



Cannabis in Ancient Egypt
Ibrahim Attia

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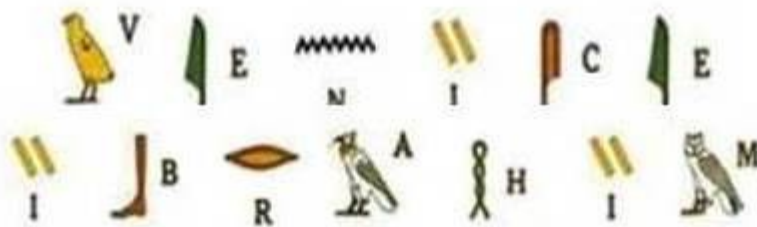
Cannabis (marijuana- hemp) in Ancient Egypt

By

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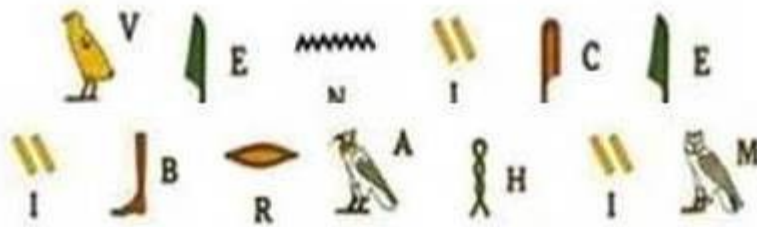


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Cannabis is a genus of a flowering plant of the family Cannabaceae, it is and has been used for producing fibres, hemp oils, medicinal uses, and as a recreational drug.

Kingdo m:	Plantae
Clade:	Angiosperms
Clade:	Eudicots



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Clade: Rosids
Order: Rosales
Family: Cannabaceae
Genus: Cannabis

Species : Cannabis sativa L.
Cannabis indica Lam.
Cannabis ruderalis Janisch

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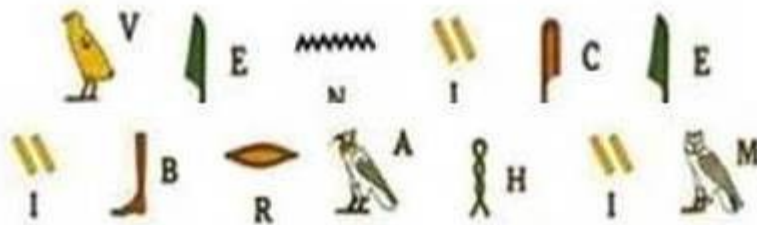


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Cannabis is a dioecious plant has with imperfect flowers (individual plant can be male or female) with staminate male and pistillate female flowers on separate plants, however some

individual plants bear both male and female flowers.



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types of cannabis

S. indica
Indica plants are normally shorter and bushier plants than Sativa. They have wide, deeply serrated leaves that are thick and sticky. They are also known for their resinous buds. The effect of indica is predominantly physical and relaxing. Due to the interplay of its genetics, indica strains generally have higher levels of CB1 and a broad spectrum of THC.

S. sativa
Generally, the Sativa plant is taller and thinner variety, also generally more upright stems. In other words, further apart, coloration that can be more bright green, and more open flower clusters that are extremely resinous. The primary effects of Sativa are on the mind and emotion, that benefits can be particularly helpful for the psychological aspects of many diseases, going up to an increased sense of well-being. Due to the stimulating nature of Sativa, they are generally better for daytime use. Caution should be taken for people experiencing heightened anxiety or those with mental health conditions. Sativa strains are generally high in levels of CB1 and low levels of CB2 and CBN.

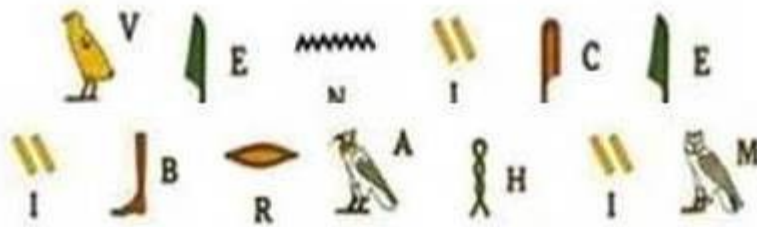
S. ruderalis
Cannabis ruderalis is characterized by a shorter stature and generally small size. This subspecies usually carries CB1 and CB2 in a 1:1 ratio with the other two species.



cannabis plant species and parts

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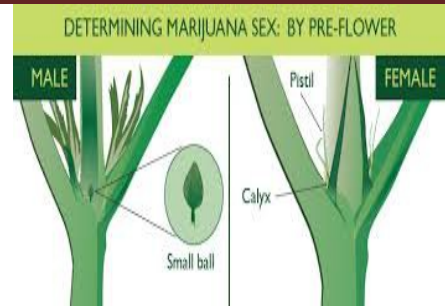


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Male and female cannabis plant

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Male and female cannabis flowers



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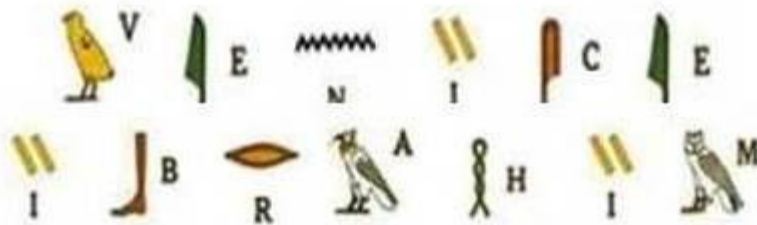
cannabis plant with both male and female flowers

Both male and female Cannabis plants are sources of fibers, but the female plant produces the best quality of cannabinoids, thus every part of the cannabis plant has its uses where its

roots, leaves and flowers are used as medicine, the stem for making textiles, rope and paper (hemp fibers are exceedingly stronger and more durable than linen and cotton), and the seeds

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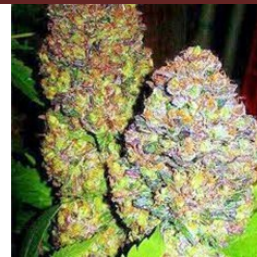
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are used as food and in oil production.



cannabis flowers

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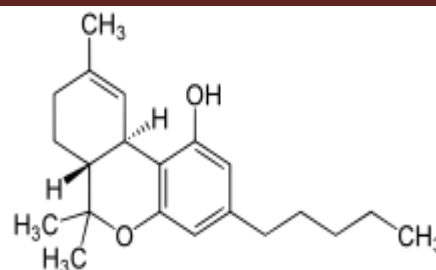
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**The ingredient in cannabis
which is used as a sedative drug
is a lipid called
Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC).**



Chemical formula of Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC)



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Hemp fiber from the Cannabis sativa plant

In contradiction to what was thought to be before 1930 now most of if not all modern day Egyptologists confirms that cannabis (marihuana) has been used by the ancient Egyptians in

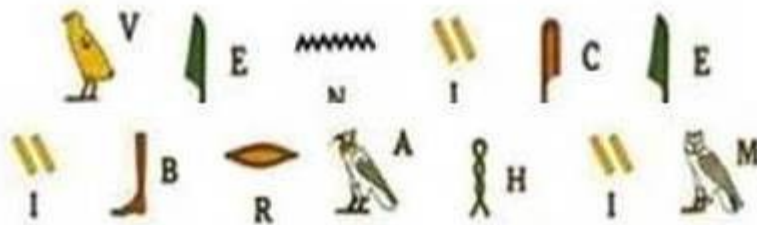


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the production of ropes, ships and boats sails, fabrics and as one of their medical ingredients. Although there is a very little evidence that ancient Egyptians cultivated cannabis, thus there are several references and evidences for its availability in

ancient Egypt as well as its versatile uses in Egypt in medicine, religious, cultural and daily life purposes. Cannabis in Ancient Egyptian medicine:- in an article titeled"Studies in the Egyptian Medical Texts"



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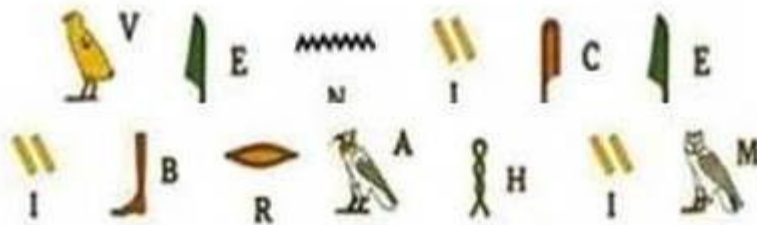
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written by Warren R. Dawson in The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology, Vol. 20, No. 1/2. (June 1934), pp. 41-46 , cannabis was mentioned to be used as medicine in ancient Egypt.

Cannabis sativa, much more likely. Hemp (قنب) is stated by the Arabic medical writers to be unfit for internal use.

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11. The plant =

This herb is somewhat rare in Egyptian medicine. Its occurrences are as follows, all external:

For fever: B 7. 8 (81); here its roots are used, and the choice of the herb is clearly due to its punning on , "fever".

For irrigating the rectum: CB 6. 7 (juice); CB 7. 8 (seeds crushed).

For a sore toe-nail: E 78. 18 (618); H 12. 16 (188).

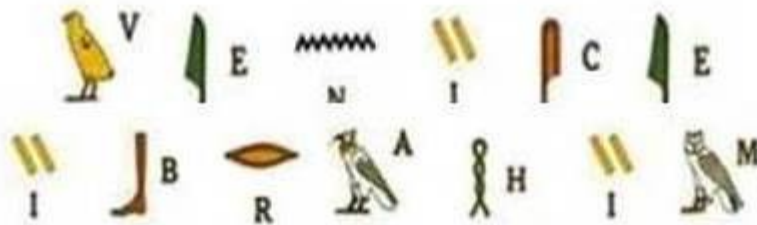
For uterine contraction: E 96. 7 (821).

It is tempting to identify the plant with the Arabic *šmsm*, sesame, but the two can scarcely be identical, for sesame is constantly used for internal doses, whereas the Egyptian *šmsmt* never is. The word occurs in the Demotic Texts (C 514) with an identical determination and

the references and evidences that proves that cannabis was used in medicine in ancient Egypt are as follows:-
- Cannabis is mentioned as a used medical ingredient in the following ancient Egyptian

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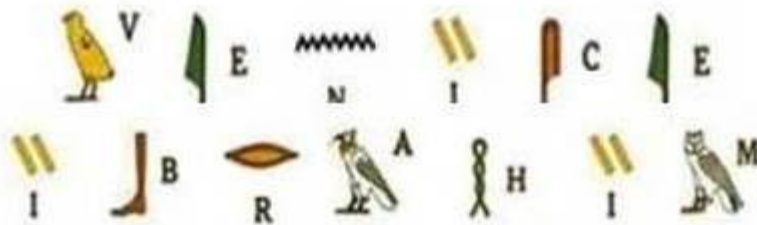
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medical texts:-

-The Ramesseum III Papyrus (1700 BC), housed in the British Museum, plate A26, contains a prescription where cannabis is mentioned and used in treatment and curing of glaucoma translated as follows:

“A treatment for the eyes: celery, cannabis is ground and left in the dew overnight. Both eyes of the patient are to be washed with it in the morning.”



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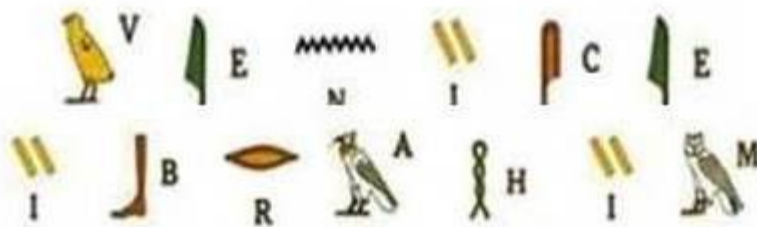
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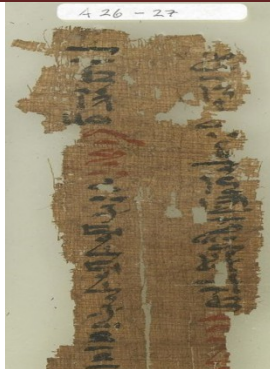
The Ramesseum III Papyrus

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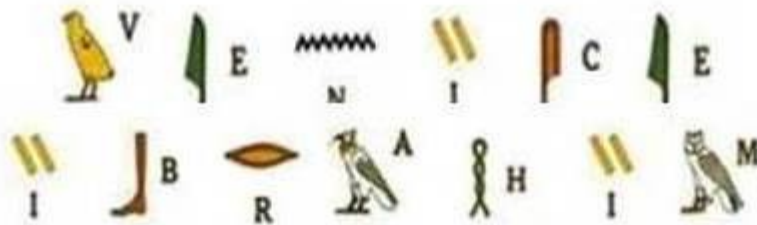


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Part of Plate A26 of the Ramesseum III -- Read from top to bottom- Courtesy of the British Museum

- The Eber's Papyrus (1600-1550 BC) housed in the University of Lepzia Plates XCVI , LXXVIII, contains an inscription of a prescription



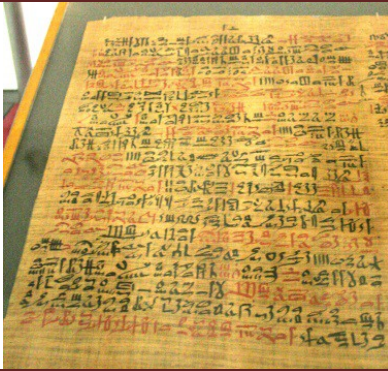
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mentioning cannabis and its use in treatment of Obstetrics translated as follows: “ground in honey; introduced into her vagina to cool the uterus and eliminate its heat” , this also suggests its use as an anti-inflammatory.

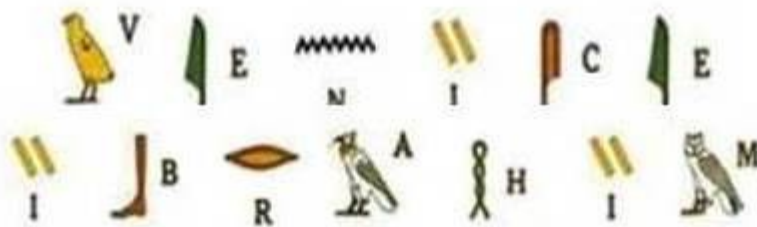


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The Eber's Papyrus

Also Cannabis was mentioned to be used as a poultice on a toenail (E 618, Ebers Papyrus 617- 618) "If you find a painful finger or a toe, from water having been around



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them (serosity), their odor being malignant, whereas they have formed maggots [worms], you must say to this patient: "A problem that I can treat". You must prepare for him treatments to kill the

vermin [. . .]. Another for the toenail: honey: 1/4; ochre 1/64; cannabis: 1/32; hedjou resin: 1/32, ibou plant: 1/32. Prepare as for the preceding, and dress with it.

-The Chester-Beatty VI



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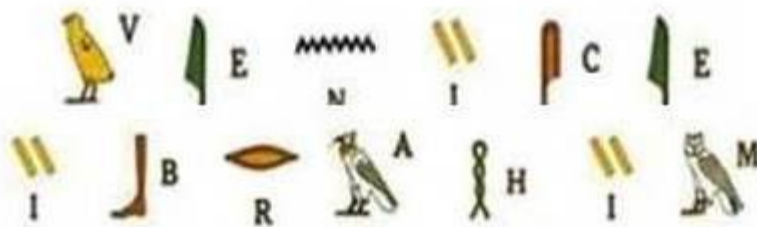
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(Medical) Papyrus (1300 BC):
(British Museum 10686 sheets
6, 7)

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The Chester-Beatty VI (Medical) Papyrus

-The Berlin Papyrus “Brugsch Papyrus” (1300 BC) Sheet 7, housed in Ägyptisches Museum und Papyrussammlung in Sheet 7 line 8 prescription No. 81 - cannabis is mentioned to be



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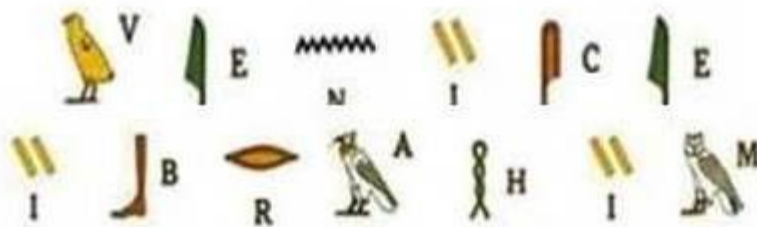
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used as an ointment to be prepared to relief fever and also used as a suppository.

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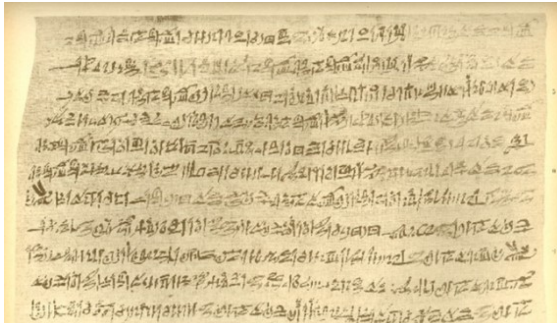
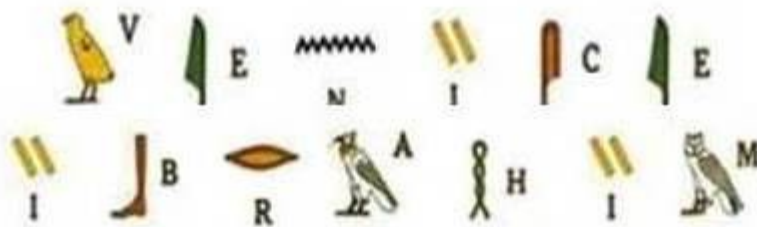


Plate 7 of the Berlin Papyrus No. 3038

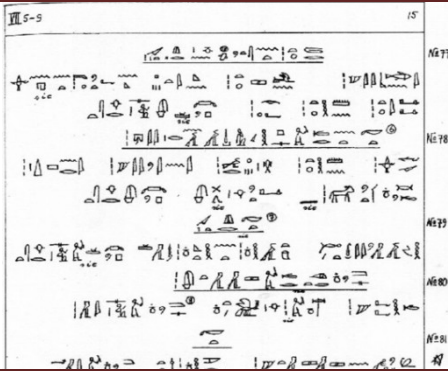


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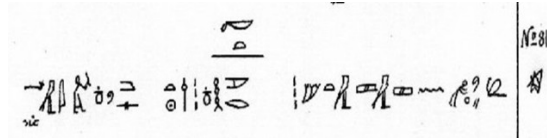


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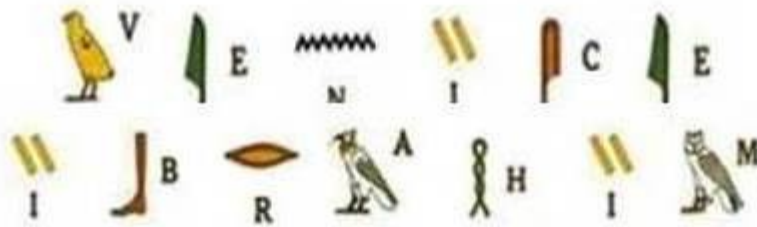


Page 15 Der grosse medizinische Papyrus des Berline
Museum
By Von Walter Wreszinski



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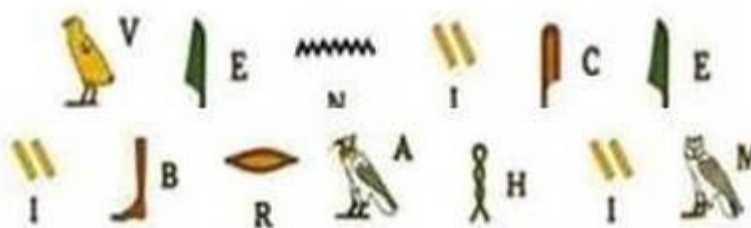


Plate 7, Line 8, Prescription No. 81

-The Hearst Papyrus (1,550 BC)
housed in the University of
California Berkeley Plate XII

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$\mathcal{H}^1 177(12, 6-7) = \mathcal{H}^2 188(12, 15-16) = \mathcal{E} 618(78, 10-11)$

\mathcal{H}^1

\mathcal{H}^2

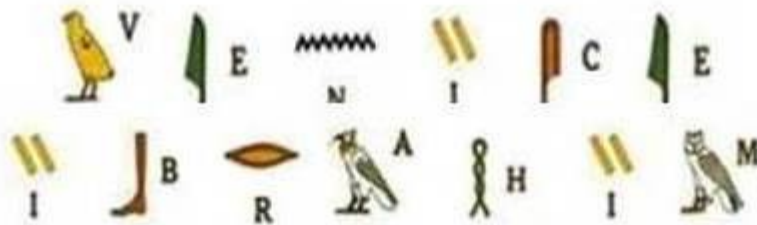
\mathcal{E}

\mathcal{H}^1

\mathcal{H}^2

Page from the book “Die Mendizinischen Texte in Hieroglyphischer Umschreibung Autographiert” by Grapow Hermann of Hearst Papyrus , Prescriptions 177, 188

-The Vienna Papyrus 6257 (200 AD) Columns IX and XIV
- Diodorus Siculus, a Sicilian Greek historian mentioned that



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Egyptian women used cannabis as a kind of medication relieving sorrow and bad humor, relieving insomnia, an anesthetic, and to kill pain - another reference dates back to the third century AD, when the Roman emperor Aurelian

imposed a tax on Egyptian cannabis. Papyrus documents from ancient Egypty. - Cannabis use in ancient Egypt has been recorded as far back as 2,000 B.C., where its depictions were found on various scrolls and inscriptions.

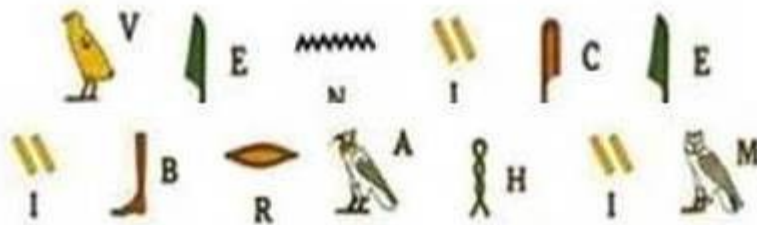


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- Egyptians listed the names of their used medical drugs and their plant sources, but there is no certain unequivocal mentions or references of cannabis (marijuana) in any of its forms, but some scholars and

researchers contended assuming that the (smsmt drug), mentioned in the Berlin and Ebers papyri is most probably cannabis, this contended opinion was believed to be hypothetical and conjecture as

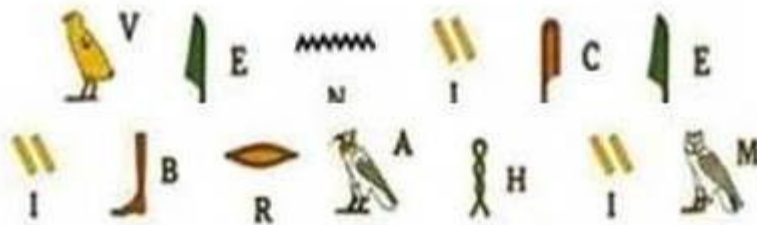


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no mummy has been discovered wrapped in fabric made from cannabis until some researchers announced that they found Cannabis pollen on the mummy of Rameses II died in 1213 BC. - Archaeologists also discovered

a "three ply hemp cord" in a stone hole where a large mat is bound with other "hemp cords" in the ruins the city of Akhenaton (El Amarna) found a, but the type of hemp is not yet specified, taking in

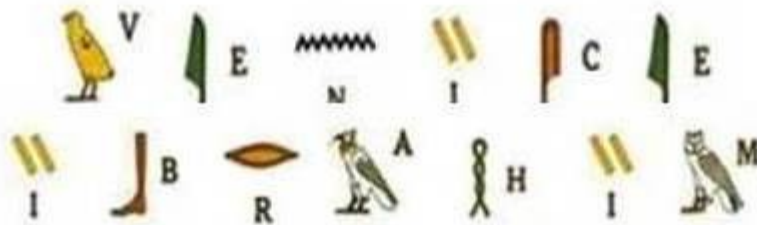


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consideration that different fibers are usually called hemp and it is not certain that the fibers at El Amarna are cannabis, knowing that Deccan hemp (*Hibiscus cannabinus*) grows in Egypt since ancient

times. Lise Manniche wrote notes referencing to " medical cannabis plant " found in several Egyptian texts, one of which dates back to the eighteenth century BC, mentioning that

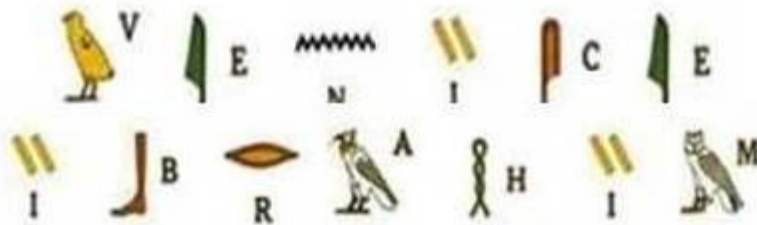


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cannabis was frequently prescribed in ancient Egypt to treat inflammation , eye problems such as glaucoma, also used during the administration of enemas and as suppositories for relieving the pain of

hemorrhoids.
Another indication that makes an extra evidence that Ancient Egyptians knew cannabis is the Goddess Seshat (Sefkhet, Abwy or Seshet) which is the Egyptian goddess of written word, her

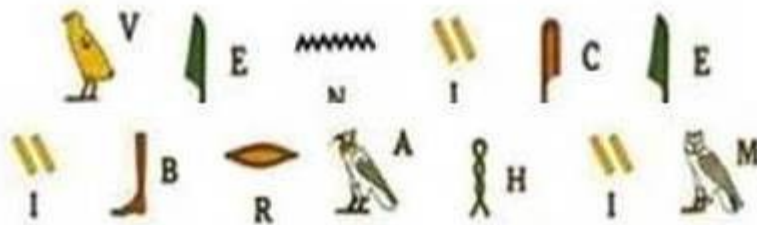


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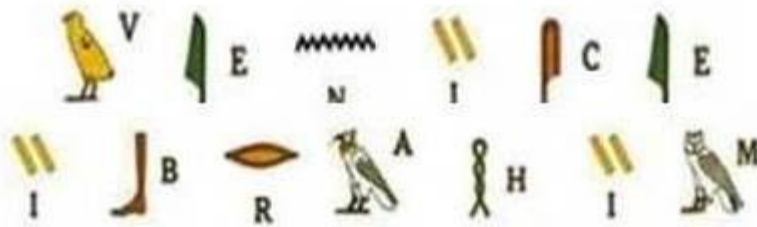


name literally means "female scribe" symbolizing supreme authority and is always depicted as a woman wearing a leopard skin draped over her robe with a headdress of a seven-pointed star (cannabis

leaf) arched by a crescent in the form of a bow.



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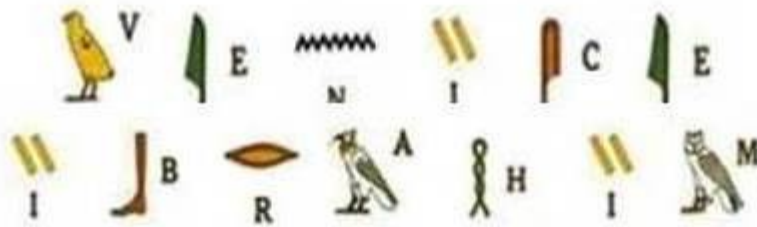
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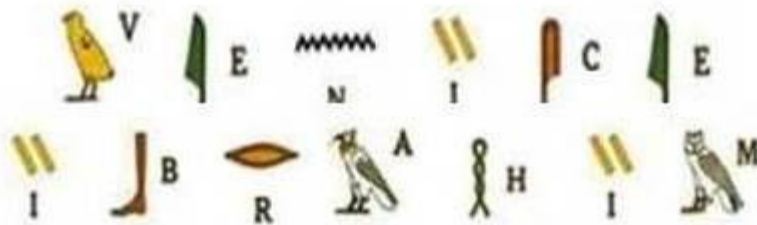
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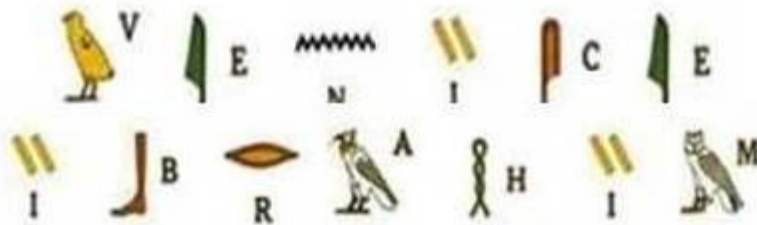
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