

E9 Week 3 Thursday

Egyptomania and Reception

HPHP4013

From Egypt to the Near East: Phenomena
of the Mediterranean

Dr. Katharina Zinn

Literature

- ❑ Hassan, F. A. 2010. Egypt in the memory of the world. In: Wendrich, W. *Egyptian Archaeology*. Malden: Wiley-Blackwell. 259-273.
- ❑ Nielsen, N. 2020. *Egyptomaniacs : how we became obsessed with ancient Egypt*. Yorkshire : Pen and Sword History.
- ❑ Fernandez Pichel, A. I. 2024. *How Pharaohs Became Media Stars: Ancient Egypt and Popular Culture*. London: Archaeopress.
<https://doi.org/10.2307/jj.14638132>
- ❑ Fritze, Ronald H. 2016. *Egyptomania : a History of Fascination, Obsession and Fantasy*. London: Reaktion Books.
- ❑ Campagnol, I. 2022. *Style from the Nile: Egyptomania in Fashion From the 19th Century to the Present Day*. Barnsley: Pen & Sword.

Egyptian reception in literature:

Bone, J. Drummond, 'Social Relations in Byron's Eastern Tales', *Byron Journal*, 16.1 (1988), 99–

Franklin, Caroline, *Byron's Heroines* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1992)

Griffiths, J. Gwyn, 'Shelley's "Ozymandias" and Diodorus Siculus', *The Modern Language Review*, 43.1 (1948), 80–84

Logan, William, 'Shelley's Wrinkled Lip, Smith's Gigantic Leg', *Parnassus. Poetry in Review*, 32.1-2 (2011), 297–

Oueijan, Naji B., *A Compendium of Eastern Elements in Byron's Oriental Tales* (New York: Peter Lang, 1999)

Rodenbeck, John, 'Travelers from an Antique Land: Shelley's Inspiration for "Ozymandias"', *Alif* (Cairo, Egypt), 24.24 (2004), 121–

Saul, Nicholas., *The Cambridge Companion to German Romanticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009)

Laurent Commynes:
Aegyptomanie – watercolour,
1993 (h.46.1 in; w.63.8 in)



Literature and Egyptomania 1790-1900

Everything now must be Egyptian: the ladies wear crocodile ornaments, and you sit upon a sphinx in a room hung round with mummies, and with long black lean-armed long-nosed hieroglyphical men, who are enough to make children afraid to go to bed. The very shopboards must be metamorphosed into the mode, and painted in Egyptian letters...

Robert Southey, *Letters from England* (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme & Brown, 1814) 449

The mausoleum pyramid of John Hobart (1728–1793), the second Earl of Buckinghamshire. This pyramid was designed by Joseph Bonomi the Elder (1739–1808)



Egyptomania 1790-1900

Biddulph Grange
Garden

horticulturist James
Bateman (1811–
1897) divided his
garden into different
themes with the help
of Edward William
Cooke (1811–1880)

One garden divisions
is Egyptian themed
→ boasts a tomb and
sphinxes



Romanticism and ideas of Egypt and the near East



In 1789 the French Directory authorized Napoleon Bonaparte to invade Egypt

Accompanying Napoleon's army was a large number of engineers, scholars, artists who compiled the thirty-seven volume *Description de l'Egypte* (1809 and 1828)

Napoleon was used as an important symbolic and mythic figure by the Romantics—to figure their political hopes, to examine the relationship of political and poetic power and to investigate new forms of leadership. (Simon Bainbridge, *Napoleon and English Romanticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995) 20.

Egypt in texts – just two examples

o'er Egypt's land of Memory floods
are level
And they are thine, O Nile – and well
thou knowest
That soul-sustaining airs and blasts of
evil
And fruits and poisons spring
where'er thou flowest. Beware, O
Man – for knowledge must to thee,
Like the great flood to Egypt, ever be.

P.B Shelley 'To the Nile' 1817-18

What are the hopes of Man's Old Egypt's
King?
Cheops erected the first Pyramid,
And largest, thinking it was just the thing
To keep his memory whole, and mummy
hid:
But somebody or other rummaging,
Burglaviously broke his coffin's lid.
Let not a monument gives you or me
hopes,
Since not a pinch of dust remains of
Cheops.
All things that have been born,
Were born to die.

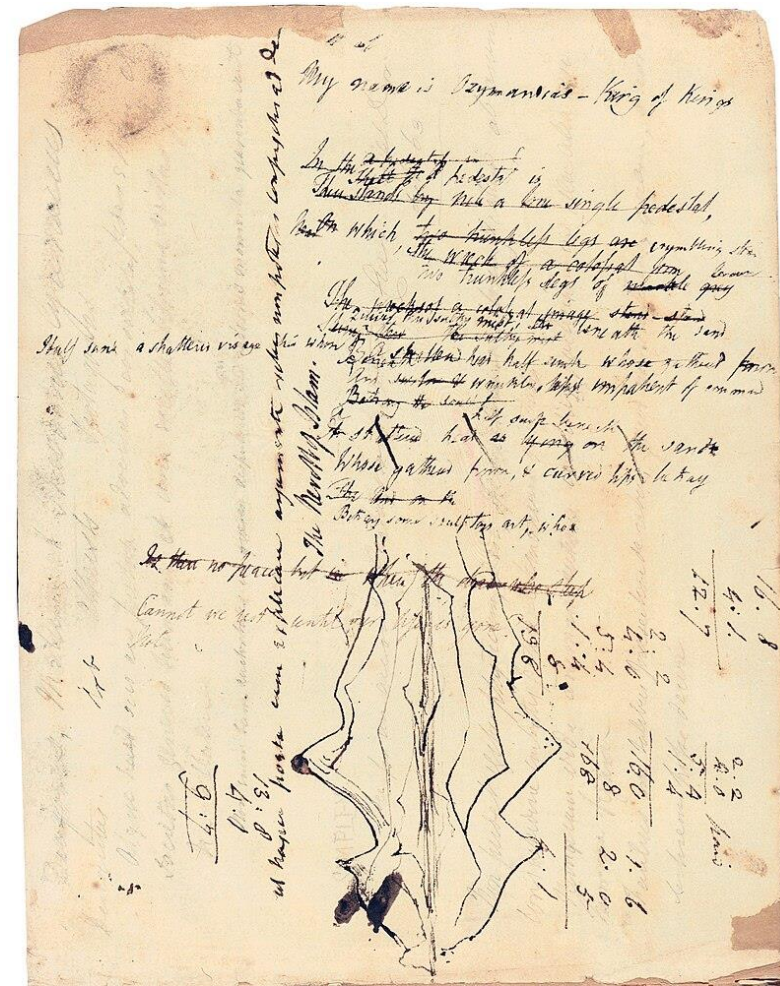
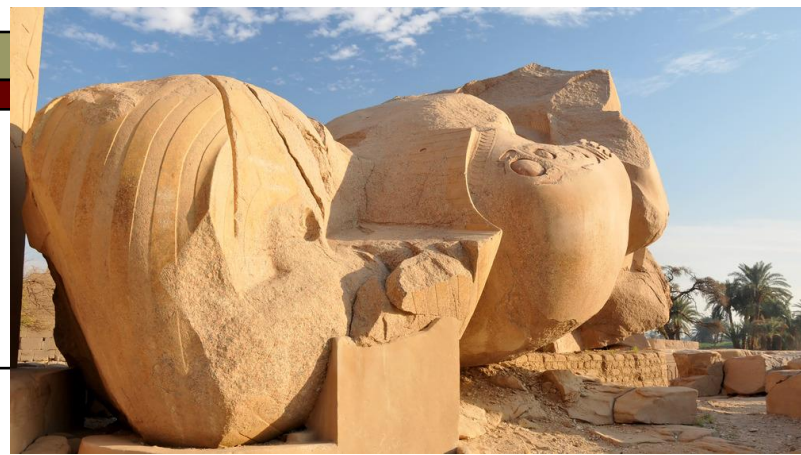
(Bryron 'Don Juan' 1820)

Shelley: 'Ozymandias'

The result of a **sonnet** competition between Shelley and Horace Smith, who had been reading together Diodorus Siculus *Bibliotheca historica* (probably in Booth's translation of 1721).

First published in *The Examiner*, January 25, 1818

I met a traveller from an antique land,
Who said—"Two vast and trunkless legs of stone
Stand in the desert. . . . Near them, on the sand,
Half sunk a shattered visage lies, whose frown,
And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command,
Tell that its sculptor well those passions read
Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things,
The hand that mocked them, and the heart that fed;
And on the pedestal, these words appear:
My name is Ozymandias, King of Kings;
Look on my Works, ye Mighty, and despair!
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
Of that colossal Wreck, boundless and bare
The lone and level sands stretch far away."



Orientalism and Postcolonialism



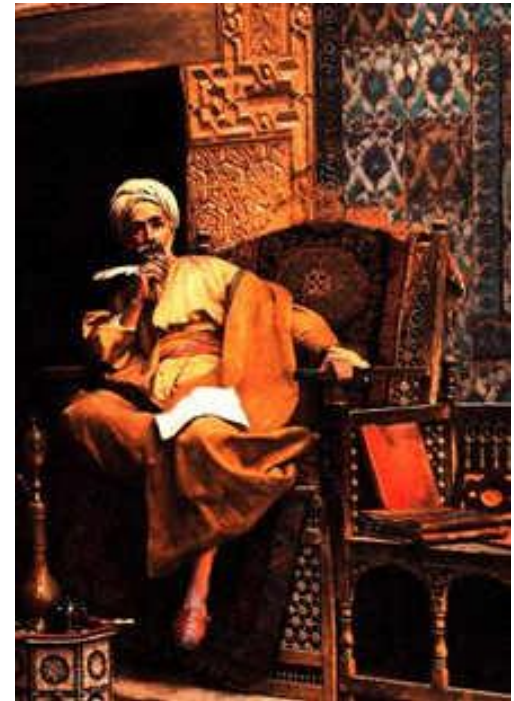
Orientalism

- ❑ Systematic, negative & Western way of discussing the Middle East
- ❑ Western academic, artistic & cultural engagement with the Middle East is paternalistic & inextricably linked with imperialism



Edward Said: *Orientalism*

- ❑ Specialist academic enquiry
- ❑ Epistemological distinction: Orient v. Occident
- ❑ From eighteenth century it was a systematic way of **controlling** the 'East'
- ❑ "Orientalism" can be discussed & analyzed as the corporate institution for dealing with the Orient- dealing with it by making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, teaching it, settling it, ruling over it: in short as a Western style for dominating, restructuring and having authority over the Orient (Said 1978: 3)



The Orient

- Representations of the Middle East framed by political forces that brought the Orient into Western consciousness
- Exists for the West & is constructed by &, in relation to, the West
 - **The Other**: inferior & alien to the West
- **Orientalism**: how the Orient is presented in the West through art, literature & academic study



People in the Orient

- The Oriental: a single image, a sweeping generalization, a stereotype that crosses countless cultural boundaries
- Men depicted as feminine, weak, effete
- Women: strikingly exotic, mysterious, alluring
 - Here: Theda Bara (actress)



Exoticism

- Europeans **manufactured** 'Otherness':
 - Everything outside Europe was portrayed as mysterious & other
- **Exoticism**: how the exotic was domesticated while foreign people, objects & places were characterised as strange, from cultural margins
- Europe was naturalised & the rest of the world exoticised:
 - the dominant culture defining the marginal in its own terms



Ancient Egypt and Exoticism / Orientalism



Egyptomania and Hybridisation

With the discovery of King Tut's tomb in 1922 the world exploded with decorative arts and fashion inspired by the Egyptian mode.



Figure in the Egyptian style; detail of a fountain on the Rue de Sèvres, Paris

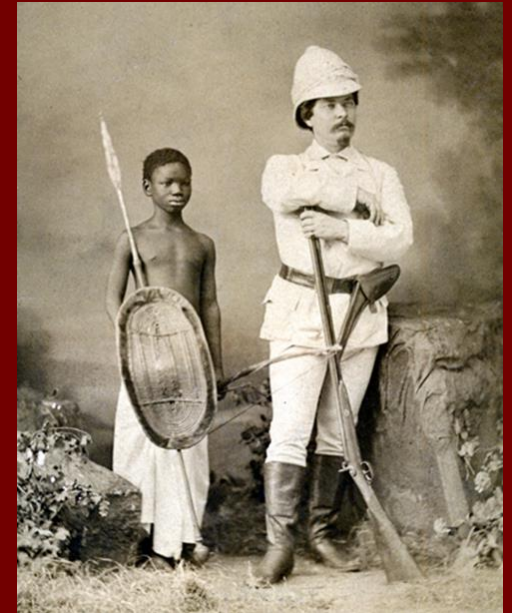


Postcolonial Theory

- ❑ A reaction against an over-riding western intellectual paradigm
- ❑ Rooted in Said's critique of "colonial discourse" in the Near East: *Orientalism*
- ❑ Key terms:
 - Hybridisation
 - Creolisation
 - Common Ground
- ❑ How are local social identities reworked by peoples living in colonial situations?
- ❑ Recognises the agency of the indigenous population

Coloniser and the Colonised

- Dualist concept of colonisation:
 - the colonist & the native
- Colonial situations: a **confrontation** between two distinct cultural entities
- **Unequal relationship:**
 - underlying assumption of cultural superiority of the coloniser & subordination of the native
 - On one hand: attempted domination based on perceptions & actions of inequality, racism, oppression, marginalization, dispossession
 - On the other: resistance, acquiescence, submission
 - Result: reworked identities & traditions often in the face of brutal conditions



King/Hall: Maspero's Egypt



EXCAVATION OF THE TOMB OF A PRIESTESS, ON THE PLATFORM OF
THE XITH DYNASTY TEMPLE, DÊR EL-BAHARI, 1904.

Love's Labour Lost (Victorian Orientalism)





LADY PAGET AS CLEOPATRA

1897



Morecambe and Wise – The complete Cleopatra Lauren Cornell

YouTube GB

Search

Upload

Sign in

Cast in order of ability

Queen Cleopatra.....
GLENDA JACKSON

Mark Antony.....
ERNIE WISE

Desdemona.....
ANN HAMILTON

00:10 / 14:33

Morecambe and Wise, with Glenda Jackson - the COMPLETE 'Antony & Cleopatra'...

slaphead6000 · 58 videos

54,675

YouTube Mix

50 videos

A Touch Of Class (Full 1973)
by ArchChinook
5,180 **FEATURED**
1:46:05

Morecambe and Wise - Andre
by Jonathan Crossfield
270,972 views
12:48

Glenda Jackson plays Hamlet as
by CannedCarrott
17,551 views
9:58

Morecambe & Wise - King
by CannedCarrott
30,627 views
8:35

Nekhbet Doll

<http://www.nikadesigns.com/egyptians.html>



Funerary culture in the modern reception: I hate mummies!



Research on mummies

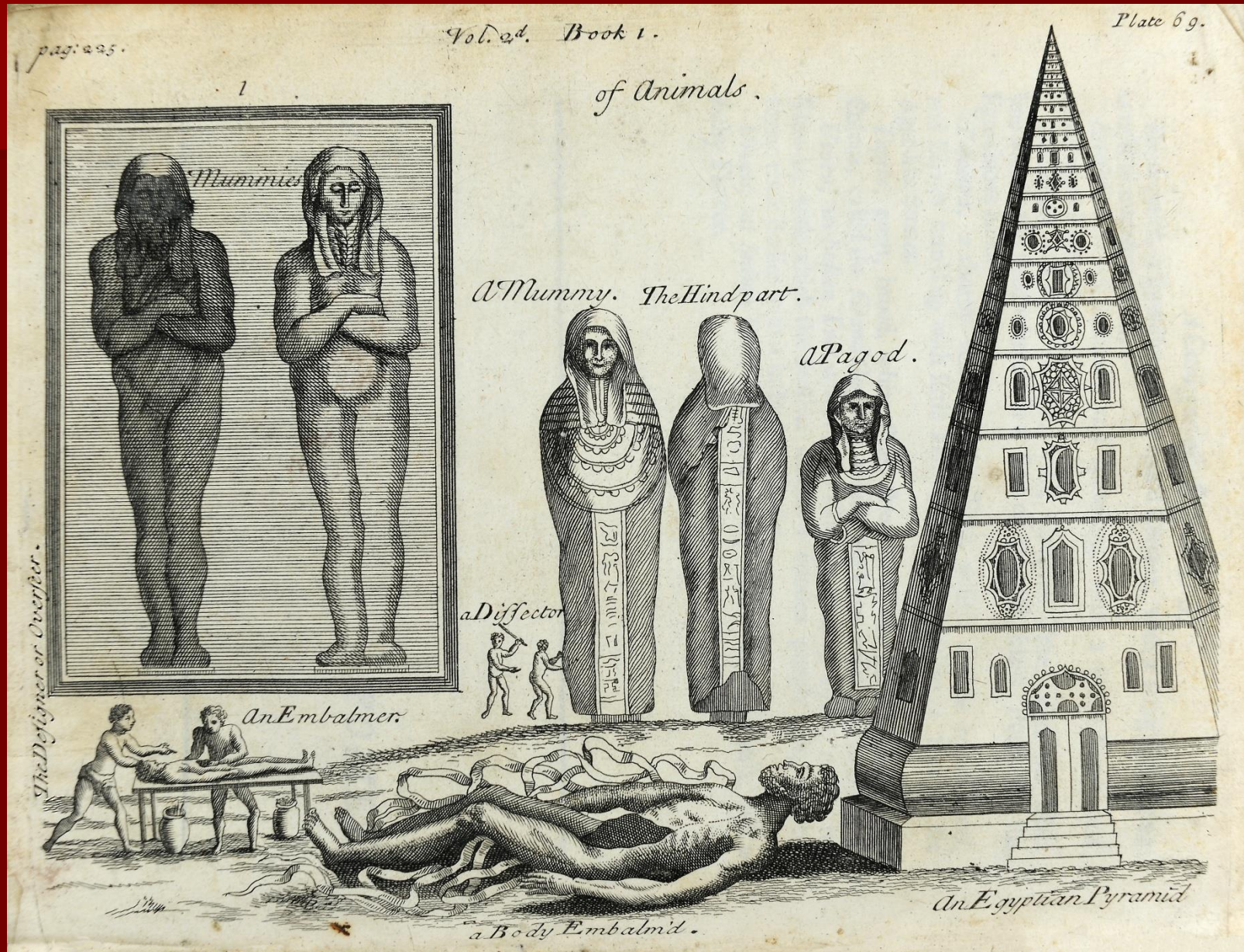




Seriously, mummies?



A compleat history of druggs, written in French by Monsieur Pomet



Making fake mummies

Napoleon in Egypt Studying a Mummy, Print by E. Fiorello





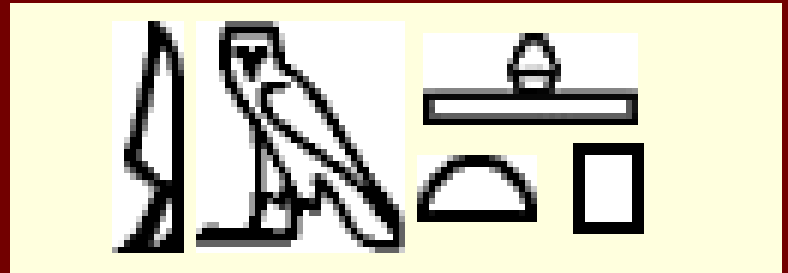
From Fiction to Academia

High Priest Imhotep

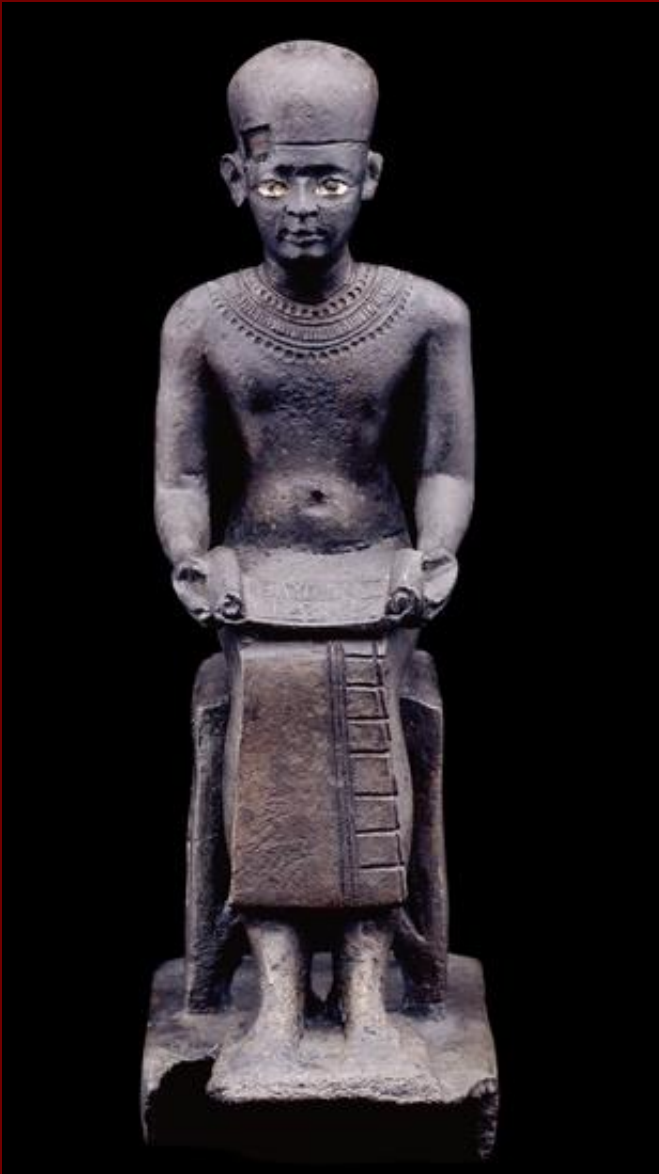


Real historic people

- *jy-m-Htp* (Imhotep)
- Common ancient Egyptian name
- Means "he who come in peace"



The most famous Imhotep



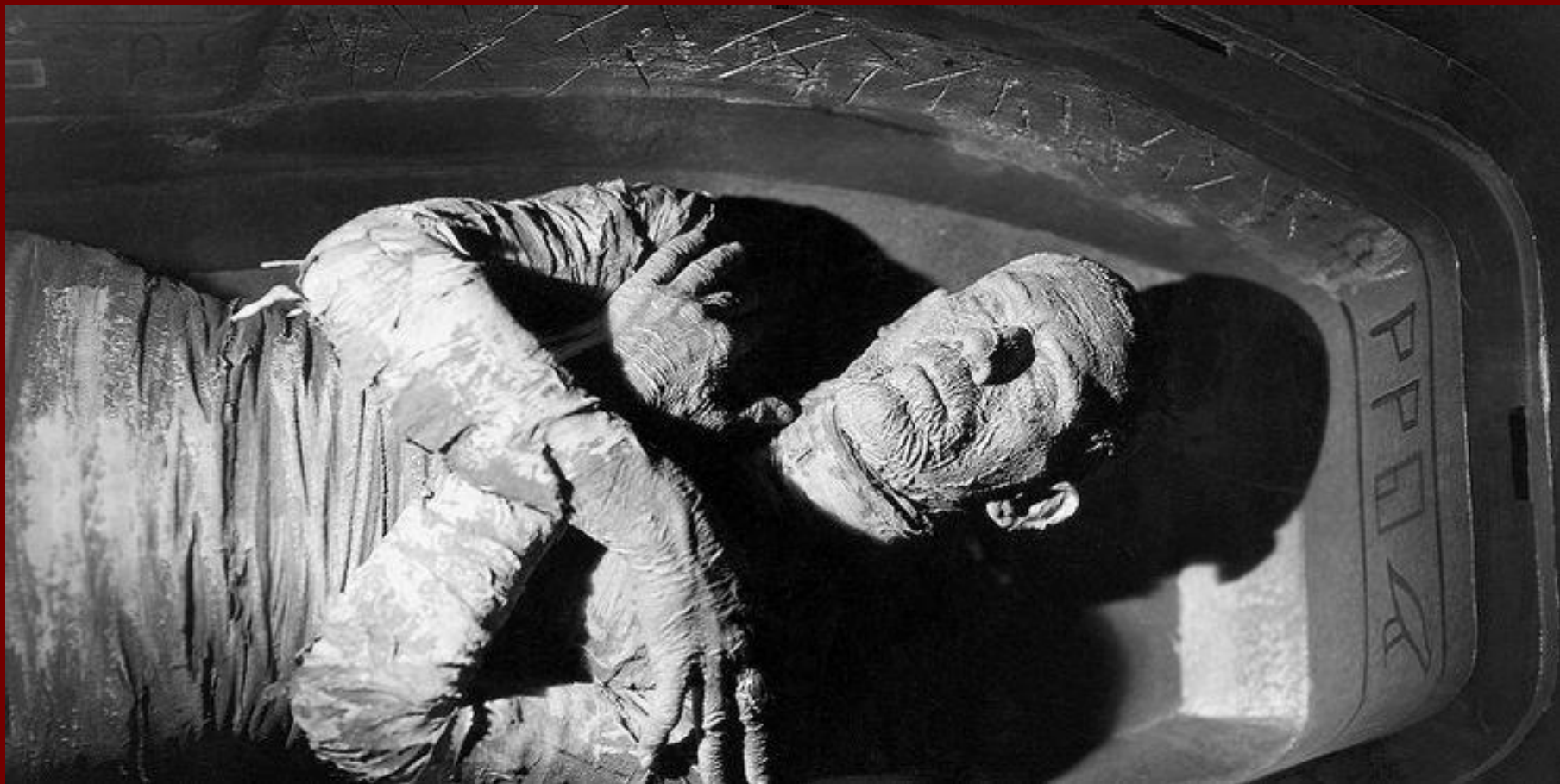
- BM EA 63800, Late Period, 6th-4th century BC
- Imhotep: vizier and architect to King Djoser in around 2700 BC, credited with building Step Pyramid at Saqqara (first monumental structure in stone)
- wrote a book of 'instructions' as one of THE wise Egyptian men

Chancellor of the king of Lower Egypt, pre-eminent after the king of Upper Egypt, hereditary prince, controller of the palace, great seer [High Priest of Heliopolis], Imhotep, builder and sculptor.



The Mummy (1932)

Boris Karlof



The Mummy's Hand (1940)



The Mummy's Tomb (1942)



The Mummy's Curse (1944)



The Mummy's Ghost (1944)



Abbott & Costello Meet The Mummy (1955)



Themes in mummy reception (literature and film)

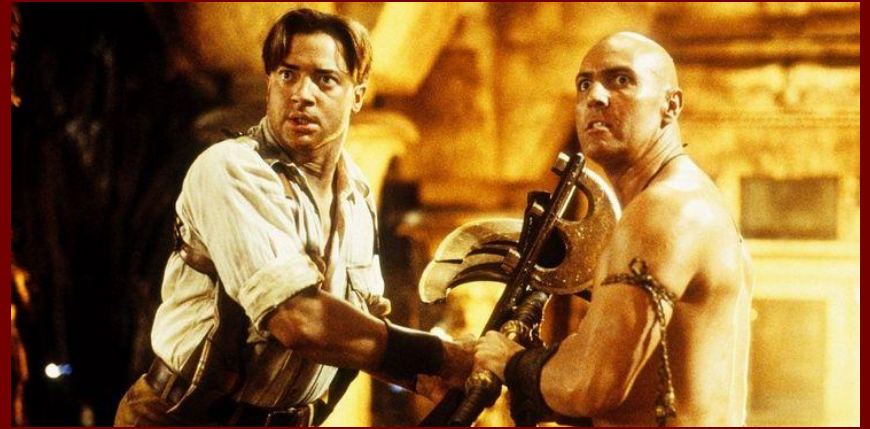
(Jasmin Day. 2006. the Mummy's Curse)

- ❑ Sex and death
- ❑ Fear and loathing
- ❑ Giggles and goosebumps
- ❑ Attraction and repulsion

- ❑ Add: mysticism, imaginary / imagination

- ❑ → for publishers and productions companies:
money, money, money

Modern (known) mummy movies (1999, 2001, 2017, 2008)

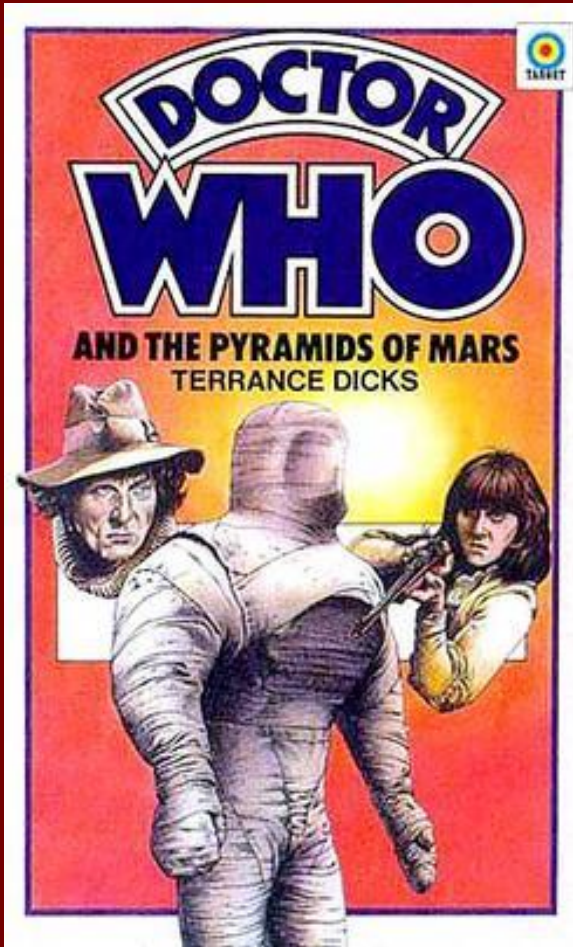


Luc Besson's The Extraordinary Adventures of Adèle Blanc-Sec (2010)



Dr Who

Pyramids on Mars (1975)

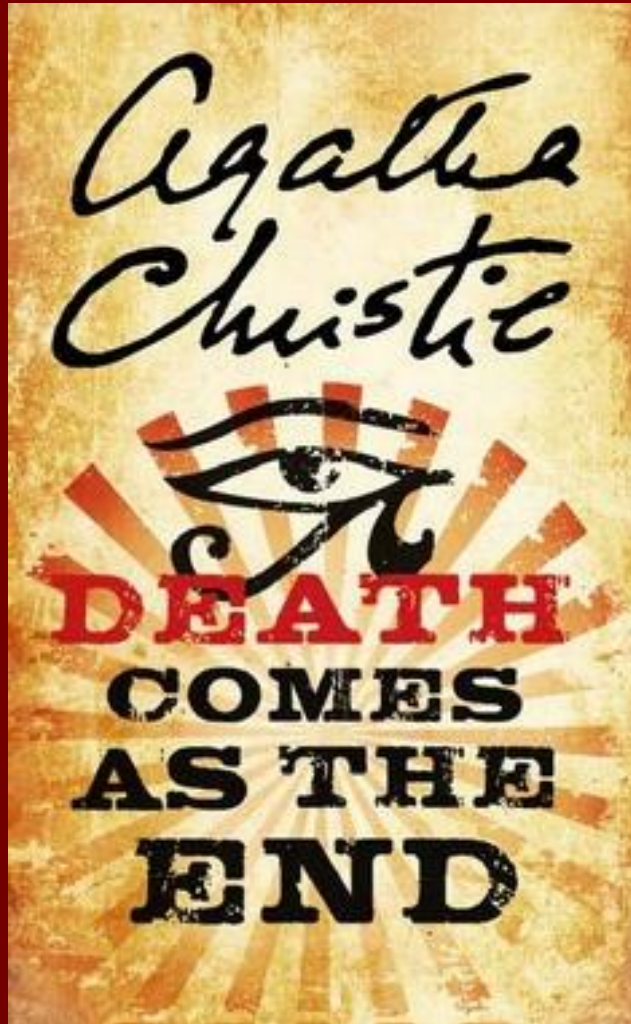


The Mummy on the Orient Express (2014)



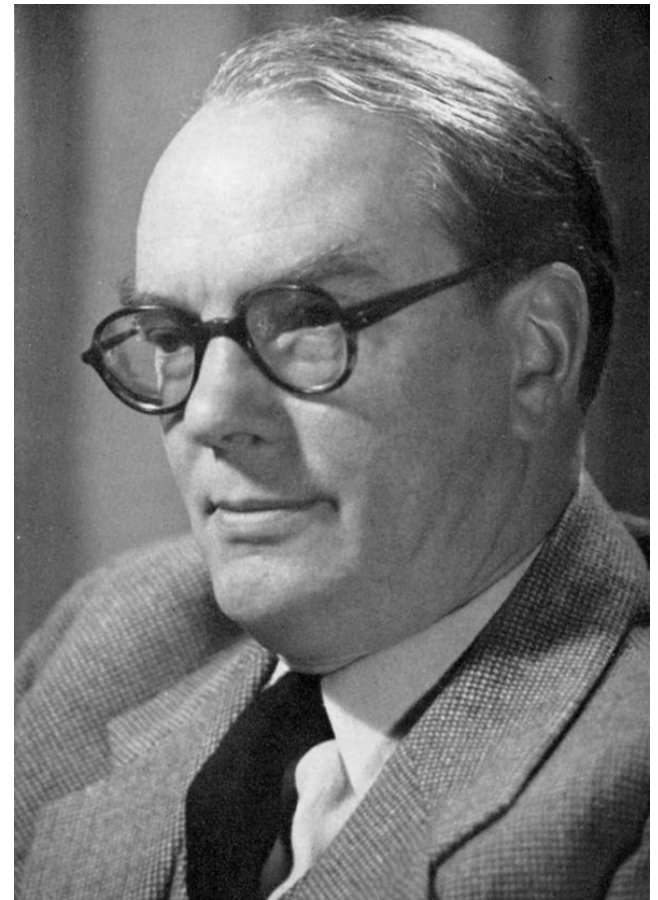
**Agatha Christie, archaeology
and the use of ancient
Egyptian sources:
Hekanakhte and “Death
comes as the end”**

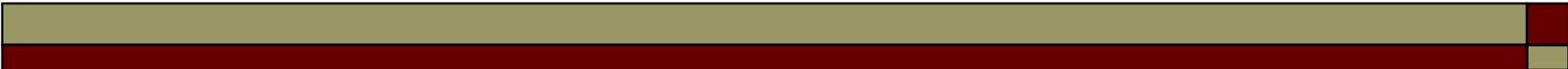
Agatha Christie and Archaeology



Death comes as the end

- ❑ Christie's only book with historical setting
- ❑ idea of setting a murder mystery novel in Egypt suggested to her by Stephen Glanville – Egyptologist and close personal friend / colleague of Christie's husband Max Mallowan
- ❑ based on some real letters from the Egyptian Middle Kingdom period from a man called Heqanakhte to his family, complaining about their behaviour and treatment of his concubine

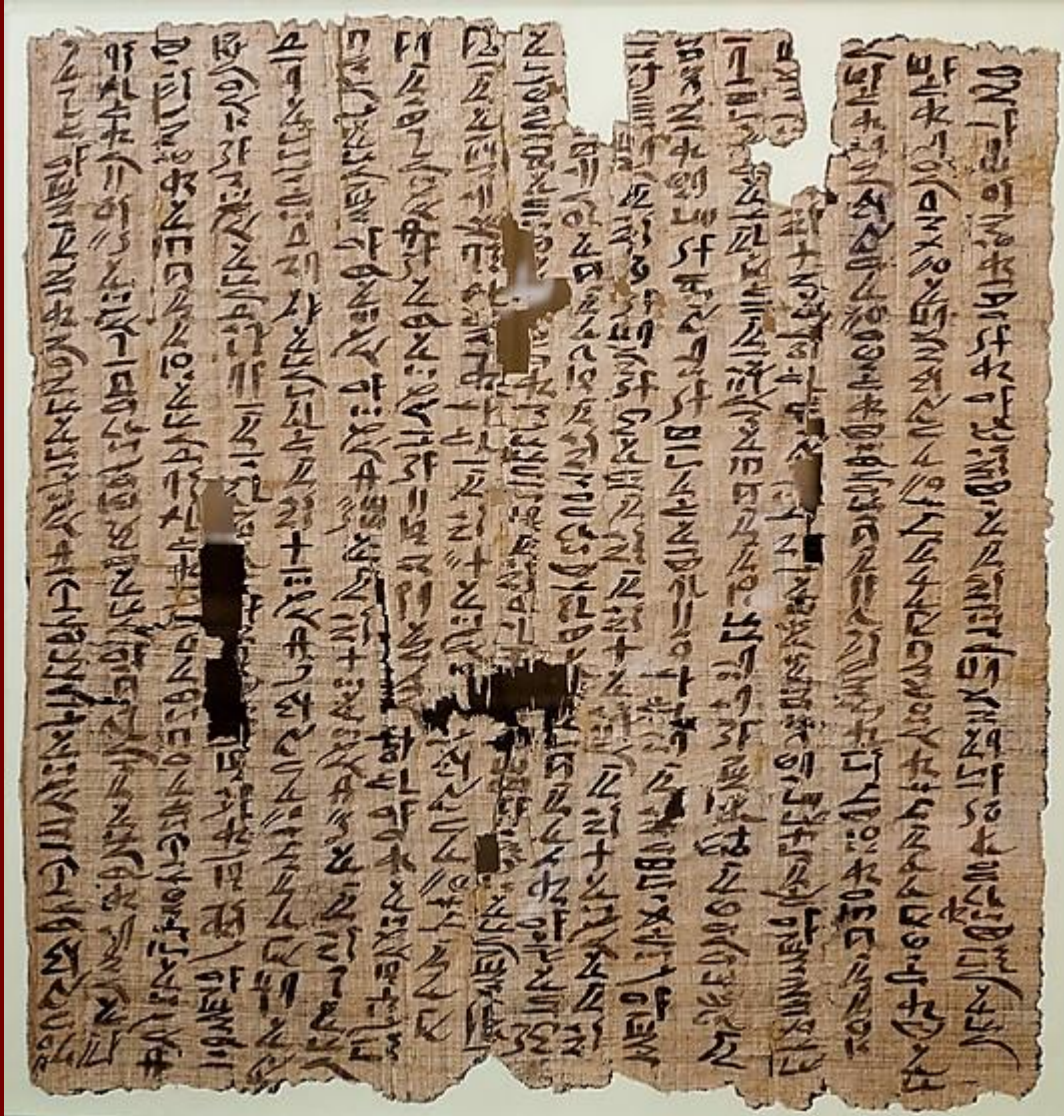




Death comes as the end

- It is 2000 BC in Egypt and Imhotep the Ka-Priest brings home his beautiful young concubine Nofret. But not all the members of his family welcome her. When she is found dead Imhotep's daughter, Renisenb, suspects it might not have been an accident. The death unleashes the greed and hate that have been building up within the family and the horrific events that follow tear it apart.

The original sources:



Heghanakht Letter I

Middle Kingdom (dyn.
12, Senwosret I)

Thebes, Deir el-Bahri,
Tomb complex of Ipy
(TT 315, MMA 516),
Tomb of Meseh (MMA
516B)

Papyrus (h. 28.4 cm, w.
27.1 cm) , ink

Rogers Fund and
Edward S. Harkness Gift,
1922 Accession Number:
22.3.516

Hekanakhte Papers

- Now, what do you mean by having Sihathor [the second son, who acted as a go-between] coming to me with old, dried-out, northern barley from Memphis, instead of giving me ten sacks of good, new barley? Fine - You're happy, eating good new barley while I'm going without. Isn't that so? Your ship has come in for you, when in fact you do nothing but evil .If you had sent me the old barley simply to keep the new barley intact, what could I have said, [except] "Well done !"? But since you won't assign me a single bushel from the new barley, I won't assign one to you - for the rest of eternity.

Detailed checked objects

Wooden toy cat/lion of Teti, Renisenebs daughter =
BM EA 15761



Wooden toy cat

From Thebes,
Egypt

New Kingdom
(1550-1070 BC)
Moving jaws and
bronze teeth

Detailed checked objects

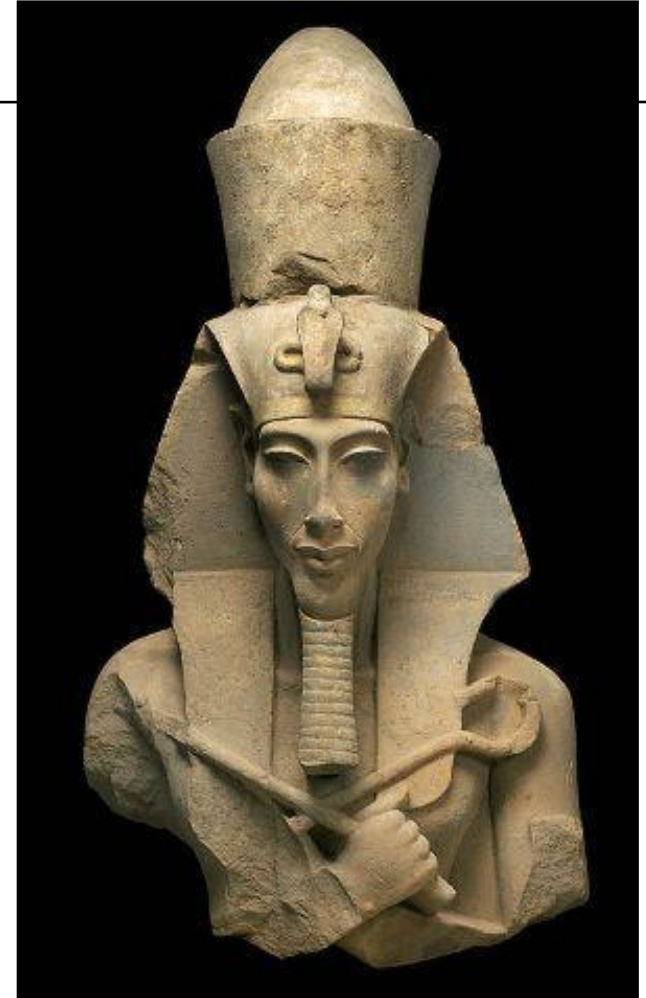
Tripartite necklace of Nofret: jewelry,
found in tomb of Sithathor, Lahun, MK



(Popular) Amarna Reception

The Popularity of The Amarna Period

- ❑ The Amarna Period (circa 1352–1323 BCE)
- ❑ Most widely discussed topic in Egyptology
- ❑ Over 3,000 titles and more than 50 books in the last 15 years
- ❑ Ironical given that Akhenaten's name was intended to be erased from history



The Popularity of The Amarna Period



The Tel el-Amarna Period has had more nonsense written about it than any other period in Egyptian history, and Akhenaten is a strong rival to Cleopatra for the historical novelist. The appeal of Cleopatra is the romantic combination of love and death; Akhenaten appeals to religion and sentiment. In the case of Akhenaten the facts do not bear the construction often put on them.

MARGARET MURRAY, THE SPLENDOUR THAT WAS EGYPT (1949)

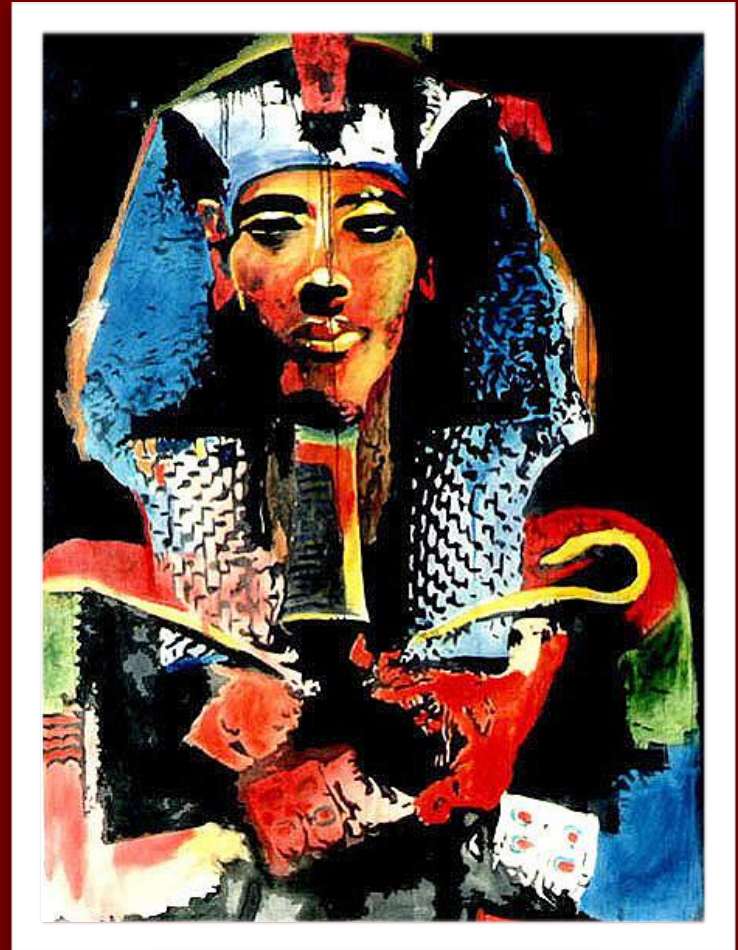
Winifred Brunton

- South African wife of British Egyptologist Guy Brunton (excavated at Lahun under Petrie, Assistant Keeper of the Cairo Museum in 1931)
- Illustrated excavation reports (tomb Tutankhamun)
- Early 20th century, published as *Kings and Queens of Ancient Egypt* (1926) and *Great Ones of Ancient Egypt* (1929)
- Today highly collectable
- Work based on evidence available at the time



The Amarna Period in Popular Culture

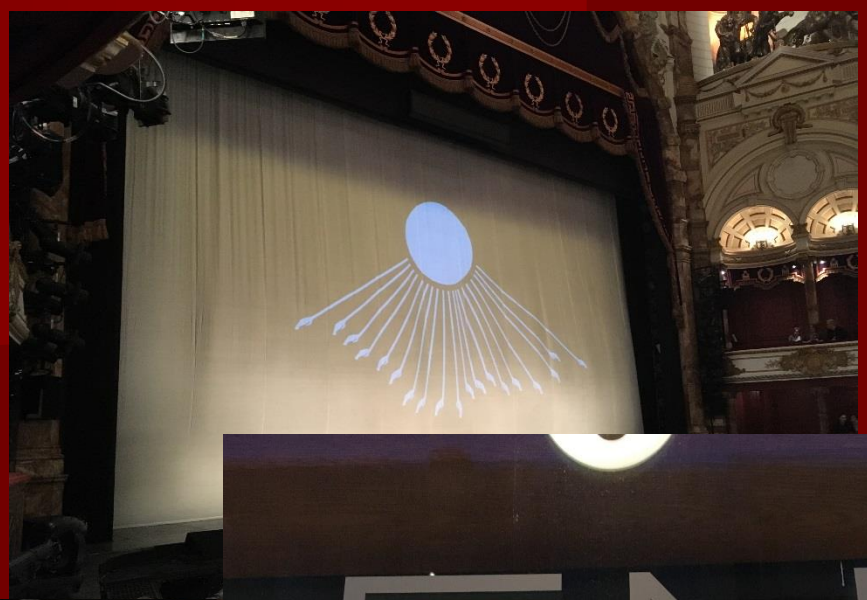
- In addition to the scholarly community, the Amarna period has wide public interest



The Amarna Period in Popular Culture

- Opera: "Akhnaten" by Philip Glass (1937), Commissioned by the Württembergisches Staatstheater, Stuttgart in 1983
- Part 3 of The "Portrait Trilogy" about men who changed the world "through the power of their ideas"
- Perpetuates the idea of Akhenaten as the 1st monotheist

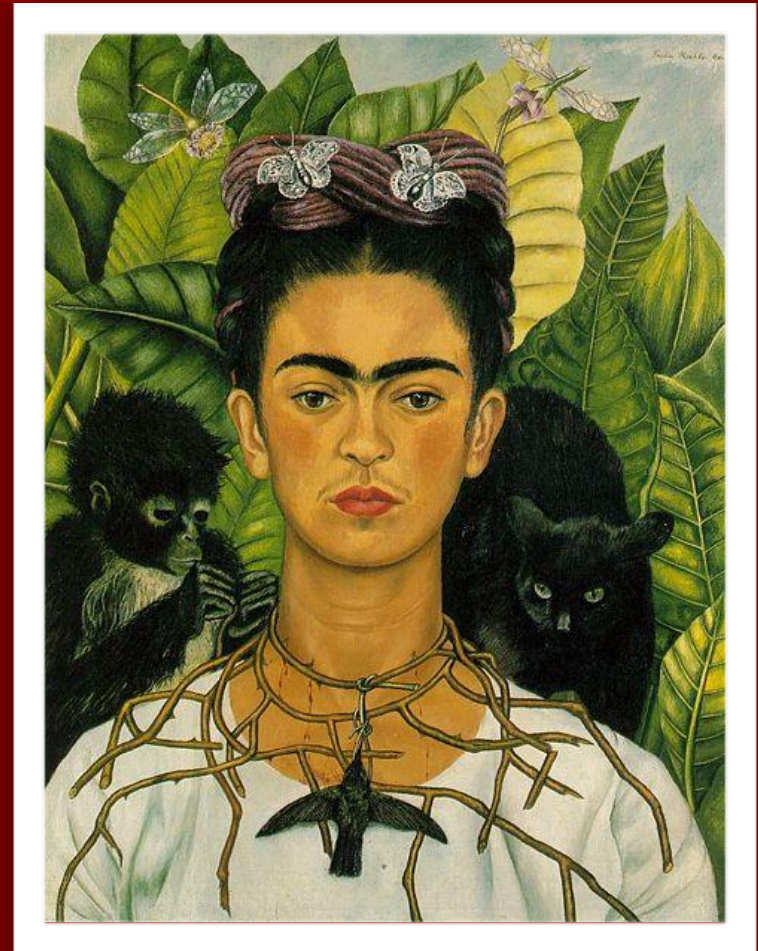






The Amarna Period in Popular Culture

- In addition to the scholarly community, the Amarna period has wide public interest
- Sigmund Freud (1856–1939): Moses and Monotheism
- Frida Kahlo (1907–1954): Mexican surrealist artist



“MOSES” (1945)



- Kahlo: Freud’s book inspired her to paint a very complex painting entitled “Moses”, which features Amarna iconography
- Blood-red Aten-disk sun, under which Moses is born
- Nefertiti and Akhenaten as revolutionary leaders, rising above the masses, with great/important/enigmatic leaders such as Jesus, Muhammad, Martin Luther, Napoleon, Hitler, Gengis Khan, Marx, Stalin, and others



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