

# Eye of Horus

## —Ancient Egyptian beliefs behind the mummies

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### Abstract

Our title “Eye of Horus” stands for the amulet which can discriminate good from evil and keep its owners healthy and happy in Ancient Egypt. We use this name because we want to help more people understand the real meanings of the Egyptian beliefs and know more about the precious culture heritage of Egypt, instead of being misled by the false interpretation and excessive exaggeration we can often see in the movies about Ancient Egypt.

Besides, at the end of the project, we create two poems to express how we were touched by Ancient Egyptian beliefs.

Keywords: Ancient Egyptian beliefs, Eye of Horus, the mummies

### 摘要

標題所指的「荷魯斯之眼」是埃及的信仰中常見的護身符，代表著辨別善惡、捍衛健康與幸福，希望以此為名，讓更多人了解真正的古埃及文化。埃及的木乃伊並非一般坊間電玩或是電影所扭曲的暴力、血腥形象，相反的，在埃及龐大而複雜的信仰中，木乃伊是在古埃及人一生的信仰以及對永生的渴望下，所世代傳承的傳統。

除了報告本身之外，我們在受到埃及信仰的感動之餘，在報告的最後，也利用埃及文化裡的意象創作了兩首詩。

關鍵詞：埃及信仰、荷魯斯之眼、木乃伊

## 1. Preface

### 1.1 Motivation

The impression about Egypt of people may start from mummies and Pyramids. Most people praise the high art developments and the mysterious burial cultures of Ancient Egypt instead of thoroughly understanding the story behind the artistic productions. Therefore, we want to introduce Egyptian religious beliefs and burial cultures by this exhibition, which was displayed in Memorial Hall from June 12<sup>th</sup>, 2011 to September 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2011.

## 2. Texture

### 2.1 World View and Beliefs

#### 2.1.1 World view & Beginning

The world was covered by dark chaotic ocean named Num, where Ra, the god of the sun, was born at the beginning. After that, Ra gave birth to the god of the air—Shu and the god of the moisture—Tefnut by his own semen. However, they lost each other in the ocean. When they found each other, they were so happy that could not stop crying. The tears they dropped while finding each other became human.

Shu and Tefnut gave birth to the god of the sky—Nuit and the god of the earth—Geb, but they were so in love with each other that they embraced with each other all day. People could not move and breathe easily because of them, so their father—Shu separated them, and made the world have space between sky and earth.

The god of wisdom—Thoth felt sorrow for Nuit and Geb, so he helped them to get five holidays. There were only 360 days a year in Ancient Egypt, so Thoth finally made it longer and become 365 days. That was the origin of a year with 365 days.

Nuit and Geb gave birth to Osiris, Isis, Nephthys, Seth and Horus in the additional five days. (The Horus here is Osiris and Isis's brother, but the one in following article means Osiris and Isis's son. They have same name.)

Except Thoth and Horus (Osiris's brother.), the other nine gods are the most important gods in the Egypt belief. All the mythology in Ancient Egypt belief was extended from those gods and supported the whole Ancient Egypt belief.

#### 2.1.2 Important Gods

There are a lot of gods in Ancient Egypt, which was a pantheistic civilization. Legends would be different because of the location or denominations, so we only introduce some gods that are representative and have connection with our report.

##### 1. Ra

Ra was the god of the sun, the ruler and the god who created the world and the other gods. Ra was the main god in Ancient Egyptian belief. Legend has it that human was made by his tears.

##### 2. Osiris

Osiris is the oldest son of Geb, the Earth god, and Nut, the sky goddess. Osiris was the god of vegetation at first, and then became the greatest god replace Ra in some denomination. Osiris was killed by his younger brother, Seth. After his son and wife helped him to reborn, Osiris resided in the underworld as the lord of the dead and performed the final judgment of the

dead.

### 3. Isis

Isis was the first daughter of the Earth god, Geb and the sky goddess, Nut, and also the wife of Osiris. She is the goddess of motherhood, magic and fertility. Isis was instrumental in the resurrection of Osiris when he was murdered by Seth. Her magical power restored Osiris's body after she gathered the body parts that had been strewn by Seth.

### 4. Seth

Seth was Osiris' younger brother, who was evil and ugly. He was so envy his brother, Osiris' power that he murdered him and usurped his throne. After that, Seth fought with Horus, his nephew, gaining the crown and kingdom for 80 years.

### 5. Horus

Horus was often shown as a hawk or a man with a hawk's head and the crown of the whole Egypt. He fought with Seth, his uncle, to revenge for his father. Horus finally got the throne back and became the pharaoh.

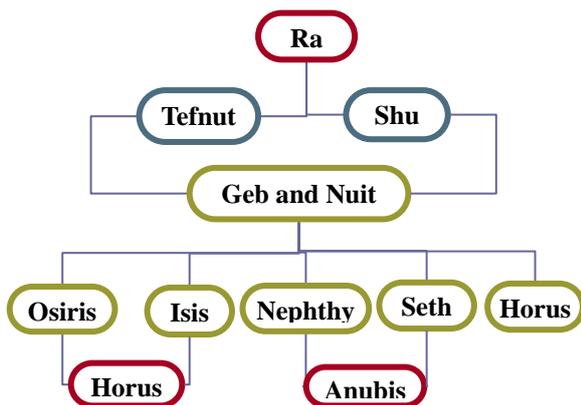
### 6. Anubis

Legend has it that Anubis was the inventor of the first mummy. He was the guide of the dead, the tutelary god of the mummies and graveyard. He led the dead and opened the door to afterworld.

### 7. Maat

Maat was the goddess of truth, justice and harmony. The Ancient Egyptians believe when people died, they have to go to the Hall and accept some tests. People will have eternal life if they pass it.

The most important part is the moment Anubis weighed their heart with Maat's feather. If their heart is lighter than the feather or as light as it, they can continue to another part of the test. But if their heart is heavier than the feather, then their heart will be eaten by the demon Ammit, the Destroyer.



Picture 1 The God Family

## 2.2 The Way to Eternal Life

### 2.2.1 Death and Eternal Life

The world after death is more important than the

living world to ancient Egyptian. They valued "transmigration" and "permanence". The present world is short, and the next world is immortal. They believed that life transmigration is just like the sunrise and the sunset.

Death is only a process of the soul leaving body, going to the whole new life and the next world. It's a necessary process to eternal life. Therefore, they make dead people become mummies to preserve their bodies.

### 2.2.2 The Origin of the Mummy

Legend has it that Seth envied his brother, Osiris's ability and throne, so he set a trap to take over his power. He made a beautiful human form coffin and declared that he wanted to give it to someone congruous.

Ancient Egyptians thought the things they would use after they died are the most important, so everyone lay into it to try. When it's Osiris turn to try the coffin, Seth covered the coffin cover and nailed it. After that, he threw the coffin into the Nile and then took the place of Osiris.

Osiris's wife, Isis, found the coffin back with difficulty, but it was discovered by Seth. He was so angry that he cut Osiris's corpse into fourteen pieces and threw them into the Nile again. But Isis didn't give up, her younger sister, Nephthys, and she found every piece back. They let Anubis sewed the pieces completely and made Osiris become the first mummy, and also the God of the hell. After that Isis and Osiris got birth of their son, Horus. Horus finally revenged for his father after an eighty-year fight with his uncle, Seth.

### 2.3. The Way of Making a Mummy

The Greece scholar Herodotus had once interviewed a worker making mummies and made some record, which is almost all we know about the mummy's production process nowadays. Other studies also found it that there are different prices between different kinds of mummies, the most expensive one, the medium one and the cheapest one. The following way is the way of making the most expensive mummies.

The ceremony must be executed by Embaumeur, a man who wear an Anubis mask. First, hook out the brain and put into a kind of liquid mixed by cedar oil and spices cut to pieces to wash the corpse's head. Then pour out the liquid and put in some resin to fix the internal part.

Second, use stone to cut a little incision on the corpse's belly and take out all the organs except heart. Use toddy and medicated wine to wash the organs and use linens to wind them around. And then, use same kind of liquid to wash the corpse's belly and wind linens around some part of corpse where will be easy came off, like fingernail or ears. After that, put all the

things in the natron for a month to dehydrate.

After dehydrate the corpse, wind the organs with new linens and put them into Canopus jars. Then use linens or sawdust to fill the corpse, sew the incision and stick a piece of hide or small dish which drew on Horus' eye on it. And then make the corpse wear a wig.

Then dye the corpse, man into red and woman into yellow, and use linens with resin on to wind the corpse carefully. Read particular scripture represent each part of body during the process and fix amulets with beeswax. Finally, cover a mask which is similar to the face when the corpse still alive, and that is the finish.

## 2.4 Important Objects in the Tomb

### 2.4.1 The Mask

To make sure the soul passed through the challenge can recognize its own body, Egyptians made the mask to remind the soul. Ancient Egyptians think god's skin is gold, and the gold mask can only use by royalties. It often made by papyrus or linens soaking in the water and then spread gypsum on. Ancient Egyptian called it "Cartonnage", which means "The Place Soul Belong."

### 2.4.2 Canopus Jars

Canopus jars were used to protect four internal organs which were linked four kinds of tutelary gods. The human head represent the god, Imsety, who take care of liver. The ape head stand for the god, Hapy, who protect lung. The jackal head is the god, Duamutef, who is responsible for stomach. The falcon head is Qebhsenuf, who protect intestine.

It says that the four gods were given by Sobek, the crocodile god, who wanted to atone for its crime to Horus. They became Horus's adopted sons and finally became Horus's four guardians. Before the animal models appeared, Canopus jars' models are four people who stand for Seth, Serqet, Nephthys and Isis.

### 2.4.3. Ushabti Figures

"Ushabti" means servant. There are usual 365 workers figures of workers in each tomb. It was believed that in the afterlife the deceased would have to work in the fields of heaven. To avoid this labor, they can have ushabti figures to substitute for them.

## 2.5 Challenges and Journey after Death

The Book of the Dead provided instructions to help the dead to reach their destination in the afterlife and to ensure the continued existence in the afterlife. In The Book of the Dead are many spells that was prepared for the dead to used and make sure they can

survive in the afterlife.

At different time the book of dead were written in different place. At first it was written on the walls of tombs, later in the coffin and finally on papyrus and put into the coffin.

There were three funeral literatures in Ancient Egypt: "Book of Dead", "Book of Gate" and "Amduat". The first one and the second one were the same before New Kingdom. Although they were generally called as Book of Dead, they had two different usages. "Book of Gate" narrating the passage to the dead to go to next world. "Book of Dead" was written for Maat's judgments. And the third one "Amduat" could only be used by the royal families.

## 2.6 "Quest for Immortality" Exhibits Introduction

### 2.6.1 Thutmose III 's Tomb

#### 1. The Feature of the Tomb and Discovery

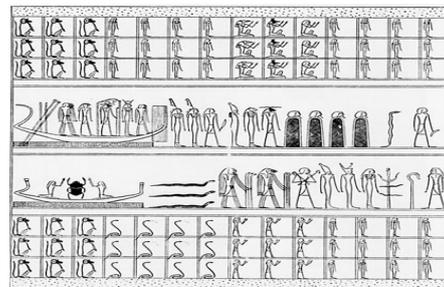
Thutmose III was the greatest martial leader in Egyptian history, the modern historian called him as Napoleon of Egypt. He fought 17 wars when he still alive and he won every time. His tomb hidden in Valley of the Kings was not the biggest or the most splendid, but the most secret. However, it was pity that the tomb had already been rifled by the grave robbers when it was found in 1898.

The coffin chamber which displayed in this exhibition was the main chamber with stars decorated on the ceiling. The stars stand for Thutmose III had already passed through the challenges and became god. That's why he lived in stars like a god which also meant he reborn in the sky goddess — Nut's uterus.

#### 2. Amduat on the Wall

The mural on Thutmose III 's tomb is important because it is the earliest and most complete version of the Amduat that people have found so far. In Ancient Egypt, because Amduat related to Ra's regeneration, so it can only belong to pharaohs and few royalties. By this reason, Thutmose III 's Amduat is a very special and important funeral literature.

The following is the summery of Thutmose III 's Amduat.

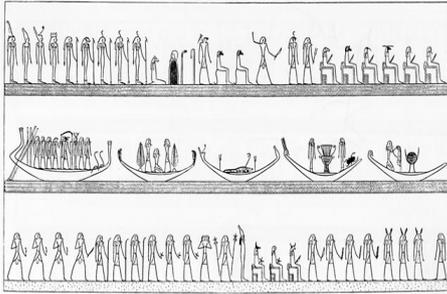


Picture2 The First Hour

#### (1) The First Hour—Ra's dark journey

Ra enters the western "akhet" (horizon), which is a transition between day and night. The pharaoh took

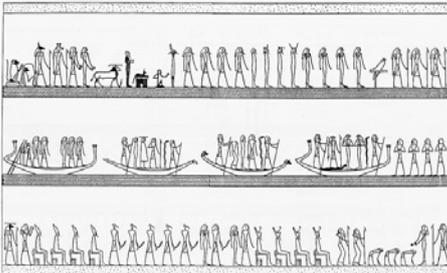
a boat with Ra's soul to the underworld.



**Picture3 The Second Hour**

(2)The Second Hour—Wernes

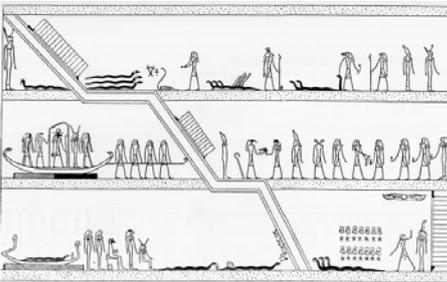
Solar boat was escorted by other boats. They passed through Wernes, which Ra gave blessing to those deceased souls.



**Picture4 The Third Hour**

(3)The Third Hour—Waters of Osiris

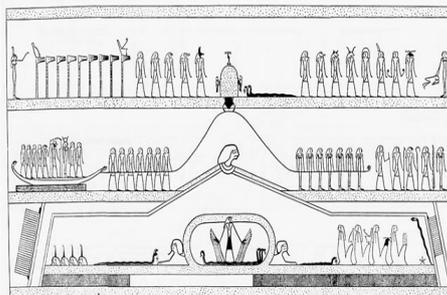
More and more boats follow Ra pass through Waters of Osiris.



**Picture5 The Forth Hour**

(4)The Forth Hour—Sokar

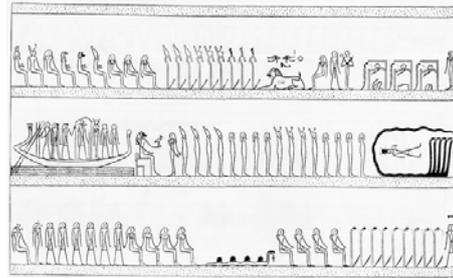
Ra reaches the difficult sandy realm of Sokar, the underworld hawk deity. All the water was dried and the ground become dessert, so some boat became snakes in order to pass the dessert.



**Picture6 The Fifth Hour**

(5)The Fifth Hour—Cave of Sokar

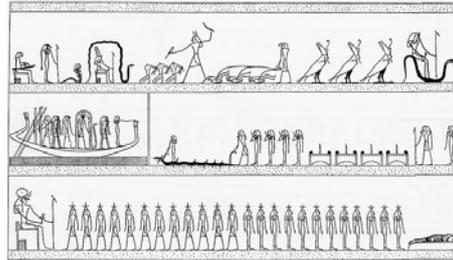
Ra and Sokar fight with enemy. A scarab tows the boat.



**Picture7 The Sixth Hour**

(6)The Sixth Hour—Ra allied with Osiris

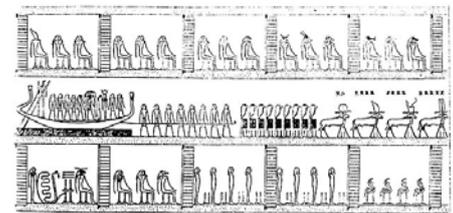
Ra's soul unites with his body. Ra brings light and eternal life to the dead.



**Picture8 The Seventh Hour**

(7)The Seventh Hour

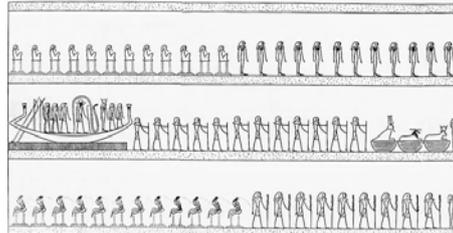
The sun's biggest enemy, the snake Apophis, is here. Everybody tries to kill it. Isis is in front of the boat and assistants is putting knives in the snake. All the gods are joint together. Horus is in the front and sitting on his throne to direct everybody.



**Picture9 The Eighth Hour**

(8)The Eighth Hour

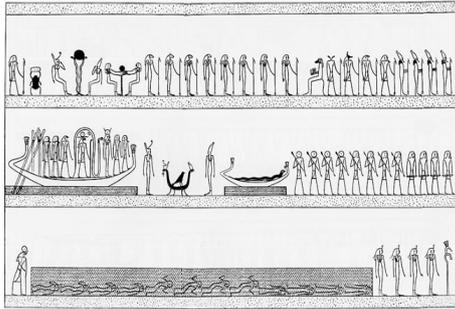
The most dangerous time is past. Ra provide the dead white linen clothes for them to wear in the future.



**Picture10 The Ninth Hour**

(9)The Ninth Hour

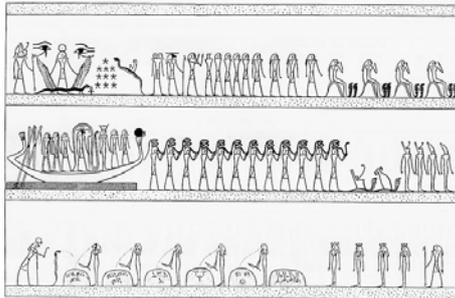
The boat is getting near the horizon. In the front of the boat rower are the dead standing. They are waiting for Ra to give offering to the dead in the underworld he meets.



**Picture11 The Tenth Hour**

(10)The Tenth Hour

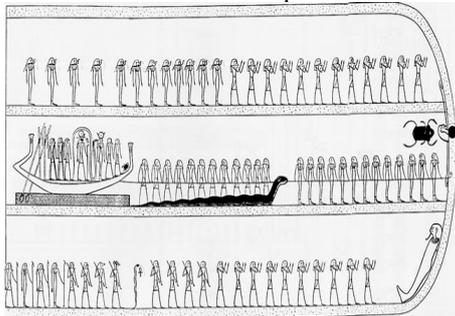
Ra show himself on the horizon as a scarab. Horus is comforting those who drowning in Nile can get divine.



**Picture12 The Eleventh Hour**

(11)The Eleventh Hour

The stars in the top is a symbol of the dark hours have already passed. In front of the boat are 12 gods keep snakes over there heads to protect the boat.



**Picture13 The Twelfth Hour**

(12)The Twelfth Hour

The god of the sky is welcoming the sun and everyone escaped from the underworld are singing. In the button Osiris is resting in the dark while the sun is continuing its trip into the land of light.

**2.6.2 Ramesses II 's child's mummy**

1. Discover of the Mummy

There is a coffin belongs to a girl named Tayuhenet in England Bolton Museum, but someone discovered that the mummy laying in it has wrong size. After the bone analysis, it was found out that the mummy was a boy, not a girl. Through the incision could judge that the boy mummy was live in 19th dynasty of Egypt. Furthermore, there have some tallow stand for the god Ra and Amun on his body, which means he has a very honorable status. Scholars finally used face restructuring technology and

discovered that his face features is similar to the Pharaoh Ramesses II . The genetic analysis showed that the mummy has a deep relation with Ramesses II .

**2.6.3 Mortuary Objects and Sacrificial Offerings**

1. Gold mask

Gold-plated mummy mask was made at 30 B.C. There is a sun with wings drew on the head that stand for the first sunlight on the horizon. It has strong power of destroy. There is Osiris picture under each ear, and there are cobras with sun on its head under the picture. Legend has it that the cobras can spurt fire to protect the mask.

**2.6.4 Others**

1. Little Girl Mummy

The girl is about 7 or 8 years old. We know this girl may get serious pulmonary tuberculosis through X-ray. The girl must be a member of royal because of the gold foil on her face and the skin color on her human form coffin is gold. Gold is the color can only use by the royal members.

**3. Our Creation**

After we went to the exhibition, worked on our project and realized more about Ancient Egypt culture, we really fall in love with this mysterious civilization. Thus, we want to show how we love this culture in literature way. The following are our poems, standing for our affection.

1. Stacy

I

Remember the Sun  
Remember the wind  
Remember the river once in your dream  
Embraced by the Nile and listen what she sings  
The song point a bright trail  
Connect to eternity

“Toward the future, but remember foretime  
Ra is always around your side  
Keep your passion, but remember don't lie  
Maat's feather is waiting before you pass. “

II

Believe in what you believe  
Dream in what you dream  
Life is always tough but sweet  
Just let life takes its course  
And immortal heaven is always waiting

Mummy is the way to eternity  
Mask keeps your smile and beautiful  
And don't be afraid  
Anubis will hold your hand  
Like you are just a little child

### III

Time is like a river  
It never stops forever  
Everyone is a drop of tear in the Nile  
Who looking up at the pyramid  
Stood for thousands of years

If life is just like a dream  
I never want to awake  
Until Osiris smiles to me  
I am willing to be as the sand  
In Egypt

#### 2. Minnie

Pass through the challenge  
Come with Ra's soul  
After twelve hours  
You will be in  
the world

the world  
in the afterlife  
is beautiful and eternal  
Live in the sky full of stars  
stay with pharaohs' soul and coffin

The way  
to eternal life  
is not so simple  
protect Ra's eye  
Anubis kills the snake  
and fights with the enemies  
The dangers had been past through

Day after Day Sunrise Sunset  
The way to the underworld will never end

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