



The Mind of Egypt: History and Meaning in the Time of the Pharaohs

Jan Assmann

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From one of the world's greatest Egyptologists, an original and brilliant study of the inner life of ancient Egypt

The Mind of Egypt presents an unprecedented account of the mainsprings of Egyptian civilization—the ideals, values, mentalities, belief systems, and aspirations that shaped the first territorial state in human history. Drawing on a range of literary, iconographic, and archaeological sources, renowned historian Jan Assmann reconstructs a world of unparalleled complexity, a culture that, long before others, possessed an extraordinary degree of awareness and self-reflection.

Moving through successive periods of Egyptian civilization, from its beginnings in the fifth millennium b.c.e. until the rise of Christianity 4,500 years later, Assmann traces the crucial roles of the pharaohs, the priests, and the imperial bureaucracy. He explores the ideal relation of man to God and explains monumental architecture and ritual celebrations as expressions of that ideal. Most strikingly, he focuses on the meaningful world of ancient Egypt—the multiple notions of time, the structures of immortality, and the commitment to the principle of social justice and human fellowship.

Widely acclaimed for his cross-disciplinary approach, Assmann has produced a tantalizing study of an ancient civilization, even as he has opened new directions in historical investigation.

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