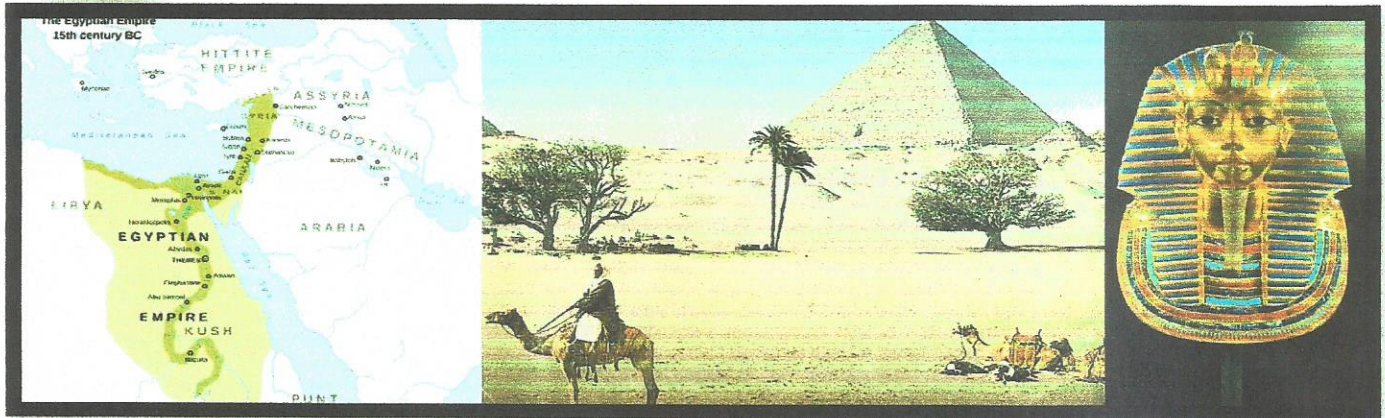




Part 2 HISTORICAL SNAPSHOT

ANCIENT EGYPT CLOSE READING INVESTIGATION



THE BEGINNING OF EGYPT

House of the Spirit of Ptah is what Egypt literally means. The Greeks called ancient Egypt Aegyptos (A-jip-tahs) which was how they pronounced the Egyptian word that meant "House of the Spirit of Ptah." So one could say that Egypt was named after one of their first gods. The ancient world called Egypt "Black Land," or Kemet, because of the rich, fertile silt deposited by the Nile River's flooding every year during Spring. The Nile runs north for 4,160 miles and empties into the Mediterranean Sea. However, from about 8000 BCE, Egyptians called their country Misr (country) that is the name still used today.

Egypt was well known in the ancient world as a cultural center for all walks of life from religion to science, and from the arts to engineering and agriculture. Artifacts and land conditions of the Sahara Desert are evidence that from the earliest times, this country was a prosperous, agricultural civilization. Around 6000 BCE, nomads (hunter-gatherers rather than settled people) began to settle along the banks of the Nile. However, the written history of the land doesn't begin until approximately 3400 BCE.

SPECIALTIES SHAPE GOVERNMENTS

The Nile River is the longest river in the world. This 4,160 miles long river stretches from one end of Egypt to the other, was a good water source, and flooded every year leaving very fertile soil for agriculture.

There are several eras (periods of years) that mark ancient Egypt. The first is from 2181 BCE-2040 BCE, known as the *Intermediate Period* when the central government's power declined so that two centers of government appeared, one in *Upper Egypt* (Thebes) and one in *Lower Egypt* (Hierakonpolis). The two governments fought over who would be master over the country until the Thebeian Dynasty gained ultimate control in 2055 BCE.

The unified government allowed the arts and culture of Egypt to flourish, and this became the *Classical Age*. Yet, uncontrolled flooding of the Nile River caused famine in the land, and that combined with outrageous spending and many building projects weakened the government at Thebes allowing the mysterious **Hyksos** (foreign rulers) to take over. Hardly anything is known about their origin.

WIDE SPREAD INNOVATION

The Hyksos kings' ushered in numerous innovations such as crop rotations, using horses, chariots, composite bow, ceramics, and developing bronze works. Even with these new ideas, the Hyksos resisted trading with surrounding nations, and this kind of isolation led to economic stagnation (slow growth).

Hatshepsut was Egypt's first and longest ruling woman pharaoh. Her name means "foremost of the royal ladies." She reigned for 20 years in the 14th century BCE. Considered one of the most successful of all the pharaohs, she maintained much needed stability in Egypt so it could grow. She opened up

trading by extending Egypt's borders and sending ambassadors to other countries, and this built great wealth for Egypt.

When her stepson became pharaoh, he tried to erase all mention of her name because the thought of the day was that only men were worthy to rule. However, the prosperity begun by Hatshepsut allowed for more leisure time and innovations, such as advances in beer brewing and sports. Doctors made advances in surgery and dentistry, with beer being prescribed for more than 200 diseases and infirmities. Advances in medicine and better hygiene led to healthier people. More elaborate baths were constructed, allowing bathing to become part of the Egyptians daily hygiene practices.

Inventions by the Egyptians include papyrus (a thick paper made from the papyrus plant), black ink, and ink of vibrant colors that remained vibrant even today. Calendars were developed around 3000 BCE using a 12-month year. They based their year on the rising of the star Sirius. Clocks such as sundials and water clocks are attributed to the ancient Egyptians. The water clock was a bowl filled with water with a pinhole in it, placed in a large bowl of water. As a certain number of hours passed the bowl would fill up.

Engineering and construction gave rise to some inventions still used today. The ramp and the lever were invented to help them build the huge pyramids. They gained great knowledge in aerodynamics (how air and water flow around objects) in order to build ships for trading.

They used their knowledge of animal husbandry and metal working to invent the first ox-pulled plow, and used goats to run across the scattered seed in the fields. Crop rotations kept the land fertile so their crops were more fruitful.

Egyptians are credited with inventing the first toothbrushes and toothpaste. They also invented the first breath mints made from essential oils (myrrh, frankincense, and cinnamon) boiled in honey then rolled into small balls easily melting in the mouth.

The art of the Egyptians is well known around the world. First, it includes cosmetics that both men and women used. It not only enhanced their facial

features, but it also protected their skin from the sun. The black kohl worn around their eyes could be the world's first sunshades, protecting eyes from the sun's glare.

Perhaps the best-known pharaoh is Ramses the Great. Ramses II had a huge powerful army of 100,000 men. Very few nations had an army with more than a few thousand.

During his reign, sea pirates, murderous thieves, attacked the heavily loaded ships of Egypt bound for other countries to trade. Ramses II defeated these pirates so trade could flourish.

He lived to be 96 years old reigning from 1279-1213 BCE. When he died, he left 200 wives and concubines, 96 sons, and 60 daughters. Almost every ancient site makes mention of his name, some calling him the Great Ancestor.

SHIFTS IN SPIRITUAL FOCUS

Egypt worshiped many different gods. Many Egyptians believed these gods controlled nature. Hapi controlled floods, Ra controlled the sun, Osiris controlled life after death, and Horus, the sky god, controlled the weather. Egyptians believed each pharaoh was a living god who would rule forever.

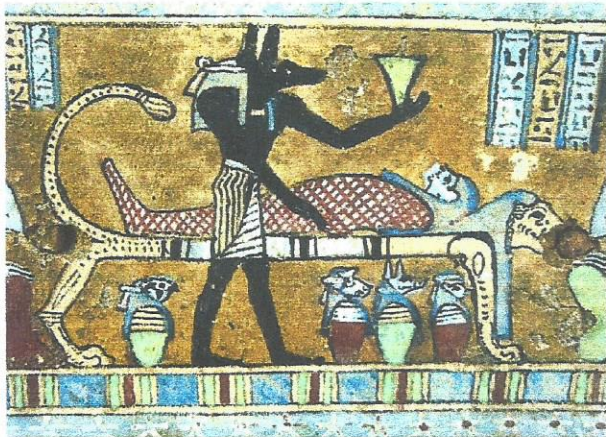
But in 1353 BCE, pharaoh Amenhotep IV came into power. He and his wife Nefertiti believed in just one god, Aten. Amenhotep changed his name to Akhenaten, which means "living spirit of Aten."

The most popular deities (gods) had huge numbers of followers making the priests of these gods very rich and influential. These gods ruled almost every aspect of Egyptian daily living. When Akhenaten and Nefertiti insisted everyone worship Aten, it reduced the power and influence of the other priests to almost nothing. This increased the power of the government. Unfortunately, his letters, called the Amarna Letters, show that this pharaoh's interest lay in religious reformation and not in his country's necessities, his people's needs, or in foreign policies.

Akhenaten was the first pharaoh to build tributes to his queen with statues and a temple. He moved the capital from Thebes to Amarna.

ANCIENT EGYPT

A MUMMY ANALYSIS!



THE LINK BETWEEN RELIGION AND LEADERSHIP

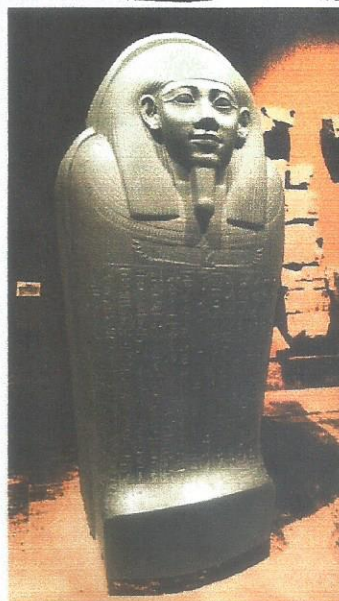
Ancient Egypt was a highly agricultural culture, with over 95% of the population living and working in farming communities. The remaining population were mostly leaders, living in cities. Due to the importance of farming, Egyptian Gods were created from the perceived need to sway nature's elements, such as the flooding water of the Nile, the sun, and the sky. The Egyptians believed that there was an afterlife when they left this one. By mummifying their bodies and being buried with their possessions, they could have a good afterlife.

In order to maintain their power, Egyptian pharaohs, or kings, claimed to be demi-gods, (decedents of gods), or living gods themselves. They had pyramids built to house their wealth and placed the mummified body in a **sarcophagus** (a stone coffin, typically adorned with a sculpture or inscription) until they entered the afterlife. Often, they had slaves, pets, and even wives killed, mummified, and sent to the afterlife with them.

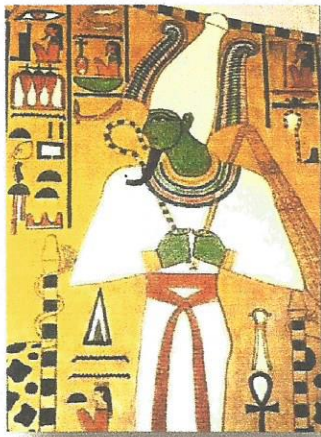
THE MUMMIFICATION PROCESS

The mummification process was considered a deeply spiritual one to ancient Egyptians. Once a person died, a chief embalmer would be responsible for mummifying the body so that it was recognizable when it reached the afterlife. Often a priest, the chief embalmer would wear a jackal mask of the God of the dead, Anubis (the God of the Dead was sometimes called Osiris). The embalmer would start by using a long hook similar to the staff the God of the Dead. It is often depicted with a hook-like tool to remove the brain from the body.

Next, a surgeon would make a long cut along the left side of the body and remove the organs so they could dry. Later, the lungs, intestines, stomach and liver were placed in jars to



One of the most popular sarcophagi is the one above for Horkhebit, Chief Priest of all Egypt, 595–589 BCE.



Osiris depicted above

accompany the body to the afterlife. The heart was the only organ that was placed back in the body.

Using special spices and wine, the body was washed and blessed by priests.

The body was then rubbed and packed with salt for 40 days. Then, sand or linens were used to stuff the body so its shape looks normal again.

Once the salt did its job, the body was wrapped in layers of linens and then placed in a special coffin called a sarcophagus.

WHAT'S ON THE SARCOPHAGUS?

Perhaps the most important part of mummification, especially for the wealthiest Egyptian nobles, was the beauty and significance of their sarcophagus. These elaborate stone, gold, or silver coffins were each very unique.

Symbols or religious scripture were often sculpted into the stone of the sarcophagus as a means to protect the dead on their journey to the afterlife and a way to remember their loved ones and favorite things back in the material world.

In addition to the sculpted symbols, brightly colored and beautiful paintings were added to the sarcophagus. These could include battles between gods, pictures of nature such as trees and the Nile and other mythological creatures. Often eyes were painted so the dead could see out their coffin on their journey. Egyptians believed the paintings would come to life in the afterlife to help the deceased. Usually their faces or heads would be sculpted or painted to make

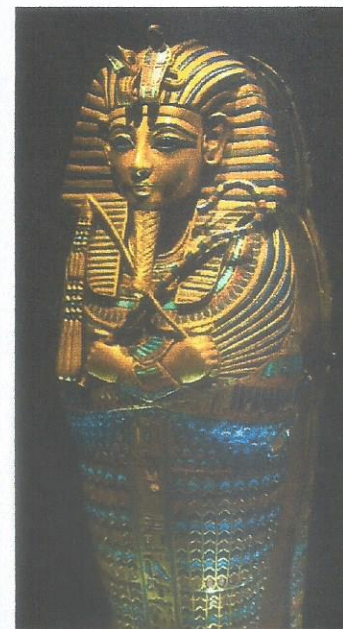
sure the God of the Dead would recognize them when they arrived to the afterlife.

Pharaohs also had a sort of kingly seal, which included a special mark he used, his signature, and some hieroglyphs about his accomplishments in this life.

Some Egyptians could nest several sarcophaguses inside each other with the body in the smallest, inner-most coffin. In this case, the outer sarcophagus would be considered a family possession, and would be removed from one person and used for another as needed. The outer one would have the history of the family or stories about the most prominent of the family's ancestors placed in hieroglyphs or painted on it by scenes.

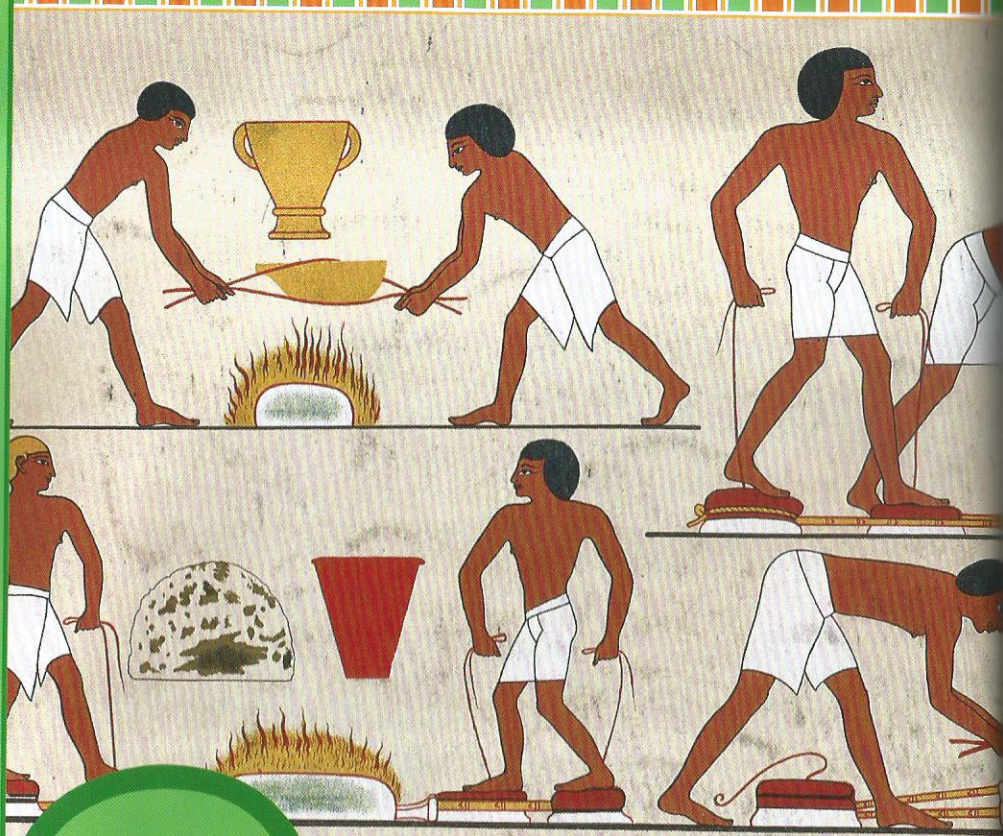
DID YOU KNOW?

- ◆ Egyptians used tree resin or sap to make the linen strips stick together and stay in place.
- ◆ According to Egyptian mythology, the first mummy was Osiris, the God of the Dead.
- ◆ King "Tut" Tutankhamen was a real Pharaoh, and one of the most well preserved mummies of ancient Egypt. He was mummified circa 1570-1095 BCE. Below is one of his sarcophagi.



Odd Jobs

Wacky Ways Some Egyptians EARNED A LIVING



**THE DAILY
WAGE FOR
THE AVERAGE
EGYPTIAN
EMPLOYEE
INCLUDED
10 LOAVES
OF BREAD.**

WORKING FOR IT

Sure, there were lots of rich people like pharaohs and nobles living the golden life in ancient Egypt. But most of the civilization consisted of a middle class who held steady jobs. Back then, the jobs were a bit different than what we see today. First off, instead of a five-day week, people would work nine days in a row with just one day off in between. And they wouldn't make actual money, since coins and other forms of currency didn't enter the picture until the Persians invaded Egypt around 500 B.C. Instead, they'd get paid in goods like grain, linen, and oil. Many workers also earned benefits like paid sick days and free doctor's visits. Not too shabby!

You Do What?

So what did people do all day? Most of the career force was made up of normal gigs, like soldiers, farmers, and craftsmen. A small percentage of people worked as scribes, and other educated Egyptians went on to top jobs like viziers, priests, and architects, who designed palaces, temples, and tombs. But there were other ways to make a living. Here's a rundown of some of the weirder jobs of ancient Egypt.

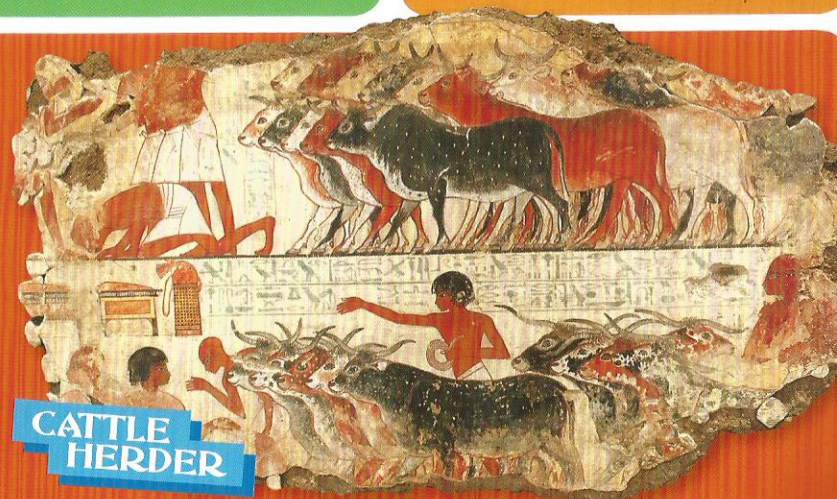
SCORPION CHARMER



DAILY DUTIES: Use magical powers to chase off the venomous desert dwellers. Occasionally, tag along on mining expeditions to treat stings and bites that may occur underground.

CARPENTER

DAILY DUTIES: Transform planks of wood into a bunch of different tools and weapons, including drills and saws, and make arrows out of reeds tipped with ivory or bone. Also craft furniture for the pharaohs from time to time.

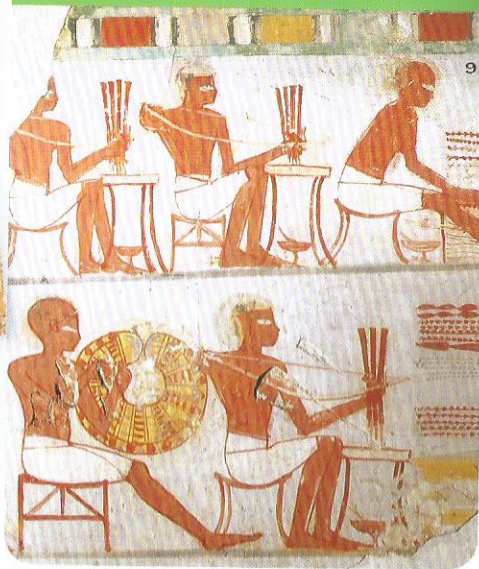


CATTLE HERDER

DAILY DUTIES: Nanny for a nobleman's prized cattle collection. Sleep beside them, take them for long walks to graze, and feed them boiled dough to fatten them up.

METALWORKER

DAILY DUTIES: Work with a fiery furnace to melt down copper, gold, and silver and pour the molten metals into molds to create sturdy weapons and jewelry.



BUTCHER

DAILY DUTIES: Cut cattle and oxen meat and sell it to Egypt's upper class (many large estates in ancient Egypt included a butcher shop).

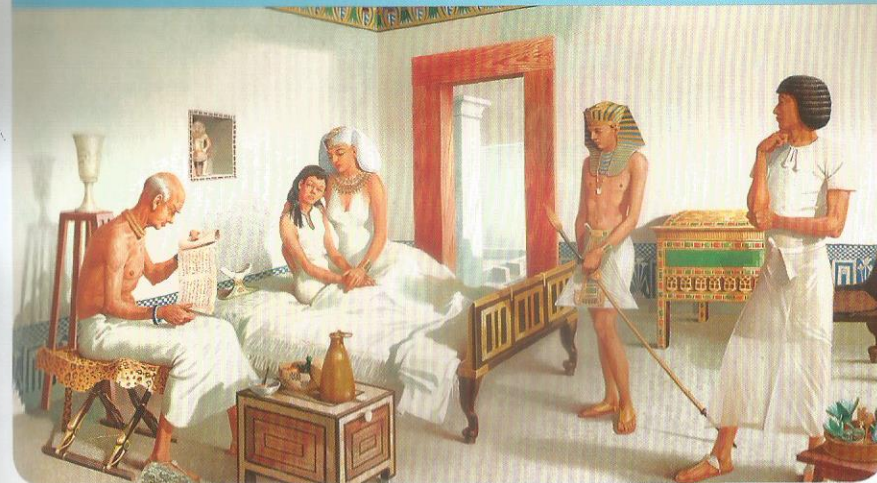


FISHERMAN

DAILY DUTIES: Sail the Nile to catch fish using nets and harpoons, and sometimes by tying fishing line to a finger and reeling them in that way. Occasionally, "water jousting" with rival fishing boats trying to overtake territory, using large poles to try to knock the competing fishermen into the Nile.

DOCTOR

DAILY DUTIES: Take care of patients' ailments and injuries in a bunch of unusual ways, like spreading animal poop on wounds to help them heal faster (turn to page 156 for more bizarre medical treatments of the time).



POLICE OFFICER

DAILY DUTIES: Keep the peace on the streets by guarding public places like markets, temples, and parks. Protect yourself with a shield and sharp arrows, and train dogs and monkeys to help you fight crime.

DIG IT
Ancient Egypt
formed the world
police force.



MANUAL LABORER

DAILY DUTIES: Hoist heavy rocks, lay bricks, mix mortar, and do other odd jobs that contribute to the construction of tombs and temples—sometimes completely naked if it gets too hot in the desert sun.

