

THE MATERIAL WORLD OF ANCIENT EGYPT

The Material World of Ancient Egypt examines the objects and artifacts, the representations in art, and the examples of documentation that together reveal the day-to-day physical substance of life in ancient Egypt. This book investigates how people dressed, what they ate, the houses they built, the games they played, and the tools they used, among many other aspects of daily life, paying great attention to the change and development of each area within the conservative Egyptian society. More than any other ancient civilization, the ancient Egyptians have left us with a wealth of evidence about their daily lives in the form of perishable objects, from leather sandals to feather fans, from detailed depictions of trades and crafts on the walls of tombs and a wide range of documentary evidence from temple inventories to personal laundry lists. Drawing on these diverse sources and richly illustrating his account with nearly one hundred images, William H. Peck illuminates the culture of the ancient Egyptians from the standpoint of the basic materials they employed to make life possible and perhaps even enjoyable.

William H. Peck is retired curator of ancient art at the Detroit Institute of Arts. He excavated for many years in Egypt, first as a field archaeologist at the site of ancient Mendes in the Nile delta and later in the Precinct of the Goddess Mut in Karnak, where he was co-field director and architect with the Brooklyn Museum mission. He was a recipient of an American Research Center in Egypt Fellowship to study New Kingdom tomb painting, a Smithsonian Institution Travel Grant to Egypt, and an Award in the Arts for an outstanding alumnus from Wayne State University. His major publications include *Drawings from Ancient Egypt*, which was translated into French, German, and Arabic; *Splendors of Ancient Egypt*, an exhibition catalog; and *Egypt in Toledo*, on the Egyptian collections in Toledo, Ohio. He has lectured widely in the United States and Canada and has acted as consultant to several museums, including the Virginia Museum, Richmond; the Arkansas Art Center, Little Rock; and the Art Museum, Toledo.

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PREFACE

My interest in ancient Egypt began early in my childhood and became more intense during my secondary school years when I discovered Piazzi-Smyth's *Our Inheritance in the Great Pyramid*. I eventually sought to know more about the culture of Egypt as it was preserved in its own artifacts, somewhat in the way that Flinders Petrie was to debunk Piazzi-Smyth's famous work by accurately measuring the monuments. After experience in the U.S. Army as a topographic surveyor and a technical illustrator I was privileged to participate at length in two major excavations, first at the site of Mendes in the Nile delta and later in the Precinct of the Goddess Mut at Karnak. Those activities, my lengthy museum experience of dealing firsthand with a wide range of Egyptian artifacts, and an early involvement with the investigation of mummies as a founding member and participant in the just-emerging Paleopathology Society have given me a series of varied and immediate experiences in the art and objects that make up the material world of ancient Egypt.

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