



Scripts.com

# National Geographic: Egypt - Quest for Eternity

By Miriam Birch

One hundred and fifty years ago  
the king of France had  
this obelisk brought  
from Egypt to grace  
the heart of Paris  
Three thousand years earlier  
it had been dedicated to the  
great pharaoh Ramses II  
with these words  
"so long as heaven exists  
your monuments shall exist  
and your name shall endure  
like the heaven."  
Through the 30 centuries  
that the pharaohs ruled Egypt  
the people of the Nile created  
the most glorious monuments  
the world has even seen  
among them  
the largest place of worship  
in the ancient world  
These miracles in stone were  
tributes to their gods and kings  
They believed that man, like the sun  
could die and be reborn  
They constructed elaborate tombs  
to protect the body  
and house the soul  
throughout eternity  
They created guides to  
the underworld  
Books of the Dead  
to insure immortality  
And on their monuments  
they left the testimony  
of their faith  
These inscriptions are keys with  
which we unlock the secrets  
of ancient Egypt  
Ladies and gentlemen  
now we are at the temple of  
the queen Hatshepsut...  
And, as they have since  
the days of Herodotus

Antony and Cleopatra  
thousands journey here  
to see these wonders  
going down to the Green Valley  
for the holy visit of Amun-Re  
to the goddess Hathor once  
a year for 15 days...  
But today, having endured  
for 50 centuries  
these seemingly imperishable  
structures are threatened  
Their fate may be determined  
in our lifetime  
so, people of science, soul  
and conscience  
travel here from all over the globe  
to save  
the priceless monuments  
to decipher the meaning  
of the messages  
before they disappear forever  
This is the story of  
the land of Egypt  
and the quest for eternity  
The Nile  
Flowing through the endless miles  
of Egypt's desert sands  
its precious waters gave birth  
and breath  
to one of the  
greatest civilizations  
that has ever taken hold on our planet  
"Hail to you, Oh Nile!"  
Went an ancient hymn  
"sprung from earth  
come to nourish Egypt  
Food provider, bounty maker  
who creates all that is good."  
The river's annual flooding left  
rich deposits of silt  
utilizing it, farmers developed  
a settled life  
sustained by its abundant waters  
the land and crops prospered

Even mud from the Nile's banks  
provided the people  
with material for everything  
from clay pots to the bricks  
with which they built their homes  
The Nile itself was Egypt's highway...  
boats sailed northward  
with the currents  
and south with the prevailing winds  
To predict the time when the  
river would overflow  
the ancients developed a calendar  
our own evolved from it  
Along the extended oasis of  
the Nile Valley  
a way of life emerged  
that still endures today  
virtually unchanged from the furthest  
reaches of recorded time  
And in the time of the Nile's  
annual flooding  
when the farmers could not till  
their fields  
they built the pyramids-tombs  
for their pharaohs  
All that remains of the seven Wonders  
of the Ancient World  
they were stairways to heaven  
For to all Egyptians  
their religion promised an afterlife  
The largest monument ever constructed  
the Great Pyramid contains more than  
two million immense limestone blocks  
each weighing over two tons  
One hundred thousand men toiled  
for 20 years  
without wheel, horse  
or iron tools to create it  
that their pharaoh might  
join the sun god  
and live in eternity  
This dedication to gods and  
kings was to sustain the Egypt  
of the pharaohs for 3,000 years

From the beginning, the Nile was  
the soul of the land  
The lotus growing on the river  
banks symbolized  
the people of Upper Egypt  
the papyrus, shimmering in the  
marshes of the Delta  
was the symbol of Lower Egypt  
Immortalized on this table of slate  
a king known as Narmer wears the  
high-domed crown  
of Upper Egypt on one side  
the low-curved crown of Lower Egypt  
on the other  
It commemorates his unification  
of the two lands  
to create the nation of Egypt  
in 3100 B.c.  
From that time, Egyptian kings  
would wear both crowns  
as rulers of the two kingdoms of  
Upper and Lower Egypt  
The two lands have remained linked  
from Narmer's time to the present  
Isolated from its neighbors  
protected by mountains, desert,  
and sea  
the Nile Valley was an ideal crucible  
in which a civilization could begin  
Traces of those beginnings can be  
found in the city of Nekhen  
The site, still populated today  
holds evidence of habitation  
stretching back 6,000 years  
since 1967  
Dr. Walter Fairservis of Vassar college  
and the American museum of  
Natural History  
has been excavating here  
in his continuing search for  
the roots of civilization  
It was here, just 90 years ago  
that the Narmer tablet was discovered  
It was here, 50 centuries before

that king Narmer established  
the capital  
of the newly unified nation  
Here we have the walls of a princely complex  
that belonged to a king who lived  
here 5,000 years ago  
the very beginning of Egypt's  
unification  
He was a great king, a powerful monarch  
And we know from the size of  
the rooms  
and the way things are located  
that he was a very rich man  
a very wealthy person  
We know he had storerooms full of grain  
We know that he had perhaps  
a great hoard of copper  
and many other things of that order  
And yet, oddly enough,  
this powerful monarch  
he left the place  
He abandoned it  
And that's part of the reason  
we're exploring this area to  
find out why  
Why, at the very beginnings of  
Egypt's history  
do we have a place as important  
as this abandoned?  
Perhaps the secret still lies buried  
in these mud-brick walls  
sifting through the debris  
of the centuries  
the Fairservis team continues  
to piece together  
the history of the site  
Many threads bind Egyptian  
prehistory and history  
But none is stronger than the  
belief in immortality  
But this one is interesting because...  
Equipped with objects necessary  
for the afterlife  
these bodies were buried before

the first pharaoh built  
his palace here  
Right here, if I can just  
pull this up a little bit  
hair pins  
found at the roof of the skull  
Made of some quill-like or ivory,  
I guess  
Perhaps ivory  
Perhaps ivory, yes.  
Put that back there  
In this capital, religion, tradition  
and political power fused  
foundations were laid on which  
the longest lasting of  
all ancient civilizations would rise  
Two thousand years later  
Egypt's religious capital  
was Thebes  
one of the richest  
most powerful cities on earth  
At its heart was the temple of  
Amun at karnak  
the largest place of worship  
in the ancient world  
As dynasty followed dynasty  
the great complex was enlarged  
and embellished  
by a succession of pharaohs  
Tutankhamun  
whose fabulous tomb treasures  
dazzled the world  
a female pharaoh, Hatshepsut  
called "the first great woman  
in history"  
the heretic Akhenaten,  
first believer in one god.  
And Ramses II, the greatest builder  
of all time  
called Ramses the Great  
pharaoh while Egypt's power and  
prosperity flourished  
this warrior-king was to rule  
for 67 years

bring peace to the empire,  
father nearly 200 children  
and leave his mark on fully half  
the monuments in Egypt  
Ramses was only about 20  
when his father seti I died  
in 1290 B.c.  
Seti had ordered his funerary  
temple built at Abydos  
One of Ramses' first acts as pharaoh  
was to travel there to complete it  
To all Egyptians, this was the  
most sacred city on earth  
Here, drawn by some mystical  
identification  
with Abydos and the long-dead pharaoh  
an extraordinary woman  
known as Omm seti  
was to come 3,000  
years later  
With a group of fellow Egyptologists  
she celebrates her 77th birthday  
Well, thank you very much  
You certainly made it  
a happy birthday  
Make a speech  
Make a speech? Oh, how lovely,  
I am touched  
I'm afraid its a mass-produced one,  
but...  
Never mind, no matter  
My heart, my mother  
My heart, my mother  
My heart whereby I came into being  
Do not stand up and witness against  
me at the judgement  
I think that is the text.  
It should be  
Yes, you've got it  
Oh, thank you very much  
To Omm seti at her 77th,  
on her way to 110  
Thank you. Let us drink to our dear  
old friend Ramses II



Born Dorothy Eady in England  
she says something called her here  
from the time she was a child  
she came here 50 years ago,  
married an Egyptian  
and had a son whom she named seti  
From then on, she was known as  
"Omm seti,"  
which means "mother of seti."  
She has devoted the last 30 years  
of her life  
to the study of seti I's temple  
and become an expert on him and  
Ramses II  
Ramses tells that he came to Abydos  
alone, you see  
in the first year of his reign  
after his father was dead  
and he found that the decoration of  
this temple was incomplete  
In the inscription he says that  
"I ordered the work of my father  
to be completed  
and all the works which my father  
had started  
and were still incomplete  
I had them finished."  
And then he goes on as  
if he's speaking to the soul  
of his father  
you see, and telling him  
that all that seti had wanted to do  
and died before completing  
and all his plans and ambitions  
Ramses would complete it  
And he said, "so long as  
I am ruling  
it will be as though you are  
still on the throne."  
He was a nice fellow,  
and he was a very good son  
When Omm seti came here for the  
Egyptian Department of Antiquities  
the temple was in ruins.

Its reconstruction became  
her passion.  
They confronted me with a pile of  
fragments of inscribed stone  
There were over 2,000  
some were very small, some were  
very big  
My job was to copy the inscriptions  
on them  
catalogue them, and, where possible,  
fit them together  
The temple is vibrant with carvings  
that look as fresh today  
as when they were painted 3,000  
years ago  
Its walls tell the first known  
story of resurrection  
Osiris, a mythical ruler  
was killed and dismembered  
by his brother  
His wife, the goddess Isis, found  
the scattered pieces of his body  
bound them together, and Osiris  
arose from the dead  
Their son, the falcon-headed god Horus  
was to grow to manhood and avenge  
his father  
Anubis, jackal-headed god of embalming  
was sent by the sun god to help  
Osiris live eternally  
The Egyptians believed  
that because Osiris died  
and rose again  
they too could achieve immortality  
Worshipping Osiris, Seti assures  
his place in the afterlife  
Offering incense  
the pharaoh worships before the  
bark of the sun god, Amun-Re  
Just as Seti offers bread, ducks,  
figs  
and a pomegranate to Isis  
Omm Seti follows the ancient belief  
Oh yes, every year at the Great Feast

and again on the birthday of the  
gods Osiris and Isis  
I come here with offerings of wine  
bread, and incense  
Oh, I love coming here  
It's the place I really do feel  
at home  
Three days after this filming  
was completed  
Omm seti died  
she was buried in Abydos  
Egyptian city of resurrection  
In the time of Ramses  
the most powerful deity of the living  
was the sun god Amun-Re  
He was patron of the city of Thebes  
located on the Nile between  
the first capital Nekhen,  
and Abydos  
On the east bank, where the sun rises  
were temples dedicated to the sun god  
karnak... and Luxor  
On the west bank, where the sun  
buries itself each day  
was a complex of tombs where  
royalty was buried  
the Valley of the kings  
and the Valley of the Queens  
The Greek poet Homer was to  
immortalize Thebes as  
"the city of a hundred gates  
where 400 heroes with their horse  
and chariots pass through each  
of these great gates."  
While Ramses reigned  
Thebes was splendid  
He ordered beautiful additions  
made to Luxor temple  
gigantic statues, obelisks  
and courts dedicated to the  
glory of Amun-Re  
But having endured 3,000 years  
these monuments face destruction  
in our time

from the effects of  
increased agriculture  
industrialization,  
changing weather conditions  
due in part to the Aswan High Dam  
and even the tourists themselves  
In 1924, in response to the  
impending crisis  
the Oriental Institute of  
the University of Chicago  
established a permanent  
headquarters in Egypt  
called Chicago House  
it was founded by  
Dr. James Henry Breasted  
father of American Egyptology  
who envisioned making a record of  
all the endangered monuments of  
ancient Egypt  
Today Chicago House is under  
the direction of Dr. Lanny Bell  
The scholars of Chicago House  
have undertaken  
a monumental labor called  
the Epigraphic Survey  
Over the past 50 years  
the Oriental Institute  
has published an epic series  
of volumes  
containing the results of the survey  
Utilizing an ingenious combination  
of photography and draftsmanship  
the Chicago House Egyptologists  
create facsimile  
drawings of the monuments' carved  
and painted surfaces  
the only record that will remain  
when the hieroglyphs  
and decorations  
have disappeared forever  
from the temples  
As pharaoh succeeded pharaoh  
it was common for them  
to alter temples

taking credit for the work  
of their predecessors  
By interpreting successive decorations  
the Chicago House team is decoding  
the history of Luxor temple  
As the glory of pharaonic Egypt faded  
people built houses inside the temple  
Their debris buried much of it  
for 2,000 years  
When excavation started a hundred  
years ago  
the stone walls were suddenly  
exposed to the air  
since then, salts, leaching  
out of the stone  
combine with moisture in the air  
creating crystals that slough off  
taking the images with them.  
The salt on the walls makes  
our work urgent  
The reliefs are being dissolved  
so that within a period of 200 years  
the temple will still stand  
but all of the decorated surface  
will have flaked off  
When they are gone  
we want there to be a record  
as accurate as humanly possible  
of the decoration  
so that scholars will be able to  
consult our drawings  
and be sure that the reliability is such  
that any questions they have  
about the decoration  
will be answered in our volumes  
When the gods were worshipped  
here no more  
great portions of the temples  
were dismantled  
Large blocks were broken into  
smaller pieces  
for reuse as building material  
Thousands of them have been  
collected over a 30-year period

chicago House is conducting a  
systematic search of the fragments  
to reconstruct a section called  
the "Lost colonnade."  
Finding a fragment that may fit  
artist Ray Johnson makes notations  
and the block is carefully photographed  
An artist pencils, then inks in the  
lines of the photograph  
making corrections and replacing  
what time may have removed  
Then the artist fits the photograph  
into his rendering of the wall  
Only the areas within the inked lines  
have actually been found  
But from the salvaged fragments  
it is sometimes possible to  
reconstruct the entire design  
created by the original artists  
You support me going up  
On those exciting and rare occasions  
when a fragment that fits onto a  
standing wall is found  
it is replaced  
Toward me?  
So, piece by piece, the ancient  
temple of Amun-Re rises again  
The investigations of chicago House  
have revealed  
that the colonnade of Luxor temple  
is the major standing monument  
of Tutankhamun  
To completely evaluate its  
architectural history  
the inscriptions at the top of  
the structure  
must be photographed  
Ladders reaching five stories high  
have been assembled  
This is the first time in 50 years  
that anyone has attempted the ascent  
On the 70-foot-high columns  
Dr. Bell studies the techniques used  
by the artisans of antiquity

Here they inserted wooden blocks to  
stabilize the structure  
as they fitted it together  
A roof once covered the colonnade  
but it fell or was removed sometime  
before 1600 A.D.  
Fragments of it found on  
the temple floor  
have been identified  
In assessing the temple's past  
Dr. Bell's thought inevitably  
turn to its future  
Paradoxically, the vibrations caused  
by the endless footsteps of the  
tourists who visit each year  
even the carbon dioxide they exhale  
are eroding the irreplaceable  
treasures they come to enjoy  
chicago House studies have reveale  
that a hundred years after Tutankhamun  
built this structure  
Ramses II systematically erased  
his predecessor's  
and replace it with his own  
naively assuming he could deceive  
the gods  
and take credit for the colonnade's  
construction  
But Ramses also added to the  
majesty of Luxor temple  
He built a massive entrance-  
"The horizon  
from which the sun god goes forth."  
From reliefs we can reconstruct a  
dazzling annual festival  
The Feast of Opet  
With the Nile in full flood  
the golden statue of the god Amun Re  
has been brought to Luxor from  
karnak in its boat-shrine  
Within the temple's innermost  
sanctuary  
Ramses offers incense, flowers  
and food to the linen-shrouded god

The sacrifices and ceremonies concluded  
priests lead the procession out  
of the temple  
purifying the way before them  
Thousands of citizens crowd the  
waterfront to see musicians  
Nubian dancers, soldiers  
and priestesses accompany the  
procession along the Nile  
The shrine of the god is placed  
on its sacred  
and in great ceremony priests, god  
and pharaoh are towed back to  
karnak temple  
Ramses' favorite queen, Nefertari  
and the royal princesses greet the  
procession as it arrives  
concluding nearly a month of worship  
and revelry,  
the royal couple enters the great  
temple of Amun at karnak  
Within the sacred precincts  
of the temple  
the shrine carrying the golden statue  
of the god  
is hidden from public view  
until the next year  
symbolically renewed and reborn  
the divine king Ramses advances  
toward the innermost  
reaches of the temple  
where no common mortals are allowed  
to venture  
Begun by his father, seti I  
this awesome hall was completed  
by Ramses  
A soaring forest of stone,  
it is created of 134 pillars  
some of them 80 feet high  
ceilings and columns are ornamented  
with Ramses' cartouches-magical ropes  
that surround the king's name to  
protect him from evil  
In the hieroglyphs of his name



is the message  
"it is Re, the sun god, who bore him."  
From the sun god  
the pharaohs drew their right to  
rule-their divinity  
their legitimacy, and crowns  
so they constructed this mighty city  
of God  
A hundred pharaohs enlarged  
and embellished it over a period of  
a creation that did not cease  
until the christian era...  
that has resumed as modern  
archaeologists  
restore this timeless testimony  
of faith  
Across the Nile stretches the Land  
of the Dead  
Here, in mystical imitation of  
the setting sun  
the bodies of the deceased were  
laid to rest  
that they might rise again  
as the sun did each day  
cut into the heart of the mountain,  
the Theban necropolis is a vast  
labyrinth of tombs  
Here, Ramses' architects built  
his splendid mortuary temple,  
the Ramesseum  
In its forecourt lie huge fragments  
of his colossal statue 1,000 tons  
of granite  
that once rose 57 feet in height...  
that inspired shelley's sonnet  
"Ozymandias  
"in which he called the pharaoh  
"king of kings."  
When Ramses died in 1224 B.c.,  
the Ramesseum was magnificent  
Here, the magic of his name and  
images would keep him alive forever  
This was but a stopping point for  
the dead king

and his funeral procession  
the sacred place where offerings  
would be made to him  
from this day throughout all time  
Though mourners wept, they knew that  
if properly provided for,  
one could live forever  
so they carried with them everything  
the dead might need  
for the voyage through eternity  
For a king there would be boats in  
which he could sail endlessly  
on the Nile...  
And a throne from which  
he could continue to reign  
Even magical figures would be provided  
to do his bidding in the afterlife  
In their tomb paintings the people  
of the Nile depicted the hereafter  
as a pleasant extension of their  
earthly lives...  
a place where they could amuse  
themselves hunting ducks...  
where rich crops would sustain them  
The deceased carried with them  
"Books of the Dead."  
They instructed the departed on how  
to avoid the gods  
and demons that would attempt to  
bar their way  
Her body painted with stars  
a goddess of the sky stretches over  
a reclining god  
who represents the earth  
Between them, a winged form of  
the sun god sails  
through the netherworld  
The divine, ibis-headed scribe, Thoth  
makes notes as the deeds of the deceased  
are weighed on the scale of justice  
In an address to the gods  
the departed will assert his innocence  
"I am pure of mouth and hands  
without sin, without guilt,

without evil."

Those who were judged to be without  
sin could join Osiris  
to dwell in the "happy land of  
the setting sun."

But most important  
there must be a body to which the  
soul could return  
Anubis, god of embalming  
prepares the body for the life to come  
so Ramses' mummy would have gone  
to his tomb

after a priest pronounced over it:  
"You will live again forever."

The tomb of Ramses II  
In a state of dangerous disrepair  
its access is forbidden  
to almost everyone  
But a team headed by Dr. Kent Weeks  
of the University of California  
at Berkeley

has recently mapped it  
In the dynasty following Ramses'  
the royal tombs were systematically  
plundered

As a last resort, priests collected  
the surviving royal mummies  
and hid them

In 1871, a grave robber  
found Ramses II  
where he had lain undisturbed  
for 3,000 years  
Reclaimed by the Egyptian Government  
the mummy of Ramses now reposes  
in the Cairo Museum

far from the Valley of the Kings  
This is the West Valley  
It's part of the ancient necropolis  
of Thebes

about nine square miles of some of  
the most important  
archaeological monuments anywhere  
in the world

The Valley of the Queens, Valley

of the kings  
Tutankhamun's tomb, they're all here  
But in spite of several centuries of  
interest in this area  
there still does not exist a detailed  
archaeological map of  
what it contains  
That's the purpose of the Berkeley  
Theban Mapping Project  
to make as detailed  
an archaeological map  
as modern technology will permit  
It's an important project  
It's going to make it possible  
for us to study the history of  
the necropolis  
But even more important  
it's going to help us to preserve  
it and protect it  
surveying techniques are used to  
measure topographical features  
...1.303  
Thank you.  
At headquarters in a village below  
the necropolis  
the team reviews its findings  
It's okay  
can you see "Q2" there above the  
temple at Deir el Medina?  
Aerial photographs are utilized  
to plan tomb mapping  
for the next day in the Valley  
of the Queens  
Right above the temple...  
Yeah, right there...  
Okay, that's the point we'll occupy  
tomorrow morning  
When surface measurements are combined  
with plans of the tombs  
they will create new and revolutionary  
three-dimensional maps  
These will make it easier to find  
correlations  
between the geography and the location

of the known tombs  
and perhaps enable scientists to  
find tombs still undiscovered  
Let's drop everything here, Dave  
and then we can send it on down  
Why don't you and Jenny go on down  
We'll start passing stuff to you  
Dave, why don't you choose what we  
have to take down  
and we'll leave the rest up here  
I get the lantern, not you  
Let's finish that rear chamber today  
if we can, Dave  
I think we can. It looks like a  
steep set of stairs  
Yeah. Watch your step  
It isn't really.  
I got it  
Okay.  
Standard surveying techniques are used to  
obtain the dimensions of each chamber  
Every archaeological detail will  
be drawn and recorded  
I think that's about it, Cathy  
Did you get those problems in  
the back chamber?  
It was customary to place the tombs  
of royal children  
in the Valley of the Queens  
This is the tomb of a young prince  
son of Ramses III.  
Here, the pharaoh himself offers  
incense to the gods  
on the boy's behalf  
In these touching scenes  
the pharaoh leads his nine-year-old son  
into the presence of the divinities  
of the underworld  
carrying the feather of truth,  
the boy obediently follows his father.  
It is believed the ancient sculptors  
and painters lit the interiors of  
tombs and temples  
with polished metal reflectors

used as mirrors.  
And these scenes were filmed under  
the same conditions.  
This is the tomb of Nefertari  
Though Ramses had at least  
four royal wives  
she remained his favorite  
Due to humidity caused by increased  
irrigation in nearby farmland  
the exquisite murals of her tomb  
are flaking off  
Unless scientists can halt  
the deterioration  
these may be the last moments of  
what was imagined  
as the endless ages in which Nefertari  
would live on these walls  
This was the woman with  
who Ramses believed he would go  
through eternity...  
to whom these words were written  
"The princess, rich in grace  
Lady of affection, sweet with love  
mistress of the Two Lands  
songstress of the beautiful countenance  
Greatest in the harem of the lord  
of the palace  
All that you say, will be done  
for you  
Everything beautiful according  
to your wish  
All your words bring contentment  
to the face  
Wherefore men love to hear your voice."  
These tributes speak to us of love  
and hope  
a people and a civilization  
that soared brilliantly  
and then was eclipsed  
Here at the temple of Isis,  
built on an island in the Nile  
the religion of ancient Egypt had  
its last stronghold  
After 332 B.c., the Greek Ptolemies

would reign  
as the last dynasty of pharaohs  
Embracing the Egyptian religion  
they built this temple dedicated  
to the worship of Isis  
divine symbol of motherhood  
her husband Osiris,  
and their son Horus  
There stories are told and retold  
on the temple walls  
But the story of another holy family  
was to sweep over Egypt  
The carvings, now considered pagan  
were chiseled away  
christianity became  
the state religion  
and in the sixth century  
this temple became a christian church  
The meaning of the hieroglyphs  
would be forgotten  
the ancient rites forbidden  
For 12 centuries  
the story of Egypt's  
ancient civilization  
would be lost  
In 640, Islam and the teachings  
of Mohammed  
swept over the country  
A succession of foreigners was  
to rule until 1952  
when revolution restored  
full independence to Egypt  
after 2,000 years  
cairo is the African continent's  
largest city  
Vexed by 20th-century problems  
of explosive growth  
pollution, economic and political  
difficulties  
cairo, like Egypt itself  
survives through the resilience  
humor and vigor of its people  
Facing an expanding population  
and an emerging nation's need

for energy  
the Aswan High Dam was built  
in the 1960s  
With 17 times the material contained  
in the Great Pyramid  
the dam is a monument to  
the new nationalism  
and what some would call the  
Behind the dam, Nubia was flooded  
much of this ancient land disappeared  
beneath the rising waters  
of the Nile  
And at Abu simbel  
a magnificent temple hewn  
from a sandstone monolith  
the newly-forming lake licked  
at the feet of these colossal  
images of Ramses II  
A concerned world realized  
that the temple would soon  
be engulfed  
How could it  
and the temple of Nefertari  
which flanked it, be saved?  
At the 11th hour with funding  
from Egypt  
the United states, and UNEScO  
an international team swung  
into action  
racing the rising Nile  
slab by slab  
in cuts no more than a quarter  
of an inch thick  
the temple was dismantled  
The work continued night and day  
as workmen cut 190 feet down  
through the cliffs  
coded for storage  
the sections made a giant  
jigsaw puzzle  
Moved up 200 feet beyond the  
reach of the Nile  
the temple was reassembled  
The precision of watchmakers was



applied to the colossi  
reconstructed to an accuracy of  
a tenth of an inch  
Ramses' temple was designed by  
ancient priest-astronomers  
so that  
the sun would penetrate deep  
within to bless a figure of the  
pharaoh on the jubilee  
that celebrated 30 years of  
his reign  
In our time, engineers have  
resituated the temple  
so that the sun still streams  
in on the pharaoh  
on each anniversary of that day  
Gilding the statue of the king  
seated among the gods  
the sun god Re bathes the figures  
in sacred light  
Why have people come here since the  
days of ancient Greece and Rome  
These works are expressions  
of the quest  
for the meaning of life itself  
a longing for connection with  
the gods  
a need for beauty,  
a hope for immortality  
They are worth knowing  
and worth saving  
because the record of the  
past tells up  
something of ourselves  
and hints of our future  
Here, Egyptians and travelers  
alike raise their eyes to Ramses  
speak of him, remember him  
as a leader  
who signed the world's first  
major peace treaty  
It reads  
"Beginning with this day  
in order to bring about good peace

and good brotherhood between us  
forever...

he is in peace with me

and I am in brotherhood with him

and I am in peace with him, forever."

In the religion of the

ancient Egyptians

to speak of the dead is to make

them live again

For Ramses, the quest for eternity

has been fulfilled