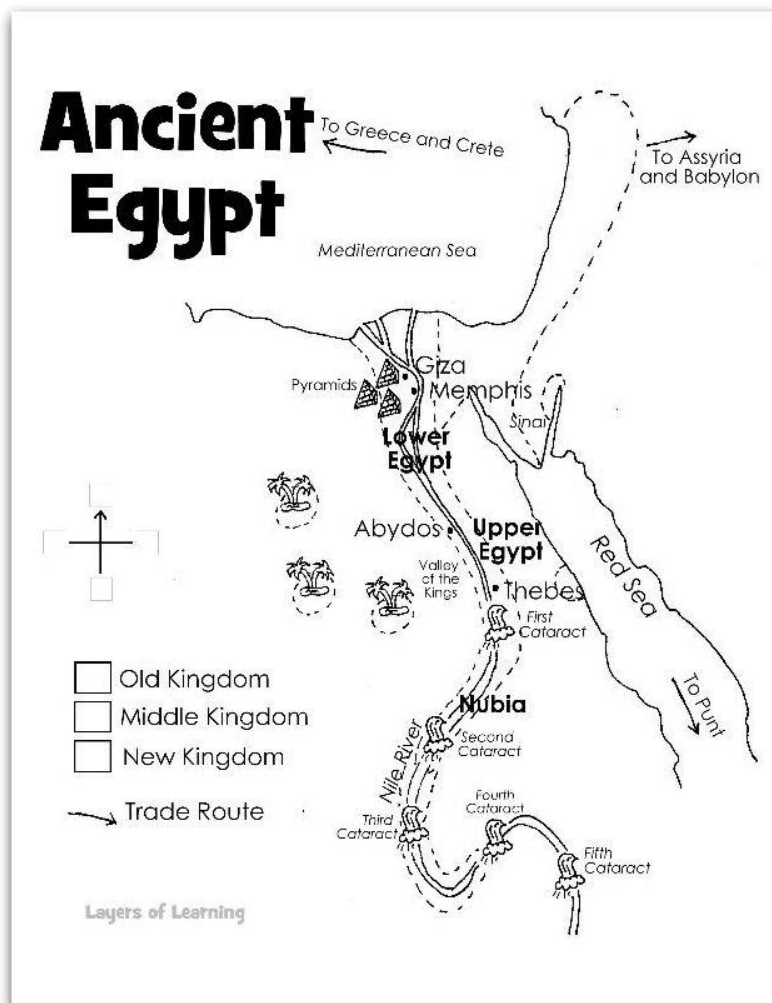


Egypt Under the Pharaohs

Egypt was home of one of the world's first great civilizations. It is close, to the West, of the Fertile Crescent and Mesopotamia. However, Egyptian culture different in many ways making them very unique.

Nile River Valley

The Nile river was the Egyptian's superhighway for everything. They used to for food, transportation, communication, irrigation, and state control. Today the Nile is a trickle of what it used to be in ancient Egyptian times. It is the worlds longest river spanning almost 4,200 miles and through a dozen countries. It flows South to North and empties in the Mediterranean Sea. The direction in which the Nile flows had a huge significance on the Kingdoms of Egypt, as we will look at later.



Where did the Nile begin flowing from? Where does it start?

The Nile has two main sources, the White Nile and the Blue Nile.

The White Nile flows from Lake Victoria and the Blue Nile rushes down from the highlands of present-day Ethiopia. The two rivers meet in present day Sudan, right below Egypt. In Ancient times the northern region of Sudan was known as Nubia, or Kush. To reach Egypt and Kush, the Nile has to flow through the Sahara desert. This is a vast desert which spans most of North Africa. In Ancient times the Nile flowed through 6 **cataracts**, which are groups of rocky rapids. Now the Nile just flows through 2. These cataracts made it impossible for people to navigate or travel upstream along the Nile from Egypt.



Upper and Lower Egypt

Below the cataracts, the Nile flows through a narrow valley lined with cliffs. Remember that the Nile flows South to North so when we say “below” we really mean above or to the North. This area right above the rapids was called **Upper Egypt** because it is upstream of the Mediterranean Sea.

The area to the far North of Upper Egypt there is something called a **Delta**. A delta is an area where **sediment** is deposited by a river. Sediment is soil or minerals carried by water. Sediment consists of **silt**, which consists of fine mineral particles that can form fertile soil. The Nile River was full of silt and sediment, which it picked up from its sources in East Africa. The Nile flows to quickly through the cataracts and doesn’t slow down until it reaches the end of its journey. When this water slows, the silt has a chance

to slow down and settle. This area is very fertile and crops grow here. This area is known as **The Nile Delta** and **Lower Egypt**.



Deshret and Kemet, the Red and Black Lands

Ancient Egypt was occupied mostly by desert. Because of this they saw two different landscapes. The first was the vast red desert which was composed of the Sahara. They called this land ***deshret which means “red land”***. The second landscape was the black silt filled fertile soil along the banks of the Nile and all throughout the Nile Delta. They referred to this land as ***kemet which means “black land”***.

People usually talk about the Nile and the river being the lifeblood of Egyptian civilization. It is true that civilizations develop along rivers like the Nile, but we are going to look at how important the desert was to the development of this civilization. In the case of Egyptians, the desert played just a big of role as the Nile and it is important to understand this.

First, the desert provided a buffer zone between Egypt and its neighbors. The desert was uncontrollable and deadly. To get to Egypt one had to cross a vast wasteland with little to no water. Because of this conquering armies usually did not have the supplies or technology to trek across the desert to attack them allowing them a certain amount of stability. Also trading with Egypt was hard. Merchants found it very hard to get to Egypt with their goods and vice versa. Because of this Egypt found itself **geographically isolated**. This means that its surroundings isolated it from other cultures and influence.

Second, the desert provided a great wealth of raw materials. The Egyptians usually, only ventured into the desert, for raw material extraction and military campaigns. The Western desert was the driest and most desolate. But it had vast reserves of raw materials, which the Egyptians used for building vast public works, art, architecture, and wealth. In order to procure these raw materials the Egyptians found 5 oases. An oasis is a fertile spot in the desert where water is found. The five great oases in the Western Desert were large enough to support communities of people. Without these oases the Egyptians would have had to bring in water and food in order to support their work crews. The Egyptians controlled the Oases so they controlled all of the raw materials and trade in that area. This also allowed them to advance into surrounding areas on military ventures. Because they knew where the oases were, and they controlled those areas, their army could resupply to venture out further. Invading armies could only travel so far until they would need to resupply. Without precious water, invading troops would drop like flies and be too weak to put up any sort of fight.

The Black Land (Kemet)

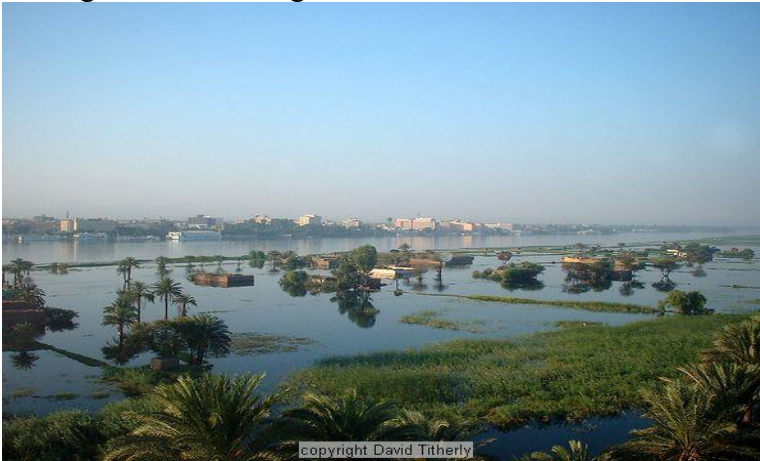
As mentioned earlier, the area right along the Nile River and in the Nile Delta was called the Black Land due to the mineral rich soil which was dark in appearance. These minerals were deposited when the Nile flooded every year. This happened every year right around the same time when East Africa was hit with heavy rains. This rain poured into the Nile through all of its sources causing it to swell in size and spill over its banks. These flood waters surged through Egypt and drained out into the Mediterranean Sea. When the waters subsided and drained away it left a fresh, mineral rich layer of top soil which was perfect for farming and vegetation. This whole process sounds perfect, but it was a highly volatile situation every year. If there was too much rain the flood waters could sweep away the soil and anything in the surrounding areas like farms and houses. If there was too little Egypt could suffer a drought, which could lead to famine due to the lack of crops growing.



The Green areas are where the flood waters reach.



Here is an old picture of the great pyramids and the surrounding land around it flooded. Notice that you can see that the vegetation grows in the areas which the water reaches leaving the surrounding area in a desert state.



Here is a photo of Luxor, another area in Egypt, which has been flooded by the Nile in modern times. Again, notice where the vegetation is growing in relation to flood zone.

The desert and the Nile both provided much needed key components to the development of Egyptian civilization. They both allowed Egypt to prosper yet protected and isolated them from the surrounding civilizations. Because of this they developed a very different culture which had very little influence from the outside world.

Civilization Develops

Civilization began about 7,000 years ago in what is now Egypt. People began growing grains in the fertile black soil left behind by the Nile floods. These early farmers became good at what they did and soon were able to grow surplus amounts of food. This food surplus led to an increase in population.

One of the things the Egyptian farmers did was they learned to build earthen walls around their fields to trap the flood waters in. This water soaked into the soil and allowed grains such as wheat to grow. This simple method led to great food surplus.

Powerful families began to take control over regions within Egypt. These families began to collect taxes, in the form of crops, from the farmers and their communities, providing protection for them. Besides protection they also used intimidation to control them.

Birth of Cities

These local ruling families began to develop wealth in the form of surplus grain. They used this surplus to trade for goods. This surplus of food allowed some people to leave the farming life and focus on creating goods to be sold. Some created the goods and others purchased the goods then sold them. The people who created goods and items were called **artisans**. People who purchase the goods from the artisans then sell them in shops were called **merchants**.

These small communities soon grew into community centers then cities, which attracted skilled professionals like architects and artists. This led to the formation of a complex culture.

The Kingdoms of Egypt

During the 3000's BC, two kingdoms developed in Egypt. Upper Egypt was located in the south and Lower Egypt was in the north.

The kings of Upper Egypt wore **White Crowns**. The kings of **Lower Egypt** wore red crowns.

How and when did the kingdoms unite?- It is believed that a ruler named **Narmer** united the two kingdoms in about 3000 BC. When he accomplished this he became the first **Pharaoh**. **A Pharaoh was an Egyptian king**. Narmer as a Pharaoh wore a double crown of red and white and founded the first Egyptian Dynasty. **A dynasty is a ruling family**.

Narmer

The King Narmer was thought to have united the two kingdoms of Egypt. It is thought that the family of Narmer came from the south of the country, in Hierakonpolis a center of ancient leaders, and one of the strongest predynastic regional states. There was

suppose to be a power struggle over land disputes located in Upper Egypt. It is thought that Narmer eventually was victorious and because of this, he was able to unite the Upper and Lower Kingdoms. Historians and Anthropologists believe this because of an artifact that they found at a dig site in Hierakonpolis. This artifact was called the Heirakonpolis palette.

Power and control was usually passed down between family members in the dynasty. However, new families would gain control from time to time starting a new wave of power controlled by a new dynasty. Egypt's history is so long and extensive that historians decided to divide Egypt's history into periods based on kingdoms and dynasties.

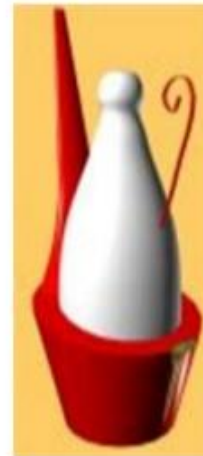
Narmer became the 1st pharaoh



**Lower
Egypt
Crown**



**Upper
Egypt
Crown**



**United
Egypt
Crown**

The Old, Middle, and New Kingdoms

Historians call the period from 2686-2125 BC, the **Old Kingdom**. The Old Kingdom was very prosperous and enjoyed a long period of peace, political stability, and cultural innovation and development. The old kingdom ended when a series of civil wars erupted.

After the civil wars ended the Middle Kingdom began. It lasted from 2055 BC to 1650 BC. The Pharaohs, during the Middle Kingdom, dealt with the environmental issue of the Nile flooding. They built a system of canals that could drain dangerous amount of flood water and irrigate new farmland.

The New Kingdom

The New kingdom followed more civil wars and outside invasions. The New Kingdom lasted from about 1550 BC to 1070 BC. The New Kingdom Pharaohs conquered lands in Asia and Africa. The New Kingdom was the high point of ancient Egyptian power and prosperity. But all good things come to an end. The New Kingdom eventually weakened and broke apart. Egypt fell victim to and was eventually broken apart. One late dynasty regained power but it was only with the help of the Assyrians. Egypt was eventually conquered by the Persian Empire and the by Alexander the Great in 332 BC.

Egyptian Government

The Pharaohs did not rule all by themselves. They relied upon advisors who specialized in different fields. The government of Egypt was made up of a **bureaucracy**. This is a system of offices and officials that handle the business of government. The head of the Egyptian bureaucracy was an official called the **vizier**. The bureaucracy was in charge of collecting taxes from the farmers, and others, which was usually paid in the form of surplus crops. The bureaucracy took some of the surplus crops for themselves then distributed the rest to priests, the pharaoh, and the artisans and merchants who worked for the pharaoh. The way that the Egyptians set of their network of taxation became a model for future civilizations and is still even today.

Egyptian Society

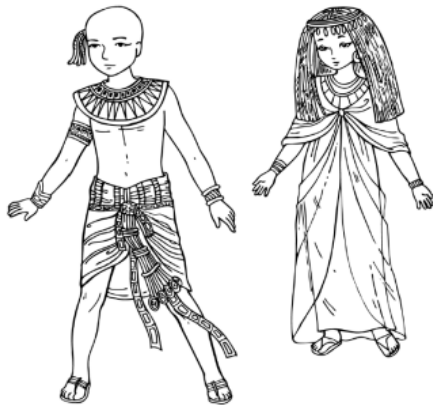
The belief that the Pharaoh was a living god, contributed to the Pharaoh's power and control. Because of this belief the people obeyed the Pharaoh, and his officials, out of fear they would anger the gods if they did not. Priests were very powerful because of this. The priests were thought to be a direct link to the gods that tended to the god's temples. Because of this people believed that the priests could help a person or family gain the favor of the gods. Of course if the priests were angry, they could also bring bad luck upon a person. This gave the priests a level of control over the people which was at times exploited. As with other cultures we have studied, religion was a key tool in controlling the people.

The Pharaohs relied upon the loyalty and labor of the people. Without both the empire would fall. Picture Egypt's society shaped like a pyramid. The pharaoh was at the top. The Egyptian people believed that the gods controlled everything, but the Pharaoh controlled Egypt. This led to the Egyptian people believing that the Pharaoh was a living god, or god-king, who deserved their loyalty. Below the Pharaoh, on the social pyramid, were the nobles, priests, and officials. All of these people helped the Pharaoh govern Egypt. Under them were the artisans and merchants. **This was considered the middle class**. The lowest class was made up of farmers, servants, and slaves. During the growing season the farmers grew Egypt's food. But in the off-season many worked as laborers on the pharaohs building projects. Most of the workers did so willingly as a form of religious devotion. They believed that if they helped the god king they would be rewarded after death for their efforts. Slaves were of course at the very bottom. They

were often prisoners of war or people who could not pay their debts. The debtors could work off what they owed and then be free after a certain period of time. The slaves were owned and were required to do forced labor. It is important to note that slaves were not common until Egypt began to venture on military campaigns where they began to bring home prisoners which were then sold and forced into labor.

Childhood and Family

As with any civilization, children played an important role since they were to be the future of the people. It was no different in Egypt. Young boys from the lower classes learned their trade by working with their fathers in the fields, workshops, or studios. Young girls apprenticed in the home at their mother's side learning how to cook, clean, and tend to younger siblings. As in modern times, the wealthier children had more advantages. These children were educated in local schools. The most common subjects taught to them were mathematics, geography, and languages.



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All children had a “coming of age ceremony”, but it is not known exactly what age this occurred. A coming of age ceremony celebrates an age, which the child passes into adulthood. It can be seen in Egyptian art when young boys, and girls, begin wearing a headband. Historians believe that when children begin wearing a headband it symbolizes that they are now considered adults. As in modern cultures, families probably threw a party or some sort of celebration to commemorate the occasion. It was after this ceremony that the children were considered able to be married. This age was much younger than our legal age of marriage now and probably occurred around the age of 12 or 13. When children reached this age, they were expected to marry. Marriages were considered more of a social than legal contract, and seem to have been arranged by families. There is **no** known recording of any type of marriage ceremonies in ancient Egypt. This does not mean that they didn’t happen, just that we have not found anything yet to support them. The main purpose of marriage was to gain children, but art does suggest that genuine affection occurred between the couples.

Gender and Careers

Gender played a major role in the Egyptian economy. Both men and women had certain jobs, which typically, they were responsible for doing. Men worked in the fields, tended herds and flocks, fished, hunted, and trapped. A woman’s role was essentially at home or helping with the harvest. In small farms or homes they were expected to take care of all of the household chores and raising the children. Families that lived on larger estates sometimes work alongside the men in the fields, or they made bread or beer.

The only craft that was practiced by women was weaving. The men ran the government and temples. Women could serve as priestesses in the service of the goddesses. Both men and women could be trained as musicians and dancers. The position of Pharaoh was reserved for men only, but there were several cases where a woman took control of the throne and assumed that role. This was usually when there was no surviving male heir or a boy was too young to assume the role. **The most influential role that a non-royal could have was that of the wet nurse for the Pharaoh’s children.** One interesting thing that showed up in ancient Egyptian art is that receding hairlines were only shown to have occurred in manual laborers.

Law

To this day archeologists have not found any Egyptian law code. Again, this not to say that they didn’t have one, just that it has not yet been found yet. The Egyptian laws were based upon the principle of **maat, which means “righteousness”**. The king and queen never involved themselves in local legal matters, **only those that were critical matters of state.** An example of this would be an assassination attempt against the king or when the royal tombs were plundered. Minor cases were handled by a local council of elders. Contracts and deeds were registered at government offices just like they are today here. These contracts and deeds were all logged and kept so that later disputes could be settled, simply by going to the local office and producing the original documents.

Punishments varied based upon the crime. For crimes against the state, penalties such as execution, or the cutting off of ears and noses were handed out. **For minor offenses, the penalties were usually in the form of restitution.** For example, if something was stolen or destroyed the punishment would be payment for the cost of the item, then an additional payment in the amount of 2 times the cost of the item. Sometimes, when the people had lost confidence in the government and their officials the elders would ask statues of Egyptian gods yes or no questions to determine the punishments for crimes.

Egyptian Religion

Religion played a key role in all aspects of Egyptian life. They believed that their gods controlled everything around them. When the Nile flooded it was because of the gods. If a child or loved one died it was because of the gods. Because of this, they felt it important to make sure that the gods were happy and pleased at all times. To help them do this they build temples and offered the gods prayers and gifts. Most Egyptian towns had one or more temples dedicated to their main god or gods. **These temples were built to symbolize cosmic creation.** Inside these temples were cult statues, which were highly prized and taken care of. The statues were fed, dressed, and adored by priests in daily ceremonies. When there were public festivals or processions, the statues were carried there to represent the gods being there in person. Temples had their own farmlands and workshops which grew food and created objects for the gods. The workers who tended to these sites were paid with the food that grew on the land or in items created in the workshops. **Temples were important to the local economy because they could own huge portions of land, vineyards, and herds of animals.** The temples, especially large ones, **employed large amounts of people from all walks of life.** It was **the job of the Pharaoh to redistribute wealth back to the temples helping them to expand and grow.** This in turn helped out the local economies by making sure that many people had jobs, which they earned payment, and was then spent around their cities and towns stimulating more wealth and growth.

The Many Gods of the Egyptians

The Egyptians were polytheists, or they worshipped multiple gods. In the case of the Egyptians they worshipped 100's of gods. Many of these gods were associated with animals. Egyptian art shows many depictions of their gods with a human body and a head of an animal on it. **Egyptians believed that gods shared the qualities of these animals such as their strengths, speed, or bad temper.**

Egyptian gods



One of the most important gods was **Amon-Re**. This was the sun gods. The Egyptians believed that Amon-Re made a daily journey across the sky. This journey ended at night when he was thought to die in the West as the land grew darker. Each morning he was believed to be reborn in the east as the sun rose, where he would begin his journey across the sky for that day.

Osiris was the god of the underworld, or the world of the dead. According to the Egyptian legends, Osiris was killed and chopped into pieces by a rival god named Seth, his brother. Isis, the wife of Osiris, was the mother goddess of Egypt. She moved heaven and earth to help her husband. **Isis found the pieces of Osiris's body and brought her husband back to life.** Isis represented love, caring, and protection. Egyptians looked to Isis for protection in both life and death.

Horus was the son of Isis and Osiris. Egyptian legends tell of great battles between Horus and Seth. When Horus finally defeated Seth, it was he believed that he united the two lands of Egypt. Because of this, **every pharaoh was thought to be Horus in human form.**



Other Egyptian Gods worth Mentioning

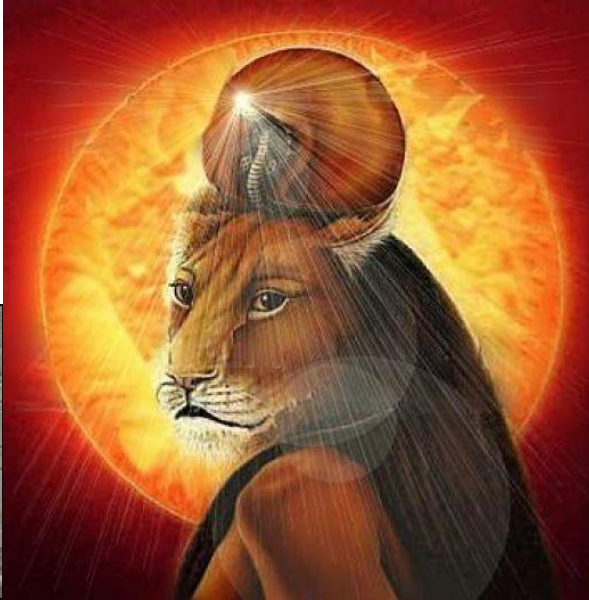
Annubis was the god of embalming and master of ceremonies. He has a head of a jackal.



Bastet was the goddess of protection and the household entertainment. She is thought to be the daughter of the sun god Ra. She had the head of a cat.



Sekmet was the goddess of war and battle. She had the head of a lioness.



Thoth was the god of wisdom, writing, and knowledge. He had a head of an ibis bird.



Sobek was the god of the Nile and swift action. He had a head of a crocodile.



Hathor was the goddess of love, joy, music, and dance. She had a head of a cow.

Seth or Set was the god of chaos, disorder, strange, the desert, and storms. He represents mystery and turmoil. He was **not** the god of the underworld and not always thought of as being bad. He too has an animal shaped head but it is not really known what type of animal it is. It has a long snout but also looks much like a jackal or dog. Some believe that Seth's head is that of an anteater or aardvark.



Preparing for the Afterlife

If Osiris could be resurrected in the afterlife why shouldn't the Egyptian people be allowed too? This is the question that is key to the unique burial rituals of the Egyptians, which a vast amount of their lives was spent preparing for. The Egyptians believed that they too could overcome death. How they lived their lives on Earth could lead to another life after death. This whole process could not be thrown together quickly and required a great deal of preparation. The first way to prepare for an afterlife was simply to live a good life. Egyptians believed that Osiris decided who would have an afterlife and he based his decision upon how a person acted during their first life. If a person behaved

well and obeyed the laws, and did not harm others, they would be allowed to live forever. If a person was sinful then they had wasted their attempt at life and should not be allowed to continue on. The afterlife was just for the Pharaoh, priests, and the wealthy at first. But it became open to all as the civilization progressed.

Mummification and the Weighing of the Heart

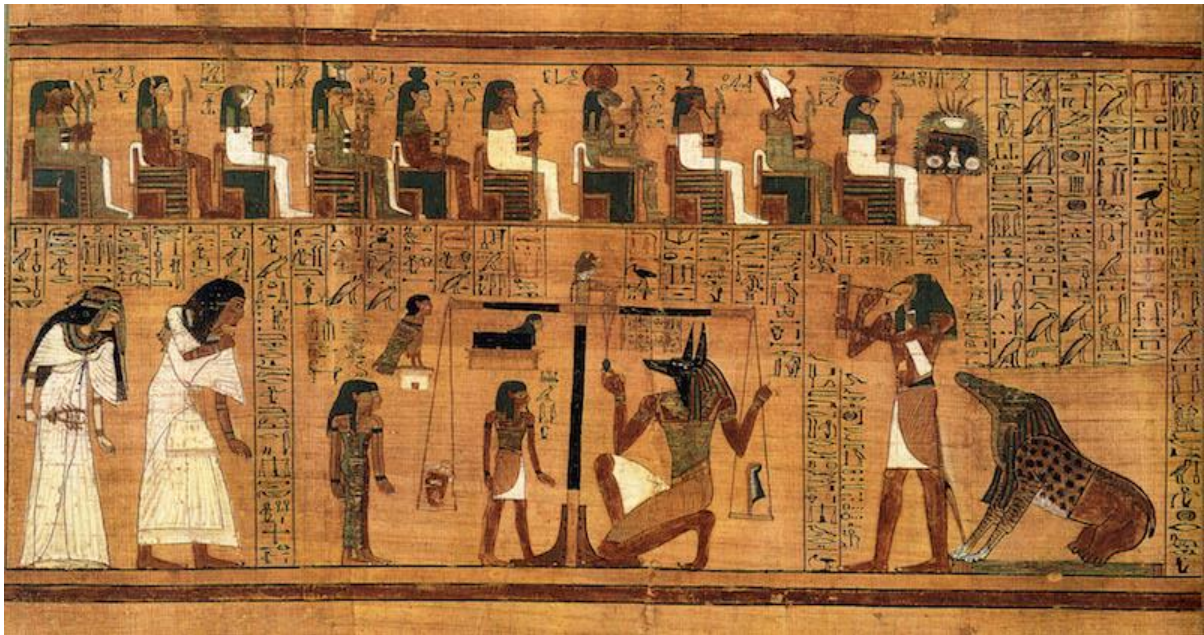
The mythology behind the weighing of the heart, otherwise known as the judgment of the dead, was introduced after the fall of the Old Kingdom. According to this myth, ordinary mortals could reach eternal life by living a moral life on Earth. The Egyptians believed that through this process righteous people could attain immortality after successfully passing the examination of the gods. This whole process was surrounded by the preparation of the body to be accepted. This is where the process of mummification arose. The Egyptians believed that they needed to preserve their bodies to have an afterlife. They felt that, after death, a person's spirit would need to recognize their body and use it as a home. This is why Egyptians went to such great lengths to preserve the bodies of the dead. The whole process was very expensive and at first was only available to the wealthy. Later the process became more affordable. The poor would bury their bodies in the desert where the heat and dry air would dry their bodies out preserving them. The wealthy had their bodies made into mummies and buried in tombs, filled with the possessions that they would need in the afterlife. The Egyptians believed that they actually could take their gold and riches with them. The process of mummification was one of ancient Egypt's greatest achievements. It is from the mummies that scientists have learned much about life and death in ancient Egypt.



The whole process of the deceased passing into the afterlife could be aided with the use of magic spells. The whole process and spells were outlined in the **Egyptian Book of the Dead**. This book outlines the step-by-step process to ensure a person is allowed into the afterlife. Not only did it reveal the proper mummification process, but it also lists all of the spells, which needed to be chanted, and the timeline of when they needed to be used. The Book of the Dead gave the soul of a person an extra edge as they crossed over and stood before the gods proclaiming their innocence of sin.

After the deceased has been mummified, and ceremonies and spells performed, the soul of the Egyptian starts a journey to prove the morality of his soul and the decisions that they made during their life on Earth. The person must first face off against a group of gods with menacing names like “Bone-Crusher” and “Blood-Consumer”. Here the person declares himself innocent of wrong-doings towards the gods and his fellow men. All of these declarations are based upon what was accepted as ethical behavior in Egyptian society. These ethics are very similar to what we consider ethical today, and all throughout history in most cultures. The person would repeat over and over, “I am pure, I am pure, I am pure.....”. After this process was completed the person would move onto the next stage, which involved the weighing of the person’s heart.

The next stage starts off with **Anubis**, god of the dead and master of ceremonies, leading the deceased by his hand to the scales in the hall of **Ma’at**. This scene is often depicted in Egyptian art and shows Anubis holding the *ankh*, the symbol of life, in his left hand. The giant scales are topped by **Ma’at**, goddess of justice, truth, and order. She is often depicted as wearing a feather on her head.

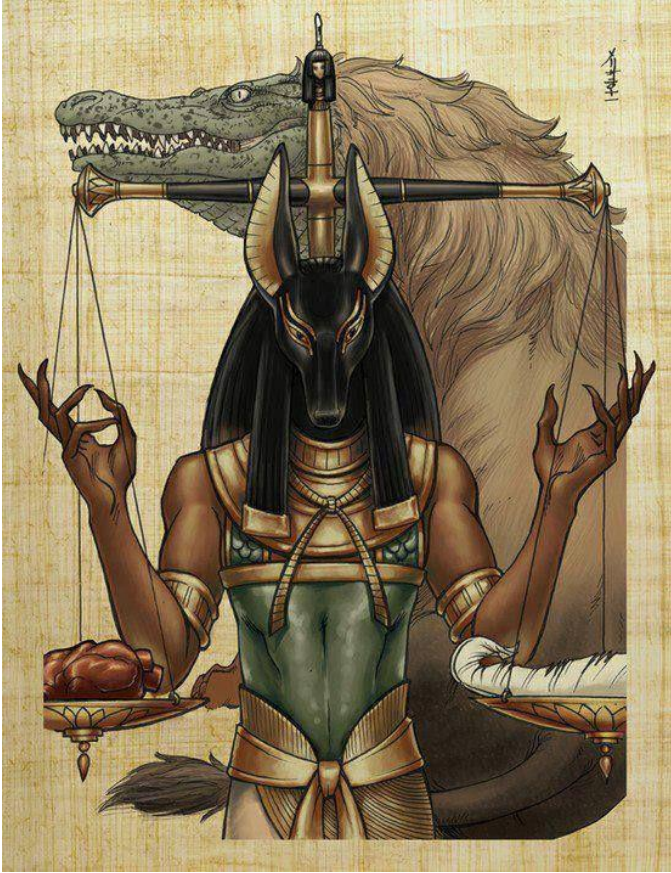


Next to the scales awaits a giant beast, who is said to be crouching on the shores of a lake of fire. This beast was named **Ammut**. Ammut was a **female monster** and is known as the Devourer of the Dead, Soul Eater, or Eater of Hearts. She is said to have had a head of a crocodile, the body of a leopard or lion, and the backside of a hippopotamus. She sits waiting to devour the heart and soul of the person if they do not pass the final test.



The final test is carried out by Anubis. When Anubis and the person reach the scales, the jar containing the heart of the person is placed upon the scales. The test is to see if the heart weighs lighter than Ma'at's feather of truth. If a person has not lived a moral blameless life his/her heart will give them away by being heavier than the feather. It is then that Ammut will devour the person's soul condemning them. If the person passes the test they will be permitted to enter the blissful afterlife and claiming all of their earthly possessions. It is safe to say that the whole earthly existence to many Egyptians was making sure they were not torn apart and eaten by a crocodile headed monster and plunged into the lake of fire.





Writing and Literature

The ancient Egyptians developed one of the world's first systems of writing. This system preserved one of the world's oldest records and works of literature. It is because of this writing system that we know as much as we do about the Egyptian's ancient lifestyle. This system of writing was called **hieroglyphics**. By 3200 BCE Egyptians had developed early systems of writing. This happened around the same time that Sumerians were developing their own system of writing. Historians are not actually sure who developed their writing systems first. It also is not know if one culture borrowed the idea from another or if both came up with the idea separately.

Whatever the case may be, Egyptian writing is very different from Sumerian Cuneiform. Instead of wedges they used glyphs called **hieroglyphics**. A hieroglyphic is a drawing or symbol that represents a word or a sound. Most ancient Egyptians could not read or write despite what many believe. Because of this, scribes, or officials that knew how to write were highly valued in Egyptian society. With their writing, Egyptians could share their knowledge and preserve it for future generations. It was because of writing that the complex Egyptian civilization with its highly advanced technology survived.

The Egyptians wrote on something called **papyrus**, which was different from the clay tablets used by the Sumerians. Papyrus was a material, very similar to paper, made from papyrus reed, which grew in abundance along the Nile's coast. Our modern English word "paper" comes from the word "papyrus". On this paper scribes wrote with ink, this was a lot easier than the clay tablets used by the Sumerians, and way more portable. Papyrus sheets could also survive for a very long time in the dry Egyptian climate. Many documents still survive today. Egyptian wall paintings give us a good idea of how they lived but the written records recorded on papyrus really let historians see into what was going on in their lives on a day to day basis.

Egyptian literature included teachings, stories, poems, religious texts, and histories. This literature is found written on papyrus, on the side of monuments, and painted on the coffins of the dead. One example of their literature is the **Book of the Dead**.

Architecture and Art

As we know, Egyptians created temples to honor their gods and tombs for their Pharaohs. The temple complex at Karnak contains the ruins of the World's largest temples. These structures were built using massive blocks of stone, which had been mined in the desert. Egyptians used these large stones to create elaborate monuments, which still exist today. The most famous being the Great Pyramids.

The Pyramids

The early rulers of Egypt were buried underground in chambers of rooms. These burial chambers contained everything they would need for their life in the afterlife. This was the original way the Pharaohs were buried. Today when people say pharaoh it is automatically associated with pyramids. These great structures are the result of years and years of architectural evolution starting with one man named **Imhotep**. Imhotep was an architect who came up with a new creative idea for a unique tomb for his pharaoh. He used six stone mounds, one on top of another. The result of this is what is known as a step pyramid. Later architects added to his design and made the sides smoother to create a true pyramid.

The Most famous pyramids are the Great Pyramids at Giza. They were constructed during the Old Kingdom for the great king Khufu, his son Khafre, and his grandson Menkaure. The largest of these is the Great pyramid of Khufu. This structure stood as the world's tallest building for almost 4000 years. Nearby is the famous statue of the Sphinx which stands guard in front of road to Khafre's pyramid. When these were built they were the largest structures on earth. They stand as proof to the Egyptians mastery of mathematics and advanced building techniques.

On another level, the pyramids also stand as proof over the pharaoh's ability to control the people. These massive work projects used thousands of laborers to cut and place the stones. These types of projects would not be possible if there was not

some sort of advanced civil order in place. For a long time I was thought that the pyramids had been built by slaves, but new evidence suggests that most of the workers were not slaves but may have volunteered. The great age of pyramid building ended around 2200BCE. Later pharaohs continued to build large-scale monuments but they were created in the form of large cliff carvings and tombs. All of these massive works stand as a testament to the Egyptians belief and devotion to their gods.