Research Article

Simon Magus*

A Victorian Gentleman in the Pharaoh's Court: Christian Egyptosophy and Victorian Egyptology in the Romances of H. Rider Haggard

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Abstract: The following article analyses the ways in which the developing field of Egyptology found its way into Victorian culture, more especially via the romances of H. Rider Haggard. It considers the process of acculturation in terms of the Christianizing tendency of a biblical archaeology which was looking for evidence of biblical narratives in opposition to Higher Criticism of the Bible. It focusses on the specific influence of the Egyptologist and Assyriologist E. A. Wallis Budge's ideas on Haggard's fiction and also examines how the prominence of excavations at Amarna produced a Victorianization of the household of the pharaoh Akhenaten in the phenomenon of "Amarnamania."

Keywords: Atenism; Original Monotheism; Osiride Christology; Egyptosophy; Amarnamania; Egyptian Romance

Figure 1. Front cover motif from the first edition of *She* (1887)

> Out of the bag we took first a very beautiful miniature done upon ivory, and, secondly, a small chocolate-coloured composition scarabæus, marked [with] symbols which, we have since ascertained, mean 'Suten se Rā,' which is being translated the 'Royal Son of Rā or the Sun.'
> H. Rider Haggard, *She* (1887).

Introduction

Sir Henry Rider Haggard (1856-1925) was one of the most prolific and popular author-novelists of his age. Although now remembered principally as the author of *She* and *King Solomon's Mines*, he penned 56 other novels, two collections of short stories, and numerous works of non-fiction. Rather than the common perception of Haggard as a dyed-in-the-wool imperialist, his romances reveal a more complex individual whose literature was influenced by the nineteenth-century occult milieu within which he wrote, and who articulates a palimpsest of esoteric, romantic and occult idioms to create parables of sin and redemption and the pursuit of Truth. This search for hidden wisdom would lead Haggard to ancient Egypt and its study

***Corresponding author: Simon Magus,** University of Exeter, Exeter, United Kingdom, E-mail: simon.magus@btinternet.com

was his life-long passion: at least 11 of his romances feature Egyptian themes or motifs. This article explores how the Egyptosophical speculations in his literature reflect the agendas of the emergent discipline of Egyptology during the Victorian era and beyond.

The term "Egyptosophical" was coined by Erik Hornung to denote the "study of an imaginary Egypt viewed as the profound source of all esoteric law." As Hornung writes:

> [a]lready in antiquity, there was an opinion that the land of the Nile was the fount of all wisdom and the stronghold of hermetic lore. Thus began a tradition that is still alive today, and which I venture to designate "Egyptosophy." It was only after the decipherment of the hieroglyphs by Jean-François Champollion in 1822 that its younger sister, the discipline of Egyptology, made its appearance. (Hornung, *The Secret Lore* 1).

As I demonstrate in the following account, the boundaries between these aspects of the study of Egypt, especially the history of that study, are in any case blurred. Where, for example, does Biblical Egyptology fit, especially when looking for archaeological witness to the miraculous? It is in an attempt to answer that question that I have further qualified Hornung's term in this context as "Christian Egyptosophy." I concur with Christina Riggs when she says that "the Manichean duality between "esoteric" and "academic" Egyptology' that Hornung has proposed 'is misleading" ("Discussing Knowledge in the Making" 136). There are significant difficulties to be negotiated in delineating Egyptology and Egyptosophical speculation, including the Egypt which found its way into Haggard's fiction.

Interest in Egyptology was pervasive in British cultural consciousness especially following the establishment of the British Protectorate in Egypt in 1882, and the ever-present "Egyptian Question." The rise of Darwinism earlier in the century, attempted Anglican Broad Church reform and the so-called Higher Biblical Criticism emanating from Germany frequently meant that the emergent Egyptology—far from being the purported developing empirical science—sided with the Church in searching for evidence of Biblical narratives in Egypt: many Egyptologists were clergy searching for the route of the Exodus. Thus there arose a discourse of Christian Egyptosophy, whereby Egyptosophical speculations were directed toward a revitalisation of the scriptural aspect of Anglicanism. In addition, the attempt at restoring the supernaturalism stripped away by the Broad Churchmen, particularly after the liberal reform manifesto *Essays and Reviews* of 1860, led progressively to the epiphenomenal blossoming of British occultism in the last quarter of the century, and given the preeminence of Egypt in British culture at that time it is perhaps hardly surprising that it should take an Egyptianizing turn. Notable in this context is the foundation of the paramasonic Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn in 1887/8, whose ceremonial magicians and initiates were part of the fin-de-siècle occult milieu in which Rider Haggard was deeply immersed. W. B. Yeats, with whom Haggard corresponded, wrote some of the Egyptianized ritual for the Golden Dawn; Wallis Budge, Haggard's great friend and whose influence we discuss below, also taught Florence Farr, famed actress and one-time *Praemonstratrix* of the Golden Dawn, who would write her own *Egyptian Magic* which had a distinct Christian Egyptosophical leaning. The notorious magician Aleister Crowley and his epigones would elaborate their own particular brand of British-Egyptian occultism.[1]

In what follows, I am more concerned with the interaction of Biblical narratives, Victorian cultural mores, and Egyptology in Haggard's fiction than Egyptian occultism per se. The Christian Egyptosophical speculations are considered under the three rubrics of "Osiride Christology," "Original Monotheism" and "Atenism," and I shall elucidate these concepts as we proceed. Later in the essay, I consider how Victorian domesticity was seen reflected in ancient Egypt—particularly in the Eighteenth Dynasty, the so-called "Amarna Period" of the art historian. Attention is focused on Haggard's *Cleopatra* of 1889, *Smith and the Pharaohs* (1921), and *She* (1887), making reference to other works where necessary.

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1 For the Egyptianized rituals of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn see Israel Regardie, *The Golden Dawn: A Complete Course in Practical Ceremonial Magic, Four Volumes in One*. St. Paul, MN: Llewellyn Publications, 1993. For Farr's Egyptosophy, see Florence Farr *Egyptian Magic*. Milton Keynes: Kessinger Publishing, 2010. A particularly interesting example of Crowley's Egyptian occultism is the Tarot deck he designed with Lady Frieda Harris. See Aleister Crowley, *The Book of Thoth: A Short Essay on the Tarot of the Egyptians being Equinox Volume III No. V by The Master Therion. Artist Executant: Frieda Harris*. York, ME: Samuel Weiser, Inc., 1993.

Osiride Christology: The Passion of Osiris

The propensity for Egyptologists to equate elements of ancient Egyptian religion with Christian doctrine from a presentist perspective in support of biblical narratives was evident from early on in the nineteenth century. In fact, "the pedigree of Christology in pre-Christian Egypt had been a well-worn theme of the 1830s." (Gange, *Dialogues* 220). In this regard, it is important to understand that Haggard's reception of Egyptology was particularly coloured by the ideas of his friend and colleague Sir Ernest Arthur Thompson Wallis Budge (1857-1934), the Keeper of the Department of Egyptian and Assyrian Antiquities at the British Museum between 1894 and 1924. Budge's Egyptological discourse was characterised by a marked Christian inflexion. Notably, his work presents what I have termed an "Osiride Christology," where Osiris is presented as a type of Christ the Redeemer—Christ in an *Atef* crown. Budge's comparison of Christ with Osiris becomes a recurring theme: in turn, it necessitates an over-emphasis of the Osirian cultus in his oeuvre, relative to those of the other deities of the Egyptian pantheon. In the tellingly entitled *Osiris and the Egyptian Resurrection* (1911), Budge notes that:

> [b]oth Plutarch and Diodorus agree in assigning a divine origin to Osiris, and both state that he reigned in the form of a man upon the earth. This being so it is clear that Egyptians generally believed that a god made himself incarnate and that an immediate ancestor of the first Pharaoh of Egypt was a being who possessed two natures, the one human and the other divine. As a man he performed the good works which his divine nature indicated to him (16).

In the preface to his *Egyptian Magic*, this is even more apparent:

> [they believed in] the resurrection of the body in a changed and glorified form, which would live to all eternity in the company of the spirits and souls of the righteous in a kingdom ruled by a being who was of divine origin, but who had lived upon the earth, and had suffered a cruel death at the hands of his enemies, and had risen from the dead, and had become the God and king of the world which is beyond the grave.
>
> (xiii)

As David Gange has observed: "[f]ew writers managed to avoid self-consciously Christological language when they wrote of the Egyptian pantheon: a staple biblical referent was found in "the altruistic—we had almost written vicarious—sufferings of Osiris." (Gange, *Dialogues* 211). Thus, we find Budge referring to the hieratic papyrus of Nesi-Amu as "the service book of the Passion of Osiris" (*Athenaeum* 246). Again, in his *Book of the Dead*, Budge refers to the "wonderful doctrine of the resurrection of the spiritual body and its everlasting existence" (v). Budge's pervasive Osiride Christology is directly adopted by Haggard. In the Egyptian romance *Smith and the Pharaohs*, Smith muses that "When one came to think of it, beneath a mass of unintelligible symbolism there was much in the Egyptian faith which it was hard for a Christian to disbelieve. Salvation through a Redeemer, for instance, and the resurrection of the body" (15). Indeed, Haggard elaborated on Budge's ideas—notably in his romantic reworking of the story of the historical Cleopatra VII *Thea Philopator.* Early in the narrative the novice priest Harmachis is initiated into the mysteries of Isis via a series of mystical and eventually anacalyptic visions. Describing one such vision, Harmachis observes:

> I saw that man was created vile, but Those who are above took pity on him, and came down to make him good . . . . But man returned to his wicked way, and then the bright Spirit of Good, who is of us called Osiris, but who has many names, offered himself up for the evil doing of the race that had dethroned him (60).

Haggard goes on to tell the reader, through the voice of Harmachis that "the mummy cloths of symbol and of ceremony that wrap Osiris round fell from him, and I understood the secret of religion, which is Sacrifice" (60). Here there is a clear statement and assertion of the Christian doctrine of vicarious atonement, cast in the Egyptian idioms of the Isis-Osiris cycle: Osiris died for the sins of humankind.

The question remains as to why there is the particular emphasis on Osiris in Haggard, aside from the obvious influence of Budge. It would appear that the elements of concordance with Egyptian religion

that Haggard emphasises are explicitly those most closely resembling the "miraculous Christ" of Pauline epistolary scripture, that is St Paul's focus on Christ as the Son of God and his Divine Nature, his death and Resurrection, and substitutionary or vicarious atonement—all of which are seen in the excerpts presented above. Vital to the survival of the Christian faith for Haggard is the necessity of the miraculous aspect of Christ's Divine nature or, in his words, that "a God-endowed Being of supernatural strength did show signs and wonders before the eyes of His generation" the most important of such miracles being the Resurrection itself. Without this 'as St Paul says, we are of all men the most miserable, then let us eat and drink for to-morrow we die . . . . If He never rose from the grave, then, so far as I can see, there is no hope for Christian man" (320). For Haggard, we are "miserable sinners" bound to "seek for the help we cannot give to ourselves, to crave that we too may be sprinkled with the atoning blood. Why this should be necessary I cannot say – for who can comprehend those wonders?" (322-3). Haggard sees the miraculous as continuing beyond Biblical times, and he reveals his occultist perspective in this regard: "To state that miracles, which after all may be but the partial manifestation of some secret law veiled from us as yet, have ceased is, in my opinion, a profound mistake" (320).

Original Monotheism

As we have seen, Budge's ideas were extremely influential in Haggard's absorption of Egyptology. Particularly important in this regard is Budge's espousal of an "original monotheism" in Ancient Egypt: that behind the panoply of theriomorphic deities there was a hidden "monotheism for initiates."[2] Thus Budge posited an esoteric monotheism and an exoteric polytheism, which he framed within a Victorian class distinction: "[t]he educated classes in Egypt at all times never placed the "gods" on the same high level as God, and they never imagined that their views on this point could be mistaken." (*Egyptian Religion* 84). Echoing the former, Haggard asserts that the Egyptian "God" was a "Divinity, which they worshipped under so many names and symbols" (*Morning Star* x), thus directly identifying Judaeo-Christian monotheism with the speculative "original monotheism" in Egypt derived from Budge: an appeal to the "primordial wisdom" of Egypt as a legitimization of Christian doctrine.

The pursuit of such legitimisation had consequences for the development of Egyptology. Although it is often assumed that during the Victorian era Egyptology was establishing itself as an empirical science, in reality, archaeology was often driven by a priori Egyptosophical and fictional narratives. As Elliott Colla succinctly remarks: "Textual representations of Egyptian antiquities and fictional narratives on Pharaonic themes were not simply posterior reflections of material practice. On the contrary, archaeology and museum culture anticipated, as much as they proceeded from, the cultural imaginary of Egyptomania and Pharaonism" (*Conflicted Antiquities* 18).

There was thus an exchange of ideas between Egyptology and the pharaonic fiction of Haggard and his predecessors: this alongside the single most important narrative driving archaeological exploration—that of the Old Testament. It is to the Old Testament and Egyptological preoccupations with the Exodus that we now turn, along with an exploration of the monotheisms of Moses and the pharaoh Akhenaten.

Atenism: Moses and Akhenaten

In his *Moses the Egyptian: The Memory of Egypt in Western Monotheism*, Jan Assmann considers the seismic shift from polytheism to monotheism in the ancient world and its profound significance for Western culture. In his argument, he contrasts two historical figures of most importance in this regard—Moses and

2 Although clearly not the exact Judaeo-Christian homologue that Budge was averring, the contemporary discussions of monotheism in ancient Egypt are philologically complex and conceptually nuanced. Assmann considers the possibility of this in the guise of an inscrutable "hidden unity" of the cosmos within the god Amun-Ra who can only be apprehended in terms of polytheistic manifestations (*Moses the Egyptian* 168-207), whereas Hornung sees the Ancient Egyptian term for" "god" as only ever referring to specific individual gods and never used in the abstract sense of a single" "Divinity." (Hornung, *Conceptions of God in Ancient Egypt* 33-65, 237-43).

a pharaoh of the Eighteenth Dynasty, Akhenaten. Moses is a figure entirely of memory and tradition—and thus "mnemohistory."[3] There is no physical trace or archaeological evidence that Moses ever lived. This contrasts with Akhenaten who is a figure with a significant archaeological presence, who was completely lost to cultural memory after this was deliberately erased and only rediscovered following excavations in the nineteenth century. Moses effectively instituted the shift from transcultural "cosmotheism"—in which different cultures recognised their respective gods because they carried out similar cosmic functions and were hence easily equated—to one where the gods of cultures other than that of Yahweh were considered as false gods. Akhenaten instituted a monotheistic "Atenism"—the worship of the solar disc—by means of a religious revolution in the Eighteenth Dynasty, which resulted in the wholesale suppression of polytheism. After Akhenaten's death, his religion collapsed, his memory was erased. Sometime following his coronation, his son Tutankhaten would seek to distance himself from his father's apostasy by assuming the name "Tutankhamun," abandoning Amarna for Thebes, and inculcating a restitution of the worship of Amun-Ra and the rest of the pantheon.[4]

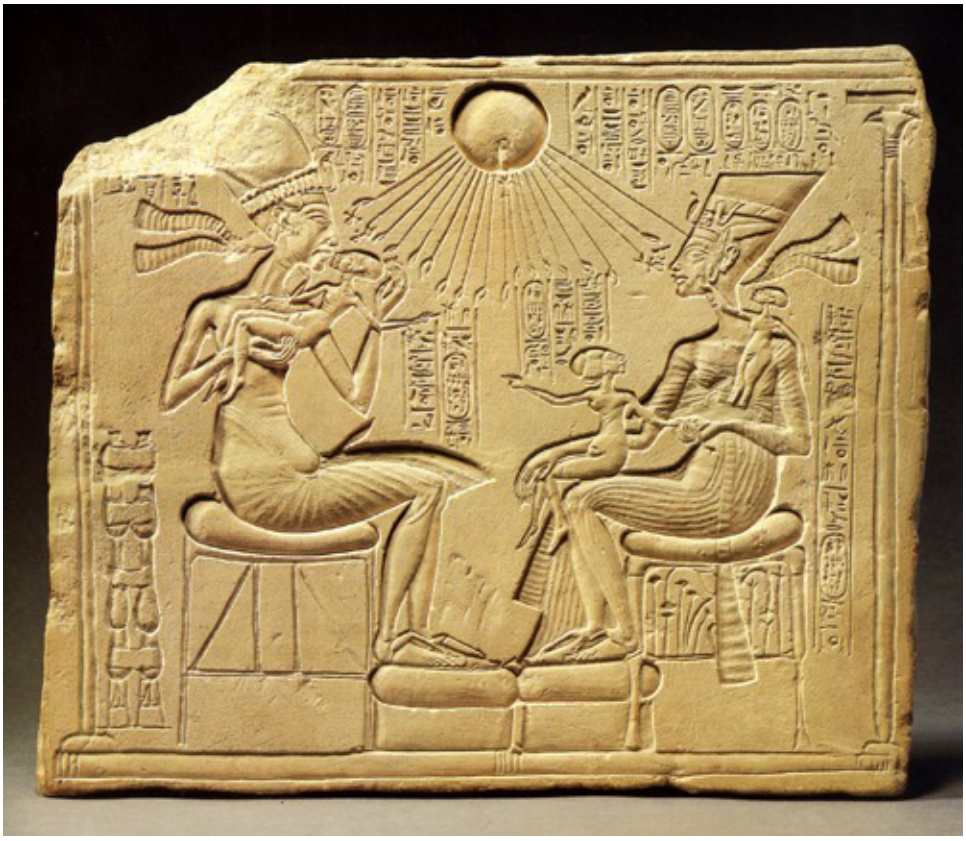

Figure 2. The "Berlin Stele." A family portrait of Akhenaten, Nefertiti, and their daughters, 18th Dynasty (Neues Museum, Berlin).

Assmann has described two historical descriptions of Moses: "Moses the Hebrew" and "Moses the Egyptian." As he notes: "[a]s a figure of memory, Moses the Egyptian is radically different from Moses the Hebrew or the Biblical Moses. Whereas Moses the Hebrew is the personification of confrontation and

3 Mnemohistory is concerned not with the past as such, but with the past as it is remembered: "It surveys the story-lines of tradition, the webs of intertextuality, the diachronic continuities and discontinuities of reading the past" (Assmann, *Moses the Egyptian* 9).

4 Though as Assmann points out, relatively recent discoveries at Thebes have indicated that there was never a complete re-constitution of the old polytheism but instead a novel pantheistic *summodeism*, where multiple deities exist as a manifestation of one 'high' deity. (*Moses the Egyptian* 171).

antagonism—between Israel = truth and Egypt = falsehood—Moses the Egyptian bridges this opposition" (*Moses the Egyptian* 11). In Haggard's portrayal of the Exodus narrative, *Moon of Israel*, the Patriarch leads the Israelites from bondage. However, Haggard's Moses is more emphatically of the Egyptian variety: in both of the romances where Moses makes an appearance, the story is narrated from an Egyptian perspective. He is mentioned in *The World's Desire*, where he is described as "one of ourselves, a shaven priest, and knows our wisdom" (65). In *Moon of Israel*, Moses' name appears only once—and that when he is pulled as a baby from the bull rushes (90).

Haggard's Exodus story is an example of how closely his fiction echoed shifting Egyptological opinion—when it suited him—in this case on the timing of a biblical event. There had long been speculation amongst Egyptologists as to the chronology of the Exodus, and which pharaoh was the "Pharaoh" of the Oppression and the Israelite Sojourn, and Haggard's writing closely follows contemporaneous Egyptological vogue in this regard. In an interview in *The Strand Magazine* from 1892, Haggard describes a ring in his possession: "Its red stone is believed to chronicle the portrait of Rameses the great, the Pharaoh of the Oppression, with whose coffin it was discovered" (How 6). However, in 1896, the Egyptologist William Flinders Petrie (1853-1942) discovered the Merneptah Stele, the so-called "Israel Stele."[5] This was the first mention of *Isrir*—Israel—to have been discovered. It was hence inferred that Merneptah was the Pharaoh of the Exodus, with his father as the oppressor. As Petrie commented at the time, "Won't the reverends be pleased!"[6] By the time of writing *Smith and the Pharaohs*, Haggard had referenced Petrie's discovery and speculation. Locked in at the Museum of Antiquities in Cairo, Smith turns around and gazes on the mummy of Merneptah, "whose hollow eyes stared at him from between the wrappings carelessly thrown across the parchment-like and ashen face. There, probably, lay the countenance that had frowned on Moses. There was the heart that God had hardened" (38). But again, by the time of the publication of *Moon of Israel*, he had radically altered the story—apparently following a discussion about the possibilities for a new plot with Gaston Maspero.[7] As a result, Haggard's new "Pharaoh" is the historically opaque pharaonic usurper of the Nineteenth Dynasty, Amenmeses.[8]

However, to clarify, my focus in this article is more concerned with Egypt seen as a progenitor to Judaeo-Christian religious ideas rather than with the dating of the Exodus per se—as much as verification of the Israelite sojourn was an important drive to archaeological exploration. To Biblical archaeology, it was more important that the Exodus took place at all rather than to name the Pharaoh of the bible.

In Haggard's Exodus tale Merapi—the titular "Moon of Israel"—is vital to the expounding of his religious ideas. During the course of the narrative, she destroys the statue of Amon-Ra by the agency of her own Israelite deity, "Javeh" (157). By the specific destruction of the head of the pantheon, Haggard juxtaposes the iconoclastic revolution of Akhenaten and thus reinforces the Yahweh-Aten equivalence, and a concordant Egypto-Hebraic monotheism: it is to Akhenaten's actual "revolution" that we now turn.

Given Haggard's focus on and interest in contemporaneous archaeological knowledge, it is hardly surprising that there is considerably more to discuss on Haggard's relationship with the archaeological Akhenaten rather than the mnemohistorical Moses: the pharaoh who instituted the monotheistic revolution of the Eighteenth Dynasty[9]—the so-called "Amarna heresy." It is evident that in doing so, Haggard conflates this historically veridical monotheism with Budge's speculative "Original monotheism" that was discussed above. In his autobiography, Haggard writes that Akhenaten was known for "the heresy of the worship of the Sun's disc, by which, I take it he symbolised the one Almighty God who made the world" (qtd. in Cohen, *Rider Haggard* 22). Haggard features Akhenaten in both *Smith and the Pharaohs* and *The Way of the Spirit*. In the former it is his ghost that appears, Haggard employing an older heteronymic form "Khu-en-aten":

5 The significance of the inscription on the stele is discussed and illustrated by Gaston Maspero in Chapter X, "On an Egyptian Monument Containing the Name of Israel," (*New Light on Ancient Egypt* 91-6).

6 Petrie would also remark that "this stele will be better known in the world than anything I have found" (Dower, *Flinders Petrie* 221).

7 As mentioned in the dedication of the novel to Gaston Maspero after the latter's death.

8 On the ascension of the pharaoh Amenmeses (Amenmessu), see Shaw, *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt* 295.

9 Eighteenth Dynasty, 1390-1352 BC. See Bard. *An Introduction to the Archaeology of Ancient Egypt* 221-9.

> There, for instance, was the long-necked Khu-en-aten, talking somewhat angrily to the imperial Rameses II. . . . He was complaining in a high, weak voice that on this, the one night of the year when they might meet . . . the magic images of the gods who were put up for them to worship, should not include *his* god, symbolized by the "Aten," or the sun's disc (45).[10]

According to Rameses, so many of the pharaohs were heretics including his grandson Seti: "I am told that he really worshipped the god of those Hebrew slaves whom I used to press to build my cities." Khu-en-aten says in reply: "I will talk with him . . . It is more than possible that we may agree on certain points" (45-6). Again, the parallels between Egyptian and Hebrew monotheism are emphasised.

As above mentioned, Haggard was thoroughly engaged with contemporary developments in Egyptology, and Petrie's archaeological excavations at Amarna were no exception. In *The Way of the Spirit*, Rupert Ullershaw, the protagonist, brings back two stelae from Egypt. He informs his mother of the provenance of one of the stelae:

> [i]t comes from Tel-el-Amarna, which, as of course you know, was the city built by the heretic king Khu-en-Aten, and was put up in the tomb of one of the royal princesses. Look at her picture on the top, with the globe of the sun above, and from it the rays ending in hands all stretched out in blessing over her (63).

Later in the novel, the Egyptian girl Mea who befriends Rupert and later has a platonic love affair with him, is said to have ancient Egyptian royal lineage. She is one of "the last descendants of an ancient and high-bred race" (203). In terms of religious belief, the reader is informed that: "Although they talked of Allah they were not Mohammedans, and if they worshipped anything, it was God as symbolised by the sun. Indeed, this was all that remained of their ancient faith, with the exception of certain feasts and days of mourning, whereof they had long forgotten the origin" (203-4). In other words, these last survivors of the ancient Egyptian "race" are Atenists—other than the survival of a few polytheistic ritual elements. Thus, Haggard is also suggesting the survival of ancient Egyptian religion into contemporaneous Islamic Egypt.

Victorian Egyptology had as we have seen promulgated Akhenaten's monotheism as evidence of an exchange of ideas between the Israelites and the "heretic" pharaoh—suggesting at the very least their presence in Egypt in support of the historicity of the Pentateuch—though in which direction monotheism flowed depends on the commentator. In his *Ancient Egypt* (1886), in a chapter entitled "Khuenaten and the Disk-Worshippers," Canon George Rawlinson notes that: "[i]t is not unlikely that the "Disk-worshippers" were drawn on towards their monotheistic creed by the presence in Egypt at the time of a large monotheistic population, the descendants of Joseph and his brethren" (226).

There are a number of reasons for Haggard's focus on Akhenaten, and once again it is predicated upon the quest for evidence of biblical narratives of "Israel in Egypt." In the season of 1891-2, Petrie was excavating the site of what was then called Tell-el-Amarna in Middle Egypt, the site of Akhenaten's city of Akhetaten ("Horizon of the Aten"). This resulted in something of an "Amarna vogue." To some Egyptologists who were contemporaries of Haggard, Akhenaten was not merely a prototype of an Old Testament patriarch, but the progenitor of the Hebrew Psalmists. Typical of this is the best-selling biography written by Arthur Weigall, *The Life and Times of Akhnaton, Pharaoh of Egypt* (1910) which states that: "[Akhenaten] himself wrote religious hymns, amongst which is the undoubted original of our 104th psalm" (9).[11] Weigall also made the etymological assertion that "Aton" was equivalent to the Hebrew "Adonai" (Assmann, *Moses the Egyptian* 24). Taking up the reins from Petrie, Weigall's work was instrumental in the development of the public perception of Akhenaten. Thus, perhaps somewhat bizarrely, there developed a cult of personality of a long-dead pharaoh in Victorian England.[12] In this regard it is significant that Akhenaten's spectacular yet

10 The form of the name "Akhenaten" is that adopted by Flinders Petrie in his *Tell el Amarna*. See also the review of this volume by Cecil Torr: "Akhenaten (Akh-en-Aten) is Mr Petrie's name for Khu-en-Aten or Chu-en-Aten. I follow his spelling throughout to avoid confusion." (*The Classical Review* 320). Budge continued to use the older form, and it is unsurprising therefore that Haggard continues to follow suit.

11 Akhenaten's "Great Hymn to the Aten" and Psalm 104 have very similar themes and solar phraseology; Assmann supports the connection (*Moses the Egyptian* 191).

12 *The Way of the Spirit* was published in 1906. On the cult of personality for Akhenaten, see Gange, *Dialogues with the Dead* 233-5 and Montserrat, *Akhenaten*, passim.

short-lived religious revolution provided the only example of non-Jewish monotheism in the ancient world and as a result:

> [i]n the eyes of Petrie and other Akhenaten aficionados [this confirmed] the belief that Egyptian civilisation maintained some memory of an antediluvian civilisation that was initially harmonious, godly, and glorious. Akhenaten's reign—in reality pretty brutal—was therefore glorified as a brief period of Christian virtue in its most Victorian, bourgeois, form (Gange, *Religion and Science* 1094).

This nod to the bourgeoisie extended to family portraits of Akhenaten and Nefertiti with their children, which at the time were not only hailed for their "naturalism"—anachronistically employing the aesthetic terminology of the period—(Montserrat, *Akhenaten* 44) but were also transposed into the setting of a middle-class Victorian homestead. Haggard asserts that Akhenaten—perhaps unusually for a pharaoh—enjoyed a blissful monogamy with Nefertiti, "my *only* wife" (Haggard, *Smith* 46). Here he is again echoing Petrie who wrote in *The Times* in 1892 that Akhenaten "openly proclaims the domestic pleasures of a monogamist" (qtd. in Montserrat, *Akhenaten* 3). This is now known to be historically inaccurate. As Jason Thompson points out, in 1959 it was discovered that Akhenaten had a second wife (*Wonderful Things* vol. 2 45); Akhenaten had Nefertiti as the Great Royal Wife and Kiya as his *Nebenfrau*.[13] As Thompson has remarked, "Many of the high ideals thought to infuse the Amarna experience turned out to be anachronistic and mistaken projections of modern values onto an utterly alien past" (*Wonderful Things* vol. 2 46). Akhenaten is thus seen as a type of Victorian *paterfamilias* on the Nile, and in part these projected Victorian sensibilities confirmed for Haggard that Akhenaten's court and family life were demonstrative of the proto-Christian monotheism that we have been discussing. Dominic Montserrat has termed the accompanying cultural phenomenon "Amarnamania," and it was partly fuelled by this and earlier pharaonic fiction. These descriptors were vital to the Victorians' appropriation of the "heretic" Pharaoh, and his provision of a historical precedent for, and affirmation of, their own cultural mores. Moreover, Akhenaten was not simply seen as a legitimising force for Old Testament Christianity but was also co-opted as an ancient prefiguration of Protestant dissent. The leading American Egyptologist James Henry Breasted (1865-1935)[14] cast the pharaoh as a type of Egyptian Luther, reforming the idolatrous religion of the god Amun. His anti-Catholic sentiment is evident when he announces: "[t]his Amonite papacy constituted a powerful obstruction in the way of realizing the supremacy of the ancient Sun god." (qtd. in Montserrat, *Akhenaten* 101-2).

Haggard's projection of Akhenaten into the Victorian household would include his own home. In an interview with the author appearing in *The Strand Magazine*, Haggard describes the contents of his home, Ditchingham House, which Marilena Parlati has described as resembling a Renaissance *Wunderkammer*—the later "cabinet of curiosities" of an antiquarian culture which preceded that of the didactic museum. Haggard demonstrates a number of objects including "ancient Egyptian bows and throwing-sticks and . . . an ancient cedar rod believed to be similar to the one which Moses cast before Pharaoh" (How quoted in Parlati, 'Memories of Exoticism' 179). He shows the interviewer a number of ancient rings, one of which is a ring which had been inscribed with Haggard's own name in hieroglyphs. In addition, a ring belonging to Queen Tiye ("Taia" in the original article), Akhenaten's mother, is shown, and here the interviewer projects the queen onto the Tudor royal family, calling her "the feminine Henry VIII" (181).

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13 On Queen Kiya, the 'lesser wife' of Akhenaten, see Nicholas Reeves," "New Light on Kiya from Texts in the British Museum", *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 74 (1988): 91-101.

14 Haggard read Breasted's work. As Morton Cohen relates, "In 1907 the *Bookman* asked a group of authors which book each had enjoyed most during the past year. By and large, they chose either a work of fiction, a book on current events, a memoir or biography. Haggard significantly chose Breasted's *Ancient Egyptian Records*" (Cohen, *Rider Haggard: His Life and Works* 103). See also H. Rider Haggard "The Book of 1906 Which Has Interested Me Most." *Bookman* January 1907:162. The work referred to is James Henry Breasted. *Ancient Records of Egypt: Historical Documents from the Earliest Times to the Persian Conquest*. 5 vols. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1906.

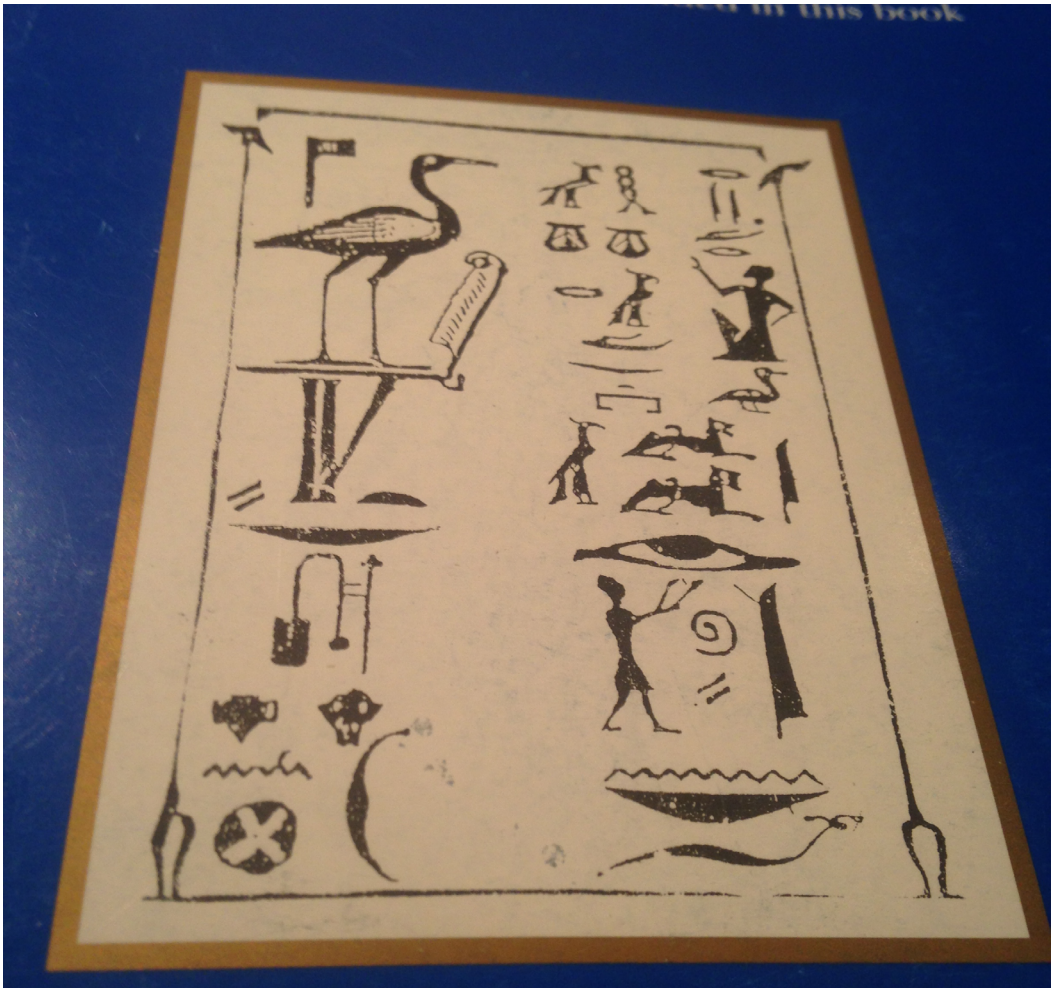

Figure 3. The Hieroglyphic Letterhead and Bookplate of H. Rider Haggard (Author's photograph after Addy, 1998).

Conclusion

We can summarise, then, the fundamental Egyptosophical components of Haggard's oeuvre: an "Original monotheism" conflated with an explicit Atenism, and—again, reprising Budge—an Osiride Christology. For Haggard, there is a hidden, proto-Christian God behind all the menagerie of the Egyptian pantheon. He is appealing to the "primordial wisdom" of Egypt, and there is less of the imperialist here—it has more to do with Church than State. Haggard's Christian Egyptosophical speculations, in turn, reflect Victorian Egyptological agendas and these ideas would stay with him throughout his working life. Likewise, the fascination with Akhenaten and the projected fealty of the Victorian bourgeoisie would persist in the consciousness of the British public well into the first decades of the twentieth century. Not only was the Victorian household projected onto ancient Amarna, but in his own home, Haggard situated himself in Ancient Egypt in a number of ways. Firstly, he inscribed an ancient ring with his own name in hieroglyphs. He said on a number of occasions that he thought he had been in ancient Egypt in a previous incarnation, and this act of inscription confirms simultaneously a wish and a belief. Secondly, Haggard had a bookplate and letterhead created for him by the Egyptologist the Revd. W. J. Loftie in March 1888 (Higgins, *Rider Haggard* 128) in which his home is referenced in an Egyptian context (see Figure 2). The hieroglyphs translate as follows (Addy, *Rider Haggard and Egypt* vi):

> *H. Rider Haggard, the son of Ella, lady of the house, makes an oblation to Thoth, the Lord of writing, who dwells in the moon.*

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