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Sincerely,
Diana Cunningham

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The Hyksos



King Kemose, with Egyptian and Ethiopian warriors, defeats the Hyksos in their chariots. The Hyksos first introduced the use of the horse to Egypt. Being mixed Asiatic tribes, they brought the horse from Asia where it had been in use for about 400 years. The Kassites were the horse-breeders who sold horses to all of Asia. See Vol. II, p. 24.

SHEPHERD KINGS: THE HYKSOS

The Shepherd Kings Conquer Egypt

ABOUT 1675 B. C.

After Amenemhet III had gone down to the Hills of the West, the nation quickly declined. Pretender after pretender struggled for the throne, until once again Egypt broke up into many petty kingdoms.

Then a dark storm cloud rose in the North, threatening death and destruction. Down on this land in confusion came a hungry horde of barbarians called the Hyk'sos or Shepherd Kings; savage, hard-featured warriors from Mes'o-po-tami-a, Syria, Scyth'i-a, and Arabia; blackbearded, swarthy fellows who had often before come down to pasture their herds in the Delta, and against whom Amenemhet I had built the Prince's Wall.

Against these wild barbarians, Egypt, so disunited, could make no effective resistance. District after district passed under their fierce sway, never daring to give them battle. They robbed and burned and plundered. They took men, women and children captive and carried them off as slaves. "Scourges of Mankind, Filthy Ones," the Egyptians called them; but the "Filthy Ones" conquered the Delta, established themselves at A-var'is, and proclaimed the most important of their barbarous chieftains as King. The sleek, clean-shaven Egyptians had to accept the rule of these shaggy, black-bearded herdsmen and acknowledge their chieftain as Pharaoh. For a hundred years or more they ruled the land of Egypt, gradually growing civilized and learning the customs of Egypt.

Of the few scattered petty kingdoms that even after a hundred years still maintained independence and refused to bow the neck before these Herdsmen Kings, the most important was Thebes. Up the river at Thebes the young king Sek-en-en're, and his vigorous little mother, the proud Queen Tet-i-she'r'i, still held their heads very high.

It was a poor little court to which Tetisheri had come as a slim and lovely young bride. Thebes was a beggared city, the last hope of the Egyptians, whither refugees flocked from all the Egyptian towns that had been seized and sacked by the onslaughts of the foe. But

even as a widow and a grandmother, the Queen was the very spirit of high-handed, independence, and proud opposition to the foe. She married her son Sekenenre to one of her daughters, Ah-ho'tep, and, directed the course of affairs.

And A-po'pi, the King of the Herdsmen, seeing the determined spirit that still continued to live in the little Southern Kingdom, decided by some means or other to force a quarrel with the King; so he called his chiefs to deliberate concerning what message to send him.

Now Apopi had made the evil god Set his chief god and served no other god of the whole land but Set. And the hippopotami which the princes of Thebes delighted to hunt were sacred to this god Set; so the wisemen advised Apopi that he should send to Sekenenre bidding him refrain from committing the terrible sacrilege of hunting the hippopotami, saying that those outraged creatures destroyed his sleep at night by reason of their complaining!

Messengers therefore took this outrageous command to the King, and by that means or some other, they succeeded at last in bringing about an open war with Thebes.

Urged on by his vigorous mother, the valiant King Sekenenre plunged into war with the Herdsmen. He had to arouse his people, by nature so unwarlike, to determined, persistent effort. He had to fight with a foe who brought horses and chariots for the first time into Egypt and rode their enemies down beneath their snorting steeds.

But in the midst of this struggle, a grim and terrible tragedy put an end to the young King's life. He may have been at the front at war with the barbarians, or he may have been in his palace, a victim of palace intrigues; but as his mummy shows by its yawning wounds and agonized limbs, his enemies caught him unawares, either creeping up behind him and striking him down so swiftly that: he did not even have time to lift a hand in his own defense, or falling upon him in his sleep, battering him with a battle axe, hacking him with sword and spear, then rudely bundling his mangled corpse in the wrappings of its grave clothes and rushing it off to the tomb, not even taking the trouble to straighten

his clawing hands and his painful distorted lips.

Tetisher's son was dead and the final storm of the Hyksos invasion was just about to break, but the influence of the Queen was still alive in the palace.

Kem'ose, the newly hailed Pharaoh, was either the Queen's son or grandson, and under the urge of her spirit, he made up his mind to attack the invading Herdsmen anew. So he called his Council of Peers and said: "To what purpose am I King when there is one chieftain in Avaris and another in Kush? I sit here with an Asiatic on one side and a negro the other, while every man holds his own slice of this Egypt. I shall grapple with these Asiatics! I shall rip open their bellies!"

But the Peers said: "It is true that the Asiatics put out their tongues at us altogether; however, we are at ease here holding our part of Egypt. Wait until they attack us. Then will be time enough for us to rise up and fight them."

Words of such cowardly weakness roused Kemose to a fury.

"As to this advice of yours," he cried, trembling with indignation; "I will fight the Asiatics!"

And he gathered together a band of the fierce, black fighting Ma'zois and sailed in his boats down stream. "Every warrior was before me like a flame of fire," he cried, "and the troops of the Mazoi advanced to search out the Asiatics. East and West, we were victorious! I spent the night on my ship, and when the day dawned, I pounced like a hawk on the enemy, a cowardly Egyptian princeling who made common cause with the Herdsmen. I found him perfuming his mouth. I knocked down his walls! I slaughtered his people!"

Thus Kemose won back from the invaders the main part of Upper Egypt, and prospects were bright for regaining the whole of the conquered land. But at that moment Kemose died, and Ah'mose, the youngest son of the late King Sekenenre, and grandson of Queen Tetisher, came to the throne of Egypt, a youth of about sixteen.

The father, the brother, the uncles of Ahmose, —all were dead. There were no royal men at the court of Thebes to surround the youthful Pharaoh, but there were three determined women, Nof-re-ti'ri, his wife and sister, Ahhotep, his mother, and his grandmother, Tetisher. Under their vigorous influence, Ahmose continued with courage the war against

the Hyksos, leading his own hosts to battle, driving the Herdsmen before him, and shutting them up at last within their strong fortress, Avaris, which lifted its threatening walls above the green fields of the Delta.

For three years Ahmose continued in camp, laying siege to Avaris, and twice in that time the Herdsmen sent war galleys out of the city by way of a narrow canal in a desperate effort to get much needed supplies to Avaris. But the watchful fleet of Ahmose gave the enemy battle and destroyed them or drove them back.

"Now the King was besieging the city of Avaris," says Ahmose-son-of-Ebana, a naval commander in Pharaoh's fleet, "and I fought on foot before his Majesty, in consequence of which I was appointed to the battleship, *Crowned-in-Memphis*. Then the King fought on the waters of the canal, called the Waterway of Avaris, and I fought in single combat and killed the enemy and cut off his hand. It was reported to the King's recorder, and the King presented me with gold for my valor. Then again on a second occasion, there was fighting on the canal."

And so after three long years, Avaris was forced to surrender. The Herdsmen poured out of their city and fled up northward toward Canaan, pursued by the hosts of Pharaoh, who scattered them to the four winds.

Then Ahmose, the King, the liberator of Egypt from the power of the Herdsmen invaders, returned in triumph to Thebes, defeated his other enemies in Nubia and Egypt, and restored the land to peace and prosperity again.

Thus the old Queen Tetisheri lived to see Thebes transformed from a little provincial city into the flourishing capital of a great and powerful Empire, and she received a gift of lands retaken from the Herdsmen. There, on her own estates, she lived in comfort and peace for all the rest of her days, and when at last she died, an overseer placed in her chapel a pair of beautiful statues, picturing her as the charming, slim, little Princess she was when she came as a bride to Thebes.

The great King Ahmose himself never forgot his vigorous, proud and handsome little grandmother, who had directed three generations of his family through the course of the

Hyksos wars; and even toward the end of his reign, he recorded on a stone tablet his deep devotion to her.

At last the Princes of Thebes had driven out the Herdsmen and paved the way for the rise of the powerful Empire of Egypt.