



A Gift of Geology

Ancient Egyptian Landscapes and Monuments

Colin Reader

Summary

An introduction to the geology of Egypt and its influence on ancient Egyptian culture

While much is known about Egypt's towering pyramids, mighty obelisks, and extraordinary works of art, less is known about the role played by Egypt's geological history in the formation of pharaonic culture's artistic and architectural legacy. The fertile soils that lined the Nile Valley meant that the people of Egypt were able to live well off the land. Yet what allowed ancient Egypt to stand apart from other early civilizations was its access to the vast range of natural resources that lay beyond the Nile floodplain.

In this engagingly written book, Colin Reader invites readers to explore the influence of geology and landscape on the development of the cultures of ancient Egypt. After describing today's Egyptian landscape and introducing key elements of the ancient Egyptian worldview, he provides a basic geological toolkit to address issues such as geological time and major earth-forming processes. The developments that gave the geology of Egypt its distinct character are explored, including the uplifting of mountains along the Red Sea coast, the evolution of the Nile river, and the formation of the vast desert areas beyond the Nile Valley. As the story unfolds, elements of Egypt's archaeology are introduced, together with discussions of mining and quarrying, construction in stone, and the ways in which the country's rich geological heritage allowed the culture of ancient Egypt to evolve.

Ideal for non-specialists and specialists alike, and supported with over one hundred illustrations, *A Gift of Geology* takes the reader on a fascinating journey into Egypt's geological landscape and its relationship to the marvels of pharaonic culture.

Contributor Bio

Colin D. Reader is a professional engineering geologist who has long been fascinated by the monuments of ancient Egypt. He has visited Egypt on countless occasions to explore the country's landscape, undertaking geological mapping at Saqqara, led tours into the Eastern and Western Deserts, and has contributed to several TV documentaries looking at aspects of construction in ancient Egypt. He lives in Liverpool, UK.

Quotes

"Colin Reader is an established authority in Egyptology, and one of only a handful to have specialist knowledge of both geology and ancient Egypt, expertise now distilled into this very readable volume."—**Chris Naunton, author of *Egyptologists'***

Notebooks

"Colin Reader's guide to all things geological in Egypt is the perfect handbook for the interested lay reader. Colin takes us from the vast swaths of geological time, across the full range of Egyptian landscapes, to the archaeological context for the building of the pyramids and the quarrying of the unfinished obelisk. His illustrated book is a comprehensive geological companion and, with its suggested further reading, a starting point for deeper investigation."—**Judith Bunbury, University of Cambridge**

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