

## Illustrations of the Views and Ambitions of Egyptian Kings

The Twelfth dynasty, 1991-1783 BCE, dominated the Middle Kingdom period in Egypt. The following account depicts advice given by Amenemhat I (1991-1962 BCE) to his son on assuming his role as pharaoh.

I was one who made the grain to grow, and who loved the god of the harvest. In every valley did the Nile greet me. In my years none had hunger and none had thirst. In peace lived the people, and their talk was of me— because of the [good] deeds which I wrought. From Amenemhat I. Instructions to his Son Hearken to that which I tell thee, that thou mayest be king over the earth and ruler over its countries, and thy prosperity may increase. Harden thy heart against thy underlings. The people obey him whom they hold in fear. . . . Take no brother to thy heart, cherish no friend, keep no intimates — there is no end to them. When thou sleep- est, still be on thy guard, for a man has no people [to defend him] when the evil day approaches. I gave to the beggar; I sustained the orphan; I was gracious to the humble as well as to the mighty—but he who ate of my bounty turned rebel: he to whom I gave my hand turned and smote me [literally "aroused fear therein"].

*Reading in Ancient History: Greece and the East*, by William Stearns Davis, p. 4