



Par Madja'at House of Books

Episode 5

Teaser

Thank you for joining us on the program that delves into the research of ancient Egypt. On this episode we have book summary and review of the priests of ancient Egypt by serge Sauneron. Magazines and periodicals have the February 2008 issue of national geographic with the black pharaohs, conquerors of ancient Egypt by Robert draper, research on the web has baking ancient Egyptian bread, geography of the durum wheat crop, and bread made using 4,500-year-old Egyptian yeast , finally the par Madja'at at Kamat – reconstructing ancient Egyptian culture electronic document library provides some remarks on the epagomenal days in ancient Egypt by Anthony Spalinger, investigation of ancient Egyptian baking and brewing methods by correlative microscopy by Delwen Samuel, scribal training in ancient Egypt by Ronald j. Williams, and an ancient analogy : pot baked bread in ancient Egypt, and Mesopotamia M. Chazan and M. Lehner. We'll be back after advertisement from our sponsors.

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Book summary and review



The priests of ancient Egypt by serge Sauneron, new edition. Summary from the back cover: the gods were everywhere in ancient Egypt. Represented by statues, bas-reliefs, and funerary paintings, they even walked among the Egyptians in the person of pharaoh, considered to be a living god, son of the divine re. What better way to understand that distant culture than by becoming familiar with the people who served those gods?

Using as his sources the Egyptian texts and the testimony of classical authors, serge Sauneron illuminates the role of the priesthood in ancient Egypt. He recreates the system of thought of one of the great civilizations of antiquity, addressing such topics as priestly functions, the world of temples, holy festivals, tombs, and pyramids.

Sauneron describes the ceremonies of daily worship, considered vital in preventing the world's descent into chaos. He takes us deep into the sacred precincts of the temples – home to the divine statues in which a part of the god was believed to dwell. One of the duties of the priests was to maintain these sacred effigies, to nourish, clothe and protect them from attacks by evil spirits. This edition of the priests of ancient Egypt, an augmented version of the 1957 classic, was published in France in 1988, and has been translated authoritatively by David Lorton.

The late Serge Sauneron was director of the institute Français d'archeologie in Cairo and the author of many works on ancient Egypt. The Egyptologist David Lorton has translated several previous Cornell books, including history of ancient Egypt: an introduction by Erik Hornung. Jean-Pierre Corteggiani is the author of the ancient Egypt of the pharaohs at the Cairo museum.

Contents:

Forward by Jean-Pierre Corteggiani, provides a short explanation of Sauneron's bibliography as proof of his unique insight into the subject of the book, with his authorizing of over 250 books and articles in all areas of Egyptology, which he called the vast body of knowledge from the most ancient times to modern day as the topic of Egypt, a single devotion of the author. Corteggiani explains Sauneron's approach as a humanist, focusing on the behaviors and motivations of the servants of the deities of all ranks and eras of ancient Egypt. Not only does Sauneron discuss the most pious of temple servants, but also those who stray from the Ma'at of rightness and commit scandals and affronts to the gods. Sauneron delves into cult ritual and magic and the most sacred knowledge in the house of life.

Translators note from David Lorton provides conventions to citations and quotations of ancient texts, and the declaration of the omission of the topographical

sign of the ayin consonant that does not exist in English. Lorton also provides relative chronology and suggests more complete chronology can be found in Erik Hornung's history of ancient Egypt: an introduction.

Introduction. Sauneron discusses the boundaries of ancient Egypt being the delta where it empties into the Mediterranean Sea in the north to the first cataract in the south. While modern Egypt has its border extends further into what was the ancient kingdom of Kush in Nubia, the ancient Egyptians considered the first cataract, a place of impassable rapids on the Nile to be the boundary of their divine realm. The southern boundary, and the sea which was seldom considered of value to the ancient Egyptians are made the limits of Sauneron's study. The author makes note that cities and even the pharaoh's palace were made of temporary mud brick, while monuments, temples and tombs were built with stone to last eternity. This he considers analogous to the ancient Egyptians' view of this world and the unseen world of the *dwa'at* afterlife, where the gods and blessed dead persist to the end of eternity. Temples and tombs are thus considered by the ancient Egyptians as eternal places where gods and blessed dead can dwell. Sauneron then makes a plea to the readers not to equate the gods of ancient Egypt or its culture to any modern ideas of culture or divinity such as Jews, Christians, or Muslims. Nor are the deities of Egypt related to ancient gods of Greece or Rome. It is necessary to put

aside all preconceived notions and cultural trappings to truly understand the ancient Egyptians, their gods and culture.

Testimony of ancient texts relies on references to scribes from several sources. Carvings of texts on statues of prominent scribes provide the most repeated and positive virtues of a scribe – **::recite::** he was discreet concerning what he saw, learned, capable in his work, well loved by the people of his town; one whose coming was noticed...**::** Sauneron provides the subsections of the edifying life of Petosiris, the scandal at Elephantine, and the misfortunes of Petese. As for the former, Petosiris led a virtuous life as the *hry tp*, high priest or first prophet of the deity DHwty or Thoth in his city of *hmnw* or Hermopolis. This prophet of the ogdoad of eight creation deities created by Thoth. Petosiris was so known for his upstanding status that his tomb inscriptions bear what has been compiled into wisdom texts that Sauneron provides. Unfortunately, the temple of *hnmw* or ram-headed god Khnum at Elephantine fared far worse than *hmnw* under the leadership of Penanukis. The priesthood there were completely corrupted, as legal documents under Ramesses the fourth and fifth can testify. Finally, Petese, a former priest of Amun at Karnak was victimized by the corrupted ire of a regional temple priesthood of Amun could be during the late period of Egyptian history. Sauneron reminds the readers that ancient Egyptian priesthoods are of a three-month seasonal endeavor,

where pure ones were trained quickly, provide the necessary labor to the temple, and then they return home to their commonplace lives.

Chapter 2: the priestly office. Sauneron begins by making a detailed discussion of mAat, one of the most significant facets of ancient Egyptian culture. Maat is the concept of universal balance, justice, and what is right. The author explains that the ultimate requirement of the pharaoh is to maintain mAat in the world. This leads into the subsection of the function of royalty. Sauneron discusses the duty of the pharaoh through the beginnings of history of the first ruler of the two lands, down to the roman emperors who claimed the title of pharaoh that they were responsible for performing the rituals in temples to maintain mAat and satisfy the gods. Given the impossibility for the pharaoh to perform these daily rituals personally, this was resolved by the delegation of the royal powers to perform these ritual were passed to the pure ones of the temples. In the subsection the function of the clergy, Sauneron makes special note not to misunderstand the word priests when applied to ancient Egyptian pure ones. While modern priests are placed within a more cloistered status, leading the people of the congregation to salvation, ancient Egyptian priests were specialists who performed the ritual as substitute for the pharaoh, and had only obligations to the temple and the gods who dwelled within. In the subsection priestly obligations, Sauneron provides a discussion of the function of a temple, not being one to serve the people, but to maintain the rituals

and act for the pharaoh in the capacity of maintaining mAat. Further, temples were designed for the specific intent to successively shelter the innermost sanctuary of the deity from the untrained and impure masses. He then discusses the duties of the pure ones, and requirements of creating and maintaining their personal purity when dwelling in the temple, such as bathing in the sacred lake, and the removal of body hair, as well as males having circumcision performed. Sauneron then discusses the clothing requirements of pure ones, being white linen, white woven sandals, and the addition of specific articles of robing depending on the station in the temple and temple vocation. In the subsection admission to priestly office, Sauneron briefly discusses how priests were appointed, such as heredity, cooption, induction, purchase of office, and most importantly, royal appointment. In the heredity rights subsection, it is explained that priests could consider his appointment as personal property, to be passed to a blood or adopted heir. Cooption and purchase explain that though royal appointment was performed, though rarely, priestly families usually made their decisions on cooption of priests. In greek periods, purchasing the office was performed. Royal appointment provides the few times a pharaoh made appointments to temples, such as Rameses the great making the appointment of first prophet of Amun in Karnak from Abydos, and Tutankhamun restoring the Amun priesthood after his father Akhenaten's closing their cult centers. Induction

is the final subsection, but little evidence describes the procedure, there are still a few narratives that describe some of the induction ceremonies.

Chapter three, the world of temples introduces us to the land and personnel a temple contains, with most temples having a modest size of around fifty persons, like the temple of Anubis in Feiyum with few temples like Karnak, Heliopolis and Memphis with thousands of temple workers, sacred animals, gardens, and fields. Subsections are classes of priests, that explain hierarchies are more common in the larger temples as the numbers of priests necessitate, but also classes are different than the specialist technicians. Administrative personnel discuss in similar fashion that the size of the temple will also necessitate more dedicated administrative personnel. Cult personnel are considered servants of the god, who represent the full-time priests with the ability to open the sanctuary shrine of the main god of a temple and perform the daily rite. The specialists, who make up both high ranking and low ranking, and are experts in specific components of ritual, from bathing to dressing or recitation. Singers and musicians, who play an especially important role in the temple, performing the sacred songs for processions and ritual.

Auxiliaries, recluses, and refugees. Subsection of classes of priests has discussion of the ambiguous hierarchy, but has hierarchical titles shared with specialists and their titles. Administrative personnel subsection has Sauneron explains the administrative classification and specialties ultimately depend on the size of the

temple and need. Temples like Karnak are the most specialized, with more interesting positions such as overseer of scribes of the domain, accounting scribes, overseers of recruits, soldiers, overseer of horned hoofed and feathered animals, and others. Cult personnel. This subsection talks about the classification of servant of the god or goddess, and what was considered prophets by the Greeks. The specialists subsection has information regarding very specialized officiants of attending to the divine statues, called by the Greeks as stolists, as found in Greco-Roman era documents. Titles such as pure one of the loincloth, were applied to servants of the god. Titled by the Ptolemaic period horologoi or hour priests, and horoskopoi. The former tracked the movements of the stars for festival calendars and prescribed rituals to deities, and the latter those who interpreted the movements of the stars for outlook of good or combative calendars. Singers and musicians subsection discusses the class of instrument players and chanters that led the ceremonial rhythms and praises. The lower clergy subsection discusses the purified ones that played a secondary role in ceremony. However, larger temples further divided the classification into those of higher rank, such as foremost pure ones and carriers of sacred objects. Sauneron also places the dream interpreters within the lower clergy. The last subsection of the chapter is auxiliaries, recluses, and refugees. Sauneron places janitors who sweep and clean buildings, artisans, painters bakers, butchers, florists, and the like. He also talks about the people who

did not have actual employment at the temple but took shelter in the temple to still devote their lives in service of the gods.

Chapter 4: the sacred services discusses the daily rites and ceremonies of a temple with a brief introduction of the morning ritual of feeding and clothing deities.

Subsection face to face continues the morning ritual with the narrative single highest-ranking priest who has the direct authority from the pharaoh to open the main doors of the sanctuary shrine that houses the primary deity of the temple.

The divine repast subsection discusses details and significance of divine offerings to the deities placed in the various food offering altars in the temple. Subsection toilette is the next stage of the morning ritual, where clothing was removed from statues on the previous day, their bathing ritual, then the strips of cloth of significant colors were restored. Then jewelry, wigs, headdresses, and the like. The final ceremonies of the morning ritual subsection concludes the rites with purification with natron and water, and their duties until midday. Carrying onto the subsection the midday ritual is brief with simple purifications and carrying of water. The evening ritual subsection is like the midday, but with offerings and ritual like morning with the shrine doors remaining closed and makes conclusions and expansive information on the daily rites as they apply culturally and spiritually. Divine procession subsection discussion the occurrence of the deities processing through the town in a portable shrine atop a barque or festival boat four

to six times monthly. Details of these festival barques are provided with their significance. The subsection way stations talk about the shrine repositories that are spaced throughout the town and provided places for offerings and oracles.

The next five subsections titled the barque oracle, prophetic voices, other oracular techniques, oracles by sacred animals and justice at the temple gate all deal with the particulars of the mediums that allow clearer communication with the divine.

Priests on the move subsection discusses the religious or political jobs priests would carry out when away from the temple when travelling to other temples during festivals or cities on administrative business. The subsection funerary priests provides specific functions of these priests who operate outside of temples during their significant funerary activities. While the complex rituals themselves are not delved into any great detail, the officiants themselves are discussed and their responsibilities.

Chapter five: sacred knowledge discusses intimate details of the intellectual properties the ancient Egyptian priests of which they had masteries over. The subsection basic characteristics of sacred knowledge discusses what Sauneron defines as sacred climate in their development, and an introduction to the written word. Obsession with the written word, the omnipotence of sounds and sacred etymology, the mysteries of the hieroglyphs, and sign play and the philosophy of

the writing system provide great discussion of the nature and significance of hieroglyphs, how they are observed and their application. Houses of life and temple libraries discusses the repositories of knowledge and their institutions. The domains of sacred knowledge subsection introduces the reader to the disciplines that ancient Egyptian priests would have mastery over, following with the expansive knowledge in the subsections: history, geography, astronomy, geometry and architecture, medicine, knowledge of animals, the interpretation of dreams, And the manufacture of cosmetics.

Chapter 6: the changing fortunes of the Egyptian clergies explains the indissoluble joining of religion and government. This is the thesis in the three subsections of the sun god re, Osiris, and Amun, as Sauneron explains the various religious cults and their relationship with the pharaoh in history. Struggle for control of the cults and crises in the new kingdom gives the explanation of the significance of the pharaoh's appointed director of all divine offices as a means of controlling the powerful cults of gods. The beginning of the solar reaction subsection discusses the reign of Tuthmose iii and his pharaonic cult development in syncretism with the Aten and his son's so-called heresy with the following subsection the Amarna episode. The Sethian episode follow with the new Rameses dynasty and their reforms to the Amun cult.

The king-priests subsection discusses the fall of the pharaonic lineage after the Ramesses, and the vacuum of power being filled by the still powerful cult of Amun. The last centuries of independence delves into the cult temples during the time known as the late period. Finally, with the Greco-Roman period sees the rise of the greek and roman influences in the syncretism of Egyptian deities, ending with the Christianization of Rome and the ending of the traditional temple era. Notes, bibliography categorized by subject, books by Sauneron, and index end the book. This reader really enjoys the subsection format of the book. It really helps to sort the vast amounts of information that are contained within those pages. Anyone with a propensity to learn about the structure and administration of the ancient Egyptian temple as well as the duties and knowledge of the pure ones who served in them would find this book invaluable. Find more information and where to buy the book at the par Madja'at – house of books at reconstructingancientegypt.org/houseofbooks

Magazines and periodicals

National geographic magazine February 2008 issue features the black pharaohs: conquerors of ancient Egypt by Robert Draper. The author discusses the rulers of pharaohs from the kingdom of Kush in modern day Sudan, who established a dynasty in the late period of 730 BCE, of not only rulers of Kush, but also the two lands of Egypt. It began with Piye, who having adopted the culture of ancient Egypt and the worship of the *ntr.w* deities therein, as rightful heir of Rameses the ii and Tuthmose III, seeing the fall of the last of the Rameses and the divided two lands, engaged in a yearlong campaign to supplant every regional ruler and united the lands under him. Draper makes discussion of the assimilation of the culture of ancient Egypt by the Kushites toward the pinnacle of their kingdom, and how their temples and pyramid tombs being built in spectacular ancient Egyptian fashion. Unfortunately, the building of the Aswan high dam flooded many Kushite sites, but under visited pyramids at el Kurru, Nuri, and Meroe in Sudan are still a testament to their greatness. The author explains the lack of racism in the ancient world, and how skin color was of no consequence to the peoples of ancient Egypt. The two lands of Egypt was one of great diversity of Africa, the levant of the near east, and in later periods from across the sea. Draper discusses the impact of modern racism on archaeology and Egyptology, with some white Egyptologists attesting the ancient Egyptians were surely of the Caucasian race. Alternatively, Afrocentric scholars have insisted that all ancient Egyptians were racially black

have also negatively impacted the debate. By polarizing the racial debate, draper believes the important message that Egypt was truly a melting pot and the skin color of Piye, and his successors were irrelevant. Draper explains his point with the history of Piye's ascension to pharaoh of the two lands and Kush. During this time, known as the third intermediate period, the two lands of Egypt were divided among warlords. In the Nubian kingdom of Kush, its ruler Piye, having maintaining ritual to the ancient Egyptian deities found called to restore the two lands under his rule. Since earliest recorded times, Egypt had culturally maintained the lands south of the first cataract known collectively as the wretched south, and its people merely 'southlanders. Piye defied generations of cultural prejudice by the Egyptian people, and modern genetics informs us were more genetically related to peoples of the levant. However, despite these differences and cultural prejudice, Piye was able to display all the characteristics of pharaoh that the Egyptian warlords recognized him as the legitimate successor as sedge and bee, pharaoh of the two lands. Piye adopted a crown with two cobras to signify his rulership of the two lands and Kush. The new pharaoh returned to his lands in Kush and ruled there for the rest of his life. He and his Kushite successors Shabaka, Shebitko, Taharqa, and Tanutamun restored and expanded the temples of Amun and his consort Mut, and at Jebel Barkal a new temple to the god that is still in excellent condition today in modern day Sudan. Additionally, the Kushite pharaohs revived pyramid

building for their tombs in Kush, which were not even built in Egypt for more than a thousand years.

Research on the web

Baking ancient Egyptian bread, published in Egyptology blog at the mummy's ball. The article gives a complete overview of ancient Egyptian bread, including composition, leavening, and baking. A full array of pictures from tombs and artifacts, as well as a bibliography of references.

Geography of the durum wheat crop by Roberto Ranieri. Durum wheat is grown primarily in the Mediterranean basin, the northern plains of the United States and Canada, the desert areas of the southeast of the United States and north of Mexico and other lesser regions. The article looks at the main quality characteristics of the varieties of durum wheat based on their area of origin, in relation to their use in producing dried pasta.

This bread was made using 4,500-year-old Egyptian yeast by Jason Daley, Smithsonian magazine. Discusses the efforts of Xbox creator Seamus Blackley, University of Queensland archaeologist and ancient brewing expert Serena Love, and University of Iowa graduate student in microbiology Richard Bowman to extract yeast from old kingdom baking and brewing vessels.

Electronic documents

some remarks on the epagomenal days in ancient Egypt by Anthony Spalinger, university of Auckland, Auckland, New Zealand. Dr. Spalinger makes further discussion of the transitional five days of the Egyptian civil year considered the days of birth of the five deities of Osiris, Horus, Seth, Isis, and Nephthys. The author provides evidence of dynasty 5 temple calendar of Niuserra, private festival offering lists of Khnumhotep at Beni Hasan, the coffin of ma and two letters written in the middle kingdom. Spalinger also makes discussion of Sekhmet and how her messengers are significant in the day preceding the days above the year, considered the last day of the year.

Investigation of ancient Egyptian baking and brewing methods by correlative microscopy by Delwen Samuel. Ancient Egyptian methods of baking and brewing are investigated by optical and scanning electron microscopy of desiccated bread loaves and beer remains. Results reveal bread ingredients and ideas of bread preparation.

Scribal training in ancient Egypt by Ronald J. Williams. The requirements of a highly complex governmental administration in Egypt led to the development in the mid-third millennium of methods of training youths as scribes to enter the civil service. In addition to the much later Greek descriptions of the educational system in ancient Egypt, there are scattered references to it in Egyptian biographical and literary texts. These are few in the early periods, but soon become more plentiful. The didactic treatises beginning in the Old Kingdom and the compositions specially designed for scribal use, together with the innumerable school texts written mostly on ostraca, afford valuable evidence for the content of the young scribe's curriculum. The nature of the elementary instruction during the first four years may be deduced, as well as the advanced training which was of a more specialized nature. The "textbooks" employed in the instruction of students are also known to us. Finally, the attitude of the Egyptians themselves to the efficacy of educational methods finds expression in their literature.

An ancient analogy: pot baked bread in ancient Egypt

And Mesopotamia m. Chazan and m. Lehner - this article evaluates the similarities between the Mesopotamian bevel rim bowl dated to the Uruk period and the Old Kingdom Egyptian bread mold (bedja). We compare the two vessels in terms of form, ware, manufacture, archaeological context, and evolution and then examine the explicit Egyptian pictorial evidence for the use of the bedja. The implications

of the identification of the bevel rim bowl as a bread mold for our understanding of state formation in the ancient near east are considered.