

enabled them to make a lightning attack and to conquer a large section of Egypt. These Hyksos (sometimes called Shepherd-kings), held much of the land in subjection for over a century. Eventually they were driven out. Instead of putting up monuments to celebrate their deliverance, the Egyptians preferred to forget that they had ever been under foreign control. Details of the Hyksos invasion are known to us principally from later incidental references, and also from statements in the tombs of some of the nobles about the part they themselves had played in the driving out of the Hyksos.

5. The Empire.

The period of the New Kingdom, also called the Empire, followed the expulsion of the Hyksos. This period begins at about 1570 B.C., with the 18th dynasty. These kings, like those of the Middle Kingdom, worshipped the god Amun, whom they considered to be identical with the earlier sun-god Re, and therefore often referred to as Amun-Re. A multitude of other gods were also worshipped in Egypt, but the priests of Amun-Re became so important that eventually a very large proportion of the land of Egypt came to be the property of the temples of the god Amun. The 18th dynasty includes a series of great rulers, a number of whom went by one of the two names: Thutmose, or Amenhotep. This was a time of Egyptian military prowess, and of the erection of great monuments and temples. The history of religion finds special interest in the so-called heretic king, Akhenaton (also called Amenhotep IV), who reigned from about 1370 to 1353 B.C. In sharp contrast with his predecessors, he was a real monotheist, worshipping only the material disk of the sun. He tried to do away with the ancient Egyptian polytheism, and desired to build a new capital city where only Aton should ever have been worshipped. Therefore he moved his capital to a new place, later called El Amarna. While preoccupied with religious and philosophical matters he