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Egyptian Secrets of the Afterlife

Ancient Medieval Europe

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 1,200 years before the birth of Christ a Pharaoh named Seti the first passed away, about to embark on his journey to the after-life. The documentary, “Egyptian Secrets of the Afterlife” produced by the National Geographic Channel told the whole story of Seti and his journey to live forever. It also talked about the Pharaoh’s Unas, Djer, Miniature and Djoser and their unique burial rituals.

Seti was one of the greatest Pharaoh’s of all time. He reined a golden age of peace and prosperity. He reduced destruction and chaos and brought about order to his people. Once Seti died he first needed to be mummified and properly prepared to rise up again, if not his body and soul would not reconnect and he would not be able to go into the after life. Once he is mummified, he is buried in The Valley of The Kings. When Seti reached the Egyptian version of Hell he had 12 hours to complete 12 different tasks, a task every hour. If he did not complete all the tasks, it was thought to believe that the sun would never rise again and the world would be destroyed. No pressure Seti!

Seti had his tomb filled will treasure, and Shawabti figurines. Shawabti’s were figurines that were placed in the tombs and when called upon they would magically come to life and do whatever the Pharaoh needed them to do. Seti’s guide on how to properly get through the 12 hours was painted on the walls of his tomb; the guide was called The Book of Gates. His journey was filled with passing through the 12 gates along the Nile River, which consisted of defeating the demon Apophis, becoming one with the god Osiris to judge dead Egyptians and know his history. Osiris was thought to be the first Pharaoh in history, but was murdered by his brother and thrown into the Nile River. He was resurrected by his wife Iris and is now the ruler of the dead. If Seti followed the rules of the Book of Gates he should have made it through all 12 levels and at the end became one with the sun.

A good portion of the documentary was about the mysterious tunnel found in Seti’s tomb that went 450 feet down into the ground.. They still don’t know what it is for but they keep going deeper and deeper into the tunnel finding more clues as to why it was made. One theory is that it was the tunnel to find everlasting life. This was very interesting to learn about, yet frustrating because they talk about the tunnel throughout the whole documentary and in the end it’s still just a tunnel that they really don’t know its purpose.

Unas lived 1,000 years before Seti. His burial chamber was the first tomb to have a guide on the wall for him once he was dead. The writings were called Pyramid Script. Unas was supposed to rise up and collect the magic from the inscriptions to help him go to the afterlife and become one of the stars. Unas’s guide wasn’t as intense or detailed as Seti’s but it was the start of it.

Djer lived 1,700 years before Seti and his tomb is supposedly the first tomb dedicated to moving into the afterlife. In the tomb, instead of an elaborate guide to move on, there was a door and the door was Djer’s way to go into the afterlife and do whatever his role was to play and live forever. Instead of Shawbti’s he had actual servants killed and buried with him so they could continue to serve him in the afterlife. Around his tomb were millions of broken pots left by people coming to worship there and leave offerings. Archeologists consider it to be like the modern day Mecca.

Djoser and Miniature were the last Pharaohs mentioned in the documentary. Their tombs were right next to each other. Djoser had the first ever step pyramid built. Miniature’s tomb today looked like just an underground tomb. There was either no structure above or it was just all in the ground. His tomb was filled with rooms that had tables, beds and bathrooms. They concluded it was like a little village to act as Miniature’s parallel palace for him to live in, in the afterlife.

Four major Pharaohs were talked about in this paper: Seti the first, Unas, Djer, Djoser and Miniature. Their tombs and all the interesting rituals that went along with burring the dead and the afterlife were explained in great detail and were very interesting to learn about. Seti was a great Pharaoh that had a lot of pressure to go through the 12 gates in 12 hours without fail. Unas was the first to have a script to go by once he died. Djer had a less stressful transition into the afterlife by basically walking through a magical door. Djoser and Miniature were tomb neighbors. Djoser had the step pyramid and Miniature had his own village prepared for him so he could live in peace and be comfortable. The documentary showed the evolution of the rituals and preparations to the afterlife. One does not have to agree with what the Egyptians believed when it came to death but its very interesting to learn all about how different cultures perceive what happens to people when they die. The Egyptians had great pride in their dead and it was almost as if one did not start living until they went to the afterlife.

Work Cited

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