

## His sculptures and Architectural works

It was through his sculptures and his architectural works that the first Usurtasen made himself chiefly conspicuous. Thebes, Abydos, Heliopolis or On, the Fayoum and the Delta, were equally the scenes of his constructive activity, and still show traces of his presence.

At Thebes, he carried to its completion the cell, or naos, of the great temple of Ammon, in later times the innermost sanctuary of the building, and reckoned so sacred, that when Thothmes III. rebuilt and enlarged the entire edifice he reproduced the structure of Usurtasen, unchanged in form, and merely turned from limestone into granite. At Abydos and other cities of Middle Egypt, he constructed temples adorned with sculptures, inscriptions, and colossal statues. At Tanis, he set up his own statue, exhibiting himself as seated upon his throne.

In the Fayoum he erected an obelisk forty-one feet high to the honour of Ammon, Phthah, and Mentu, which now lies prone upon the ground near the Arab village of Begig. Indications of his ubiquitous activity are found also at the Wady Magharah, in the Sinaitic peninsula, and at Wady Haifa in Nubia, a little above the Second Cataract; but his grandest and most elaborate work was his construction of the great temple of the Sun at Heliopolis, and his best memorial is that tall finger pointing to the sky which greets the traveller approaching Egypt from the east as the first sample of its strange and mystic wonders.

This temple the king began in his third year. After a consultation with his lords and counsellors, he issued the solemn decree: "It is determined to execute the work; his majesty chooses to have it made. Let the superintendent carry it on in the way that is desired; let all those employed upon it be vigilant; let them see that it is made without weariness; let every due ceremony be performed; let the beloved place arise." Then the king rose up, wearing a diadem, and holding the double pen; and all present followed him.

The scribe read the holy book, and extended the measuring cord, and laid the foundations on the spot which the temple was to occupy. A grand building arose; but it has been wholly demolished by the ruthless hand of time and the barbarity of conquerors. Of all its glories nothing now remains but the one taper obelisk of pink granite, which rises into the soft sleepy air above the green cornfields of Matariyeh, no longer tipped with gold, but still catching on its summit the earliest and latest sun-rays, while wild-bees nestle in the crannies of the weird characters cut into the stone.