

1 **Heliopolis** [anc. Egyp. Iunu; now Tell Hisn, nr Cairo, Egypt]. An
 2 ancient Egyptian city, known in the Bible as On, which was the capital of the
 3 13th Lower Egyptian nome (administrative province) and a cult centre
 4 of the sun-god, in its various guises (Ra, Atum, Khepri). The symbol of
 5 Heliopolis was the benben, the precursor of the pyramid and obelisk,
 6 which represented the primeval hill upon which the sun first rose. The oldest
 7 monolithic benben found at Heliopolis dates to the 6th dynasty. An
 8 obelisk of Sesostris I (reg 1971-1926 BC) still stands on the
 9 site; two other obelisks of Heliopolitan origin ^M 'Cleopatra's needles' ^M are
 0 now in London and New York. Remains of a temenos wall and chapel
 1 reliefs testify to the city's importance as a religious centre as early as the
 2 Archaic period. **INHOTEP**, a high priest of Heliopolis under the
 3 3rd dynasty, was instrumental in the creation of the Step Pyramid at Saqqara.
 4 Excavations at Heliopolis have produced evidence of various New Kingdom
 5 temples, dating to the reigns of Amenophis III, Sethos I, Ramesses II and IX
 6 and Merenptah. There are also remains of tombs of 6th-dynasty high priests
 7 (south-east of the Sesostris I obelisk), a necropolis of the Ramessid and Late
 8 Periods (at the nearby site of Ard el-Na'am) and a series of tombs of
 9 Mnevis-bulls (north-east of the obelisk). The city itself maintained a
 0 reputation as a scientific centre until the rise of Alexandria.▲

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26 **HABIL SHELIM**

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