

years of patient study before an article by a young Frenchman, J. F. Champollion finally proved, in <sup>1822</sup>1822, that a correct interpretation of the meaning of many of the signs had been worked out and the foundation laid for studying the history of the ancient Egyptians.

Since that time many brilliant scholars have studied the hieroglyphic inscriptions, and other students have carefully excavated and studied thousands of objects throwing light upon various aspects of Egyptian history. Through the combined efforts of these two types of researchers, many aspects of the public and private life of the ancient Egyptians have become known to us. Thousands of inscriptions throw light on great events in ancient Egyptian history. Some of its periods are better known to us than many portions of the Middle Ages in Europe, but other periods remain comparatively little known.

The contacts between the archaeological material from ancient Egypt and the Bible are not as numerous as one might expect, in view of the great increase in our knowledge of that region. While at various points there are striking contacts, and considerable light is thrown on the Bible by a number of specific Egyptian discoveries, it is rather disappointing to Bible students to find that the definite contacts of Egyptian archaeology with the Bible are even less than the number of Biblical references to Egypt would suggest.

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There are two principal reasons for this situation. The first relates to the source of our Egyptian archaeological material. Egypt is a land which is naturally divided into two parts. The northern section, known as Lower Egypt, is a wide delta of fertile soil. The southern section, called Upper Egypt, follows the course of the Nile through the desert, south of the delta. The Biblical account of events in Egypt deals almost entirely with Lower Egypt, where, indeed, more than half of the great events of Egyptian history took place, but possibly nine-tenths of the archaeological material available to us has come from Upper Egypt, where the narrow strip of fertile land beside the river never is more than a few miles in width, and the desert edge beyond provided an ideal situation for monuments, temples and tombs.