

To this fable, which, despite of all the pretended explanations that have been given of it, evinces so gross an ignorance of astronomy, they added, regarding Sesostris, Phero, Helenius, and Rhampsinitus, the kings who built the pyramids, and an Ethiopian conqueror named *Sabacos*, a set of tales equally absurd.

The priests of Thebes did better: they shewed Herodotus, and they had before shewn to Hecataeus, three hundred and forty-five colossal figures of wood, which represented three hundred and forty-five high priests, who had succeeded to each other from father to son, all men, all born the one of the other, but who had been preceded by gods\*. Other Egyptians told him that they had exact registers, not only of the reign of men, but also of that of gods. They reckoned 17,000 years from Hercules to Amases, and 15,000 from Bacchus. Pan had even been prior to Hercules †. These people evidently took for history some allegories relating to pantheistic metaphysics, which formed, unknown to them, the basis of their mythology.

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\* Euterpe, chap. cxliii.

† Ibid. cxliv.