

## Egypt tour: escorted small group history & cultural tour of Egypt

### Reading List

#### **Egyptian Mythology: A Guide to the Gods, Goddesses, and Traditions of Ancient Egypt**

by Geraldine Pinch

From stories of resurrected mummies and thousand-year-old curses to powerful pharaohs and the coveted treasures of the Great Pyramids, ancient Egypt has had an unfaltering grip on the modern imagination. Now, in *Egyptian Mythology*, Geraldine Pinch offers a comprehensive introduction that untangles the mystery of Egyptian Myth.

Spanning Ancient Egyptian culture--from 3200 BC to AD 400--Pinch opens a door to this hidden world and casts light on its often misunderstood belief system. She discusses the nature of myths and the history of Egypt, from the predynastic to the postpharaonic period. She explains how Egyptian culture developed around the flooding of the Nile, or the "inundation," a phenomenon on which the whole welfare of the country depended, and how aspects of the inundation were personified as deities. She explains that the usually cloudless skies made for a preoccupation with the stars and planets. Indeed, much early Egyptian mythology may have developed to explain the movement of these celestial bodies. She provides a timeline covering the seven stages in the mythical history of Egypt and outlining the major events of each stage, such as the reign of the sun God. A substantial A to Z section covers the principal themes and concepts of Egyptian mythology as well as the most important deities, demons, and other characters. For anyone who wants to know about Anubis, the terrifying canine god who presided over the mummification of bodies and guarded burials, or Hathor, the golden goddess who helped women to give birth and the dead to be reborn, or an explanation of the nun, the primeval ocean from which all life came, *Egyptian Mythology* is the place to look.

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#### **Ancient Egypt**

by David P. Silverman (ed.)

The ancient Egyptians created some of the world's most beautiful art and architecture. To this day, this ancient civilization--which produced the great pyramids, the riddle of the Sphinx, and the riches of Tutankhamun--exerts a strong hold on our imaginations.

Now, in *Ancient Egypt*, eminent Egyptologist David P. Silverman and a team of leading scholars explore the cultural wealth of this civilization in a series of intriguing and authoritative essays based

on the latest theories and discoveries. Illustrated with more than 200 superb color photographs, maps, and charts, this book illuminates the vivid and powerful symbolic images of this fascinating culture--from pyramids and temples to priests and rituals; from hieroglyphic writing to daily life by the Nile; and from temple carvings to the cult of the dead. Correcting the popular misconception of the Egyptians as a death-obsessed people, the book uses the most recent historical research and archaeological finds to illuminate the routines of daily life in royal, elite, priestly circles, as well as at lower levels of society. We learn, for example, that despite the monochromatic appearance of most temple ruins today, in ancient times they would have been colorful, even gleaming structures; that the title "Pharaoh" derives from the Egyptian phrase per aa, which means "great house" and was originally a reference to the royal palace; that temples employed all manner of part-time and full-time personnel, from farmers and carpenters to scribes, jewelers, and keepers of livestock; and that Egyptian law viewed women as equal to men, and they could, in some cases, wield considerable influence.

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### **Egyptian Myth: A Very Short Introduction**

by Geraldine Pinch

Egyptian myths articulated the core values of one of the longest lasting civilizations in history, and myths of deities such as Isis and Osiris influenced contemporary cultures and became part of the Western cultural heritage. *Egyptian Mythology: A Very Short Introduction* explains the cultural and historical background to the fascinating and complex world of Egyptian myth, with each chapter dealing with a particular theme.

To show the variety of source material for Egyptian myth, each chapter features a particular object--such as the obelisk known as Cleopatra's Needle, a golden statue of Tutankhamun, and a papyrus containing a story in which the Egyptian gods behave outrageously--which is illustrated by a photograph or line-drawing. The myth "The Contendings of Horus and Seth" is looked at in detail, and the many interpretations it has provoked are examined. In addition to a list of major deities and myths, there are explanations of related topics such as how hieroglyphs work, royal names and titles, and the Egyptian cosmos. There is also a timeline of Egyptian history, a glossary of technical terms and an up-to-date bibliography.

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### **The Automobile Club of Egypt: A Novel**

by Alaa Al Aswany

From the most popular Egyptian novelist of his generation ("a suitable heir to the mantle worn by Naguib Mahfouz" —*The Guardian*), a rollicking, exuberant and powerfully moving story of a family

swept up by social unrest in post–World War II Cairo.

Once a respected landowner, Abd el-Aziz Gaafar fell into penury and moved his family to Cairo, where he was forced into menial work at the Automobile Club—a refuge of colonial luxury for its European members. There, Alku, the lifelong Nubian retainer of Egypt's corrupt and dissolute king, lords it over the staff, a squabbling but tight-knit group, who live in perpetual fear, as they are thrashed for their mistakes, their wages dependent on Alku's whims. When, one day, Abd el-Aziz stands up for himself, he is beaten. Soon afterward, he dies, as much from shame as from his injuries, leaving his widow and four children further impoverished. The family's loss propels them down different paths: the responsible son, Kamel, takes over his late father's post in the Club's storeroom, even as his law school friends seduce him into revolutionary politics; Mahmud joins his brother working at the Club but spends his free time sleeping with older women—for a fee, which he splits with his partner in crime, his devil-may-care workout buddy and neighbor, Fawzy; their greedy brother Said breaks away to follow ambitions of his own; and their only sister, Saleha, is torn between her dream of studying mathematics and the security of settling down as a wife and saving her family.

It is at the Club, too, that Kamel's dangerous politics will find the favor and patronage of the king's seditious cousin, an unlikely revolutionary plotter–cum–bon vivant. Soon, both servants and masters will be subsumed by the brewing social upheaval. And the Egyptians of the Automobile Club will face a stark choice: to live safely, but without dignity, or to fight for their rights and risk everything.

Full of absorbing incident, and marvelously drawn characters, Alaa Al Aswany's novel gives us Egypt on the brink of changes that resonate to this day. It is an irresistible confirmation of Al Aswany's reputation as one of the Middle East's most beguiling storytellers and insightful interpreters of the human spirit.

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## **Creative Reckonings: The Politics of Art and Culture in Contemporary Egypt**

by Jessica Winegar

The Egyptian art world is the oldest and largest in the Arab Middle East. Its artists must reckon with the histories of ancient Egypt, European modernism, anti-colonial nationalism, and state socialism—all in the context of a growing neoliberal economy marked by American global dominance. At this crucial intersection of culture, politics, and economy, Egypt's art and artists provide unique insight into current struggles for cultural identity and sovereignty in the Middle East. This book examines the heated cultural politics in today's Arab world, and tells how art-making has become an unexpectedly central part of that. It offers a lively analysis of the battles between artists, curators, and audiences over cultural authenticity, cultural policy, public art in a changing urban Egypt, and the new global marketing of Egyptian art. The art world it shows powerfully exemplifies how people in the Middle East reckon with global transformations that are changing how culture is made in societies with

colonial and socialist pasts.

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## **The Rise and Fall of Ancient Egypt**

by Toby Wilkinson

Egyptologists constitute a relatively small subspecialty among professional historians. Perhaps that is why many express an almost fanatical devotion to and admiration for the culture of ancient Egypt. Wilkinson, an award-winning Egyptologist who teaches at Oxford, provides a fine single-volume history of ancient Egypt that covers more than 3,000 years, from prehistory to the Roman conquest. He uses a conventional chronological approach that inevitably uses archaeological sources to provide examples. Like his colleagues, Wilkinson expresses admiration for the continuity, stability, and relative harmony of pharaonic Egypt. Yet he is strikingly at odds with other Egyptologists in his efforts to present the darker side of Egyptian life. Egyptian rulers created and maintained the first true nation-state. As Wilkinson shows, however, the price of this stability was regimes based on fear, coercion, and, when deemed necessary, violent military suppression. This superbly written survey is ideal for general readers and likely to engender controversy among specialists.

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## **Arab Fall: How the Muslim Brotherhood Won and Lost Egypt in 891 Days**

by Eric Trager

How did Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood win power so quickly after the dramatic "Arab Spring" uprising that ended President Hosni Mubarak's thirty-year reign in February 2011? And why did the Brotherhood fall from power even more quickly, culminating with the popular "rebellion" and military coup that toppled Egypt's first elected president, Brotherhood leader Mohamed Morsi, in July 2013? In Arab Fall, Eric Trager examines the Brotherhood's decision making throughout this critical period, explaining its reasons for joining the 2011 uprising, running for a majority of the seats in the 2011-2012 parliamentary elections, and nominating a presidential candidate despite its initial promise not to do so. Based on extensive research in Egypt and interviews with dozens of Brotherhood leaders and cadres including Morsi, Trager argues that the very organizational characteristics that helped the Brotherhood win power also contributed to its rapid downfall. The Brotherhood's intensive process for recruiting members and its rigid nationwide command-chain meant that it possessed unparalleled mobilizing capabilities for winning the first post-Mubarak parliamentary and presidential elections.

Yet the Brotherhood's hierarchical organizational culture, in which dissenters are banished and critics are viewed as enemies of Islam, bred exclusivism. This alienated many Egyptians, including many within Egypt's state institutions. The Brotherhood's insularity also prevented its leaders from

recognizing how quickly the country was slipping from their grasp, leaving hundreds of thousands of Muslim Brothers entirely unprepared for the brutal crackdown that followed Morsi's overthrow. Trager concludes with an assessment of the current state of Egyptian politics and examines the Brotherhood's prospects for reemerging.

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### **Egypt on the Brink: From Nasser to the Muslim Brotherhood**

by Tarek Osman

Famous until the 1950s for its religious pluralism and extraordinary cultural heritage, Egypt is now seen as an increasingly repressive and divided land, home of the Muslim Brotherhood and an opaque regime headed by the aging President Mubarak.

In this immensely readable and thoroughly researched book, Tarek Osman explores what has happened to the biggest Arab nation since President Nasser took control of the country in 1954. He examines Egypt's central role in the development of the two crucial movements of the period, Arab nationalism and radical Islam; the increasingly contentious relationship between Muslims and Christians; and perhaps most important of all, the rift between the cosmopolitan elite and the mass of the undereducated and underemployed population, more than half of whom are aged under thirty. This is an essential guide to one of the Middle East's most important but least understood states.

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### **Public Culture and Islam in Modern Egypt: Media, Intellectuals and Society**

by Hatsuki Aishima

What does it mean to be an intellectual in Egypt today? What is expected from an 'authentic scholar'? And how does the mass media influence or reflect intellectual debates? Hatsuki Aishima explores these questions by examining educated, urban Egyptians and their perceptions of what it means to be 'cultured' and 'middle class'? something that, as a result of the neoliberal policies of Egyptian government, is perceived to be a shrinking sector of society. Discussing the media presentations and representations of Abdel-Halim Mahmoud? Sufi scholar and the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar under former Egyptian president Anwar Sadat? she discusses the connection of Islam to these middle class considerations, as well as offering analysis concerning the commodification of religious teaching and knowledge. Public Culture and Islam in Modern Egypt is thereby a unique contribution to the fields of anthropology, Middle East and media studies.

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### **Napoleon in Egypt**

by Paul Strathern

In 1798, Napoleon Bonaparte, only twenty-eight, set sail for Egypt with 335 ships, 40,000 soldiers, and a collection of scholars, artists, and scientists to establish an eastern empire. He saw himself as a liberator, freeing the Egyptians from oppression. But Napoleon wasn't the first—nor the last—who tragically misunderstood Muslim culture. Marching across seemingly endless deserts in the shadow of the pyramids, pushed to the limits of human endurance, his men would be plagued by mirages, suicides, and the constant threat of ambush. A crusade begun in honor would degenerate into chaos. And yet his grand failure also yielded a treasure trove of knowledge that paved the way for modern Egyptology—and it tempered the complex leader who believed himself destined to conquer the world.

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