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*Amarna in Religion und Kunst.* By HEINRICH SCHÄFER. 7te Sendschrift der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft, 1931.

Between the covers of this little book Dr. Schäfer has succeeded in compressing the story of the 'Amarnah period, and in doing so has robbed the subject of none of its interest. On the contrary his account is infused with life from beginning to end, and the full significance of Akhenaten's revolution, both religious and artistic, has been brought out with great skill. The essay is complemented by 64 plates illustrating the finest works of art discovered at El-'Amarnah, each being accompanied by a short description, and reference to these plates being made throughout the text.

To the reviewer the most interesting among the questions raised by this essay is the much vexed one of Akhenaten's beliefs concerning the nature of Aten. From the over-romantic ideas of earlier writers on the subject the pendulum has swung away very far indeed, and it is now customary for us to see in the Aten an entirely materialistic conception, the physical disk of the sun and nothing more. Dr. Schäfer, however, holds to the view that the Aten was essentially a spiritual being, whose soul dwelt in the sun-disk and through this manifested his power. "Ein Mann wie Echnatôn", he says "ist kein Materialist." Without further discussion of the question, which would be out of place here, may one suggest that a careful reconsideration of the evidence may lead us to modify our opinion, at least to some extent, in favour of this view?


A. W. SHORTER.

*Mycerinus. The Temples of the Third Pyramid at Giza.* By G. A. REISNER, Ph.D. Harvard University Press, 1931; London, Humphrey Milford. £9 16s.

This monumental work gives the results of excavations at Gizeh conducted by Dr. Reisner between 1906 and 1924 on behalf of the Joint Egyptian Expedition of Harvard University and the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, and is stated to be the first of a series of reports on this expedition's work. The present volume is concerned with the clearing of the pyramid temple of Mycerinus, the valley temple of the same king, and the temples of the three small pyramids within his precinct, and each of these sites has a chapter devoted to it describing the course of the excavations and disentangling the history of the buildings concerned, while a chapter on the building materials and the methods of construction forms a valuable contribution to the study of Egyptian architecture.

The discussion and classification of the objects found occupy the next five chapters. The most remarkable finds were the already well-known statuary groups of the king with his queen and of the king with the nome-deities, many of which are in an excellent state of preservation. A large number of stone and pottery vessels came to light and are dealt with at considerable length, besides being fully illustrated with figures in the text and photographic plates. The inscriptions found consisted mainly of the remains of five royal decrees of the type already made familiar by Weill, apart from the numerous builders' marks and gang-names written on the blocks of stone employed in the constructions. A portion of the pyramid temple had been utilized in the Roman period as a communal burial-place, whence came a large number of beads, amulets, and other small objects; these are catalogued in the second of six appendices, two others being devoted respectively to the builders' marks and to the other inscriptions.

The last chapter is occupied with a discussion of the family history of the Fourth Dynasty and the succession of its kings. On the latter point Dr. Reisner follows the order of the Abydos king-list in placing Dedefrê before Chephren, but in order to find a place for the otherwise unknown kings named by Manetho Bikheris, Thamphthis, and Seberkheres (who, as R. points out, can hardly be Shepseskaf) he conjectures that these personages belonged to a secondary branch of the family headed by Dedefrê and at feud with the direct line, and that they came to the throne as pretenders whom the later annalists did not recognize as legitimate rulers. His theory is admitted to be conjectural and is certainly a possibility, but the caution must be added that there does not seem to be a particle of real evidence pointing in that direction; in the first place, until the parentage of Dedefrê is known with certainty it is impossible to say whether he was of the full blood royal or not, and secondly, there is nothing whatever to show the connexion, if any, between this king and the three unknowns of Manetho's list.

The text is completed by six appendices. In addition to the three already mentioned, one is concerned with a discussion of the word *gs* found in the expression  *Urk.* I, 18, 11 in the inscription of Debehen. In view of his identification of the name of the Third Pyramid as *Ntr*, Reisner rejects the usual rendering "beside the pyramid *Hr*" and renders "to the works of the pyramid cemetery", regarding *gs*

as a word for "works", "administration" and the like, and *hr* as a word akin to *hrt* "tomb". He bases his rendering of *gs* on evidence afforded by quarry-marks, but the reviewer must confess to remaining unconvinced. The crux of the passage is the interpretation of *hr*. If this be no longer regarded as a name of a pyramid but either as a name of the pyramid cemetery (Reisner) or of the plateau on which the pyramids stand (*Wb. d. aeg. Spr.*, III, 143), then there would appear to be no difficulty in giving to *r gs* the rendering "beside", which one would normally expect it to have. Of the two appendices not yet mentioned, one consists of a "provenience-list" of the objects from the valley-temple; the other, which is supplementary to the chapter on building materials and constructions, is concerned with a discussion of the building operations on the Second Pyramid in opposition to Hölscher's reconstruction of the methods employed. The book is completed by an index and seventy-eight photographic plates, while twelve excellent plans are supplied loose in a pocket, an arrangement which adds materially to the convenience of the reader.

The full publication of these important excavations has been long awaited, and Dr. Reisner is to be congratulated on having now achieved it, but there is one respect in which his book is open to serious criticism. While all will agree that the results of excavations should be published as fully as possible, it is equally important that such publications should be produced at a price within the means of those who are likely to use them, even, at the cost, if necessary, of some condensation of matter and sacrifice of appearance. The present volume is excellently printed and produced, but its bulk is somewhat unwieldy and, what is worse, its heavy cost puts it beyond the reach of the great majority of scholars and students, the very public for which it is presumably intended, and thus to a large extent stultifies the value of the work. There can be no doubt that considerable economies in the cost of production could have been made without loss of scientific value; is there, for instance, any real gain in devoting fifteen photographs on six plates (Nos. 55-60) to the illustration of one statuary group? Is it too much to ask that this matter of cost may receive fuller consideration in any future reports on the expedition's work?

R. O. FAULKNER.