CHAPTER 9
EGYPTIAN KNOWLEDGE

67:Statues of Maya and Merit from Sakkara, Leiden Museum

Egypt

"Concerning Egypt I will now speak at length, because nowhere are there so many marvelous things, nor in the whole world beside are there as many things of such unmistakable greatness." Herodotus[i]

The early part of this book looked closely at the ideas of wisdom. Knowledge is a word that seems to mean the same thing, but it does not. Knowledge is a term that is more closely tied to our ideas of science, technology, or understanding of this physical world. When one has first acquired knowledge, that knowledge can be used through experience to become wisdom. As mentioned in the introduction, many try to show Egypt's technology as a sign of their "advancement." However the reverse becomes true when archaeologists believe that if a society did not have technology, they can only do things in a primitive way. Egypt was at a great height in building practices, astronomy, or medicine far beyond what most scholars today admit. Rather than attempt to prove their technology per say, I will instead be showing the results of the knowledge they possessed, or how similar knowledge could be expressed and used in ways different to us today. Remember most of the knowledge of Egypt would have been kept secret and taught only to specific members of society who proved their moral character to use the information in the best way possible. The main focus of Egyptian knowledge was based on the understanding of mathematics and geometry. They believed that this science was one that was able to bridge the gap between the spiritual and physical worlds, thus could be used to explain both the above and below.

Art

"Art is not meant to be enjoyed, it is meant to illuminate." John Anthony West[ii]

68:The incredible statue of Thutmosis III at the Luxor Museum

Even modern scholars will not disagree with the incredible paining, sculpture or architecture of Egypt. However they object that while of incredibly high quality, it all looks the same. They look down upon the Egyptian priests as being oppressive and forcing artists to only create art that looked a certain way, unlike the great freedom of modern artists who are allowed to express in whatever way they want. It again must be pointed out that we must not judge the knowledge of Egypt based on our own views, instead we must place our minds in the past to understand the reason for all of this. The result will be a greater appreciation of ancient art, and less appreciation for what is termed art today. In fact since so few can even understand what the ancients were actually creating, they miss the powers that exist right before their eyes.

To the Egyptian, art had only one purpose, to allow human beings the possibility to enlighten directly from the art created. Thus what someone wanted to paint or sculpt was far less vital than what would allow wisdom and enlightenment to be granted those who viewed it. This concept was also suggested by the mystic Gurdjieff. He believed there were two types of art. The first type is what is created today and was done from our conscious mind. Today art is created so that the artist can express their feelings or emotions, make a social commentary, or create something that looks nice. It will provoke different feelings and emotions from those who view it. It is usually created as the artist went along adding here and there what inspired them. The modern artist is attempting to find their own style that makes them different, thus related to their own ego. The Egyptian was using art to raise people above their ego. In Egypt to spend hours creating art to look good, tell ones emotions, or feed a buyer's ego was a waste of time. There is almost no ancient art created today, thus few have the opportunity to experience it at all. Modern art and architecture is physical and for the physical world. Ancient art was physical, but created for the spiritual world.

Art is usually purchased as a hobby, or a way to show others how important and cultured they are. Art is bought as a luxury, something we buy after our physical needs are met. Art is not seen as something important to our survival. In Egypt, their main focus was not physical needs but to regain our state of spiritual magic. Thus having proper art would be thought of as being just as important as food. The food we eat would be used once, but the art would be used for eternity. If an Egyptian moved to a new home, their first thought would not be furniture but artwork and statues. This is opposite to today where people chose places depending on whether all of their furniture will fit. To focus only on our physical needs would be thought of as a giant waste. To acquire modern art is the same as acquiring all sorts of "stuff" for our home. If it is not directly necessary, or part of our path to God, it is clutter. What good would it be to have 50 years of comfortable life, and an eternity without wisdom? Our modern society has become one that only thinks of comfort, not purpose or destiny or spirit.[iii]

The ancient artist did not try to find their own style, but were taught how to produce art that looked the same. Ancient art will have the same impression on everyone for it was designed to affect every human the exact same way. The artist created it from a plan that would express some form of universal truth. We don't think a modern actor is oppressed because they have to read lines from a script (their part which helps to make a complete whole) like a movie or play. Thus think of an ancient artist as more of an actor, working from a script from the gods. Making true art was a most powerful tool, not only for the artist but for all who came in contact with it. Photographs would mean little, the symbolic art created from the photograph would provide much more.[iv]

Nothing is placed in any part of Ancient Egyptian artwork because the artist thought it would look nice. Everything is there for a reason, has some symbolic significance, or is there to allow one to merge with God. Things were not built big to boost some King's ego, they were built that big to create a specific reaction inside

each and every person who came in contact with it. By the same contrast some of the most powerful Egyptian art is also the smallest. They sit in cases in the Cairo Museum, rarely even noticed by tourists, yet because of how they were created they hold incredible power. Remember too that all Egyptian art was meant to be seen as a whole, not in part. A statue was meant to be experienced in the temple that housed it, not on its own. Any piece of ancient art that does not still include the whole of what was meant to be experienced with it, will lose a bit of its power with us.

I am not saying that art created the modern way is bad. This type of art was done in Egypt but never appeared on tomb or temple walls. This other type of art is part of the personal growth process as the artist explores their own inner being, revealing this connection to their own soul in their outer product. This type of art is powerful for the artist for it helps them connect with their Higher Self, provides personal healing and growth. Just as a Zen master will spend part of his day painting, he is painting for himself, not to sell the artwork. No one else will see it, it is for the artist alone. However this type of art is transforming only for the artist, not for every other person who views their art. Ancient art was created to potentially heal and illuminate every person who came in contact with it.

As will be mentioned in the next chapter, geometry and the interplay of numbers was very well understood in the ancient temples where the art was created. Egyptian art was created using a grid system, like graph paper, that allowed the perfect proportion of what was being created. Their grid was 18:19, like the Maya. This grid was not made out of some accidental choice, but the 18/19 grid related to the golden section (see number). The size of a fist became the measuring tool for the rest of the parts of the artwork. A light sketch of the relief or painting would be made using the grid, then when perfected would be carved or painted. Renaissance artists claimed that ancient art is music that has been placed on canvas, and looks so breathtaking to us because the principles of the golden section were placed within it. It would be actually impossible for someone not to like it. Certain numbers and geometry would be placed within to allow specific energies to infuse the painting or statue. Some Egyptian artwork will heal on its own based on how they were designed. Some will open altered states of consciousness, lead directly to the Neteru, or provoke feelings of love, well-being or kindness. This mystical understanding of art and architecture was reborn during the Renaissance by people like Bottacheli or Isenheim. This type of wisdom is also placed within alchemic paintings and drawings.

The abilities of the ancient world to craft stone like pyramids, obelisks or walls in Peru is beyond belief for the modern world. No one today can explain how they could work with stones up to two hundred tons and move and place them like simple rocks. Dolerite statues, one of the hardest metals, were found at Sakkara that no modern sculptor can duplicate. Some believe they needed special drills or electrical power to even create them. Thus the question becomes, how and why could they do this. It is easier to cut and move two-ton stones than two hundred ton stones. The look would be roughly the same, but the ancients did not do this. The large stones were important and they found the ways to move and raise them. The hardest stone was used for statues. They needed particular stone, or size of stone, because they were not just making a statue they were making real art which required the proper stone to create the proper energies. A statue of the fire Neteru Sekhemet could not be made out of anything except hard igneous granite that was produced from the molten fire energy of the earth.

Calendar

"It is incomprehensible how the modern world can recognize the inherit genius of Plato, Socrates, (Pythagoras) and yet reject the religious and philosophical systems of which they were the product." Manly Hall[v]

69: Dendera Zodiac in the Louvre

Beyond using mathematics to create powerful artwork, they also used it to understand the workings of the universe. Our present calendar comes from the Romans who got there's from Egypt. Rome originally used a ten-month calendar of 334 days. The ten months led to the last four names September (7), October (8), November (9) and December (Deca, 10). By the seventh century BC January and February were added to make the calendar twelve months of 354 days, which still left the year 11.25 days short. Within a few hundred years the calendar was again off and forced Caesar, on the suggestion of Cleopatra, to install the Egyptian Sothic calendar of 365.25 days. This became known as the Julian Calendar, but while accurate for a few decades it too becomes inaccurate by one day every 128 years (for the actual solar year is 365.2422 days). In 1582 Pope Gregory installed a change because the spring equinox that forecast Easter was no longer falling on March 21 but March 11. On October 4, 1582 he decreed the next day to be October 15, thus deleting ten days. Many parts of Europe refused the change causing Christmas to be celebrated on different days across the continent. It wasn't until the eighteenth century that the Gregorian calendar became standard Europe, a calendar that will be accurate for 20,000 years.[vi] Besides having this brief history you are likely commenting, so how great can this Egyptian knowledge be if their calendar was wrong? To answer that one must understand that the Egyptian temples used several calendars that were interconnected.

The Egyptian calendar system was more in line with the perfected one used by the Ancient Maya in Mexico, which both claim was not devised by humans but given to them by the gods. Thanks to the astronomical markers the ancient calendars use it allows us today to link our modern dates with theirs. Our calendar begins with January 1, a date that has no relation to an astronomical event. Without complete understanding of Western dating systems, twenty days after New Year would be hard to match up on any other calendar. The ancient world used specific astronomical dates such as the Summer or Winter Solstice for their new year. Thus to say twenty days after the new year in Egypt, could easily be plotted on our calendar today as twenty days after June 21st. [vii] The calendars were important and helped link to the science of astronomy and astrology. By comparing the motions of planets and stars, one would know the most favorable times for festivals, rituals, even healing. Chinese medicine still understands that certain times of the day are better for healing certain parts of the body. In Egypt this was shown as each hour of the day or night was ruled by a different Neteru.

While many calendars were kept, three were of great importance for most of Egypt's history: a lunar, civil and Sothic calendar. All ancient societies had a lunar calendar as their oldest and most important timekeeper. This connection to the feminine energies of the moon, thus to nature upon the earth, and was kept in Egypt in twenty-five year cycles of alternating 29 and 30 day months. They also kept a twenty-five year lunar calendar of 309 lunar cycles, or 9, 125 solar days. Dividing the two numbers is 29.5307 days per lunation (the modern astronomical figure is 29.53059). The lunar calendar also incorporates the golden section. The Egyptian civil calendar kept a 365-day year. Like the Maya the civil year was not thought of being 365 days, but 360 days plus five. The myth relates to Ra not allowing his daughter Nut to conceive in any of the 360-day year, so Tehuti

played the moon in a gambling game winning 1/72 of the moon's light to make up five extra days. The Egyptian sky (as is our modern circle) was divided into 360 degrees. The 360 days were divided into twelve months of thirty days. Each ten of these degrees (or days) were known in Egypt as a decan, each which brought differing energies to the earth.[viii]

The obvious question is why divide a circle, the sky and a day into 360 (a much harder figure to work with mathematically) as opposed to a number like 100. The Egyptians were not interested in easy but rather with keeping everything on earth in harmony with what was in the sky. They are showing something very important about the sky, earth, calendar, time, space and the number 360. Ancient calendars from England to South America to China were all 360 days divided into 12 months. Even the Maya, a civilization that could track astronomical events with decimal precision and knew the exact solar year, still had a calendar in use of 360+5 days. Some writers now feel that the earth suffered a catastrophic event during the period of early humanity, perhaps hit by an asteroid or another planet. This event may have caused the earth to fall out of its perfect circular 360-day (degree) orbit of the sun, to a stranger 365.25-day one. To the ancient mind, the 360-day year was still the proper one for the earth and was used as the measure of time and space. However because the actual solar year changed for some reason, they viewed this additional time to be an extension of perfect time from before the catastrophe. From this idea comes the comma of Pythagoras (see number) that may relate to the connection between the real and illusion. We see an illusion of a 365.24-day year, but the real year may still be 360 days. The comma is a number that allows us to perceive beyond the illusion with number. It should also be remembered that the ancients say we have 360 Neteru inside of us, not 365.24!

The third key calendar was the Sothic, which had its origin in the return of the star Sirius (which was introduced in the section on the Nile). The helical rising of a star happens when it first appears on the horizon ahead of the sun, and Sirius rises every 365.25 days. Out of the 2,000 stars that can be seen without a telescope it is the only one to rise close to the actual solar year. This observation would have required thousands of years of astronomical observation, as opposed to the usual answer of a lucky guess or freak coincidence. Thanks to sophisticated astronomy shown at temples like Karnak, the Egyptians were able to determine the exact length of the solar year (kept on another calendar) and use the star Sirius as an astronomical version that kept the myth of Osiris in each person's daily life. Sirius was thought of as the star of Isis and her rising was called the day of the drop, when a tear for her dead husband Osiris lead to the flooding of the Nile that allowed the crops to grow.[ix] The southern shaft of the Queen's Chamber in the Great Pyramid points to this star.

Why the importance of this particular star, not only for the Egyptians but other ancient cultures around the world? Many mystics and even modern astronomers believe Sirius is the central fire, or great sun, around which our entire solar system (or even galaxy) orbits. Ra in fact may not be the animating force of our Sun, but of the central sun of Sirius. Sirius was mentioned with great knowledge by the African Dogon tribe, who knew that it was not just one star but has a second star (Sirius B, a dense collapsed white dwarf star that can not be seen by the eye) which revolves around it every fifty years. The Dogon also claim there to be a third star that is the origin of all female souls. The question for modern scientists was how did an "unevolved" African tribe know about advanced astronomy that was not discovered with telescopes until 1862? Of course the Egyptians had the same information placed in the Pyramid Texts, "Thy sister Isis cometh unto thee rejoicing in her love for thee. Thou settest upon thee…and she became great with child like the star Sirius." The smaller star of Sirius (B) is often thought of as a child that does not stray far from their mother Sirius A. It is somehow greatly connected to the earth, for the diameter of the earth is one-millionth that of the solar system, while the distance of our sun to Sirius is one-millionth that of our earth to the sun. The Egyptians believed human beings came from the star Sirius and from the system of Orion, related to Osiris. The Hopi and the Cherokee claim our human ancestors arrived 250,000 years ago from Sirius, which they call "Place of Ancestors."[x] Whether this is the central sun of our galaxy, the alien birthplace of humans, or simply the symbolic home of Isis this star system was of great importance in the ancient world.

With the civil calendar being 365 days while the Sothic was 365.25 days, meant the calendars would only match up as having the same start date every 1460 Sothic years or 1461 civil years. This event was known as the Sothic Year. Archaeologists have claimed the need for calendars in the ancient world was for agriculture. However a very simple calendar is all that is needed for agricultural practices. These ancient calendars allowed the energies of the sky to be brought down to the earth. They foretold the correct time for ritual or healing, even when great changes on the earth or in the universe could be expected. Because of this the Egyptians became masters of astronomy.

Astronomy

Until a few hundred years ago the study of the skies (astronomy) was linked to the discipline of what it means for the earth (astrology). Ancient cultures recorded the skies with the utmost of precision, and used that knowledge to make up birth charts, build temples or heal. They could correlate the position of the stars to understand when and how key events should happen or unfold upon the earth. They were able to relate when times were favorable or not favorable. Eclipses were carefully tracked as the loss of the sun to darkness was symbolizing a time on earth when the forces of darkness could snatch back our hard earned gains. It was a time when candles and fires would be lit to help keep Set away until the eclipse ended and the light of Ra would again dispel the darkness. The study of the stars, the zodiac and the energies associated with each constellation, led to their understanding of precession, the universal time clock. A complete trip through the zodiac lasts 25, 920 years when a new age would begin. Each of these new giant ages, as we are now coming upon, was a time of catastrophe and overhaul. Every 2,160 years a new small age would happen when a different zodiac sign rose to replace the previous. This would be less forceful than a complete precession; for example we are now leaving the age of Pisces to enter the Age of Aquarius.

Just as the Taoist can use oracles like the I Ching to suggest possible changes, astrology allows the examination of energetic influences and to provide the possibility of more choices of how to act and proceed. Some have linked the astrological signs to the twelve different forces of energy that the sun gives off each year, which provide a different first blast of solar energy upon our conception. The other planets would also do something similar. Along with the 28 year cycle of Saturn, mentioned in the Osiris myth, Marsiglio Ficino claimed that each year of our life is ruled by a different planet (energy): 1-moon, 2-mercury, 3-Venus, 4-sun, 5-mars, 6-Jupiter, 7-Saturn. Then the order is repeated. He claimed that every seven years will be a change due to the Saturn influence, as well as a four-year complete cycle that will come every 28 years. He suggested a new chart be done every seven years to chart the new influences in our lives.[xi]

Geodesy

Understanding the mathematics of the earth's surface is referred to as geodesy. The Egyptians knew the circumference of the earth and used it to create their system of measurement. The Great Pyramid itself is a storehouse of geodesic data of the earth and mathematical data as a whole. Egypt in the ancient world was seen as the zero line of longitude (which today is at an arbitrary point in Greenwich, England). This line ran right through the pyramids at Giza and can be proved thanks to projections from ancient maps. The island of Elephantine in Southern Egypt was said to be a source for their ability to ascertain latitude. A well was built on the true Tropic of Cancer, thus on the summer solstice the difference of a shadow here and at a spot in northern Egypt would provide the earth's circumference. It is also claimed that pairs of obelisks could provide similar data, as could the long hallway at Karnak. This near perfect understanding of measurement of the earth was encoded within the temple designs themselves. A chapel at the temple of Karnak was shown by Lucie Lamy from its sixteen columns and two stairways to provide lengths and measures for all of Egypt.[xii] This understanding of measurement was far beyond the simple use of numbers that we use in the modern world. To fully understand the knowledge inherent in ancient artwork, temples, or even their calendar one needs to learn sacred number, geometry and sound.

[i] West *Key* p.xi
[ii] West *Serpen*t p.75
[iii] West *Serpent* pp.71-73
[iv] West *Serpen*t pp.74-80; Speeth p.90
[v] Hall p. 36
[vi] Tompkins p.121
[vii] Hancock *Fingerprints* p.375; Schwaller *Sacred* p.174
[viii] West *Serpent* pp.94, 98
[ix] West *Serpent* p.96; Hancock *Fingerprints* p.376
[x] Schwaller *Sacred* p.28; West *Serpent* p.97; Hancock *Fingerprints* pp.374, 390
[xi] Ficino p.83
[xii] see tompkins 177-79 for more information; Lamy 77

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