly 2,000 years before the Christian era, the Chaldeans had determined the famous cycle of the Saros, can doubt that they must have observed the heavenly bodies for several centuries before they could have achieved such a success.\* As to the later Chaldeans, the Jewish writer Philo observes that they make everything depend on the movement of the stars, which they regard as the sovereign arbiters of the order of the world. They limit their homage to the visible, and do not form any idea of the invisible and intellectual being; on the contrary, in observing the order of the world, they think they see in it the divinity itself, which exercises its power by the movements of the sun, the moon, the planets, and the fixed stars, by the successive revolutions of the seasons, and by the combined action of the heaven and the earth.†

A religion such as this could have no fitter monument than a vast astronomical observatory, which the Great Pyramid probably was, until at least it was completed on the death of its royal founder. The building was a worthy

\* *Myths and Marvels of Astronomy*, p. 73.

† *Treatise on Abraham*, Sec. 15.

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symbol of the remarkable system of religion which, according to ancient writers, once pervaded nearly the whole world, and was said to have been founded by Seth, the son of Adam. According to Philo, Abraham was educated in its principles, which he held, until having opened his eyes, he saw the light and recognised in the Universe a sovereign guide, whom he had not before suspected.

## CHAPTER V.

## SETH AND SERPENT WORSHIP.

THE association of the name of the god Seth with the Great Pyramid—a structure which appears to embody or to bear a relation to the chief scientific truths recognised by the ancient world, throws light on certain ideas entertained as to the nature of that deity. The god of intelligence of the Egyptians was Thoth, the Hermes of the Sabæans. Hermes was, however, called the son of Seth, and this deity is in some sense to be identified with Thoth. In a passage of the Book of the Dead, the former has the name Tet which, according to Bunsen, intimates that Thoth inherited many of the attributes of Seth.\* It may, indeed, show that they are the same deity. Seth was the true god of Wisdom, and the pillars of Seth, on which, according to Josephus,† was inscribed the astronomical knowledge of the

\* "Egypt," Vol. iii. p. 427.

† "Antiquities," Chap. ii. sec. iii.

ancient world, were the same as those mentioned in an apocryphal work ascribed to Hermes, which, according to Cedrenus, affirmed that "Enoch, foreseeing the destruction of the Earth, had inscribed the science of astronomy upon two pillars."\* By these structures was probably intended the two great pyramids of Ghizeh, which appear originally to have had many inscriptions on their external coverings. Makrizi cites various authors as to the origin of the Pyramids, and among other statements it was said that that they were built by Surid, and that the First was dedicated to history and astronomy, and the Second to medical knowledge.† As Seth, Thoth, or Hermes was the god of Wisdom, so the serpent was its emblem, and especially connected with that God and with other deities of similar characteristics. "Wise as serpents‡ and harmless as doves," is an old saying, which probably has a deeper meaning than that usually ascribed to it. The connection between the serpent and the idea

\* Vyse, "Operations, etc.," vol. ii. p. 330 *z.*

† Ditto, p. 354. See Appendix II. for Masoudi's account of the Legend of Surid.

‡ The Sophia, or Divine Wisdom and the Ophis-Christos of the Gnostics, was represented under the form of a serpent.—Matter's "Histoire Critique du Gnosticisme," Planches II. A. B. C. Matter appears to identify the Ophis with the god Kneph, p. 32.

of wisdom is well seen in the Hindu legend as to the Nagas. Mr. Fergusson remarks, "the Naga appears everywhere in Vaishnava tradition. There is no more common representation of Vishnu than as reposing on the Sesha, the celestial seven-headed snake, contemplating the creation of the world." The Upanishads refer to the science of serpents, by which is meant the wisdom of the mysterious Nagas who, according to Buddhistic legend, reside under Mount Meru, and in the waters of the terrestrial world. One of the sacred books of the Tibetan Buddhists is fabled to have been received from the Nagas, who, says Schlagentweit, are "fabulous creatures, of the nature of serpents, who occupy a place among the beings superior to man, and are regarded as protectors of the law of the Buddha. To these spiritual beings Sakyamuni is said to have taught a more philosophical religious system than to men, who were not sufficiently advanced to understand it at the time of his appearance." The serpent holds an analogous place in the religious ideas of the modern Hindus. Siva,\* as Sambhu, is the patron of the Brahmanic

\* Siva would seem to be the same deity as Saturn, and possibly therefore as Set (Seth), a fact which confirms the serpent character of the last named deity.

order, and, as shown by his being three-eyed, is essentially a god possessing high intellectual attributes. Vishnu also is a god of wisdom, but (notwithstanding the association with him of the Sessa), of a somewhat lower type, such as is distinctive of the worshippers of truth under its feminine aspect. The serpent has been connected with the god of Wisdom from the earliest times of which we have any historical notice. This animal was the especial symbol of Thoth or Taut, a primeval deity of Syro-Egyptian mythology, and of all those gods, such as Hermes and Seth, who can be connected with him. This is true also of the third member of the primitive Chaldean triad, H ea or Hoa. According to Sir Henry Rawlinson, the most important titles of this deity refer to "his functions as the source of all knowledge and science." Not only is he "the intelligent fish," but his name may be read as signifying both "life" and a "serpent," and he may be considered as "figured by the great serpent which occupies so conspicuous a place among the symbols of the gods on the black stones recording Babylonian benefactions." M. Lenormant identifies H ea with the fish-god Oannes of Babylonian mythology, who, according to



Berosus, "spent the whole day amongst men without taking any food, while he taught them letters, science, and the principles of every art, the rules for the foundation of towns, the building of temples, the measurement and boundaries of lands, seed-time and harvest, in short, all that could advance civilization, so that nothing new has been invented since that period."\* Héa, as the god of Science, was the defender of "the frame of nature against the incessant ravages of the wicked spirits," and "help was sought from him when neither word, rite, talisman, nor even the intervention of any other of the gods had availed to destroy the demons' power."† The Chaldean god was, moreover, the healer of disease,‡ in which character he resembled the God of the Hebrews, the sight of whose serpent-symbol was supposed to cure those bitten by the fiery serpents in the wilderness. There is reason to believe§ that this deity was the same as Seth, the Agathodæmon of the early Egyptians, who was represented under the form of the serpent,

\* Lenormant "Chaldean Magic and Sorcery" (Eng. trans.), p. 157.

† Ditto, p. 158.

‡ Ditto, p. 21.

§ See the "Journal of Anthropology," 1870, p. 209, on this point.

and who was the giver of happiness and good fortune.\* The good genius which presided over the affairs of men as the guardian spirit of their houses was a serpent, the Asp of Ranno, the snake-headed goddess who is represented as nursing the young princes. That the idea of health was among the Egyptians intimately associated with the serpent, is shown, moreover, by the crown formed of the asp, or sacred *Thermuthis*, having been given particularly to Isis, a goddess of Life and Healing. It was also the symbol of other gods of health and the like attributes, as stated by the learned Dupuis in the chapters entitled "Esculapius, Serapis, Pluto, Esmun, Cneph, and all the divinities with the attributes of the serpent."† It is remarkable that a Moslem saint of Upper Egypt is still thought to appear under the form of a serpent, and to cure the diseases which afflict the pilgrims to his shrine. The power of healing is an evidence of the possession of wisdom, and so also

\* Wilkinson's "Ancient Egyptians," Vol. iv. p. 413. Mr. Lane states that each quarter of Cairo (which was built out of the ruins of Memphis and its tombs), is supposed to have its guardian genius or agathodæmon, in the form of a serpent.—"Manners and Customs of the Egyptians," Vol. i. p. 289.

† "Origine de tous les Cultes," Tom. ii. Part I, p. 165.

is the power of influencing atmospheric changes. This is a most important attribute, and, as Mr. Fergusson points out, a chief characteristic of the serpents throughout the East in all ages seems to have been their power over the wind and rain. According to Colonel Meadows Taylor, in the Indian Deccan, at the present day, offerings are made to the village divinities (of whom the nag, or snake, is always one) at spring time and harvest for rain or fine weather, and also in time of cholera or other diseases or pestilence. So, among the Chinese, the dragon is regarded as the giver of rain, and in time of drought offerings are made to it. In the spring and fall, of the year it is one of the objects worshipped, by command of the Emperor, by certain mandarins. The Chinese notion of the serpent or dragon dwelling above the clouds in spring to give rain reminds us of the Aryan myth of Vritra, or Ahi, the throttling snake, or dragon with three heads, who hides away the rain-clouds, but who is slain by Indra, the beneficent giver of rain. M. Bréal says,\* that "Typhon is the monster who obscures the heavens, a sort of Greek Vritra." The myth of Indra and Vritra is reproduced in

\* "Mélanges de Mythologie et de Linguistique," p. 95.

Latin mythology as that of Hercules and Cacus. Cacus also is analogous to Typhon, and as the former is supposed to have taken his name from, or given it to, a certain wind which had the power of clothing itself with clouds, so the latter bore the same name as a very destructive wind which was much dreaded by the Phœnicians and Egyptians. Moreover, the name Typhon was given by the Egyptians to anything tempestuous and hence to the Ocean.

We have here a reference to the serpent as the embodiment of the Evil Being; and in the later identification of Seth with Typhon, the enemy of Osiris, we have evidence of the connection of the serpent with the former deity. M. Lenormant tells us that, "evil was personified in a particular god, Set or Soutekh,\* called also sometimes Baal, who was the supreme god of the neighbouring Asiatic populations, and, at a later period, of the shepherd kings; the Greeks considered him the same as their Typhon, and it was said that Osiris had succumbed to his blows."†

\* The earlier character of this deity is well shown by the remark of Tiele, that the name Sutech is an attempt to reproduce in Egyptian form the Semitic divine name, Sedeq, "the righteous."  
—"Outlines of the History of Religion," p. 55.

† "Chaldean Magic," p. 83.

The name Typhon appears to have been given more especially to the Evil Being, as the opponent of Horus, who was, however, the same deity as Osiris, whose son he was said to be. The former was then represented as Apap or Apophis, or the giant serpent, who was pierced by the spear of Horus, as the serpent Pytho was slain by Apollo.\* Henceforth Seth, instead of being regarded by the Egyptians as the Agathodæmon, was looked upon as the principle of evil. The same change took place among the Accadian population of Media. M. Lenormant states that the "worship of serpent-gods is found amongst many of the Turanian tribes. The Accadians made the serpent one of the principal attributes, and one of the forms of Héa." When once, however, "the Iranian traditions were fused with the ancient beliefs of the Proto-Medic religion, the serpent-god naturally became identified with the representative of the dark and bad principle, for, according to the Mazdean myths, the serpent was the form assumed by

\* "Chaldean Magic," p. 83; Wilkinson, Vol. iv. pp. 395, 435—Apophis, may have given name to Papi, and Egyptian king, who lived about a century after Cheops, and also to Apepi, or Apappos one of the Hyksos kings, unless the 'Giant' Serpent took this title from the former monarch.

Angromainyus, in order to penetrate into the heaven of Ahuramazda."\* Here is the conflict between light and darkness, and between life and death, which is reproduced in Egyptian mythology, where the evil principle is represented in the one case by the serpent Apap, and in the other by Set † (Seth), whose symbol was the serpent.

The association between the serpent and the idea of darkness had an astronomical foundation. The position which the constellation Draco at one time occupied showed that the Great Serpent was the ruler of the night. This constellation was formerly at the very centre of the heavens, and it is so extensive, that it was called the Great Dragon. Its body spreads over seven signs of the Zodiac, and Dupuis, who sees in the Dragon of the Apocalypse a reference to the celestial serpent, says, "It is not astonishing that a constellation so extended should be represented by the author of that book as a great dragon with seven heads, who drew the third part of the stars from heaven and cast them to the earth." ‡

\* "Chaldean Magic," p. 232.

† Tiele, "Outlines of the History of Religions," p. 47; also, "History of the Egyptian Religion," Vol. i. p. 72.

‡ Dupuis, Tom. iii. p. 255.

Moreover, when the constellation Draco occupied its elevated position, it supplied the pole-star of the heavens. The importance of this fact, in connection with the erection of the Great Pyramid, will be understood after what has been said as to the association of the Pyramid with the god Seth. That structure was erected, not only as a tomb for its founder, but as a monumental temple in honour of a deity whose special symbol was the serpent, the emblem of wisdom with the primitive race whose religion would appear to have been a combination of serpent-worship and Sabaism. The Great Pyramid is thus a monument not only of Sabaism, but of serpent-worship, and, as such, its scientific as well as its astronomical character receives the proper explanation. The builders of such a temple would apply their utmost skill in its construction and they would seek to preserve in it, as far as possible, the scientific knowledge which they had derived from their ancestors.

According to a Coptic MS., upon the walls of the Pyramids were written the mysteries of science, astronomy, geometry, physic, and much useful knowledge. The same MS. states, that they were built before the Flood by Surid, for

safety, and as tombs for himself and household.\* It is remarkable that, as Sir Gardner Wilkinson points out, Tuphán, which appears to be the same word as Typhon, the name of the Evil Being, is the Arabic name of the Deluge.† The association of the Pyramids with a flood has, however, a purely astronomical explanation. Mr. Proctor, when speaking of the position of the pole-star Alpha Draconis, at the date of the erection of the Great Pyramid, says,‡ “We know that in the past the constellation of the Dragon was at the pole, or boss, of the celestial sphere. In stellar temples, like those of which Rawlinson gives examples, the Dragon would be the uppermost or ruling constellation. And here, in passing, it may interest the reader to note that, some find evidence in this relation that when writers of old spoke of the Old Dragon as having been cast from heaven, carrying two-thirds of the celestial beings with him, reference was made—unconsciously, perhaps, on the narrator’s part

\* Vyse, “Operations,” etc., Vol. ii. p. 350, and see Appendix II.

† “The Ancient Egyptians,” Vol. iv. p. 427 n.

‡ *Knowledge*, Vol. i. p. 243.



—to some tradition of the passing away or fall of the Dragon from its former ruling position among the constellations. Those who thus interpret ancient records (much more ancient than Jewish history), find in Hercules, with his heel assailed by the serpent, as in our constellation figures, the first Adam; in Ophinchus, the serpent holder, the second Adam. In Argo they find the Ark—in fact, in a whole series of constellations they find the story of the Flood. In Aquarius, with the streams pouring from his water-jug, they find the beginning of the Flood. In the river Eridanus and the seas in which Pisces and the great sea-monster Cetus seem to swim, they see pictured the prevalence of deep water over the whole earth. The Raven of the Heavens is the raven of the Flood-narrative. Argo is the Ark, shown as if only the stern-half of a great ship lodged in the mountain. The Centaur, bearing sacrifice, as Aratus says, to Ara, the altar, is Noah offering sacrifice after he had left the Ark; and the bow of Sagittarius in the smoke (the Milky-way), which seems to ascend from the altar, is the bow of promise. These may, of course, be only fancies, but it is singular how closely these constellations, which are among

the few really seeming to picture recognisable objects in the heavens, correspond in sequence and in range of right ascension with the events recorded respecting the Flood." \*

Fancies or not, it is unquestionable that the Deluge has been associated in the legends of some Eastern peoples, not only with the Pyramids,† but also with the constellations. Thus it is with the Chaldean legend, according to which Saturn in a dream announced the coming catastrophe to Xixutrus, who, like Noah, escaped in an ark. The Assyrian tablets discovered by the late Dr. Smith, and which contain what is called the Nimrod Epic, have preserved a similar account of the Deluge. It is now established that the twelve cantos of that Epic "refer to the annual course of the sun through the twelve months of the year. Each tablet answers to a special month, and contains a distinct reference to the animal forms in the signs of the Zodiac." Thus, "the Deluge forms the subject of the eleventh canto, corresponding

\* *Knowledge*, Vol. i. p. 243 — Dupuis explains fully the position of the heavens at the date of what he terms the "sacred fiction" of the Deluge, Tom. iii. p. 176, *seq.*

† See Appendix II. for the Arabian legend as to the connection between the Deluge and the building of the Pyramids.

with the month of Skebat (Feb.—Jan.), which is consecrated to Rimmon, the god of storms and rain, and harmonises with the eleventh sign of the Zodiac—Aquarius, or the Waterman. The latter month is styled in Sumerish-Accadian ‘the month of the curse of the rain,’ or, as we might almost say, the Deluge month.”\* The ancient Babylonians are usually accredited with the invention of the worship of the heavenly bodies, and the existence among them of the deluge myth in connection with the constellations is an important fact. It is no less important in relation to the question of the object of the Great Pyramid, that the capital of Babylonia contained a structure described by Strabo as a pyramid dedicated to the worship of the planetary bodies, exceeding in size the great Egyptian monument itself, and much resembling the Egyptian Pyramid of Degrees at Sakkarah. The Babylonian Tower was at the base a square of 600 feet, and consisted of eight towers, each 75 feet high, one above the other, making a total height of 600 feet. M. Lenormant speaks of the erection of this temple as having been attri-

\* “The Nineteenth Century,” 1882, p. 236.

buted to "the most ancient king, the first king," and he says it was "the tangible expression, the material and architectural manifestation, of the Chaldaic-Babylonian religion. Serving both as a sanctuary and as an observatory for the stars, it agreed admirably with the genius of the essentially sidereal religion to which it was united by an indissoluble bond"\*—language which might be used with exactly the same propriety of the Great Pyramid itself.

That the erection of the Great Pyramid had some connection with the constellations is not at all improbable. We have already seen that Mr. Proctor prefers the date 3350 B.C. to the later one of 2170 B.C. for the building of the pyramid. The latter date would seem, however, to be the more probable one. That it was erected during the reign of Cheops† is almost universally admitted; and, although the time when he reigned has not been satisfactorily established, there are grounds for believing it to have been about 2200 B.C. Prof. C. Piazzzi Smyth affirms that

\* "Chaldean Magic," p. 322.

† If Soris was the first monarch of the Fourth Dynasty, the Great Pyramid may possibly have been commenced in his reign, and completed during that of Cheops.

“the only monumental conclusion formed by comparing the quarry marks of the Great Pyramid with whatever is to be trusted, or is tolerably agreed upon among Egyptologists, and both of them with an astronomical date of the buildings,—can be no other than that two of the kings of the Fourth Dynasty of Egyptian history—Shofu and Nu-Shofu by name—lived through a period including the epoch of 2170 B.C.”\* It is true that, as Prof. Smyth points out, this date differs from that fixed by nearly all modern Egyptologists,† although it agrees very nearly with the date 2228 B.C., assigned for the commencement of the Fourth Dynasty by Mr. Wm. Osburn, the author of the “Monumental History of Egypt.” It is consistent, moreover, with the chronological facts given by Dr. Birch. This Egyptologist gives 3000 B.C. for the commencement of the first dynasty; and if this Dynasty continued for 263 years, the Second Dynasty for 306 years, and the Third Dynasty for 214 years, as stated by Manetho, we have 2223 B.C. as the date of

\* “Life and Work at the Great Pyramid,” Vol. iii. p. 338.

† M. Vivien de Saint-Martin gives 3893 B.C. as the best date for the epoch of Menes.—“Nouveau Dict. de Géographie Universelle,” Art. *Egypte*.

the commencement of the Fourth Dynasty, and therefore of the erection of the Great Pyramid, if Cheops was its builder. Curiously enough, however, this is about the date fixed for the origin of the constellations. Mr. Proctor states that between 2100 and 2200 years before the Christian era the southern constellations had their original position, the invisible southern pole then lying at the centre of the space free from constellations. He adds, "It is noteworthy that for other reasons this period, or rather a definite epoch within it, is indicated as that to which must be referred the beginning of exact astronomy. Amongst others must be mentioned this—that in the year 2170 B.C. *quam proxime*, the Pleiades rose to their highest above the horizon at noon (or technically made their noon culmination) at the spring equinox. We can readily understand that to minds possessed with full faith in the influence of the stars on the earth, this fact would have great significance." At that epoch the southernmost constellations would be seen in their natural position—standing upright when above the southern horizon at midnight. On those grounds, Mr. Proctor affirms that the period when the old southern con-

stellations were formed must have been between 2400 and 2000 years before the Christian era. He deems it highly probable, moreover, that the year 2170 B.C. may be regarded as the date, not of the beginning of astronomy, but of the introduction of a new astronomical system, the substitution of the use of the twelve zodiacal signs for that of the twenty-eight lunar mansions. Assuming that conclusion to be correct, we have a most remarkable coincidence between the date of the invention of the Zodiac and that of the erection of the Great Pyramid. If it is true, however, as Dupuis supposed, that the Egyptians invented the constellations, the agreement between those dates was probably more than a coincidence. The French writer remarks, "The figures traced in the Zodiac and in the other constellations have not been placed there haphazard: they are the hieroglyphic calendar of the ancient peoples; they are connected with their wants and their climate; and they all have a meaning in their origin, although it may be difficult for us now to discover the sense of all the symbols." Dupuis shows what was the primitive position of the constellations, considered as the astronomical and rural calendar of

a people both intellectual and agricultural, and he affirms that it accords perfectly with the agriculture of Egypt, and at the same time with the position of the solstitial and equinoctial points in the heavens at a certain epoch. Moreover, owing to the difference in the order of agricultural operations followed in Egypt from that in other climates, the rural calendar which fitted the Egyptians could not suit any other people, and therefore he ascribes to them the honour of having invented the astronomical sciences; a conclusion supported, it is said, by the fact that the Egyptians regarded their Zodiac, not only as a rural and meteorological calendar, but as the base of all their religion and of their astronomy.\* M. Flammarion appears to doubt whether Dupuis has satisfactorily established his theory of the origin of the constellations,† and the date fixed by Mr. Proctor for the formation of the Zodiac is hardly consistent with that theory. It is possible, however, that whilst the constellations were formed by the Chaldeans long before that date, the zodiacal signs were only then arranged

\* "Origine de tous les Cultes," Tom. iii. p. 339.

† "Histoire du Ciel," p. 153.



in an order to accord with the climate of Egypt by settlers in this country. Mr. Proctor, after fixing the probable limits of the place where the constellations were formed, at from 35 to 39 degrees north of the equator, says, "The Great Pyramid, as we know, is about 30 degrees north of the Equator; but we also know that its architects travelled southwards to find a suitable place for it. One of their objects may have been to obtain a fuller view of the star-sphere south of their constellations."\* This suggestion is a very important one, for it assumes that the constellations were formed before the erection of the Pyramid, and therefore that the date of the latter event cannot have been earlier than that of the former. Mr. Proctor goes further, however, and even suggests that one of the objects which the architects of the Great Pyramid may have had was "the erection of a building indicating the epoch when the new system was entered upon, and defining in its proportions, its interior passages, and other features, fundamental elements of the new system." The construction of that building implies considerable proficiency in astronomical observation,

\* "Myths," etc., p. 362.

and hence, says Mr. Proctor, "the year 2170 B.C. may very well be regarded as defining the introduction of a new system of astronomy, but certainly not the beginning of astronomy itself.\*" That year becomes, however, the date of the pyramid itself, and in the suggestion that it was intended to commemorate the substitution of the twelve zodiacal signs for the twenty-eight lunar mansions, we have a strong confirmation of the opinion expressed in these pages that the Great Pyramid was a monument of Sabaism, and that it was erected in honour of Seth, the Agathodæmon of the ancient world, and consecrated to his worship.

\* Ditto, p. 360.

## NOTE.

ONE of the most curious series of relations found by the Pyramidists is connected with the Great Coffin, or sarcophagus, of the King's Chamber. John Taylor and his followers assert that this coffin is the same in capacity with the Ark and with the Laver of the Hebrew Tabernacle, and that the Molten Sea of Solomon's Temple was just fifty times such capacity, and exactly equal in interior cubic space with the contents of the King's Chamber itself. There is nothing absurd or improbable in there being some such relation between those vessels, if the Pyramid was a temple dedicated to the god Seth. Judging, indeed, from the analogy presented by Hindoo usage, the coffin was "a sacred trough, filled by the Priests on certain festivals with sacramental water and lotus-flowers." This explanation of its use was given to Mr. St. John by some learned Brahmins, who said that the

Great Pyramid was a temple, and that if it had an underground communication with the Nile it must have been intended for the worship of Pad Madévi.\* An early English writer, Mr. Shaw, would seem to have been much of the same opinion, as he thought the coffer was intended for the celebration of the mystical worship of Osiris, and he supposed it to have contained images, sacred vestments and utensils, or water for lustration. If for Osiris we substitute Seth that opinion will be near the truth. The so-called King's Chamber, of which an enthusiastic pyramidist says, "The polished walls, fine materials, grand proportions, and exalted place eloquently tell of glories yet to come," if not "the chamber of perfections"† of Cheops's tomb, was probably the place to which the initiate was admitted after he had passed through the narrow upward passage and the grand gallery, with its lowly termination, which gradually prepared him for the final stage of the sacred mysteries.

\* Referred to by Col. Vyse, "Operations," etc., Vol ii. p. 313.

† This was one of the names of the principal chamber of a tomb. See "Records of the Past," Vol xii. Egyptian Texts, p. 106.

## APPENDIX I.

The following is Dr. Sprenger's account (taken from Arab and Syrian sources) of Seth and Hermes, in connection with the Pyramids of Ghizeh. He says (as quoted by Col. Vyse in the 2nd vol. of his work, p. 364):—

“In Abul Feda's ‘*Historia Anteislamitica*,’ edited by Fleisher, p. 16, it is stated, that Syria was one of the earliest inhabited countries, and that the Syriac language was the first that was spoken; that the Sabæan language was established by Seth and Edris (Enoch); that there was a town called Haran, to which pilgrims resorted, as they did to the two large Pyramids of Ghizeh, one of which was said to be the tomb of Edris, and the other of his son Syabi; where they celebrated as a festival the day on which the sun entered the sign of Aries. In the ‘*Melelwa Nahil*,’ MS., 47 in Nic. Cat., Hermes is represented as the pupil of Agathodæmon. In another account, MS. 785, Uri's Cat. Agathodæmon is

mentioned as a King of Egypt. The Sabæans consider the Great Pyramid of Ghizeh as the tomb of Seth; the Second, that of Hermes; and the Third, that of Izabi; while the Copts state that the Great Pyramid is the tomb of Surid; the Second, that of Herjib, or Haukith, his brother; the Third, that of his son."

Dr. Sprenger says, further:—"In the Syrian chronicle of Bar-Hebræus (translated into Latin by Professor Bruns), Enoch is said to have invented letters and architecture, under the title of Trismigistus, or of Hermes, to have built many cities and established laws, to have taught the worship of God,\* and astronomy, to give alms and tithes, to offer up first fruits, libations, etc., to abstain from unlawful foods, and drunkenness, and to keep feasts at the rising of the sun, or new moons, and at the ascent of the planets. His pupil was Agathodæmon (Seth); according to other accounts, Asclepiades, a king renowned for wisdom, who, when Enoch was translated, set up an image in honour of him, and thereby introduced idolatry. The Egyptians are supposed to have been descended from these persons.

\* This agrees with the Biblical statement that in the days of Enos men began "to call on the name of the Lord," Gen. iv. 26.

According to Hadgi Walfah, they derived their knowledge from the Chaldeans, who are said to have been the Persian Magi, and to have originally come from Babylon. The statues of the Grecian Hermes, which seem to agree in name with the Pyramids (Haram), were not images, but symbols of the deity and of the generative principle of nature in the form of obelisks (see Winkelman, Book i., Cap. i. 1011.) Statues of this kind sacred to Hermes were erected by the Greeks in honour of distinguished heroes; and the same allegorical allusion might have been kept in view when the Pyramids were constructed as tombs. The Egyptian account, however, of Hermes, is very obscure; that person is mentioned in the 'Burham-i-Kati' as the son of Rahman, son of Isfendiar, and to have arrived from the East. One of the sons of Aunshirwan has also that title. Hormig is the name of the first day of the month, which is considered propitious for any undertaking; and it is a name of the planet Mercury; and Wednesday (dies Mercurii) was sacred to him: for to most of the planets days were attributed, in which their influence was supposed to govern human affairs, and even Mohammedan superstition assigned to

children born on these days various qualities, characteristic of the heathen personifications of the different planets. Hermes is mentioned in many astrological treatises as presiding over the sixth climate. An idea, a period of time, or any remarkable occurrence, were frequently connected with ideal persons in mythology, and when any similarity existed received the same appellation. In this manner there were five Hermes; and the fifth was the Oriental Hermes who was worshipped by the Phineatæ, and is said to have fled after the death of Argus into Egypt, and to have civilized that country under the name of Thoth. This coincides with the account of Tifashi, which is evidently taken from an Egyptian tradition; reference may also be made to Plato, *Philel.* 21, 24, *Phædro*, p. 340. Hermes was likewise distinguished by his wisdom; and was reported to have been buried in a great building called Abou Hermes, which, together with another, the tomb of his wife, or of his son, was afterwards named Haraman. These were the two large Pyramids, and the form of their construction was called Makhrut."



## APPENDIX II.

MASOUDI, who died in the year 967 A.D., professes to relate the Coptic tradition, which says, "that Surid\* Ben Shaluk Ben Sermuni Ben Termidun Ben Tedresan Ben Sal, one of the kings of Egypt before the Flood, built the two great pyramids; and notwithstanding they were subsequently named after a person called Sheddad Ben Ad, that they were not built by the Adites, who could not conquer Egypt, on account of the powers which the Egyptians possessed by means of enchantment; that the reason for

\* Surid may be the same as Suphis or Cleops, as in a papyrus said to have been found in the monastery of Abou-Hormeis, Surid is said to have been buried in the eastern (Great) Pyramid, his brother Haukith in the western, and his nephew Karwars in the smaller pyramid. (Vyse, "Operations," etc., vol. ii. p. 332.)—Surid appears to be given in the list of Manetho, under the name of Sôris, as the first king of the fourth dynasty. This king is, however, treated by M. Lenormant as non-historical. (See List of the Kings of Egypt, "Histoire Ancienne de l'Orient," tom. ii. p. 430), and he refers to Khoufou (Suphis) the tablet at the mouth of the ancient mine at Sinai, which English Egyptologists ascribe to Soris (Shuré). The name of this king is also said to have been found in the tombs near Ghizeh, and in the quarry marks of the northern pyramid of Abou-Seir, which is, therefore, thought to be his tomb. (Sir J. G. Wilkinson, in Rawlinson's "Herodotus," vol. ii. p. 344, 346).

building the Pyramids was the following dream, which happened to Surid three hundred years previous to the Flood. It appeared to him, that the earth was overthrown, and that the inhabitants were laid prostrate upon it; that the stars wandered confusedly from their courses, and clashed together with a tremendous noise. The king, although greatly affected by this vision, did not disclose it to any person, but was conscious that some great event was about to take place." Soon afterwards the king had another vision, which so much alarmed him that he repaired to the Temple of the Sun, "where, with great lamentations, he prostrated himself in the dust. Early in the morning he assembled the chief priests from all the Nomes of Egypt, a hundred and thirty in number. No other persons were admitted to this assembly, when he related his first and his second vision. The interpretation was declared to announce, 'that some great event would take place.'" The high-priest, whose name was Philimon, or Iklimon, related a dream which he had had a year before, in which the firmament descended till it overshadowed him and the king like a vault as they sat upon the tower of Amasis. "The king then directed the astrologers to ascertain, by taking the alti-

tude, whether the stars foretold any great catastrophe, and the result announced an approaching deluge.\* The king ordered them to inquire, whether or not this calamity would befall Egypt; and they answered, Yes, the flood will overwhelm the land, and destroy a large portion of it for some years. He ordered them to inquire if the earth would again become fruitful, or if it would continue to be covered with water. They answered that its former fertility would return. The king demanded what would then happen. He was informed that a stranger would invade the country, kill the inhabitants, and seize upon their property; and that afterwards a deformed people, coming from beyond the Nile, would take possession of the kingdom, upon which the king ordered the Pyramids to be built, and the predictions of the priests to be inscribed upon columns, and upon the large stones belonging to them; and he placed within them his treasures, and all his valuable property, together with the bodies of his ancestors. He also ordered the priests to deposit within them written accounts of their wisdom and acquirements in the different arts

\* According to Makrizi, fire was to proceed from the sign Leo, and to consume the world.

and sciences.\* Subterraneous channels were also constructed to convey to them the waters of the Nile. He filled the passages with talismans, with wonderful things and idols, and with the writings of the priests, containing all manner of wisdom, the names and properties of medical plants, and the sciences of arithmetic and geometry, that they might remain as records, for the benefit of those who would afterwards comprehend them." After describing the construction of the three pyramids, Masoudi, says, "In the eastern (Great) Pyramid were inscribed the heavenly spheres, and figures representing the stars and planets in the forms in which they were worshipped. The king also deposited the instruments and the thuribula with which his forefathers had sacrificed to the stars, and also their writings; likewise, the position of the stars and their circles, together with the history and chronicles of time past, of that which is to come, and of every future event which would take place in Egypt. He placed there, also, coloured basins (for lustration and sacrificial purposes),

\* Masoudi says that all these marvellous things were placed within the Pyramids; whilst Makrizi, on the authority of Usted Ibrahim, particularises the subterraneous passages as the depositories. On the margin of one of Makrizi's MSS., we read that the inscriptions of the priests were on the ceilings, roofs, etc., of the subterraneous passages.

with pure water, and other matters." After referring to the deposit of the bodies of the priests in the coloured (Third) Pyramid, Masoudi describes the guardians assigned by the king to each pyramid. "The guardian of the eastern pyramid was an idol of speckled granite, standing upright, with a weapon like a spear in his hand; a serpent was wreathed round his head, which seized upon and strangled whoever approached, by twisting round his neck, when it again returned to its former position upon the idol. . . . When everything was finished, he caused the Pyramids to be haunted with living spirits; and offered up sacrifices to prevent the intrusion of strangers, and of all persons excepting those who by their conduct were worthy of admission." The author then says, that, according to the Coptic account, the following passage was inscribed, in Arabic, upon the Pyramids: "I, Surid the King, have built these Pyramids, and have finished them in sixty-one years. Let him, who comes after me, and imagines himself a king like me, attempt to destroy them in six hundred. To destroy is easier than to build. I have clothed them with silk: let him try to cover them with mats."\*

\* Col. Vyse, "Operations," etc., Vol. ii. p. 322 *seq.*

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