

What the Egyptians knew

Piero Scaruffi

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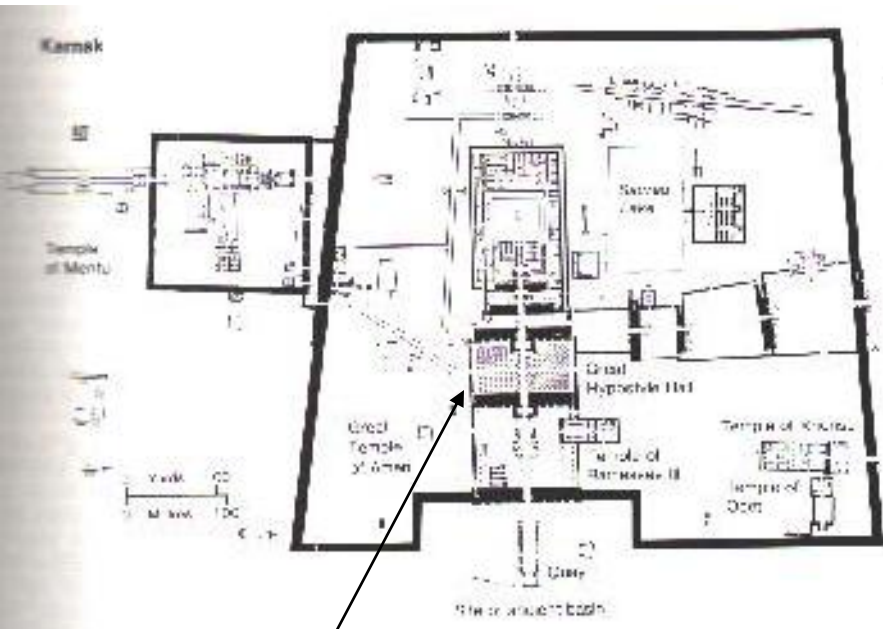
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Part II: New Kingdom

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)**
 - **Rameses II rock-cut temples at Abu Simbel (1250 BC)**

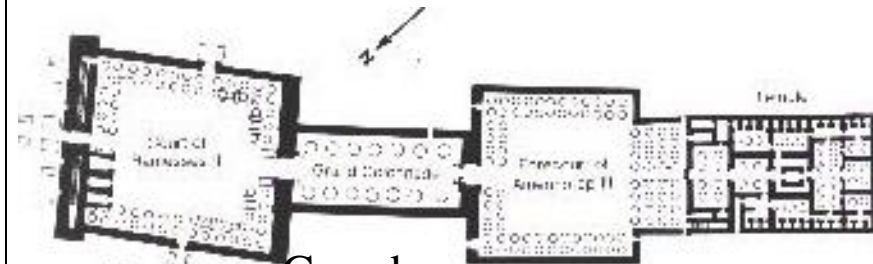
Karnak/ Luxor



Great Hypostyle Hall

N
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R
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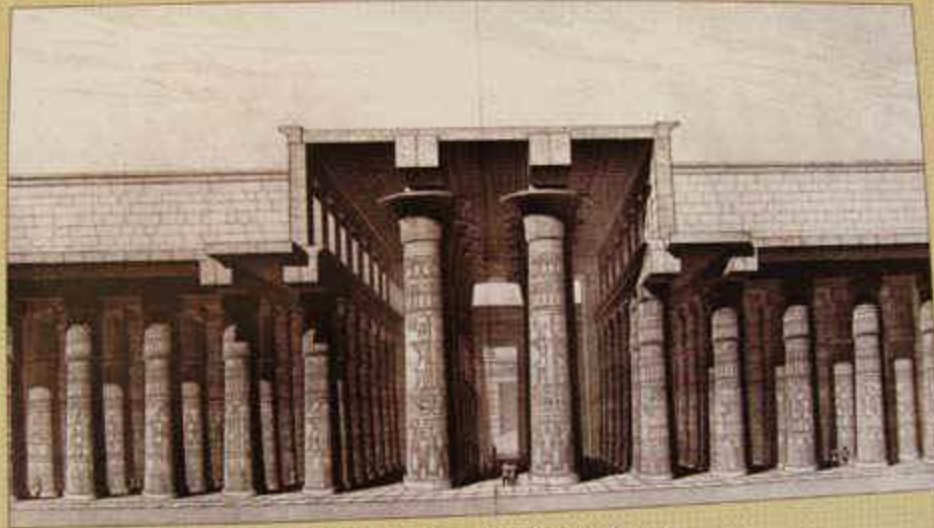


Grand Court of Ramesses II Grand Colonnade Temple of Amenhotep II

Karnak



Karnak



Perspective rendering of the Hypostyle Hall by Perrot & Chipiez.

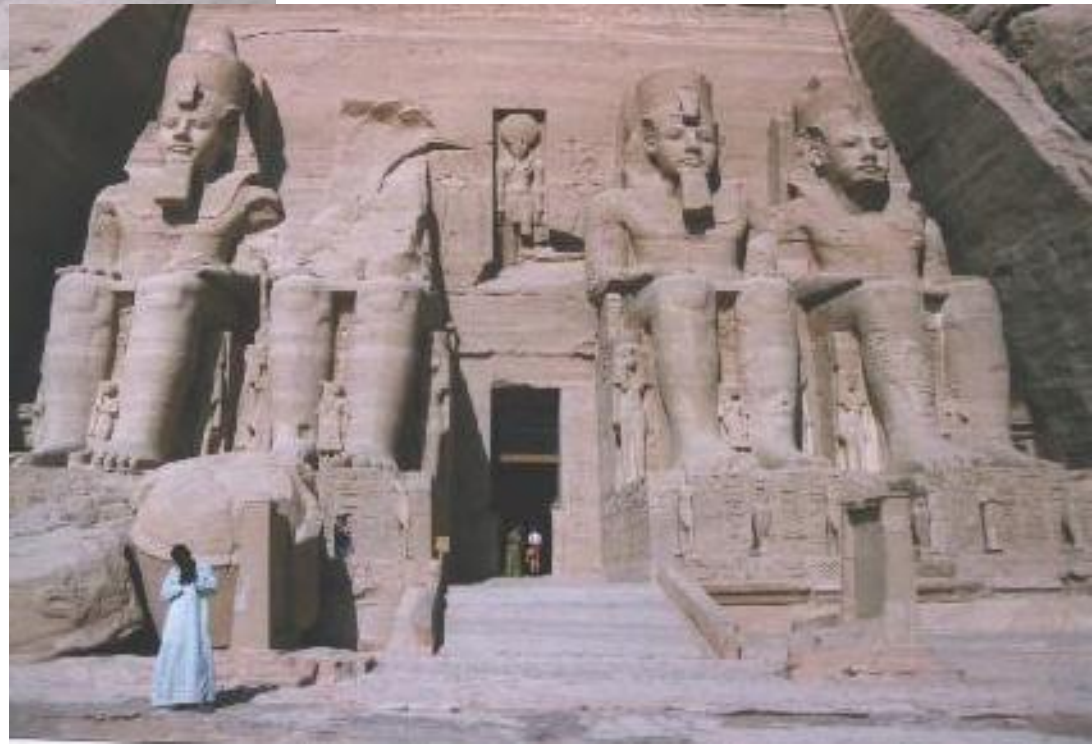


Luxor



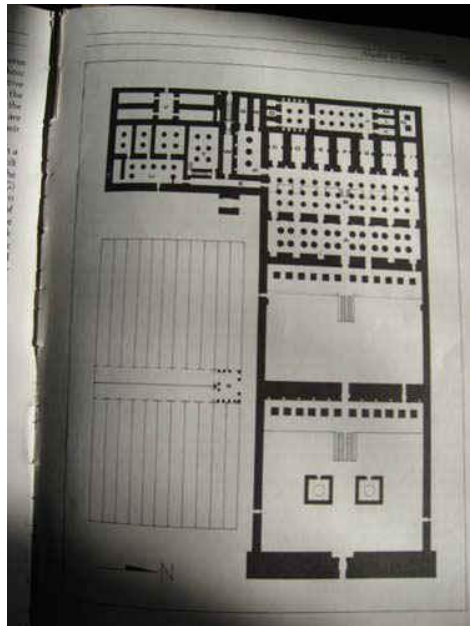


Abu Simbel





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 at Deir-el-Bahri**



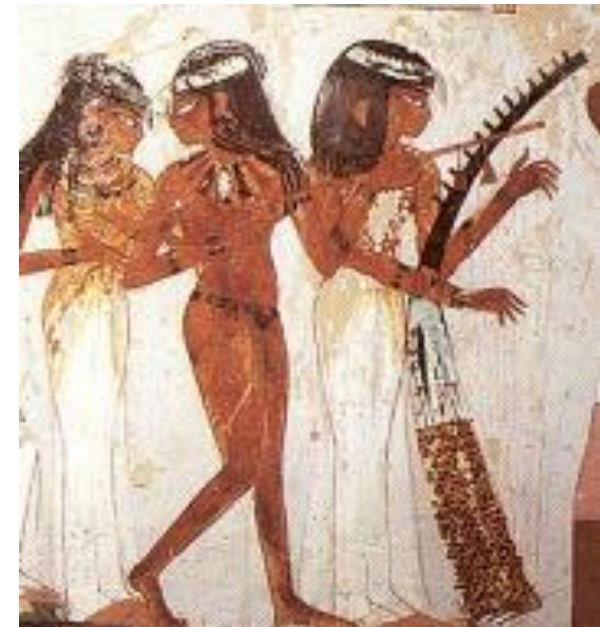
What the Egyptians knew

- **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)



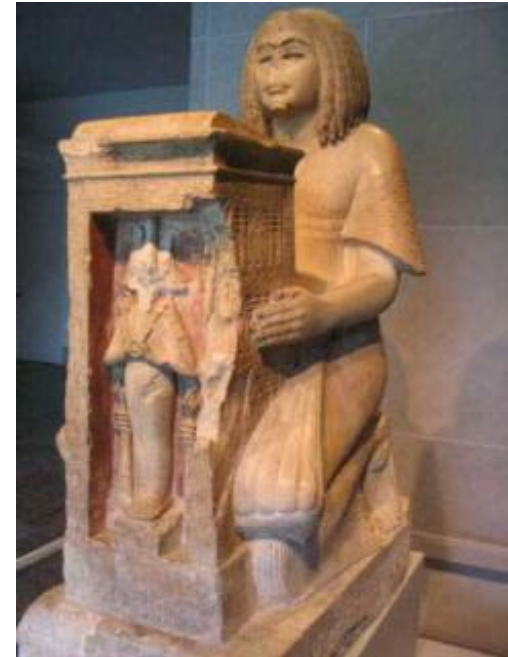
What the Egyptians knew



Granite sphinx of Hatshepsut
15th c BC



Coffin of Khonsu
from tomb of
Sennedjem 13th c BC



Statue of Yuny
13th c BC

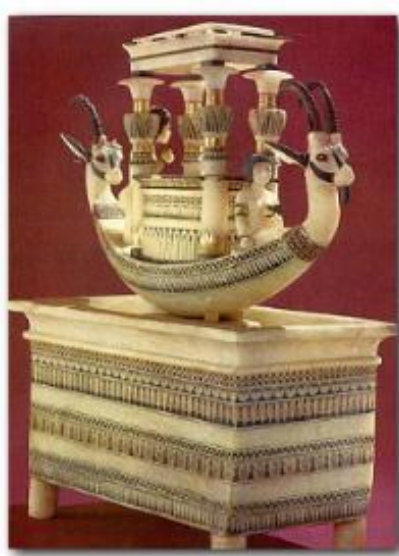


(Metropolitan Museum)

Tutankhamun



Tutankhamun
(Oriental Institute, Chicago)



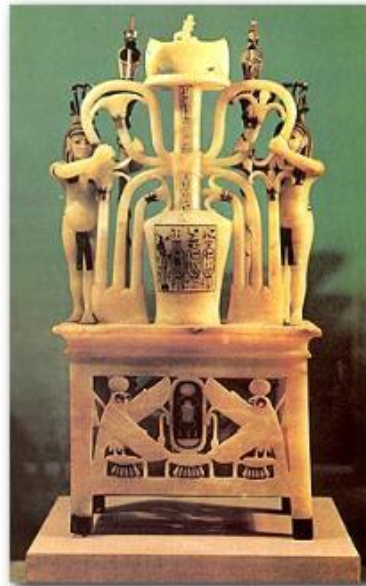
Alabaster basin and boat



Alabaster chest



Wood-stucco casket



Alabaster perfume vase



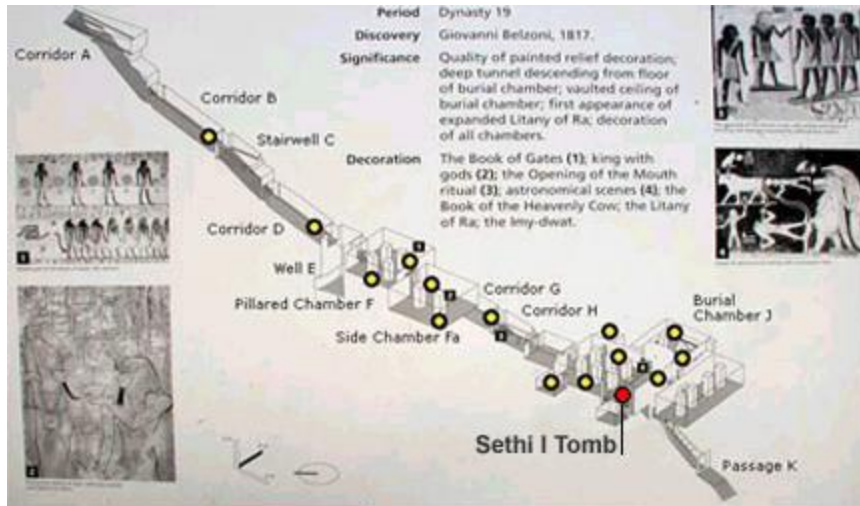
Tutankhamun Treasure (1300 BC)



Second coffin

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



(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

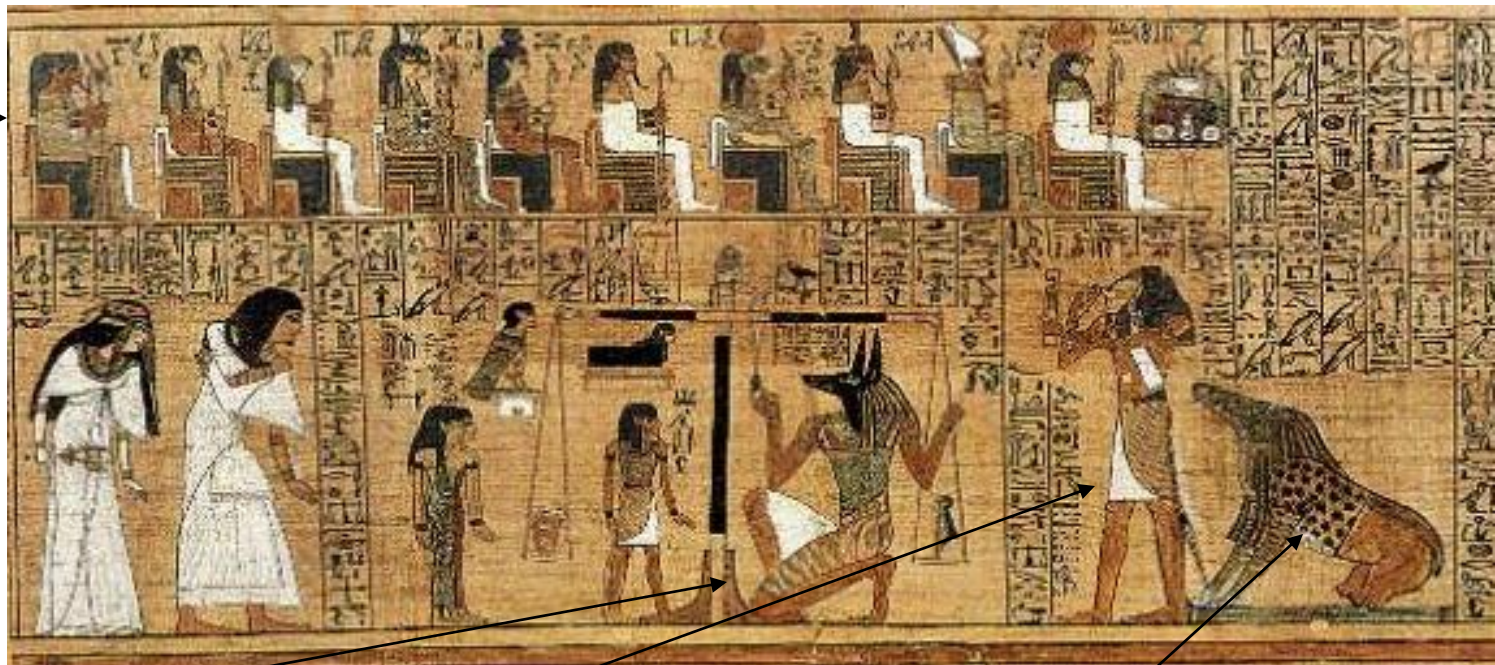
- **New Kingdom (dynasties 18-20, 1532 BC - 1070 BC)**
 - **“Book of the Dead”**
 - **Not a standard text but a customized text for each “customer”**
 - **A sign of democratization: ordinary people can afford to have their own guide to the underworld**
 - **A multidisciplinary artwork: literature + painting**
 - **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)**

British Museum

The jury



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

Ibis-headed Thoth
writes the verdict

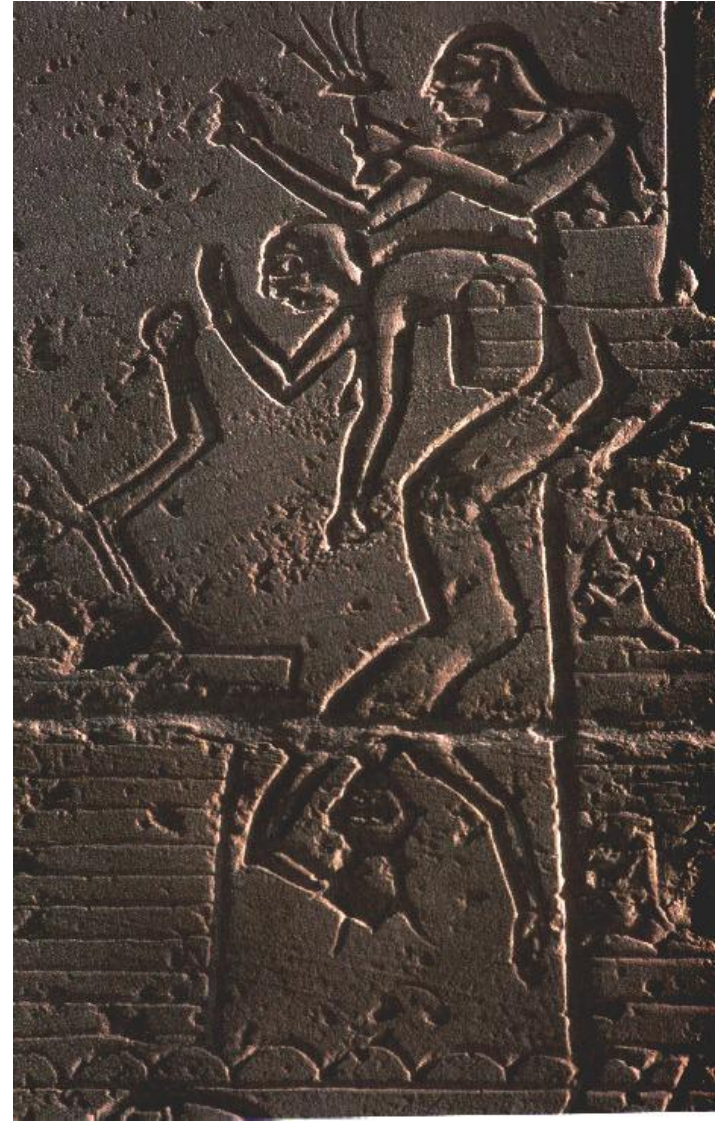
Crocodile-headed monster
Ammit is ready to maul Ani

Battle of Kadesh (1275BC)



Rhamses II

Abu Simbel





Egyptian chariot of 1275 BC



Hittite chariot 1200 BC

What the Egyptians knew

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



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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**



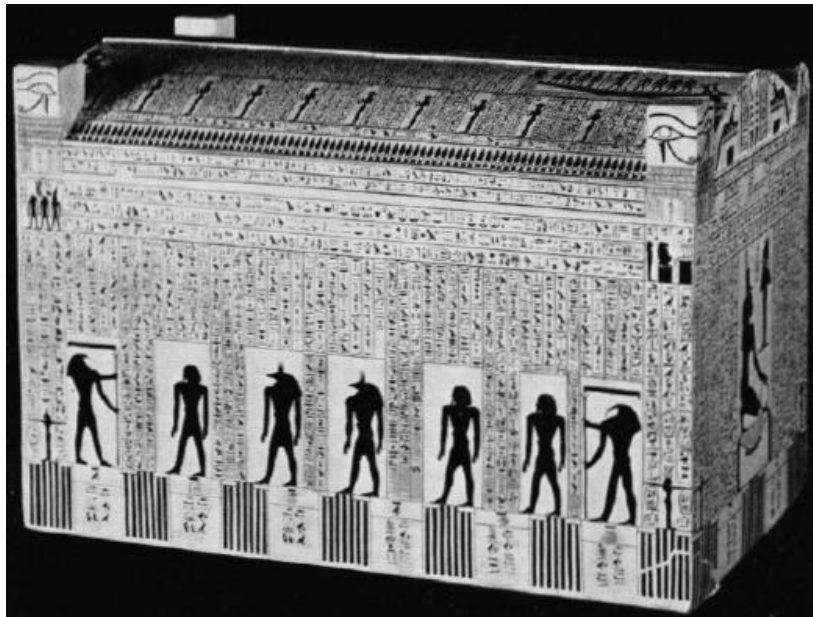
Coffin of Tabakmut 10th c BC
(Metropolitan Museum)



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)

XLIII, 56

BULLETIN OF THE MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS

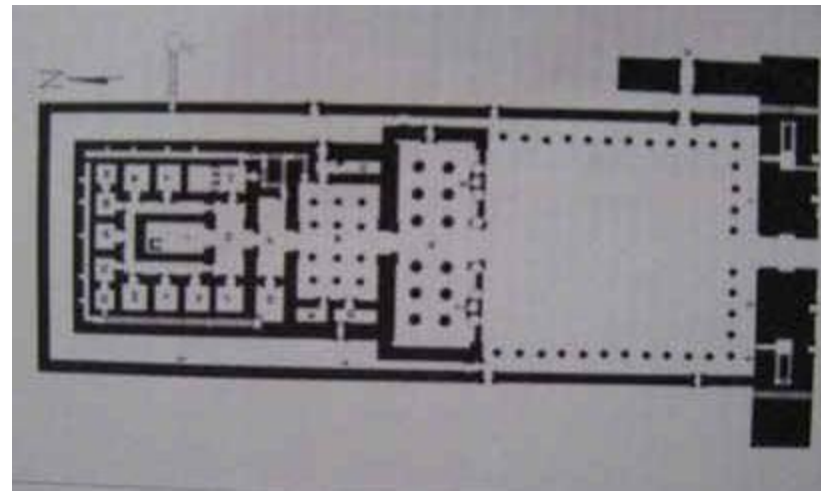
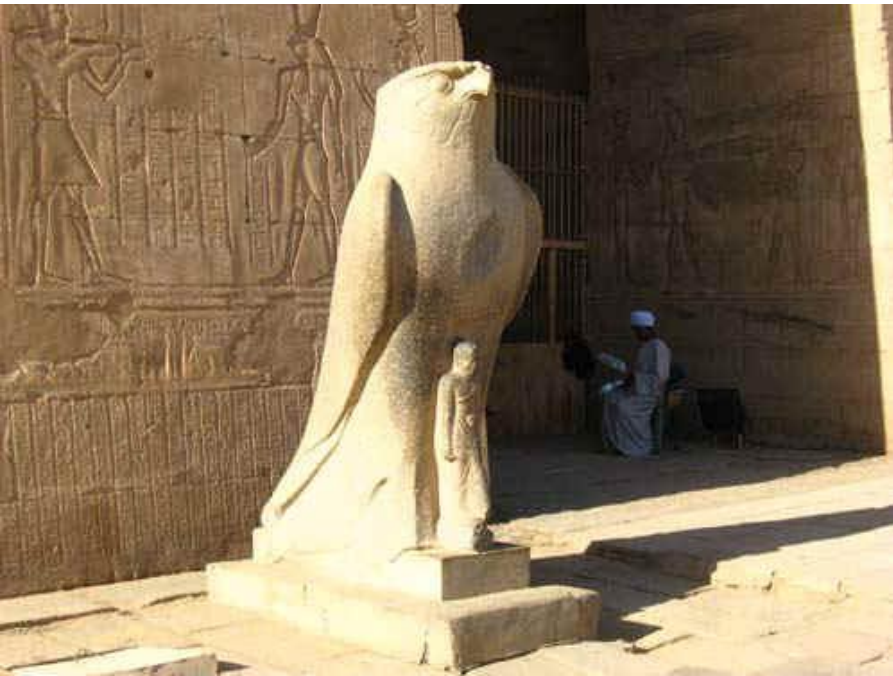


What the Egyptians knew

- **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)**



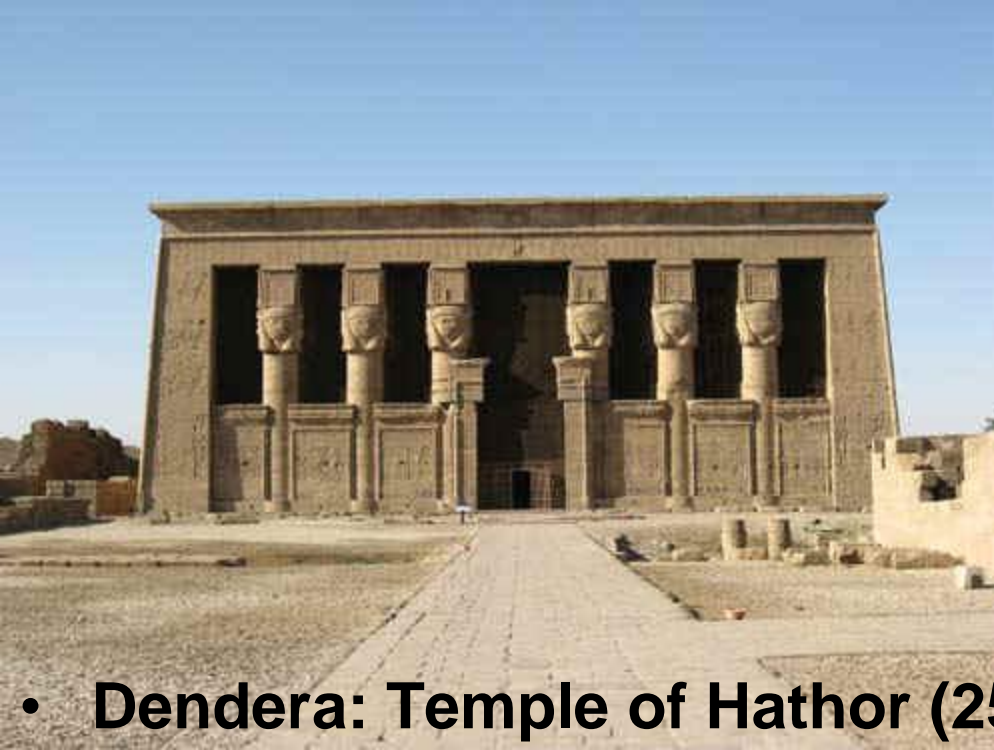
- Edfu: Temple of Horus (237 BC)



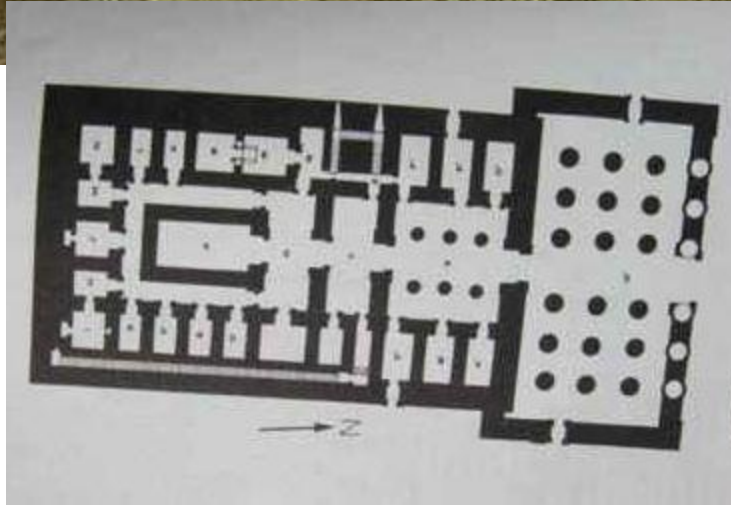
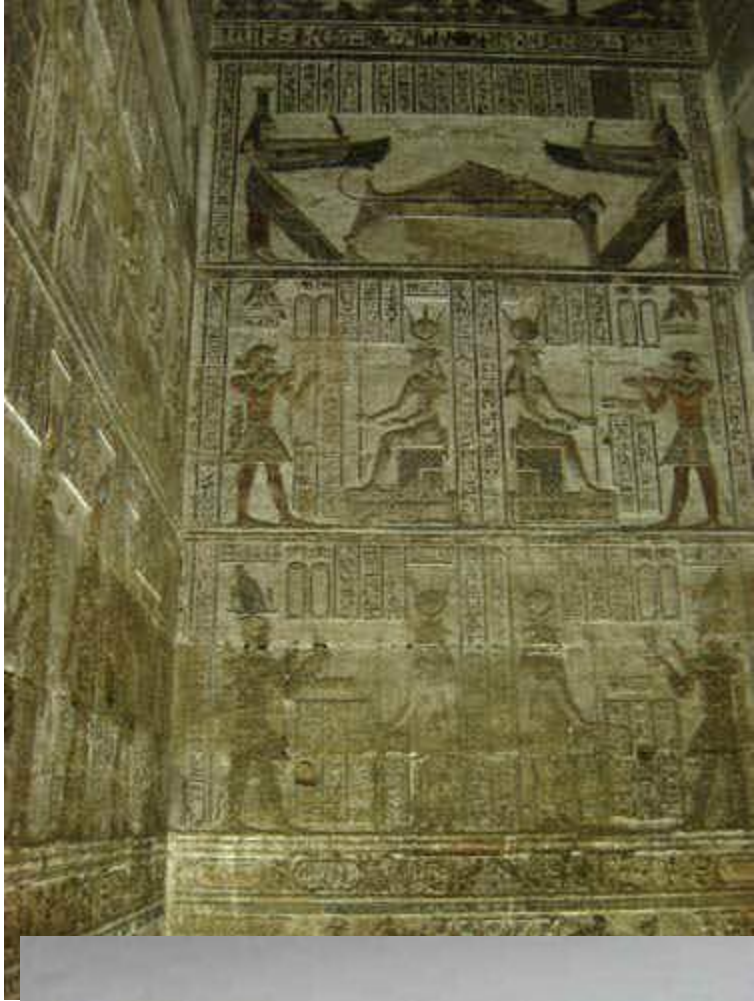


- **Aswan:
Temple of
Philae (3rd c
BC)**





• 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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