

CHAPTER II.

THE TEMENOS OF OSIRIS.

12. As the excavations in the great Temenos of Osiris still need one or two years more of work to complete them, it is not desirable to prepare a tentative plan; but anyone wishing to follow closely what is described can use the plan made by Mr. Garstang, and published in *El Arabah*. Without a plan it is useless to trouble a reader with topographical descriptions, and hence the account here is restricted to explaining the relations of the various things found and figured in these plates.

So far as our excavations have yet gone, the history of the site may be briefly summed up thus. A temple of Osiris stood here upon the sandy edge of the desert, certainly in the VIth Dynasty, and presumably before the Ist Dynasty. Outside of the temple enclosure a town sprang up behind it on the desert before the Ist Dynasty, and mingled with that town are a few large tombs and some smaller burials of the Ist Dynasty. These seem to have been placed amid the deserted houses when that part of the town was unoccupied. This town spread for some hundreds of feet around the temple, and lasted on to the IVth—VIth Dynasties. Some time after the Old Kingdom a great enclosure wall was built, far outside of the temple ground, resting upon the town rubbish. A corner of this was boxed off with cross walls, and filled up with interments of the XIth—XVIIth Dynasties, known later as the Kom es Sultan, which was completely emptied out by Mariette's workmen. In the XIth Dynasty Antef V. rebuilt the

temple with octagonal columns of limestone. In the XIIth Dynasty many monuments were added by Useratesen I. In the XIIIth Dynasty Sebekhotep III. built a black granite gateway.

In the XVIIIth Dynasty Tahutmes III. built a massive inner enclosing wall to the temple, over twenty feet thick, with a great red granite pylon on the back or desert side, opening into the larger walled area. Much of the larger wall had been destroyed, and a town spread over the space, as before in the Old Kingdom; but later, probably in the troubles of the XXth Dynasty, the old line of outer wall was built again, over the later town. In the XXVIth Dynasty the temple was rebuilt, and additions made in the XXXth Dynasty. Where the original shrine of Osiris stood is not yet known; but presumably it was the nucleus of the original temple, and therefore beneath the later temples. We have not yet cleared the temple site below the foundations of the XVIIIth Dynasty, and work there will be very difficult owing to the rise of the Nile level placing the lower parts under water.

13. The excavation of the temenos area was a difficult matter to arrange. On every side it was bounded so that no clear space could be begun upon; and I was obliged to start by throwing back along a line of existing ruins. In the higher part of the ground, nearer to the desert, the clean sand surface of the old desert was found beneath all the towns piled one over the other. But this clean sand was inaccessible beneath the water in every part of the temple ground bounded by the great wall of Tahutmes