



TREASURES OF ANCIENT  
**EGYPT**  
THE QUEST FOR IMMORTALITY

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into Relationships

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## RESOURCE PACKET INTRODUCTION



PYRAMIDION OF AMENHOTEP-HUY, Nineteenth Dynasty, reign of Ramesses II, 1279-1213 BCE; grandiorite. The Egyptian Museum, Cairo.

This resource packet is provided to support the exhibition, *The Quest for Immortality: Treasures of Ancient Egypt*, presented by NCR Corporation, on view at The Dayton Art Institute, September 1, 2005-January 3, 2006.

The packet includes general background information about ancient Egypt, the culture, the people, and their religious beliefs. It is intended for teachers of all grade levels but requires adaptation for specific learning levels.

In addition, the packet focuses on six specific works providing information about the objects and suggesting activities that relate directly to math, language arts,

science, social studies, and fine arts. Words in bold print are defined in the glossary at the end of this section. You will also find a bibliography that includes resources for teachers and students. We hope that this packet will assist you in preparing your students for their visit to the exhibition.

You may also want to visit *Inside Egypt*, an exciting new addition to the *Experienter*, The Dayton Art Institute's interactive gallery. Through hands-on activities, students will learn about the building of the Great Pyramids at Giza, write coded messages in hieroglyphs, and make drawings like the ancient Egyptians. A tactile diagram of a cross-section

view of the Great Pyramid, accompanied by an audio description and braille text, will assist blind visitors and those with low vision. In addition, several activities will make direct connections to ancient Egyptian objects from the museum's permanent collection. *Inside Egypt* is on view May 21, 2005 through April, 2006. The *Experienter* is open every day and is free to the public.

*Inside Egypt* is sponsored by George and Pam Houk, The Iams Company, Iddings Foundation, Levin Family Foundation, Reynolds & Reynolds Company Foundation, and the Frank M. Tait Foundation



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COFFIN OF ISIS-EM-AKHBIT, Twenty-first Dynasty, reign of Psusennes II, 959-945 BCE; painted wood, gold. The Egyptian Museum, Cairo.



## ABOUT THE EXHIBITION

*The Quest for Immortality: Treasures of Ancient Egypt*, presented by NCR Corporation, represents the largest collection of ancient artifacts to ever travel outside Egypt. It consists of more than one hundred objects specifically chosen to illustrate the afterlife beliefs of the ancient Egyptians, a culture that existed more than 3500 years ago.

The objects—sculpture, jewelry and numerous funerary artifacts—reflect the Egyptian burial rituals, religious beliefs about gods and goddesses, concepts of the afterlife, and the pursuit of immortality. Much of the exhibition dates to the New Kingdom period (c.1569-1081 BCE) and the life of a particular pharaoh, Thutmose III. However, objects dating through the Late Period (c.724-333 BCE) are also included.

Throughout ancient Egypt's long history, its complex civilization flourished and many things remained fairly constant, such as the use of **hieroglyphs** and the rigid rules that dictated artistic styles. Yet there were some changes, such as the architectural design of the tombs of pharaohs. When people think of ancient Egypt, the pyramids come to mind first. The rise of the pyramid age, occurring during the “youth” of this civilization, is a period that is not focused on in this exhibition.

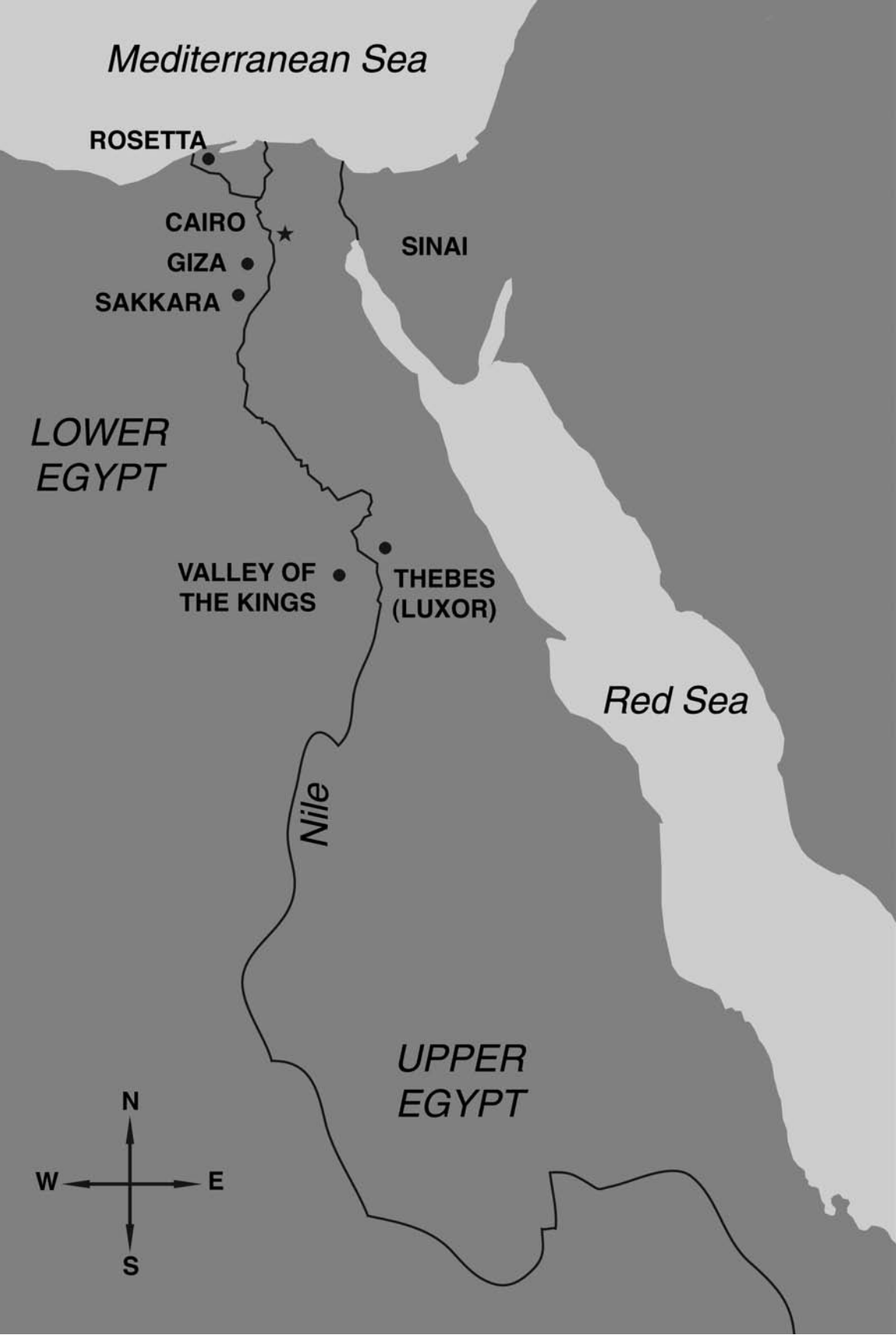
Most of the objects in this collection were created a thousand years after the pyramids. By this time the use of pyramids had been abandoned for a new and different style of funerary architecture—tombs that were carved into the limestone cliffs across from Thebes on the west bank of the Nile River.

Highlighted in this exhibition is a very important, though perhaps less well known pharaoh, Thutmose III. Thutmose III was the sixth pharaoh of the Eighteenth Dynasty in the New Kingdom, an eventful period in Egyptian history. Fourteen pharaohs fall under the Eighteenth Dynasty, some of whom have very familiar names: Akhenaten, Hatshepsut, and of course, Tutankhamun, better known as King Tut. An exhibition highlight is the full-scale reconstruction of Thutmose III's burial chamber. Inside, visitors can view the earliest known complete painting of the *Amduat*, the great text describing the sun god's journey through the **underworld**.

This exhibition provides an opportunity for our visitors to learn about the many facets of Egyptian funerary rites, religious beliefs, and the quest for eternal life. The ancient Egyptians viewed the afterlife as a place to pass into where an individual's spirit would continue to live on. It was viewed as an extension of this world. Therefore, processes such as mummification and supplies of food and objects used in daily life were important in this passage. Although most of these objects were made to be placed in the tomb of the deceased and must now be viewed out of their original context, these ancient objects give us a glimpse into an ancient civilization's quest for the eternal.



SPHINX OF THUTMOSE III, Eighteenth Dynasty, 1479-1425 BCE; granodiorite. The Egyptian Museum, Cairo.





## FACTS ABOUT ANCIENT EGYPT

♀ Egypt is located in Northern Africa, bordering the Middle East and the Mediterranean Sea.

♀ The Nile, the longest river in the world, divides the length of Egypt. Beginning at its source in central Africa, the Nile River winds northward for over 4,000 miles to the Mediterranean Sea.

♀ Miles of desert protected Egypt over the centuries from invaders, allowing the ancient Egyptian civilization to develop isolated artistic traditions, as well as advanced political, religious and agricultural systems.

♀ Egyptian culture was primarily agricultural relying on the annual flooding of the Nile River that brought fresh water and fertilized silt to renew the soil for crops. Agricultural themes emerge repeatedly in Egyptian art.

♀ Although located in southern Egypt, the area is referred to as **Upper Egypt** because of its high elevation. **Lower Egypt** is in the north and includes the low floodplains of the Nile.

♀ Ancient Egyptian society was organized as a hierarchy, with the pharaoh at the top and farmers and laborers at the bottom.

♀ The earliest Egyptian writing system consisted of picture symbols called **hieroglyphs**.

♀ Egypt's rulers were believed to be divine kings, sons of the solar god Re. The term "**pharaoh**" means "great house" and was first used by the New Kingdom ruler, Thutmose III.

♀ Thirty-one **dynasties** of pharaohs ruled for over 2500 years in Egypt.

♀ The ancient Egyptians believed in polytheism, the worship of many gods. Different gods and goddesses, including those representing the sun and the Nile River, played a role in explaining natural occurrences.

♀ Ancient Egyptians believed that after death, they could be reborn into a new life in the **underworld** ruled by the god Osiris.

♀ Funerary texts helped the deceased achieve immortality. The **Amduat** ("that which is in the netherworld") was a text reserved for royalty which traced the twelve-hour journey through the underworld.

♀ In preparation for the afterlife, pharaohs built elaborate tombs for themselves. In the Old Kingdom, the pharaohs built pyramids to house their remains. Later, tombs were carved into the sides of cliffs. One famous area now referred to as the **Valley of the Kings** is located on the west bank of the Nile across from Thebes.

♀ **Mummification** was the first step taken to prepare for immortality. Occurring over a seventy day period, mummification was a process for preserving the body. Important internal organs, the lungs, liver, stomach, and intestines were removed, dried in salts, and placed in **canopic jars**. The body was also dried with salts and wrapped in multiple layers of fine linen. Bodies were often adorned with jewelry, protective **amulets** (small magical charms) and funerary masks before being placed in decorated coffins.



FOUR CANOPIC JARS OF PRINCE HORNAKHT (detail of Jackal), Twenty-first Dynasty, reign of Osorkon II, 874-850 BCE; alabaster. The Egyptian Museum, Cairo.



## EGYPTIAN SOCIETY

### The Class System

Ancient Egyptian society was arranged as a hierarchy, with people grouped according to status and ability. The **pharaoh**, believed to have been appointed by the gods, had the power to communicate with the gods in order to oversee and maintain the natural order and harmony of the Egyptian world. As a member of this top tier of society, the pharaoh was the chief authority over all human endeavors and was responsible for the well-being of every Egyptian. He or she collected taxes, organized labor and maintained law and order. The second hierarchical tier consisted of the nobles, government officials and priests. Also important to society were **scribes**, scholars and artisans. Most Egyptians were at the bottom level of society, working as farmers and laborers who split their time between tending crops and building temples or mortuary complexes for the pharaoh.



PENDANT IN THE FORM OF A HATHORIC HEAD, Twenty-first Dynasty, reign of Osorkon II, 874-850 BCE; gold and lapis lazuli. The Egyptian Museum, Cairo.

### Egyptian Life

Egyptians lived in a remarkably stable environment. Wealthy Egyptians lived a pleasant life, with servants and an abundance of leisure time. Traveling was a popular activity for the wealthy, but only inside Egypt. The people viewed areas outside of Egypt as unappealing and did not like foreign clothes or habits. Most of the population was poor and worked hard, often as farmers, with little hope of doing better in the future. This was not thought of as unjust. It was an accepted belief that some people were born to work, while others were born to positions of authority. Although ancient Egyptian history spanned over 3000 years, lives of ordinary people changed little. They believed in the rules of society and saw no reason for change.

### The Importance of the Nile River

Stretching over 4000 miles, the Nile River was the single most important natural element in the development of ancient Egyptian civilization. Towns, situated high above its banks, overlooked the lush, green fields supported by the river and the surrounding deserts that formed a protective barrier from invaders. A major transportation route and habitat for many species of fish and animals, the Nile flooded every year, depositing new layers of fertile

soil for the next season's crops. Mainly an agricultural society, Egyptians grew corn, wheat, barley, and vegetables, including onions, lettuce, cucumbers, peas, and beans. In addition, they devised canals and irrigation ditches to extend water use. Even the Egyptian calendar was based on the seasons determined by the Nile.

### The Endurance of a Civilization

Beginning about 3100 BCE, thirty-one **dynasties** controlled Egypt, guided by a succession of kings called pharaohs. Each dynasty was known by its royal house or ruling family and was distinguished by political events, wars, or artistic and technological advances. When one family lost power and another group took control, a new dynasty began. Long periods of stability were known as kingdoms: the Old Kingdom (c.2687-2191 BCE), the Middle Kingdom (c.2061-1665 BCE) and the New Kingdom (c.1569-1081 BCE). Times of unrest and instability were known as the Intermediate Periods.



## The Religious Beliefs

Egyptian religion was polytheistic and permeated almost every aspect of life. Hundreds of Egyptian gods and goddesses have been identified, each having a distinct personality and purpose. Myths told about the gods' origins and their exploits often explained puzzling natural changes, such as night into day and life into death. Many gods were identified with animals and the strengths associated with them. Ancient Egyptians believed that after death they would enter a world much like the one that they knew, only better. Careful preparations had to be made to ensure happiness in the afterlife. Egyptian religious beliefs and perceptions of what awaited them in the afterlife relied heavily on the conditions of their daily lives. Their culture was permeated by the idea of the cycles of life: the cycle of the sun, the cycle of the Nile River and its annual flooding, and the cycle of birth, death and the afterlife.

The Egyptians also believed that each person's soul had different parts. One part was the *ba*, or the individual personality. This spirit had the head of a human but the body of a bird. At night it was able to fly from the burial tomb and visit home or other places that were important to it in life. Because the *ba* needed food, pictures of meals were often painted on tomb walls or replicas of food were left in the tomb. Priests or relatives of the deceased would bring food offerings to the tomb as well.

Another part of the spirit was the *ka*, the life force that lived in every person. When someone died, the *ka* separated from the body but went on living. The *ka* looked exactly like the deceased when he or she was alive. A statue of the dead person was usually placed in the tomb in order to guide the *ka* back to its body. Like the *ba*, the *ka* also needed food placed in the tomb.



SARCOPHAGUS OF KHONSU, Nineteenth Dynasty, 1295-1186 BCE; stuccoed, painted, and varnished wood. The Egyptian Museum, Cairo.

## The Afterlife and Immortality

Ancient Egyptians envisioned the underworld as a physical place where life would continue as before, but flaws of the body would be healed, crops would grow taller, disease would not exist. All Egyptians hoped to reach this ideal realm, but because their place was not guaranteed, their quest for immortality thus inspired elaborate preparations for the afterlife. Believing that the soul could not survive without its body, they practiced **mummification** and further shielded the body from physical decay with coffins and **sarcophagi**. Images of deities, **amulets** and sacred texts were buried with the deceased to provide them with the needed protection during their journey to the underworld. Tombs were furnished with practical goods to ensure a comfortable life in the beyond.



## GODS AND GODDESSES

Ancient Egyptians believed that their gods inhabited every part of the natural world. Their comprehension of life and the afterlife was intimately linked to and guided by the many gods and goddesses they worshiped. In this complex family of gods and goddesses, some have multiple names, many have legends associated with them, and some take on multiple forms. Some were regional or served various elements of one concept, such as Kephri, the rising sun, and Atum, the setting sun—both aspects of the sun god Re. Although they were visualized in human or animal form, or as animal-headed humans, the Egyptians did not worship the images themselves, but rather the force or power they associated with them.

It was the pharaoh's duty to build temples and to ensure that offerings were made to the gods housed within them. In return the gods would bestow blessings on the people, such as victory in battle, bountiful harvests and recovery from sickness. In his role as king, the **pharaoh** was believed to have been appointed by the gods and he derived his power from them, forming a link between the gods and the world of humankind. However, he was to some extent a servant of the gods. It was the high priests, who acted on behalf of the ruler in the great state temples erected throughout the country, who played a vital role in the structure of Egyptian civilization.

With regard to the afterlife, Egyptians were careful to equip their dead with detailed instructions for safe passage through the perils of the **underworld** (netherworld), a journey that was required in order to achieve immortality. Sacred objects were also placed in the tombs, including images of protective deities that were first dedicated in temples. Those gods and goddesses that were connected to the netherworld, regeneration and the solar cycle of rebirth took precedence.

**Re** – A major god in the Egyptian world, the sun god, Re, formed the link between earthly life and eternal life. When darkness fell and the day ended, Egyptians believed that the sun god descended into the underworld, bringing light to the place inhabited by the dead. He caused the dead to awake. When Re left the underworld at dawn to bring light to the earth, the dead went back to sleep until he returned.

**Atum** – A personification of Re, Atum is pictured as a human being but is identified with the setting sun and the change of light into darkness.

**Khepri** – Another manifestation of Re, Khepri was represented by a **scarab** beetle and signified the rising aspect of the sun and rebirth.



STATUE OF OSIRIS, Twenty-sixth Dynasty, reign of Psamtik I, 664-610 BCE; graywacke. The Egyptian Museum, Cairo.

**Osiris** – One of the most popular and well-known gods, Osiris was the absolute ruler of the underworld and presided over the travels of the sun and of the deceased during the twelve hours of the night. With Re, the primary god of the sun and creator of the universe, he judged the soul of the deceased by weighing their heart against a feather, known as the **feather of Maat**, to determine if he or she merited admittance to the afterlife. Usually represented as a mummified man sitting on a throne, Osiris wore either the crown of Upper Egypt or an **atef-crown**, a tall white crown with a plume on each side and a small disk at the top. Sometimes he was shown holding the **crook and flail**, symbols of royal authority. The king identified himself with Osiris.



**Isis** – The sister and wife of Osiris, Isis had strong associations with regeneration, birth and magical protection. Because she healed Osiris with magic after he was torn apart and killed by his brother, it was believed she could ease the passage to the afterlife and that she could aid in the purification and mummification of the dead. Seen as a beautiful young woman with a crown of cow horns and sometimes a sun disk, she shared characteristics with Hathor – both were patronesses of fertility and deities of the sky.



STATUE OF ISIS, Twenty-sixth Dynasty, 664-524 BCE; graywacke. The Egyptian Museum, Cairo.

**Horus** – This falcon god, the son of Osiris and Isis, reigned as god of the sky and served as the embodiment and protector of the king. He watched over and guided souls through the underworld. His symbol was the **wedjat** (Eye of Horus), representing the triumph of good over evil.

**Sakhmet** – Strong and sometimes vengeful, the lioness goddess Sakhmet was a fierce protector of the sun god. The goddess of war, she could determine people’s luck, protect their health, and ensure annual flooding of the Nile.

**Thoth** – The moon god, Thoth, was responsible for writing and knowledge. Sometimes he was shown as an **ibis** or ibis-headed human, or sometimes as a baboon, a symbol of wisdom. The ability to write was a sacred and magical act, and Thoth guarded the sacred **hieroglyphs** and protected **scribes**. He was scribe of the gods, recording the verdict of Osiris when weighing the hearts of the dead.

**Maat** – The personification of truth and justice, Maat was represented as a goddess but was more of an abstract idea. Maat means “things as they ought to be” and was considered to be the order of the universe. Represented with a feather on her head, she appears in the weighing of the heart ceremony when the heart of the deceased is weighed against a feather.

**Hathor** – This sky goddess, traced back to very ancient times, was associated with the stars and known as one of Re’s children. The wife of Horus, her name means “Temple of Horus.” She was consistently represented as a cow or as a human with cow ears or horns. She was concerned with nourishment and child-rearing and was strongly associated with love, regeneration, song, and dance.

**Anubis** – Most often seen as either a jackal-headed god in human form or a seated black jackal, Anubis was frequently depicted as the embalmer, who tends to the mummy on its bed. He is associated with the Opening of the Mouth Ceremony (for details see page 14 “Mummification”) and the judgment of the dead.

**Nut** – Goddess of the sky, Nut often appears as a female figure bent over with her feet and hands touching the ground, her body arrayed with stars, and sometimes she is shown as a young woman with a pair of large wings. At night, this sky goddess swallows the sun and carries it within her into the underworld. Twelve hours later she gives birth to the sun in the east and the sun is reborn as a new day begins.



## HIEROGLYPHS

The ancient Egyptian system of writing, one of the oldest written languages in the world, was developed late in the fourth millennium **BCE**, with the earliest inscriptions composed before the First Dynasty began, about 3100 BCE. Different types of writing were used for different purposes throughout Egyptian history, but the picture writing known as **hieroglyphs** (Greek for “sacred engraving”) that was carved on monuments was intended to survive the ages.

The act of writing was perceived to be magical by the ancient Egyptians. They believed that the god Thoth invented writing, so they called hieroglyphs “the god’s words.” Only a small proportion of the population was able to read or write, perhaps as little as four percent, with priests and high officials among the most literate. **Scribes** specifically were revered by **pharaohs** because of their ability to read and write hieroglyphs. Funerary objects were covered in hieroglyphic prayers, spells and dedications. Offerings for the deceased were often written descriptions rather than physical items. Writing “loaf of bread” on an offering was as good as leaving the real item. Hieroglyphs were painted or carved and there were several hundred signs in regular use.

Hieroglyphs generally combined characters representing sounds with picture symbols that depicted entire words or ideas. Inscriptions were generally written from right



ROSETTA STONE.










to left, but sometimes they were written from left to right or even from top to bottom. You could tell which direction to read by looking at the picture symbols that had faces. If the face looked to the left, you began reading from the left. The name of a pharaoh was always enclosed in an oval ring called a **cartouche**. The individual picture symbols, or hieroglyphs, were drawings of nearly everything the Egyptians saw and used in daily life.










After the decline of the ancient Egyptian civilization, the ability to read hieroglyphs was lost. The language remained indecipherable until 1799 when a group of soldiers in Napoleon’s invading army discovered a large stone fragment while digging the foundations for an addition to a fort near the town of el-Rashid









(Rosetta). This fragment, now known as the **Rosetta Stone**, was inscribed three times with the same decree, first in hieroglyphs (Egyptian picture symbols), once in demotic (an Egyptian script used for daily purposes), and once in Greek (the administrative language used in Egypt in the third century BCE).

The French scholar of ancient oriental languages, Jean-François Champollion, revealed the final secret in deciphering hieroglyphs when he realized that the picture symbols recorded the sound of the Egyptian words, not the letters that make up the words. By 1822, Champollion had deciphered the entire text of the Rosetta Stone, which was a decree affirming the royal cult of the 13-year-old Ptolemy V on the first anniversary of his coronation.

Although the French discovered the Rosetta Stone, after Napoleon’s defeat the stone became the property of the English under the terms of the Treaty of Alexandria (1801). It has been exhibited in the British Museum since 1802.

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## EGYPTIAN TOMBS

For the ancient Egyptians, death meant the beginning of a new state of existence. Specific preparations were necessary since all that was required and desired in this life would play a role in the afterlife. Consequently, real or model versions of important objects and food were provided for the deceased in their tombs. In addition, it was necessary that the body of the deceased be preserved or mummified so that the *ka* could reunite with the body. The *ka* was that aspect of the soul that represented the life force within a person and was represented pictorially as a person's double.

During the New Kingdom, the kings' burial chambers were carved into the limestone cliffs across from Thebes, on the west bank of the Nile, in the land of the setting sun. Although most tombs in the **Valley of the Kings** (the main royal cemetery) were plundered by ancient grave robbers, archaeologists have discovered royal tombs with elaborate ensembles of funerary materials. Many of these items were crafted from gold – the “flesh of the gods” – understood as a symbol of eternity because its luminous surface did not tarnish or chip. The body of the deceased, preserved through **mummification**, was further protected by mummy masks, finger and toe covers, and finally by a series of coffins.

In addition to the physical protection of the body, the Egyptian royals were provided with divine protection and basic provisions. Images of deities, **amulets** and jewelry, often inscribed with funerary texts, were buried with the king and members of his family. These objects were thought to provide magical power that facilitated rebirth. Royal tombs were also equipped with practical accessories, such as clothing, cosmetics and furniture, because the afterlife was considered a real, physical realm in which everyday items were necessary. These useful objects were decorated with religious scenes, texts and symbols that invested the deceased with magical powers.

Egyptian nobles also carved their tombs in the hillsides west of Thebes, near the Valley of the Kings. Their tombs were filled

with expensive burial goods, including coffins, **sarcophagi**, magical figurines, beaded clothing, furniture, and even food offerings, – demonstrating that the nobles adhered to the same funerary beliefs as the king.

While Egyptian commoners also believed in these rituals, they could not afford such elaborate furnishings. In recent years, cemeteries containing tombs of the people who worked on the elaborate burial sites of the pharaohs have been unearthed by archaeologists. Built from odds and ends of different types of building materials, inscriptions have been found indicating who was buried in the tombs, although these bodies were never mummified.



MUMMY ON BIER, Reigns of Thutmose IV-Amenhotep III, c. 1400-1352 BCE; granodiorite. The Egyptian Museum, Cairo.



## MUMMIFICATION

Egyptians believed that everyone's spirit had two aspects, the *ba*, or soul, and the *ka*, an invisible twin of the person. When a person died the *ba* and *ka* were released from the body and lived on in the tomb. The *ba* could fly out of the tomb and maintain contact with living family members of the deceased. The *ka* traveled back and forth from the body to the underworld. In order to achieve immortality and become an effective reborn spirit (*akh*) in the afterlife, the *ba* and the *ka* had to be able to recognize the body or they could not return to it. That is why the body needed to be preserved or mummified. (Before 3000 BCE, the dead were buried in simple pits in the desert sands, which dried the bodies and naturally preserved them. Once customs became more elaborate with the use of coffins and tomb chambers, bodies had to be preserved chemically.)

Chemical **mummification** came into use by the Egyptians around 2500 BCE, first for royalty and then for anyone who could afford it. This same method continued to be used for almost 3000 years. To preserve the body, an incision was made in the left flank of the body and four major organs were removed: the lungs, liver, stomach, and intestines. These were placed in individual **canopic jars** that were buried in the tomb. The brain was removed through the nose and discarded, but the heart was left in place, as it was thought to be the seat of intelligence. The corpse was then filled with linen-wrapped



TOE STALLS WITH RINGS, Twenty-first Dynasty, reign of Psusennes I, 1039-991 BCE; gold. The Egyptian Museum, Cairo.

bundles of **natron**, a salt found in Egypt. The outside was covered with natron as well for a period of 40 days during which time the natron absorbed any moisture contained in the body. After this phase the body was cleaned and rubbed with aromatic oils, spices and resin (a sticky substance secreted by plants). The head and body were packed with linen and other materials to fill out its shrunken appearance. The arms were crossed and the mummy's fingernails and toenails were covered with caps of gold. The embalming cut was sewn together and the body was adorned with jewelry or protective amulets before it was wrapped in long narrow strips of linen. Magical **amulets** were often placed between the layers of wrapping. After twenty layers, the mummy began to take on its original body size. The linen bandages were often collected during a person's lifetime and could include household bed sheets and clothing.

A layer of fine linen purchased especially for the mummy completed the wrappings. The bound head was then covered with a portrait mask so that the *ba* and *ka* would still be able to recognize it in case something happened to the mummy. The whole package was then wrapped in a shroud and given one last coat of resin before being placed in a nest of coffins.

The entire mummification process took 70 days, after which a long, solemn funeral procession carried the mummy and burial equipment to the tomb. An "opening of the mouth" ritual was performed by priests at this time. The mummy's mouth was not actually opened, but physical abilities, such as speaking and eating, needed for its new life in the next world were magically restored to the deceased. The mummy was then put into the stone **sarcophagus** and a heavy lid placed on top with the canopic jars standing nearby. The mourners left and the tomb entrance was sealed.



## THUTMOSE III

The Eighteenth Dynasty marks the beginning of the New Kingdom period in ancient Egyptian history with the reassertion of Egyptian power and the building of an empire. Thutmose III was the fifth ruler in a line of young and famous rulers during this dynasty that included Hatshepsut, one of the few women pharaohs and Tutankhamun, the boy king known as King Tut.

Thutmose III (ruled c.1479-1425 BCE) was very young when his father, Thutmose II, died. After the pharaoh's death, Hatshepsut, his wife and half-sister, assumed power, first as regent for the young Thutmose III, and then as pharaoh. However, by about 1482 BCE, Thutmose III became the sole ruler.

As pharaoh of Egypt, Thutmose III devoted himself to the expansion of the empire through numerous successful military offensives, leading campaigns into Canaan, Phoenicia and Syria in the Middle East. To the south, he expanded Egypt's hold over the wealth of Nubia and Kush.

Thutmose set up an efficient administration, both civil and military, and assessed large yearly tributes from the defeated kings and chiefs of conquered lands. This allowed Thutmose to construct temples, **obelisks** and monuments at numerous sites throughout his empire, including



a Festival Temple at Karnak. After nearly 50 years as ruler of Egypt, Thutmose III died.

The impact of Thutmose III on Egyptian culture was profound. He was a national hero who was worshiped long after his death. His reverence for his ancestors and his care for his people was acknowledged by the Egyptians, as demonstrated in the cult that grew up around him and the many monuments that were built in his memory. Several of the objects seen in *The Quest for Immortality: Treasures of Ancient Egypt*, presented by NCR Corporation, were produced during the reign of Thutmose III. An exact replica of the interior walls of his burial chamber is also a part of the exhibition. On the walls you will see the *Amduat* text, the story of the pharaoh's journey through the **underworld**.

THUTMOSE III, Eighteenth Dynasty, 1550-1069 BCE; wood. The Egyptian Museum, Cairo.



## THE JOURNEY TO THE AFTERLIFE

During the time of the New Kingdom (c.1550-1069 BCE) there was a resurgence of religious activity that resulted in the development of numerous funerary texts designed to assist the deceased in attaining immortality. The *Amduat*, a text that was reserved for royalty, describes the deceased king's union with Re, the sun god who descends on a solar boat into the dangerous realm of the **underworld** where he brings eternal life to the dead. Guided by magical knowledge and assisted by numerous gods, the king travels through the underworld on a twelve-hour journey, at the end of which he is reborn as the sun god and meets the day. In some cases the *Amduat* was written on **papyrus** scrolls, but in the case of Thutmose III, the entire book is painted on the walls of his tomb.

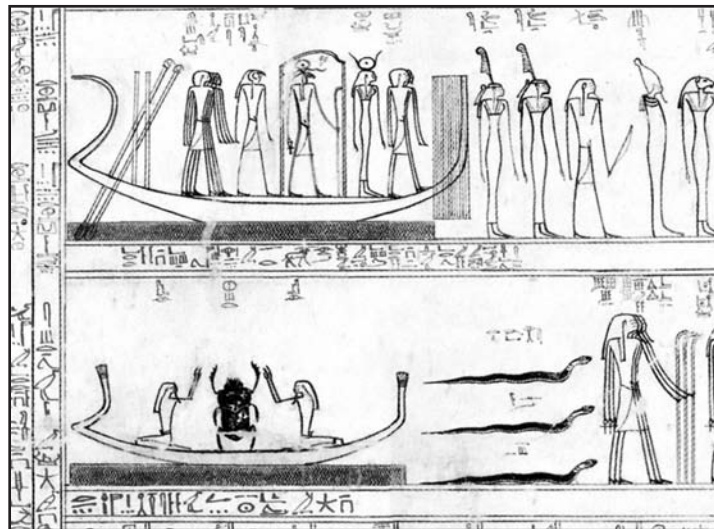
In each hour, the text and illustrations form a unit starting with an introduction in vertical columns. Then each hour is divided into three horizontal bars, called registers. Generally, the middle register shows the solar boat, a key component in the *Amduat*. The text that tells the story of the *Amduat* is read from top to bottom. In addition to the illustrated long version of the text, there is also a short version included that represents a summary of the book.

The following is a synopsis of the twelve-hour journey described in the images and text on the tomb walls of Thutmose III. This tomb with its *Amduat* text is recreated in its entirety as part of the exhibition. When you walk through the tomb and study the walls you will notice that the

hours are not illustrated in consecutive order. That's because the story begins in the west where the sun sets and ends in the east with the sunrise. Ideally, hours 1-4 are on the west wall, 5 and 6 on the south, 7 and 8 on the north, and 9-12 on the east wall. However, because of the orientation of Thutmose's tomb, some of the registers had to be rearranged and the prescribed order was not followed exactly.

### Hour 1

The life of Thutmose III has ended. The day ends and he is greeted by the sun god Re who appears in his nocturnal form with the head of a ram. Re invites the **pharaoh** to join him on his boat along with other gods and goddesses. There is another boat containing a **scarab** beetle representing the sun god's form in the morning and pointing to the ultimate purpose of this journey, the renewed life of the king after death.

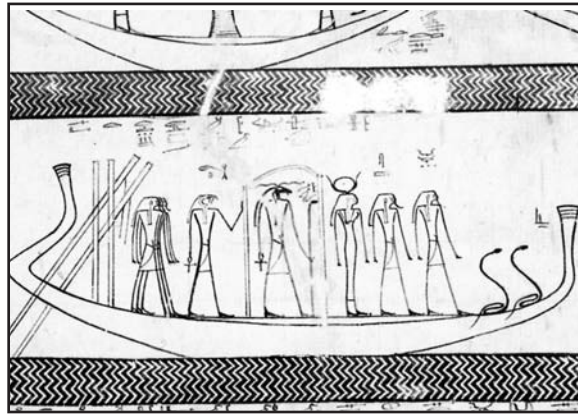


The first hour of the *Amduat* in the tomb of Thutmose III, detail. Eighteenth Dynasty, 1479-1425 BCE; painted plaster. Valley of the Kings tomb no. KV 34.



### Hour 2

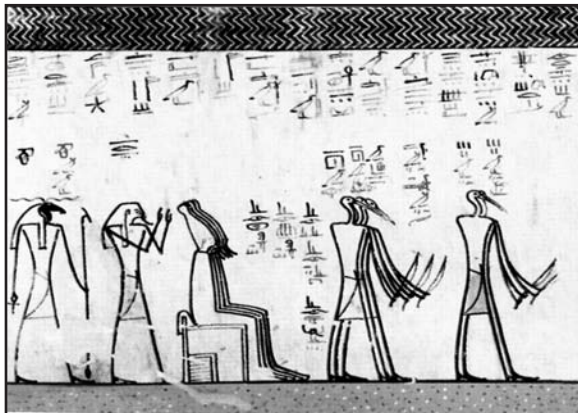
The boat is guided along a zigzag pattern that probably represents an underworld Nile River. The guide is the sun god's daughter, Hathor. Thutmose III and Re see the abundant and well-watered wheat fields of Osiris along the riverbanks.



The second hour of the Amduat in the tomb of Thutmose III, detail. Eighteenth Dynasty, 1479-1425 BCE; painted plaster. Valley of the Kings tomb no. KV 34.

### Hour 3

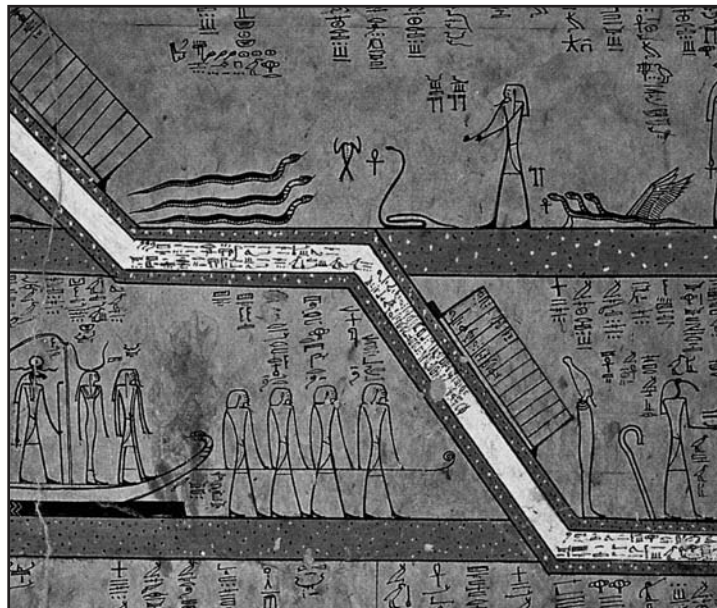
Thutmose, Re and Hathor meet Osiris, the god who rules the underworld. Surrounding Osiris are several bird-headed gods with knives in their hands, ready to protect Thutmose and Re from all enemies.



The third hour of the Amduat in the tomb of Thutmose III, detail. Eighteenth Dynasty, 1479-1425 BCE; painted plaster. Valley of the Kings tomb no. KV 34.

### Hour 4

Suddenly the journey becomes dangerous. The travelers have reached the land of Sokar, a falcon-headed god of the underworld and an aspect of Osiris. The land is populated by monster snakes, some with several heads or with legs and wings. Complete darkness surrounds them, a zigzag path blocks their way, and the river dries up. Four figures tow the boat across the desert, but magically the boat turns itself into a double-headed serpent whose fiery breath pierces the darkness and they are transported safely across the sands.

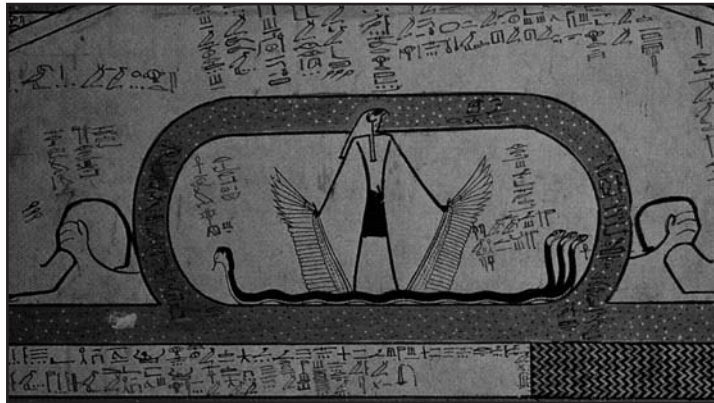


The zigzag path in the fourth hour of the Amduat in the tomb of Thutmose III, detail. Eighteenth Dynasty, 1479-1425 BCE; painted plaster. Valley of the Kings tomb no. KV 34.



### Hour 5

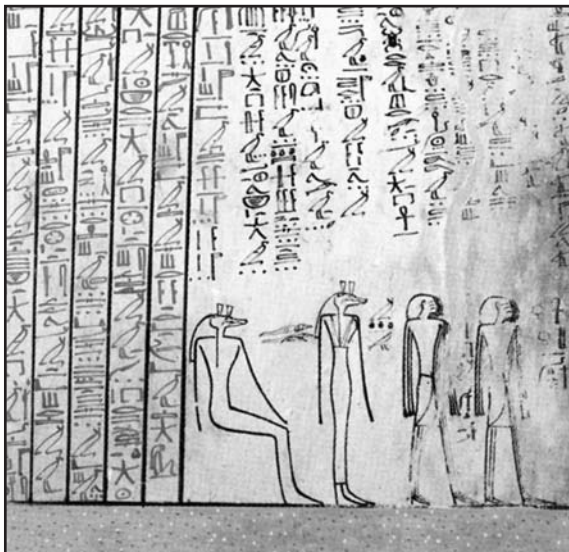
The travelers continue through the land of Sokar with several figures joining in the effort of pulling the solar boat safely through a dangerous narrow pass. Eventually they reach the secret cave of Sokar which is guarded by a two-headed sphinx. Sokar grasps the wings of a multi-headed serpent representing the sun god Re and the two are united in the underworld.



The fifth hour of the Amduat in the tomb of Thutmose III, detail. Eighteenth Dynasty, 1479-1425 BCE; painted plaster. Valley of the Kings tomb no. KV 34.

### Hour 6

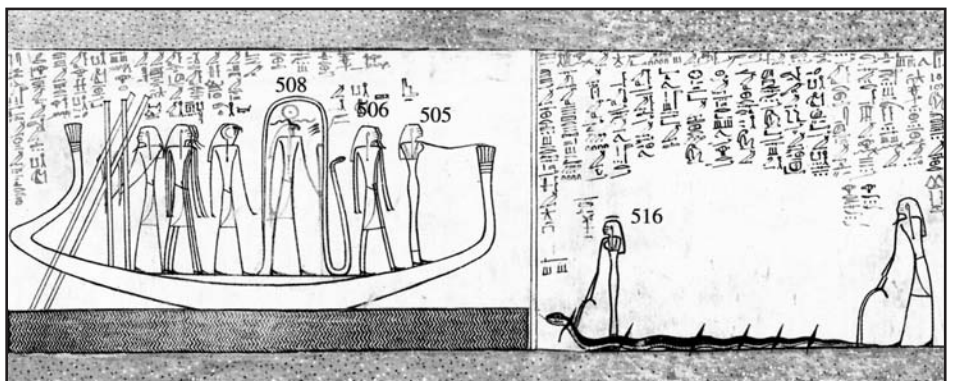
As midnight approaches, the journey continues into the darkest parts of the underworld. The travelers find themselves in a place dominated by the presence of Sobek, the crocodile god, and Nun, the god who represents the world before creation, out of which the sun god emerged at the beginning of time and is now renewed again. Also, in this place a five-headed snake protects the corpse of Re's earth body.



The sixth hour of the Amduat in the tomb of Thutmose III, detail. Eighteenth Dynasty, 1479-1425 BCE; painted plaster. Valley of the Kings tomb no. KV 34.

### Hour 7

At this point, the sun god Re meets his archenemy, a magical snake called Apophis. It was Apophis who swallowed the river that had carried the sun boat. But the goddess Isis comes to rescue them. She stands in front of the boat, raises her arms and hurls strong spells, destroying the snake's power while other gods decapitate more of Re's enemies.



The seventh hour of the Amduat in the tomb of Thutmose III, detail. Eighteenth Dynasty, 1479-1425 BCE; painted plaster. Valley of the Kings tomb no. KV 34.



### Hour 8

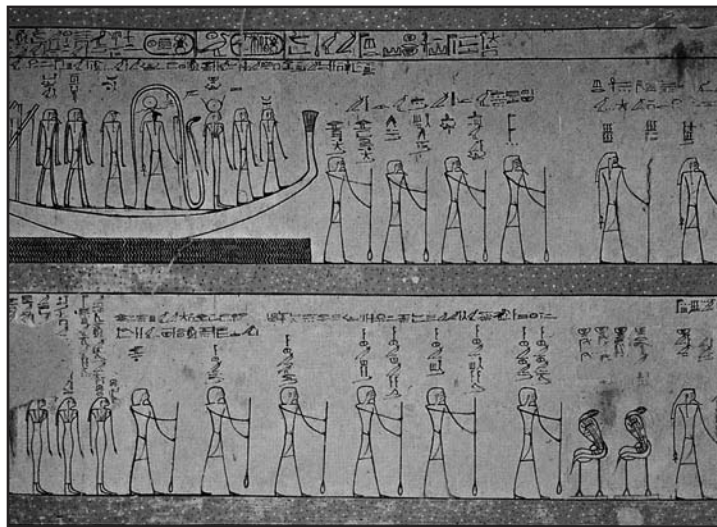
The worst is now over, but the solar boat continues to be towed, this time by eight gods (according to the number of the hour). Almost all the figures represented in this hour are enthroned on the **hieroglyph** for “cloth.” New clothes are part of the general renewal of well-being, another feature of rebirth.



The eighth hour of the Amduat in the tomb of Thutmose III, detail. Eighteenth Dynasty, 1479-1425 BCE; painted plaster. Valley of the Kings tomb no. KV 34.

### Hour 9

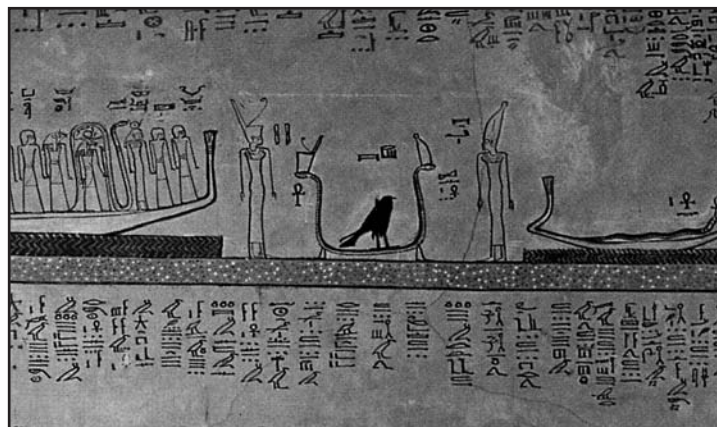
Three idols appear who are in charge of providing bread, beer and other essential foods for the pharaoh so that he is fully prepared for his life in the netherworld.



The ninth hour of the Amduat in the tomb of Thutmose III, detail. Eighteenth Dynasty, 1479-1425 BCE; painted plaster. Valley of the Kings tomb no. KV 34.

### Hour 10

A large body of regenerating water appears in front of the solar boat. In it are those who died by drowning. In ancient Egypt, the drowned were of special concern because they couldn't have a proper burial, and therefore, no chance for immortality. But Thutmose sees Horus, the falcon-headed god, gesturing toward the drowned, assuring them eternal life.

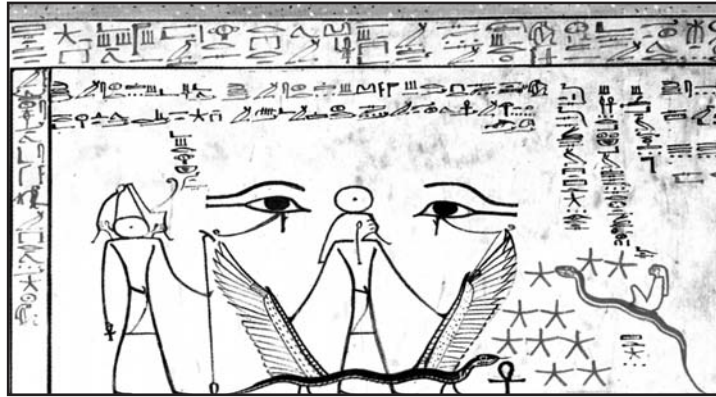


The tenth hour of the Amduat depicting the deified drowned in the lower register, in the tomb of Amenhotep II, detail. Eighteenth Dynasty, 1427-1400 BCE; painted plaster. Valley of the Kings tomb no. KV 35.



**Hour 11**

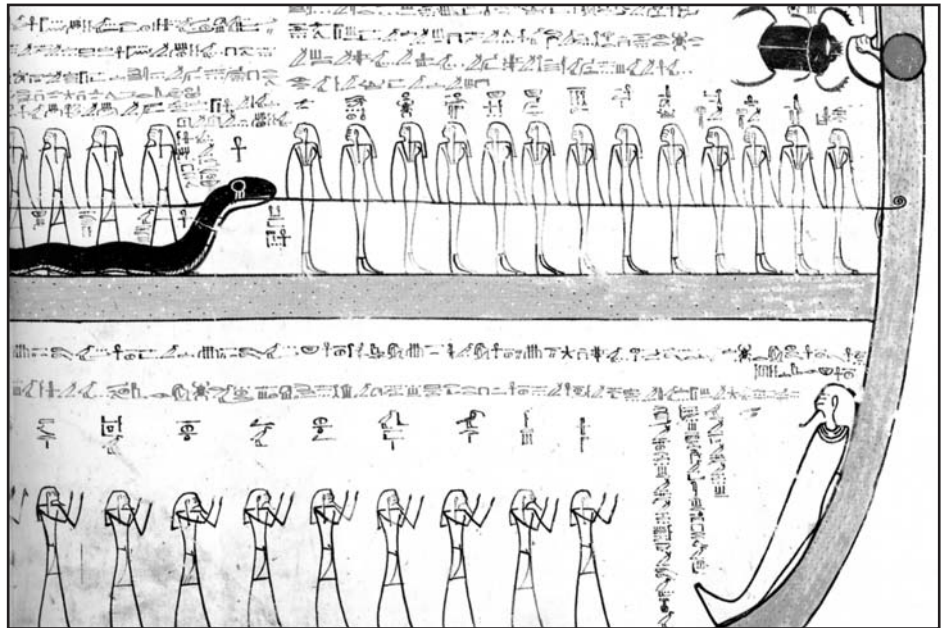
The new day will begin soon. Re's boat now has a solar disk at the front. Thutmose can see the snake of time about to eat ten stars in the dark sky, one star for each hour that the pharaoh has been on his journey through the underworld.



The eleventh hour of the Amduat in the burial chamber of the tomb of Thutmose III, detail. Eighteenth Dynasty, 1479-1425 BCE; painted plaster. Valley of the Kings tomb no. KV

**Hour 12**

The last hour of the night has arrived. Thutmose has been transformed and will be reborn as the sun god Re. There is a long snake, followed by the triumphant Re in his boat. The boat is being pulled by a towline that passes through the snake's head indicating that the sun god will be pulled through the snake's body, emerging from its mouth, reborn and triumphant at sunrise. Re will first appear in his daytime form as a scarab beetle and will rise to begin the new day. As he rises into the sky the gods rejoice that the sun, a brilliant disk of gold, will travel across the sky to sink below the horizon at dusk and continue its journey through the underworld once again. The mummiform figure of Osiris also appears in the twelfth hour. He will remain in the underworld as its king.



The twelfth hour of the Amduat in the tomb of Thutmose III, detail. Eighteenth Dynasty, 1479-1425 BCE; painted plaster. Valley of the Kings tomb no. KV 34.



## GLOSSARY

### **Amduat**

a burial text that traces the twelve-hour journey through the underworld

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### **amulet**

a magical charm worn as a protection against evil, usually placed in mummy wrappings

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### **ankh**

the sign of life

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### **atef crown**

a tall white crown with plumes on either side and worn by kings and the god Osiris

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### **ba**

a name for the individual personality of a person, represented as a bird with a human head

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### **BCE**

the abbreviation for Before the Common Era; can be used in place of BC

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### **canopic jars**

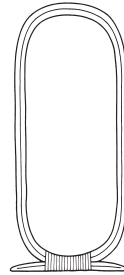
four specially designed funerary jars that held the mummified internal organs of the deceased: the lungs, intestines, stomach, and liver

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### **cartouche**

oval ring that represents a rope with the ends overlapped; it encircles the name of the pharaoh

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### **crook and flail**

the crook is a curved scepter and the flail may represent a fly whisk; pharaohs and the god Osiris are often shown holding these two symbols crossed over their chests

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### **djed pillar**

symbol of stability, associated with the backbone of the god Osiris

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### **dynasty**

the succession of rulers belonging to related families; ancient Egyptian history includes 31 dynasties

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### **faience**

a glass-like material pressed into a mold, covered with glaze, and fired; often used to decorate jewelry and small statues

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### **feather of Maat**

feather of truth that is used when the heart of a deceased person is weighed against a feather associated with the goddess Maat

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### **hieroglyphs**

picture writing of ancient Egypt that represented sounds and/or entire words and ideas

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### **ibis**

Egyptian wading bird with a curved bill and long legs associated with the moon god, Thoth

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### **ka**

life force of a person, represented as a twin that could live on after a person's death if provided with food and an image of the person to use as a resting place

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### **Lower Egypt**

northern part of Egypt that includes the low floodplains

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### **mummification**

the process of drying and embalming the dead body of a person or an animal in order to preserve it

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### **natron**

a natural salt from the desert that was used in the mummification process

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### **nemes**

linen headdress worn by pharaohs

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### **obelisk**

a tapering four-sided stone monument topped by a pyramid shape (pyramidion)

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**papyrus**

the pith of the papyrus reed was used to make a surface on which to write and paint; the reed itself was used for products such as ropes, sandals and baskets

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**pharaoh**

title given to rulers of ancient Egypt

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**Rosetta Stone**

stone fragment containing a decree written in hieroglyphs, demotic and Greek; its discovery led to the ability to read ancient Egyptian hieroglyphs

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**sarcophagus**

the outer container for a coffin, often carved from stone

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**scarab**

beetle that lays its eggs in animal dung, then rolls the dung into a ball and moves it around



with its pincers until the eggs hatch; symbol of regeneration and new life

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**scribe**

person trained to read and write who worked in the service of the pharaoh and the government

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**shabti**

a small funerary statue intended to stand in for the deceased in the afterlife and perform manual tasks (*also spelled ushebti or shawabti*)

**sphinx**

the combination of the body of a lion and a human head; pharaohs often combined their image with the lion's body in order to take on the power and strength associated with the lion

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**underworld**

land of the dead, also called the netherworld

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**Upper Egypt**

southern part of Egypt, with a high elevation

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**uraeus**

sacred cobra shown on the headdress of pharaohs and gods

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**Valley of the Kings**

located in Upper Egypt near Thebes; the burial sites for numerous pharaohs of the New Kingdom are located in this valley

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**wedjat**

the eye of Horus and symbol of the renewal of life





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\**What Life Was Like on the Banks of the Nile*. Alexandria, Virginia: Time-Life Books, 1997.

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Morley, Jacqueline. *How Would You Survive as an Ancient Egyptian?* New York: Franklin Watts, 1995.

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### **Suggested videos:**

\**Egypt*. Image Videos. 55 minutes

\**This Old Pyramid*. Nova. 90 minutes

\**Secrets of Lost Empires: Obelisk*. Nova. 60 minutes.

\**Secrets of Lost Empires: Pyramid*. Nova. 60 minutes.

**\*Books and videos that are available in the Educator Resource Center of The Dayton Art Institute.**



**Suggested websites:**

<http://www.britishmuseum.org>

<http://www.guardians.net/egypt>

<http://www.iwebquest.com/egypt/ancientegypt>

<http://www.nationalgeographic.com/pyramids>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/ancient/egyptians>

<http://www.pbs.org/empires/egypt/education>



FALCON WITH KING,  
Thirtieth Dynasty,  
c. 350 BCE; limestone.  
The Egyptian Museum, Cairo.