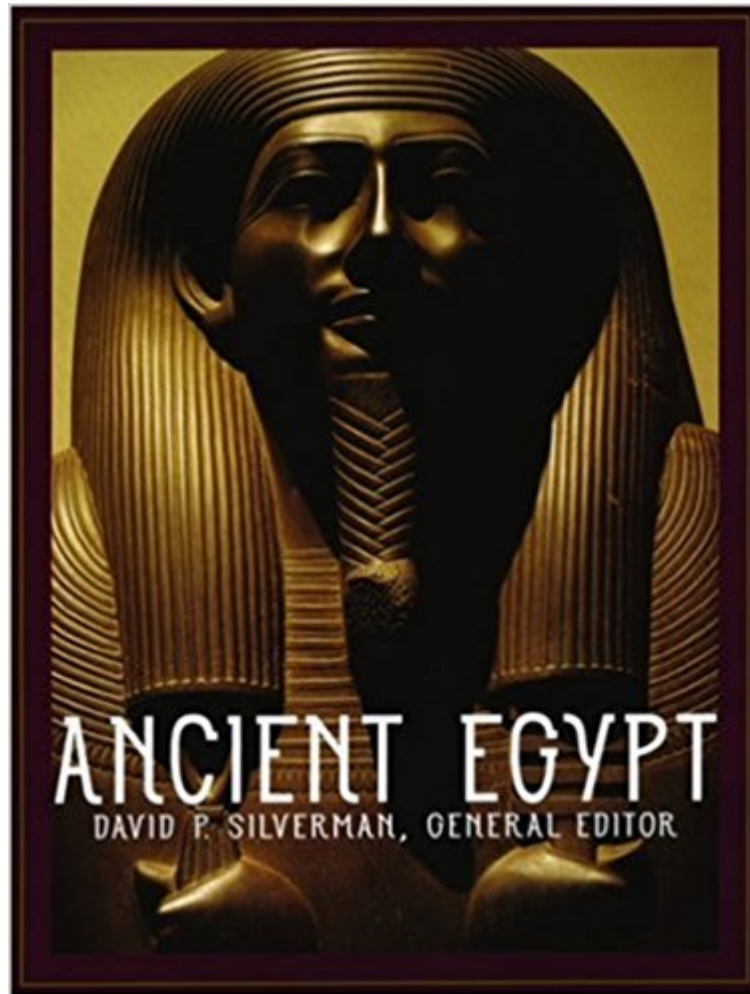




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# Ancient Egypt



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## 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

Twelve contributing scholars have joined Silverman in writing this lavishly illustrated book that

contains 200 color photographs, maps, and charts. Their essays cover such broad subjects as history, geography, legends, archaeology, religion, economy, art, architecture, and language. There are pieces on international trade and travel, farming, hunting, fishing, mining, capital cities, palaces, fortresses, gender and society, mathematics, medicine, magic, the pharaohs, the cosmos, the cult of the dead, ritual games, the pyramids, tombs, temples, the solar cycle, and hieroglyphs. The writing is based on the latest historical research and archaeological finds, offering readers a penetrating look at the daily life of both royalty and commoner. George Cohen --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

"The writing is based on the latest historical research and archaeological finds, offering readers a penetrating look at the daily life of both royalty and commoner."

Organized by theme, Silverman's Ancient Egypt provides an unusual approach to the topic. Divided into three parts (The Egyptian World, Belief and Ritual, Art, Architecture and Language), the subsequent chapters are written by a variety of scholars, each an expert in their fields (to name a few: Fekri Hassan a geo-archeologist formerly of Washington State, more recently at the Egyptian Ministry of Culture writing on commerce; Gay Robbins of Emory University on Women in Ancient Egypt, Ian Shaw of University of Liverpool on urban centers, Zahi Hawass - former Egyptian Minister of Antiquities on the Pyramids). These scholars provide a fresh take on Egyptian history. I was particularly struck by the chapters on "The Celestial Realm" and "Tombs and Temples" as both provided unique details about Egyptian cosmology and the evolution of funerary architecture. The number of color plates and maps are also helpful and illustrative in connecting details to the larger historical narrative. However, I had problems with the historical narrative itself; in a few words, it was simply too brief. The opening chapter, "Three Kingdoms and Thirty-four Dynasties" covered the entirety of Ancient Egyptian history in 20 pages. While the ebbed flow of history was discussed well, one cannot adequately write a political history of the 2000 + years of Ancient Egyptian history in so few pages. Further, the thematic nature of the book also meant that events or issues would be repeated in chapter after chapter. For example, the reign of Akhenaten is discussed several times: in the political history of the 18th dynasty, again in a chapter about cities and capitals, yet again in the discussion of art and architecture, and still again in the chapter about temples and tombs. While events and individuals like Akhenaten are repeatedly highlighted, other significant facets are overlooked or given short shrift (the Naqada period or the Second Intermediate Period). While The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt remains unrivaled in terms of its scholarship and depth, the

strength of Silverman's thematic approach is the variety of perspectives it provides beyond the exclusively political. For those who already have a passing familiarity with Ancient Egypt but are searching for interesting details and a more social history approach to the time, this would be my recommendation.

This book has the best of the expert writing on their areas of expertise. They all know how to tell you everything in a concise way in language that the average person can understand. The pictures, many I'd not seen before, are for the most part clear enough to make out things, maps and plans of ancient forts and temples homes, etc. are excellent with clear keys and explanations. If you wanted only one good book to read on Ancient Egypt, I would not hesitate to recommend this book.

Information in the book provides a good overview of Ancient Egypt. The writing style is clear, concise, and easy to understand. The print is quite small which makes it hard to read, especially in the inserted boxes and sidebars. Recommended to go along with the Coursera course on Ancient Egypt.

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. This book is NOT just a pretty coffee table book of the

typical type, with more photographs than writing, and little or no explanation of what you're seeing. Professor Silverman as well as being the editor is also one of contributors, and wrote the chapters on "Belief and Ritual" and "Signs, Symbols and Language". I can't recommend this book more highly. Highly accessible and readable. There is a glossary at the end and a good index. Useful for the interested amateur like myself, or someone already involved in the study of ancient Egypt.

Full of well researched information and well illustrated throughout. Easy to read, relatively short chapters but chocked full of detailed information. The only shortcoming, but a minor one, is that it's a bit difficult to identify where the objects pictured may be found. Highly recommended.

Ordered this as an accompaniment for a MOOC, but it's a wonderful book on it's own. I'm very happy with it.

This is a wonderful book for anyone who wants to further their study of Egypt and the fascinating people.

Very informative book that was used to accompany the Coursera online course by Professor Silverman. Lots of detail on Egypt as well as numerous pictures. Not too technical - just the right level.

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