

Theosophical History
Occasional Papers

Volume II



Joan Grant:
WINGED PHARAOH

SCARLET FEATHER



Joan Grant in 1937

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Jean Overton Fuller (7 June 1944):

(7 June 1944): Taken twenty-one days
after Miss Fuller's return from her visit to Joan Grant.
(Reprinted courtesy of Miss Fuller)

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EDITOR: JAMES A. SANTUCCI

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JEAN OVERTON FULLER

THEOSOPHICAL HISTORY

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Preface

The International Theosophical History Conference (12 - 14 June 1992) has proven to be a most fruitful source of information on topics that hitherto have been generally ignored or only have marginally investigated. One such subject is the English novelist Joan Grant (1907-1989). The author of such "novels" as *Winged Pharaoh*, *Eyes of Horus*, *Life as Carola*, *Scarlet Feather*, *Return to Elysium*, *So Moses was Born*, and an autobiography, *Time out of Mind*, Miss Grant gave some indication—at least to her faithful readers—that she may not have been writing simple fiction after all but had actual recollections of her past lives. Whatever one's opinion of Miss Grant either as a person or as a writer, Jean Overton Fuller provides a highly erudite and engagingly personal account of the author that will certainly arouse the reader to read or reread her tales of yore.

Readers will no doubt find Miss Fuller's review and analysis of the above books to be most informative, but what makes this essay so appealing is her recollection of that long weekend in 1944, when she met the author and her then husband, Charles Longford Beatty. Their long conversations left little doubt that Joan *and* Charles were absolutely convinced that they experienced former lives. Yet it is one thing to believe such an account, another to verify it. Unlike the *Lives of Alcyone*, which is but one example of a tale of successive reincarnations, Miss Grant's accounts of ancient Egypt could at least be partially substantiated due to the historical and linguistic evidence that remains of that remote epoch. Miss Fuller's researches in hieroglyphics and Egyptian history shed considerable light on the events described in Miss Grant's books, but it must be left up to the reader whether the evidence leans more to a verification of her accounts or not.

Jean Overton Fuller is a frequent contributor to *Theosophical History* and the author of such works as *Blavatsky and Her Teachers*, *The Comte de Saint-Germain*, *Shelley: A Biography*, and *Swinburne: A Biography*. In addition, Miss Fuller is a poetess and an artist of note.

James A. Santucci

I have never seen a Theosophical critique of Joan Grant's books, which is strange, considering the extent of their contribution to the literature of reincarnation. Her *Winged Pharaoh*, which I first read in 1940, in its original Arthur Barker edition, was to me a matter of such wonder as to be a landmark in my life. Told in the first person, it was set in the archaic Egypt of the First Dynasty. The publisher's blurb did not make clear whether it was fiction, and the storyteller assumed the verity of reincarnation throughout. Her father, she said, to show his love for her mother, made a garden for her, before their child was born. On the lintel he had inscribed their two names, Za Atet and Meri Nesut, the latter meaning (or said to mean) Beloved of Pharaoh's Heart. The garden they called Sekhet-a-ra, Meadow of Ra, and this name they gave to their little girl. Thereafter, this name was shortened to Sekeeta. For a companion she had her brother, Neyah, born three years before her, and it was understood from the beginning that they should reign together. Nevertheless, it was decided that at the age of twelve she should enter the temple for training.

At first she disliked having to take off her fine linens and put on the coarse cloth worn by the other girls in training, and having to mingle with them. But she was under the tutelage of Ney-sey-ra, the High Priest of Anubis, and her faculties began to unfold. Within the temple, the tuition was differentiated. Most of the girls were being taught to look into a bright bowl, and to see in it the subtle counterpart of what was happening on the physical plane, in some other part but at the present time. Thus, the lookers were posted to watch over the borders and give warning if preparations were being made to mount an invasion. Also, they were used for the reception of messages. The different cities and regions had their own conventional symbols, so that if one needed to appeal for help, a priest would by his will transmit the symbol of the place followed by a symbol for the cause of distress, a locust for pestilence, an ear of wheat stripped of its grains, famine. The looker would see these symbols in her bowl and give the alert. The lookers needed to have no understanding of the causes underlying the conditions of which they had only to transmit warning. Sekeeta was not trained to be a looker-girl of this order.

Sekeeta was one of a smaller number of trained in the cultivation of memory, memory of what had happened during her sleep, and memory of her previous existences. In her fifth year of training, she recalled five of her previous lives in as many days, three as a man, two as a woman. All had been turbulent, ending in violent death. Ney-sey-ra explained to her that this was because eventful days are easier to remember than quiet ones.

Sometimes she wearied of the long years of working to train her memory, and asked why she needed to do it; people who needed help could always come to the temple. Ney-sey-ra said it was because there could come ages of ignorance, when she could only be a light to herself and others by remembering the teaching that he was giving her now.

At the conclusion of her training, she was entered for formal initiatory ordeals, sealed for four days and nights within a dark chamber. After this, she was declared to be a winged one.

She and Neyah were now ceremonially married, so that they might reign as joint Pharaoh. He had been acting as Pharaoh already, but with considerable help from his mother, who since the death of their father, had been virtually regent, but who now retired. The marriage was in name only. There was a Minoan sculptor named Dio. She had met him while she was wearing the rough cloth of a temple pupil and he had not realized who she was. Her mother had sent him elsewhere so that she should not be troubled by thoughts of him as the time approached for her initiation. But now he had returned and was briefly her lover: briefly because he did not fancy the position of Pharaoh's favorite. But he left her with child: copper-haired like her father, it was Den, who after her death was to succeed her as the next Pharaoh.

These were the bare bones of a story shot with insights: the relations of the subtle-bodies, *ba*, *ka* and *nam*; the significance of colours in the aura: wisdom, the light yellow of sunlight, jealousy and greed dull dark green but true sympathy and compassion the tender green of the sky before dawn, deceit clay-coloured, a warrior's courage clear scarlet, the creativity of the poet or artist turquoise.

I liked the teaching given her by her father concerning plants, for Za Atet did not merely direct the making of a garden. He was a herbalist. He could make distillations of plants to heal the sick, and he could heal plants that were sick. If a plant's spirit was failing, he would point his fingers at it to direct to it a flow of the universal life of Ptah till the flagging leaves perked up again.¹

Her second book, *Life as Carola*, conveyed, by contrast, something of a shock. She had been born in 1510, in Italy, in a castle near Perugia, the illegitimate child of a minor noble and a seamstress in his mother's employ. When he brought home a bride, his mother had them cast out, and her mother did not long survive. Carola, having been taught to play the lute, was able to join a band of strolling entertainers. There was a woman, Luccia, who sang, but eked out slender earnings by prostitution, and a hunchback dwarf jester, Petruccio. Luccia goes down with smallpox and Carola nurses her through it. For one dismal winter they

¹*Winged Pharaoh*, 12th edition (London: Methuen, 1948), 31.
[London: Arthur Barker, 1937].

are stranded in Fiume as entertainers in the anteroom of a brothel. Petruccio wants to get Carola into a convent, and after his death she does indeed enter one, near Perugia. The Abbess, elderly and frail, though she sensed Carola's mind to be heretical, covered up for her, and talked to her about the plants and herbs. Only at a recent re-reading does it strike me that in this character one should see Meri-nesut reincarnated, the mother of her life as Sekeeta. The old Abbess dies and her successor is a demon, who has her flogged across the breasts, to the words, "Recant, Recant!" She crawls to safety, and is taken in by an elderly man, Carlos di Ludovici. He had, as Thoth-terre-das, been the temple scribe who took down Sekeeta's visions.

She was seeing a good deal in symbols and "remembering how to remember." She remembered having been a Greek runner, who competed in a race with half a dozen others...She told Carlos she had been born with inward knowledge, though she could only bring back fragments... He was a scholar, perplexed but not dismissive. He married her. This was not only companionship but an immense protection. Yet, because of his age, it was an unconsummated marriage. When his son, Alcestis, came to visit, she saw in him Nigellus, who had been when she met him, in a previous existence, a Roman Senator. She had abandoned her position as a priestess to elope with him, from Rome to very near this present place. Carola had found it on foot, the remains of this house he had built for her.² So, meeting him again, they became lovers - but this time only briefly, for he did not like what she told him of her previous career. It was only after Carlos's death that she dared confess to him and ask his forgiveness, which she knew she had.

I was disappointed by her next book, *Eyes of Horus* and its sequel, *Lord of the Horizon*. This two-parter started in the closing reign of the Eleventh Dynasty. The rule had become corrupt and corruption was throughout the land. She was a man, Ra-ab-Hotep, nomarch of the Oryx, one of the eighteen nomes into which Egypt was divided, and joined with others in a conspiracy to replace the unpleasant and ineffectual Pharaoh with his vizier, Amenhotep. The conspirators called themselves the Eyes of Horus for they formed a network of spies, noting everywhere individuals who were corrupt in their functions and needed replacing when the new regime took over. I did not altogether like this, for what guarantee was there that the Eyes might not, themselves, become corrupt? They could then become as dreadful as the Nazi or Soviet secret police. The story encompassed one very nasty betrayal by an Eye, not by Ra-ab but he did not forbid it. The first book ended with the installation of Amenhotep as the new Pharaoh, and the second began with that.

Side by side with the political story was a personal one. Ra-ab used in dreams to meet

²*Life as Carola* (London: Methuen, 1939), 344-45.

a girl, whom he felt was somewhere in incarnation in Egypt, though he could not find her. His own psychic abilities were dulled by his training as a soldier. The girl said, "You didn't always hate being a soldier. We both were, not very long ago. We fought a battle together and drove the Asiatics out of Egypt - they were called 'Zumas' then."³

In *Winged Pharaoh* there had been a lot about Zumas. Sekeeta hated them, and in the last years of her reign had to fight an invasion of Egypt by them. The man she had promoted captain of her army was Zeb, who when they both had been children, had been her father's lion-boy, and looked after her own lion-cub, Natee.

When Ra-ab left the Oryx for the Royal City, he met and recognized the girl of his dreams. Her name was Meri-o-sosis, and she was the daughter of Ramaios, the Lord of the Gold Seal. Keeping to themselves the psychic origins of their union, they were able to persuade their fathers that the match would be equitable, and so were able to marry. They had two boys and a girl. During Meri's first pregnancy, he worried very much. He supposed it was because his own mother died in giving birth to his sister, Kyas. To Hanuk, his brother-in-law, he says, "Meri tells me I was a woman only two or three lives ago. She says I had a child; it wasn't hers, although she was a man then."⁴ This was the only other reference back to a past life, and it seemed, like the first, to refer to Sekeeta.

Only at one moment is there a rift in the harmony between Ra-ab and Meri. It comes over their daughter, Becket. Becket has a wonderful sense of kinship with the animal kingdom, but while Ra-ab appreciates this, Meri is exasperated by the destruction Becket's animal companions wreak upon things—the nice furniture she, Meri, has put in her daughter's room, the nice clothes and beautiful artifacts she had given her. Ra-ab tries to put it to her that as Becket is unable to share her appreciation of "things", so she, Meri, is not attempting to share Becket's sense of kinship with animals. Meri comes in the end to do this and all ends harmoniously.

Winged Pharaoh was dedicated to "D.S.", *Life as Carola* "To Charles Beatty from the I that was Carola", *Eyes of Horus* was dedicated, "Ra-ab's story of Meri and Kyas is for Charles and Gillian." None of these names then meant anything to me.

It was a long time before I wrote to Joan Grant, and when I did so I was in a sense a different person from when I had read *Winged Pharaoh*, for I had by then had my own Egyptian experience, and reincarnation was for me no longer an idea but something that was,

³*Eyes of Horus* (London: Pioneer Press, 1974), 103. [Original edition: London: Methuen, 1942].

⁴*Ibid.*, 199.

for me, factual.

My letter, addressed care of her publishers, was replied to from Trelydan, inviting me for a long week-end. I took the train from Euston to Welshpool, and then a long taxi-ride over the border into Wales. It was Saturday 13 May, 1944, I was to stay until Tuesday, and it was my first and only holiday from London during the war. The taxi took me up to a large, spreading house, white with black beams, in a garden of forget-me-nots. I had wondered what she would be like, and imagined that a person with such psychic gifts might be a little brown mouse. The contrary was the case. The woman who opened the door to me was very tall, with sand-coloured hair braided over the top of her head, dark eyes, large mouth and good speech. Her husband, Charles Longford Beatty, was a big man, with a hearty manner and strong voice, who made a lot of jokes. There were drinks before dinner and it seemed expected that one would take rather a lot. I felt I had dropped into a set that was very County, and unexpectedly alien. Watching her with the drinks, I said to myself, "Hunting, shooting and fishing." In truth, as I later learned, she had routinely participated in grouse-shooting and in fishing, though not in hunting. In my feeling of her having to do with riding to hounds, I had wronged her. They kept, of course, an excellent table, though war-time rationing helped me to get out of eating meat. Wine naturally, and afterwards I had to refuse a liqueur. There were two or three other guests, one of whom was a Church of England Canon. Nothing serious had yet been discussed. It was the Canon who now said, "The time has come when we should perhaps ask Joan how she first became aware she had had previous existences."

This was the first overt confirmation that Joan's book's were claimed not to be fiction. In a silence that had suddenly become profound, she said in a lowered voice, that she had been impatient with being a baby, resented the helplessness of having to be carried or pushed in a pram. (This interested me, because I remembered from before my mother rose from childbed, though I had found that other people generally said they remembered only from several years old.) Joan's parents had moved to Hayling Island when she was about eighteen months. Perhaps it was the level stretch of sandy beach that caused her to remember another such level sandy beach on which she had run. She felt the power she had had in her legs and the speed she had been able to get up to as that young man, and was infuriated by the slow and clumsy steps that were all she could now take. So, to answer the Canon's question, she could say, "At eighteen months."

Not a lot more came about that young man, who she had been, except that he not only practised but competed in races, and was crowned with a laurel wreath, so it must have been in Greece.

It was one of her lives as a North American Indian that came through from time to time, whilst she was a slightly older child, and then fragments of being a French girl, in a riding-

habit, walking through the stables of a Château. But it was for talking about the Red Indian existence that she was first scolded. She thought it must be not good manners to talk about one's past lives. "One didn't talk about what one did when one went to the lavatory, though everybody did it, and one didn't talk about who one had been in one's past lives." It was the same. The same kind of grown-ups' convention.

It was a long time before it struck her that when people said they didn't remember anything of their previous lives they weren't pretending. "Then there were the painful things." She said to a visitor, "Isn't it nice you're going to die soon."

Everybody said it was naughty of her, but it hadn't occurred to her that he did not know and that he would not be pleased—to be running and jumping and climbing trees again.

And then, she always thought it odd the way grown-ups would sit in other people. On one occasion she said to a guest, "Don't you feel uncomfortable sitting in grandfather?" (or whoever the elderly relative was). The man looked puzzled, and asked, "Do you mean this is the chair he used to sit in?"

"He *is* sitting in it."

The guest got out of it remarkably fast.

Her father, as a man of science, did not much care for this sort of happening, nor her mother either, and she was an only child. She had a string of governesses, from whom she did not learn much. But her father was an entomologist and she learned something of scientific method when she worked as a lab assistant in his Mosquito Control Unit. She had a much warmer relationship with Daisy Sartorius, a maiden lady who was more her mother than her real mother to her, and gave her sanctuary when her parents practically turned her out following a certain crisis in her life. Then she married Leslie Grant. He had trained to be a lawyer, but in 1934 decided he wanted to be an archeologist instead, and took her on a dig to Iraq. She found that she could sometimes psychometrise objects that had been dug up, and he would write down what she said, because it could be useful to him.

Then they went to Egypt, where she had verified from her passport she was for twenty-five days. She did not feel it familiar except for one bend in the river, and had no kind of psychic experience while she was there.

They returned to England, and Leslie went to Iraq again, on his own, for six months. While he was away, she made for the first time a systematic effort to recover the full memory of one of her previous lives, concentrating on the French one, which she now discovered ended with her being guillotined, at the age of nineteen, which fixed the period as the end of the eighteenth century. None of this did she mention to Leslie. He returned from Iraq and they went to stay for a few days with Daisy Sartorius. He asked Daisy if she had anything Egyptian, and Daisy brought out a box of scarabs which Bunny had brought back from Egypt. Bunny was Daisy's brother. Joan had not met him for he was killed before

she was born. He was a botanist and had travelled widely in search for rare plants, and of course it was he who had created the beautiful garden of the house, Hurtwood, which he and Daisy shared.

The scarabs she tried first, Joan found not to have much in them. The one she had left to the last, the turquoise blue, on the contrary, felt as she put it to her forehead, warm, as though it had much to tell her. It was much older than the others. "This did not come off a mummy." She asked Leslie if he remembered an underground tomb with three drop-stones they had seen at Saqqara. What she was seeing now was not that one but one very like it. It wasn't a tomb. It was a place one was put in to remember. They thought it was a tomb because one was carried in on a bier. Suddenly she felt very cold. Then she lost consciousness.

She was brought back by the repeated calling of her name. Only it was not her name, it sounded like "Joan." It was Leslie, and he was saying, "Come back, Joan." He said she had been "out" for an hour. He had become extremely concerned.

Did he get it all down, she asked? For already she could feel her memory slipping away, and knew it was important. Yes, he had got it all down. There were pages of it, in his speedwriting. It had come to be in the first person, "Shall I ever see the sun again?... Soon I shall hear the drop-stones fall...every one has gone..."

The date was 13 September, 1936.

Her headache was splitting and blinding. Yet she had a deep urge to go on, and on the next day did so.

The memories crowded upon one another, bits of Dio, bits of the lion-hunt, bits of battle against the Zumas.... Leslie wanted her to try to fix the period. "Try to get the name of the reigning Pharaoh." She tried to see the Pharaoh, but could see only a man tending the plants in a beautiful garden who seemed to be her father. Leslie recommended her to look for the Pyramids. She tried, then said, "They have not been built." They must have been, he insisted. They were built in the Fourth Dynasty.

When she and Leslie had been to Egypt they had been inside the Great Pyramid—in which she felt nothing whatever. Neither it nor the Sphinx had seemed familiar to her. She remembered where they stood, the route to them, and looked for the spot at the time she was seeing. No. They were not there, neither the Great Pyramid nor the Sphinx nor any pyramids. It was impossible she should not be able to see them if they were there. She had the right spot, but nothing had yet been built on it.

Leslie was in protest against this, because, he said, the culture she was describing was too advanced for any previous to the Fourth Dynasty. It sounded to him like the Fifteenth Dynasty, at the time when Egypt was being invaded by the Hyksos. When she talked about Zumas, he thought it must be the Hyksos she meant.

Daisy wanted to hear more about, "The poor girl who was buried alive." She went back to where it had begun—with her being laid on to the bier, to be carried down...She was dictating in the first person. Identification became complete as she said Daisy put the scarab round her neck as she was being carried down into the initiation chamber.

"Daisy!"

Daisy had been her mother then. Leslie had been her brother. It was Daisy's brother, Bunny, who had been their father. She had never told Leslie of her fragmentary recollections of previous existences, as the Red Indian girl, the Greek boy runner, the French girl in the eighteenth century. Now he was overwhelmed.

She was trying to see her father's cartouche as Pharaoh, her own cartouche. Leslie had bought Petrie's three-volume work, *A History of Egypt*, but so much had his mind been taken by what he thought to be battles with the invading Hyksos that he did not at first look in the first volume. When he did, he found the cartouches she was describing. The Dynasty they belonged to was the First. What really gave her a turn was when she saw a photograph of a moon-daisy bracelet she had given Daisy,⁵ still encircling the mummified remains of a severed arm. Petrie had dug it from their father's tomb, which had been badly vandalised by robbers, who had missed this. (There is also a photograph of it, removed from the arm, in Arthur Weigall's *History of the Pharaohs*, vol. 1). She knew who she was, now...

They had rented a house in Scotland, but she kept "going out" or as she came to call it, "changing level", while they were there. She would wake Leslie in the middle of the night to tell him that more was coming back, and he had quickly to put on the light and pick up the pencil and pad that he had always to have by him, and take down. She had all the time a blinding headache and he was getting worn out. The number of the pages increased so that they had to sort them out.

Of course, nothing was chronological. They had to find an order for the pages taken down at different sessions. It had started in the middle, with her being shut into the initiation chamber at the conclusion of her temple training; the parts about that must come before; the parts about her childhood must be put earlier, parts in which she seemed to be older later. They had the little collections of pages spread out all over the floor, saying, "now this lot must go before this." One thing seemed to her very important. Sometimes a session had been interrupted in the middle of an episode, and when they resumed it had been on a different part of the story. Yet when they came back to where the interrupted episode had been resumed, the beginning of the new script was found to carry on from the interrupted one without a break. But for that, she could have doubted, wondered if it all came from her

⁵*Winged Pharaoh*, 50.

imagination. It was the discovery of the way in which these interrupted passages could be matched with follow-ons that convinced her.

Eventually, all the events of the life were there, arranged in what seemed to be the proper order. There was much more of it than was published. Amongst the passages edited out which she regretted, was the death of Natee, her pet lion, whom she had helped as he passed over. The whole was typed out. A copy was sent to Daisy, and, on their return to London, Joan unwarily lent a copy to a man friend without telling him to keep it to himself and he lent it to a friend of his, the publisher, Arthur Barker. The result was an offer of publication.

Leslie, though he had taken it all down, did not at all like the idea of its being published. He did not want his professional colleagues saying behind his back, "Grant's wife thinks she was Pharaoh." It came out in time for her to put the first copy into Daisy's hands before she died. The reviewers treated it as a historical novel.

She made the point that eighteen months had elapsed between her visit to Egypt and the onset of the memories. She was aware that people would say it must have been during those days in Egypt and from her husband that she had picked up the details which she wove into the book, but she felt sure that it was not so. It was the scarab that had brought back the memory of the first time she wore it, when she was being carried on the bier into the underground chamber, and that opened the door to the rest of her memories of that existence.

Memory had to have something to set it off. Sir Henry Wood was staying with them and asked her if she could tell him how Egyptian music was organised. This was asking her to recall something she had never really recorded, for Sekeeta was not very musical. On the radio, Haydn was being played on a harpsichord. Saying to herself, "Music," she shifted level, and felt a lute beneath her fingers. When she came back, she could still feel the lute and asked if she had brought through anything of use to Henry.

Leslie said "You weren't in Egypt, you were in Italy." He then read back to her what she had dictated. It began, "I was born early in the morning of the fourth of May, in the year of our Lord 1510... my name is Carola..."

She thought this had happened because her life as Carola was probably the only one in which she had learned to play a musical instrument. Her companions on the roadside, the woman singer and the hunchbacked dwarf jester surged into memory in the wake of that. That happened while she was still recording Sekeeta, and before there was thought of its publication.

She appreciated that had placed a great strain on Leslie, but they had rows, "And then *this* turned up, "—with a jerk of her head towards Charles. She eloped with him. On their elopement she had to tell him to stop the car as she was about to "change level." What

came through was the last chapter of *Life as Carola*, which he had to take down.

Somebody put a question about astrology, and she dismissed it as having nothing in it. Though she declared, "I can't tell you from how high up I have that," I felt that this was not the reply that would have come from deeper understanding.

In the morning, my breakfast was brought up to me by one of the other guests. She sat on the bed and we talked about it. Like me, she had learned to cast horoscopes. We thought that what put Joan off was the fatalistic attitude some people took to their stars; we did not regard the study as fatalistic. "Astrology has helped me and I stick up for astrology," she said.

"Do you know when Joan was born?" I asked.

"Yes. 12 April, 1907. The moon was with the sun in Aries."

"Close to the 4th cusp?"

She had not dared to ask Joan the hour, so the cusps could only be speculated. Many years later, when I gave a lecture to the Astrological Lodge of the Theosophical Society, on "The Horoscope of Joan Grant," I suggested that if one put a middle degree of Sagittarius on the Ascendant, that would take care of her long legs and outspoken manner and put the Mars-Uranus conjunction into the first house, for the sandy hair and peremptory speech, Pluto on to the Descendant for her burning eyes and delving, and the soli-lunar conjunction to the cusp of the fourth house. No one made a counter-suggestion.

As for the bringer of my breakfast, that day at Trelydan, she later became a professional astrologer, under the name of Ingrid Lind, and wrote a book, *Astrology and Common Sense*.

Joan was doing something else during the morning and I was left with Kathleen Barker, her publisher's wife. Since Beatty was now writing another book of his own and had no time to take down Joan's, it was she who was taking down Joan's new book.

Then Beatty came to collect us and took us for a walk in the beautiful garden of Trelydan, which he said was full of "leprechauns."

It was over lunch that he and Joan told me, together, that he had been Petruccio, the hunchbacked jester, in *Life as Carola*. I ought to have asked him whatever he had done to bring that deformity upon himself—there was a hint in the book of his having strayed off the path in a former birth and earned himself this prison—but at least it explained his compulsive making of jokes.

"And Zeb the lion boy," said Joan, affectionately.

I remembered Zeb, in *Winged Pharaoh*. As a child, Sekeeta had been given a lion cub as a pet. She called him Natee. One day when she went to the lion-court to tell one of the lion-boys to get him out, for her to take for a walk, he had refused, saying he had been told he was not to let her take Natee out unless there was someone with her. This was because he was growing so big. She was so incensed that a servant should thwart her that she picked

up a heavy whip that was lying by and lashed him with it again and again across his head and shoulders. Later that day, when she saw her father, his face was stern as granite. He said, "You struck one who was but showing his loyalty to Pharaoh and obeying the orders of your father. Moreover, you have injured a boy who because of his rank and yours could not strike back." Then she was ashamed. She bit her arm to show that she could stand pain, and said that she would go back and tell the boy he could hit her without remembering who she was. Za Atet said he had a better idea, for adjusting the scales. She could tell the boy, Zeb, she was sorry, and dress his wounds herself, with an ointment he had made from his herbs. They went to Zeb together, and the boy dropped on one knee and said, "I will serve you truly with all my heart until I die."

It had stuck in my mind as the proper way of adjusting karma. So many Buddhist and Theosophical works give a rather negative picture of one's always having to suffer the harms which one has done to others. Surely, the right way is to repair the harm.

Zeb was made her personal attendant, and when she grew up she made him her standard bearer and gave him a command in her army. Come to think of it, her relationship with Zeb probably had much more affection in it than that with Dio, her Minoan lover, a brief folly founded mainly on illusion.

Joan said that when she had written the stories of all those of her lives—prepersonas or "prepers" as she called them—that were dramatic enough to make books, she would write another book, arranging them in chronological order and writing in brief summaries of the quieter ones in between the ones treated in books already published, and pointing to the way in which acts committed in one existence had produced effects in a later one: "This was the result of that." I thought this would be interesting, but she never did it.

In the one that was coming through now, in which I gathered that Charles also appeared, she (or they) carried on for a long time after she (or they) was (were) dead without realising it. "I thought I was still alive in the body and carried on doing things for months—until at last I did notice things were a bit odd and by that time I was practically ready to reincarnate."

Charles said he had come into that existence, too. "I was a strange, shrivelled character. I had become, at that time, extraordinarily interested in *things*," he said in a puzzled way.

"I tried to get him out of it," she said kindly.

I asked her if she could remember Atlantis. "Yes," she said, but was not happy to talk about it. "I performed human sacrifices." She was not going to write a book about it. "I was very cruel. I could weep for some of the things I did then. I had no pity at all."

Charles said, "We've all been some simply horrible people." Joan said, length of time ago did not affect ease of recollection. What she found to make it more difficult was change of sex. Though one's immortal self had no sex, the sex of the body did affect one's reactions up to a certain level. She had found it much more difficult to bring back Ra-ab than Sekeeta,

who was a thousand years earlier. "And then sometimes there is a block, where there is something that isn't pleasant to remember." To persist where there was a block could have very disturbing results. Recovered memory was not like ordinary memory but was a re-living, with all the original emotions, not softened by time. There was no sense of its all having been a long time ago.

She said that her own falls—and Charles's also—had been through greed for power. She was standing against the mantelpiece, talking about power. That was a very intoxicating wine. When she got it, there was the temptation to misuse it and become ruthless and that was what she had to guard against, being now aware of it.

There were things she had not understood when she wrote *Winged Pharaoh*. In the phase of her initiation in which she had to go down into the caverns, where she had seen wretched people suffering hellish punishments for their sins, from which she had to liberate them—she had not understood the significance of that. "Nice little Cook's tour!" she had thought, as though those people had nothing to do with her. Now, she realised it was otherwise. "I put them there." She had, in past existences, cursed them to suffer these torments. That was why she had to see them again. "If you commit somebody to the caverns you are responsible for setting a term to the sentence and getting them out."

Then, I merely listened. Today, I am sure that that was wrong, too. She had not got the inwardness of it, yet. Nobody can be cast into hell by somebody else. Only oneself can put oneself in hell. Those people whom she saw in the hells were not other people, they were herself, her own "prepers" or parts of them that had got separated from her on-going self and left behind, sealed down into their cells of misery, that she had to open up and face and dissolve, before she could evolve further.

Joan was violently anti anything that savoured of mortification of the flesh. She seemed still to be raw from memories of the scourging in the convent at Perugia, and made very much a point of it that the body should be pampered. She was also violently anti-puritan. When she and Charles had eloped, two months before the outbreak of the war, he had brought her to Trelydan, where his mother would not speak to her, though they were left alone after he was in the army. "She wouldn't even show me the letters he was allowed to send only to his next-of-kin while he was in hospital." After he had been invalided out and rejoined them, the neighbors did not call, save one or two. As soon as she was divorced, and married to him, they all called. "We had a card printed: Mr. and Mrs. Charles Beatty will not return calls of people who did not call on them before they were married." I thought that was a bit aggressive. It would have been sufficient not to return the calls.

She was also anti-vegetarianism. "The animals would rather their bodies were eaten by us." This seemed to me false. It was not as though "we" were eating the bodies of animals that had died from natural causes to prevent their going to rot; the animals had to be killed

and no animal wants to be killed. Though I had been brought up to eat meat, I had, not without some difficulty, made the change to vegetarianism some time before I joined the Theosophical Society following my Egyptian experiences.

Joan was dismissive of Theosophy, but I doubted if she had read any books by Blavatsky, Besant or other Theosophical authors. The belief held by most Theosophists, that the initiate had to be celibate, came into discussion. Joan dismissed it. But then, she reflected, "There didn't seem to be a Mrs. Ney-seh ra..."

Charles Beatty put in, "Because he was Mr. and Mrs. Ney-seh-ra in one body."

"Do you mean two people?" I asked, puzzled.

"Yes—so attuned there was no longer the need for separate vehicles."

This was a quaint, nice idea, but unless there was an internal chattering would mean unity instead of communication, and I remembered a phrase in one of Hazrat Inayat Khan's books, "The joy of communion is greater than the joy of union." A more likely idea it seemed to me was that in such a person the male and female principles were equally balanced within.

Charles was talking about "two fishes," androgyny and bishops' mitres and this brought him into collision with the Canon, whom Charles was addressing as though he were a Bishop, saying that no man in the Christian church today had the right to wear that symbol. They did not even know what it meant, for the Church had lost its mysteries and the keys to them. Ney-sey-ra was a true priest, the clergy pretenders.

The Canon, trying to defend his brothers of the cloth, said they might not possess the special faculties of Joan yet they did their best and he thought that they did some good.

Charles, very bellicose now, said, "If they are what their symbols proclaim." The symbol was one of androgyny. Bishops put on a mitre which proclaimed them divine androgynes and they were not, they were men. Very ordinary men at that. The wearing of the mitre was blasphemous presumption and hypocrisy. I did not know why Charles kept going on at this churchman about mitres, for it was not as a bishop but as a "Canon" he had been introduced to me. Perhaps, however, he was about to be made a Bishop and knew it.

At one moment when the Canon volunteered something, Charles Beatty put him down with, "That's a damned lie."

Joan, evidently distressed, kept trying to stop him, but he would not be stopped and the argument went on all the evening.

In the morning, she apologised for it over breakfast and again after it. I said I did not think the Canon was as upset as she was.

But it had wasted his time here, she said. He came here because something drew him to the profound. "Instead of which he had an argument he could have had anywhere."

Had he left before breakfast? I wish I could remember who he was. Bell is the association I have in mind—and my mother, when I told her of the people I had met in Wales, said there

was a well known Pacifist churchman of that name.

Joan and I talked of how to distinguish imaginary from real visions. She said, "If it's imaginary you can change it. If you can't change it, it's *there*."

Then, leaning forward towards me, she said, "Person to person, Carola was superior to Sekeeta."

I understood that. Sekeeta had had everything laid on for her. Carola would have given her all for an iota of the teaching so freely given Sekeeta.

Joan made no attempt at pronouncing any kind of Egyptian "kh." She used an English "k" and put the stress on the "ee."

I tried to talk with her about hieroglyphics, but she did not know sufficient about them. I had, after my own Egyptian experiences, ordered Gardiner's *Ancient Egyptian Grammar*, which had arrived in November 1942. I had worked through all its 595 pages, doing all the exercises in translating into and out of hieroglyphics, though as I had nobody to correct what I had written and there was no key, I could not know if I was doing them rightly. On reaching the end of Gardiner, I had bought the large-format edition of *The Book of the Dead* published by the British Museum, Budge's edition and translation of it and his *Hieroglyphic Vocabulary*. I could not have read the papyrus without using Budge's translation as a crib, yet had gained a certain knowledge of how the language worked, and would have liked to put some questions to Joan, but she said she would have to change level and I did not like to put her to that trouble.

She mentioned that a particular person had entered more than one of her books. Then she looked at me carefully and said, "I don't think you have come into any of my lives. If I come on anything I'll let you know."

I left without having told her of my own Egyptian experience—or that I had seen the house, Trelydan, from my bed in London. I had not recognised it from the taxi as it drove up—I had wondered if I would—but later, as from a window I viewed one of the wings from a different angle, I did. Yes, that was the way it related to the pines; I had seen true. That this should have happened seemed to me an earnest that it was a genuine spiritual centre, even if we had not hit it off very well.

I had little further contact with her but bought her next book, *Scarlet Feather*⁶, when it appeared, in 1952. This was the one in which she had been a North American Indian girl, Piyanah. Although this was the second earliest one to have come up, in her childhood, I was not sure that I believed in the psychological revolution she claimed to have effected in her tribe in what was perhaps today's Utah. She had had difficulty in dating it. It was not her

⁶*Scarlet Feather* (London: Methuen, 1952).

first in that tribe. As a man, she had lived in it, and won the scarlet feather, before Sekeeta, but this one she believed came between Sekeeta and Ra-ab. Piyanah dreamed of a land where they had "stone tepees"—pyramids, which had not been built when Sekeeta lived. Who was Raki, her foster-suckling at the breast, companion and eventually husband, with whom she enjoyed a perfection of relationship with the lover not attained by Sekeeta or Carola?

Her next book, *Return to Elysium*, was set towards the end of the second century BC. She was born in Greece, an orphan, brought up as the ward of a skeptic philosopher, Aesculepius (the usual Greek spelling of this name is Aesclepius, she has used the Latinised form), who kept a school near Athens, which he called Elysium. He calls his pupils, according to some dominant characteristic, by famous names: Agamemnon, Praxitiles, Euripides, Narcissus, Epicurus.... Epicurus, the steward confides to her in the stores over which he presides that he knows the qualities of honeys, wines, silks and wools...*things*, and vests his faith in them, not in human beings, who are undependable. (So this was Charles Beatty, in that life.) She respects the intellect and honesty of Aesculepius, but he tries to explain away her psychic experiences; she feels she must leave the insulated community, and with Epicurus and Narcissus sails for Rome, to try her fortune.

They meet Salonius. He believes that some psychic sense endows her with real ability to help people with their problems, but puts it to them that, to make it business, she needs a proper setting. She will be consulted only in her temple, on an island in the Tiber that is part of his south bank estate, so that people will need to be ferried in a boat as though across the Styx, and she will appear only through a transparent veil, on a dais, and speak in a voice suitable to the oracle of Apollo. He has chosen her first patient with care, Cordelia, the mistress of a wealthy senator, whose patronage they need.

Just before Cordelia arrives, Lucina is swept by the feeling that the scarlet lilies she has laid on the altar are wrong. She whisks them away, and replaces them with daisies, hastily gathered from outside. When Cordelia enters, she gasps, for the question she had come to ask was whether she should leave the rich senator for a poor man. He had nothing but a small shop that sold cooked meats on the outskirts of the city—but as she was borne past in her litter, he had thrown her a posy of daisies. Those on the altar show her where her true path lies. (Am I wrong to imagine it was in memory of this that Daisy Sartorius was given the name of this flower? In that case, the young man with the cooked meats shop will have been Pharaoh Za Atet on his way to becoming Bunny Sartorius—a link of flowers, though everybody down a bit, in the world, as the wheel of fortune turned?)

Salonius is not pleased when he learns that Lucina has lost them the patronage of the wealthy senator. Euripides comes out from Greece to tell them Aesculpeius has died, and to the last spoke of Lucina with love. She feels she has forgotten what he taught her—to be

natural. A young senator, Nigellus, comes to consult, and she wants natural life. They are certain that if they live together openly his wife, Julia, will find means to poison them, so, with the assistance of Euripides they contrive the appearance of having been drowned in a boating accident—and leave for Umbria, where he has a villa. It is just on the spot where, seventeen hundred years later, Carlos di Ludovici had one. In a barn attached to the property, Lucina found a stone Apollo that must have been brought from Greece, and set it up in the garden.⁷ It was the stone Apollo that Carola found beneath her cheek as she lay on the turf, the contact with which caused her to remember having dwelt there with Nigellus.

Yet Carola's recall had not been perfect. If one turns back to *Life as Carola*, one reads⁸:

She [her earlier self] had been a temple virgin, consecrate to some ritual of an ever-burning fire. The man had been a senator.... For her to leave her dedicated way of life was to be put to death. For him to gain her was to lose all else; honour, and name and power...the world believed them dead. The priestesses feared to betray that they had lost a vestal...

Now this implies she had been a Vestal Virgin. The Vestals tended the sacred flame, in the temple of Vesta, that can still be seen in the Foro Romano. They were responsible to the Pontifex Maximus and committed themselves to serve for a fixed number of years, after which they were free to marry. If during their years of tending the flame they ceased to be virgins, they were entombed alive. Lucina was not one of these. She had not served in the Temple of Vesta, she had dedicated herself by no oath, was beholden only to Salonius, and had to fear only the vengeance of Julia. And Carola brought the name back as Lucretia.

I mention this discrepancy not to criticize but because it affords an example of what I believe to be the commonest cause of error in the work of those with psychic gifts: they resonate to the general atmosphere of a thing without getting precise details, and, in trying to make details precise, supply them from the everyday consciousness with its culture: runaway lovers in hiding, from Rome, he a senator, she a priestess...in Rome there were Vestal Virgins, who were put to death if they took a lover, so she must have been a Vestal Virgin and that was why they were in hiding.... The "so", the reasoning, is not noticed by the sensitive, who includes all this detail in the report of the psychometry or far memory.

⁷*Return to Elysium* (London: Methuen, 1957), 236.

⁸*Life as Carola*, 345, in the chapter "Statue of Apollo", which ties up with the chapter "Stone Apollo" in *Return to Elysium*.

Carola had not Joan's development of the gift of recall, but Joan, when she wrote *Carola*, did not notice the error; she noticed it only when concentrating on the recall of life as Lucina. There can, therefore, be slips of this sort elsewhere in her work.

Carola's recollection of this earlier love as an idyll was also only partially correct. It at first seemed an idyll, but although she bore Nigellus a son her days had turned to sour wine, for she felt she was not on her right path and told Euripides she wished to return to Elysium. She felt a slight chill, and it surprised her she had not noticed before the white cyclamen that grew on the other side of the stream. She stepped over to them...It is necessary to leave before dark, she tells Euripides, but she feels she has let down everyone who tried to help her. In Rome she had left Saloniis, Narcissus and Epicurus to sorrow for her believing her drowned.... She finds them again back in Elysium, but one by one they are leaving, going down again into birth. She is the last to realise...she died of a chill in Umbria and those white cyclamen were the first things she had seen on the other side of the Styx, which had seemed to her such a little stream that she had not realised what it was that she was stepping across...This she had told me at Trelydan, and I understood now what Charles Beatty had said to me about it, that a number of people who had been closely associated had shared a sort of group-heaven or group-illusion after they were dead. Yet was that it? I did not feel convinced that they were independently acting in that limbo or devachan and wondered if the images of those who had been with her in Elysium had not been projected by Lucina as she mulled her life over. In her new one, she would have a Greek mother again, but a Roman father...

The book left me with questions in my mind concerning Charles Beatty. He, himself, had told me that in *Life as Carola* he had been Petruccio, the hunchbacked dwarf, in *Winged Pharaoh*, Zeb, the lion boy, who became her commander-in-chief against the Zumas, and, in Joan's forthcoming book, in which they all carried on for a time after they were dead without realising they had died, a strange dried up character who was only interested in *things*; that enabled me to recognise him as Epicurus. Re-reading in this light *Eyes of Horus* and *Lord of the Horizon*, it was obvious that he had also been Meri-o-sosis, Joan's wife, instead of husband, when she had been a man instead of a woman. In the main, Meri was built up to be a person of such beauty and mystery as to make it difficult to grasp her distinguishing characteristics as a human being. How did the lissom and beautiful Meri become the crabbed Epicurus and deformed Petruccio? When one knows, the clue is given in Meri's concern with "*things*." Yet in Meri's personality, this did not go beyond what can be observed in many a fussy housewife who objects to pets - and even to husband and children who bring the mud in on their shoes. Something must have gone most terribly wrong for Beatty between the incarnations in which he had been Meri and Epicurus, something to cause an embitterment and consequent retreat from the world of beings into that of things, and, despite Lucina's

endeavors to cheer him out of it, deepened into one can only imagine what darkness to produce that terrible affliction of the spine by which Petruccio found himself contorted. One had his "prepers" only where they intersected Joan's and wanted to know what had been in between. As Zeb, he had been a simple, faithful servitor figure, without hint of complications—or intellectuality. One cannot say that much intellectuality was observable in Meri or Epicurus—some, perhaps, in Petruccio, but Beatty was an intellectual. Also, a bit violent, and the violence was something one did not glimpse in the "prepers" exposed. Neither was there really a character in *Scarlet Feather* to fill in the missing links. It was a pity she had not written the book she projected, supplying the links between the incarnations which had books to themselves, and saying however briefly what had happened to the other characters in between. Another point which perplexed me was that the union of Ra-ab and Meri was represented as mystical and eternal. True, such a link might have subsisted from older times between Sekeeta and Zeb though obscured by the difference in their stations; yet, one could hardly say that it had been recognised by Joan as Lucina. In that story he had figured as a grotesque, not as a person she could ever possibly fall in love with. Between Petruccio and Carola, though he was by then grotesque in body, there was a hint of a deeper bond as between those who recognised themselves as kindred spirits born into a world alien from that they had both known. All this could have done with more probing—and I only knew so much as I did because of that week-end with them, when they took me a little behind-the-scenes as it were of the lives on stage in the books.

When her next book, *So Moses was Born*,⁹ came out, in 1952, I turned the pages of a copy in Foyle's Bookshop and said to myself, "This is rubbish. I will not buy it." This reaction was largely occasioned by my doubt whether Moses was a historical character of the reign of Rameses. Blavatsky had pointed out the story of his rescue from the Nile by Pharaoh's daughter appeared to have been adapted from the Chaldean one about Sargon. However, whilst writing this chapter, I obtained a copy to see if I had dismissed it unfairly. Joan said she was Neb-un-Nefer, the elder brother of Rameses II, passed over in his favour. This, at least, was not self-aggrandising, which was in favour of authenticity, but she had set herself an awkward task, in as much as Neb-un-Nefer had not been at the hub of the story she had to tell but very much at the periphery; for the central character was Rameses II. She had to relate things which, according to her, occurred when Neb-un-Nefer was not present, notably Rameses' relations with a girl of the Hebrew race; and the convolutions of the plot by which it came to be decided that the best thing would be to place their child where his daughter would find and adopt him, were such as I simply did not believe. It was

⁹*So Moses was Born* (London: Methuen, 1952).

the last of Joan Grant's books on her previous lives. Had she come to feel that the constant recalling overstrained her?

Vague Vacation had been simply a travelogue, though one gathered from a chapter on "tweety-bird" women, that she had been one of Charles Beatty's wives, poisoned by the others because of her charm for him, some two thousand years ago in Persia.¹⁰ A reversal of power-roles here? As Pharaoh and faithful servitor he had only to obey; as woman in his harem, his power over her must have been nearly as absolute.

Her autobiography, *Time out of Mind*¹¹, 1956, was full of interest, and enabled me to check my memory of things I had heard her say. Nothing about fox-hunting; I must have grafted that on to her. It went only up to the publication of *Winged Pharaoh* in 1937.

*A Lot to Remember*¹² (Lot is a river in France), was again a travelogue, and from it one gathered she was now married to Denys Kelsey, her marriage to Beatty having been dissolved. One wondered why she had left him. The parting could not have been in anger, for the dedication was to them both, "with love," and Beatty haunted the story, her recollections of her travels in the same district with him appearing in almost every chapter.

*Many Lifetimes*¹³ was written by Joan and by Denys Kelsey in alternate chapters. Her third husband was a practising psychiatrist. Her introductory chapter, "Far Memory," contained a brief commentary or a re-run of what was in her books about her previous lives. Of *How Moses was Born*, she said only, "I was a male contemporary of Rameses II." Was that about it? Kelsey had developed the art of regressing patients under hypnotism, when he suspected their troubles might rise from their experiences prior to the present birth. And he had something to tell us about Joan.

It worried him that when having breakfast in bed she did not sit up to it, as most people would, but lay, her legs straight in front of her, flat on her back, only her head raised a few inches. Swallowing in that position, he feared she would choke. When he recommended her to sit up properly, she did so, but soon relapsed, and indeed there were accidents, as when she scalded herself with the hot water she was pouring out. It struck him that her attitude was that of paralytics. He therefore regressed her.

¹⁰*Vague Vacation* (London: Arthur Barker, 1947), 159.

¹¹*Time out of Mind* (London: Arthur Barker 1956).

¹²*A Lot to Remember* (London: Methuen, 1965).

¹³Joan Grant and Denys Kelsey, *Many Lifetimes* (London: Gollancz, 1968), 25.

Under his hypnosis she produced a life immediately antecedent to her present one. It had been in England and her name was Lavinia. Her husband (not Kelsey) was angered because at the Hunt Ball she had danced too often with one young man. To prevent her from joining the hunt the next morning (and the young man), he locked her in her bedroom. Furious, she climbed out of the window. She reached the ground safely and went to the stables. Everyone was out, already riding to hounds. The only horse there was a black stallion of such temper that even her husband did not care to ride him. She ordered the groom to saddle him with her side-saddle, and dashed off. She was in sight of the hounds (and of the hunt and so presumably the young man), "rebellious and triumphant"¹⁴, when the saddle slipped. She fell and broke her back. It was not only that she never rode to hounds again or met the young man. She was only twenty, and the three years of her life that remained to her were spent as a paralytic, on her back on her bed, her legs always straight out in front of her, able only to raise her head for a few inches. She died in 1875.

It is interesting that Joan, who enjoyed spontaneous recall of so many of her former incarnations, needed Denys Kelsey to regress her to this one. It was an example of what, talking to me, she had called a "block" And the danger she had mentioned of persisting against a block was exemplified in that her first reaction to this regression was one of terror that she would become paralysed in this life. Indeed, she was, briefly, and Kelsey had to act as a healer—assuring her that he was, as she besought him, healing Lavinia. There were two repercussions during the night when she woke, each time, to find herself paralysed. After these had passed, however, when having breakfast in bed she sat up to it like a normal person.

Obviously, Lavinia had been much more wounding than Sekeeta to recall. Sekeeta may have felt dread as she was carried into the underground initiation-chamber and heard the drop-stones fall, but the experience had been deep, and the teaching of Ney-se-ra infinitely rewarding to be able to bring back; but what I imagine made Lavinia's misadventure so galling to her was the realisation, deep down, that though the stable-boy could not sufficiently have tightened the girth, her own state of mind was contributory to the accident.

To me, it was interesting because it gave a justification to that feeling I had when I met her, that she rode to hounds. Of Joan in this life, it was false, but of the Lavinia she had been, it was true. For some reason, it was that, that I had picked up. (I do not think I could have met Lavinia, but I have sometimes seen people, particularly at a first meeting, not as they are but as they were.) I had come expecting to meet Sekeeta, but had encountered, instead, Lavinia.

¹⁴Ibid, 108.

There was probably a good deal of the immediately preceding incarnation to be read off the personality of Joan.

Joan Grant died on 3 February, 1989, aged almost eighty-two. Reading her Obituary, I remembered a generous week-end and wondered about her again.

There was the mystery of her parting from Beatty. The shock to him must have been considerable, for at Trelydan he had looked forward to the time when he and Joan, having overcome the need for separate vehicles, would find themselves reincarnated within a single body—and here she was, leaving him to marry someone else. Which was the mistake? It was flippantly said of Leadbeater's *Lives of Alcyone*, "In the Lives, In the Lives We've had lots of husbands and wives." That may be so—and is indeed recognised by Meri in *Lord of the Horizon*, wherein it is also claimed that they two have been in aeons past husband and wife, wife and husband, parent and child, brother and sister, sister and brother, comrades in arms, from which it may be inferred that in those incarnations in which they were not spouses, they had other spouses or lovers with whom their unions may not have been totally invalid. If this represents a true pattern in human relations, may one suppose that what takes place over the ages is a gradual shake-down during which different relations are tried and the less appropriate discarded? That her love for Beatty remained intense is evident from the dedication of *A Lot to Remember* and the extent to which her memory of him haunts that book—with, as it seems to me, a great sadness. So why did she leave him? Had she discovered in Kelsey another link, unsuspected yet deeper? That she began, after her marriage to him, as is evident from *Many Lifetimes*, to recollect lives in which they had been lovers or spouses before, need not arouse cynicism. It is axiomatic that memory is triggered by what presents itself. One meets somebody whom one has not met for years, and what happens? Both remember the days and the circumstances in which they met before; they remind each other of the locale, and of the other people whom they knew in common. Meet another person, from a different segment of one's past, and it is the details of that different segment which re-emerge. Are there any "prepers" of Kelsey to be detected in any of the lives that "came up" before her meeting with him in this life? By what could one recognise his personality? Apart from his profession as physician and psychiatrist, his occupation was with horses. He had asked Joan how he could remember his past lives and she suggested his looking into a candle. He did this and the transition was instantaneous to a chariot race of two thousand years ago. The course had a bend, the spectators being on an "island" in the middle. He was being overtaken on the inside. He knew that he should have given way and allowed his competitor to win, but in his fury he drove his horses inward, so as to close the gap and, as he died, heard in his ears their screams as they impaled themselves on the

barrier.¹⁵ For days after this, he was unable to face himself, so utter was his shame, that, through his ambition and lack of sportsmanship he had caused the death, in agonies, of the horses of which he had been so proud. In *Return to Elysium*, there is a chapter entitled 'The Slaves.' During her period in Rome, Lucina had bought a villa, and with it the slaves that had belonged to the previous owner. A Greek herself, she comes to feel ashamed of owning Greeks, summons them to her one day and tells them she is making them free, granting to each of them a sum of money. Most opt to remain with her as free employees, and one—who is not even given a name—says 'I want to stay with the horses.... Yours would never be properly looked after by anyone else. I shall use the money. I want to drive a chariot in the Circus...Wait till I feel a quadriga in hand.'¹⁶

Was this Kelsey? Two thousand years subtracted from the middle 1950s would bring one almost literally to the turn of the first and second centuries BC and so fit the date of this freed slave's intent to harness his former owner's horses and drive the quadriga in the Circus Maximus. If this was half in homage to her, she showed no recognition whatever of him as a person who had been in lives past and would be again her own life's companion. He is much less in the story than Epicurus, occupying less than half a page, but does one indeed sometimes pass over one's deepest links whilst pursuing marsh-lights? Lucina was about to fall in love with that handsome man who as Nigellus, and seventeen hundred years later as Alcestis, was to prove so lacking in understanding of her as to unsuit him to be her companion save briefly.

For Kelsey, when he recovered sufficiently to think about it, it explained to him why, in an eighteenth century life in which he and Joan had been husband and wife in England, and bred horses, he had never put any but leather bits in their mouths and in this life, though he had competed in equestrian events, he missed winning them, so careful was he not to overstrain his mount.

There is a hint of earlier shared temple training where Joan advises him to gaze into a flame, this being a technique which had once been commonplace to them both. There is also in *Winged Pharaoh*, her father's charioteer, Harka, to consider.

Are the memories true? That is the big question. Of Joan's sincerity I have no doubt. She was a person with a mission: a mission to testify that we never died but were reborn, with the capability of remembering our past existences, even if, lacking training, we had to wait for its development—a mission, also, to proclaim that the method did not involve

¹⁵Ibid., 157-8.

¹⁶*Return to Elysium*, 187.

denying oneself love and ordinary life.

But how far was what she brought back reliable as to detail? I tried to check what I could against my small knowledge of hieroglyphics and books on Egyptology.

I began with the names. Sekeeta was a contraction or affectionate form of Sekhet-a-ra, said to mean Garden of Ra. Did it? I looked first in Budge's *Hieroglyphic Vocabulary to the Book of the Dead*, wherein I found "sekhet", written as the three flowering reeds joined at the base followed by the half-loaf which represented "t", translated as "field, meadow."¹⁷ In Gardiner's *Egyptian Grammar*, I found the three reeds joined at the base given as "marshland", with the suggested pronunciation of "sht", the vowels being unknown.¹⁸ Preferring the more poetic version, "Meadow of Ra" did seem a probable and fair rendering, yet how about the grammar? I found the paragraphs about the genitive case complicated, as Egyptian had a direct and an indirect genitive, but the case seemed to be covered by Gardiner's paragraph 85 concerning the Direct Genitive, following the noun that it governs, the first example given being, "imy-r pr," written as hawk, mouth, courtyard.¹⁹ Here, the courtyard, "pr" or "per" is the normal word for house or palace, the hawk for overseer, and the mouth, "r" for the genitive case, the "of." The sound of "r" then, did represent "of", so "Sekhet-ar-Ra" translated Garden of Ra quite nicely.

Her mother's name was given as Meri-nesut, said to mean Beloved of Pharaoh's Heart. The symbol for heart is the jar with handles that would contain it after death, and was pronounced "ab" or "ib", yet there was no "b" in the name as given. I did, however, find in Budge, "mer", to love and "meru", written as the hoe, the mouth, the chick, and the man touching his mouth, given as meaning "the beloved,"²⁰ and when I turned to Gardiner, I found he suggested the last vowel was an "i"—"mri."²¹ Pharaoh would be written as courtyard or house, on the principle that "the palace" is sometimes used with us to imply the

¹⁷E.A. Wallis Budge, *A Hieroglyphic Vocabulary to the Theban Recension of The Book Of The Dead* (London: Kegan Paul, 1911), 370.

¹⁸Alan H. Gardiner, *Egyptian Grammar, Introduction to the Study of Hieroglyphics* (Oxford at the Clarendon Press, 1927), 471.

¹⁹*Ibid.*, 65.

²⁰*Hieroglyphic Vocabulary*, 179.

²¹*Egyptian Grammar*, 544.

sovereign, and this symbol was not in the name, but I did find in Budge "nesut", written as the rippling water, the outstretched forearm, the flat line with a swelling through the middle, the chick and the half-loaf, with the meaning "weapons of war."²² Could Joan have been translating "Beloved of the Warrior"? There was no genitival "r", but as there was the "r" in "Meri", could it have been elided?

But which Pharaoh actually was Sekeeta? I looked first into a Harmsworth Encyclopaedia of 1910 that I just happened to have, and saw that the hawk-names of the first four Pharaohs of the First Dynasty were given as Aha, Zer, Zet and Den. This seemed to fit not too badly, with Zet corresponding to Joan's Zat Atet, but then I looked in Bains and Malek's *Atlas of Ancient Egypt*²³ and saw that the first four were given as "Menes = Aha, Djet, Wadji, Den", and all the dates given were different. I knew, of course, that there was a question of "long dating" and "short dating", and wrote to the Curator of the Egyptological Department of the British Museum, asking how the names came to have been changed, if he or she could draw them in hieroglyphics for me, and what I should read to catch up on the latest Egyptological research.

I received a helpful reply from their Carol A.R. Andrews:

I am enclosing a xerox from our *Introduction to Ancient Egypt* which will show how the relevant names are spelled...Zer has become Djer because the initial sign is always transliterated as dj now; it was Budge who used to transliterate it as z. His system is now totally discarded. This should also explain the discrepancy in spellings between your Harmsworth Encyclopaedia and recent publications: you should not use the former. Hor Aha has now become the second king of the First Dynasty because Narmer is now usually identified with Menes. You will have noted that the name of Djet-Wadji is still disputed. All that is actually in the serekh is the serpent which is usually transliterated as dj or possibly djt. For information on the First Dynasty you should read the relevant chapter of the latest *Cambridge Ancient History, Archaic Egypt* by W. B. Emery (Penguin 1961) with the proviso that some of his theories have been subsequently overtaken by more recent research; the relevant sections of *In the Shadow of the Pyramids* by J. Malek (London 1986). There is also a chapter about the archaic period in A. Gardiner's *Egypt of the Pharaohs* (Oxford 1961) though again a little of the

²²*Hieroglyphic Vocabulary*, 217.

²³John Bains and Jaromir Malek, *Atlas of Ancient Egypt* (Oxford: Phaidon, 1958).

information may be out of date.

The enclosed xerox showed the names written in hieroglyphics the first four being given as Narmer, the name beneath the hawk written as a strange object looking like a fish with whiskers—cat-fish (?); Aha written as a doorway and a horizontal line with bulb or ellipse on the end, Djer a trellis, Djet (against which Miss Andrews had kindly written in, in ink, Wadji), a snake and Den, a hand over rippling water. Only the last was clear to me, the hand being the ordinary character for "d", and the rippling water the ordinary character for "n." But Joan must have been the snake. Joan said that her Horus name, Zat, was written as a snake, and so was her brother's, Za, written just as a snake. They used the same seal.

I obtained all four of the recommended books. The Emery explained the root of the problem. We have no histories of Ancient Egypt written by Ancient Egyptians. The earliest thing we have is an attempted history by Manetho who lived in the third century BC. He was apparently Egyptian, but being in the time of Ptolemy II, wrote in Greek, and he gave us the names, as best he was able to gather them from whatever his sources, rendered into Greek—and we do not even have his writings in themselves. We have only copies made of them, by Africanus and Eusebius (the latter in two versions and there are occasional disagreements between the copies). The first four sovereigns, as given by Manetho, are Menes, Athothis, Kenkenes and Uenephes. Needless to say, no Egyptians ever bore these names and the problem, for Egyptologists, looking at the fragments of pottery and the like on which the names originally inscribed can be found, is to fit Manetho's names to the hieroglyphic names. And this is where our troubles start. There is no Egyptian word Menes, but there is an Egyptian word "men", meaning Established,²⁴ which would suit the unifier of the country, and which Manetho would simply have Grecianised by adding "es" to it, to be pronounced as in Socrates, Praxiteles, etc. (Why Joan has replaced this with an "iss" I cannot imagine; she did tell us all at Trelydan that she had unusually little sense of spelling and had to rely for this on whoever was taking down her words at dictation, and on her publisher's editor: but she can never have, as Sekeeta, heard the name of her great-uncle so pronounced, nor could anybody have heard him referred to as Menes before the time of Manetho.) Certain difficulties in our way are that in Ancient Egyptian, 1) though the hawk is thought to be the "A" and the flowering reed the "I"—and their shapes seem to me to suggest this, for the hawk looks very much like a Roman capital A, with the upper and lower serifs forming the beak and the feet, and the slanting belly the cross-bar, while the flowering reed suggests the capital "I" as we often write it, with a certain head—and the chick was

²⁴Walter B. Emery, *Archaic Egypt* (Cambridge and Penguin, Harmondsworth, Middlesex, 1961), 25.

perhaps the "U" or "W", if there was an "E" or an "O" we do not know by which symbols these were represented, and far the most often no vowels were written in at all. 2) That whereas European languages are written across the page from left to right, Arabic and Hebrew and some others from right to left, Egyptian goes sometimes one way and sometimes the other (and sometimes from top to bottom, even when there would be space to write horizontally); therefore, one has first to see which way the text is going. In principle, if it is going from right to left, the figures face to the right and vice versa, but in Ancient Egyptian it is dangerous to assume constancy in anything. Again, even the consonants are not always placed in the order in which they are sounded, for the artist is more concerned to make an effective pictorial design than to represent phonological sequence. Thus, low horizontal characters will be set one above the other, whereas tall vertical ones will be dramatically grouped. 3) More acutely germane to our problem, is that Egyptian Pharaohs all had a number of names, the most important of which were the Horus name, set beneath a hawk, used on formal occasions, such as investiture as the ruler, and the Nebti (or "two ladies") name written beneath the two goddesses, vulture and cobra, used of him after his death. Both these were more important than his personal name. Our trouble is, that as there are no tables setting out all the names and our knowledge is derived from fragments, we do not always know which is the Nebti name of which individual for which we have a Horus name, and vice versa. We may be splitting individuals in two, or wrongly conjoining them. There is an individual discerned, Hor Aha (meaning Fighting Hawk). Was he, or was his predecessor, Narmer, Menes? The rest follow in order, but if Hor Aha was Menes, then Zer was the second ruler, Wadji/Uadji/Djet the third and Den the fourth. This Emery believed to be the case. Narmer was some predynastic personage, or, just possibly, another name for Hor Aha, if Menes was a composite personage, to whom had been ascribed the deeds of both Narmer and Hor Aha.

Sir Alan Gardiner took the opposite view. He took as universal the rule that Horus and Nebti names of the same individual faced each other. If they faced the same way they were two people. He read the inscription on the ivory label as signifying that Hor Aha paid a visit to some place connected with Nar-mer, the latter being Menes. There was a jar-sealing on which the symbol of the draughtsboard was over the symbol of the rippling water (m over n), which surely meant "men", against the name of Nar-mer.

From the page sent me from the British Museum, as well as from Malek's book, it was obvious that it was Gardiner's view that had prevailed. In that case, Hor Aha would be Athothis, the physician, and Zer would be Neya, not jointly with Joan but preceding her.

Yet there was a character to whom Emery gave some space, Queen Meryet-Nit. She puzzled him because her tomb was so large and important that he felt she must have been a Queen Regent, though Manetho's table seemed to leave no place for such a one, and

inclined to insert her before Wadji, or as he wrote it Uadji. Reading this, I thought at once of Joan's penultimate chapter, 'The Tomb of Meri-neyt.' Meri-neyt, she had explained earlier, was her priest-name, meaning Beloved of Ney-sey-ra; it would be the name under which she would be laid to rest in her tomb, the construction of which she was superintending. Meri-neyt was practically the anagram of Meryet-Nit. Had I stumbled upon the Nebti name of Wadji? Against this, Emery ascribed to Wadji/Uadji a separate tomb, and the Nebti name of Irteti. This at first seemed to rule out my hunch. But then again I remembered Neyah. Since he used the same Hawk name as his father and the same seal as his sister-wife, history could have elided him, even Manetho having failed to perceive him as a person having had an existence of his own: for Manetho said nothing about a double reign. Was the nut now cracked?

Crucial now became Joan's recollection of the moon-daisy bracelet which Neya and she had given their mother as a present for her anniversary, and which she recognised still on her shrivelled and dismembered arm, which Petrie had dug out of the tomb of Zer. It was the tomb of their father that she and Neyah had opened after their mother's death, that her body might lie beside his.

It was, therefore, the Egyptologists' Zer who was Joan's Za, or Za Atet, the herbalist, successor of the founder of the dynasty. This had the advantage of equating him with Manetho's Athothis, the physician, the second sovereign, the successor of Menes.

On re-reading *Winged Pharaoh* after having read the Egyptologists, I was struck by something which previously had been without signification for me. It comes in the chapter "Royal Progress," wherein Joan tells that she and Neyah made a journey up the Nile²⁶:

...in four days we reached Nekht-an, the chief city of the south. It had been founded by Na-mer who, before the Two Lands were united, had subjugated the King of the North for ten years.

So there we have it. If Joan's evidence is accepted the controversy is settled. Na-mer or Narmer was not Menes; he was a forerunner, respected by the descendants of Menes. (Lower on the same page, Joan says her father, Za Atet, had in his previous incarnation been a vizier under Na-mer and remembered a bit of that existence.) There is a further reference

²⁵ *Winged Pharaoh*, 76.

to this honoured forbear in the chapter, "Festival of Min"²⁶:

Before the banquet ended a toast was given, which had been written by the cup-bearer of Na-mer, who had saved his master from death by poison; and it was in his memory that it was given at this festival until this day.

So Emery was right. Narmer was what the Egyptologists now call a "Predynastic king," meaning of the South only, before Menes annexed the North. It could not have been from Emery that Joan took this since he did not publish until twenty-four years later than she; neither would he, as a scholar, have been likely to consult what he would probably have regarded as a novel. It is a singular case of a scholar and a psychic independently and by their different methods confirming one another.

As regards dating, Emery explained that the earlier Egyptologists were counting in a whole Sothic cycle too many. Radiocarbon dating of wood from a roofing-beam from a tomb of the period gives a reading of at most just over three and a half thousand BC, perhaps only two and a half thousand BC.²⁷ He fixed the unification of Egypt by Menes as approximately 3400-3200 BC.²⁸ Malek shortens this still further, to 2950-2925 BC.²⁹ If Joan was the daughter of the son of the eldest daughter of the eldest sister of Menes, this places her life as Sekeeta as about five thousand years ago.

In her chapter on Daily Life,³⁰ Joan said:

In the temple I had but a single comb and a little copper mirror, in which my reflection was blurred... Now my ivory combs were carved with my seal as a Winged Pharaoh, the hawk of the trained will upon the triumphant boat, above the wings of a Winged One; then, below this, my Horus name, Zat, written as

²⁶ Ibid., 208.

²⁷ *Archaic Egypt*, 29-30.

²⁸ Ibid., 30.

²⁹ Jaromir Malek, *In the Shadow of the Pyramids: Egypt during the Old Kingdom* (London: Orbis, 1986), 124.

³⁰ *Winged Pharaoh*, 190.

a snake, next to the key of life and flanked by two rods of power, power wielded upon Earth and away from Earth.

It gave me a start when first I saw in Emery a line-drawing of exactly that.³¹ His caption for it was 'Comb of Uadji.' The snake was in the rectangle in the middle, surmounted by Horus, both the snake and the hawk facing right. Right of the rectangle was the ankh. To the right of this again, and to the left of the rectangle were rods. Over the top was what I might have taken for a river, except for the hump in the middle—or a section through a hill, though it could be wings, the centre being somewhat effaced, and on this a boat, within or above which was a smaller bird. This was what Joan's text described, but was it unaided recall or could she have seen it?

Were there any anachronisms? Emery said, "The only metals known in and worked by the archaic Egyptians were gold and copper."³² Sekeeta's copper mirror was correct, but the looker girls in the temple looked into silver:

A looker is trained to leave her body by looking at a bright spot of light, sometimes at a flame, but usually at sunlight reflected in a cup of polished silver.³³

Had Joan been caught in an anachronism? Gardiner was less categorical: Egypt was rich in gold³⁴: The position as regards silver is less clear. Egypt has never, so far as is known, had either native silver or silver ores, though all Egyptian gold contains silver in various proportions. No method is on record, however, whereby the ancients could have extracted the silver from the gold, and it has been suggested that what in earliest texts is called *hadj* 'white gold' was really a natural alloy so pale in colour as to have been regarded as a metal distinct from gold. The Greeks called such an alloy of gold and silver 'electrum' and Egyptologists often use that word to translate the hieroglyphic *djam*, which, however, appears

³¹*Archaic Egypt*, 248.

³²*Ibid.*, 224.

³³*Winged Pharaoh*, 111.

³⁴Sir Alan Gardiner, *Egypt of the Pharaohs: an Introduction* (Oxford at the Clarendon Press, 1961), 42-43.

to be merely a more elegant term for gold. It is certain, however, that *hadj* later meant true silver....Were the looker-girls gazing into white gold? Joan knew electrum and silver as different. For her marriage as Pharaoh, she wore the five-rayed pectoral...the first row was of faience, symbolising the *khat*, the second of copper, for the *ba*, the third of silver, the *nam*, the fourth of electrum, the *za*; and the fifth of thrice refined gold, the *maat*.³⁵

Then I looked in Malek³⁶, and found that:

In southern Egypt copper was known from the very beginning of the Predynastic period....Other metals, such as gold, silver, and even meteoric iron, were used for the making of personal ornaments.

So they did have silver though this was not known to Egyptologists at the time when Joan wrote. This could be read as telling in Joan's favour—if she knew the Egyptians had silver before the Egyptologists knew it, and did not accidentally put in something they then denied, since confirmed.

But then I thought about horses. In her chapter, "Lion Hunt,"³⁷ she referred to forty chariots lined up in a row and their horses with ostrich plumes, and again, in "The Amphitheatre of Grain,"³⁸ to a fleet of barges for the transporting of their horses and chariots, to meet the Zumas in battle. Emery, under "Domestic Animals," said they had the donkey, goat, pig, sheep and possibly camel³⁹, and under "The Military System" showed only foot soldiers.

Malek⁴⁰ has written that:

³⁵*Winged Pharaoh*, 183.

³⁶Malek, *In the Shadow of the Pyramids*, 20.

³⁷*Winged Pharaoh*, 61.

³⁸*Ibid.*, 269.

³⁹*Archaic Egypt*, 240.

⁴⁰*In the Shadow of the Pyramids*, 59.

Although the concept of the wheel was known and employed for several purposes, roads in our sense did not exist during the Old Kingdom. Light loads were carried on donkeys along narrow strips skirting the cultivated fields. Donkeys were also the only animals known to have been ridden. Wheeled transport did not exist.

According to Gardiner: The horse did not make its appearance in Egypt until late in the Hyksos' times (c.1600 B.C.) when it was introduced from Asia....⁴¹ The Hyksos episode was not without effecting certain changes in the material civilisation of Egypt. The most important of these was the introduction of the horse and of the horse-drawn chariot which played so large a part in the later history of the country.⁴²

Now, at last, I understood why Leslie Grant had wanted to put the whole thing into the time of the Hyksos. Joan, when she put aside his suggestions and protestations must have known it was horses and chariots he was objecting to, as well as silver and perhaps some other things. Hers was, then, not a sin of ignorance but a firm persistence, despite the remonstrations of her husband.

Gardiner had inferred the introduction of horses, the first discovered reference to them having been found in connection with the Hyksos' invasions. Nevertheless, there was no discovered annal saying, "in this year the horse was introduced." It is always dangerous to infer a negative from absence of positive proof. But really the problem disappears when one notices a passage in *Winged Pharaoh* saying they had their horses from the Zumas, who would only trade them stallions.⁴³

One thing in Emery's book shocked me, his suggestion that during the earliest dynasties, when a Pharaoh died, all his servitors were killed and buried with him.⁴⁴ If so, there was something Joan did not tell us. It seemed at variance with the picture she gave us of a highly enlightened people.

I was not sure whether Emery was still alive, yet addressed a letter to him at the University of London, asking questions about Uadji or Wadji's comb and about this. Was it

⁴¹Gardiner, *Egypt of the Pharaohs*, 40.

⁴²Ibid., 171.

⁴³*Winged Pharaoh*, 80.

⁴⁴*Archaic Egypt*, 131 and 135.

certain? How was it known? Did the evidence leave any possibility that the servitors were simply privileged to be buried beside their Pharaoh when, in the fullness of their years, they passed away? The reply I received was from his successor to the Chair, Professor H.S. Smith. Professor Emery, he told me, had died on 11 March 1971, on his dig at Saqqara:

The comb of Wadji was first published by the French scholar Bénédictine and is in the Cairo Museum....As to your second question, it is certain that Pharaoh's courtiers and servants were NOT killed on his death and buried simultaneously with him during the main Dynastic period from Dyn. III onwards. A slight doubt exists for the Archaic period (Dyons. I and II) and the preceding Predynastic period. Both Petrie at Abydos and Emery at Saqqara thought they observed mud-brick partition-walling which had bulged out when still not fully dry over skeletons. They interpreted this to mean that they were buried before the tomb was completed at the time of Pharaoh's burial rite. However, inferences built on observations such as these are always uncertain.

A last question remains, of different order. If Joan had been five thousand years ago the pupil of Ney-sey-ra, how was it that she seemed not to have progressed more in wisdom since? Of the lives published, the best seemed to have been at the beginning. Lucina was unsatisfactory; so was Lavinia. I believe the answer is that both she and Beatty were people who subsequent to initiation had had falls, from which they had difficulty in retrieving the path. Indeed a clue was given us in *Life as Carola*.⁴⁵ At one moment, as she sought to regain the knowledge she felt that once she had possessed, she saw passing before her an endless line of all the people she had been through the millennia. One, in white tunic, with black hair cut short, held a blue lotus and she knew that was what she sought and tried to take it, but there interposed a smoky sword in the hand of a hawk-faced man of the later Egypt. She understood that he had fought for the Light but with a dark sword, and that only when she had removed that tarnish could she hold the blue lotus again. The hawk-faced man, of course was Ra-ab; in his activity was the fall, since which she had been through three millennia wandering with a sense of being cut off from what once she had known. Though Lavinia's accident resulted from headstrong wilfulness, who knows but that the three years she lay paralysed on her back may not have occasioned that withdrawal that led to the beginning of the "remembering how to remember" that blossomed as Joan's far-memory of Sekeeta?

⁴⁵Page 175.

GENEALOGY

JOAN GRANT'S CHARACTERS EQUATED WITH THOSE OF MANETHO AND EGYPTOLOGISTS



