



Carnet de Voyage en Egypte



Adam Cope

2001 - 2003



This 'internet travel journal' grew out of a two week visit to Egypt in 2001.



I took a 6 x 8 inch (15 x 20cm) sketchbook, some watercolours & a camera. The sketchbook I hope has some of the joys as well as some of the practicalities of sketching whilst travelling. I also painted on the spot a dozen or so medium sized watercolours.



To see the monuments of Ancient Egypt was even more of a shock than I imagined it would be.



This 'online notebook' is the result of trying to understand. Researching afterwards, I strived to assimilate this shock that I felt upon encountering this great culture. Relics of Egypt can be found in many museums, such as the British Museum, and the Louvre. Some of the drawings were made after my visit to Egypt in these museums. There are many great historians of Ancient Egypt, and it is through their works that one can be 'an armchair Egyptologist.' And thus continue to voyage... At least in one's mind's eye.



In 2003, I then used this Egyptian material to build my first website, now long since defunct. Today in 2017, I feel that it's worth preserving hence this current format. Imperfect. As is. Incomplete. Maybe one day I will return to Egypt and finish it. I deeply hope so. I painted some watercolours afterwards in the studio, with the sole aim of recreating something of the wonderful things I'd seen. Some people say that you can never really leave Egypt but will be inescapably called back.



This, therefore, is my homage to 'Egypt The Eternal' ... The true home of miracles.



The River Nile



MIN: 42 or the luminous light and of the sudden thundering
at flash have the qualities of a condensation

Aswan is beautiful. Aswan inspired me.

leaving Thebes. A mirage of mid-day light.

Aswan the golden. One of the most beautiful places in Egypt.

Leaving Thebes

Aswan

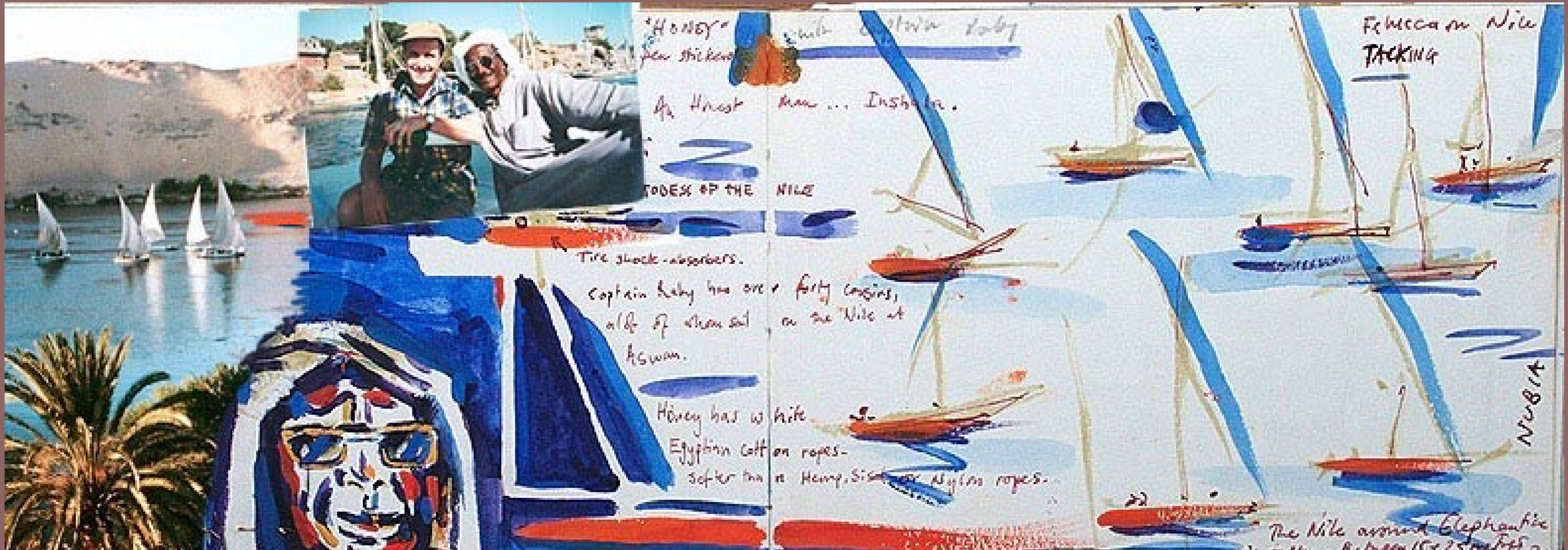


“Egypt is a gift of the Nile.” - Herodotus





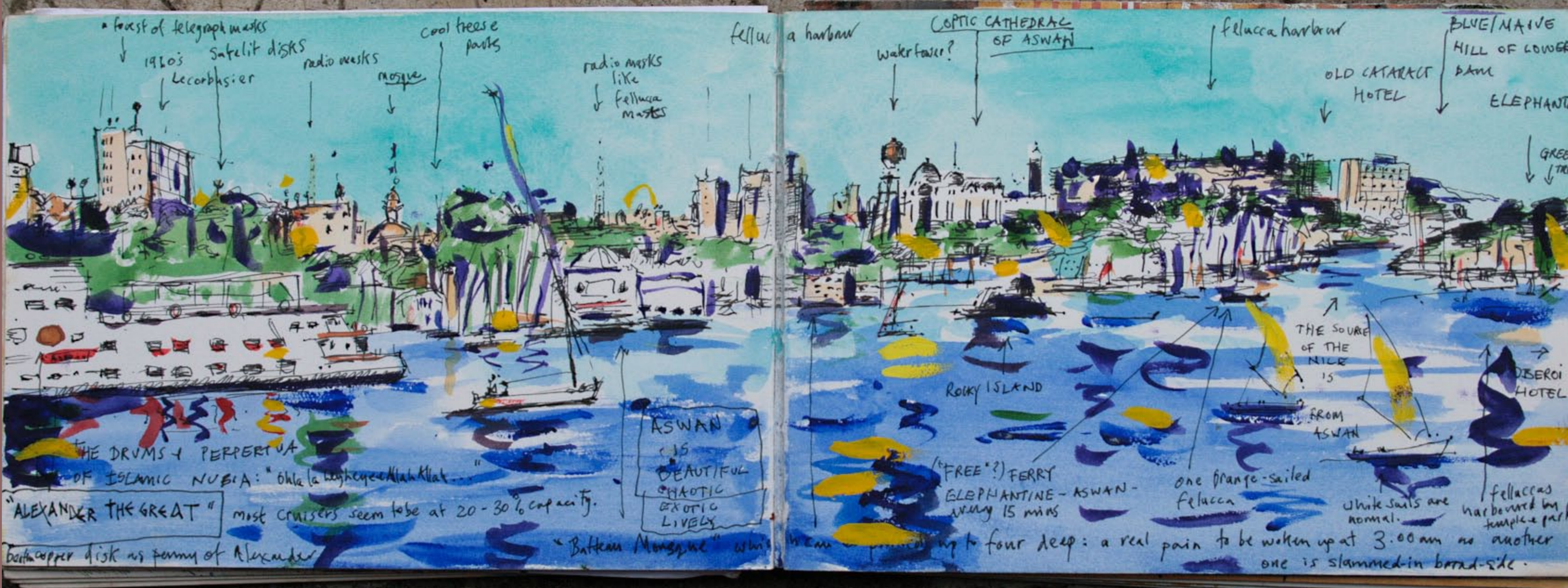
Sailing around Elephantine



'Sailing around Elephantine Isle, Aswan'
 Gouache & photo. Doublespread sketchbook. © Adam Cope. 2001



Aswan



'Aswan from the Pleasure Boat Harbour'
Watercolour & pen, Doublespread sketchbook. © Adam Cope. 2001

☐☐ “Do you not know that Egypt is a copy of heaven and the temple of the whole world?” - Egyptian scribe, circa 1400 BC ☐☐



"JE SUIS VENU ME SAUVER MOI-MÊME,
POUR M'ÉTENDRE SUR LE LIT D'OSIRIS.
JE SUIS NÉ ORPHEUN DE MON PÈRE,
COMME TOUS LES HOMMES NON INITIÉS."
(LIVRE DE SORTIR HORS DE LA LUMIÈRE, CHAP. I.)

The temple is my body; my body is my temple.

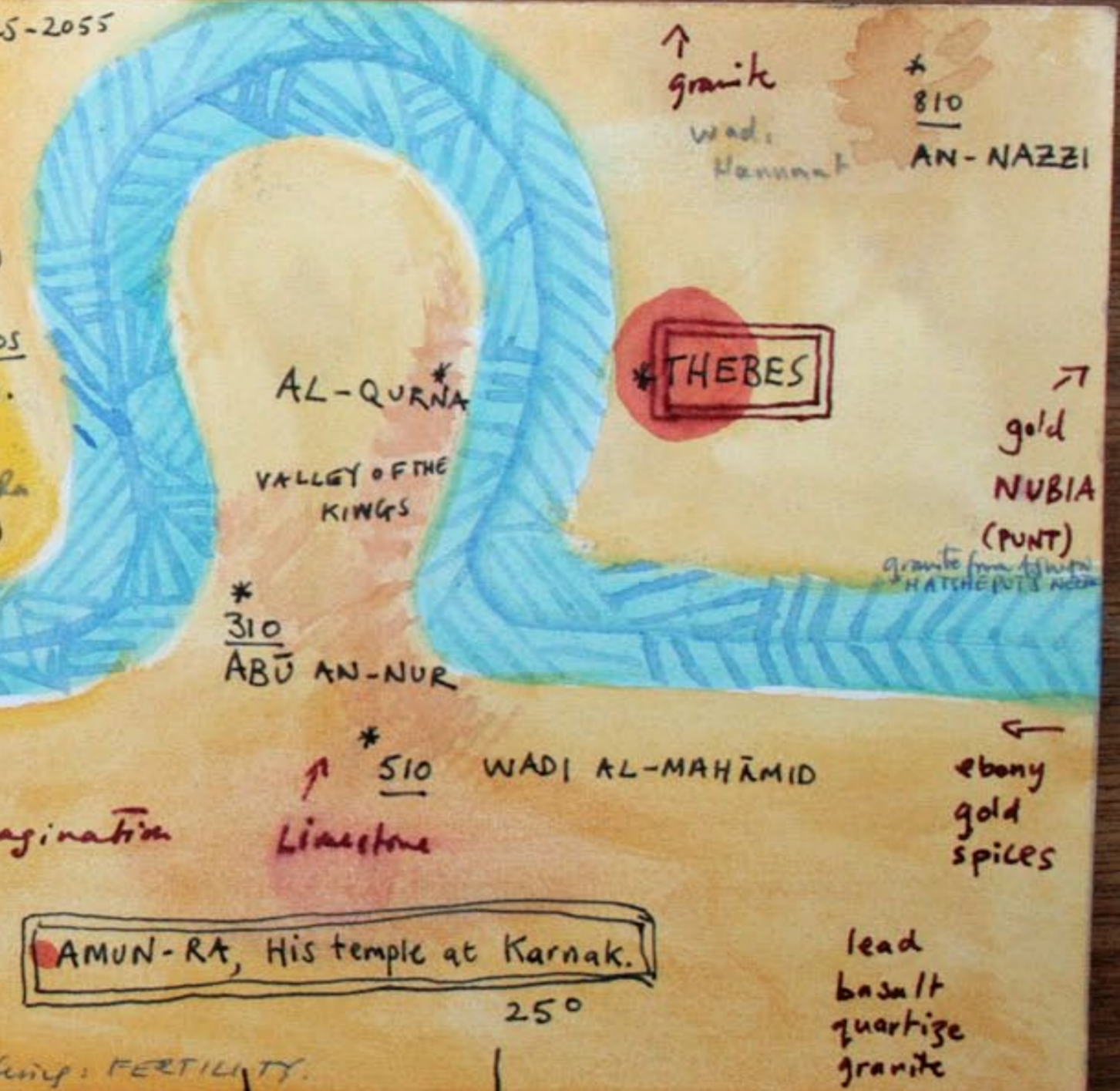
limestone
alabaster
* TELL-AL-ĀMĀRNA (AMENHOTEP IV / AKHENATEN 1352-1336)

← MEMPHIS (30°)
" Cette Thebes aux Cent Portes, pharaon poétique que l'on répète avec confiance depuis tant des siècles, cette cité était encore un phantôme si gigantesque que l'armée Napoléonienne à la vue de ces ruines éparpillées, s'arrêta d'elle-même. Par un mouvement spontané, Serpentine on battit des mains." DENON

" EGYPT IS A GIFT OF THE NILE " HERODOTUS.
1270 HAPI, Goddess of the Nile, is the only divinity that gives (rather than receives) an offering: FERTILITY.

11th DYNASTY (Thebes only) 2125-2055
MENTUHOTEP I (TEPY-A: 'the ancestor')
MIDDLE KINGDOM 2055-1650
11th DYNASTY (all Egypt)
MENTUHOTEP II (NEBHEPETA) 2055-2004
THEBAN RESISTANCE TO HYKSOS
SECOND INTERMEDIATE PERIOD.
then New Kingdom Dynasties
+ Amen-Ra
* ABYDOS (≈ 150-200 kms)

limestone
antique pour notre imagination - même...
IV.



'Thebes' Watercolour. Double Spread sketchbook.
© Adam Cope. 2001

'The Book of Two Ways.' Coffin of Gua - detail.
12th Dynasty. 1985-1795 BC
The British Museum (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0)

Kom Ombos

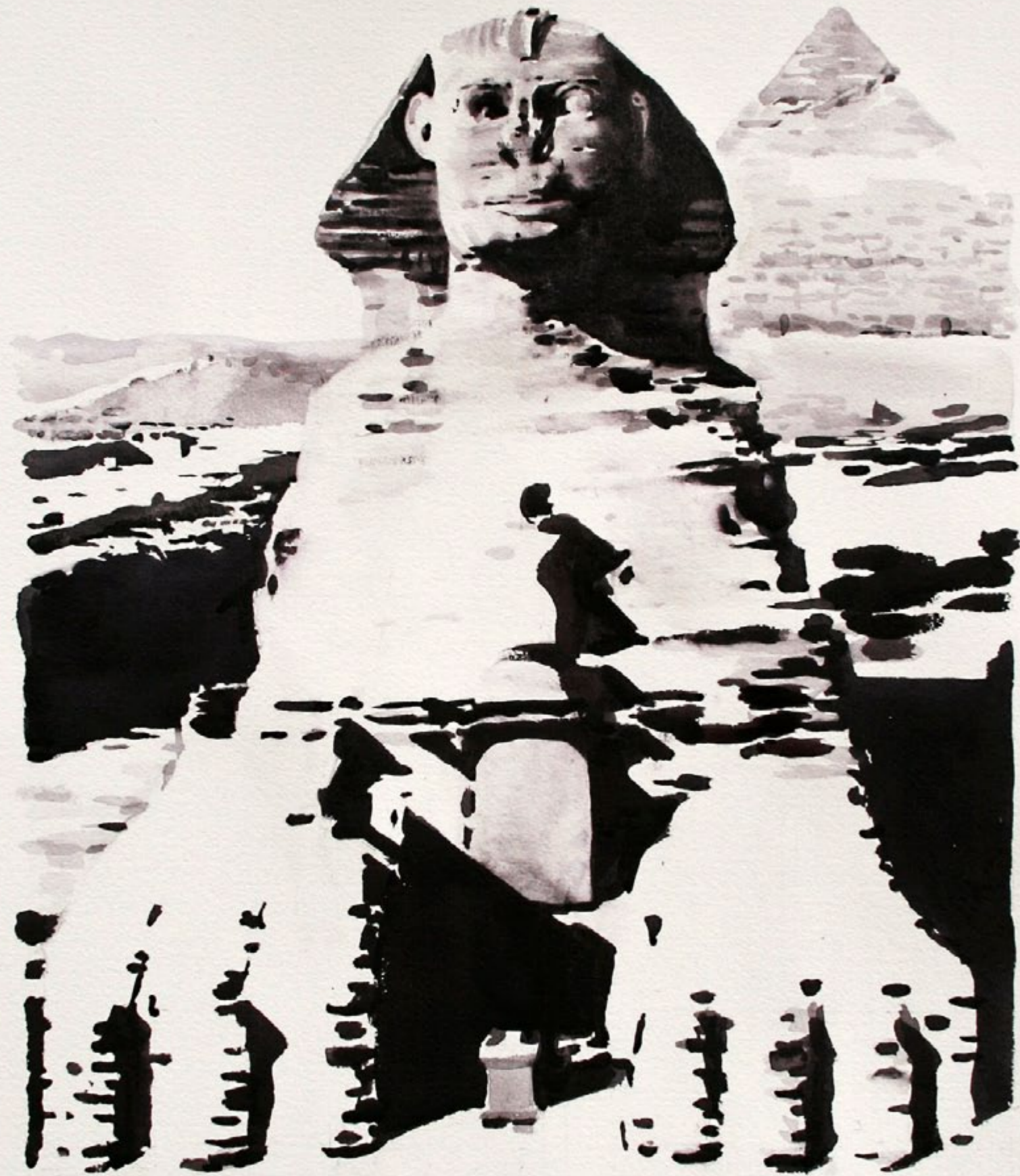


A good pm visit with the South African King-
 kid... thought, he guide, didn't engage from
 children "He talks too much" "But that's because
 he knows alot"



'Kom Ombos' Watercolour. Double Spread sketchbook. © Adam Cope. 2001

::: Gods, Animals & Humans :::



“Tell me, when you are alone with him Sphinx, does he take off his face and reveal his mask?” - Oscar Wilde

⌘ Goddesses, Animals & Humans ⌘



“I once saw something truly beautiful... A moon beam passed through a hole in the roof and lit up all of **SEKHMET**. It only lasted a few moments, but I understood that evening how one could worship statues, because other people long ago had seen what I had seen today, and they believed enough in **SEKHMET**, in **PHAT**, in **AMON**, enough to build these colossal temples that we still admire today.” - Legrain



“We cannot get to the soul of the image without love for the image” - James Hillman



*Sekhmet, New Kingdom.
'La Dame de Retouy',
Louvre
Graphite. A5 © Adam
Cope 2008*



⌘ Karnak ⌘



“This Thebes of a Hundred Doors, poetic phase faithfully repeated for so many centuries, this city was so gigantic a phantom in our imaginations so much so that when the Napoleon Army came into sight of these scattered ruins, it stopped of its own accord... And spontaneously broke into hand-clapping applause.” - Dennon



'Criosphinxes' Karnak. Watercolour. 33 x 28 cm. © Adam Cope 2001

Obelisk of Hatshepsut Karnak



When I painted this, I did something unusual for me : to paint in the midday sun, with neither shade nor cover. The African sun is very hot & bright.

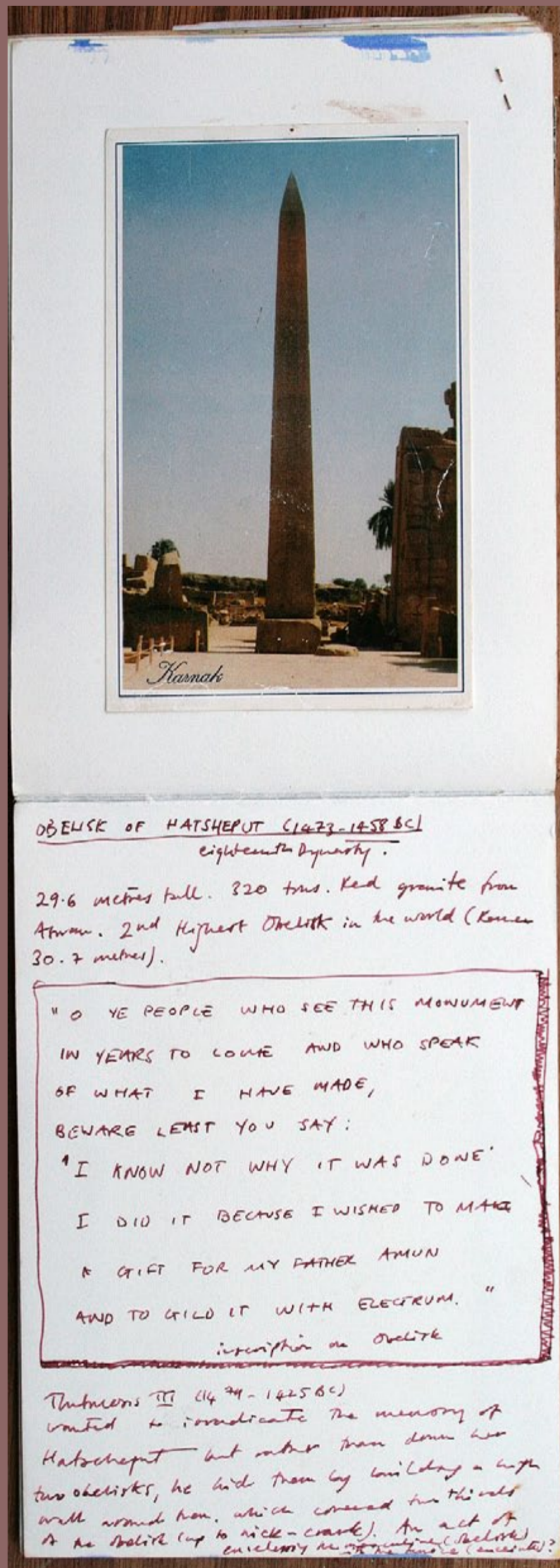
These monuments are strong essences and make strong impressions in one's mind. This obelisk is still so frighteningly straight. Not one degree of a tilt! It seems to bend the dome of the sky around it. So blue. Africa!

The Temple was busy with tourists. An English lady with her young child came by, speaking loudly to her child in that tone of voice which one instantly knows as 'educational', saying "Oh look, it's an obelisk. Can you say Obelisk?" To which the child replied, "No, spaceship..."

Strange memory. I thought I saw black scuttling things amongst the ruins. Made me jump with fear. Probably only sun shock. Retinal after-images of hieroglyphs. Hope so.



*'Obelisk of Hatshepsut' Karnak.
Watercolour. 32 x 25 cm © Adam Cope 2001*





⌘ La Mammisi d'Optet, Karnak ⌘



“ May you enter favoured
and leave beloved.”
- Ancient Egyptian Prayer



Walking through the dust of ages, I arrived at a small temple towards the Precinct of **MUT**, far from the main drag of the Hippo-style Hall and it's noisy tourists. It was my third day at Karnak & I wasn't yet tired of temples & surprises.

I took up the guardian's offer of a tour. He was a gentle intelligent man, whose expressive face and eloquent miming overcame my inability to speak Arabic and his in French or English. I was shown dark chambers by torchlight, coloured hieroglyphs in a sorry state, water damage, always the dust, rows of squatting monkey gods, a red granite altar in the heretic style... In front of a seated Sekmet the guardian tried to indicate some kind of story about ... children being eaten?

We picked our way around a small edifice placed at right angles to the main temple but the door was barred. I could see nothing. He mimed holding a baby. I had read about how the Ptolemies built small temples called a mammisi where the birth of the child-god was celebrated.

It was now mid afternoon. I would have to be quick if I was going to do another watercolour before the site shut at five. As I was walking down the main axis of the temple, my subject found me. Through a gateway and across a route, there was the door to mammisi! Its hieroglyphs were in a pristine state, framed with the healing wands of **ASKLEPIOS**.

The low afternoon light lit up the stone and made it gold.



La Mammisi d'Optet' Karnak
Watercolour 34 x 28 cm © Adam Cope 2001



The Hippostyle Hall Karnak



“I am the holy lotus that cometh forth from the light which belongeth to the nostrils of **RA**, and which belongeth to the head of **HATHOR**. I have made my way, and I seek after him, that is to say, **HORUS**. I am the pure lotus that cometh forth from the field of **RA**.”

The Book of the Dead



‘Karnak. Hippostyle Hall.’

Watercolour 32 x 25cm. © Adam Cope 2001

⌘ Esna, Temple of Khum ⌘



The Temple was used to store gunpowder in the eighteenth century, blackening its walls and columns with soot. Carbon black. The months I spent in a stone lithography press came back to me. Rolling out coal black ink over the smooth limestone. Then the magic - the Image appears from the age old stone. I can hear the voice of the print-master “Let the stone speak...”



And now here I was, in the footsteps of David Roberts, whose watercoloured stone lithographs pervaded the British Empire with a heady romance of the Orient. They are still omnipresent in tourist Egypt today.



In the golden light of this seldom visited temple, it seemed that **KHUM** The World Potter, Shaper and Creator, walked amongst the columns, and that the stones spoke of colours and sooty black golden creations.



‘Esna’.

*Watercolour & graphite pencil. 57*38 cm. © Adam Cope 2001.*

:: The Temple of Edfou ::



Capitals from the Peristyle Hall... Reed, papyrus & lotus. Verdant plants from the banks of the river Nile... now sapphire at Edfou.

The closed buds of the blue Nile lotus, *Nymphaea Caerulea*, make a beautiful motif in this capital.



Joyous Edfou, Temple of Fertility, Temple of **HORUS** Son of the Green God.

Sail out victorious in your sacred boat, 'Great of Turquoise', & meet the visiting goddess.



“O you who stride out... Strewing green stone, malachite, turquoise of the stars, if you are green, then the King shall be green as even a living rush is green.”



'Edfou'

Watercolour 32 x 25cm. © Adam Cope 2001





Edfou, Temple of Fertility



Colours at Edfou: amber yellow sandstone; the fresco colours disappearing, dusted with a fine coating of the cement-like white desert sand. Salination. Everywhere sprayed with pigeon droppings & the fatigue of mass tourism. The ceiling blackened with the soot of a thousand fires of a thousand nights. Before the temple was excavated by Mariette, it was a bandit's hide-out.

Amidst the erosion, I spied traces of the green shade of 'Egyptian Blue.' Enduringly fresh. Malachite azure green copper crystals from the ore mines of Wadi Hammat. It corresponds to a watercolour wash of cobalt turquoise light over a raw sienna base.

* Conspicuous pillars height = capital width = 1:0.58. 6:1:1/2

* Temple pillars height: 7:1 width: 1:1 are taller, capital more important. they are also weight beauty.

* COLOURS AT EDFOU. White dusted yellow stone. Carbon-black paint fired ceilings. Pigeon crap.

* 'EGYPTIAN BLUE' contained oxides of copper & iron with silica & calcium to produce a rich, though relatively unstable pigment. "Wilkinson"

* Egyptian blue is fresh at Edfou, as Osiris fertility temple. Cobalt turquoise AS NEW (too bright as capital capital capital)

* Beautiful cup-shaped flowering columns beside the water in the desert. Temple on East bank now.

Do that Edfou is who began to fertility along the banks of the Nile. Like illustrated medieval manuscript. Nature illuminated like in an image embedded in a mediaeval manuscript. The Image flowers alongside the Letter.

no not feather but a plant local colour

Capital at Edfou: reed, lily, papyrus. many other plants from the banks of the Nile with which the temple was decorated.

philosophic aside: maybe the life force expressed in these columns are a corrective for the barren regions of the desert (Seth).

TEMPLE PILLAR, EDFOU. (see this one symbolically early spring growth (closed buds).)

osiris
Nubia
Mars
Seth
Heliophylis
Sunt



Sixth column in Peristyle Hall, west side. Ptolemaic VIII - XII Period, circa 164-55 B.C.



The art at Edfou is a hymn to the fertility of the banks of the Nile. The life-force expressed in these columns is a corrective for the barren regions of the desert, the bad lands of **SETH**.

The extraordinary natural beauty of the Nile shook me. Dark, fecund soil amongst a sterile waste land of sand, salt & smashed rock. They have an animal fodder crop which can be harvested in only ten days after sowing. So strange to see such succulent chlorophyll in front of huge banks of sand. Nasser's barrage tamed the natural rhythm of the river Nile's cycle of fertility : **Akhet** - the annual inundation of the Nile bringing the rich and fertile nutrients to the soil. Then **Peret** - the Coming Forth, the fertile growth giving harvests and plenty, before **Shemu** , the terrible time of drought and thirst, the vengeance of **SETH**.

Green **OSIRIS** of the Corn endlessly reborn.

Beautiful cup-shaped columns flowering beside the water flowing through the desert. The root of the column is the tree. Nature illuminated like in an image embedded in a mediaeval manuscript. The Image flowers alongside the Letter.

Litany: feather as plant to lily. Closed bud to flowering scent. **RA** - life made from sun & water, baby born of the golden centre of the blue lotus floating on the Nile... My heart unfolded.



VI - V Century BC. Pelizaeus-Museum. Clay 24 cm. Filled up with black alluvium mixed with the crop seed so as that the cereal crop would include the actual body of Osiris Himself. Thus the annual cycle of the crops followed the cosmic resurrection of 'Vegetative' Orisis.

“When you look at its brilliance, your eyes become imbued with dynamic force. When you breath in, your nostrils dilate.” - **HORUS** Script, Edfou.



Death in Ancient Egyptian Art



The first corpse I ever saw was in the British Museum. It was mummy, all bound up and dried out. Adorned with art, gold, magical jewels. Frantic hieroglyphs spelt out curses. Be warned. His reputation went before him. At the entrance, we boys were psyching each other up for our first audience.

I was fascinated. Spooked, yes. Ghastly death surrounded by so much artful beauty.



Dismembered **OSIRIS** cut up and thrown into the Nile. His penis eaten. Pour black pitch, balsam and scented resin over the corpse. Hook out the brain though the nose. Preserve the entrails in jars. Nothing rots in desert tombs. Wash well the corpse and bind it up tightly. Use bandages of finest linen. Place in between the finest jewels. On the heart **KHEPRI** the Amulet of Protection. Pray for your loved ones. Spend your life saving up to ensure your rebirth. Lay in a golden sarcophagus. Paint a map inside & a face on the lid.

The **BA** wanders forth. Divine Protectrice **ISIS** brings together the Dead God's parts. This mortal body is to be preserved, not discarded. It is the mirror of the Immortal Soul. It is to be mummified, lovingly caressed by artful necrophilia, awaiting resurrection via a reassembly of parts.



The burial chamber is dark, beneath the desert, far from the sun. **ANUBIS** will attend to you in blackness.

Eyes strain in the dark. But their eyes don't seem to.

Do not lose your way in the marshes before sunrise.



The sun will arise at dawn in the tomb. The heavens map it out. The painted ceilings announce it. New life awaits.

'Kha-Ae' Elephantine, 2686 BC



Eyes wide open, awake, staring out into eternity. Forever with hope. A mysterious smile on their faces. Their faith produced in me a deep 'moral' shock. They really believed in **LIFE AFTER DEATH.**



Ironic that this wealth and fame should have attracted so many tomb robbers. And now, in our turn, so many tourists. Voyeurs. We were not meant to be there. Not even the most well-meaning anthropologist was meant to be there. Has **ANUBIS** fled before mass tourism? Is Pharaoh's hope of rebirth lost because of our intrusion?

Khepri

KHEPRI - Opens doors in the next world for the deceased

"The Scarabs is going of with the sunrise & push between its legs a ball of mud so they connected the Scarabs with the sun god who also push of mud so they connected the Scarabs with the sun god who also push

SCARBEE AMULET. fixed & ylojed (protection from evil & promise of life after death)

entrie CV17. Elephantine Music.

type: Boosé

The Scarab is a solar image - the winged Scarab probably represents the sun's passage.

wings to body with a hole toward

deep tongue

the sun-disk everyday in the sky from east to west and they connected also with the daily course of the sun with the death of his body.

CHÉPER en français.

Khepri "He who Becomes." - "cloud scarab - heart amulet."

TUTANKHAMEN'S PECTORAL - Symbol of RESURRECTION → the morning sun re-ising

EAST & WEST WITH DIETIES OF XIX DYNASTY. (CAIRO)

SNARE RED - DEATH OF SUN? Then WEST?

(TABLE OFFERING OF FOOD)

(P. TRUTH OF NIGHT.)

WEST (HEAVEN)

table offering as head dress of EAST

HIEROGLYPHS have in 'Snake cursive' like Am' many in Tomb of Amenhotep II

WEST

KHEPRI - Amulet of the Heart - "He who Becomes"

"The scarabs is going of with the sunrise & push between its legs a ball of mud so they connected the scarabs with the sun god who also push the sun-disk everyday in the sky from east to west and they also connected the course of the sun with death of the body." - Explanation in Elephantine Museum.



Detail from The Book of the Earth, Tomb of Ramses VI, Valley of the Kings. Photo : Theban Mapping Project



MUT - XVIII Dynasty (1400 B.C.) Said to have been found in mortuary temple of Amenophis III
- Tripartite wig & modius. B.M. 2001

⌘ Meet The Immortals ⌘

The day after returning, I went to the British Museum, whose Egyptian collection has always been a place of wonder for me. I was missing Egypt. The words of the very last souvenir vendor at Luxor airport were still ringing in my ears : one day I would return to Egypt. I've even been told, here in modern day France, that everybody returns to Egypt. Eventually...

The fragments in the museum now seemed to me displaced and up-rooted. Somehow diminished. Made smaller. Displaced. Out of context. The door back to Ancient Egypt appeared shut to me.

But one element manages to cross the sands of time... Remains intact, despite the ravages of plunder & museum collections.... It is the Egyptian smile in the face of eternity.



'Amenophis II'
cica 1350BC

The museum restorers did a wonderful job in piecing together the fragments of this statue of **MUT**. The expression is the work of a great artist. Full of mystery and interior life.

She is **MUT** Goddess, adored of Thebes, Feminine Divine, consort of **AMON RA**, mother of **KHONS** the Moon-child, World Mother, Anima Mundi.

In some ways the act of drawing is akin to the act of worship. To draw is to love, and in loving we carry our breathe of life and enter, fuse with the adored. They say that the Gods need us so as not to be forgotten, and it is with semen of worship that the grain of the Divine is brought to flesh and life in the sculpted stone itself. Picasso said "a painting only lives in the eye of the beholder."

The museum shut its doors but I could not leave. Casting one last look back, it seemed to me that the Goddess **MUT** was shimmering, forever smiling.



'Mut' (Statue in the British Museum, said to have been found in the mortuary temple of Amenophis III, circa 1400BC)