



ANCIENT EGYPT

Early Dynastic, Old Kingdom, 1st Intermediate Period, Middle Kingdom, 2nd Intermediate Period, New Kingdom, 3rd Intermediate Period, Late Period



WHAT MADE EGYPT STABLE?

Egyptian society remained almost unchanged for almost 3,000 years. This is an incredible story! What was the one major factor enabling this?

ANSWER

The geographic location of this civilization is the answer! The Nile River provided regular flooding and fertile soils. Also, the location along the Nile River was more secure than Ancient Sumer and other regions of the Middle East preventing easy invasions. It was only during times of instability that Egypt was threatened or invaded.

OVERVIEW

For almost 30 centuries, from its unification around 3100 BCE to its conquest by Alexander the Great in 332 BCE, ancient Egypt was the preeminent civilization in the Mediterranean world. From the great pyramids of the Old Kingdom, through the military conquests of the New Kingdom, Egypt's majesty has long entranced archaeologists and historians and created a vibrant field of study all its own: Egyptology. The main sources of information about ancient Egypt are the many monuments, objects and artifacts that have been recovered from archaeological sites, covered with hieroglyphs that have only recently been deciphered. The picture that emerges is of a culture with few equals in the beauty of its art, the accomplishments of its architecture, or the richness of its religious traditions.



PREDYNASTIC PERIOD (C. 5000-3100 BCE)

Few written records or artifacts have been found from the Predynastic Period, which encompassed at least 2,000 years of gradual development of the Egyptian civilization.

ARCHAIC (EARLY
DYNASTIC) PERIOD (C.
3100-2686 BCE)

EARLY DYNASTIC

King Menes founded the capital of ancient Egypt at White Walls (later known as Memphis), in the north, near the apex of the Nile River delta. The capital would grow into a great metropolis that dominated Egyptian society during the Old Kingdom period. The Early Dynastic Period saw the development of the foundations of Egyptian society, including the all-important ideology of kingship. To the ancient Egyptians, the king was a godlike being, closely identified with the all-powerful god Horus. The earliest known hieroglyphic writing also dates to this period.

MENES

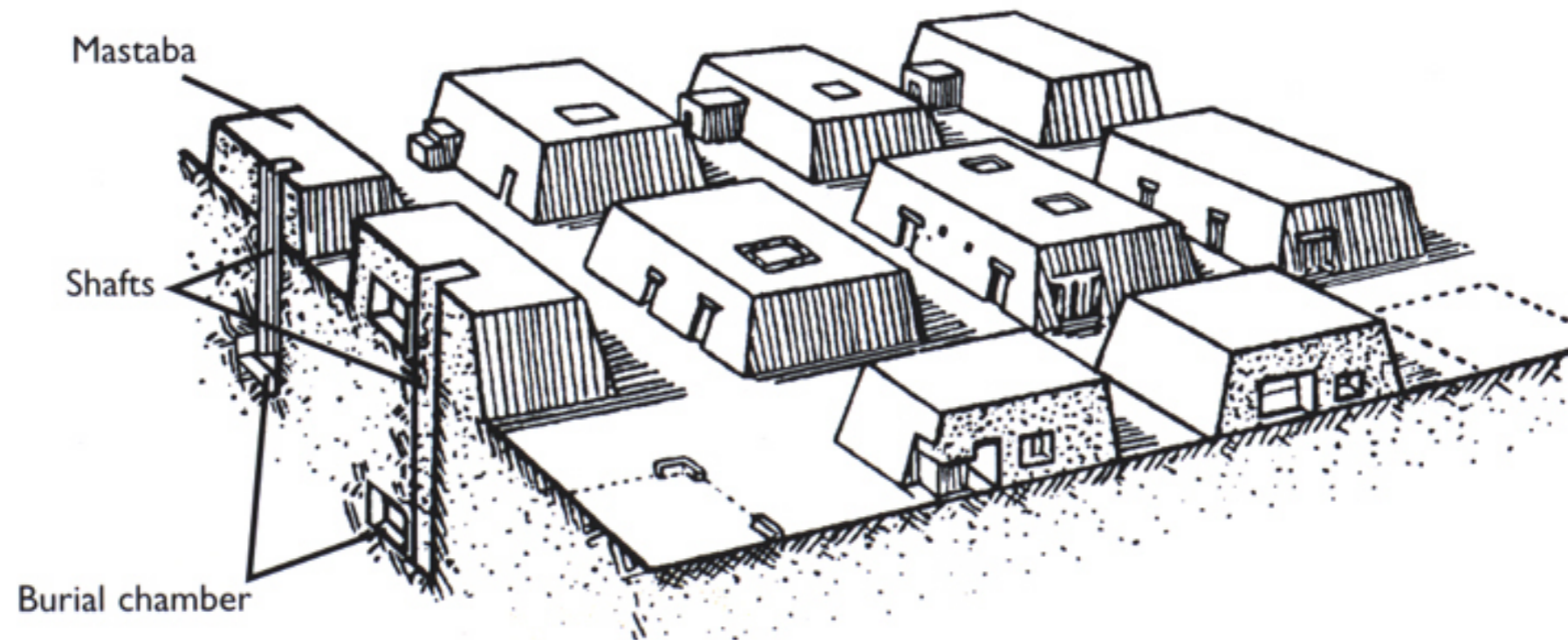
Menes sent an army down the Nile and defeated the king of Lower Egypt in battle. In this way Menes united the two kingdoms. Unification means the joining together of two separate parts, in this case, the two kingdoms. Menes, sometimes known as Narmer, became the first pharaoh.

The next slide shows King Narmer unifying the two kingdoms. He wears the crowns of the two kingdoms in this tablet.

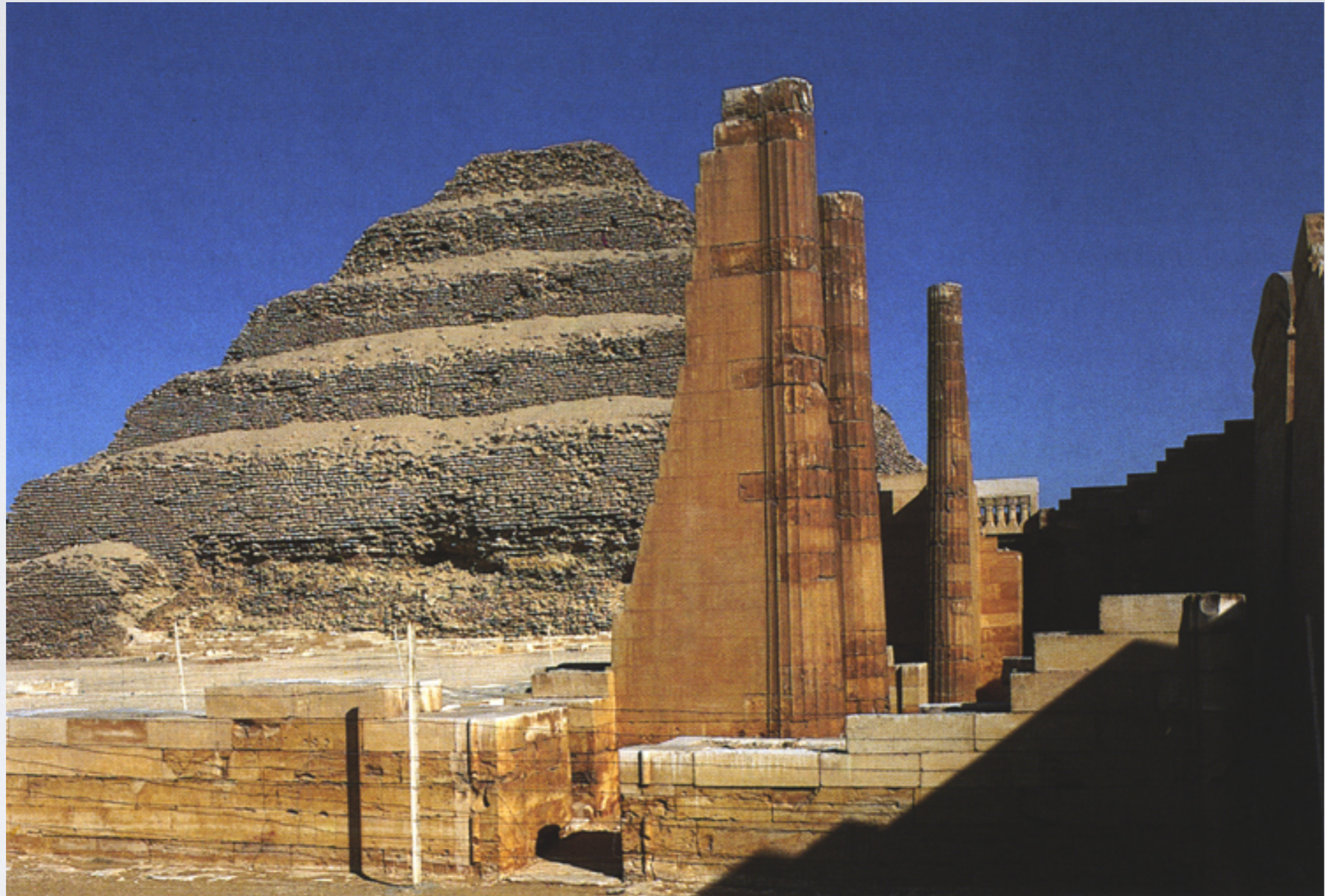


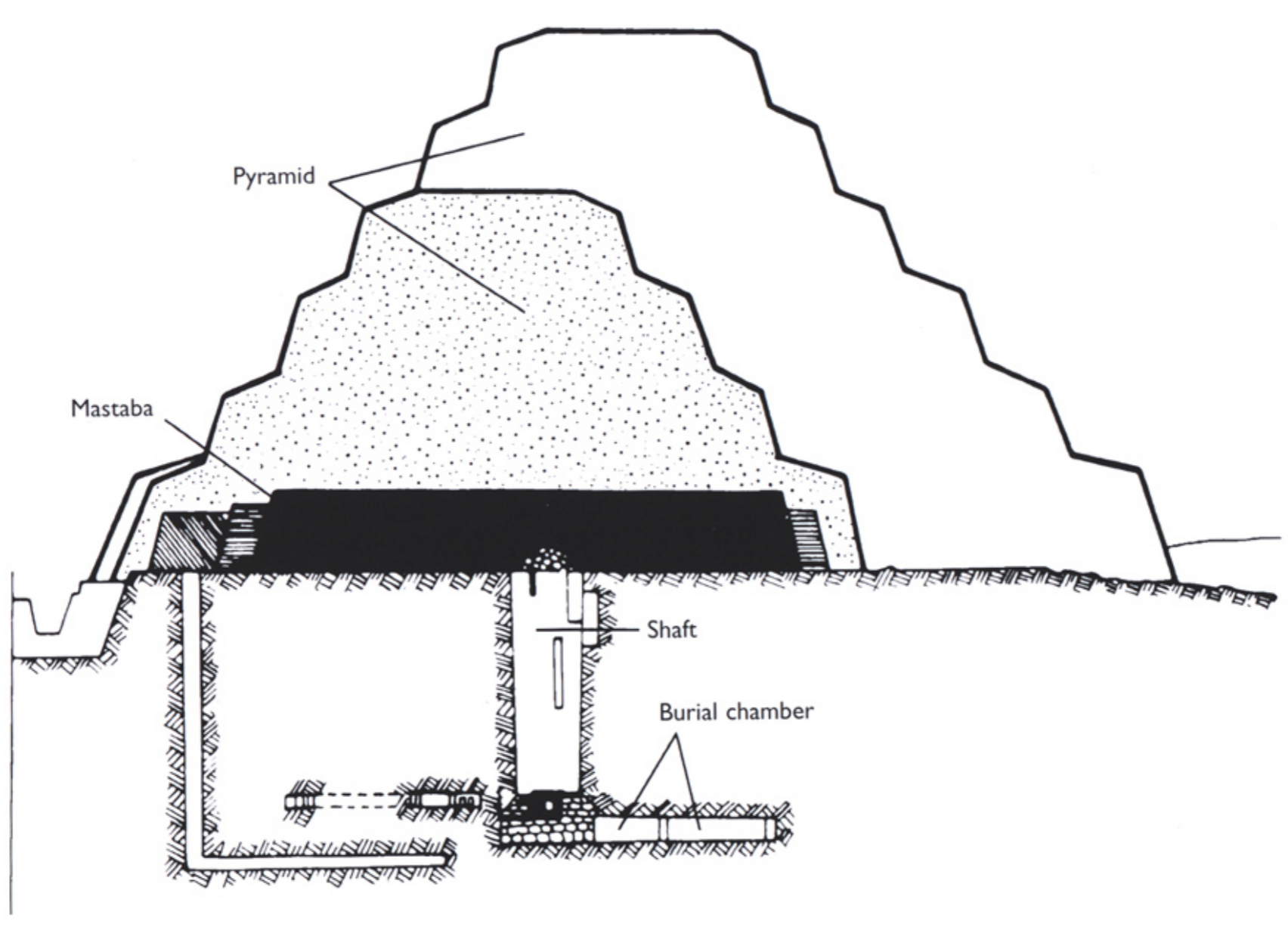
OLD KINGDOM: AGE OF THE PYRAMID BUILDERS (C. 2686-2181 BCE)

The Old Kingdom began with the third dynasty of pharaohs. Around 2630 BCE, the third dynasty's King Djoser asked Imhotep, an architect, priest and healer, to design a funerary monument for him; the result was the world's first major stone building, the Step-Pyramid at Saqqara, near Memphis. Egyptian pyramid-building reached its zenith with the construction of the Great Pyramid at Giza, on the outskirts of Cairo. Built for Khufu (or Cheops, in Greek), who ruled from 2589 to 2566 BCE, the pyramid was later named by classical historians as one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World.



2-4. Group of mastabas (after A. Badawy). 4th Dynasty





IMHOTEP

Imhotep - “he who comes in peace” - invented building in stone around 2600 BCE, at the beginning of the 3rd dynasty. This achievement corresponds with the spread of monumental stone architecture during the reign of Khasekhemwy, last king of the second dynasty and Djoser’s predecessor on the throne – and probably his father. While no break in political development seemed evident between the second and third dynasties, the reign of Djoser marked a new era characterized by an incredible rise in complexity of the Old Kingdom state.

IMHOTEP

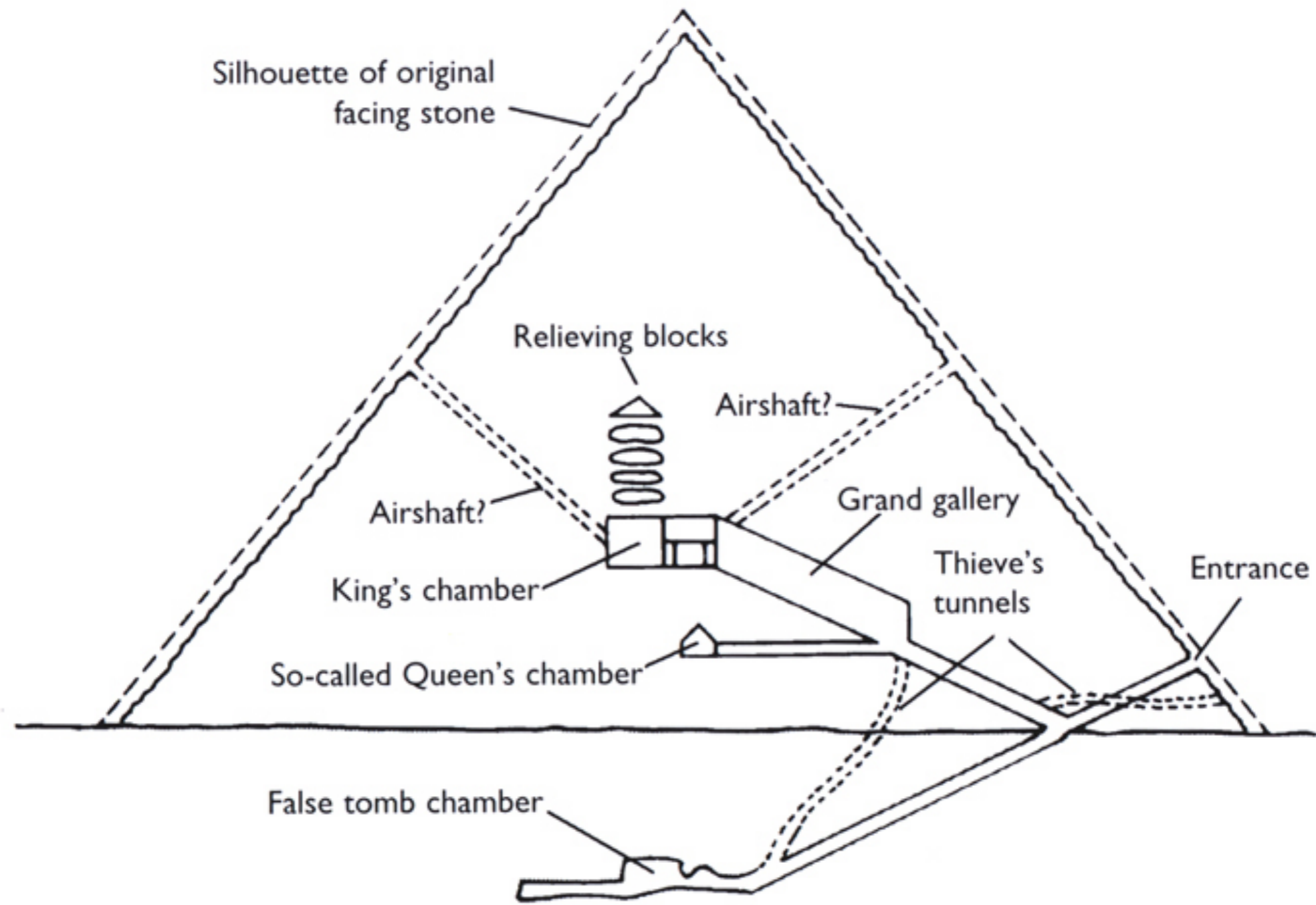




OLD KINGDOM

During the third and fourth dynasties, Egypt enjoyed a golden age of peace and prosperity. The pharaohs held absolute power and provided a stable central government; the kingdom faced no serious threats from abroad; and successful military campaigns in foreign countries like Nubia and Libya added to its considerable economic prosperity. Over the course of the fifth and sixth dynasties, the king's wealth was steadily depleted, partially due to the huge expense of pyramid-building, and his absolute power faltered in the face of the growing influence of the nobility and the priesthood that grew up around the sun god Ra (Re). After the death of the sixth dynasty's King Pepy II, who ruled for some 94 years, the Old Kingdom period ended in chaos.





2-11. North-south section of Pyramid of Khufu (after L. Borchardt)











2-13. *Khafre*, from Giza. c. 2500 B.C. Diorite, height 66" (167.7 cm).
Egyptian Museum, Cairo







FIRST INTERMEDIATE PERIOD

On the heels of the Old Kingdom's collapse, the seventh and eighth dynasties consisted of a rapid succession of Memphis-based rulers until about 2160 BCE, when the central authority completely dissolved, leading to civil war between provincial governors. This chaotic situation was intensified by Bedouin invasions and accompanied by famine and disease.

FIRST INTERMEDIATE PERIOD

From this era of conflict emerged two different kingdoms: A line of 17 rulers (dynasties nine and 10) based in Heracleopolis ruled Middle Egypt between Memphis and Thebes, while another family of rulers arose in Thebes to challenge Heracleopolitan power. Around 2055 BCE, the Theban prince Mentuhotep managed to topple Heracleopolis and reunited Egypt, beginning the 11th dynasty and ending the First Intermediate Period.

MIDDLE KINGDOM: 12TH DYNASTY (C. 2055-1786 BCE)

After the last ruler of the 11th dynasty, Mentuhotep IV, was assassinated, the throne passed to his vizier, or chief minister, who became King Amenemhet I, founder of dynasty 12. A new capital was established at It-towy, south of Memphis, while Thebes remained a great religious center. During the Middle Kingdom, Egypt once again flourished, as it had during the Old Kingdom. The 12th dynasty kings ensured the smooth succession of their line by making each successor co-regent, a custom that began with Amenemhet I.

MIDDLE KINGDOM: 12TH DYNASTY (C. 2055-1786 BCE)

Middle-Kingdom Egypt pursued an aggressive foreign policy, colonizing Nubia (with its rich supply of gold, ebony, ivory and other resources) and repelling the Bedouins who had infiltrated Egypt during the First Intermediate Period. The kingdom also built diplomatic and trade relations with Syria, Palestine, and other countries; undertook building projects including military fortresses and mining quarries; and returned to pyramid-building in the tradition of the Old Kingdom.

MIDDLE KINGDOM: 12TH DYNASTY (C. 2055-1786 BCE)

The Middle Kingdom reached its peak under Amenemhet III (1842-1797 BCE); its decline began under Amenenhet IV (1798-1790 BCE) and continued under his sister and regent, Queen Sobekneferu (1789-1786 BCE), who was the first confirmed female ruler of Egypt and the last ruler of the 12th dynasty.

SECOND INTERMEDIATE PERIOD (C. 1786-1567 BCE)

The 13th dynasty marked the beginning of another unsettled period in Egyptian history, during which a rapid succession of kings failed to consolidate power. As a consequence, during the Second Intermediate Period Egypt was divided into several spheres of influence. The official royal court and seat of government was relocated to Thebes, while a rival dynasty (the 14th), centered on the city of Xoïs in the Nile delta, seems to have existed at the same time as the 13th.

HYKSOS INVASION

Around 1650 BCE, a line of foreign rulers known as the Hyksos took advantage of Egypt's instability to take control. The Hyksos rulers of the 15th dynasty adopted and continued many of the existing Egyptian traditions in government as well as culture. They ruled concurrently with the line of native Theban rulers of the 17th dynasty, who retained control over most of southern Egypt despite having to pay taxes to the Hyksos. (The 16th dynasty is variously believed to be Theban or Hyksos rulers.)

Conflict eventually flared between the two groups, and the Thebans launched a war against the Hyksos around 1570 BCE, driving them out of Egypt.

LADY SENNUWY
1971–1926 BCE

LADY SENNUWY

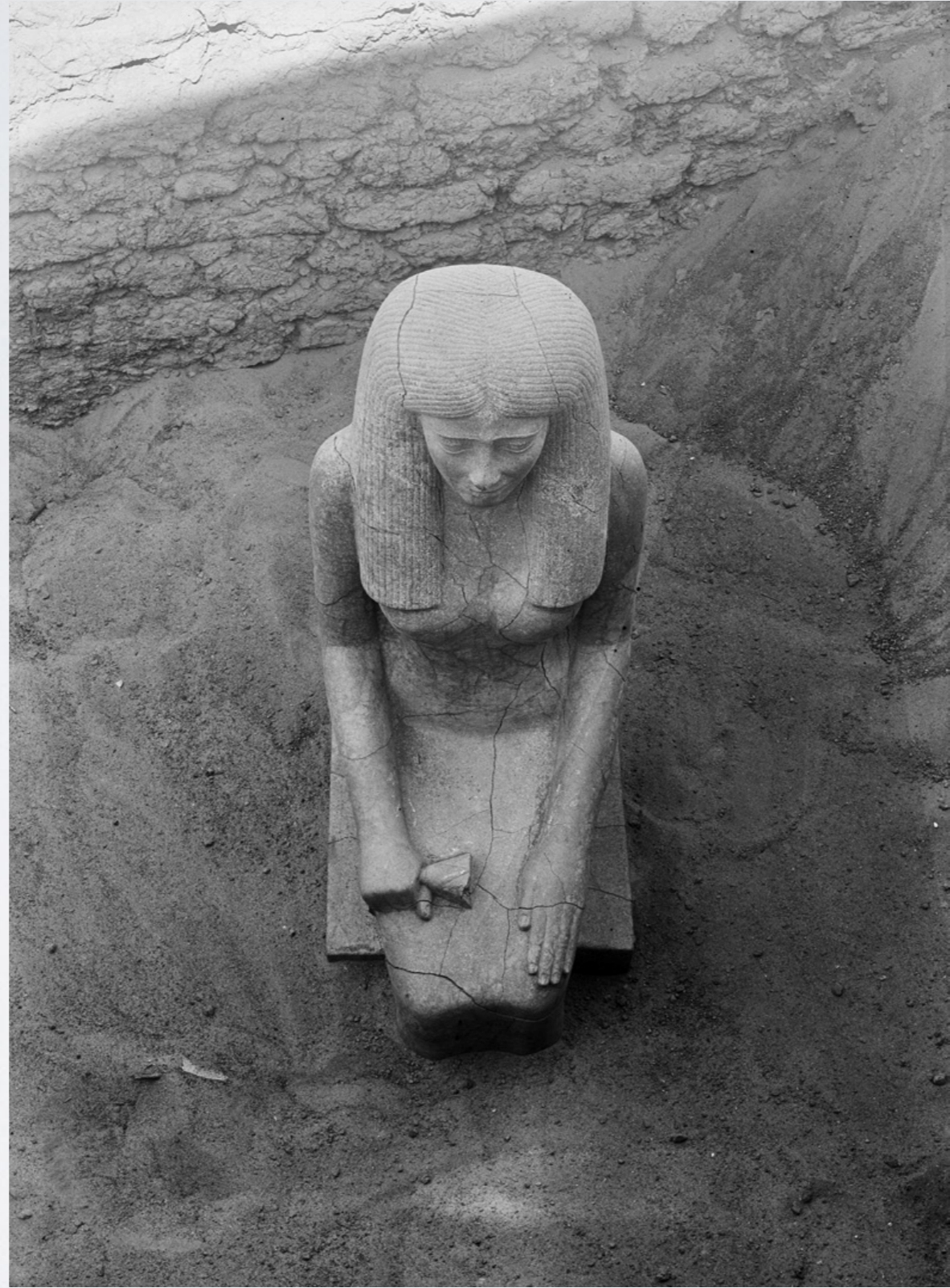
Egyptian officials of the Middle Kingdom continued the practice of equipping their tombs with statues to house the ka of the tomb owner and to provide a focal point for the offering cult. Highly ranked officials also dedicated statues of themselves at sanctuaries of gods and deified ancestors. Following the experimental and idiosyncratic interlude of the First Intermediate Period, sculptors once again produced large-scale stone statues, returning to the basic forms and poses established in the Old Kingdom.

LADY SENNUWY

This elegant seated statue of Lady Sennuwy of Asyut is one of the most superbly carved and beautifully proportioned sculptures from the Middle Kingdom. The unknown artist shaped and polished the hard, gray granodiorite with extraordinary skill, suggesting that he was trained in a royal workshop. He has portrayed Sennuwy as a slender, graceful young woman, dressed in the tightly fitting sheath dress that was fashionable at the time. The carefully modeled planes of the face, framed by a long, thick, striated wig, convey a serene confidence and timeless beauty. Such idealized, youthful, and placid images characterize the first half of Dynasty 12 and hark back to the art of the Old Kingdom. Sennuwy sits poised and attentive on a solid, blocklike chair, with her left hand resting flat on her lap and her right hand holding a lotus blossom, a symbol of rebirth. Inscribed on the sides and base of the chair are hieroglyphic texts declaring that she is venerated in the presence of Osiris and other deities associated with the afterlife.







SENWOSRET III

| 878-184 | BCE

The face of Senwosret III is one of the most individual and recognizable in all of Egyptian art. The deep-set, heavy-lidded eyes, the thin lips, and the series of diagonal furrows marking the rather hollow cheeks give representations of this king a brooding expression not usually found on the faces of Egyptian kings, who are generally portrayed with a more youthful countenance. Although it lacks any inscription, this fragment of a quartzite statue is easily identified as a likeness of Senwosret III. However, unlike the stern features seen on the face of the king's gneiss sphinx, the expression here is somewhat softened, suggesting the face of a living, aging man. This image is one of the few instances in Egyptian art in which the ruler seems consciously to have chosen to represent his humanity rather than an idealized image of eternal kingship.



NEW KINGDOM (C. 1567-1085 BCE)

Under Ahmose I, the first king of the 18th dynasty, Egypt was once again reunited. During the 18th dynasty, Egypt restored its control over Nubia and began military campaigns in Palestine, clashing with other powers in the area such as the Mitannians and the Hittites. The country went on to establish the world's first great empire, stretching from Nubia to the Euphrates River in Asia. In addition to powerful kings such as Amenhotep I (1546-1526 BCE), Thutmose I (1525-1512 BCE) and Amenhotep III (1417-1379 BCE), the New Kingdom was notable for the role of royal women such as Queen Hatshepsut (1503-1482 BCE), who began ruling as a regent for her young stepson (he later became Thutmose III, Egypt's greatest military hero), but rose to wield all the powers of a pharaoh.

THE MAN WHO WOULD BE KING



THE MAN WHO WOULD BE KING



Story by Rudyard Kipling

THE WOMAN WHO WOULD BE KING



Story by Hatshepsut herself

HATSHEPSUT (1473-1458 BCE)



HATSHEPSUT

Although her long rule had been a time of peace and prosperity, filled with magnificent art and a number of ambitious building projects (the greatest of which was her mortuary, or memorial, temple at Deir el-Bahri), Hatshepsut's methods of acquiring and holding onto power suggested a darker side to her reign and character. The widowed queen of the pharaoh Thutmose II, she had, according to custom, been made regent after his death in c. 1479 BCE to rule for her young stepson, Thutmose III, until he came of age. Within a few years, however, she proclaimed herself pharaoh, thereby becoming, in the words of Winlock's colleague at the Metropolitan, William C. Hayes, the "vilest type of usurper."

HATSHEPSUT

Disconcerting to some scholars, too, was her insistence on being portrayed as male, with bulging muscles and the traditional pharaonic false beard—variously interpreted by those historians as an act of outrageous deception, deviant behavior or both. Many early Egyptologists also concluded that Hatshepsut's chief minister, Senenmut, must have been her lover as well, a co-conspirator in her climb to power, the so-called evil genius behind what they viewed as her devious politics.

HATSHEPSUT

Upon Hatshepsut's death in c. 1458 BCE, her stepson, then likely still in his early 20s, finally ascended to the throne. By that time, according to Hayes, Thutmose III had developed "a loathing for Hatshepsut...her name and her very memory which practically beggars description." The destruction of her monuments, carried out with such apparent fury, was almost universally interpreted as an act of long-awaited and bitter revenge on the part of Thutmose III, who, Winlock wrote, "could scarcely wait to take the vengeance on her dead that he had not dared in life."

HATSHEPSUT

“Of course, it made a wonderful story,” says Renée Dreyfus, curator of ancient art and interpretation at the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco. “And this is what we all read when we were growing up. But so much of what was written about Hatshepsut, I think, had to do with who the archaeologists were...gentlemen scholars of a certain generation.”

HATSHEPSUT

Hatshepsut probably knew her position was tenuous—both by virtue of her sex and the unconventional way she had gained the throne—and therefore appears to have done what canny leaders have often done in times of crisis: she reinvented herself. The most obvious form this took was having herself portrayed as a male pharaoh. As to why, “No one really knows,” says Dorman. But he believes it may have been motivated by the presence of a male co-ruler—a circumstance with which no previous female ruler had ever contended.

Read more: <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/the-queen-who-would-be-king-130328511/>

Hatshepsut's face appears stoic. We thought this might highlight her ability to be an unemotional ruler.

Her face also looks youthful. Youth and beauty are associated in works of art from different cultures and time periods.

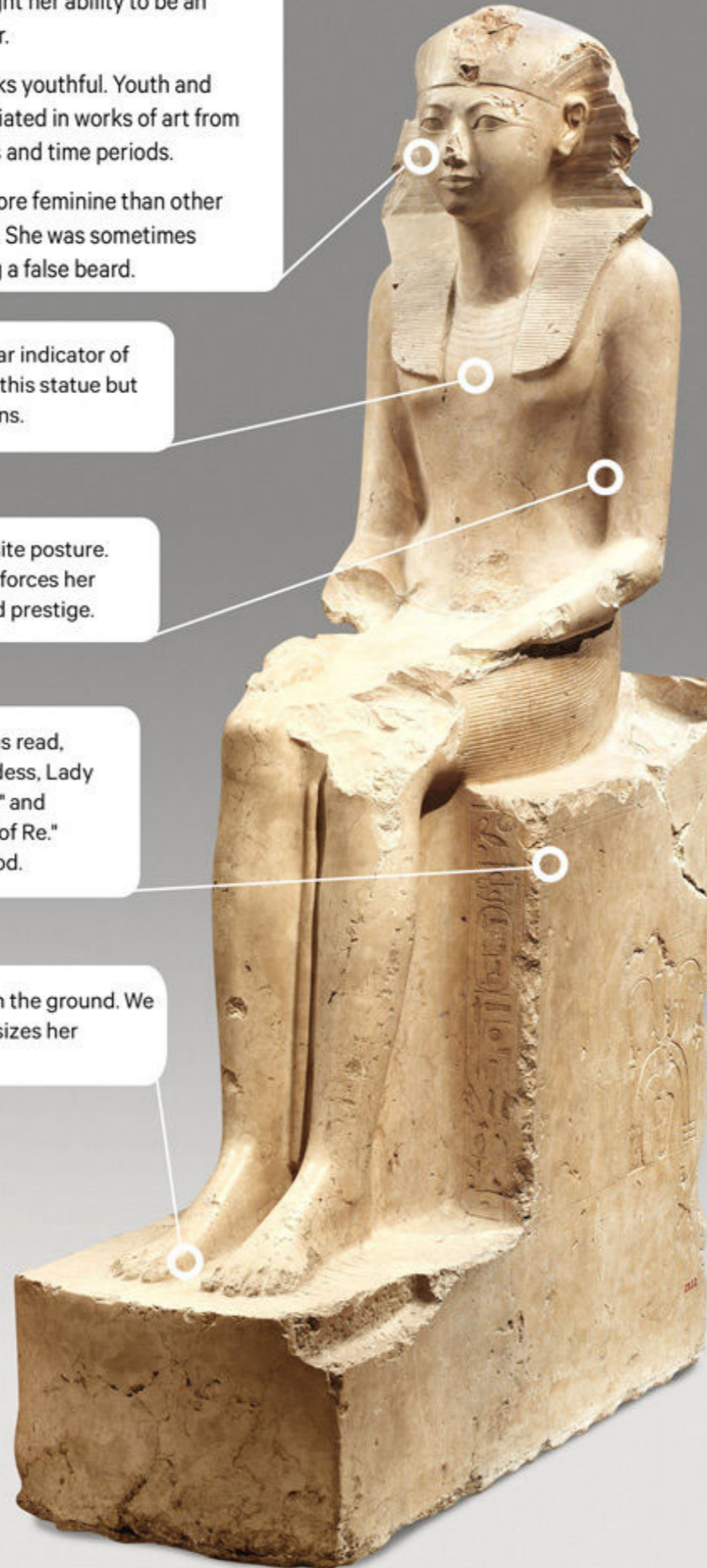
Her face looks more feminine than other depictions of her. She was sometimes depicted wearing a false beard.

Her chest is a clear indicator of her femininity on this statue but not in all depictions.

Notice her exquisite posture. We think this reinforces her respectability and prestige.

These hieroglyphs read, "the Perfect Goddess, Lady of the Two Lands" and "Bodily daughter of Re." Re was the sun god.

Her feet sit flat on the ground. We think this emphasizes her authority.





DEIR EL-BAHRI

Deir el-Bahri (Arabic for “The Northern Monastery”) is a complex of mortuary temples and tombs located on the west bank of the Nile. It is separated from the Valley of the Kings by the peak of el-Qurn (Arabic for “The Horn” known to the Egyptians as “Dehent”) and lies directly across the water from the temple complexes at Karnak and Luxor in Thebes. The mountain formed a natural pyramid towering over the Valley of the Kings and Deir el-Bahri, and was sacred to Hathor and Meretseger

Hatshepsut built the largest, best preserved and arguably the most impressive temple at the site, her Mortuary Temple named “Djeser-Djeseru” (“Holy of Holies”). Her Mortuary Temple is clearly inspired by that of Montuhotep and was built so that the colonnades at each side of the central ramp to her temple correspond with the two levels of Montuhotep’s Mortuary Temple. After her death her temple was vandalized by Thuthmosis II and then by Akhenaten (because of his antipathy towards Amun).









SENENMUT (1464 BCE)



SENMENMUT

A man of humble origins, the ancient Egyptian Senenmut reached uncommon heights during his lifetime. Amazingly, he earned almost one hundred titles, including “Great Treasurer of the Queen” and “Chief Steward of the King’s daughter.” Senenmut was a close advisor and loyal companion to Queen Hatshepsut. He was also the tutor to Hatshepsut’s only child, a daughter, Neferure. His service probably began during the reign of Thutmose II, Hatshepsut’s husband.

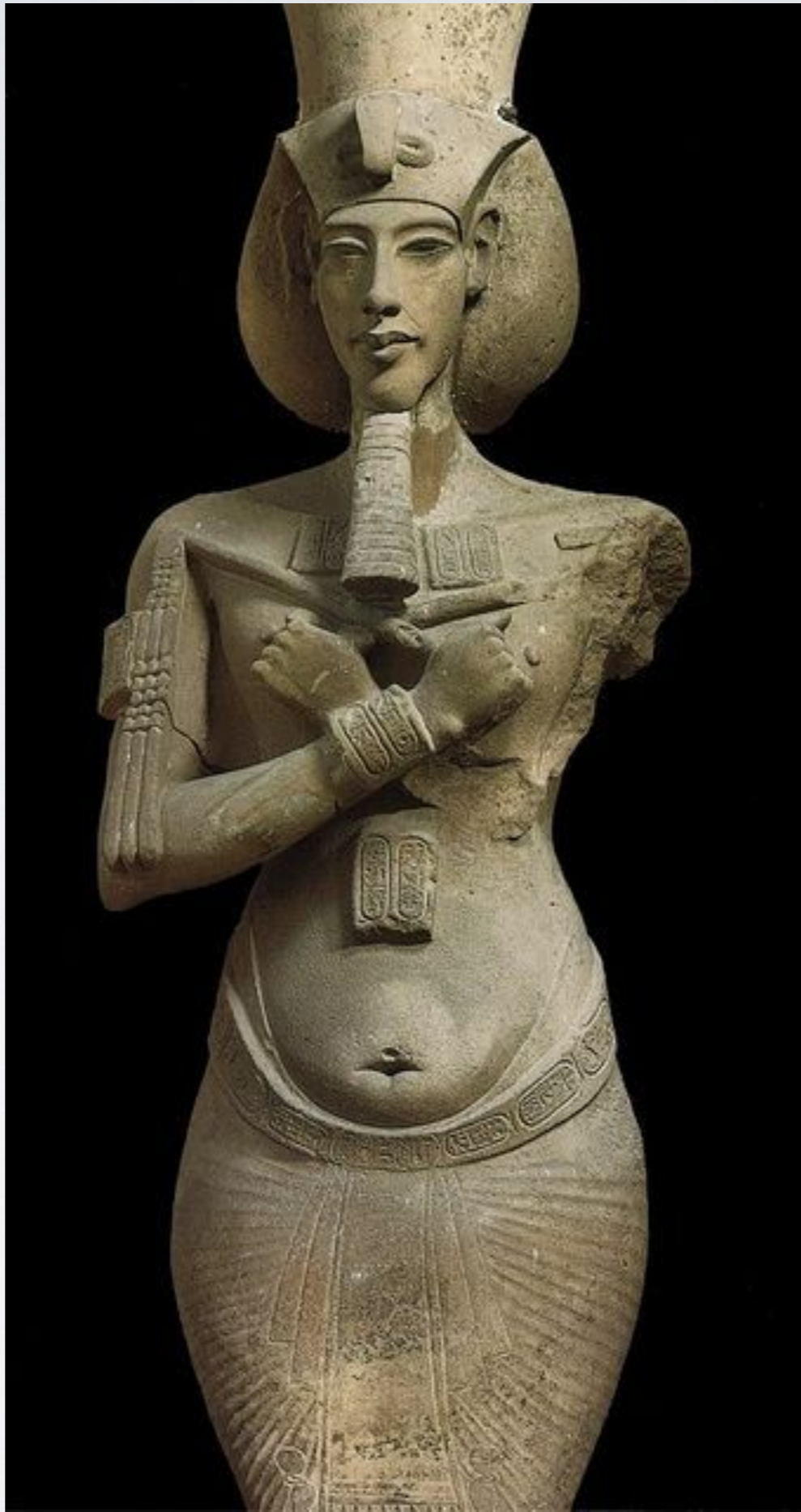
THE AMARNA EXPERIMENT

The controversial Amenhotep IV (c. 1379-1362), of the late 18th dynasty, undertook a religious revolution, disbanding the priesthoods dedicated to Amon-Re (a combination of the local Theban god Amon and the sun god Re) and forcing the exclusive worship of another sun-god, Aton. Renaming himself Akhenaton (“servant of the Aton”), he built a new capital in Middle Egypt called Akhetaton, known later as Amarna.









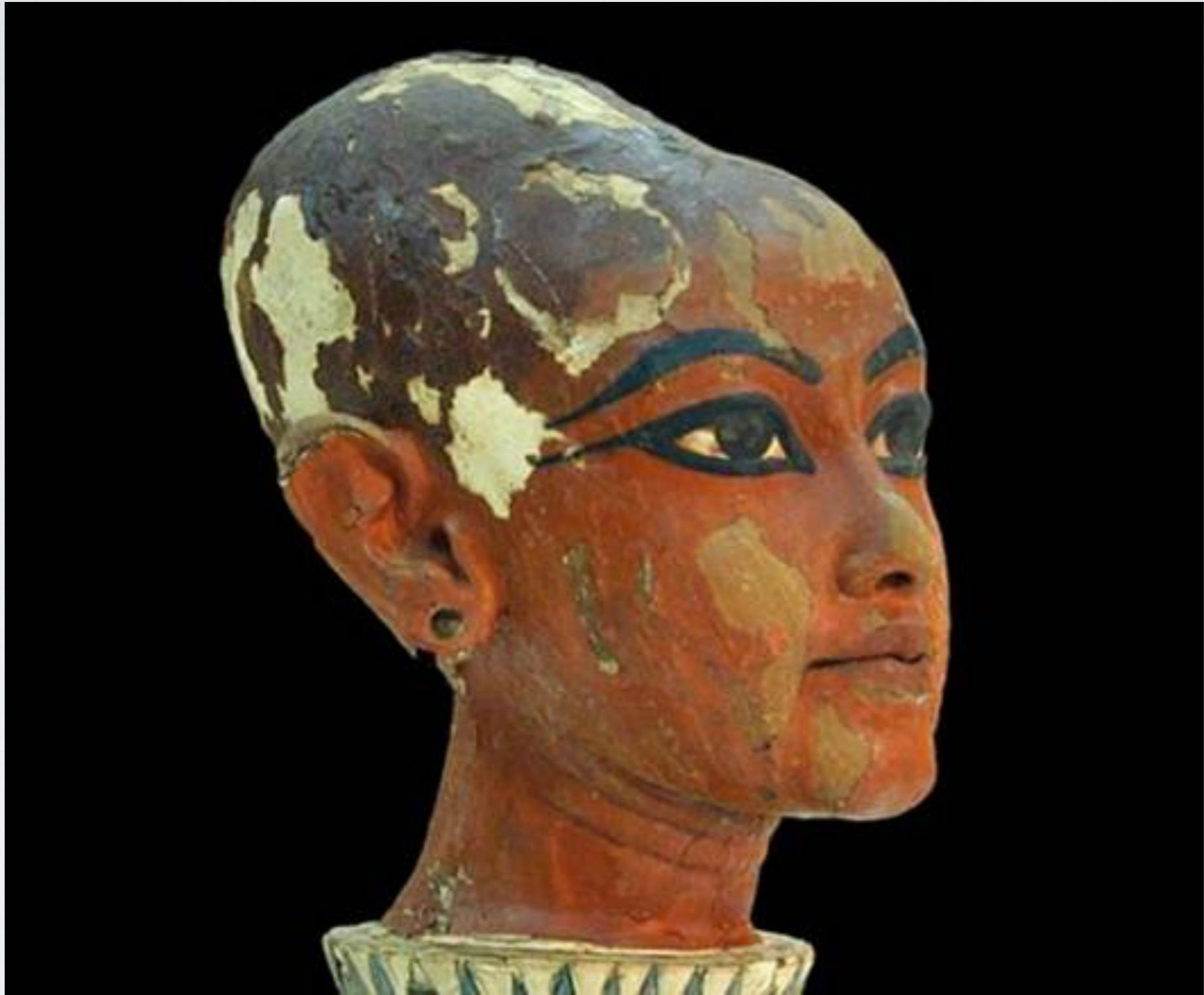


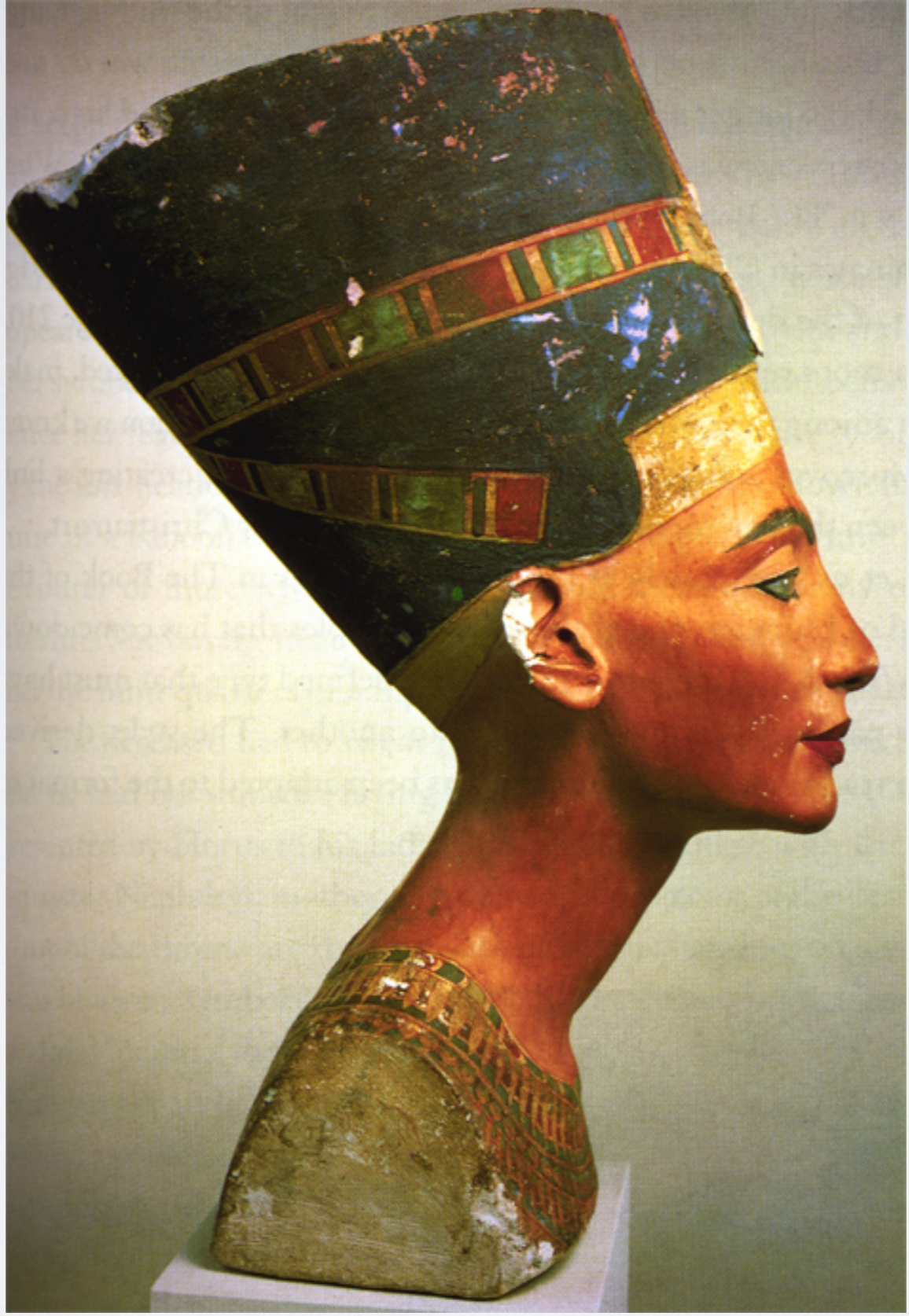
















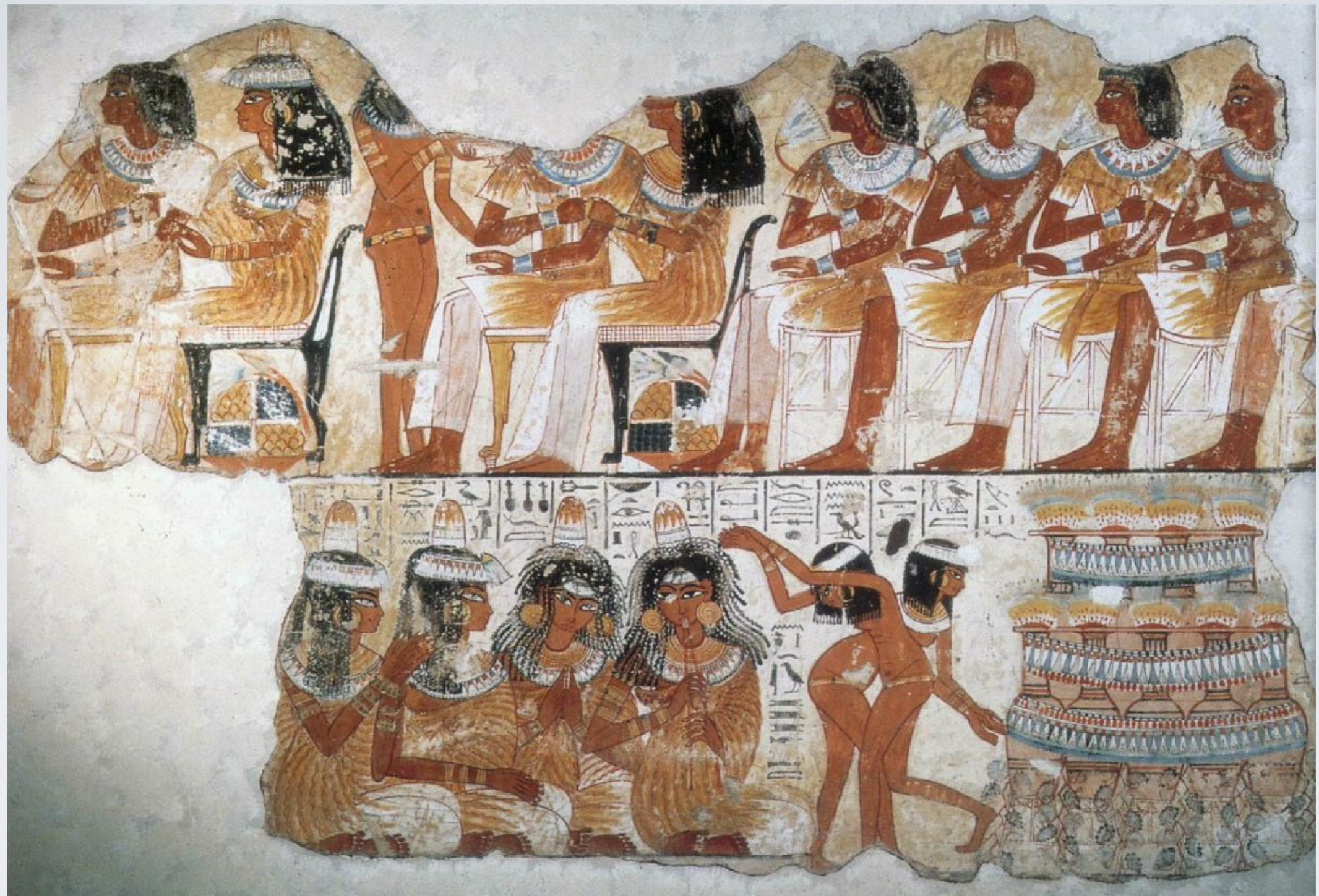


























INCESTUOUS MARRIAGES

The story of King Tut











RAMSES

Upon Akhenaton's death, the capital returned to Thebes and Egyptians returned to worshipping a multitude of gods. The 19th and 20th dynasties, known as the Ramesside period (for the line of kings named Ramses) saw the restoration of the weakened Egyptian empire and an impressive amount of building, including great temples and cities. According to biblical chronology, the exodus of Moses and the Israelites from Egypt possibly occurred during the reign of Ramses II (1304-1237 BCE).

TOMBS

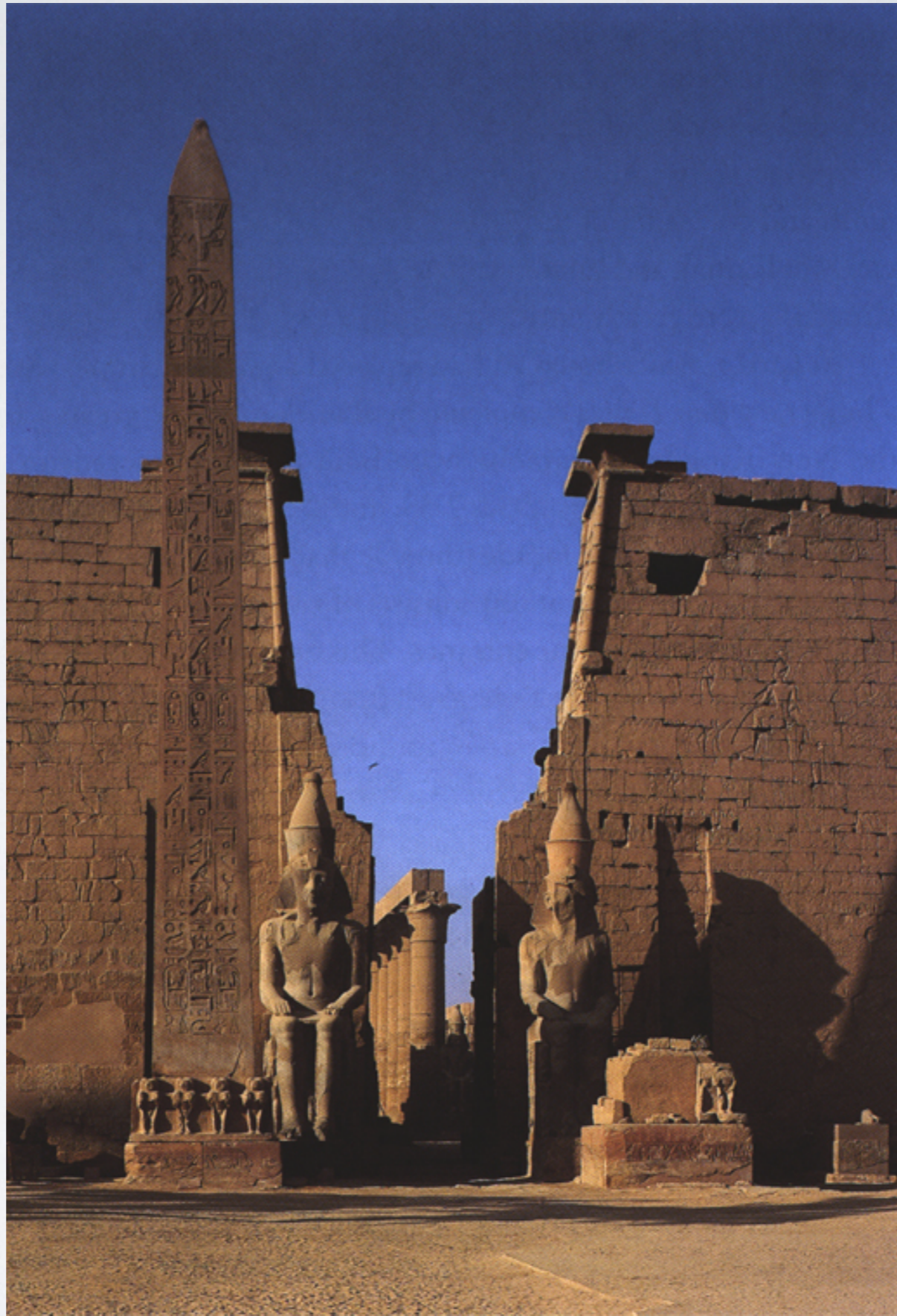
All of the New Kingdom rulers (with the exception of Akhenaton) were laid to rest in deep, rock-cut tombs (not pyramids) in the Valley of the Kings, a burial site on the west bank of the Nile opposite Thebes. Most of them were raided and destroyed, with the exception of the tomb and treasure of Tutankhamen (c.1361-1352 BCE), discovered largely intact in 1922 (CE).

TOMB PAINTINGS



RAMSES III

The splendid mortuary temple of the last great king of the 20th dynasty, Ramses III (c. 1187-1156 BCE), was also relatively well preserved, and indicated the prosperity Egypt still enjoyed during his reign. The kings who followed Ramses III were less successful: Egypt lost its provinces in Palestine and Syria for good and suffered from foreign invasions (notably by the Libyans), while its wealth was being steadily, but inevitably depleted.





PYLON TEMPLE

Starting in the New Kingdom, and continuing in the centuries after, Egyptian rulers gradually created a series of 10 “pylons” at Karnak. Functioning as gateways of sorts, these pylons were connected to each other through a network of walls. They were often decorated with scenes depicting the ruler who built them and many of them also had flag-staffs from which colorful banners would be flown. At Karnak the pylons start near the main sanctuary and go in two directions. One set of six pylons faces west towards the Nile River and ends in an entrance lined with an avenue of small sphinxes. Another set of four pylons faces south along a processional route used for ceremonies.



THIRD INTERMEDIATE PERIOD (C. 1085-664 BCE)

The next 400 years—known as the Third Intermediate Period—saw important changes in Egyptian politics, society and culture.

Centralized government under the 21st dynasty pharaohs gave way to the resurgence of local officials, while foreigners from Libya and Nubia grabbed power for themselves and left a lasting imprint on Egypt's population. The 22nd dynasty began around 945 BCE with King Sheshonq, a descendant of Libyans who had invaded Egypt during the late 20th dynasty and settled there. Many local rulers were virtually autonomous during this period and dynasties 23-24 are poorly documented.

FROM THE LATE PERIOD TO ALEXANDER'S CONQUEST (C. 664-332 BCE)

Psammetichus and sons, in the Saite dynasty, ruled a reunified Egypt for less than two centuries. In 525 BCE, Cambyses, king of Persia, defeated Psammetichus III, the last Saite king, at the Battle of Pelusium, and Egypt became part of the Persian Empire. Persian rulers such as Darius (522-485 BCE) ruled the country largely under the same terms as native Egyptian kings: Darius supported Egypt's religious cults and undertook the building and restoration of its temples. The tyrannical rule of Xerxes (486-465 BCE) sparked increased uprisings under him and his successors. One of these rebellions triumphed in 404 BCE, beginning one last period of Egyptian independence under native rulers (dynasties 28-30).

FROM THE LATE PERIOD TO ALEXANDER'S CONQUEST (C. 664-332 BCE)

In the mid-fourth century BCE, the Persians again attacked Egypt, reviving their empire under Ataxerxes III in 343 BCE. Barely a decade later, in 332 BCE, Alexander the Great of Macedonia defeated the armies of the Persian Empire and conquered Egypt. After Alexander's death, Egypt was ruled by a line of Macedonian kings, beginning with Alexander's general Ptolemy and continuing with his descendants.

ROME'S CONQUEST

The last ruler of Ptolemaic Egypt—the legendary Cleopatra VII—surrendered Egypt to the armies of Octavian (later Augustus) in 31 BCE. Six centuries of Roman rule followed, during which Christianity became the official religion of Rome and the Roman Empire's provinces (including Egypt). The conquest of Egypt by the Arabs in the seventh century CE and the introduction of Islam would do away with the last outward aspects of ancient Egyptian culture and propel the country towards its modern incarnation.

GODS AND GODESSES



HORUS

The Eye of Horus is one of the best-known symbols of ancient Egypt. Known also as the Wadjet, this magical symbol is believed to provide protection, health, and rejuvenation. Due to its powerful protective powers, the Eye of Horus was popularly used by the ancient Egyptians, both the living and the dead, as amulets. Even today, the Eye of Horus continues to be used as a symbol of protection.





AFTERLIFE



MUMMIFICATION



MUMMIFICATION

The methods of embalming, or treating the dead body, that the ancient Egyptians used is called mummification. Using special processes, the Egyptians removed all moisture from the body, leaving only a dried form that would not easily decay. It was important in their religion to preserve the dead body in as life-like a manner as possible. So successful were they that today we can view the mummified body of an Egyptian and have a good idea of what he or she looked like in life, 3,000 years ago.

CANOPIIC JARS



CANOPIIC JARS

Canopic Jars were used by the ancient Egyptian during the rituals of mummification processes. These were used as containers in which to hold the internal organs of the deceased that was going to be mummified. The ancient Egyptians before mummifying their pharaohs and dead took out the internal soft organs. These organs contained a lot of fluid and could cause the body to putrefy and decompose quickly.

The jars had lids or stoppers that were shaped as the head of one of the minor funerary deities known as the Four Sons of Horus.

DOGS & BABOONS





BABOONS

Not only were baboons linked to the moon-god, but also to the cult of the sun-god. Baboons are known to greet the morning sun by barking – a theme often seen in ancient Egyptian art and sculpture, where baboons are depicted raising their hands to the sun in worship.

DOGS

It turns out that dogs were equally loved and praised in Egyptian culture. A large part of this comes from the religious significance of dogs- they are connected to the afterlife through Anubis, the god of the dead, and were thought to act as companions and guides to humans in the afterlife.

BEAUTY AT LUXOR







HIEROGLYPHS



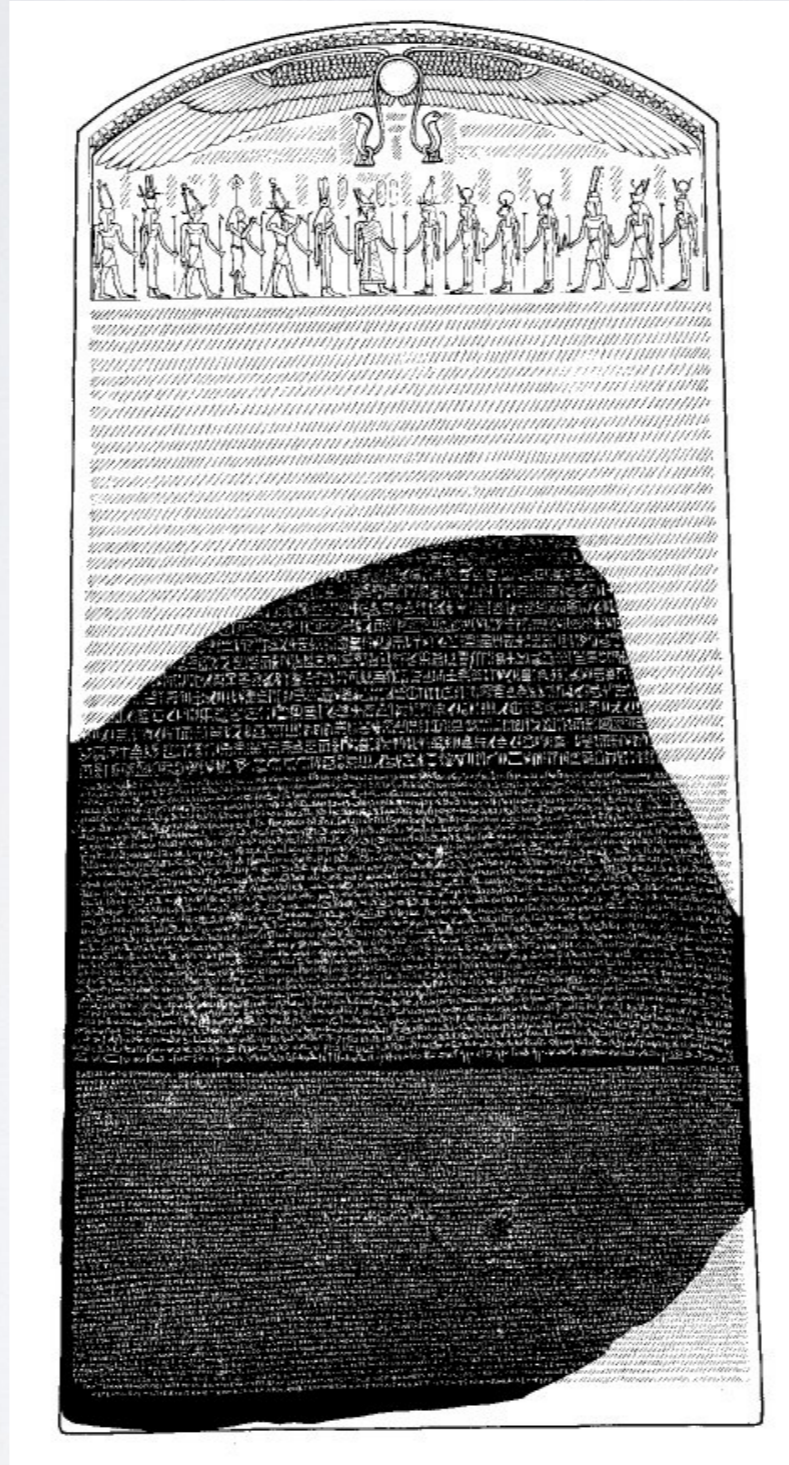
HIEROGLYPHS



THE ROSETTA STONE

The Rosetta Stone, a symbol for different things to different people, is a dark-colored granodiorite stela inscribed with the same text in three scripts - Demotic, hieroglyphic and Greek. In July 1799, the stone was found in the city of Rosetta (modern el Rashid) by French soldiers during Napoleon's invasion of Egypt. Rosetta was located on a tributary of the Nile near the Mediterranean coast east of Alexandria. Napoleon's forces were constructing fortifications when the large inscribed stone fragment was uncovered by officer Pierre François Xavier Bouchard (1772–1832). He immediately recognized the significance of the juxtaposed Greek and hieroglyphic scripts, predicting correctly that each script represented a translation of a single text. This guess was corroborated upon translating the Greek description of how the stela's text was to be promulgated: "This decree shall be inscribed on a stela of hard stone in sacred (hieroglyphic), native (Demotic), and Greek characters." Thus, the Rosetta Stone (in French "the stone of Rosetta") was named after the city where it was discovered.

ROSETTA STONE



SCARABS

The Egyptian scarab was one of the most well-recognized symbols in Ancient Egypt, appearing as amulets, on jewelry and in funerary context.

Modeled after the dung beetle, the scarab was closely connected with the sun god Khepri, who brought the sunrise over the horizon each day. Thus, it became a symbol of rebirth, regeneration, and protection in the afterlife.



THE END