

# The Ethiopian Culture of Ancient Egypt

Introduction to the Amarigna and Tigrigna  
Dual Hieroglyphic Language



Legesse Allyn

Learning with Hieroglyphic Linguistics  
Volume I

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Amarigna and Tigrigna word matching by Legesse Allyn

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# Introduction

Diodorus Siculus wrote that the culture of ancient Egypt was Ethiopian, due to Ethiopians having founded ancient Egypt and preserving their culture there.

As such, this book provides, *through an introduction to the Ethiopian Amarigna and Tigrigna dual hieroglyphic language*, a way of learning about the culture of ancient Egypt.

Ancient texts are messages from the bygone eras. They stand as a testimony to heights of development achieved by our ancient civilizations. Historians for long have depended on ancient texts for understanding contemporary events of ancient periods. These ancient texts give us a first-hand account of the forgotten events, times and culture of the past.

The Rosetta Stone is a singularly important artifact and document that has changed the course of our understanding of Egyptian civilization. The Rosetta Stone enabled historians to bring a purportedly dead language back to life, paving the way for a better understanding of the available hieroglyphic literature. In fact, the language was never dead, thriving in over 30 million speakers.

Although known to ancient Greek historians, like Diodorus Siculus, but unbeknownst to the yesteryear colonial-era historians, the Ethiopian languages of Amarigna and Tigrigna still today hold the elements of the ancient hieroglyphic language intact. These path-breaking revelations are leading to a revision of hitherto translated documents and are giving deeper insights into the Egyptian civilization.

This book provides an understanding of the history and culture of Egyptian civilization by peering through the prism of dual hieroglyphic languages of Amarigna and Tigrigna and analyzing the hieroglyphs, more so, with the help of those of the Rosetta Stone. This approach affords us advantages of not only getting a deeper understanding of historical documents but also an understanding of vast information lying embedded in each of the hieroglyphs.

Meshing hieroglyphs in-between the history of Ancient Egypt, we take a look at their customs, trade and symbology. Another outcome of this exercise is understanding the global relationship between words. It is an accepted fact that more than 60% of the English words have their roots in Latin and Greek, and this book shows Amarigna and Tigrigna to be the root of Greek and Latin and therefore a wide range of European languages including English, Spanish, German and more.

It is demonstrated in this book that many words of the world's languages have their roots in the dual hieroglyphic languages of Amarigna and Tigrigna. Though the extent of such relationships is beyond the scope of this book, it lays foundations for the students to explore this path on their own.

With the world shrinking closer day-by-day and multi-cultural societies a norm, this book paves way for appreciation of the cradle of all the civilizations and how other cultures have readily embraced the elements of ancient Egyptian and therefore Ethiopian culture and civilization. Ancient Egyptian and Ethiopian culture civilized European culture, not the other way around.

This book is also intended to showcase the Ethiopian culture from where the ancient Egyptian culture was born and give the Ethiopian culture its due credit.





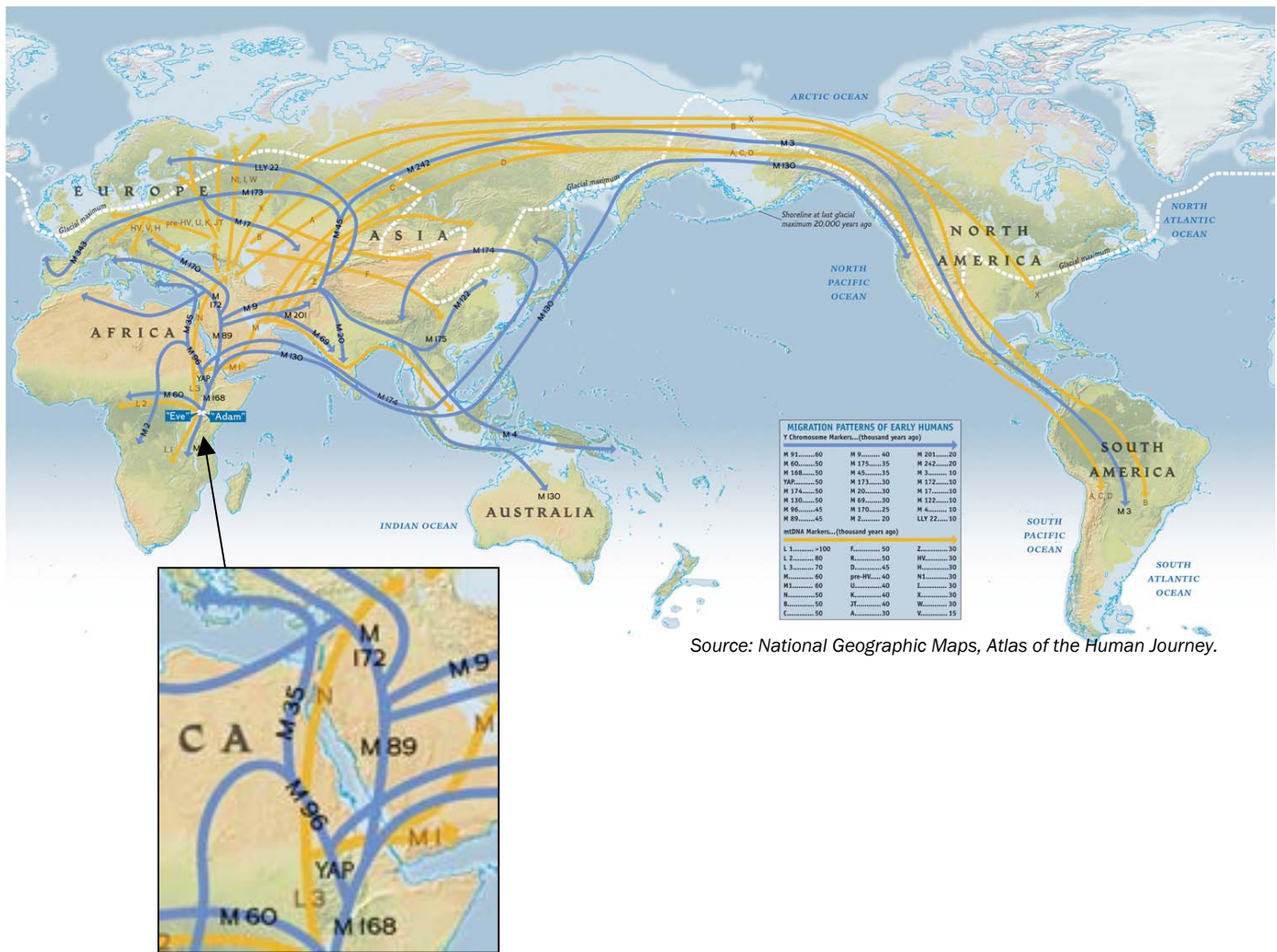
MODERN MAN **LEFT AFRICA**  
50,000 YEARS AGO  
WITH LANGUAGE

# We Are All Related Through DNA

The fact is, we are all related. How?

According to modern DNA research, including that of National Geographic's *Genographic Project*, Africans classified as *modern humans* left east Africa, the region just south of Egypt that includes Ethiopia and Eritrea, to populate the rest of the world an estimated 50,000 years ago.

When they left, they didn't make up new languages. They took language with them. Therefore, all current languages are descended from the original language.



Source: National Geographic Maps, *Atlas of the Human Journey*.

## Quick Quiz:

How many years ago do scientists say modern humans left Africa?

Which classification of humans were they that left Africa and populated the world?

# Modern Humans Populated the World with Language

*Homo sapiens idaltu*, an extinct sub-species from Ethiopia about 160,000 years ago, is argued to be the direct ancestor of all modern humans and therefore where all our languages evolve from. While those modern humans left Africa 50,000 years ago, fossils of older humans from Ethiopia have been found dating back 4.4 million years and another from 3.2 million years old.

These very old remains of the earliest humans include *Dinknesh*, found in the Ethiopian Afar Region. Her name means, "you are marvelous," in the Ethiopian *Amarigna* and *Tigrigna* languages. But she has another name given to her by Western archaeologists, *Lucy*.

And her scientific name, *Australopithecus Afarensis*, which means "Southern ape from Afar," is still another name given to her by scientists.



A replica of *Dinknesh* to the left contains several hundred pieces of her bones that were found, representing about 40% of her skeleton. Wikipedia - Lucy (*Australopithecus*)

## DNA TIMELINE:

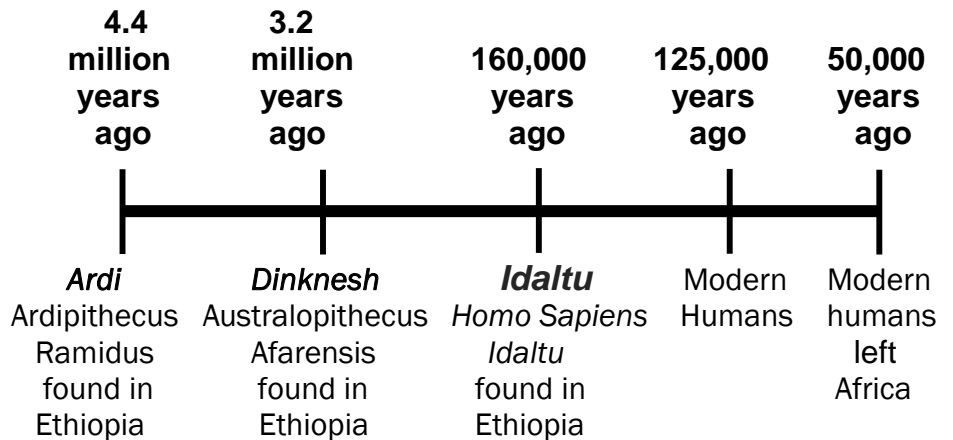


Photo Credit: Philip Krome  
*Dinknesh* in the National Museum of Ethiopia

### Quick Quiz:

- What does *Dinknesh*'s name in the Ethiopian *Amarigna* and *Tigrigna* languages mean?
- What is her name that Europeans and Westerners call her?
- What does *Dinknesh* tell us about the human evolution?

## Dinknesh or Lucy - Which Name Do We Use?

So, given *Dinknesh* has multiple names, the question is, which name do we use? The answer is really simple.

Ethiopians proudly call her by her Ethiopian name, *Dinknesh*, because Ethiopians are easily able to pronounce Ethiopian words that make up her name and understand their significance to Dinknesh's life and their figurative meanings. Additionally, naturally, Ethiopians will give her an Ethiopian name, since her bones were found in Ethiopia.

But Europeans, Westerners and others outside of Ethiopia may not be able to pronounce her Ethiopian name or the words that make up *Dinknesh*. So, to make it easier to talk about her, they give her a name common to the West, *Lucy*.

Interestingly, she was given the Western name *Lucy* because the day Dinknesh's bones were first found, the song, "Lucy in the Sky With Diamonds," was repeatedly played at the celebratory party. So researchers gave it the name of the woman in the Beatles' song.

### *Dinknesh*

Feminine form of *dnk* and *dnqi* in the Ethiopian Amarigna and Tigrigna languages, which mean, "wonderful, marvelous, admirable."

### *Lucy*

Feminine form of the name, *Lucian*, from Latin *Lucianus*, a derivative of Roman Lucius, from *lux* (genitive *lucis*) "light." In Spanish, *luz*.

Which name would you call her?

*Lucy* is an important part of our ancestral culture.

*Throughout this book, we will discover other people and things that have multiple names given by different cultures. If examined closely, each name may reveal interesting things about each culture. But they may also reveal a relationship to each other.*

#### **Quick Quiz:**

What are pronunciation sound groups?

What is a reason people use names from their language?

What are names made up from?

Why should one keenly examine the names of different cultures?

## Our Words Are All Related

On the previous page, you were asked which name you would call Dinknesh. Did you know all the languages in the world are related?

When people left Africa 50,000 years ago, they took language with them. The region from which the migration took place is the present day Ethiopia and the languages they took with them are still living, used in Ethiopia as the languages of Amarigna and Tigrigna.

Maybe you already noticed that there is a pronunciation sound change between the root of Dinknesh's name in Amarigna and Tigrigna...

*dnk*  
"wonderful, marvelous, admirable."  
(Amarigna)

*dnqi*  
"wonderful, marvelous, admirable."  
(Tigrigna)

Linguists, experts who specialize in languages, have sorted similar pronunciation sounds into pronunciation sound groups. [K] and [Q] represent the same pronunciation sound and are in the same pronunciation sound group.

The Ethiopian suffix, *-nesh*, in the Amarigna language, means, "you are" for a female. Together, *dnk + nesh* means, "you are wonderful, marvelous, admirable." You can remember this because *neh* means, "you are," for a male, similar to the English, *he*, and *nesh* means "you are" for a female, similar to *she*.

*-neh*  
"you are"  
masculine

*-nesh*  
"you are"  
feminine

Just as DNA changes over time, so does pronunciation. And like the natural evolution of humans over time and across groups and societies, pronunciation sound change is a natural part of the evolution and spread of words and language among groups and societies of the world.

What about in English? Can you think of a word that has a similar pronunciation and meaning? How about the English word, *ding*er?

*ding*er  
"something superlative, outstanding" (English)

[K], [Q] and [G] all represent the same pronunciation sound and are in the same pronunciation sound group. This is the effect of pronunciation sound change over time. But sound change can happen in relatively short time periods, especially as a result of a speaker of one language trying to pronounce an unfamiliar word or pronunciation of a word from another language.

### Quick Quiz:

What is pronunciation sound change? How can pronunciation sound change occur?  
Search online for the meaning of your name? What other names are related to yours?  
How can we use sound change to understand history?

# What is Culture?

History not only attempts to make a timeline out of the chain of events in the past, but also tries to understand why and how events have occurred. To understand the chain of events and meaningfully reconstruct them, an overall understanding of the land and its people is important.

Before we continue, let us take a minute to learn what culture is. The Merriam-Webster dictionary simply defines culture as, “*The beliefs, customs, arts, etc., of a particular society, group, place, or time.*”

Just as the pronunciation of a name can differ, depending on the people and society, so too can definitions. And since ancient Egypt is in Africa, let’s take a look at the definition of *culture* from an African perspective. Professor A. Babs Fafunwa, a former Professor and Dean of Education of the Faculty of Education of Ife, Nigeria, in his book, “The History of Education In Nigeria,” defines *culture* as the “total way of life of a people,” specifically including their...

- *Material Products*
- *Habits*
- *Customs*
- *Religions*
- *Beliefs*
- *Thoughts*
- *Arts*
- *Technology*
- *Music*
- *Literature*
- *Theatre*
- *Drama*
- *Dress*
- *Education*

As part of culture, Professor Fafunwa defines *education*, whether modern or ancient, as, “*The aggregate of all the processes by which a child or young adult develops the abilities, attitudes and other forms of behaviour which are of positive value to the society in which he lives... A way of perpetuating the culture of the society.*”

So we have read two perspectives about culture, one from the West, where we live, and one from Africa, where ancient Egyptians lived. Gaining information from multiple sources can help us tremendously refine and strengthen our understanding and knowledge of words, names and other topics. Later, we will begin examining etymologies of words, which give the history of words and how their pronunciations and meanings have changed over time. The etymologies in this book series come from the Online Etymology Dictionary, located at [www.etymonline.com](http://www.etymonline.com).

Now let us continue to learn more details about the culture of ancient Egypt through what has been written in hieroglyphs, in the Rosetta Stone, and by the Greek historian Diodorus.

## **Quick Quiz:**

What is a benefit of getting information about a subject from multiple sources?  
What are some of the most important aspects of culture to you?

LANGUAGE & GRAMMAR  
ARE **PARTS OF CULTURE**

# Meet Sewasw: Ethiopian Ancestress of Grammar

If you take a look at the points defining history by Prof. A. Babs Fafunwa, all of them can be understood only by first understanding the language of that civilization. The standard of any language is reflected by the standard of grammar of that language and the reverence paid to it. Let us now take a look at the role played by the grammar in Ethiopian and thereby the Egyptian Civilization

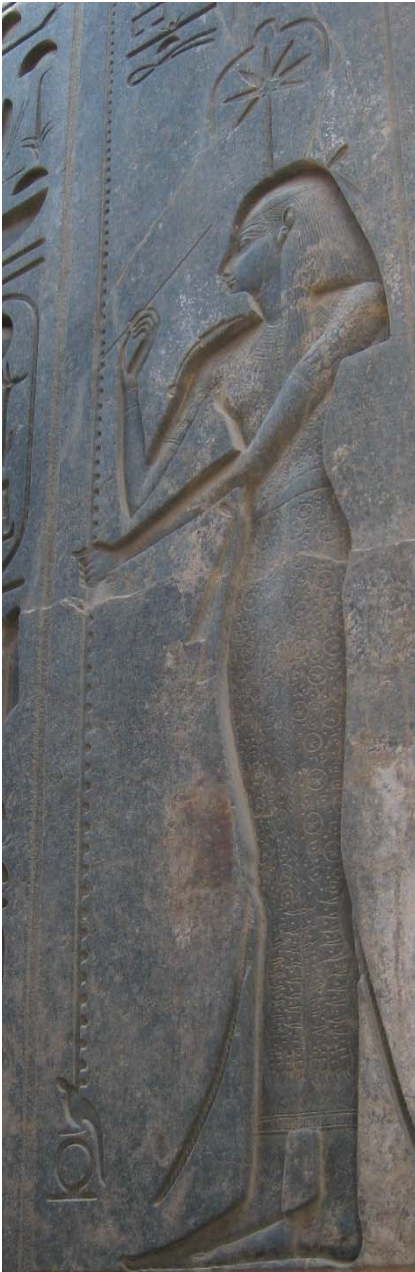
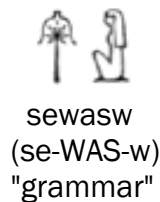


Photo Credit: Karen Green

Now, please meet another Ethiopian. Her name is Sewasw and she is recorded in ancient Egyptian tradition as the Ancestress of grammar. Sewasw is a name that continues to be given to girls in Ethiopia. which means “grammar” in the Amariḡna and Tigrigna dual ancient Egyptian languages.



As can be seen in the photo on the left, Sewasw is shown in ancient Egyptian art with a palm tree above her head and writing with a palm tree frond in her hand, which came from the palm tree.

So there are two questions we must ask: what is grammar and what is an *Ancestress* or *Ancestor*?

*Grammar* is defined by the *American Linguistics Society* (ALS) as simply the collection of principles defining how to put together a sentence. The principles include word order and word structure.

Since we are talking about the ancient Ethiopian development of writing in ancient Egypt, we can look at how today’s Ethiopian Ministry of Education defines *grammar*, “*Grammar uses a set of finite rules to make an infinite choice of sentences and utterances.*”

In Ethiopia, *speaking* and *writing skills* are called *productive skills*. As was likely the case to Sewasw, teaching writing was important because written communication was a critical skill for taking notes, writing letters, stories and reports related to farming, production and sales.

## Quick Quiz:

What does Sewasw’s name mean in the Ethiopian languages of Amariḡna and Tigrigna?

According to the Ethiopian Ministry of Education, grammar uses a set of finite rules for what two skills?

What is the relevance of grammar in understanding history of a civilization?



# What Is Grammar?

According to the Ethiopian Ministry of Education, and likely what Sewasw taught, the key aspects of a grammatical structure include.

- *Form* - The words and order of words that a sentence consists of
- *Function* - The meaning or concept of the sentence
- *Pronunciation* - The pronunciation sounds when speaking and listening

Grammar includes *word classes*, or *parts of speech*, including...

- *Nouns* - naming words (i.e., Sewasw, knowledge, house, team)
- *Adjectives* - describe nouns (i.e., fast, beautiful)
- *Verbs* - denote action or being, and can also refer to events, emotions or processes (i.e., eat, run)
- *Adverbs* - add information or describe other words, usually verbs (i.e., quietly, quickly)
- *Pronouns* - a noun that has been mentioned previously (i.e., he, yours)
- *Prepositions* - go before a noun or pronoun and links it with another word or phrase (i.e., because, when)
- *Conjunctions* - a 'joining word' linking words or parts of sentences together (i.e., and)
- *Determiners* - precede nouns and quantify them in some way (i.e., "an apple", "the doctor")
- *Interjections* - express feelings and are often exclamatory (i.e., "Oh!")
- *Numbers*

Sewasw understood all these elements of Ethiopian grammar and helped others learn them to write the grammar of Amariḡna and Tigrina in hieroglyphs, as the dual national language of ancient Egypt. Let's look into the Rosetta Stone for some of these elements of grammar examples in hieroglyphs...

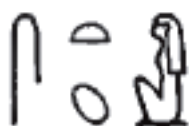
## Nouns



shum  
(shoom)  
"leader"



sew  
(sew)  
"man, person"



set  
(sayt)  
"woman"



gnb  
(gnb)  
"wall"

## Adjectives



hecha  
(he-CHA)  
"white"



netela  
(ne-TE-lah)  
"independent"

## Preposition



nay  
(nie)  
"of"

## Verbs



amnesheneshe  
(am-ne-SHE-ne-she)  
"treat well"



reda  
(re-DAH)  
"serve, assist"

## Pronouns



nissu  
(ni-SOO)  
"he"

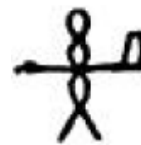


eziom  
(e-ZEE-om)  
"these"



entay  
(en-TIE)  
"what"

## Conjunction



kea  
(ke-AH)  
"and"

**Quick Quiz:**

What are the three key aspects of grammatical structure that hieroglyphs utilize?

Name three of the many parts of speech that hieroglyphs record?

What is a name for Ethiopian girls that means “grammar”?

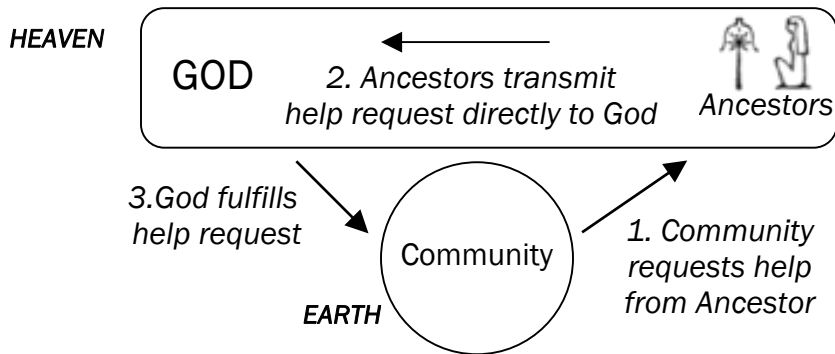
Do you find the Ancient Egyptian language interesting? Why?

# How Did Sewasw Become an Ancestress?

Ancient Egyptians held the African traditional religion (ATR) belief that members of the community who played a very important role, including local and national *heros*, *legends* and *leaders*, rose up to heaven to be with God when they died. As Professor Fufunwa wrote:

*“The ancestors are regarded as or believed to be the past heroes of a community.”*

That is where they can continue to help the community by directly accessing God for the divine assistance the community needs.



These people are called by the title, *Ancestor*, or *Ancestress* for a female. The community asks the Ancestor for assistance and the Ancestor goes to God and asks God for the help the community requires. Sewasw was one such Ancestor.

Many people had small statues of their favorite ancestors, like the one seen below.



Photo Credit: Courtesy of Harrogate Museums and Arts

# The Ancient Egyptians Had Many Ancestors

Did the ancient Egyptians have multiple gods? No. This is a common misconception from ancient days until today. The ancient Egyptians only believed in one god.

Like the ancient Egyptians, all religions today now have a person who once lived on earth who intercedes for them with God in heaven. And while the *Ancestors* were featured in ancient Egyptian art, God was not. As Professor Fufunwa wrote:

*“To the Africans God is unique; he cannot be compared with any being.”*

It is important to recognize that the Greeks thought ancient Egyptian *Ancestors* were *gods*, which they were not. That was a misunderstanding by the Greeks and later led to the mistaken belief that Africans need to be converted to various religions, even by force, in order for them to receive the understanding about a single god. An understanding they already had.

Below is one of the many ancient Egyptian hieroglyphs for *Ancestor*, *abat*. Notice they are people.



*abat*  
(a-bat)  
“ancestor”

In this sense, Africans, including the ancient Egyptian Africans, always believed in a single god, a belief today called *monotheism* in the West. The *Ancestors* merely interceded for the community, but were not *gods*.

So in reality, monotheism always existed traditionally in Ethiopia, ancient Egypt and elsewhere African traditional religion, even if the ancient Greeks mistook the *Ancestors* for *gods*.

## **Quick Quiz:**

What type of role did *Ancestors* play in ancient Egypt and in African traditional religion today?  
Were ancient Egyptian *Ancestors* really *gods*, as the Greeks mistakenly believed them to be?  
Where was an Ancestor believed to go when he or she died?  
How were Ancestors believed to intercede for the community?

## Cultural Information Is In Sewasw’s Name

As other Africans continue to do today, names in ancient Egypt were given to children by their parents that had important meanings and positive cultural significance. Also, later in life, a person can acquire additional names, based on their achievements or other events in their lives.

A famous Ethiopian emperor, *Haile Selassie*, later in his life received the name, *Ras Tefari*. You might have heard this name as, *Rastafari*. In the name, *Ras* is a title that means, “emperor, chief, head,” and *Tefari* means, “somebody who is feared.” We will learn more about Haile Selassie in book three.

In Sewasw’s name and variations in the spelling of her name, we can learn about important elements of the ancient Egyptian culture...

- Sewasw (alt., *swaswu*) means “grammar,” showing that the *ability to read and write* (literacy) was important to the culture of ancient Egypt and its *transfer and transmission of information*
- *asash* means, “examiner,” showing that *careful observation, accurate documentation, and objective analysis* was important to the culture of ancient Egypt and its *advancement*
- *ishokh* (alt. *shok*) is a thorn of palm tree used to write with and *sy* is the palm tree the *ishokh* comes from, showing that the being *resourceful* was important to the ancient Egyptian culture and its *utilization of natural resources*
- *ahaz* (alt., *ahaz*) means, “number,” showing that *the ability to count* was important to the culture of ancient Egypt and its *financial success*

Sewasw and the multiple words related to her name show us that Egyptians placed the knowledge and record keeping on a higher pedestal. It also shows that the yearning to preserve ones own roots and passing them onto further generations is not a preserve of modern civilization alone, but was very much a part of our ancient civilizations, too.

### Quick Quiz:

What do you understand about Egyptian civilization based on Sewasw’s name?

# Your Own Ancestors Help You Retain Your History

While different societies have different heroes, legends and Ancestors who keep them connected to their culture, history and God, those of each society help preserve their ability to face the future with confidence. By forcing one society to reject their heroes, legends and Ancestors submits that society to an unknown future, a social disadvantage.

As Professor Fafunwa aptly points out:

*“History is to a people what memory is to the individual. A people with no knowledge of the past would suffer from collective amnesia, grouping blindly into the future without the guide-posts of precedence to shape their course. Only a thorough awareness of their heritage allows them to make their public decisions as they make their private ones... reflection on previous events and policies will assist considerably in planning any future course of action.”*

*“...in the final analysis, it is the citizen of a country who should write its history, because it takes an indigenous historian to glimpse the historical past of his people and to express it in a language that his people will appreciate and in a manner that will create deeper understanding and sense of identity with the cultural heritage of his people.”*

Substituting one's own heroes, legends and Ancestors for somebody else's can have benefits but can also have disastrous consequences. While the rest of the adopted society understands its cultural past and therefore its future, the new converts are forced to play catch-up, a distraction that would not have otherwise occurred, the convert already having understood its own culture, past and therefore its future.

An extreme of this is shown by what Godwyn Morgan wrote in his 1682 lawsuit that was published into a book entitled, “The Negroe's and Indian's Advocate.” Morgan writes that the new religion to be forced onto the Africans held in slavery in America would even put, “a restraint upon the Thoughts and Desires” of those Africans,

## **Quick Quiz:**

Why is it important to have knowledge of one's own heroes, legends, Ancestors, culture and history?

PRONUNCIATION SOUNDS  
& FIGURATIVE MEANINGS  
**ARE BUILDING BLOCKS** OF  
WORDS

# Words Are Building Blocks of Pronunciations

Words are like buildings with components that look different, but are actually the same around the world. Notice that these buildings, among other similarities, all have roofs supported by columns...



Egyptian

*Photo Credit: Olaf Tausch*



Greek

*Photo Credit: Jebulon*



Roman

*Photo Credit: ChrisO*



English

*Photo Credit: Jacek Halicki*



American

*Photo Credit: U.S. National Park Service*



Chinese

*Photo Credit: Fred Hsu*

## Quick Quiz:

What are some of the features that the buildings above share in common?



# Buildings Constructed With Similar Components

Like buildings around the world that look different but are built with similar components, there are words that look different but are built with similar pronunciation sound components...

**geza = “house”**

An ancient Egyptian word, *geza*, which means “house”, looks like a word you’ve never seen before. Right? Let’s look at the components, namely the consonants, of 5 language variations of *geza*...

**G+Z (*geza*)= K+S (*oikos*) C+S (*casa*) H+S (*house*) J+Z (*jǐzǔ*)**

The two letters represent pronunciation sounds that have changed across different ethnic groups. We will use a building column to represent the first letter, [G]...



Egypt  
(Tigrigna)  
*geza*  
[G]



Greece  
(Greek)  
*oikos*  
[K]



Rome  
(Latin)  
*casa*  
[C]



Britain  
(English)  
*house*  
[H]



China  
(Mandarin)  
*jǐzǔ*  
[J]

Just as each column looks different but is the same component of a building, each of the [G], [K], [C], [H], and [J] above represents the *geza* [G] pronunciation sound in different languages.

The same is true with the [Z] in *geza*, which we will illustrate with a roof ...



Egypt  
(Tigrigna)  
*geza*  
[Z]



Greece  
(Greek)  
*oikos*  
[S]



Rome  
(Latin)  
*casa*  
[S]



Britain  
(English)  
*house*  
[S]



China  
(Mandarin)  
*jǐzǔ*  
[Z]

Just as each roof looks different, each of the [Z], [S], [S], [S], and [Z] above represents the *geza* [Z] pronunciation sound in different languages. So while, *geza*, *oikos*, *casa*, *house*, and *jǐzǔ* look completely different from each other, they each represent the pronunciation of the word “house” in different languages.

On the following pages, we will explore more words that look different but are the same, just pronounced different in languages around the world.

# Evolution of the Name Egypt Through Sound Change

As we have learned, there can be different names or pronunciations of the same name, depending on the culture or society, and names can be affected by pronunciation sound change. This is true with the name, **Egypt**. Because Ethiopians founded ancient Egypt, it is important to learn how Ethiopians pronounce Egypt.

## Gebts = “Egypt”

The name *Egypt* is known to be the Greek pronunciation of the ancient civilization, with obvious pronunciation sound change since [P] is not a natural pronunciation in the ancient Egyptian hieroglyphic languages of *Amarigna* and *Tigrigna*. Ethiopians pronounce Egypt as Gebts (GE-bts) and Gebtsi (GE-btsee).

1. First thing you notice is the [E] at the beginning of *Egypt* before the [G]. This is because some cultures add a vowel at the beginning of the first consonant in a word, such as *Espaniol*, which in English is pronounced *Spanish*...

G B TS = E G P T

2. Since the [G] is the same in both names, let's move on to the [P]. In this case, the pronunciation of the Ethiopian [B] was changed to [P] by the Greeks...

G B TS = E G P T

3. Then we have the [TS] in *Gebts*. While it may not seem like an easy sound to pronounce, Italian retains the sound in *pizza* and the Chinese retains the sound also. But someone unfamiliar with this sound might simplify change the pronunciation sound to [T] or [S], both sounds existing in [TS] ...

G B TS = E G P T

So pronunciation sound change not only leads to the change in the way consonants and vowels are pronounced. As you see in both *Gebts* and *Spanish*, vowels can be added where they may have never existed. *Later we will learn which hieroglyphs can be used to write which sounds.*

## Gebts = “Copts”

Not only was *Gebts* the original pronunciation of *Egypt*, it was also the original pronunciation of the name *Copts*. Which pronunciation do you prefer?

### Quick Quiz:

What are some ways pronunciation sound change affects words?

Have you ever told somebody your name and then they pronounced it differently than how you said it?

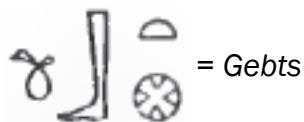
Have you ever met somebody whose name was difficult to pronounce?

Have you ever been able to recognize the origin of people based on the way they pronounce your name?

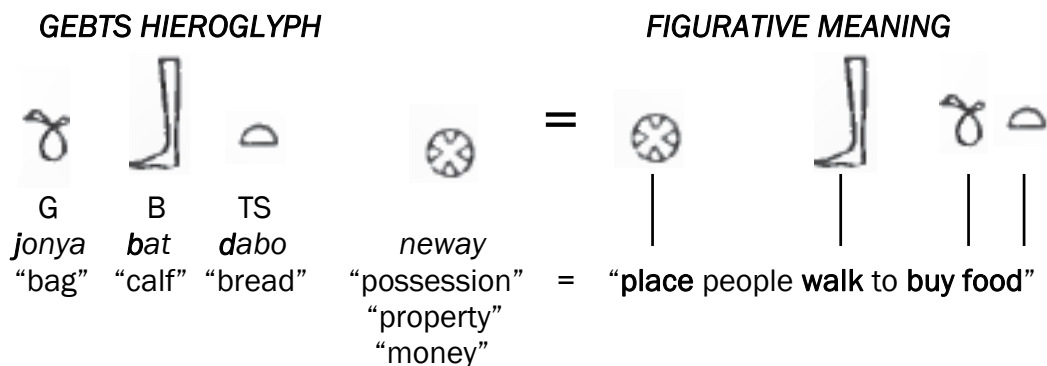
# Figurative Meaning of Gebts

We can look at the hieroglyph of *Gebts* to discover the significance of the name, the figurative meaning, and something about its culture.

Ancient Egypt was well known for international trade. But it also had thriving local markets. We can learn many things about its culture by looking at a hieroglyph of the name, *Gebts*...



Let's break down each hieroglyphic letter...



As we are learning, a single hieroglyphic letter can represent multiple pronunciation sounds...

- The *bag* hieroglyph can represent sounds including [J], [Q], [G], [K], [H], and [CH]
- The *leg* hieroglyph can represent sounds including [B], [F], [W] and the European [P] and [V]
- The *bread* hieroglyph can represent sounds including [TS], [T], and [D]

So what can we discover in the hieroglyphic name about the culture and society of *Gebts*?

- The *bag* tells us that **buying and selling** was an important part of the culture of *Gebts*
- The *leg* tells us that people would **travel on foot** to the markets to buy, sell and trade
- The *dabo*, a name for Ethiopian bread, tells us **food was sold** in the markets
- The *neway* symbol tells us that *Gebts* was a **city**

*Let's learn more about this cultural information on the next page!*

### Quick Quiz:

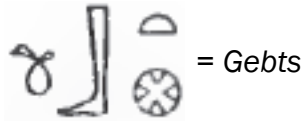
What did you understand from the figurative meaning of hieroglyph of *Gebts*?

How is trade important for understanding a civilization?

What are some differences between ancient Egyptian and today's society?

# Culture Hidden In the Gebts Hieroglyphic Name

On the previous page, we learned there are many pieces of cultural information we can learn from one of the many ways *Gebts* is written in hieroglyphs ...



- The **bag** tells us that **buying and selling** was an important part of the culture of Gebts
- The **leg** tells us that people would **travel on foot** to the markets to buy and sell
- The **dabo**, a name for Ethiopian bread, tells us **food was sold** in the markets
- The **neway** symbol tells us that Gebts was a **city**

What we have learned from the figurative meaning of *Gebts* matches with artifacts found in various archeological sites of the Ancient Egypt. This shows how hieroglyphs reflected the thoughts and beliefs of the society. Let us now take a look at what else can be learned about the Ancient Egyptian society based on what we have learned from the meaning of *Gebts*.

## Shoppers Used Shopping Bags

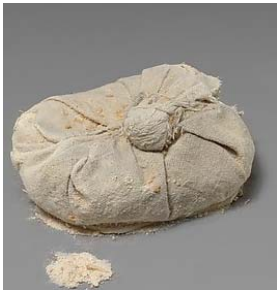


Photo Credit:  
The Metropolitan Museum of Art

The bag in the name of *Gebts* reveals that the market culture, although up to 5100 years older than ours, also utilized shopping bags. Ancient Egyptian bags, like the one in the photo to the left, were made from linen and tied shut with a string.

Maybe a bag was used to hold grain or flour purchased, which would have been processed in a mill, like the one seen in the wooden model to the right, from the tomb of Meketre.



Photo Credit:  
Keith Schengili-Roberts

## Ancient Egyptians Produced and Ate Baked Foods



Photo Credit: Andrea, Nummy Kitchen

The fact that ancient Egyptians milled flour means the culture baked items like bread. The *dabo* hieroglyph is the Ethiopian bread seen in the photo at the left is Ethiopian *dabo*, bread made of flour and yeast.

The ingredients also include, egg, honey, ground coriander, ground cinnamon, ground cloves, salt, whole milk, and butter. Each of these ingredients can individually tell you even more about the ancient Egyptian culture, for example, they raised birds (eggs), they raised cows (milk, butter), and they cultivated bees (honey).

If you want to taste *dabo*, you can buy it in almost any Ethiopian or Eritrean market or restaurant.

## Ancient Egyptians Produced and Ate Dairy Products



Photo Credit: Keith Schengili-Roberts

The model to the left, from the tomb of Meketre provides evidence that dairy products, such as the milk to bake the dabo bread, were a part of the ancient Egyptian culture.

## Ancient Egyptians Walked To Markets on Foot

The model to the right from an ancient tomb can easily be either shoppers walking to the market with what they have to trade, or walking from the market with what they bought.

Notice the geese in the hands of the first two ladies, from which eggs to bake the dabo bread could come from. Also, like the culture of other Africans, the ancient Egyptian shoppers are carrying items and baskets with goods on their heads. Where did they buy the items?



Photo Credit: Marcus Cyron

## Ancient Egyptians Produced and Ate Honey Products



Photo Credit: Kenneth J. Stein

The photo to the left shows that beekeeping was a part of the ancient Egyptian culture, from which honey to bake the dabo bread could come from.

The honey could also be used to make the sweet Ethiopian honey wine, called *tej*.

### Quick Quiz:

What did you learn about relationship between hieroglyphs and the society?

Can you briefly imagine and describe what an ancient Egyptian marketplace would have looked like?

List the types of animals, birds and insects Egyptians used for livelihood.



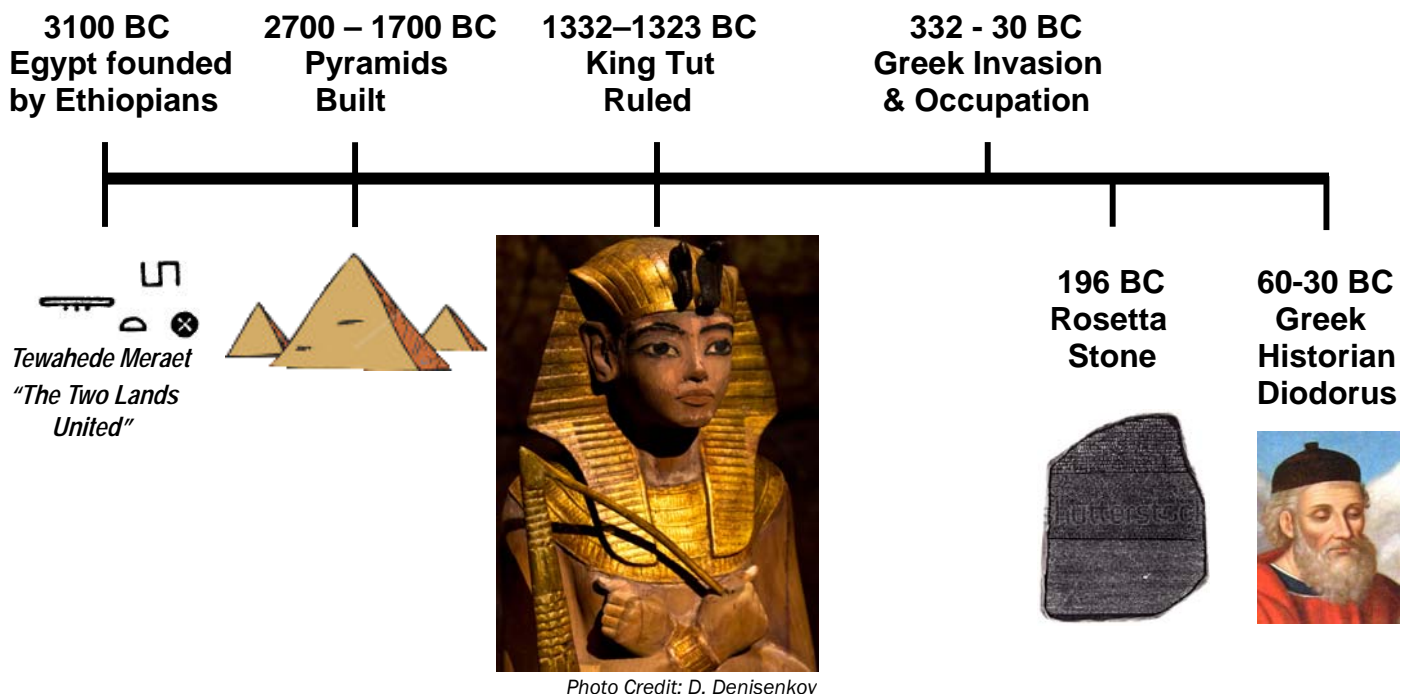
**ETHIOPIA IS THE SOURCE**  
**OF ANCIENT EGYPTIAN**  
**NILE WATER, AGRICULTURE**  
**& CULTURE**

# Ancient Egypt Timeline

Now we will now begin learning more details about ancient Egypt, its people and its culture. Following is a general timeline of ancient Egypt...

- The founding of ancient Egypt by Ethiopians in 3100 BC
- The pyramid-building period between 2700 and 1700 BC
- The reign of young King Tut between 1332 and 1323 BC (became king at only 9 years of age)
- The eventual invasion and occupation of ancient Egypt by the Greeks between 332 and 30 BC
- The writing and carving of the Rosetta Stone by the Greek priests, commemorating the young Ptolemy V becoming occupying ruler of Egypt (became ruler at only 12 – 14 years of age)
- The historical writings about ancient Egypt between 60 and 30 BC by the Greek historian, Diodorus Siculus

TIMELINE:



## Quick Quiz:

How old was King Tut when he became king of Egypt?

How old was Ptolemy V when he became a foreign military occupying ruler of Egypt?

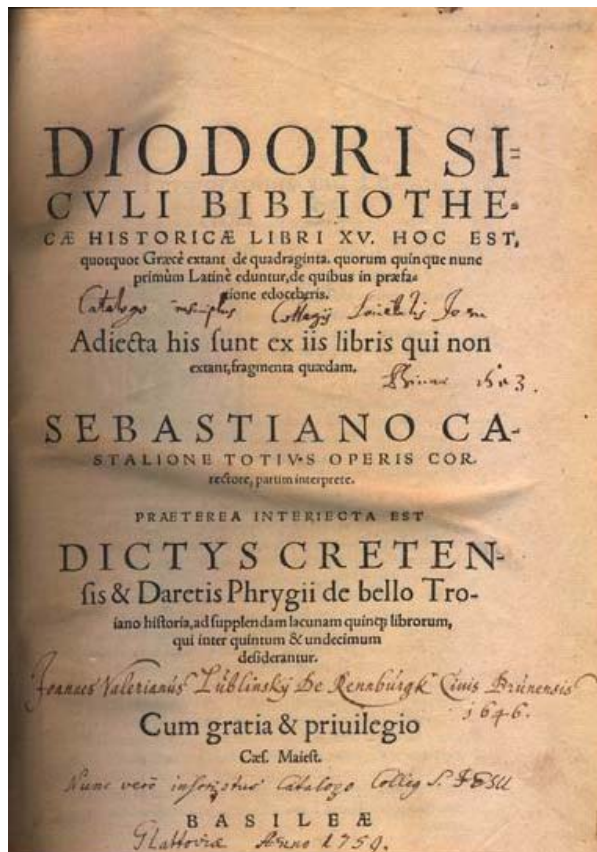
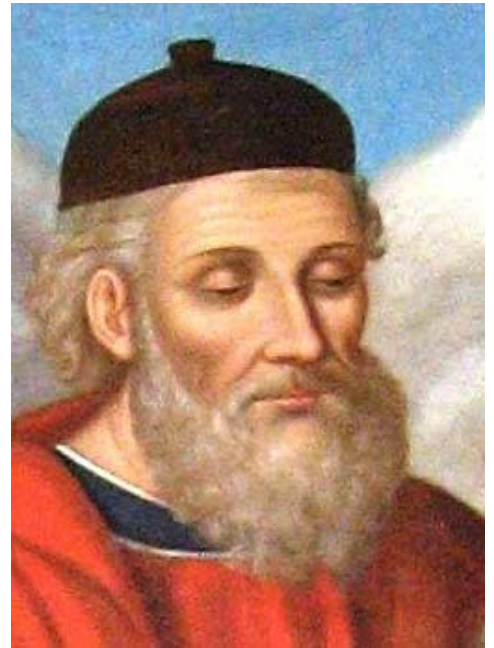


# Greek Historian Diodorus Wrote About Egypt

To begin learning more about ancient Egypt, its people and its culture, we start with Diodorus Siculus. Why? Because Diodorus is one of the best sources for accurate information about ancient Egypt, its people and its culture.

Diodorus was a Greek historian who made many trips to Egypt in order to learn more about its culture and civilization, which he documented in his “Bibliotheca Historica,” written between 60 and 30 BC.

Not only did Diodorus write about the Greeks in Egypt, he identified Ethiopians as the founders of ancient Egypt and source of its culture. He also wrote about Ethiopia as the source of the Nile River water. And he wrote that the Ethiopian founders of Egypt were the source of the stories about the Greek gods.



"They say also that the Egyptians are colonists sent out by the Ethiopians, Osiris having been the leader of the colony. And the larger part of the customs of the Egyptians are, they hold, Ethiopian, the colonists still preserving their ancient manners."

Diodorus, book 3, 3:1

## Quick Quiz:

Who was Diodorus?

What did he write about Ethiopians in Egypt?

Whose customs did Diodorus write were of the ancient Egyptians?

# The Rosetta Stone's Egyptian & Greek Languages

The Rosetta Stone is the key to learn about the culture of ancient Egypt. It was carved in the year 196 BC to mark the rise of Ptolemy V to the throne, only 12 to 14 years of age, a young king like King Tut.

In fact, after modern researchers were able to map Ptolemy's name in the Greek portion, to his name in the hieroglyphic portion, they developed the ability to read hieroglyphs.

The top two sections are in the ancient Egyptian hieroglyphic language and Demotic. The bottom section is written in ancient Greek. By knowing what the Greek section said, we learned what the top sections said.

The Rosetta Stone contains a lot of useful information to help you understand Egypt, its people and its culture. It was carved with a message in both the Egyptian language and the Greek language, during the 300-year military occupation by the Greeks following their successful invasion.

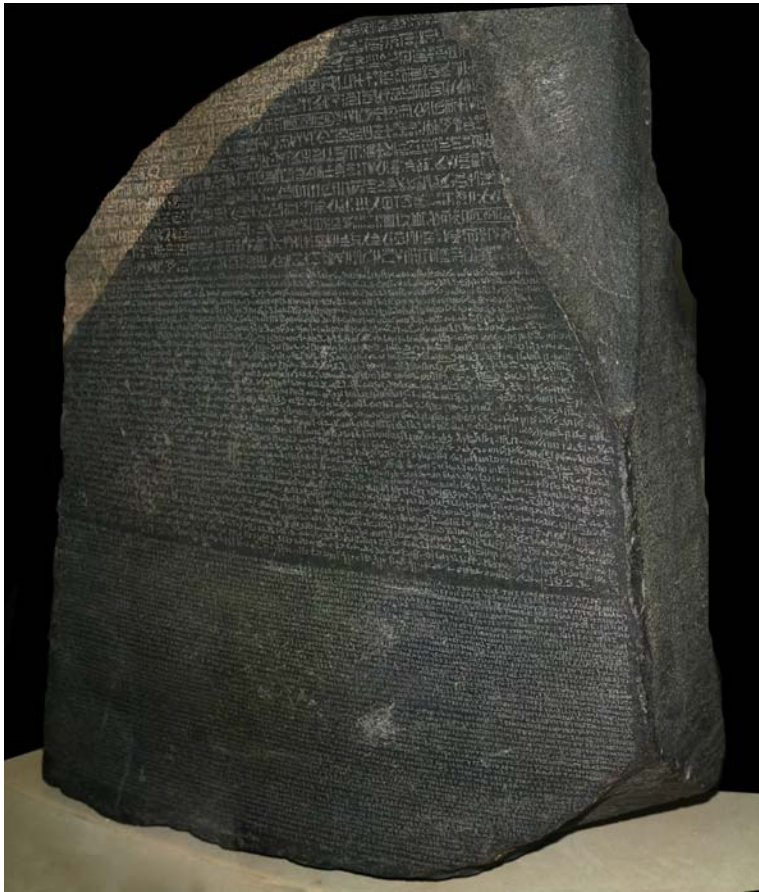


Photo Credit: Hans Hillewaert

*“Ptolemy, the king of Egypt, was for a time regarded with approval. Aristomenes had been appointed his guardian and had been in all respects an able administrator. Now at the start Ptolemy revered him like a father and was wholly guided by his judgment. Later, however, corrupted by the flattery of his courtiers, he came to hate Aristomenes for his frankness of speech, and finally compelled him to end his life with a draught of hemlock. His ever-increasing brutality and his emulation, not of kingly authority, but of tyrannical license, brought on him the hatred of the Egyptian people.”*

Diodorus, book 28, 15:1

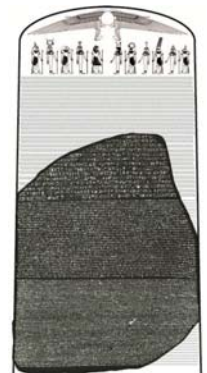


Illustration of the Rosetta Stone and the missing portions of the stele that it was originally part of.  
Photo Credit: Captrondo

## Quick Quiz:

What two languages are recorded on the Rosetta Stone?

The Rosetta Stone contains how many different types of writing?

How did we begin again to read the ancient Egyptian hieroglyphic language?

# Northeast Africa



# Ancient Egypt, Northeast Corner of Africa

It has been observed that ancient civilizations all over the world are generally found on the banks of perennial rivers. Perennial rivers are rivers that flow through out the year, unlike seasonal river that are dry in the summers. As we go ahead we will see that the river Nile played a major role in shaping the Egyptian Civilization.

Ancient Egypt, located on the northeast corner of the African continent, was a vast desert region dotted with desert hills that lined both sides of the Nile River from the southern end, all the way up to the Nile Delta, which emptied out into the Mediterranean Sea.



*"In density of population it far surpassed of old all known regions of the inhabited world. for in ancient times it had over eighteen thousand important villages and cities. The total population, they say, was of old about seven million. It is for this reason that, according to our historical accounts, the ancient kings Egypt built great and marvellous works with the aid of so many hands and left in them immortal monuments to their glory."*

Diodorus, book 1, 31:6-9



## Quick Quiz:

- What is the name of the continent on which Egypt is located?
- What is the name of the river that flows through Egypt from Ethiopia?
- What was the name of the sea into which the Nile emptied?
- What is the name of the sea on the eastern border of Egypt?
- How many villages were there in ancient Egypt?
- What was the population of ancient Egypt?
- What are the other ancient civilizations that are located on the banks of rivers?

# The Nile River Begins in Ethiopia

The Nile River was, and still is, the most important feature of Egypt. But where does it begin?

Most of the water that flows into Egypt's Nile River begins in Ethiopia, as Diodorus wrote, "... nearly all of the water that flows to Egypt and into the Mediterranean Ocean comes from Ethiopia."

The Nile River is not only one of the world's longest rivers, but it is also one of the only rivers in the world to flow from south to north, from Ethiopia to the Mediterranean Sea, through Egypt.

In fact today, 85% or more of the water that flows into Egypt comes from Ethiopia. Ethiopia's *Semaen Mountains* (also referred to as *Simien* and *Simen*) receive monsoon rains that empty into its *Lake Tana*, which then flow through Ethiopia's *Abbay River* (also referred to as the *Blue Nile*), into the Nile. The *Semaen Mountains* is a World Heritage Site today.



*"The Nile flows from south to north. it is the largest of all rivers as well as the one which traverses the greatest territory, it forms great windings. from the mountains of Ethiopia.."*  
Diodorus, book 1, 32:1-2



## Quick Quiz:

What is the name of the country from which most of the Nile River comes from?

Generally speaking, does the Nile River flow from south to north or north to south?

# Ethiopia's Lake Tana Is the Source of the Nile

Ethiopia's *Lake Tana* is 41 miles wide X 52 miles long with a maximum depth of 9 miles. Lake Tana is possibly the origin of reed boats that you can see in scenes of ancient Egypt. A priest is shown in a reed boat on Ethiopia's Lake Tana in the photo below.



Photo Credit: Landroving Linguist

*“... its entire length is filled with foam made by the backward rush of the water, and strikes those who approach it with great terror. And, in fact, the descent of the river is so swift and violent that it appears to the eye like the very rush of an arrow. During the flood-time of the Nile, when the peaked rocks are covered and the entire rapids are hidden by the large volume of the water, some men descend the cataract when they find the winds against them, but no man can make his way up it, since the force of the river overcomes every human device.*

Diodorus, book 1, 32:9-10



From Ethiopia's Lake Tana, the long, winding Nile River begins. In Ethiopia, the name of the river that flows directly from Lake Tana is called the *Abbay (a-bai) River*. The Abbay River exits Lake Tana by a 148-foot high waterfall, called the *Tis Issat Falls*. Once the Lake Tana water drops down into the Abbay River, it begins its 2000-mile journey into Egypt.

And while the river may begin by flowing southward, after nearly 200 miles it turns northward, on its way to Egypt. But that's not all, because after passing the famous ancient city of Khartoum, the river turns southward again for another 200 miles, before finally turning northward again to enter Egypt.

The water from Ethiopia was important to the culture of ancient Egypt. Without it, almost nothing we know about ancient Egypt would exist.

## Quick Quiz:

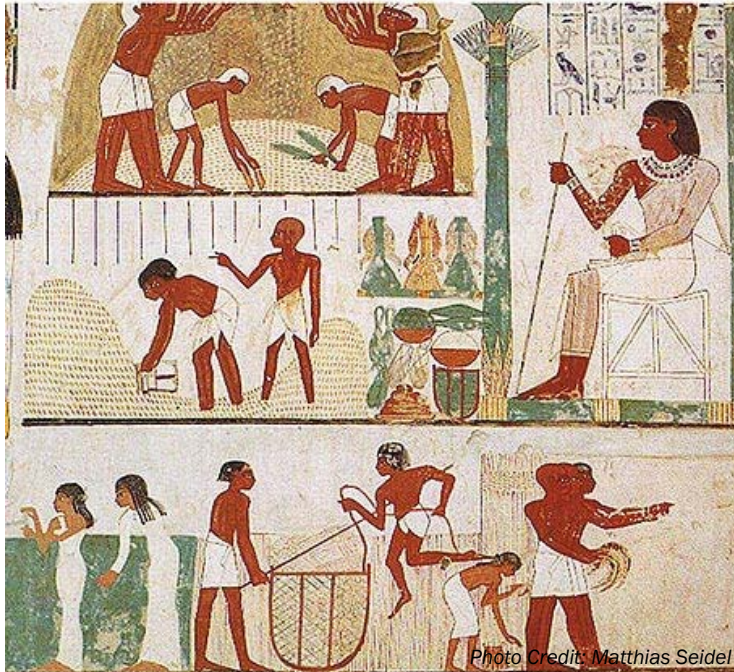
What is the name of the lake in Ethiopia that is the source of most of the Nile River's water?

What is the name of the waterfall where the water leaves the lake?

# Ethiopian Agricultural Technology Changed Egypt

If the water didn't change Egypt, since it was always there, what did?

According to Diodorus, it was the Ethiopians' knowledge of agriculture, practiced in the famous Ethiopian highlands of the Semaen Mountains. According to Diodorus, the people living in the region that became Egypt were cannibals, and the food crops introduced by Ethiopians gave them a way to eat, without eating each other...



*"... all men were glad to change their food, both because of the pleasing nature of the newly-discovered grains and because it seemed to their advantage to refrain from their butchery of one another."*

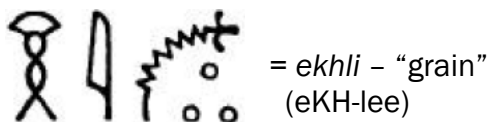
Diodorus, book 1:14-1



When Ethiopians came to Egypt, and after establishing agriculture, food was plentiful for all. When food is plentiful, other people can afford to pursue a wide range of occupations.

It is said that agricultural surplus led to urbanization, because people in the city could now practice new professions such as architecture, medicine, and metallurgy. Hence, you would see that Egyptians had time to evolve because of following Ethiopian agricultural practices. And this marked the beginning of what would become the great ancient nation of Egypt.

We can see the hieroglyph for grain in the Rosetta Stone...



## Quick Quiz:

What was one type of crops introduced to Egypt by its Ethiopian founders?

What is the word for this type of crop written in hieroglyphs that is recorded in the Rosetta Stone?

# Ekhli - A Global Agriculture Root Word for “Grain”

While it looks different than the word *grain* in many languages in the world, *ekhli* is the root word for many of the world’s agricultural words for “grain.”



*ekhli*  
(eKH-lee)  
“grain”



**KH L = GR, KR, HR, CL, KL, GL** pronunciations in other languages (see below)

**KH** is a pronunciation sound that includes **Q, QW, K, KW, KH, G, CH, SH, J** and **H** in other languages.  
**L** is a pronunciation sound that includes **L** and **R** in different languages. Over time, *ekhli* experienced pronunciation sound change in Europe where the [KH] began being pronounced as [G] and the [L] began being pronounced as [R].

To help you remember *ekhli*, following are words in the English language that have *ekhli* as their root...

**KH L** equivalent in English:  
*grain*

Also, the equivalent of  
**KH L** are in these words...

- corn*
- cereal*
- gruel*
- agriculture*
- granual*
- granola*
- herb*
- grow*
- grass*
- green*
- culture*
- cultivate*

**KH L** equivalent for the word  
“grain” in other languages:

- kūlam* (Tamil)
- calla* (Tajik)
- gallā* (Hindi)
- kēli* (Chinese)
- cây lúa* (Vietnamese)
- kruopelė* (Lithuanian)
- korn* (Norwegian)
- korn* (Indonesian)
- korn* (German)
- gran* (German)
- gra* (Georgian)
- kirimi* (Japanese)
- karyū* (Japanese)
- grano* (Spanish)

### Quick Quiz:

What is the relationship to the G in *grain* and the KH in *ekhli*?  
What is the relationship between R and L in *grain* and *ekhli*?



# **FUN WITH** WORD GAMES

# Pass the Message

Let's find out how important writing is. This activity has two parts that allow us to compare which is most precise for transmitting a message, oral communication or written communication.

## Part I – Oral Communication Accuracy



Photo Credit: Rod Waddington

Take a student out of the class and verbally communicate a message consisting of 3 to 4 sentences.

The student should in turn pass on the message verbally to the next student by whispering the message it in his/her ear. The message is to be communicated in this way, from each student to the next, to the entire class.

Select the students randomly and ask them to say the message out loud. The variations between messages by each student are to be pointed out.

## Part II – Written Communication Accuracy



Photo Credit: Columbia Ministry of Education

Cut out the message card below to write out a message and give it to a student. The student is to be instructed to copy the message and pass the piece of paper to next student. When all the students have the message, students should be asked randomly to read the message out loud.

100% accuracy between each student's versions is to be pointed out.

Conclusion: Conclude the activity by pointing out that when the message is written down, the message is recorded accurately and can be passed to each other accurately.

**MESSAGE TO BE PASSED ALONG THROUGH THE CLASS:**

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### Quick Quiz:

Calculate the accuracy of the oral message passed along versus the written. What percentage heard the oral message accurately and what percentage rewrote the written message accurately?

## Pass the Word

Now let's see how the Ethiopian writing system of hieroglyphs allow us to write out multiple pronunciation sounds with a single hieroglyph.

For example, the [M] *may* (my) “water” hieroglyph  can be used to write out the [M] or [N] sound, because [M] and [N] are essentially the same. In fact, when you hear a word that has either sound, you might mistake one for the other.

We can test this idea in the same way we did with *Pass the Message* on the previous page. This time we will pass the word. This will show the importance of the role *listening* plays in pronunciation. It will also reinforce the fact that hieroglyphs represent pronunciations sounds and that each hieroglyph was used to represent multiple related pronunciation sounds.



Photo Credit: Zalouk Webdesign

Take the student out of the class and verbally communicate a single word to the student.

The student should in turn say the word verbally to each student by whispering the word it in his/her ear, who will write down the word as they heard it pronounced. This is done until the student has said the word to each student in the entire class.

Select the students randomly and ask them to show the pronunciation of the word they heard. The variations between the pronunciations heard by each student are to be pointed out.

WORD TO BE TOLD TO EACH CLASSMATE:

*precedent*

Some people will hear *president* (PRE-**ze**-dent) and some will hear *precedent* (PRE-**se**-dent), showing that the [S] and [Z] pronunciation sounds are similar and therefore in the same pronunciation group. A single hieroglyph was able to be used for both [Z] and [S] pronunciation sounds as well as [TS] (the ZZ sound in *pizza*).

### Quick Quiz:

Calculate the accuracy of the word passed along. What percentage heard *precedent* and what percentage heard *president*?

# Write or Identify English Words Using Only 10 Letters

One reason many sounds are related is because of what linguists call, *economy*, which causes us to use an easier pronunciation for a hard one, Therefore, a hard [K] can *soften* to a [G], [CH], or even an [H] pronunciation,

Pronounce each sound in the following 10 *pronunciation sound groups*...

1. [A] = [A], [E], [I], [O], [U], and [Y] vowels
2. [B] = [B], [F], [W] and European [P], [V]
3. [D] = [T], [D]
4. [G] = [G], [Q], [K]
5. [H] = [H], [SH], [CH] [J] and European [X]
6. [L] = [R], [L]
7. [M] = [M], [N]
8. [S] = [S], [Z]
9. [W] = [W]
10. [Y] = [Y] consonant

So, let's test how only 10 letters, *one letter from each pronunciation sound group*, can effectively represent all 26 English pronunciation sounds, providing less letters to memorize. Identify English words in the sentences below that use only 10 letters to represent all 26 English pronunciation sounds.

- A. "I walk in my HAS to school."  
Answer: shoes
- B. "I have a nice design on the HALT I am wearing"  
Answer: shirt
- C. "I am wearing short BAMDS to cover my legs."  
Answer: pants
- D. "Girls sometimes wear a SGALD instead of pants or a dress."  
Answer: skirt
- E. "I put on my SAGS before putting on my shoes."  
Answer: socks
- F. "My friends and I often wear a HAD on our head."  
Answer: hat
- G. "When it is cold, I like to wear GLABS to keep my hands warm."  
Answer: gloves
- H. "My shirt has long "SLYBS."  
Answer: sleeves
- I. "I wear a HAGAD over my clothes to stay warm in the cold."  
Answer: jacket
- J. "Rain boots help keep my feet warm when I step in puddles of WADEL"  
Answer: water

## Quick Quiz:

What are the pronunciation sounds that are related to B pronunciation?  
What is one of the reasons pronunciation sounds change?

## Write or Identify English Words Using Only 8 Letters

Finally, let us further reduce the number of letters to only 8 letters to represent all English pronunciation sounds.

Pronounce each sound in the following 8 *pronunciation sound groups*...

1. [A] = [A], [E], [I], [O], [U], and [Y] vowels
2. [B] = [B], [F], [W] and European [P], [V]
3. [D] = [T], [D]
4. [H] = [H], [G], [Q], [K], [SH], [CH] [J] and European [X]
5. [L] = [R], [L]
6. [M] = [M], [N]
7. [S] = [S], [Z]
8. [Y] = [Y]

So, let's test how only 8 letters, *one letter from each pronunciation sound group*, can effectively represent all 26 English pronunciation sounds, providing less letters to memorize. Identify English words in the sentences below that use only 8 letters to represent all 26 English pronunciation sounds.

A. "My mother drives a HEL to work."

Answer: car

B. "Sometimes I LEM to school instead of walking."

Answer: run

C. "I like to ride a SHODOBIOLD when I'm not riding my bike."

Answer: skateboard

D. "My HYD runs from dogs when it sees them."

Answer: cat

E. "I enjoy playing BODAA HEMIS with my friends online."

Answer: video games

F. "I send texts to my friends with my SMILDBHYMO."

Answer: smartphone

G. "My friends and I like to eat a HOMBELHOL with french fries."

Answer: hamburger

H. "I want to play the guitar, but my dad wants me to play the BYOMI."

Answer: piano

I. "Another favorite food I like to eat is DUHES and salsa."

Answer: tacos

J. "One of the most popular pants to wear are HOIMS."

Answer: jeans

As we have learned, we can have a writing system that can effectively use hieroglyphs to represent multiple pronunciation sounds.

### Quick Quiz:

What are the pronunciation sounds related to [H], which look and sound different but are related through pronunciation sound change?

## Summary

From the above exercises we can understand a fundamental fact that different language systems around the world have different ways of expressing pronunciation sounds. Few languages have a single letter representing a single pronunciation sound.

It might also happen that certain sounds do not exist at all in other languages. Egyptian hieroglyphs have similar exceptions and characters, which we are going to learn in the coming chapters.

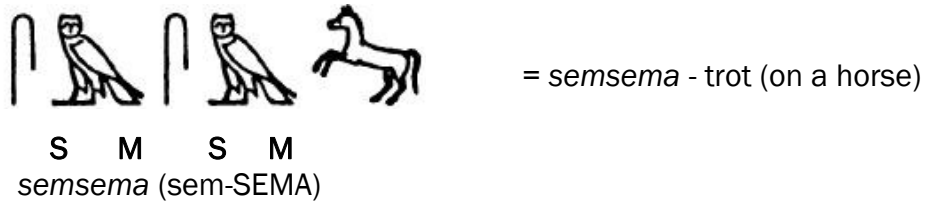
### **Quick Quiz:**

Do you know any other language other than English? If so, can you give a few examples of "linguistic economy" in that language to the class.

# WHAT'S IN A HIEROGLYPH

# What Can We Learn from the Rosetta Stone?

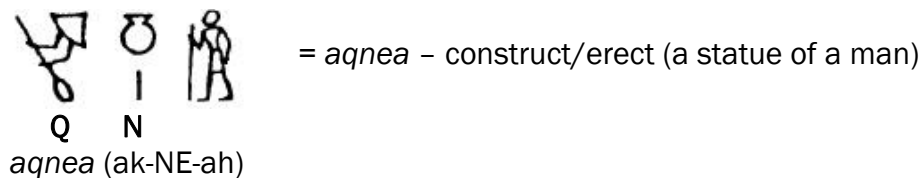
Aside from seeing actual examples of pronunciation sound change in ancient Egyptian hieroglyphic words, there are lots of things we can learn about ancient Egypt, its people and its culture from the Rosetta Stone. For example, take the following word written in the Rosetta Stone, **semsema** ...



SMSM in hieroglyphic letters, is the word, *semsema*, which means, “at a trot,” a pace that is half running. How can you remember this word? While they look a little different, *semsema* and *semi* (“half, partially”) in English are the same words.

Not only do we learn that horseback riding was a part of ancient Egyptian culture, but also that there was terminology for horseback riding styles and modes. Understanding the word in front of the horse helps you understand the relationship to the horse and therefore the exact meaning.

Let’s look at another word written in hieroglyphs in the Rosetta Stone, *aqnea*, “construct/erect”.



QN in hieroglyphs is the word *aqnea*, means to “construct/erect”, in this case a statue of a man. How can you remember this word? While they look a little different, *aqnea* and *con* of “construct” in English are the same words. *Also notice it was not always necessary to write out vowels in hieroglyphic writing.* But we also learn from *aqnea*, that art and construction was a part of the culture.

Now, let’s create a new phrase, using portions of these two hieroglyphic phrases...



We have written what can mean, “construct a statue of a owl” and “construct a statue of a horse.”

### Quick Quiz:

What cultural element does the hieroglyphic word, *semsema*, tell you about ancient Egyptian culture?

What cultural element does the hieroglyphic word, *aqnea*, tell you about ancient Egyptian culture?

What do the words *gungwa* and *feres* mean?



# Hieroglyphic Writing is Ethiopian Writing

Let's get an even deeper meaning of hieroglyphic words. Diodorus writes that ancient Egyptian hieroglyphic writing is Ethiopian.



Photo Credit: Clio20

*"... the shapes of their statues and the forms of their letters are Ethiopian; for of the two kinds of writing which the Egyptians have, that which is known as "popular" (demotic) is learned by everyone, while that which is called "sacred" is understood only by the priests of the Egyptians, who learn it from their fathers as one of the things which are not divulged, but among the Ethiopians everyone uses these forms of letters... the Ethiopian writing which is called hieroglyphic among the Egyptians."*

Diodorus, book 3, 3:4-5, 4:1



Above we see the ancient Egyptian hieroglyphic word for, *fera*, "produce." What can we learn from the word?



The legs walking show that the word is an action, therefore a verb



= B

The building (*bet*, "house") shows that the produced products are crops or manufactured goods stored in a warehouse or produced in a factory



= R

The "wide open" hieroglyph shows the goods or manufactured products are ready to leave the warehouse or factory and be delivered

How does **B R** equal the **F R** in *fera*? As you will learn, the [B] pronunciation sound is a part of the [B], [F], [W] pronunciation sound group, which includes the European [P] and [V] pronunciation sounds.

**B R = F R (P R in European words)**

The equivalent word in English that is rooted in *fera* is "produce," because [F] and [B] are in the same pronunciation group... **F R = P R**. In Latin, *producere* means, "lead or bring forth, draw out" and *producir* in Spanish.

## Quick Quiz:

In the *fera* hieroglyph, who do you think the man on the right might be?


The legs are walking away from him with the goods, so what do you think he is indicating with his outstretched hand?

# Memorizing Hieroglyphic Pronunciations

Below are many common hieroglyphic letters. By knowing the word and the letter within it that the hieroglyph represents, it is possible to memorize its pronunciation. Each word's meaning is in quotation marks.

Also notice that hieroglyphs can be utilized to write out pronunciations of sounds within groups of sounds that are related to each other. The **primary** pronunciation sound for each hieroglyph is in **bold**.












## EXAMPLE:

Hieroglyph:		<b>RULES FOR THE WETAT HIEROGLYPH:</b>
Word:	<b>wetat</b>	1. The primary use is to write the <b>W</b> pronunciation sound
Meaning:	"adolescence"	2. Can also be used to write the <b>B, F, W, (European P, V)</b> sounds
		3. Remember the <i>primary usage</i> by remembering the word, <b>wetat</b>

Each of the following hieroglyphs can be used to write the **B, F, W (P, V)** pronunciation sounds:

					
af ut "viper"	<b>wari</b> "blackbird"	wha "water"	<b>wetat</b> "adolescence"	<b>bat</b> "calf of the leg"	<b>berchuma</b> "seat"

Each of the following hieroglyphs can be used to write the **M and N** pronunciation sounds:

					
mares "plow"	<b>may</b> "water"	mahel "inside"	<b>shemene</b> "weave"	<b>gungwa</b> "owl"	
					
chnbl "crown"	<b>srnay</b> "wheat"	<b>messob</b> "basket"	sarma "pot"	<b>mlas</b> "tongue"	<b>nfue</b> "excellent"

Each of the following hieroglyphs can be used to write the **TS, T and D** pronunciation sounds:

			
<b>tat</b> "finger"	<b>temen</b> "snake"	<b>wtret</b> "tension"	<b>dabo</b> "bread"

Each of the following hieroglyphs can be used to write the **TS, Z, S** and **SH** pronunciation sounds:



**ersha**  
“farm”



**zega**  
“to shut, to block”



**ez**  
“command”



**qelese**  
“fold s/t over”

Each of the following hieroglyphs can be used to write the **Q, QW, K, KW, KH, CH, G, GW, J, SH, H** and **(X)** pronunciation sounds:



**gemed**  
“rope”



**quras**  
“portion, piece”



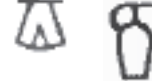
**hatsur**  
“enclosure”



**borch**  
“stomach”



**kubaya**  
“cup”



**gan**  
“large jar”



**leka**  
“measure”

Each of the following hieroglyphs can be used to write the **R** and **L** pronunciation sounds:



**raey**  
“vision”



**beletete**  
“wide open”



**waero**  
“lioness”

Each of the following hieroglyphs can be used to write the **R** and **W** pronunciation sounds:



**wari**  
“blackbird”



**wha**  
“water”



**wetat**  
“adolescence”

and sometimes



**bat**  
“calf of leg”



**berchma**  
“seat”

Each of the following hieroglyphs can be used to write the vowels **A, E, I, O, U** and **Y** pronunciation sounds:



**ej**  
“arm”



**amora**  
“eagle”



**adega**  
“grow”

The following hieroglyph can be used to write the **Y** pronunciation sounds:



# Hieroglyphs Combine the Significance of Objects and Their Figurative Meanings

While hieroglyphs do express syllables joined together to represent the pronunciation of words, it is the particular hieroglyphic letters used that can give a clue to the meaning of the word.



*“Now it is found that the forms of their letters take the shape of animals of every kind, and of the members of the human body, and of implements and especially carpenters' tools; for their writing does not express the intended concept by means of syllables joined one to another, but by means of the significance of the objects which have been copied and by its figurative meaning which has been impressed upon the memory by practice. “*

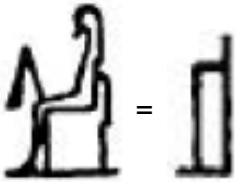
Diodorus, book 3, 4:1



Following shows the significance of these three symbols as they appeared in the Rosetta Stone.



= “make something happen” – the leader makes things happen



= command throne – the leader’s commands are represented by the throne



= “independent ruler” – the leader is independent from others of similar rank

## Quick Quiz:

What is the significance of *making things happen* for a leader?

What is the significance of *command throne* for a leader?

What is the significance of *being an independent ruler* for a leader?

What did Diodorus tell us about hieroglyphs?

# Significance of Objects in Hieroglyphic Writing

Diodorus writes that each element of the hieroglyphic word has a significance that relates to the message being expressed. Let's look at the following hieroglyphic word from the Rosetta Stone...



= the wasp is looking at the plant to find invading bugs to eat

*nsu* *betshe*  
(n-SOO) (bets-HE)  
"he" "overtakes  
achieves"

In the Rosetta Stone, the Greek translation of the ancient Egyptian hieroglyphic phrase, *nsu betshe*, is "great king of the UPPER COUNTRY and of the LOWER COUNTRY." Why? Because the word, *nsu* means "he" and *betshe* means "achieves/overtakes."

Significance of objects:



food crops



protective wasp

The first object represents a plant on an ancient Egyptian farm. The second object is a wasp. Can you see what the wasp is doing? It is looking at the plant. But why? It is looking for insect invaders.

*Like a member of the ancient Egyptian army, the wasp has overtaken and captured an invader.*

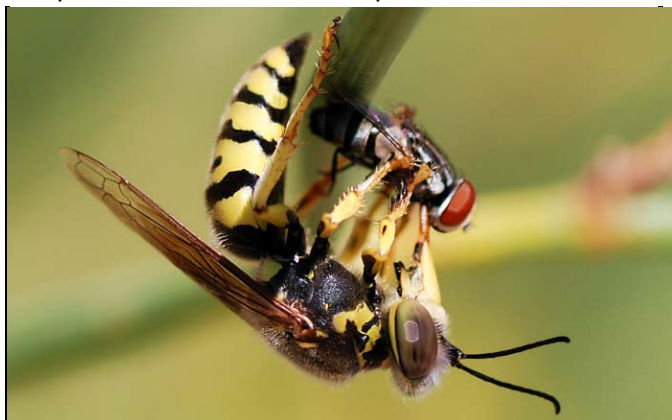


Photo Credit: Alvesgaspar

*A wooden model of the ancient Egyptian military from the tomb of Meketre.*



Photo Credit: Udimu

## Quick Quiz:

In the hieroglyph of *nsu betshe*, what is the wasp looking at?

What is the wasp looking for?

Why does the hieroglyphic phrase *nsu betshe* represent the ancient Egypt king?

Why does the wasp also represent the ancient Egyptian military?

# More Examples of Ancient Egyptian Hieroglyphic Figurative Meanings from Diodorus

Diodorus provides figurative meanings for several hieroglyphs, as an example of how the ancient Egyptians used objects in writing.



Photo Credit: Los Angeles County Museum of Art

*“Now the hawk signifies to them everything which happens swiftly, since this animal is practically the swiftest of winged creatures. And the concept portrayed is then transferred, by the appropriate metaphorical transfer, to all swift things and to everything to which swiftness is appropriate, very much as if they had been named.” - Diodorus, book 3, 4:1*



halawi – “guard, guardian”  
(ha-LA-wee)



“watchman”  
in the Rosetta Stone



Photo Credit: Walters Art Museum

*“And the crocodile is a symbol of all that is evil...”  
Diodorus, book 3, 4:1*



asboka – “he intimidated”  
(as-BO-ka)

## Quick Quiz:

A falcon is known to be how fast in relation to other birds?

The crocodile is known for what kind of personality OR ACTIONS?

## Protecting Ancient Egypt

Security of the country and its people was the number one priority in ancient Egypt. That is why there are so many symbols that represent ancient Egypt's ability to keep the country and its people safe. This security provided stability to produce agricultural and manufactured products for the benefit of the people, as well as for sale to export markets, such as ancient Iran, India, China, Greece and others.

Egypt was a large country to protect and it was kept safe for nearly 3000 years from invaders. The cobra and vulture symbols on the crowns represented a warning to outsiders not to attempt an invasion. After the cobra kills the invaders, the vultures will eat their remains.



*"... their kings, who wear high felt hats which end in a knob at the top and are circled by the serpents which they call asps; and this symbol appears to carry the thought that it will be the lot of those who shall dare to attack the king to encounter death-carrying stings."*

Diodorus, book 3, 3:6



### Quick Quiz:

Explain the figurative meaning of the snake wrapped around an eyeball for the "watchman" hieroglyph.

# Who Is Watching Who?

The *raey* symbol is one of the most prominent symbols of ancient Egypt. Here we see again the falcon and snake wrapped around the eyeball.



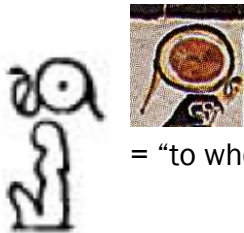
Photo Credit: Zenodot Verlagsgesellschaft mbH

*"... the eye is the warder of justice and the guardian of the entire body."*

Diodorus, book 3, 4:3



*raey*  
(ra-ee)  
"sight, vision"



= "to whom HELIOS hath given the victory" – Rosetta Stone

## Quick Quiz:

How is the cobra wrapped around the eye representation of "warder of justice"?  
How is the eye the "guardian" of the entire body?




## Protection Provides A Prolonging of Life

Below, we see the cobra again, but from a different angle. From this angle, we see the cobra wrapped around the eyeball facing us. There are arms extending down from the cobra. The symbol in the hands at the end of the arms, *anaqhe* (a-na-Q-he), means “prolong,” symbolizing the prolonging of life that protection provides.



Photo Credit: niM.Min

  
*anaqhe*  
(a-na-Q-he)  
“prolong”

### Quick Quiz:

How does the cobra wrapped around an eyeball represent the prolonging of life?

## The Eye is Watching for You

Look closely and you will notice an eye on the front of the boat. This is due to the fact that all along the Nile River were bandits who were ready to rob the boats of its cargo boats as they passed by. These bandits, called *shifta*, were sometimes represented in ancient Egyptian art as snakes.

The eyes on the front of the boats were a warning to the *shifta* bandits.



Photo Credit: Vania Teofilo

Here's looking at you!



Bandits are still called *shifta* in Ethiopia and Eritrea today. Many live in the forests and along rivers.

### Quick Quiz:

The eye is on the front of the boat as a warning to whom?

## Pay Close Attention to Hieroglyphs

It will help you to understand hieroglyphs when you write them out. Writing them out helps you focus on what each character is trying to communicate.

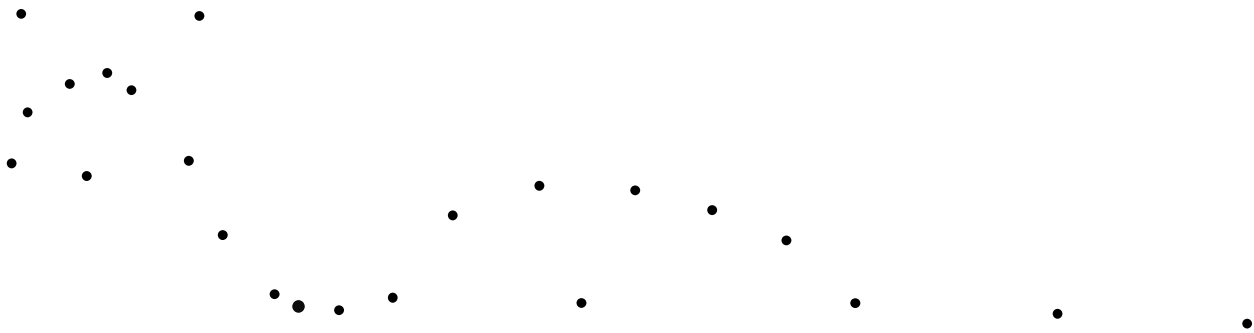


*“... by paying close attention to the significance, which is inherent in each object, and by training their minds through drill and exercise of the memory over a long period, they read from habit everything which has been written.”*

Diodorus, book 3, 4:1

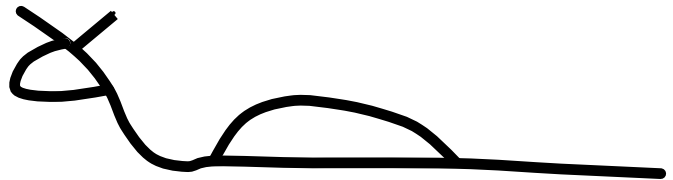


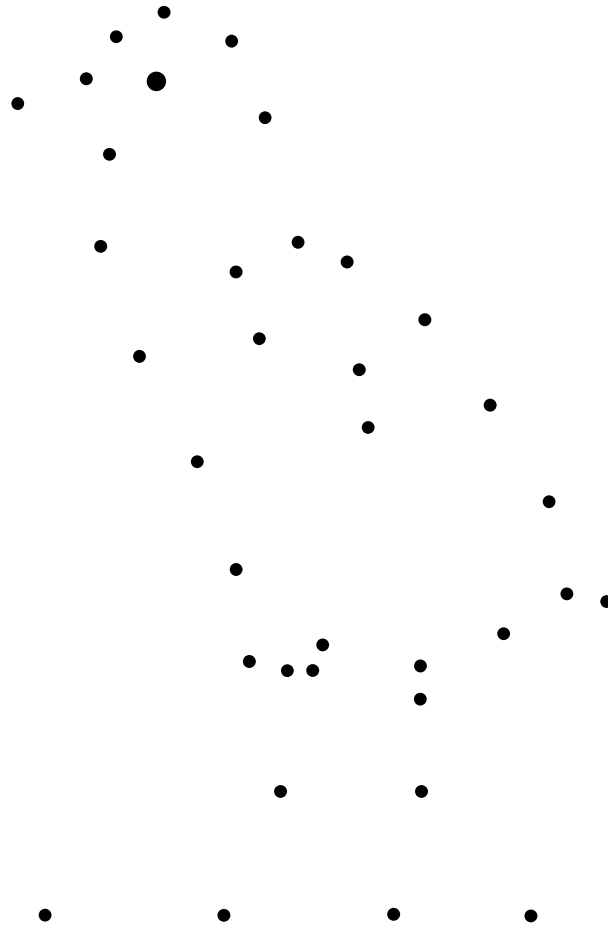
The following pages will help you learn to draw some of the most basic hieroglyphic characters. Due to the fact there are hundreds of hieroglyphic characters, we will include only some of the most common.



*af ut*  
(af oot)  
“viper”

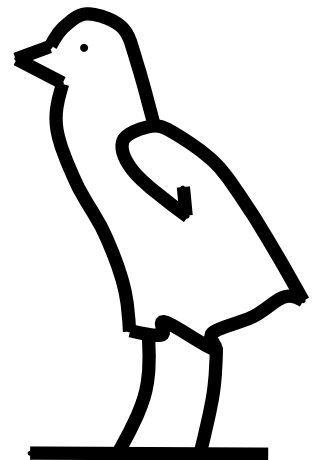
PRONUNCIATION SOUNDS  
[B], [F], [W]  
European [P], [V]





*wetat*  
(we-TAT)  
“adolescence”

PRONUNCIATION SOUNDS  
[B], [F], [W]  
European [F], [W]



• •

• •

• •

• •

•

•

*bat*

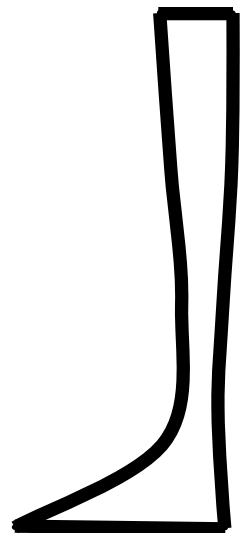
*(bat)*

“calf of the leg”

PRONUNCIATION SOUNDS

[B], [F], [W]

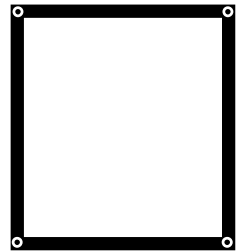
European [F], [W]

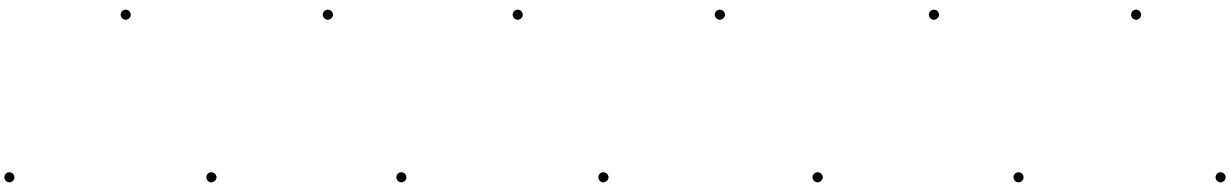




*berchma*  
(ber-CHU-ma)  
“seat”

PRONUNCIATION SOUNDS  
[B], [F], [W]  
European [F], [W]





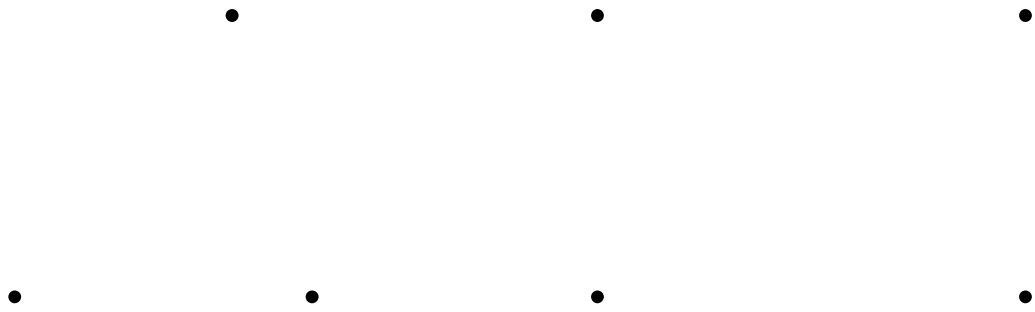
*may*  
(ma-ee)  
“water”

PRONUNCIATION SOUNDS

[M], [N]







*mahel*  
(ma-HEL)  
“inside”

PRONUNCIATION SOUNDS

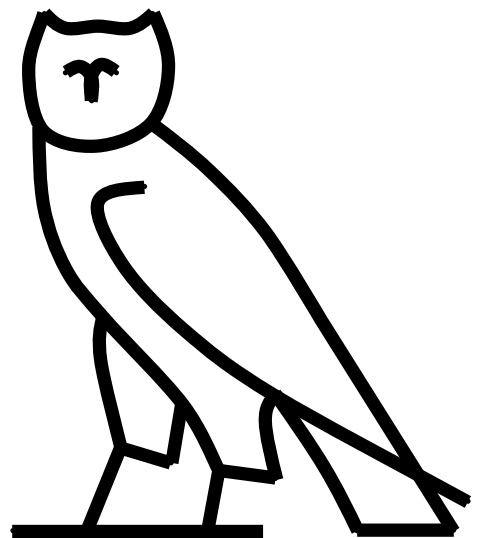
[M], [N]

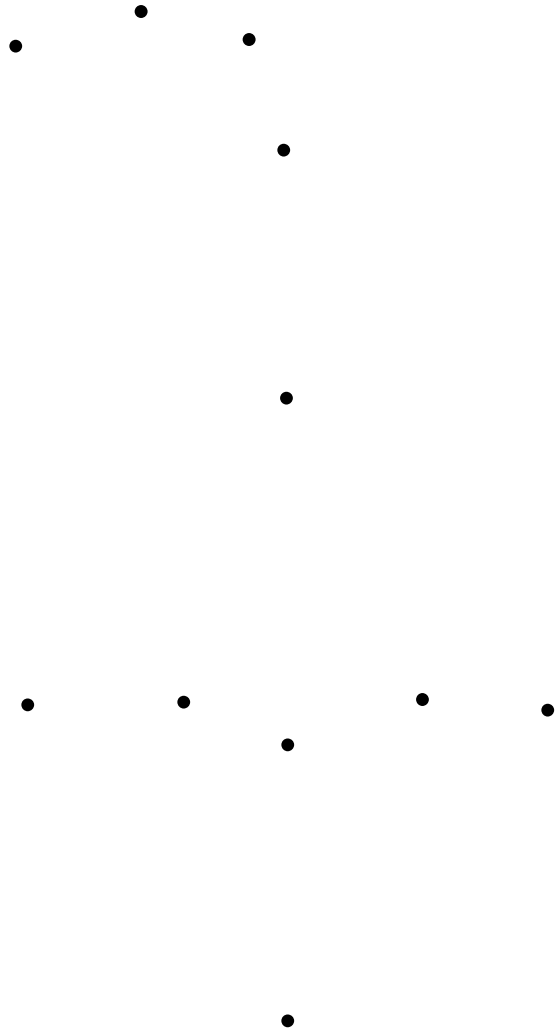




*gungwa*  
(gun-GWA)  
“owl”

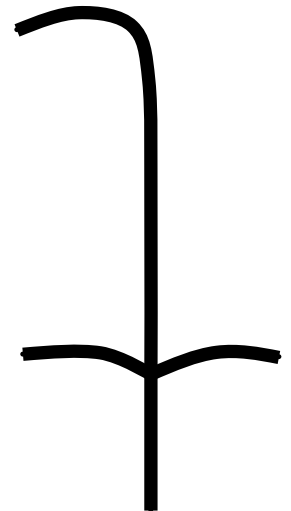
PRONUNCIATION SOUNDS  
[M], [N]

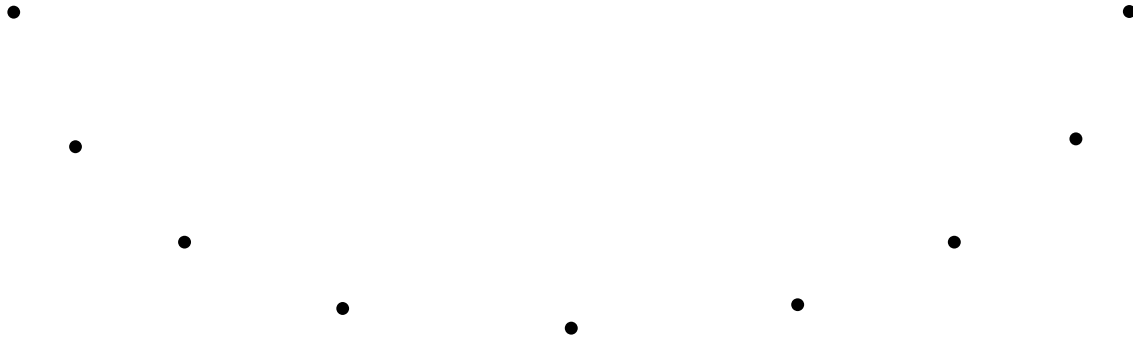




*srnay*  
(sr-NIE)  
“wheat”

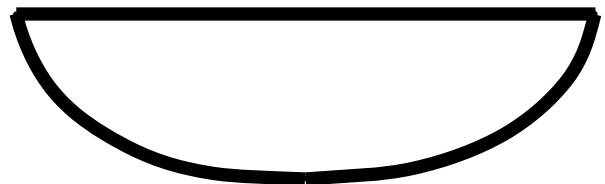
PRONUNCIATION SOUNDS  
[M], [N]

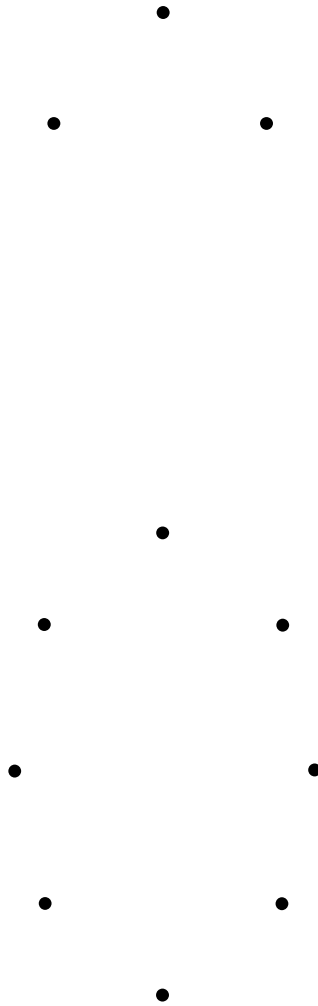




*messob*  
(me-SOBE)  
“basket”

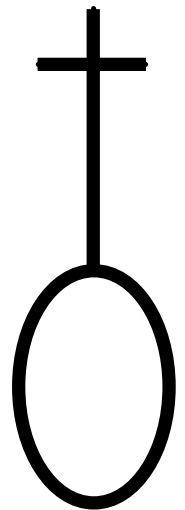
PRONUNCIATION SOUNDS  
[M], [N]

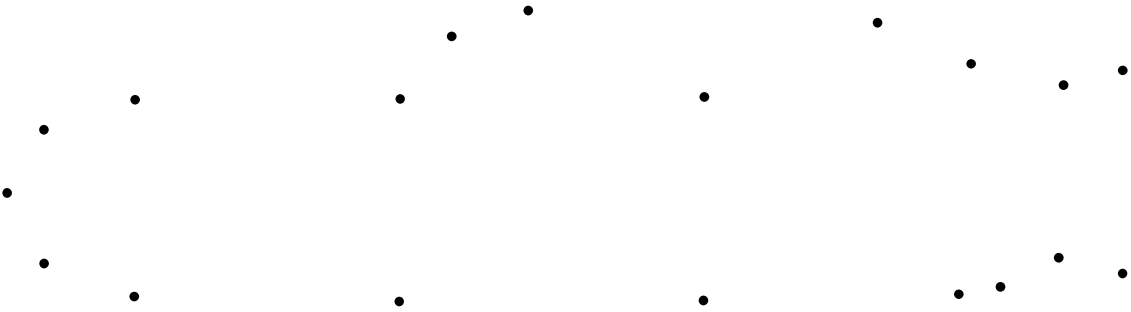




*nfue*  
(nif-U-e)  
“excellent, smart”

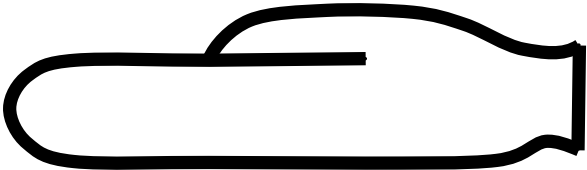
PRONUNCIATION SOUNDS  
[M], [N]





*tat*  
(tat)  
“finger”

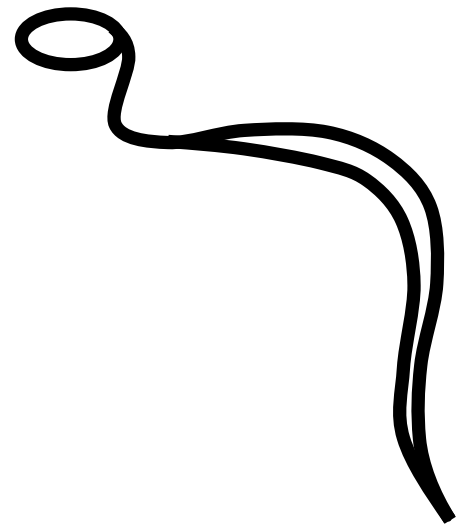
PRONUNCIATION SOUNDS  
[TS], [T], [D]





*temen*  
(te-MEN)  
“snake”

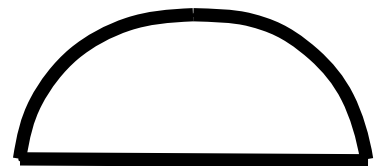
PRONUNCIATION SOUNDS  
[TS], [T], [D]



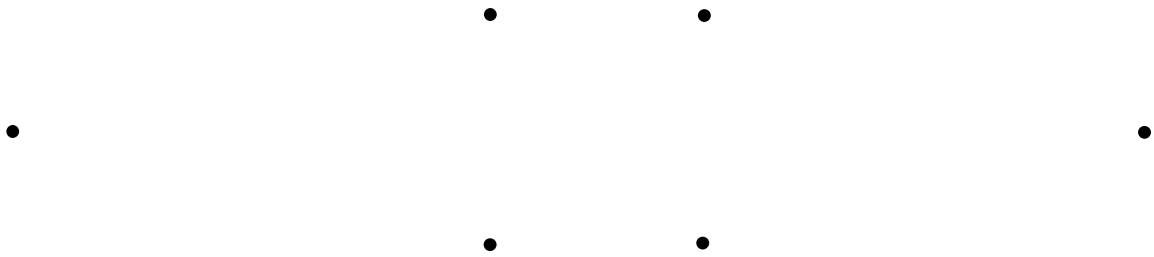


*dabo*  
(da-BOE)  
“bread”

PRONUNCIATION SOUNDS  
[TS], [T], [D]

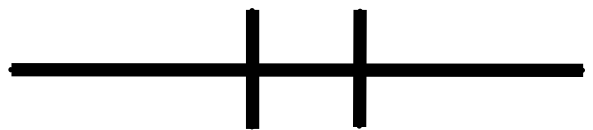


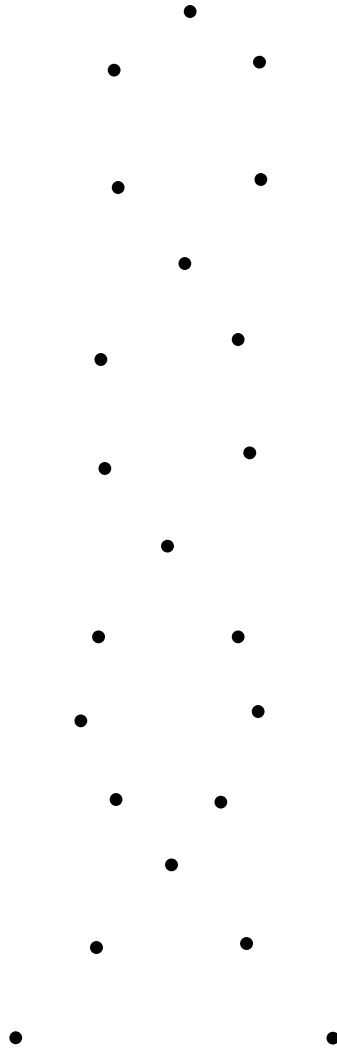




*zega*  
(ze-GA)  
“to shut, to block”

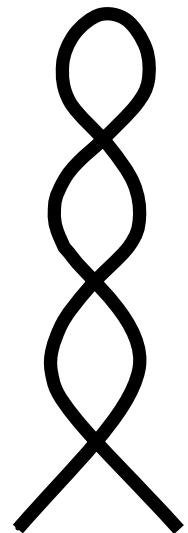
PRONUNCIATION SOUNDS  
[TS], [Z], [S], [SH]





*gemed*  
(ge-MED)  
“rope”

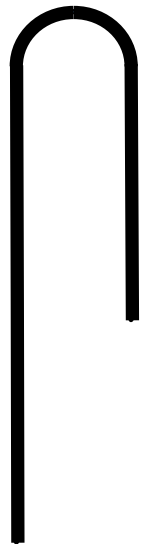
PRONUNCIATION SOUNDS  
[Q], [K], [G], [J], [H],  
[CH], [SH]





*qelese*  
(qe-LE-se)  
“fold something over”

PRONUNCIATION SOUNDS  
[TS], [Z], [S], [SH]

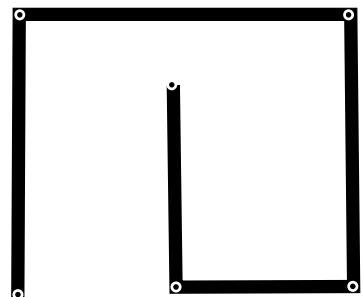




*hatsur*  
(ha-TSUR)  
“enclosure”

PRONUNCIATION SOUNDS

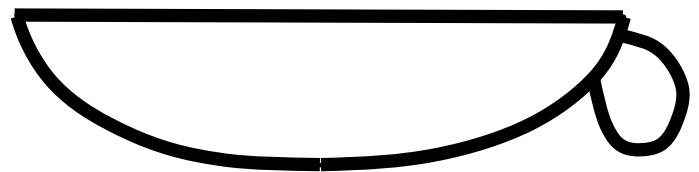
[Q], [K], [G], [J], [H],  
[CH], [SH]

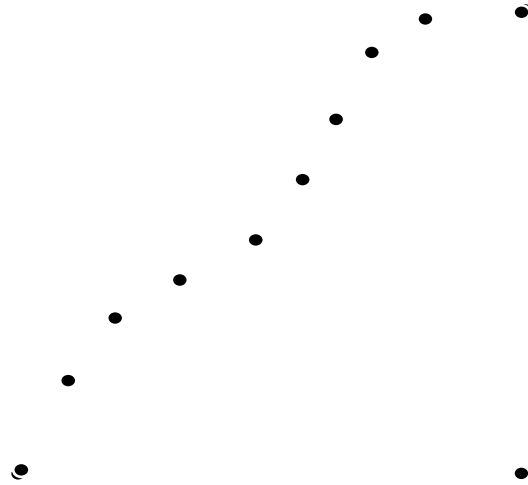




*kubaya*  
(koo-BA-ya)  
“cup”

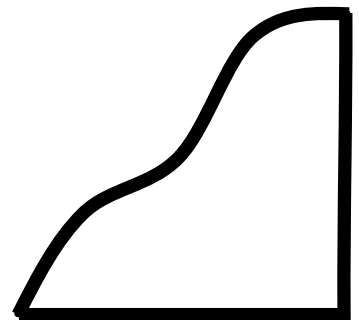
PRONUNCIATION SOUNDS  
[Q], [K], [G], [J], [H],  
[CH], [SH]

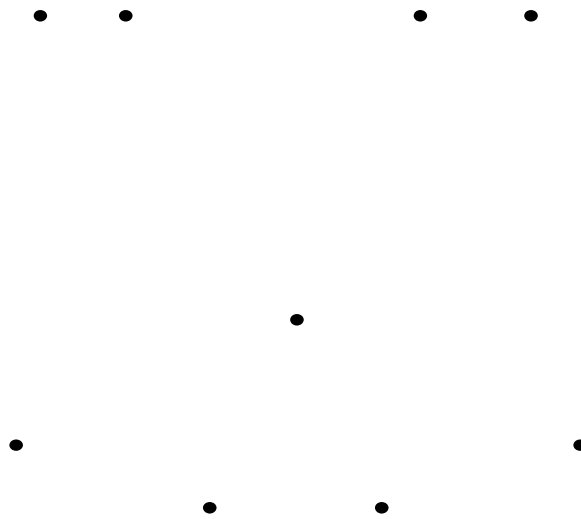




*qulqulet*  
(qool-QOO-let)  
“downhill”

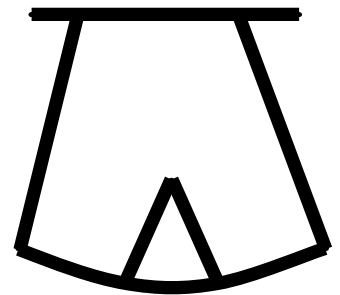
PRONUNCIATION SOUNDS  
[Q], [K], [G], [J], [H],  
[CH], [SH]

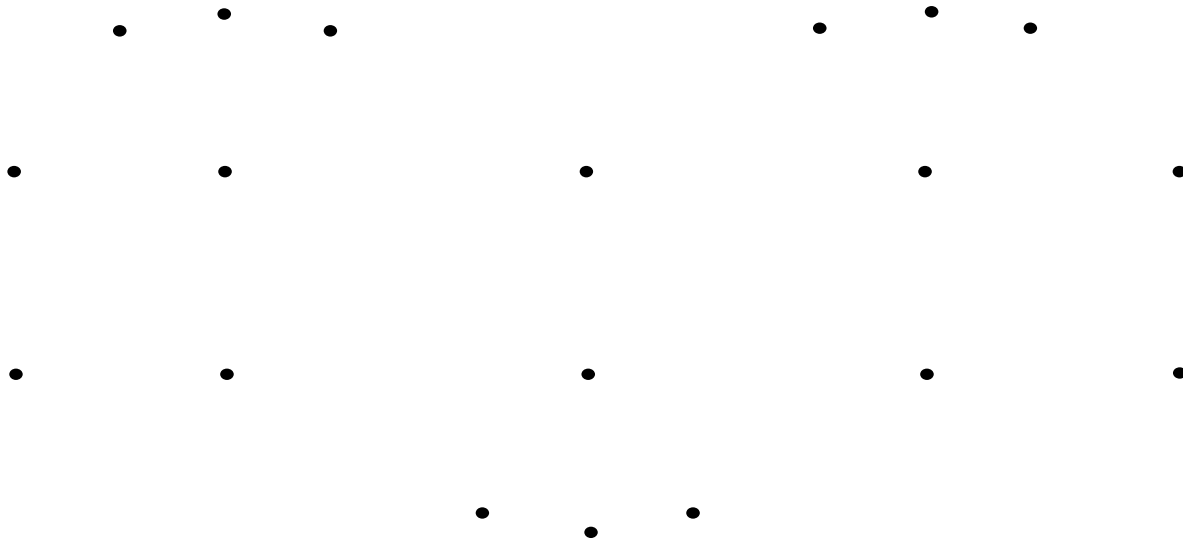




*gan*  
(gan)  
“large jar”

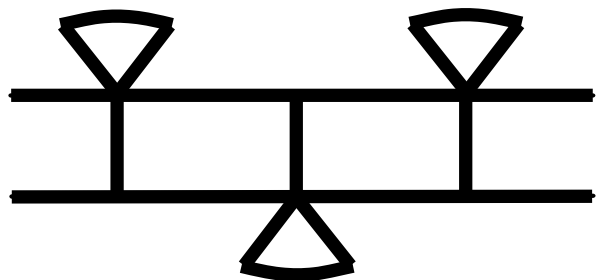
PRONUNCIATION SOUNDS  
[Q], [K], [G], [J], [H],  
[CH], [SH]





*leka*  
(le-KA)  
“measure”

PRONUNCIATION SOUNDS  
[Q], [K], [G], [J], [H],  
[CH], [SH]



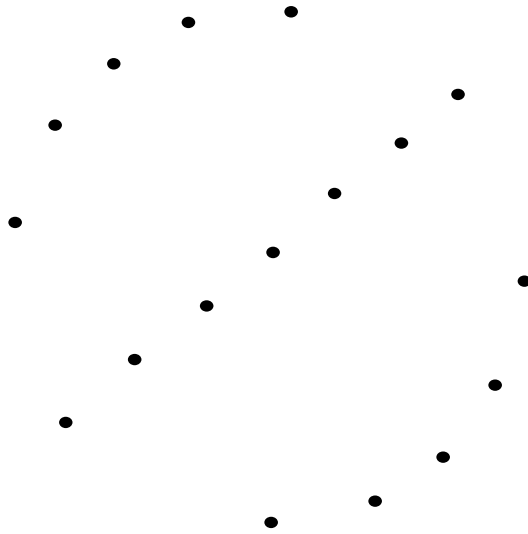




*ej*  
(ej)  
“arm”

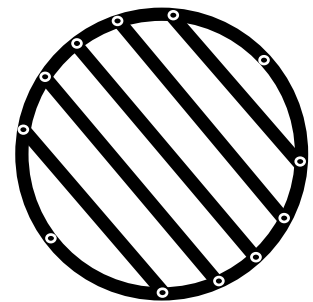
PRONUNCIATION SOUNDS  
[A], [H], [Y]

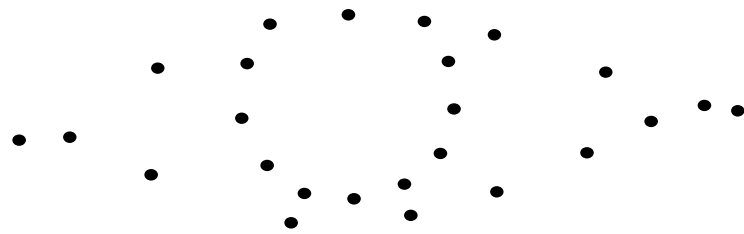




*tqur*  
(ti-QOOR)  
“dark”

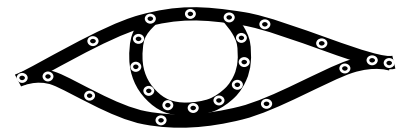
PRONUNCIATION SOUNDS  
[Q], [K], [G], [J], [H],  
[CH], [SH]

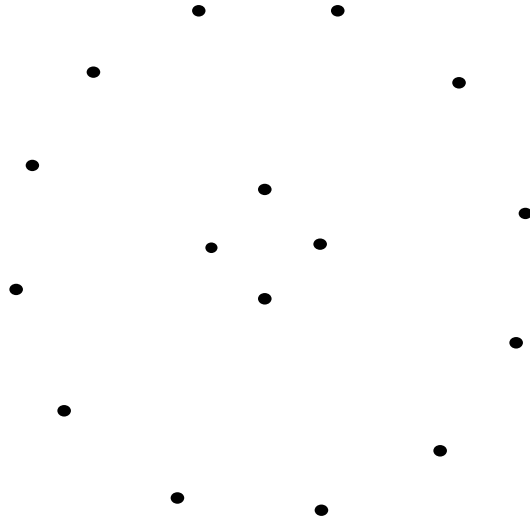




*raey*  
(ra-eye)  
“vision, sight”

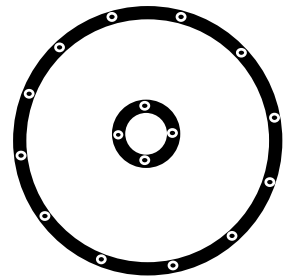
PRONUNCIATION SOUNDS  
[R], [L]

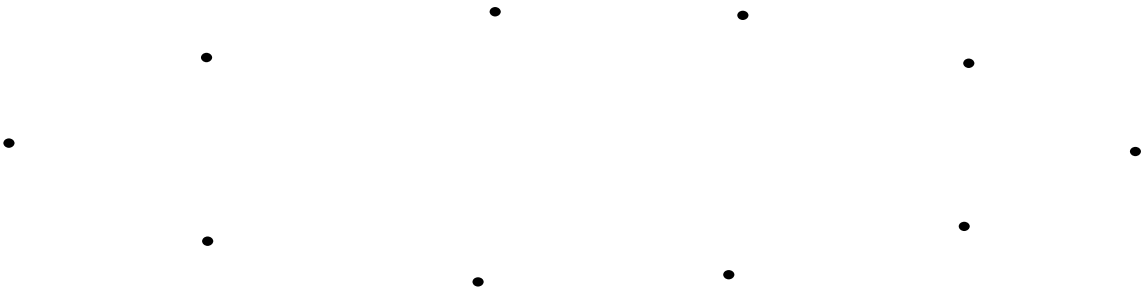




*raey*  
(ra-eye)  
“vision, sight”

PRONUNCIATION SOUNDS  
[R], [L]

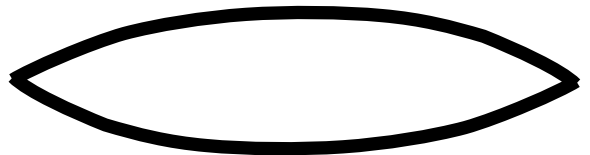


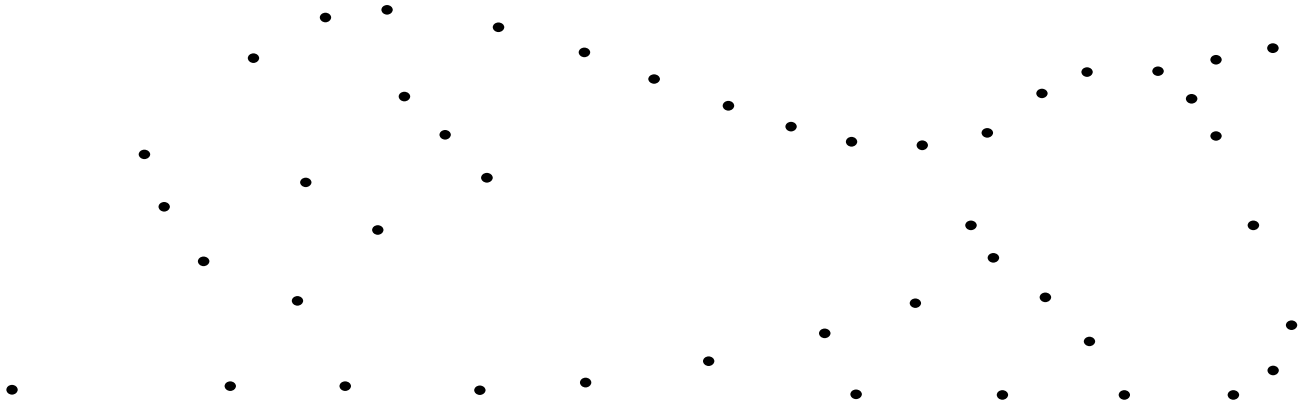


*raey*  
(ra-eye)  
“vision, sight”

PRONUNCIATION SOUNDS

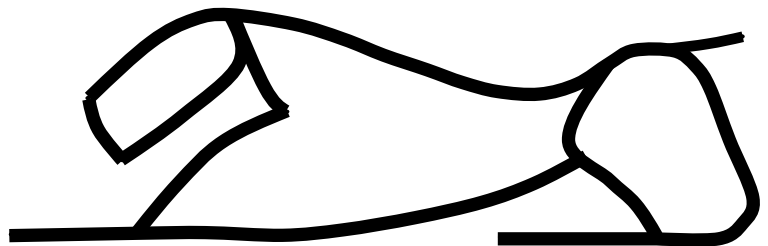
[R], [L]





*waero*  
(wa-E-ro)  
“lioness”

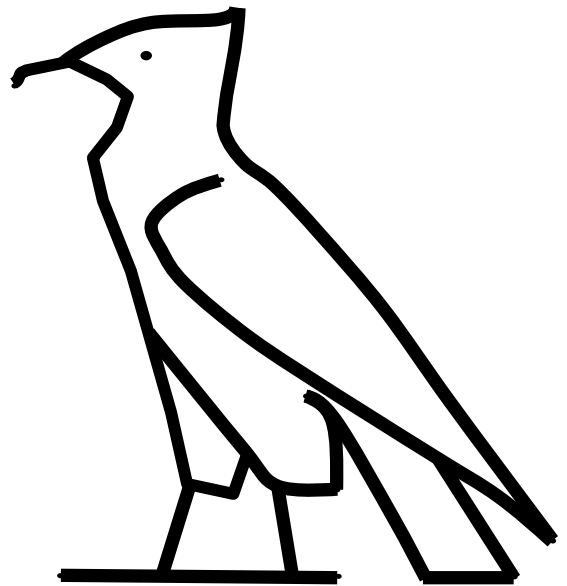
PRONUNCIATION SOUNDS  
[R], [L]

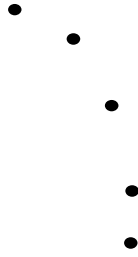




*amora*  
(a-MO-ra)  
“large bird, eagle”

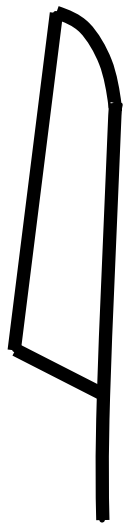
PRONUNCIATION SOUNDS  
[A], [H], [Y]





*adega*  
(a-DE-ga)  
“grow”

PRONUNCIATION SOUNDS  
[A], [H], [Y]





# WHO'S THE BOSS

## On the Job: Who Is Watching?

Owls are known for their ability to see at night. In ancient Egypt, the owl was the symbol of the supervisor, leader, and guide. The owl symbolizes the eyes of the king or a business owner. Let's see why.



Photo Credit: Vassil



*Meri*

(me-REE)

“guide, president, leader, captain”

### Quick Quiz:

What is the special vision ability that owls possess?

## Who Is Watching the Workers?

In the scene below, what do you see? Some are men working filling containers with what might be grain. What are all the other men doing? They are field clerks making a report for the business owner about the number of containers that were filled.

Like the owl, the field clerks provide the business owner the ability to see in the dark, in a sense, to know what is happening at work without the owner being there.

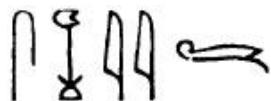
They also might have recorded the names of the men who are working, including the time they began work and finished, and the number of containers filled by each worker.



The field clerks are not only watching the workers, they are recording what the workers are doing. What are they writing with? They are writing with a long thorn, as is recorded in the Rosetta Stone.



= *ishokh* (i-SHOKH), “thorn”



= *ishokh* (i-SHOKH), “thorn”

### Quick Quiz:

What are these workers doing?

Why are the men with writing instruments watching the workers?

What are some of the details they might be writing down in the report for the business owner?

# The Role of Ancient Egyptian Clerks

In the picture below, you see a wooden model of a cattle auction, from an ancient Egyptian tomb. Look closely and you can see the clerks recording the details and transactions of the auctions.



Photo Credit: Gérard Ducher



There appear to be 3 or 4 clerks. They are recording the activity at the auction including inventory, bids and sales.

## Quick Quiz:

Why might there be so many bookkeepers at the auction?

You can see the recording clerks here also.



Photo Credit: Keith Schengili-Roberts



**Quick Quiz:**  
What might the clerks be recording?

## Who's the Boss?

There are two primary hieroglyphs for *meri* and *merahi*, "leader, guide, president, chief, captain," as shown below...



owl + open eye/mouth  
*meri/merahi*  
watching and commanding



tongue  
*meri/merahi*  
speaking

In each hieroglyph, there is a special significance. In the first hieroglyph there is an owl with an open eye/mouth. This means the leader is watching and giving commands.

In the second hieroglyph, the tongue, *melas*, like the open eye/mouth next to the owl, is giving commands. You can also see the relationship between the [L] and [R] between *meri* and *melas*.

$$\begin{array}{c} \mathit{meri} \\ \text{M R} \end{array} = \begin{array}{c} \mathit{melas} \\ \text{M L} \end{array}$$

Again we see the significance of the hieroglyphs.

### Quick Quiz:

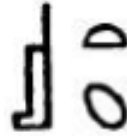
But notice there is not a throne associated with the *meri/merahi* title. Why not?

## Who Is Higher than the Boss?

There is a title higher than the *meri/merahi* title. It's the *Ras* and *Atse* titles, which mean "emperor." By adding the feminine *-ti* suffix to *Atse*, you have *Atseti*, Empress.



*Ras*  
(ra-S)  
"Emperor"



*Atseti*  
(a-TSAY-ti)  
"Empress"

So, while *Ras* means "head, emperor" the eye is the same as in *meri/merahi*, except that the throne means it is not just a leader, instead it is a higher leadership position.

As we learned earlier, the *Ras* hieroglyph combines the command throne and the all-seeing eye. The *Ras* is assisted by countless on-site inspectors who record the activities and provide him a written report. The hatchet indicates he is independent of all others.

## The Wives of the Ras

As you see, the *Atseti* hieroglyph also features a throne, showing her similar rank with her husband. In fact, keeping with the traditional culture of Africa where a man can have more than one wife, this is also the hieroglyph of the first wife. She is a bearer of children, as you can see by the egg.



*Atseti*  
(a-TSAY-ti)  
“Empress”

The second wife is known as the *Emebet* and does not feature the command throne. This is because, again, keeping with the traditional culture of Africa, the *Emebet* also bears children for her husband, as we can see by the egg in the hieroglyph, but is the second wife of the emperor.



*Emebet*  
(e-ME-bate)  
“mother of the house”

In front of the egg is a basket, *messob*, on top of a house, *bet*. Together the [M] of *messob* and the [B] of *bet* combine to form the title *eme* (“mother”)/*bet* (“house”), or “mother of the house.”

Often in Africa, it is the first wife who selects or approves the second and subsequent wives. Therefore they are cordial with each other. This is why we often see an *Atseti* and *Emebet* together in ancient Egyptian art.



# The Ras Emperor Crown

As we see below, every Ras wears the *etf* (e-TIF) crown, which is a crown with two feather plumes symbolizing the treasury, as is detailed in the Rosetta Stone.



Photo Credit: Wufei07



*etf*  
(e-TIF)  
“double”



*hecha*  
(he-CHA)  
“white”

The name of the crown is the *etf* crown, which features the *hecha*, “white,” crown with double ostrich feathers. *etf* means, “double.” *Hecha* is the same word in the name of Memphis, *Hecha Genb*, “white wall.”

No matter what city you rule if you are an Emperor, you are always drawn wearing this crown. Maybe even if you are an emperor from a different country.

So let’s learn more about the feathers on the crown. In the Rosetta Stone, the feathers are associated with the treasury.



*geza*      *br*  
“house”    “money”

“house of money” (translated in the Rosetta Stone in Greek as “treasury”)

Therefore, the crown represents not only the *Ras* title, but also the financial wealth of ancient Egyptian city the *Ras* is emperor of.

# Ancient Egyptian Royal Family Structure

This *Ras* (“emperor”) pictured below has two wives. The first wife, or *Atseti* is directly behind him. The second wife, *Emebet* (“mother of the house”), stands behind the first wife.

In traditional African culture, a man can only have as many wives and families that he can afford to support. Additionally, he must usually provide each wife with her own house to raise their children.

Multiple wives in Africa help insure the largest number of children in the extended family at a time when life expectancy might have been less than 40 years. Additionally, infant mortality was likely high, so the more children conceived, the more survive.

Below we can see the hierarchical order of each member, the *Ras*, then the *Atseti*, and finally the *Emebet* behind the *Atseti*.



Photo Credit: Jon Bodsworth

**Ras**  
“Emperor”

**Atseti**  
“Empress”  
1<sup>st</sup> wife

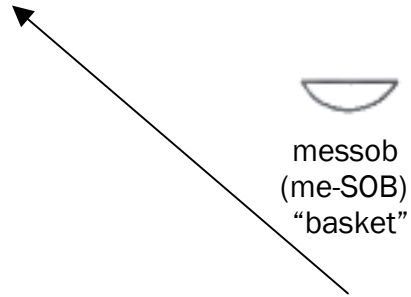
**Emebet**  
“mother of the house”  
2<sup>nd</sup> wife

# The Emebet



Photo Credit: Rama

*Emebet*  
“mother of the house”



Ethiopian *messob* basket with Ethiopian food served in it. Enough for an entire family to eat!

# The Ras Emperor

Part of the Papyrus of Ani shows a number of *Ras* who either attended Ani's funeral or came to pay their regards after his death. On the upper right of each *Ras* you can see the name of the city in hieroglyphs from which each particular *Ras* came.



*Ras from the city of Annu*



*Ras from the city of Tettetu*



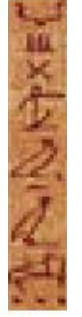
*Ras from the city of Sechem*



*Ras from the city of Taiu Rekhit*



*Ras from the city of Abtu*



*Ras from the city of Ab-Mitu*



*Ras from the city of Naareretef*



*Ras from the city of Restau*

Photo Credit: British Museum

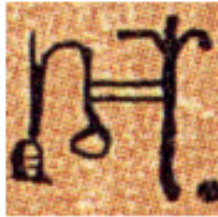
As you see, there were at least eight *Ras* documented in the Papyrus of Ani. They all wear the *etf* crown, have the long beard, and are dressed similarly, except for one who wore red instead of white. The city names here are those as listed in "The Book of the Dead: The Papyrus of Ani in the British Museum," by Wallis Budge.

## The Ras As Head

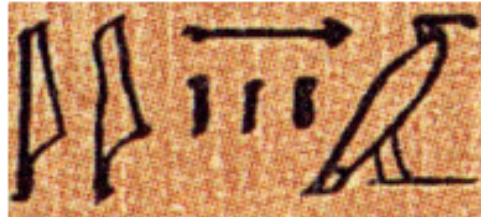
While Ani was not a *Ras* emperor, he was the *head* examiner, or *chief* examiner. Therefore his name in his papyrus always was always preceded with the “head of” *Ras* title...



Head



Examiner



Ani



Photo Credit: Soutekh67

## The Atsei and Emebet Hairstyle

Look closely and you will notice both the Atseti and Emebet have braided hairstyles. Why is this?



Photo Credit: Scanned from *The Egyptian Book of the Dead: The Book of Going Forth by Day* by James Wasserman et al.

## African Hair and Braids

African hair is very curly, with curls measuring as small as  $\frac{1}{4}$ " in diameter or even less. This means that it is easy for the hair to lock with other hairs. And when all the hairs are locked together, while it might make a very nice looking *afro* or *dreadlock* hairstyles, it is not easy to comb and maintain.

In fact, people who are not accustomed to seeing African people are often astonished at the way the hair looks, even wanting to touch and feel it. Especially afro hairstyles!

Braids are a natural part of African culture. What does braiding do? Braiding is a way of managing the tight curls of hair, stretching it out and *tying up* or *twisting* the hair in a stylish way.

Sometimes the braids are skinny, while other braid styles feature fat braids. It is up to the stylist who does the braiding. Sometimes the style is a combination of braid styles. And both African women and men wear braids.

We will learn more about Ethiopian hairstyle in ancient Egypt in book two!



Photo Credit: Yorck Project

*"This book helps to understand the history and culture of Egyptian civilization by peering through the prism of dual Amarna and Tigrina hieroglyphic languages of Ethiopia."*

The image on the cover was colorized without altering the physical features of the statue as shown below.



1. Grayscale the image



2. Set the skin color



3. Color the eyeballs



4. Color the eye pupils



5. Color the eyebrows



6. Add a moustache



7. Color the beard



8. Color the crown



9. Color the background

*"Just as colorizing can bring out the true ethnic features of a statue, so too can the hieroglyphs be colored with words of the actual ancient Egyptian language."*