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## "Most Noble Out-pourings of the Soul"

### The Reception of Ancient Egypt in the Works of G.R.S. Mead

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## **“Most Noble Out-pourings of the Soul”: The Reception of Ancient Egypt in the Works of G.R.S. Mead**

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Ancient Egypt played an important but perhaps understated role in early Theosophy, with frequent references to Egyptian Cabala in Helena Petrovna Blavatsky and George Henry Felt's early papers. Significantly, Blavatsky planned for the early Theosophical Society (TS) to be “composed of learned occultists and cabbalists, of *philosophes hermétiques* of the nineteenth century, and of antiquaries and Egyptologists generally ... following literally the instructions of the old Cabalas, both Jewish and Egyptian (Hanegraaff 2021:37). While TS clearly made a shift in favor of Indian philosophy and religiosity in the 1880s, (the imagined) ancient Egypt remained an important source for some later Theosophists. G.R.S. Mead, who regarded much of the Western esoteric tradition, including astrology and the hermetic corpus to originate there, is one such Theosophist. This paper aims to give an overview of the theme of ancient Egypt in the early as well as latter Theosophical Society. Additionally, I will analyze some of the leading theoretical concepts that have been used to locate and understand this theme in Theosophy, including Hornung's Egyptosophy (2001), Leirich's magical Ægypt (2007), and Magus' Christian Egyptosophy (2021). Lastly, I will briefly consider the reception of Mead's Egypt in C.G. Jung's psychoanalysis and spirituality.