



History

HIS 101 HIEROGLYPHICS: ANCIENT WRITINGS ON THE WALL

Class 2. Deciphering Hieroglyphics

Notes

- Hieroglyphics use pictures to represent ideas and sounds.
- Hieroglyphics consist of two groups of symbols:
 - Phonograms: any written symbol that stands for a spoken sound or group of sounds.
 - Ideograms: a written symbol that stands for an entire word, or concept (like \$ means money).
- Here are some common symbols and their meanings:



= vulture. sound = ah.



= doorbolt. sound = z.



= bolt of cloth. sound = s.



= quail chick. sound = ooh.



= horned viper. sound = f.



= owl. sound = m.

- The Amarna Period was during the 18th dynasty and included the reign of King Tutankhamen.
- Hieroglyphics should be read by reading into the faces of the animate characters.



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- Hieroglyphics can be read left to right, right to left, top to bottom, or bottom to top.
- Hieratic script was a cursive script developed at the same time as hieroglyphics. It was most commonly written with ink and reed on papyrus, and often involved religious texts.
- Demotic script was another cursive script written with ink and reed on papyrus, and used in administrative and clerical texts.
- Coptic was the final stage of the Egyptian language. It adopted the Greek alphabet, and was spoken in Egypt until the late 17th century.