

# **MENES THE 1ST PHARAOH**

King Menes is shrouded in mystery that may be lost in the folds of history forever. He is considered by many scholars to be the first pharaoh to rule Egypt and the first pharaoh of the Dynasty I period. He is also thought to be the Pharaoh Narmer; however, there is no definitive evidence one way or the other. Today, it still remains unclear as to whether these two names represent one or two persons. Dates of King Menes' reign also range widely, but there is a fair amount of consensus that his reign was between c. 3000 B.C. and c. 3100 B.C. It is thought that he ruled for over 60 years.

Also under debate, but still generally accepted, is the fact that King Menes succeeded in uniting Upper Egypt and Lower Egypt making him the first pharaoh of both kingdoms. If this is true, he would be responsible for ushering in the First Dynasty.

## **ANCIENT TEXTS NAME KING MENES THE FIRST HUMAN KING**

Probably one of the most interesting pieces of information that has come down to us through the ages is that King Memes appears in documentation after the Fifth Dynasty as the first human ruler of Egypt. It is noted that he inherited the throne and crown of Egypt from the falcon-headed god, Horus.

Horus is one of the most powerful and significant gods in Ancient Egyptian religion. He appears to be one of the very oldest gods that was worshipped from the late Egyptian Predynastic Period until Greco-Roman times.

## **THE KING'S FAMILY**

Equally shrouded in mystery is King Menes' family. It is suggested that he united Upper Egypt and Lower Egypt by marrying into the family of a southern royal family. This marriage, supposedly, was occurring at the same time as he was claiming the throne of the southern "Falcon kings" and assuming their god and their rituals. He informed those around him that he had been given the kingship by Horus, the god himself.

## **CITY OF MEMPHIS**

Menes built the city of Men-nofre, or Memphis from which the English name Egypt is derived. The original name, Hikuptah, means "home of the soul of Ptah." Menes built this city on an earlier site known as the White Wall, located in the center of the White Kingdom, or the Upper Kingdom. It was built on the west side of the Nile only a few miles from present day Cairo. This city was built here to take advantage of the northern breezes from the Mediterranean that blew across the otherwise desert land of Egypt.

In order to have the city exactly where he wanted it, King Menes built Memphis on the Nile's flood plain. In order to have it on the flood plain and still avoid the water overflow, he constructed a gigantic dam that would divert the annual inundating floods that made the Nile delta so fertile.

## **WORSHIP AND RITUALS**

Menes established worship in his new city, as well as manners and graces of decoration and refined tastes. He taught the residents of Memphis to cover their tables and couches with beautiful and lavish cloths. He has been noted as the first person to introduce the idea of elegant, sumptuous living. These dramatic changes in the way of life seem almost as if they were a gift of the gods bestowed upon humanity.

Memes built the temple of Ptah, who was considered the potter and craftsman of the gods. It was believed that Ptah dreamt creation through his heart, and when he spoke it, the world came into being. Ptah then in turn created Atum to watch over his creation; although, this is in conflict with other sources that state Atum was self-created.

## **ADVANCES IN TECHNOLOGY AND GOVERNMENT**

Having Upper and Lower Egypt united and further establishing its culture, as well as having Memphis strategically located in the most fertile place in all of Egypt, King Menes and his subjects amassed surpluses of food. This no doubt, had a huge influence upon the advancement of technology and government that continued for approximately 1,000 years. Security, stability, good nutrition, and luxury all contributed to this advancement. The trade of food throughout the Mediterranean brought yet more opulence to Memphis.

## **CROCODILE STORY OR MYTH**

The story of the Pharaoh Menes being attacked by his own dogs while hunting and then being saved after climbing upon the back of a crocodile is most notably a myth; however, it is said that due to this incident Pharaoh Menes then founded the City of Crocodilopolis in order to give thanks. Scholars translate this story as allegory.