

THE OLD EGYPTIAN ROOTS OF THE JUGENDSTIL

by

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Since I have yet attempted to come to terms, at the 'Symbol Contents of the Golden Period of Gustav Klimt', with the mystic ideas of the old Egyptians very precisely, it was obvious to examine other areas of art, e.g. of architecture and art design, for parallels. By this, the treatise as follows was traced out. Condition for such a view are the mystical imaginations of the old Egyptians in the fields of Gods' realms, temple constructions, jewelleryes, and burial objects.

The Religious Ideas of the Old Egyptians

The most important cult in old Egypt was the cult of the Sun God. The course of the sun showed all stages of being and becoming, namely birth, life, dying, death and rebirth. The rise of the sun corresponds to birth, respectively to rebirth, her daily course to life and her setting to dying. Then the sun enters, that is in the night, the realm of death, where also the souls of the dead are dwelling, to shine over there. At the end of the night the sun then leaves the realm of the dead to the east, where her rising, respectively her rebirth, takes place.

But just so simple as described here the sun rising at the next day did not happen. The daily sunrise was not guaranteed. The sun was impeded every night in the underworld and had to fight every day to free between the mountains, to take up her daily run. In the west, in the Atlantic, according to the old myths the sun went down, America therefore can be seen as the death realm of the sun, and Japan is considered today also as the country of the rising sun. In Mexico from where according to the theory of cultural diffusion there have been relations to Egypt, they tried to relieve the sunrise even by human sacrifices. The blood of men should help the sun in her 'rebirth'. In Bolivia, we find corresponding to these ideas, the 'Sun Gate' of the old Inca town Tiawanaku.

The religion ideas of the old Egyptians changed in the tide of the centuries again and again. This is to be recognized at the example of the God Horus. Originally, Horus, as World Creator, was a Supreme God, this is, the Sun God, and drove with the sun barque over the heaven's ocean. The tincture of gold symbolizes the Sun God and his realm, the heaven. Horus flew in falcon's shape over the heaven's ocean, whereby his both wings represent heaven. Later on, he was worshipped as son of the Sun God, or also as son of Isis and Osiris.

In conclusion, the meaning of certain geometric forms should be dealt with. Such structures are derived from the old Egyptian temple construction. The rectangle, and especially the square, represent the male principle. The way leading to the innermost of a male deity temple, consists of straight stretches which collide at right angles. The spiral symbolizes the female principle, because the way into the temple of a female deity does not show straight stretches, but gives a line bent inwards.

The architecture as well as the artistic arrangements of the façade, windows in pretence, the rectangular form of the objects show elements of the mystic imagination of old Egypt. Jugendstil buildings can be traced back to these mystic ideas.

Also Jugendstil jewellery in special its design and used material can be traced back to an old Egyptian origin.

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