Chapter 3

Egypt Under the Pharaohs
Ancient Egypt

Context

- Nile river brought rich soil (alluvial deposits) for agriculture and raising livestock making life possible in dry habitat
- Years ago Nile lined with marshes, island ridges, and thick papyrus (hunting)
- Variety of stone resources available for carving and building
- Lower Egypt is North
- Upper Egypt is South
- Dynasty — succession of pharaohs divided into groups
- Sophisticated culture at 3500BCE.
Goals

• Understand the evolution of Egyptian culture and its relationship to the Nile.

• Recognize stylistic conventions of Egyptian art.

• Understand architectural evolution from mastaba to pyramid in the Old Kingdom.

• Describe key characteristics of Old Kingdom sculpture. Explain how its form follows its function.

• Compare and contrast Middle Kingdom sculpture and funerary structures to that of the Old Kingdom.

• Recognize the proliferation of the rock-cut tomb and mortuary temple and how they replace mastabas and pyramids as the most popular funerary structures in the Middle and New Kingdoms.
Goals (continued)

• Understand aspects of the New Kingdom as reflected in its art.

• Identify Egyptian pylon temples and their purpose.

• Identify the Amarna period of the New Kingdom. Compare and contrast its stylistic idiosyncracies to conventions of earlier Egyptian art.

• Explain reasons why Egyptian art returned to its earlier stylistic conventions and why the Amarna period was short-lived.
3.1 Predynastic, Early Dynasties, and the Old Kingdom

- Understand the early evolution of Egyptian culture and its relationship to the Nile.
- Recognize stylistic conventions of Egyptian art.
- Describe Egyptian funerary art forms from these periods and state reasons for the development of these monuments.
The Nile and Egyptian Unification

- Examine the early evolution of the Egyptian culture, its dependence on the Nile River, and the importance of the unification of upper and lower Egypt.
Context

- Egypt divided geographically and politically
- Major finds of Predynastic art come from Upper Egypt (especially Hierakonpolis)
- Narmer palette and this mural painting from Hierakonpolis

- Figures scattered haphazardly across wall
- Painting category
- Depiction of daily life

Figure 3-1A People, boats, and animals, detail of a watercolor copy of a wall painting from tomb 100 at Hierakonpolis, Egypt, Predynastic, ca. 3500–3200 BCE. Paint on plaster, entire painting 16’ 4” X 3’ 7 3/8”. Egyptian Museum, Cairo.
• Explore the importance of the **Palette of Narmer** as a blueprint for a **formula for figure representation** and other **conventions** seen in Egyptian art for nearly 3000 years.
Relief Sculpture narrative (bas/low relief)
Palette- stone slab w/circular depression
Hieroglyph- system of writing using symbols/pics

**Context**
- Predynastic period ended w/unification of Up & Low Egypt
- Narmer pharaoh in 1\textsuperscript{st} dynasty
- High white bowling-pin-shaped crown (Up Egypt)
- King at top of hierarchical society

**Function/Purpose**
- Utilitarian object… eye makeup palette (eye makeup worn for protection from sun)
- (commemorative) unification of two kingdoms (probably)
- King slaying unarmed foe became standard image = triumph of Egyptian god-kings over enemies

**Style**
- Narmer depicted larger than everyone else
- Composite view like Meso. And Paleo.
Early Funerary Architectural Forms

- Describe funerary architectural forms of the Old Kingdom.
- Observe the evolution of funerary structures from mastaba to stepped pyramid to pyramid.
- Understand the importance of the Stepped Pyramid of Djoser by Imhotep and the mortuary precinct at Saqqara.
- Mastaba standard *tomb* type...rectangular brick or stone structure with sloping sides over an underground burial chamber
- Arabic for “bench”
- Single family burials—multiple family
- Main feature burial chamber
- Chapel with false door through which *ka* could join world of living and partake in meals on offering table

Figure 3-3 Section (*top*), plan (*center*), and restored view (*bottom*) of typical Egyptian mastaba tombs.
- 1\textsuperscript{st} recorded name of an artist
- master builder to King Djoser of 3\textsuperscript{rd} dynasty
- Saqqara was necropolis (city of dead) of Memphis (capital at time)
- oldest stone structure in Egypt, 1\textsuperscript{st} grandiose tomb
- corners face cardinal points
- series of mastabas of diminishing size
- resembles Meso. Ziggurat

**Function**- tomb and to protect mummified king & possessions and to symbolize his godlike power
- subterranean complex resembles palace/king’s home for afterlife
- surrounded by walls to regulate access
- funerary temple for priests to perform daily rituals

*Figure 3-4* IMHOTEP, Stepped Pyramid and mortuary precinct of Djoser, Saqqara, Egypt, Third Dynasty, ca. 2630–2611 BCE. CUE CARD
Figure 3-5 Restored view (top) and plan (bottom) of the mortuary precinct of Djoser, Saqqara, Egypt, Third Dynasty, ca. 2630–2611 BCE.
- Engaged columns/attached
- Predate Meso. columns

3-5A Columnar entrance corridor to the mortuary precinct of Djoser, Saqqara, Egypt, Third Dynasty, ca. 2630–2611 BCE.
-columns end in capitals (heads) that resemble papyrus blossom of Lower Egypt
-shaft of column resembles papyrus stalks
-also engaged (attached) vs. later Greek/Roman freestanding columns

Figure 3-6 Detail of the facade of the North Palace of the mortuary precinct of Djoser, Saqqara, Egypt, Third Dynasty, ca. 2630–2611 BCE.
The Pyramids

• Understand the evolution of the pyramid.
• Explore how and why the Great Pyramids were built.
Context
- oldest of 7 wonders of ancient world
- served as tombs for 4th Dynasty pharaohs and where they were reborn in afterlife (Khufu, Khafre, Menkaure)
- shape influenced by cult of Re
- pyramidal stone “ben-ben”
- pyramid itself symbol of sun
- Pyramid Texts on burial chamber walls describe sun’s rays as the ladder used to ascend to heaven
- 4 corners oriented to cardinal points
-engineering and mathematical expertise
-mobilize, direct, house, feed huge workforce
-limestone taken from Gizeh plateau
-removed stone with copper chisels, wooden mallets, wedges
-pried stones from bedrock with wooden levers
-transported large blocks with wooden rollers and sleds (ashlar masonry)
-rubble ramps
-temples on east side facing rising sun=Ra

Figure 3-8 Section of the Pyramid of Khufu, Gizeh, Egypt, Fourth Dynasty, ca. 2551–2528 BCE.
Complex served as palace for pharaoh in afterlife.

Figure 3-9 Model of the Fourth Dynasty pyramid complex, Gizeh, Egypt. Harvard University Semitic Museum, Cambridge. 1) Pyramid of Menkaure, 2) Pyramid of Khafre, 3) mortuary temple of Khafre, 4) causeway, 5) Great Sphinx, 6) valley temple of Khafre, 7) Pyramid of Khufu, 8) pyramids of the royal family and mastabas of nobles.
Largest in Egypt, Meso., & Persia
-image of Khafre or Khufu
-Composite of lion with human head...associated with Re
-human intelligence with fearsome lion strength
• Describe how Egyptians depicted and positioned the human form in funerary sculpture.
Old Kingdom Sculpture

- Describe how ancient Egyptians rendered the human form in Old Kingdom sculpture.
- Explain how the form of the sculpture reflects its purpose.
  (form follows function)
- Compare and contrast the appearance of the human form based on their status in Egyptian society.
Context
- located in valley temple
- belief in ideal proportions for god-like king
- Intentionally non-representational

Materials/Technique
- diorite like Gudea statue; figure connected to original stone
- subtractive method

Style
- not a true likeness of king’s actual looks; formula type to represent human fig.
- rigid and still position, bilateral symmetry
- throne formed of 2 stylized lions, intertwined lotus, papyrus plants (symbols of unified Egypt)

Purpose
- not to record individual features, but to proclaim divine nature of Egyptian kingship
- suppressed all movement & notion of time creating an eternal stillness

Function
- substitute abodes for ka in tomb
-Similar pose as Khafre statue
-originial paint remains
-color gives a life-like quality despite stiff posture

**Polytheism** - belief in many gods vs. **monotheism** - belief in one god
- Painting depicting steps to carving a sculpture

3-11B Sculptors at work, detail of the south wall of the main hall of the funerary chapel of Rekhmire, Thebes, Egypt, 18th Dynasty, ca. 1425 BCE.
Sculptural Forms

• Examine Egyptian realism and the canon seen in Old Kingdom sculptural forms of the human figure.
• What important differences are observed in the two objects presented here?
-located in valley temple of Menkaure’s pyramid complex at Gizeh

**Style/Technique** - figures wedded to original stone
- high relief sculpture technically

**Style** - Menkaure’s frozen pose stereotypical with rigid frontal, arms hanging straight down and close to well-built body
- hands clenched into fists, thumbs forward
- left leg forward slightly, but no shift in angle of hips
- gesture indicates marital status (only sign of affection in arms) while faces stare into space
- purpose of artist to suggest timeless nature of stone statue to serve as eternal home for ka
- most statues originally painted

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**Figure 3-12** Menkaure and Khamerernebty(?), from Gizeh, Egypt, Fourth Dynasty, ca. 2490–2472 BCE. Graywacke, 4’ 6 1/2” high. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.
**Style** - more life-like than previous funerary sculpture

- face has more expression and individual characteristics

**Context** - sits on ground = hierarchical status

- in hist. of portraiture, as person’s importance decreases, formality relaxed and realism increases

- disrespectful to show royalty this way

- not completely a true portrait; most non-royal Old Kingdom portraits show obesity stereotypically

- obesity = comfortable lifestyle and relatively high position in society

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**Old Kingdom funerary portraiture**

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*Figure 3-13 Seated scribe, from Saqqara, Egypt, Fourth Dynasty, ca. 2500 BCE. Painted limestone, 1’ 9” high. Louvre, Paris.*

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Dynasty-a long period of time ruled by same family of kings (changes when new family takes power)
Old Kingdom funerary sculpture
-similar to seated scribe
Old Kingdom funerary sculpture
-similar to last two sculptures

3-13B Seated statue of Hemiunu, from his mastaba at Gizeh, Egypt, Fourth Dynasty, ca. 2550–2530 BCE. Painted limestone, 5’ 1 1/2" high. Römer- und Pelizaeus-Museum, Hildesheim.
Egyptian Tomb Reliefs and Murals

• Explain their **importance** and **function** in relationship to the **ka**.
• Recognize the **consistency of stylistic conventions** and the **representation of status**.
Context- patrons favored certain subjects for eternal resting places such as agriculture and hunting (literal and symbolic significance)

Style- Ti larger size as in palette of King Narmer (hierarchical status)
-servants tiny and more life-like views as well as animals at top = lower hier. status
-artists applied a strict canon or system of proportions to human figure (grids and predetermined size of body parts)
-composite view of Ti (informative) same as ancient art

Purpose- suggest deceased’s eternal existence in afterlife (not showing him while alive)

Old Kingdom painted relief sculpture

Figure 3-14 Ti watching a hippopotamus hunt, relief in the mastaba of Ti, Saqqara, Egypt, Fifth Dynasty, ca. 2450–2350 BCE. Painted limestone, 4’ high. CUE CARD
-artists could be close observers of daily life (cows and youth at bottom)
-deliberate choice to depict stiff composite views of certain figures
-crossing of Nile metaphor for passage to afterlife
-combination of unconventional postures, stereotypical poses, and anecdotal details
-registers

Figure 3-15 Goats treading seed and cattle fording a canal, reliefs in the mastaba of Ti, Saqqara, Egypt, Fifth Dynasty, ca. 2450 – 2350 BCE. Painted limestone.
3.2 First Intermediate and Middle Kingdom

- Describe Egyptian funerary art forms from these periods and state reasons for the development of these monuments.
- Explain possible reasons for the decline in the power of the pharaoh in the Middle Kingdom.
- Understand the evolution of burial monuments and why this occurred in the Middle Kingdom.
Changes in the Middle Kingdom

- Understand **how and why** the **funerary art forms and burial monuments are changed** in the Middle Kingdom.
- Describe **features** of the fragmentary head of Senusret III and **how they reflect the political climate** of the Middle Kingdom.
Context- 2150 BCE
civil unrest/anarchy
-2040BCE
Mentuhotep II unites all Egypt (dyn. lasts 400 yrs.)
-est. more powerful central gov.
Style- very life-like and expressive features
-diff. from Old Kingdom sculptures
-face shows mood of times (king determined, troubled, aged)

Figure 3-16 Fragmentary head of Senuret III, 12th Dynasty, ca. 1860 BCE. Red quartzite, 6 ½” high. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

-same seated position as Old Kingdom
-more facial expression
Figure 3-17 Rock-cut tombs BH 3-5, Beni Hasan, Egypt, 12th Dynasty, ca. 1950 – 1900 BCE.

- hollowed out of cliffs
- shallow porch with fluted columns
- porch leads to hypostyle hall, then a burial chamber w/statues of deceased, paintings, painted reliefs of walls
- columns serve no supporting function (carved from rock)
- resemble Greek columns of Doric order
- Greek architecture also influenced by Egyptian Middle Kingdom
Figure 3-18 Interior hall of the rock-cut tomb of Amenemhet (tomb BH 2), Beni Hasan, Egypt, 12th Dynasty, ca. 1950–1900 BCE.
• Describe **early events** in the New Kingdom which bring **new influences into the art**.
• Discuss how the **Hyksos changed the culture of Egypt** and show their **location of origin**
• Understand **aspects of the New Kingdom as reflected in the art** of ancient Egypt.
Grand Mortuary Temples of the New Kingdom

- Describe the grand tombs and mortuary temples of Hatshepsut and Ramses II. What is their significance in terms of statuary and architecture?

- Identify Hatshepsut as the first great female monarch whose name has been recorded.

Context

-Middle Kingdom ended when the Hyksos from Syrian and Mesopotamian uplands took over
-Hyskos ruled the Intermediate Period until mid-16th century BCE. Egyptians revolted and gained power once more
-New Kingdom most glorious period
-new capital in Thebes, Upper Egypt
-grandiose temples to honor pharaohs, queens and gods
-temples served as place for kings to worship gods while alive and as temples in their own honor after death
- 1st great tribute to a woman’s achievements in history
- 3 collonaded terraces
- ramps on central axis
- collonades mimic patterns in cliffs
- causeway connecting mortuary temple to valley temple (now gone)
- inside shrines to gods, her father, and herself
- painted limestone reliefs commemorate her divine birth
- other reliefs depict engineering feats of transporting huge obelisks
- statues of her everywhere in different guises glorifying her reign

Figure 3-19  Mortuary temple of Hatshepsut (with the Middle Kingdom mortuary temple of Mentuhotep II at left), Deir el-Bahri, Egypt, 18th Dynasty, ca. 1473–1458 BCE.
Queen Hatshepsut’s successful expedition to kingdom of Punt

3-20 King and queen of Punt and attendants, relief from the mortuary temple of Hatshepsut, Deir el-Bahri, Egypt, 18th Dynasty, ca. 1473–1458 BCE. Painted limestone, 1’ 3” high. Egyptian Museum, Cairo.
-reassembled/once destroyed by her successor as were many of her statues
-depicts queen as male pharaoh
-queen was shown as male, female, and sphinx

Figure 3-21 Hatshepsut with offering jars, from the upper court of her mortuary temple, Deir el-Bahri, Egypt, 18th Dynasty, ca. 1473–1458 BCE. Red granite, 8’ 6” high. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.
- rock-cut temple (cut into living rock)
- colossal statues built to proclaim Ramses II’s greatness (heirarchy)
- sculptors had to sacrifice detail and refinement for size with sculptures
-atlantid vs. caryatid
statue columns have no
load-bearing function
(like tombs of Beni Hasan)
-Ramses depicted in
guise of Osiris

Figure 3-23 Interior of the temple of Ramses II, Abu Simbel, Egypt, 19th Dynasty, ca. 1290–1224 BCE. Sandstone, pillar statues 32’ high.
- built to honor one or more of the gods (unlike other temples of New Kingdom that honor pharaohs and queens)
- large perimeter wall
- sacred lake
- temple of Amen-Re = sacred mound rising from waters in beginning of time
- axial plan - parts of building arranged longitudinally (N-S)
- bi-symmetrical along center axis
- pylon temple - simple massive gateways with sloping walls

Aerial view of the temple of Amen-Re (looking north), Karnak, Egypt begun 15th century BCE (Jean Claude Golvin).
3-24A Aerial view of the temple of Amen-Re, Mut, and Khonsu (looking east), Luxor, Egypt, 18th and 19th Dynasties, begun early 14th century BCE.
-new approach to temple facade replaced statues with monumental pylon temple facade

-collonade

-hypostyle hall
-bud/bell capitals
-no cement in construction of columns, relied on precision of cutting joints and weight of structure
-columns function as structural support
-clerestory
-stone grilles
-sunken relief sculpture glorifying rulers (to preserve contour of column)
-sharp architectural lines
-intention of architects not to emphasize function of columns, but to convey a message (glory of king)

**Figure 3-25** Hypostyle hall, temple of Amen-Re, Karnak, Egypt, 19th Dynasty, ca. 1290–1224 BCE.
Figure 3-26 Model of the hypostyle hall, temple of Amen-Re, Karnak, Egypt, 19th Dynasty, ca. 1290 – 1224 BCE. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.
Sculpture and Painting of the New Kingdom

We will discuss:
- the form and function of the block statue, a popular sculptural form of the New Kingdom.
- materials and methods of painting in the New Kingdom. Compare the style to the earlier Egyptian conventions.
- the purpose of tomb painting in ancient Egypt in connection with providing for the ka
Context

- placed in tomb
- block statue
- expressed idea that ka could find eternal home in statue
- radical simplification of form compared to Old Kingdom statues
- rounded corners of cube create streamlined look/simple beauty
- brings attention to heads
- 2 bodies treated as single cubic block covered in hieroglyphic inscriptions
- frequent depiction of Senmut (chancellor/her tutor) with princess enhanced his stature

Figure 3-27 Senmut with Princess Nefrua, from Thebes, Egypt, 18th Dynasty, ca. 1470–1460 BCE. Granite, 3’ 1/2” high. Ägyptisches Museum, Berlin.
Figure 3-28  Fowling scene, from the tomb of Nebamun, Thebes, Egypt, 18th Dynasty, ca. 1400–1350 BCE. Fresco on dry plaster, 2’ 8” high. British Museum, London.
Figure 3-29  Funerary banquet from the tomb of Nebamun, Thebes, Egypt, 18th Dynasty, ca. 1400-1350 BCE. Fresco secco, 2’ 10 5/8” x 3’ 10 7/8”. British Museum, London.
Akhenaton and the Amarna Period

• Discuss reasons for the artistic revolution of the Amarna Period.
• Examine the different artistic elements in the figures of Nefertiti and Tiye.
• Describe common artistic features in the human figures of the Amarna period.
• Contrast the depiction of family interaction between the relief of Akhenaton, Nefertiti, and their children and the Old Kingdom sculpture of Menkaure and Khamerernebty (Fig. 3-12).
Figure 3-30  Akhenaton, from the temple of Aton, Karnak, Egypt, 18th Dynasty, ca. 1353–1335 BCE. Sandstone, 13’ high. Egyptian Museum, Cairo.
Figure 3-31 THUTMOSE, Nefertiti, from Amarna, Egypt, 18th Dynasty, ca. 1353–1335 BCE. Painted limestone, approx. 1’ 8” high. Ägyptisches Museum, Berlin. Cue Card
Figure 3-32 Tiye, from Ghurab, Egypt, 18th Dynasty, ca. 1353–1335 BCE. Wood, with gold, silver, alabaster, and lapis lazuli, 3 3/4” high. Ägyptisches Museum, Berlin.
Figure 3-33  Akhenaton, Nefertiti, and three daughters, from Amarna, Egypt, 18th Dynasty, ca. 1353–1335 BCE. Limestone, 1’ 1/4” high. Ägyptisches Museum, Berlin. Cue Card
King Tut

- Tutankhamen died at the age of 18 and is a relatively minor figure in Egyptian history. **Why is the “boy-king” and the discovery of his tomb so famous?**
- Compare the different images of the Pharaohs Akhenaton and Tutankhamen. Are there any **similarities**? What are the **differences**?
- Why does the art revert back to the **earlier conventions**?
Figure 3-34  Innermost coffin of Tutankhamen, from his tomb at Thebes, Egypt, 18th Dynasty, ca. 1323 BCE. Gold with inlay of enamel and semiprecious stones, 6’ 1” long. Egyptian Museum, Cairo. cue card
Figure 3-35  Death mask of Tutankhamen, from the innermost coffin in his tomb at Thebes, Egypt, 18th Dynasty, ca. 1323 BCE. Gold with inlay of semiprecious stones, 1’ 9 1/4” high. Egyptian Museum, Cairo.
Figure 3-36  Painted chest, from the Tomb of Tutankhamen, Thebes, Egypt, 18th Dynasty, ca. 1333–1323 BCE. Wood, 1’ 8” long. Egyptian Museum, Cairo.
• **Who are the figures** being depicted in the Last Judgment of Hu-Nefer?

• What was the **purpose of these Books of the Dead?**

• Describe the **rendering of the human** form and compare it to earlier depictions of humans dating back to the **Palette of Narmer.**
Figure 3-37  Last judgment of Hu-Nefer, from his tomb at Thebes, Egypt, 19th Dynasty, ca. 1290–1280 BCE. Painted papyrus scroll, 1’ 6” high. British Museum, London. Cue card
Portrait statue of Mentuemhet, from Karnak, Egypt, 26th Dynasty, ca. 660–650 BCE. Granite, 4’ 5” high. Egyptian Museum, Cairo.
3-39 Taharqo as a sphinx, from the temple T, Kawa, Sudan, 25th Dynasty, ca. 680 BCE, Granite, 1’ 4” X 2’ 4 ¾”. British Museum.
Continuity of Ancient Egyptian Art

- Despite some alterations and short deviations (Amarna) from their artistic tradition, why did Egyptians maintain such continuity in their art (statue of Mentuemhet, ca. 650 BCE) and architecture (Temple of Horus, ca. 237 – 47 BCE)?
Figure 3-40 Temple of Horus, Edfu, Egypt, ca. 237 – 47 BCE cue card.
Discussion Questions

❖ How do you speculate the great pyramids were built? What would have been some specific problems to consider?
❖ Is Egyptian art similar stylistically to any Mesopotamian culture from that time? Which culture and how are they similar or different in style and cultural context?
❖ What would be some reasons for the modification of pyramid scale and institution of rock-cut tombs as seen at Beni Hasan?
❖ Why does a change in religion bring about a change in art in ancient Egypt?