



Reflections of Osiris: Lives from Ancient Egypt

John Ray

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Spanning more than two millennia, *Reflections of Osiris* opens a small window into a timeless world, capturing the flavor of life in ancient Egypt through vivid profiles of eleven actual people and the god Osiris. Some of the figures profiled here are famous. Ray discusses Imhotep, whom he calls "Egypt's Leonardo"--the royal architect of the Step Pyramid, high priest of the sun cult, and a man of great medical skill. We meet Hatshepsut, a rare female Pharaoh, who had herself depicted as a male figure in temple scenes, ceremonial beard and all. Horemheb, who rose from local politician to general and finally to king. And the legendary magician, Pharaoh Nectanebo II, the greatest builder of temples. Equally intriguing are the lives of everyday Egyptians who are also resurrected here. There is Heqanakhte, a cantankerous peasant farmer who has problems with his sons--and they with their stepmother. And Petiese, a scribe whose petition to the authorities preserves a feud stretching back over generations. Most fascinating of all are the people of the Serapeum: a Greek recluse, his brother (a rootless adolescent and police informer), two temple dancers with financial difficulties, and a temple scribe. All of whom we come to know intimately--even their dreams. Last comes the god Osiris, judge of the netherworld, creator of the land of Egypt, before whom all would appear at the end of their lives.

Reflections of Osiris captures the full spectrum of life in ancient Egypt. With more than twenty halftones and several maps, this superb volume will fascinate anyone interested in an inside look at the great ancient civilization of the Nile.



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