

# The amduat essay



The Amduat, also called the ‘ The Book of the Secret Chamber’ was a knowledge oriented book and an important book in the history of ancient Egyptian funerary text, that was found written on the inside of the tomb of Pharaoh mainly for references purposes. The book was reserved for pharaohs only until the 21st dynasty. This paper will research on the Amduat; its development, evolution and importance in the art history of Egypt.

### The Amduat

The Amduat dates back to the time of the first appearing in the tomb of Tuthmosis I, which is called the New Kingdom in some tombs in the Valley of the Kings. The Amduat was initially intended for royal tombs but it also included such tombs like the vizier from the time of Tuthmosis III. The Duat is interpreted as the inner world that exists parallel with the earth where we have the living and the skies where there are deities. The book Amduat contains what is in the Duat and divides Re’s journey into 12 hours from dusk (Mojsov, 2001/2002). The book is remarkable with unseen fusion of both visual and textual meanings that underlines the accessibility of the Duat by those who are living on earth. The texts speak of the regeneration of the Osiris and royal illumination otherwise known as the Re.

According to Schweizer and Lorton, the Amduat was written around the year 1500 BC, creating a big impact in Egypt (p. vii). Although the author of the Amduat work is still not known, the Egyptian art and literature are anonymous. The book is represented in a multimedia presentation where there is both the use of illustrations and texts in describing the “ hidden

chamber.” At the end of the Valley of Kings, there is the Tuthmosis III tomb, within which the tomb is the copy of Amduat decorating its walls. The walls of the tomb are crudely chiseled with the first room having a fine layout that distracts attention. A shaft around 20 feet interrupts the path but a small bridge enables one to continue. In Egypt, archeological symbols always have a meaning and the shaft is interpreted to mean a transition from the netherworlds where life originates (p. 16). The other room is a rectangular chamber with two pillars with a blue ceiling containing several stars. The next room is oval, decorated in red. People traveling in their have to read illustrations in the burial chamber as doing so is like accompanying the sungod Re and his barque crew on the eventful but dangerous 12 hour journey.

In the book, the story depicts the sun god entering ‘ the Swallow of All’ and crosses over into the twilight world (Mosjov). The Amduat was used to sketch the nocturnal journey of the god of the sun through the earth. It began from the west and ended in the east. The scenes were divided into three phases; the middle register and two other registers on the bank of the river. The middle register was to depict the river flowing through the earth’s center whose solar bark and crew sail on the river. This river is in many ways compared to the river Nile that passes through Egypt. Many deities do surround the sungod some escorting him in the barque while others live on the banks of the stream (p. 19). On Re’s appearance, they come to life at the riverbanks expressing joy at the great god when he passes but fall back into sleep (death) when he sails out of site. The remaining other two registers are the shores of the river where the world’s inhabitants live. The god descends

from through the western portal into the death realm accompanied by deities and the blessed dead to participate in his regeneration mystery.

### The Hours

The book has several hundreds of figures with captions and longer texts that explain what is happening. It is divided into twelve hours. The hours are separated by texts that introduce them. Another book called the Book of Gates (this is another book of the underworld) divides the hours from each other depictions of gates; the hours and the events they represent have slight relations from what they represent. Each hour has a heading that describes the events that occur in that hour with notations that concern its orientation.

The hour's countdown starts with the book describing entry of the sun god. The first six hours represent the differentiation awareness (represented by the soul of Re) and starts at noon. In hour 1, the sun is shown entering the western horizon called the akhet. This is a transition between day and night. In the succeeding two hours (hour 2 and 3), it is shown passing through an abundant watery called 'waters of Osiris' and the 'Wernes'. In hour 4, he reaches at Solkar that is a difficult sandy realm underworld hawk deity. Here he encounters zig zag paths being dragged by snake boat that he negotiates. In hour 5, he discovers where the tomb of Osiris is hidden in a lake fire. A pyramid like mound, which is identified as the goddess Isis, covers the tomb of Osiris and on top of the goddess; Nephthys alights in form of two kites that are interpreted to be birds of prey.

The sixth hour is the most important event in the world. The sixth hour, which is the deepest point is the central moment and represents the unification of the sun god with the body of Osiris. This is comparable with the unification between 'ba', which is interpreted as the soul and the body. The Amduat represents the sun god. It depicts the sun god with the head of a ram, which is the symbol of 'ba'. This is the event that the sun begins regenerating and a moment of great significance. This is because it is at this hour that a conjunction happens between the solar awareness and the divine substrate. This is the point where the Re and Osiris body ascends to the autogenic cause of consciousness. The soul is united with the body and we have a Re-Osiris returning to an energy-surplus to the universe.

In hour 7, the serpent Apep lies in wait to impede the way of the barque and is subdued by the Isis magic and Set's strength assisted by Serqet. The sun now has the protection of Mehen serpent (called the great encircle) while Osiris is viewing the beheading of his enemies by a deity. In hour 8, the sun god opens the tomb's door while leaving the sandy Sokar Island. In hour 9, it rows vigorously back into the water as the regeneration process continues. In hour 10, the regeneration process continues by immersion in water until hour 11 when god's eyes are regenerated fully. The beetle with the pellet here represents the birth of Khepri. God's eyes here represent a symbol of health and well being. In the 12th hour, the horizon on the eastern part is ready to rise again. There are several symbolic ideas that are used to illustrate the rebirth of the whole process and the sun god. The first is when the beetle is shown at the head of the solar barque pushing the solar disk through the sand. In the last stage of the rebirth, the sun god is seen

entering through the tail of a serpent while the old flesh form of god is abandoned. Here, the serpent symbolizes the final rebirth and return to a youthful form- it reverses the ageing process. In the beetle's shape, the sun comes out of the serpent's mouth. The sun is thus born again to benefit the inhabitants of the earth. This is the new day's sun.

It is worth noting that the the book inspired such several other later books like the Bible. From the book we have it that humans could not make demand on the sungod as any sort of healing and transformation is only granted by divine grace but theologians new that each of them could participate in the sungod's renewal. The blessed dead were embedded in his unending creative transformation. This has the psychological meaning that one could share ultimate typical power of consciousness but cannot summon it by efforts. This is the psychological truth of Jesus' words in the bible in John 8: 12 where He asserts that he is the light of the world and whoever follows Him will never walk in darkness but has eternal life (Schweizer and Lorton 21). The seven deities seated on the barge of the earth are also likened to the seven angels in the book of revelation 15 and their appearance parallels that of the seven spirits of Re.

### Summary and Conclusion

The paper has described the story of the Duat in the Netherworld. The Amduat describes the journey of the sun god through 12 hours of the night. The earliest and complete version of the book was found in tombs of Tuthmosis III and his chief vizier the Usermon. The 12 hours are distributed according to the cardinal directions. In the Amenhotep III tomb, the texts

were written in a sarcophagus chamber in a sequential order. After Akhenaten reigns, the Amduat was left out of the royal tombs until the tomb of Seity I. The first three hours here were surrounded by the sarcophagus while the fourth and fifth were in the third corridor. The remaining hours were scattered around the tomb although the twelfth hour is missing in the Seity I although it is suspected to have been written on lost funerary equipment. The Amduat was only reserved for kings. The story is about the sun god entering a gateway called 'the Swallower of All' entering the real underworld during the second and third hours. The paper has dealt with the Amduat and its nocturnal voyages of the solar barque with the sun and the darkness surrounding us. The sun god distributed portions of land to the blessed dead during the second and third hours. As he sails through the fourth hour, he passes through the hidden chamber of the west' through the fifth hour. The sixth hour is the most important hour as the sun god fuses his union with the body of Osiris. The seventh hour he overcomes the serpent Aphopis to raise the dead in the eighth hour. The ninth hour is when the enemy is subdued while the tenth is when the sun god encounters souls of people in the Nile while the eleventh hour is filled with preparations for the coming regeneration. The rebirth is done on the twelfth hour and ushers in a new dawn.

In conclusion, the threats hidden in depths of our souls are revealed and become visible as concrete images into the netherworld. We realize that creative energies of dreadful energy are active but only death makes us truly alive by the regeneration process from depths.