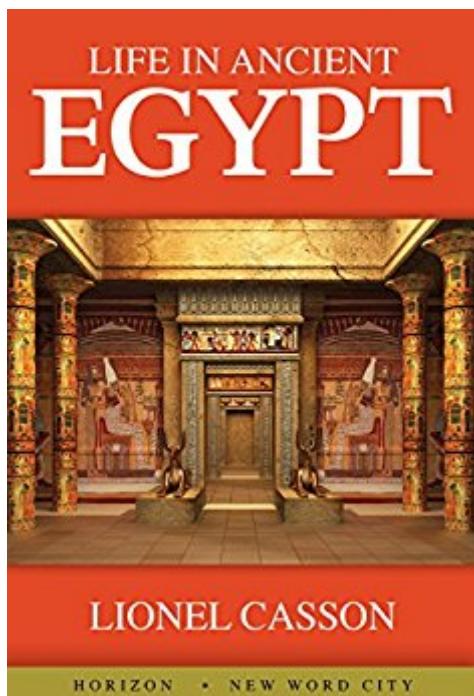


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Life In Ancient Egypt



Synopsis

"... gracefully written" - The New York Times Award-winning historian Lionel Casson paints a vivid portrait of the people of ancient Egypt - from peasants and pharaohs to soldiers and scribes and artists and priests - and what life was like beyond the splendors and treasures that remain with us today.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The extraordinary civilization of Ancient Egypt lasted for almost three thousand years and left behind some of the most famous monuments in the world. Who isn't fascinated by the pyramids at Giza, the temple at Luxor, and the Sphinx? But I wanted to know more about the people who created these monuments, and I once met the author so I bought this book. (Lionel Casson was a professor at New York University and something of a celebrity in the world of Classics. He wrote two dozen books including A Life in Ancient Rome, The Ancient Mariners, and A Ships and Seamanship in the Ancient World.) This excellent book is well written and covers a lot of ground on such subjects as the structure of Egyptian society, engineering and the

professions, farming, family life, the role of women, religion and the role of the afterlife. An important note: the book covers mostly life during the New Kingdom (not Old or Middle Kingdom), roughly 1550 to 1075 B.C., a time of extended peace and prosperity. Much of the evidence of daily life of both nobility and commoners comes from the lavish wall paintings that decorated the many tombs of pharaohs and nobles that have been uncovered from this period. Casson put forward one particularly interesting theory: that the Egyptian civilization grew and survived because of the unique environment. It hardly ever rained in Egypt but the Nile flooded on schedule every year and provided plenty of food as long as people worked together to build the dikes, canals, and catch basins needed to conserve water and were reasonable about sharing. That's a good lesson: we need to get along to prosper!

Although scholarly and factual, this is no dry recitation of facts. The descriptions of the everyday lives of Egyptians feature many humanizing elements -- maybe nobody expected the Spanish Inquisition, but the Egyptians certainly did anticipate and greatly dread the after-death exam they were sure they'd be undergoing, so much that crib sheets containing the correct things to say were tucked in somewhere easy to access, like between their thighs. It's endearing to think of them gulping nervously and furtively consulting their hidden, handy written guide before saying anything incriminating (or, more accurately, not assertively denying anything they needed to deny.) Origins of the various Pharaohs are explained, Cleopatra's likely fate if she hadn't suicided, and some things that may be a bit too graphic for younger readers (why funerary preparations for some ladies might be delayed for a few days, for instance.) This isn't just like every other book on ancient Egypt, and it's worth reading even if you've watched every available in-depth documentary regarding the subject.

This book promised, and delivered on, a description of everyday life in ancient Egypt. It tells us what they ate, what the inside of their homes looked like, what they slept on, and even described what the six kinds of boats they used looked like. I did find it interesting. I did find it written just a smidgen above the level of the average reader. I recommend keeping a dictionary close at hand.

I enjoyed this "quick read" overview of life in ancient Egypt. The book covers everything from the structure of government to the daily lives of the various social strata, and from the religious beliefs and practices to the treatment of women. I especially enjoyed the insight it gave into the beliefs of the Egyptians in the afterlife.

Excellent description of life in ancient Egypt. A subject which was always wrapped in mystery with all the different reigns and the Pharaohs now easy to follow. An engrossing read.

A fascinating, easy read. I love the details of daily life in ancient cultures, and this delivers. It packs a lot of info into a short book.

Just like a visit to Egypt.

Excellent read. Not your usual boring history book.

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