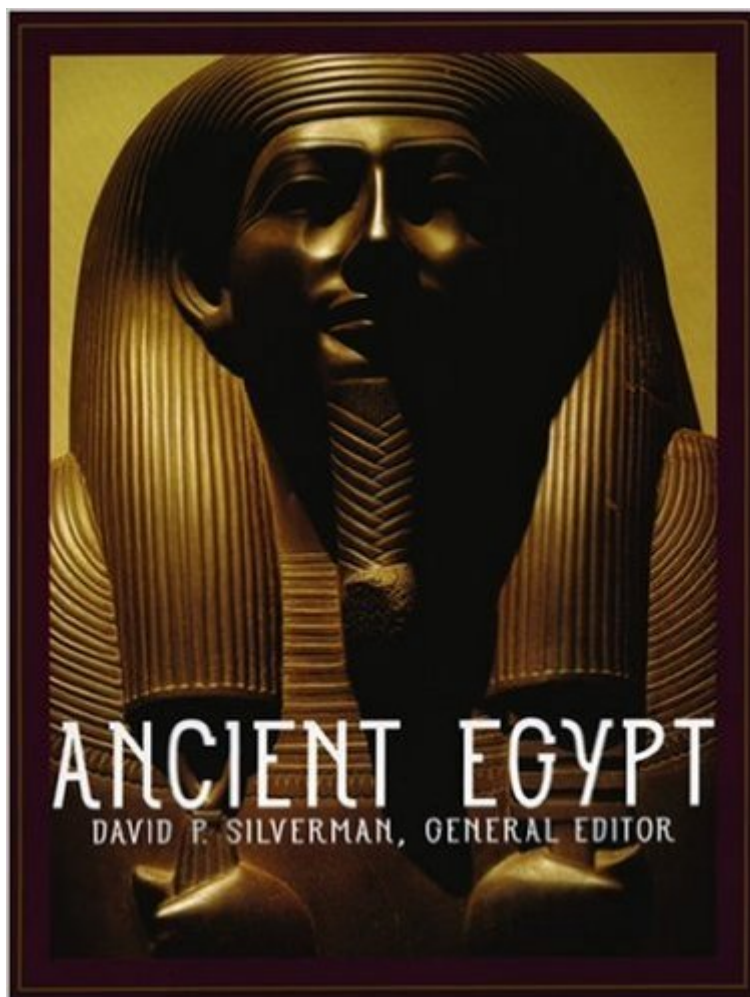


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Ancient Egypt



Synopsis

The ancient Egyptians created some of the world's most beautiful art and architecture. To this day, this ancient civilization--which produced the great pyramids, the riddle of the Sphinx, and the riches of Tutankhamun--exerts a strong hold on our imaginations. Now, in *Ancient Egypt*, eminent Egyptologist David P. Silverman and a team of leading scholars explore the cultural wealth of this civilization in a series of intriguing and authoritative essays based on the latest theories and discoveries. Illustrated with more than 200 superb color photographs, maps, and charts, this book illuminates the vivid and powerful symbolic images of this fascinating culture--from pyramids and temples to priests and rituals; from hieroglyphic writing to daily life by the Nile; and from temple carvings to the cult of the dead. Correcting the popular misconception of the Egyptians as a death-obsessed people, the book uses the most recent historical research and archaeological finds to illuminate the routines of daily life in royal, elite, priestly circles, as well as at lower levels of society. We learn, for example, that despite the monochromatic appearance of most temple ruins today, in ancient times they would have been colorful, even gleaming structures; that the title "Pharaoh" derives from the Egyptian phrase per aa, which means "great house" and was originally a reference to the royal palace; that temples employed all manner of part-time and full-time personnel, from farmers and carpenters to scribes, jewelers, and keepers of livestock; and that Egyptian law viewed women as equal to men, and they could, in some cases, wield considerable influence.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"Ancient Egypt" is the perfect antidote to those Time-Life books about ancient civilizations, where

you look at the pictures and read the text and wonder, "is that all there is?" Well, of course there is. The problem is finding it. This collection of essays uses words, pictures, artwork and imaginative reconstructions to describe the ancient world ruled by gods and which built monuments that have lasted millennia. The book's 15 chapters opens all aspects of the Nile kingdom's world. In addition to the expected sections on the pyramids, its hieroglyphs and Pharaohs, "Ancient Egypt" also delves into religious beliefs, political campaigns, the role of women, the development of towns and trade and the daily rituals of its people. Wrapped around the text are superlative photographs, shorter articles about equally fascinating subjects (a profile of Ramesses the Great in the section on Pharaohs, for example, or on the "letters" to the dead, written on simple pottery bowls and deposited in the tomb or coffin), plenty of colorful reproductions of Egyptian art so vivid that the course of individual brush-strokes could be seen, and commissioned drawings giving theories of how pyramids were built, and what the Temple of Karnak must have looked like at its height. But what really shines are the little touches.

This is a very thorough book, delving deep into the entire history of Egypt, starting with their earliest history as a nation, and going through all of the aspects of their history up through the Roman conquest. It covers the various dynasties, an overview of the entire history (4000+ years of it) and special sections on religious belief, the importance of the belief in the afterlife, their language, written (hieroglyphs and demotic (demotic is more like short hand and almost looks like our cursive writing...much easier and simpler than hieroglyphs!)) Mathematics, astronomy, medicine, the building of the pyramids--- every aspect is thoroughly discussed by an expert in the field of Egyptology. Each chapter (there are 15) is written by a different specialist in the field of Egyptology. Their credentials are listed in the dust jacket cover. They hold many different titles, are professors, university and museum curators, and all are experts in their given field. (Such as Dr Ian Shaw, editor of the Oxford History of Ancient Egypt who wrote the chapter called "The Settled World".) Or Dr Zahi Hawass, the head of the Cairo Museum and of Egyptian antiquities in Egypt, who wrote the chapter on the Pyramids. The chapter headings include "The Celestial Realm", "Egyptian Art", "Women in Egypt", "Egypt and the World Beyond", and many more. Aside from the wealth of knowledge, every single page two or more beautiful illustrations and photographs of the best of the artwork, tomb painting, statuary, jewelry, etc to illustrate what is being discussed. This may be the one book on ancient Egypt to have if you have to have just one.

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