What the Egyptians knew

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Part II: New Kingdom
What the Egyptians knew

• New Kingdom (dynasties 18-20, 1532 BC - 1070 BC)
  – Main political center: Thebes (liberated Egypt from the Hyksos)
  – Main religious center: Karnak (Thebes), temple of Amun (1530 BC)
  – Chief deity: Amun, associated with the north's Re and now regarded as creator of all people
  – The king's chief wife becomes the divine wife of Atum
  – Thebes as the original place of creation (creation myth)
  – Royal burial: rock-cut tombs in the Valley of the Kings (Karnak)
  – Ramesses II rock-cut temples at Abu Simbel (1250 BC)
Karnak/ Luxor

- Great Hypostyle Hall
- Court of Ramesses II
- Grand Colonnade
- Court of Amenhotep II
- Temple
Karnak
Karnak
Abydos: Temple of Seti I (13th c BC)
What the Egyptians knew

- New Kingdom (dynasties 18-20, 1532 BC - 1070 BC)
  - Amenhotep I’s experiment (1520 BC): Separation of Royal burial site and Royal cult sites
  - Divine cult complexes (houses of the gods) and Royal cult complexes, between the Nile and the necropolis (royal burial rites)
  - The king is called “pharaoh” (originally the word for the palace of the king)
What the Egyptians knew

• New Kingdom (dynasties 18-20, 1532 BC - 1070 BC)
  – Old Kingdom: age of the pyramids; New Kingdom: age of the grandiose temples
  – Pyramid: belief that the immortality of the nation depends on the immortality of the pharaoh
  – Temple: a manifestation of the nation’s immortality
What the Egyptians knew

- New Kingdom (dynasties 18-20, 1532 BC - 1070 BC)
  - Painting not only accessory to relief but independent art
  - Sundial (1450, probably an evolution of the obelisk) and (outflow) water clock (before 1500)
    - Clepsydr : time measurement that does not depend on weather and light (also in India, China, Mesopotamia)
    - Sundial: depends on weather and light
    - Daylight divided into 10 parts plus two "twilight hours" in the morning and evening
What the Egyptians knew

- Royal temple of Queen Hatshepsut (1483 BC) at Deir-el-Bahri
What the Egyptians knew

- Colossi of Memnon (14th c BC)
What the Egyptians knew

- Tomb of scribe Nakht at Luxor (1420 BC)
What the Egyptians knew

- New Kingdom (dynasties 18-20, 1532 BC - 1070 BC)
  - Burgeoning economy of Amenhotep III (1391-1353 BC) and Ramesses II (1290-1224 BC)
    - Urban expansion
    - Temple construction
    - Agricultural surpluses
    - Influx of gold from Nubia
    - The gold shekel (11.3 gr) becomes the standard medium of exchange for trade in the Middle East
    - Egyptian economy fuels Mediterranean trade
What the Egyptians knew

- **New Kingdom (dynasties 18-20, 1532 BC - 1070 BC)**
  - Imports from Phoenicia:
    - Afghan tin
    - Cyprus’ copper
    - Timber
      - Ships
      - Temples
      - Coffins
    - Silver from Asia Minor
What the Egyptians knew

• New Kingdom (dynasties 18-20, 1532 BC - 1070 BC)
  – Foreign policy (Palestine, Syria, Nubia, Mitannis, Hittites, Mesopotamia)
    • 1458 BC: Tuthmosis III defeats the Mitannis and conquers Syria, the peak of Egyptian power
    • 1415: Marriage between Tuthmosis IV and Artatama’s daughter seal peace with Mitannis
    • 1353 BC: monotheism (Atum) of Amenhotep IV (Akhenaten/Ikhnaton) and his wife Nefertiti at new capital Akhetaten (Amarna)
    • 1275 BC: the battle of Kadesh
What the Egyptians knew

- **Nefertiti**  
  Egyptian Museum

- **Sekhmet (14th c BC)**
  (Boston Museum of Fine Arts)

- **King Akhenaten as sphinx 14th c BC**
  (Boston Museum of Fine Arts)
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Granite sphinx of Hatshepsut
15th c BC

Coffin of Khonsu
from tomb of Sennedjem 13th c BC

Statue of Yuny
13th c BC

(Metropolitan Museum)
Tutankhamun

Tutankhamun
(Oriental Institute, Chicago)
Tutankhamun’s tomb contained more gold than the Bank of Egypt in 1922.
Tomb of Sethi I (13th c BC)

Tomb of Sethi I, Valley of the Kings, 13th c BC
What the Egyptians knew

- New Kingdom (dynasties 18-20, 1532 BC - 1070 BC)
  - Private tombs
    - Underground burial chamber
    - Chapel for the cult of the deceased
    - Paintings depicting the daily life of the deceased rather than his/her life in the underworld
Tomb of worker Sennedjem

Tomb of Sennedjem, Valley of the Kings, 13th c BC
Tomb of mayor Sennefer

(Tombs of Sennedjem, major of Thebes, Valley of the Kings, 15th c BC)

(Emphasis on his love for his wife)
What the Egyptians knew

• New Kingdom (dynasties 18-20, 1532 BC - 1070 BC)
  – Writing
    • Cursory form (“hieratic”) for religious writing (1500 BC)
    • Abstract form (“demotic”) for commercial and legal transactions (400 BC)
What the Egyptians knew

• New Kingdom (dynasties 18-20, 1532 BC - 1070 BC)
  – Literature
    • Akhenaten: “Royal Hymn to Aton” (1350 BC)
    • “Tale of the Two Brothers” (1185 BC)
What the Egyptians knew

• New Kingdom (dynasties 18-20, 1532 BC - 1070 BC)
  – Funerary texts
    • Walls of the pyramids (but only for kings and queens)
    • Later coffins and sarcophagi (for the aristocracy)
    • Finally (1580 BC), on papyrus, which is affordable to everybody
    • Scribes and artists (“Book of the Dead”) devise a customized story of how the soul will travel in the underworld (up to 27 meters long!)
    • The pictures become progressively more important than the text
What the Egyptians knew

- New Kingdom (dynasties 18-20, 1532 BC - 1070 BC)
  - “Book of the Dead”
    - Not a standard text but a customized text for each “customer”
    - A sign of democratization: ordinary people can afford to have their own guide to the underworld
    - A multidisciplinary artwork: literature + painting
    - Creative storytelling: instead of recounting the past of the dead man, try to imagine his future
What the Egyptians knew

- **New Kingdom (dynasties 18-20, 1532 BC - 1070 BC)**
  - **Papyrus of Ani**: a papyrus manuscript written in cursive hieroglyphs and illustrated with color miniatures (1420 BC)

The jury

Jackal-headed Anubis weights Ani's heart vs a feather

Ibis-headed Thoth writes the verdict

Crocodile-headed monster Ammit is ready to maul Ani
Battle of Kadesh (1275 BC)
Egyptian chariot of 1275 BC

Hittite chariot 1200 BC
What the Egyptians knew

• New Kingdom (dynasties 18-20, 1532 BC - 1070 BC)
  – Private life

Nefertari, wife of Ramesses II (13th c BC), playing Senet
What the Egyptians knew

- Third Intermediate Period, Late Period (dynasties 21-25, 1070 BC - 525 BC)
  - Political capital: Tanis (Delta), Thebes (Nubian dynasty 25)
  - Main religion center: Thebes
  - The king's elder daughter becomes the divine wife of Atum, is forbidden to marry and resides at Thebes
  - Royal burial: the Nuri pyramid (664 BC), the first pyramid in a thousand years
  - Egypt’s weakness: still no iron age (although the technology was known since 4,000 BC)
What the Egyptians knew

• Third Intermediate Period, Late Period (dynasties 21-25, 1070 BC - 525 BC)
  – Foreign rulers: Libyan, Nubian, Greek mercenaries
    • 671 BC: the Assyrians capture the capital Memphis
    • 605 BC: the Babylonians (Nabuchadnezzar) defeat the Egyptians at Carchemish
    • 525 BC: the Persians (Cambyses) defeat Egypt at Pelusium
What the Egyptians knew

• Dynasties 21-25, 1070 BC - 525 BC

Coffin of Tabakmut 10th c BC
(Metropolitan Museum)

Coffin of Henettawy 10th c BC
(Metropolitan Museum)
What the Egyptians knew

• Visual representation
  – Writing can go right to left, left to right, top to bottom, bottom to top, and even all of them combined in the same story

Sarcophagus of Aspalta 6th c BC Reconstruction (Boston Museum)
What the Egyptians knew

• Third Intermediate Period, Late Period (dynasties 21-25, 1070 BC - 525 BC)
  – Temples
    • Edfu: Temple of Horus (237 BC)
    • Dendera: Temple of Hathor (25 BC)
• Edfu: Temple of Horus (237 BC)
What the Egyptians knew

- Aswan: Temple of Philae (3rd c BC)
• Dendera: Temple of Hathor (25 BC)
What the Egyptians knew

- Persian rule (525 BC - 332 BC)
- Macenodian rule (332 BC - 47 BC)
  - Foundation of Alexandria
  - Ptolemaic rulers (Greeks)
- Roman rule (47 BC - 641 AD)
- Arab rule (642:1252)
- Mumluk rule (1252-1516)
- Ottoman rule (1516-1798)
- Egyptian rule (1811-1882)
- British rule (1882-1922)
Continued on Part III
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