



AS Pliny the Elder truly wrote more than twenty centuries ago, "The remembrance of past events depends upon paper (papyrus)"; yet, with the irony of fate, paper has failed to preserve any record of its own origin, and much of the early history of the art of paper-making is left to conjecture. The word "paper" itself may rightly be regarded as a living link in human speech which connects ancient Egypt with modern Canada. The former was the land of the early paper plant; the latter is the land of the latest paper tree. The existence of papyrus has been traced back to 2400 B.C., and without doubt it had then been in use a long time. "Papyrus" was probably the Egyptian name, with a Greek termination, of a sedge or bulrush of the Nile and the marshes of Egypt, which was used for making thin sheets primarily for writing upon, though some were used for wrapping. The Egyptians stripped the rind from the long stems, exposing the pith, which was then cut into thin strips. These were laid out flat side by side, forming a layer upon which other strips were laid at right angles to the first. The two layers were then compressed, so as to adhere to each other. Sometimes, perhaps generally, three layers were used. The article thus formed was the papyrus on which the ancient dwellers on the banks of the Nile wrote those records which, three thousand years and more after they were stored away, have been brought out again from the tombs of the Pharaohs into the light of today with their cuttlefish ink as distinct as though the writing was done but yesterday.

