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重构古埃及

Ancient Egypt

A Very Short Introduction

Ian Shaw 著
颜海英 译

外语教学与研究出版社

FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING AND RESEARCH PRESS

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Preface

In the temple of the goddess Isis on the island of Philae, a few miles to the south of the city of Aswan, one wall bears a brief hieroglyphic inscription. Its significance is not in its content or meaning but purely its date – it was written on 24 August AD 394, and as far as we know it was the last time that the hieroglyphic script was used. The *language* of ancient Egypt survived considerably longer (Philae temple also contains the last graffiti in the more cursive ‘demotic’ script, dating to 2 December AD 452), and in a sense it still exists in fossilized form in the liturgical texts of the modern Coptic church. Nevertheless, it was around the end of the 4th century AD that the knowledge and use of hieroglyphs effectively vanished, and until the decipherment of hieroglyphs by Jean-François Champollion in 1822, the written world of the Egyptians was unknown, and scholars were almost entirely reliant on the accounts left by Greek and Roman authors, or the sections of the Bible story in which Egypt features. Classical and biblical images of Egypt therefore dominated the emerging subject of Egyptology until almost the end of the 19th century.

More than 180 years after Champollion’s breakthrough, the study of ancient Egypt has influenced and permeated a vast number of contemporary issues, from linguistics and ‘Afrocentrism’, to religious cults and bizarre theories involving extraterrestrials. This book combines discussion of the archaeological and historical study of ancient Egypt with appraisal of the impact of Egypt – and its many

icons – on past and present Western society and thought. It is intended both to give the reader a sense of some of the crucial issues that dominate the modern study of ancient Egypt, and also to attempt to discuss some of the reasons why the culture of the Egyptians is still so appealing and fascinating to us.

Much of the discussion in this Very Short Introduction focuses, initially at least, on the ‘Narmer Palette’ (*c.*3100 BC), outlining its significance with regard to our understanding of early Egyptian culture. Most of the chapters take different aspects of the palette as starting points for consideration of key factors in Egyptology, such as history, writing, religion, and funerary beliefs. Within this structure, current academic Egyptological ideas and discoveries are occasionally compared and contrasted with more populist and commercial viewpoints, including Egypt’s widespread exploitation by modern mass media.

前言

在距离阿斯旺市南部几英里远的费莱岛上，有一座伊西斯女神庙，神庙的一面墙上刻有一段简短的象形文字铭文。这段铭文的意义不在于其内容或含义，而纯粹在于它的刻写时间——公元394年8月24日，就我们目前所知，这是象形文字符号最后一次出现的时间。此后古埃及的语言存续了相当长的时间（费莱岛神庙上还有最后的世俗体象形文字的涂写，时间是公元452年12月2日），在某种程度上它还以古老僵化的形式存在于当代科普特教堂的礼仪典籍中。尽管如此，大约在公元4世纪末期，人们已经不再了解和使用象形文字。在1822年商博良解读象形文字之前，古埃及人的文字世界一直不为人知，学者们的研究几乎完全依赖于希腊罗马作家的记载，或者《圣经》中有关埃及的章节。因此，直到19世纪末，古典的和《圣经》中的埃及形象几乎一直主导着埃及学这一新兴学科。

在商博良作出突破性发现的180多年后，古埃及研究已经深刻影响到了许多当代问题，从语言学和“非洲中心论”到宗教崇拜和关于外星人的奇谈怪论。本书既讨论古埃及的考古和历史研究，也评析埃及及其诸多象征对于过去和现在的西方社会及思想的影响，目的是使读者对于主导当代埃及学研究领域的重要专题有一定了解，并试图探讨埃及文化依然深深吸引我们的原因。

这本小书集中讨论了“纳尔迈调色板”(约公元前3100年)——至少在开篇如此,概括了它对我们理解早期埃及文化的重要性。大部分章节都将调色板的不同方面作为讨论埃及学关键要素的出发点,这些要素包括历史、文字、宗教和墓葬信仰等。在这个框架下,本书偶尔会把当前的埃及学学术观点和发现与更为通俗化、商业化的观点——其中包括现代大众传媒对埃及的广泛宣传——进行对比。

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