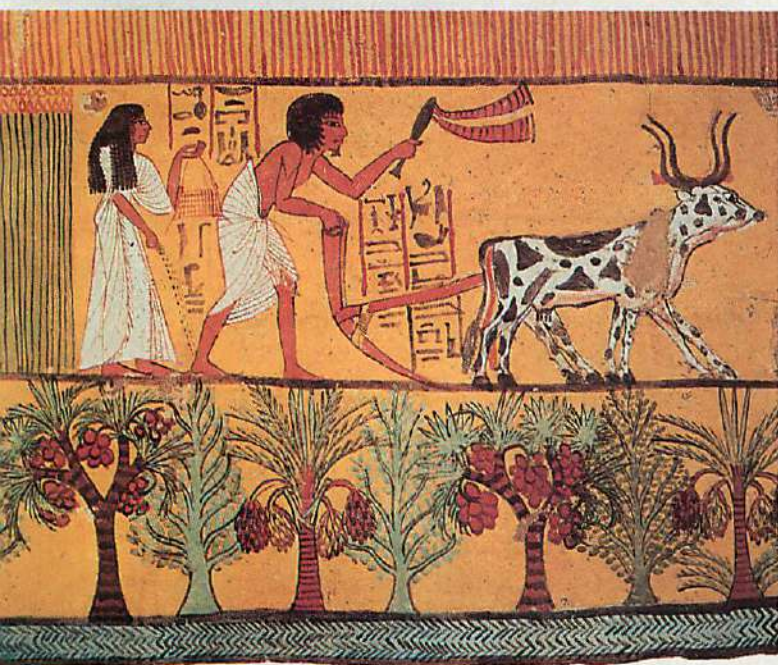


## Chapter 7

# Ancient Egypt

*Tombs filled with dazzling treasures tell us of the ancient Egyptians. Their civilization flourished in the valley along the Nile River in North Africa, a region rich in resources and protected from enemies by a vast desert. The valley seemed like heaven on earth to the Egyptians. In fact, life was so good that they hoped it would continue after death, in the afterlife.*



**4000 B.C.** People begin to settle along the Nile. In this tomb painting from a later period, an Egyptian couple happily plow their fields in the afterlife.

4000



3000

**c. 3100 B.C.** According to legend, the king of Upper Egypt conquers Lower Egypt and unites the two lands. This figure wears the crown of Upper Egypt.

4000 B.C.





Throughout this period, Egyptian kings built massive royal tombs. These pyramids date from the 2600s B.C. The giant figures (below) guard the temple built by King Ramsès II about 1250 B.C.



**c. 1570–1070 B.C.** Egyptian rulers conquer their neighbors and expand trade. This model boat, found in the tomb of King Tutankhamen, resembles the trading ships that sailed the Nile.

1000

B.C. A.D.

1000

**1489 B.C.** Queen Hatshepsut takes control. A skillful ruler, she promotes trade and brings peace. Like earlier rulers, she orders a grand temple built so she will be remembered forever.

A.D. 350



## L E S S O N 1

# The Gift of the Nile

## THINKING FOCUS

*What did the ancient Egyptians accomplish because of the "gifts of the Nile"?*

### Key Terms

- cataract
- delta
- papyrus
- dynasty

**G**rain was scarce, and fruit was dried up. People robbed their neighbors. Babies were crying, and old men were sad as they sat on the ground with their legs bent and their arms folded.

So begins an ancient legend about the Nile River. The Egyptians depended on the flooding of the Nile to water their fields. Some years there were "high Niles," when crops grew well and people had plenty to eat. Other years there were "low Niles," when the fields became dry, baked by the sun, and few had enough food.

The legend tells of a time of low Niles, when Egypt had seven years of famine. This time fell during the reign of King Zoser in the 2600s B.C. The king watched the crops withering, and he saw his people starving. He turned to his

chief advisor, Imhotep, for help. The answer was to learn the name of the god of the Nile so they could pray to him, said Imhotep. Later, he told the king that the Nile slept in two caverns below a temple near Egypt's southern border. The god Khnum (*kuh NOOM*) controlled the floodgates and let the Nile rush toward Egypt.

Later that night, Zoser dreamed that Khnum spoke to him: "I am Khnum. I know the Nile. When it covers the fields, it gives them life. Now the Nile will pour over the land without stopping. Plants will grow, bowing down with fruit. The years of starvation will be over."

When the king awoke, he told the people to honor Khnum by giving him a portion of each year's harvest. The "high Niles" returned, and the years of hunger ended.

► *In this scene at Aswan in south Egypt, the fertile riverbank contrasts sharply with the barren desert.*





# The Geography of the Nile

Egypt is on the northeastern coast of Africa. Look at the map below, and locate Egypt on the globe in the inset. Now find the Nile River on the large map.

The Nile is Egypt's lifeline. Without it, the land would be mostly desert. It is the longest river in the world, traveling over 4,000 miles from its source in the lakes and marshes of central Africa to its outlet in the Mediterranean Sea.

At six places along the Nile's winding course, stone cliffs and boulders force its waters through narrow channels. The rushing water forms waterfalls and rapids called **cataracts**. The first cataract marked the southern boundary of ancient Egypt. Find it on the map.

From the first cataract, the Nile flows north for about 600 miles. For most of this journey, it flows as a single river. But just south of what is today Cairo (*KY roh*), it divides into many small channels and streams. This triangle of marshy wetlands is called the **delta**.

## Droughts and Floods

From the air much of the Nile looks like a brown snake wriggling north across a vast desert. Its narrow banks are green with crops and palms. Abruptly they turn into desert—red stones and hot sands. The people who lived there 4,000 years ago called their fertile, dark-soiled valley the Black Land. The desert was the Red Land.

Egypt gets almost no rain. The deserts on the east and west are

parts of the Sahara, the desert that covers much of northern Africa.

Desert on two sides, mountains on the south, and the Mediterranean Sea on the north—all of these natural barriers isolated ancient Egypt and thus protected it from invaders.

In this desert land, Egyptians depended on the Nile for water and for life. The amount of water the Nile carried on its journey to

▶ The Egyptians used stone nilometers like this one to measure the yearly flood level of the Nile.

▼ Some have compared the shape of Egypt with that of a lotus flower. Can you see the flower's blossom and stem?



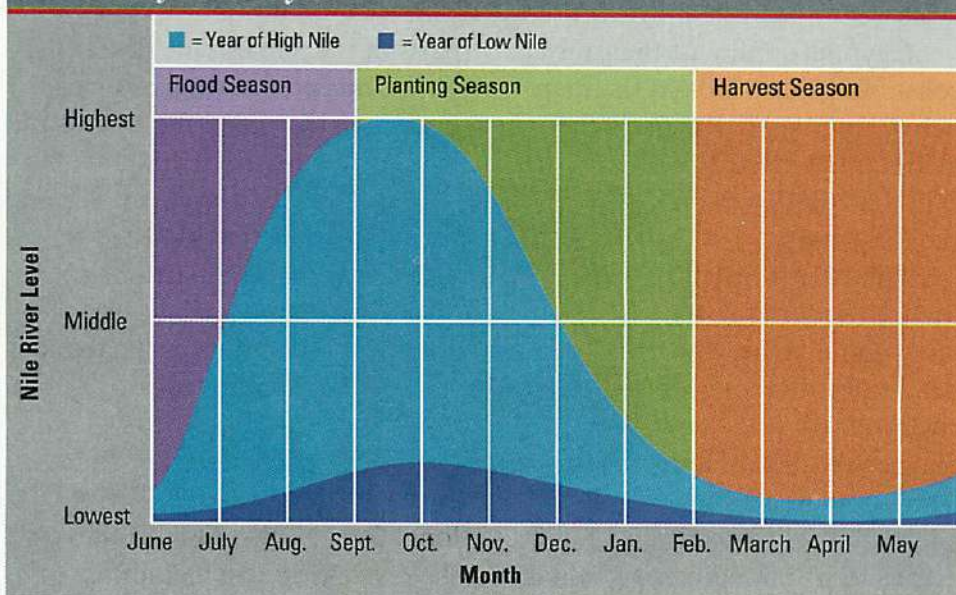
## Ancient Egypt





➤ Which months made up each of Egypt's three seasons? How did the years of "high Niles" differ from the years of "low Niles"? What might you be doing now if you were a farmer in ancient Egypt?

## Nile Valley Flood Cycle



the Mediterranean varied from season to season. When rains fell in central Africa and snows began to melt in the mountains of east Africa, the water level of the river rose. As the river reached Egypt, it overflowed its banks. Farmers depended on the annual flooding to water their crops.

The floods of Egypt were more predictable than those of Mesopotamia. Farmers each year knew when the Nile would rise, and they planned ahead. The Egyptians measured time by the river, dividing the year into three seasons. Study the chart above.

What was the season for planting? What was the season for harvesting? This seasonal cycle of flooding, planting, and harvesting gave a pattern to Egyptian life.

### The River's Gifts

About 2,500 years ago, Herodotus (*hih RAHD uh tuhs*), a Greek visitor to ancient

Egypt, called this land the "gift of the Nile." The Egyptians sang special hymns of praise to the river. The example below was first written down during the period known as the New Kingdom (from about 1570 to 1070 B.C.):

*H*ail to thee O Nile that issues from the earth and comes to keep Egypt alive! . . . He that waters the meadows which Ra created.

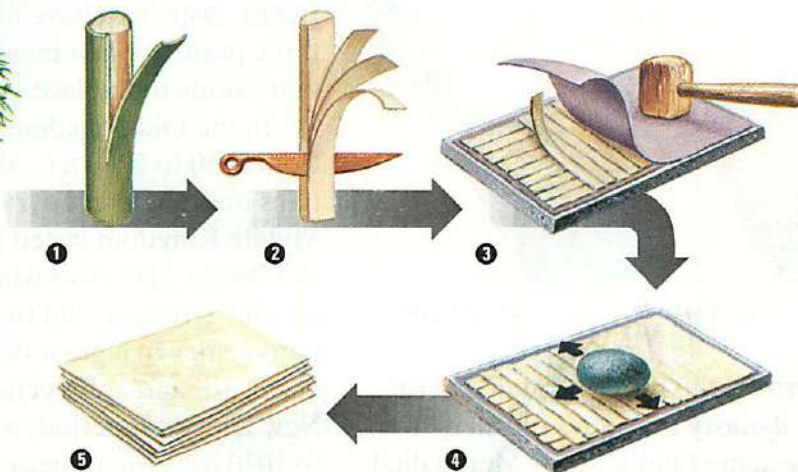
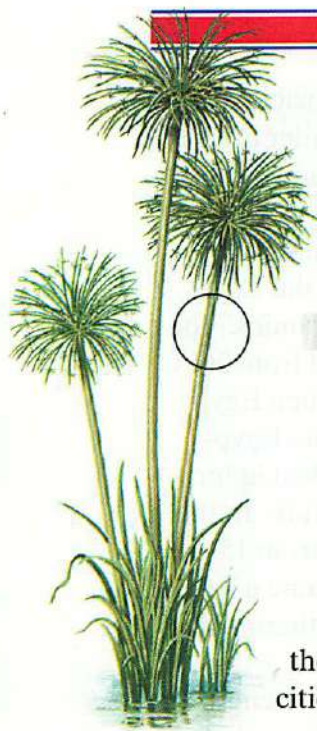
*Hymn to the Nile, from papyrus documents, 1350-1100 B.C.*

To take advantage of the annual flooding of the Nile, the people built irrigation channels to carry water into the fields. They also built dams to hold back the water for use during droughts. What they did may sound familiar to you. In some ways it was the same thing the Sumerians did. But the floods came at predictable times in Egypt, and farming was easier. The Egyptians needed less cooperation than the Sumerians to get the work done. As a result,

➤ Notice the fine carving and bright coloring in this small wooden statue of a woman who is carrying an offering.







they did not develop cities until much later.

Besides water, another gift of the Nile was the thick, black mud left behind in the flooding. This dark mud enriched the soil and made the farmland extremely productive.

The Nile gave other gifts as well. Fish, ducks, geese, and other edible water birds made their homes in the marshlands of the delta. **Papyrus** (*puh PY ruhs*), a

long, thin reed, grew wild along the riverbanks. The Egyptians harvested papyrus and made baskets, boats, sandals, and a lightweight writing material. Our word *paper* comes from the word *papyrus*.

The Egyptians used the gifts of the Nile wisely. Here in this land of contrasts—fertile riverbanks and barren deserts, floods and droughts, Black Land and Red Land—they managed to build a remarkable civilization. ■

◀ (1) Paper makers cut the stem of the papyrus and removed the inner pith. (2) They cut the pith into strips, (3) put one layer across another, and beat the layers into a single sheet. (4) They polished the sheet with a stone, and (5) finally, they trimmed the edges.

■ Explain how water, mud, plants, and animals were all “gifts of the Nile” to the Egyptians.

## The Union of Two Lands

Ancient Egypt had two parts, Upper Egypt and Lower Egypt. Upper Egypt, the southern part, stretched for over 500 miles from the first cataract northward to the beginning of the Nile Delta. Lower Egypt, the northern part, was the Nile Delta. It was only 100 miles long but many times wider than Upper Egypt.

### Red and White Crowns

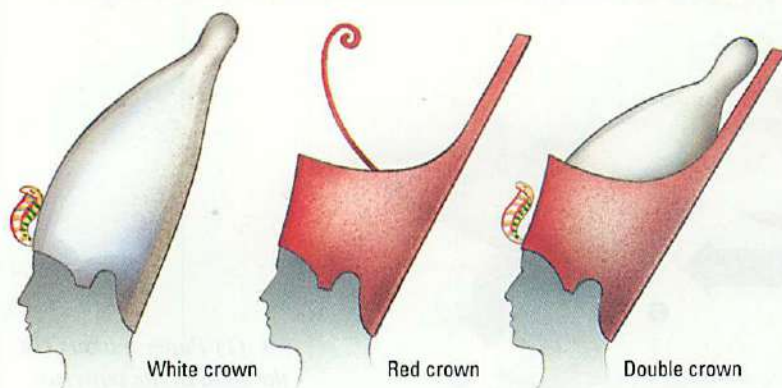
By about 3300 B.C., both Upper Egypt and Lower Egypt had kings. The king of Upper Egypt wore a tall, white, pear-shaped crown. The king of Lower Egypt wore a short,

boxy, red crown with a tall spike at the back and a curlicue at the front.

Much of our knowledge of prehistoric Egypt is mixed with legend. One famous legend tells about Menes (*MEE neez*), a king of Upper Egypt. Around 3100 B.C., Menes defeated the king of Lower Egypt, united the two lands, and named himself King of both Upper and Lower Egypt.

The legend goes on to tell how Menes designed a new crown to celebrate his victory. This double crown stood for the union of the two lands. Menes and his family





▲ The white crown of the king of Upper Egypt was placed inside the red crown of the king of Lower Egypt, forming the double red and white crown that symbolized the union of the two lands.

► The slate palette of Narmer is from around 2950 B.C. King Narmer, who is wearing the white crown, is striking a kneeling prisoner.

■ What were some important early accomplishments of the Egyptians?

formed the first Egyptian dynasty. A **dynasty** is a series of rulers from the same family. After Menes died, his son became king, and later his grandson. Throughout its history, 30 different dynasties ruled ancient Egypt.

Menes chose the city of Memphis as his capital. Find Memphis on the map on page 187. How do you think the city's location helped the king keep firm control of both parts of his newly united kingdom?

Historians believe that the “Menes” of this legend may have been a real king, possibly Narmer. They also believe it wasn't that king who first wore the red and white crown, but a later one.

### Three Kingdoms

History for ancient Egypt began around 3000 B.C., with the invention of hieroglyphic writing.



Within the history of ancient Egypt, historians have identified three periods when many important events took place.

In the Old Kingdom period, from 2750 to 2260 B.C., the Egyptians built the great pyramids. The Middle Kingdom lasted from 2061 to 1784 B.C. This was when Egypt became stronger, and the Egyptians achieved a great deal in literature, art, and architecture. In the New Kingdom period, from 1570 to 1070 B.C., Egypt became a world power by conquering other nations and building an empire.

Between periods of strength and discovery, weak kings ruled, or foreigners gained control of Egypt. These in-between periods were times of great confusion and disorder in Egyptian society.

In the 1,000 years before the Old Kingdom began, the Egyptian people accomplished many things. They learned to irrigate their fields. They learned to farm. They formed governments, with kings as rulers. They invented hieroglyphic writing. Finally, the Egyptians created the belief systems and customs that made Egyptian life unique. These early achievements formed the basis of ancient Egyptian society. ■

## R E V I E W

1. **FOCUS** What did the ancient Egyptians accomplish because of the “gifts of the Nile”?
2. **CONNECT** Compare and contrast the conditions for farmers in Mesopotamia and Egypt.
3. **GEOGRAPHY** Explain how the geography of Egypt affected its early development as a civilization.
4. **CRITICAL THINKING** The ancient Egyptians valued a

quiet, orderly life. They did not want things to change. How might these preferences help to explain why the story of Menes was important to them?

5. **WRITING ACTIVITY** Imagine you are a travel writer who has just visited ancient Egypt by time machine. Write an article called “Egypt: A Land of Contrasts.”



## LESSON 2

# Life in Ancient Egypt

**T**he photo below might surprise you if you have seen pictures of Egyptian pyramids. This pyramid is different. It is called the Step Pyramid, and the name fits. To find out more about this unusual structure, we will revisit King Zoser.

Sometime in the middle of the 2600s B.C., the king began to plan for his burial. He called on Imhotep, his chief advisor and also a fine architect, to design his tomb. Until then, a royal tomb was a flat-topped, mud-brick structure built over a burial chamber that lay deep under the ground. Imhotep designed a grander, more permanent tomb for the king, and he did not build it of mud brick, but of stone.

No one knows whether Imhotep planned the design in advance

or thought of it as the work went along. At any rate, his builders put one flat-topped structure on top of another. They made each level a few feet smaller than the one below it.

When Imhotep's pyramid was finished, a chamber for the king's body lay about 80 feet under the ground. A mile-long, 133-foot-high stone wall surrounded the tomb. The wall had 14 doors, only one of which actually opened.

Architects of later periods built on Imhotep's ideas to design and construct pyramids that were even grander. King Zoser had started an age of pyramid building that would last for more than a thousand years. Pyramid building reached its height during the Old Kingdom period. More than 80 pyramids have survived as reminders of that distant age.

### THINKING

### FOCUS

*Describe the religious ideas and the social structure of the ancient Egyptians.*

### Key Terms

- afterlife
- embalm
- mummy
- hieroglyphics



◀ Zoser's Step Pyramid, the first large-scale stone structure in the world, was built in the mid-2600s B.C. on a plateau overlooking the ancient city of Memphis.



## The Egyptian Religion

► The Egyptians' love for animals can be seen in their portrayal of gods with animal heads, their animal sculptures, and animal mummies like this one of a cat.



King Zoser's pyramid was undoubtedly more than just a new idea in architecture. It showed the religious beliefs of the Egyptian people. Early Egyptian literature pictured the king climbing up to heaven on a stairway formed by the rays of the sun. People may have thought of that stairway when they looked at the Step Pyramid. The shape of the later pyramids might have seemed like the slope of the sun's rays. In that way, the later pyramids, too, might have pictured a king's passage to heaven.

### Preparing for the Afterlife

The Egyptians believed in an **afterlife**, a life that would continue after death. Their belief was so strong and important to the people that great preparation was made for death and burial. Pyramid building was just one part of this preparation.

Another part was the preparation of the body itself. Before an Egyptian's body could be placed in a pyramid or other tomb, it had to be prepared for the afterlife.

The Egyptians believed that without a body, a person's spirit couldn't eat, drink, dance, or enjoy the other pleasures that the afterlife would offer. If the body decayed, the spirit would die too. So the Egyptians developed a process called **embalming**, treating the body to protect it from decay. Embalming changed the body into a **mummy**. To learn more about this process, see A Closer Look on pages 194 and 195.

Once the mummy had been prepared, it was placed in the tomb along with items for use in the afterlife. These items ranged from food and drink to gold and jewelry. They included many objects that were useful in daily life, such as clothes, games, and hand mirrors. Some tombs even held mummies of cats, dogs, horses, and apes or contained small carved statues of servants. Tomb walls were **painted** with scenes from the everyday life of the dead person. See the example on pages 204 and 205.

Most of these objects and paintings were found in the tombs of royal or wealthy families. But even many of the less privileged were buried with some of their favorite possessions.

According to Egyptian belief, the objects and paintings in the tomb would help to ensure that the person would continue to enjoy the good things of this life. The Egyptians loved life in this world. Because they believed the afterlife would be much like this life, they wanted to be buried with the things they would need.

After a mummy was placed in its tomb, priests recited prayers or

▼ The sky god Horus, depicted with the head of a hawk, was closely connected with the king. In fact, the Egyptians saw their king as Horus on earth. Here Horus is shown standing in his sun boat. With him is an ibis, a sacred bird of ancient Egypt.





chanted magic spells. They called on the gods to help the person make the trip from this world to the next. The following words appear on the tomb of an Old Kingdom ruler named Pepi: "Gates of sky, open for Pepi, Gates of heaven, open for Pepi, Pepi comes to you, make him live!"

### The Book of the Dead

Hymns, prayers, and magic spells from the tombs are found in the Egyptian *Book of the Dead*. One part describes a trial in which the soul of a dead person argues its case before a jury of the gods. "In life, I fed the hungry," says the soul. "I respected my parents."

The soul also tells what it did not do. "I never stole." The gods then weigh the heart of the dead person against the feather of truth. The Egyptians believed the heart was the center of intelligence and memory. If the soul was too heavy with sin, they believed, it died a second death from which there was no returning. But the soul that passed the test would go on to a happy afterlife. Such a judgment scene is shown in the picture above.

### The Gods of the Egyptians

The religion of ancient Egypt, like that of Mesopotamia, was a form of polytheism, belief in a number of gods. Some of these gods were, of course, linked with death and the afterlife. Osiris (*oh SY ruhs*) was chief god of the underworld, or home of the dead. One helper

of Osiris was Anubis (*uh NOO buhs*), who had the body of a human and the head of a jackal. His job was to prepare the bodies of the dead for the afterlife.

Like the Mesopotamians, the Egyptians had great gods that they believed created and ruled the world. One of these was Ra (*rah*), the sun god, who was later joined with another great god, Amon (*AH muhn*), to become Amon-Ra.

Some Egyptian gods, like Anubis, had the body of a human and the head of an animal. Hathor (*HAH thawr*), the goddess of love, had the head of a cow. Horus, the sky god, had the head of a hawk.

Each Egyptian village or city had its own local god. There were also gods of music and dancing, of love and beauty, and of healing and learning. Ordinary Egyptians built small shrines at home and dedicated them to their favorite gods. Especially popular was a dwarf like god named Bes, the god of the family. ■



▲ This picture, painted on papyrus around 1250 B.C., shows the jackal-headed god Anubis weighing the heart of a dead person named Ani against the feather of truth.



◀ At one time Amon was a minor god, but he became the most powerful of all the Egyptian gods. This small gold statue shows Amon with a curved sword in his right hand and a key, the symbol of life, in his left hand.

■ What religious beliefs account for the pyramids and mummies of ancient Egypt?

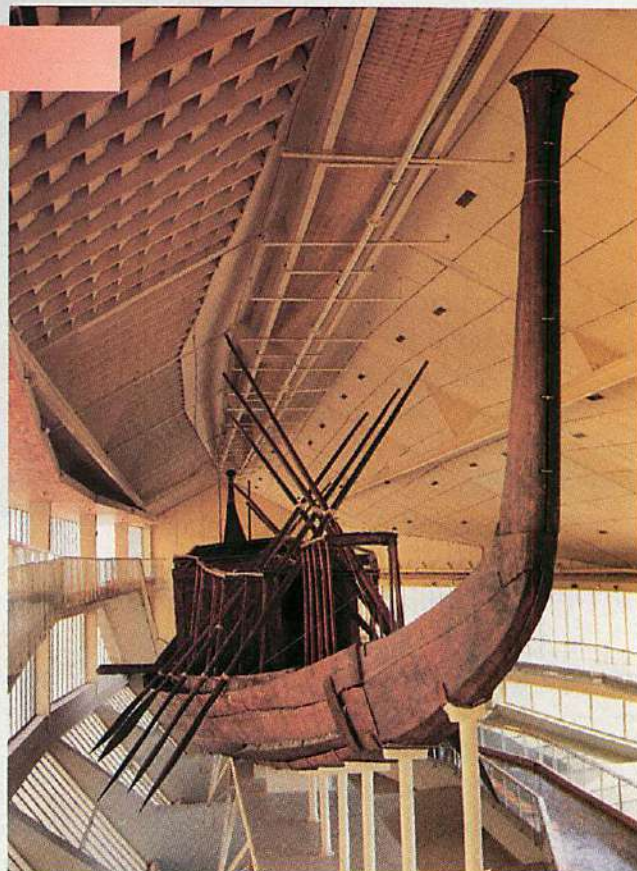


# Egyptian Burial

*Preparing for the afterlife was like packing for a long trip. Every step in the process, from preparing the body to protecting the tomb against robbers, had to be done just right.*

### This huge boat was buried

near the Great Pyramid of Khufu, a king of the Old Kingdom. Was it used at his funeral, or was it for his use in his afterlife? No one knows for sure. Perhaps it symbolizes the soul's journey after death.

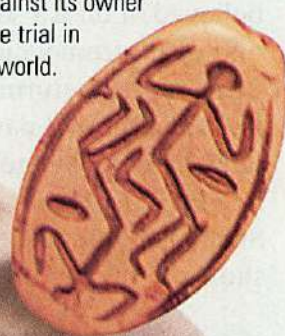


### To get the body ready,

embalmers removed all the internal organs except the heart and put them inside jars like this. Then they covered the body for about 40 days with natron, a kind of salt, which dried it out.



**Magic amulets** were tucked into the wrappings next to the body. A scarab over the heart, for instance, would make sure the heart could not speak against its owner during the trial in the afterworld.



**Embalmers sealed** the dried corpse in a coat of hot, liquid tree sap. Then they washed and oiled the mummy. Finally, they wrapped it in up to 400 yards of linen strips.





**Once the body was placed** in the burial room of the pyramid, the workers needed to seal the tomb. As they left, the workers let huge stones crash into place and block the main passageway. To fool robbers, some Egyptian royal tombs had traps and false stairs that led nowhere.

Air shafts allow workers to breathe and the king's soul to fly to heaven

The king's burial room

Stones seal the passageway

Workers' escape corridor

**Craftsmen made coffins look like humans** and wrote spells and prayers of protection outside and inside. The face of the coffin was often a portrait of the dead person.





## UNDERSTANDING THE IDEA OF AN AFTERLIFE

**T**o us, the ancient Egyptians sometimes seem more interested in death than life. We marvel at the time, energy, and other resources they put into making pyramids and mummies. Yet we know that their love of life caused them to do these things. They thought an afterlife would be like this one, only better.

In every time and place, people have asked, "Is there life beyond this life?" and if so, "What kind of life is it?" These questions ask about the afterlife—life that continues after death.

## A Place of Darkness

The Mesopotamians painted a gloomy picture of the afterlife. For them, the world of the dead was under the earth. One of their stories called it a place “where they see no light and live in darkness.” The hero-king Gilgamesh tried but failed to gain a happy afterlife. Eternal life was reserved for the gods.

## A Happy Afterlife

People's ideas about an afterlife are tied to their ideas about God or the gods. In our own twentieth-

## A Writing System

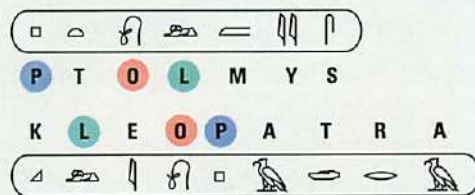


▲ *The Rosetta Stone provided the key that unlocked hieroglyphics.*

Then, in 1799, French soldiers near Rosetta, a village in the Nile Delta, unearthed a black stone slab. They found that on it the same passage was written in three ways: in Greek, in Egyptian hieroglyphs, and in a cursive form of Egyptian.

For 20 years, scholars tried in vain to decode the hieroglyphic

writing on the Rosetta Stone. Then a brilliant Frenchman named Jean Champollion found the key. Champollion knew that part of the message was the same in all three cases. It praised the pharaoh Ptolemy V for gifts he had given the temples. One day in 1822, Champollion was comparing the hieroglyphs with the Greek words. He identified and compared the proper names *Ptolemy* and *Cleopatra*. He matched the sounds with the hieroglyphs as follows:





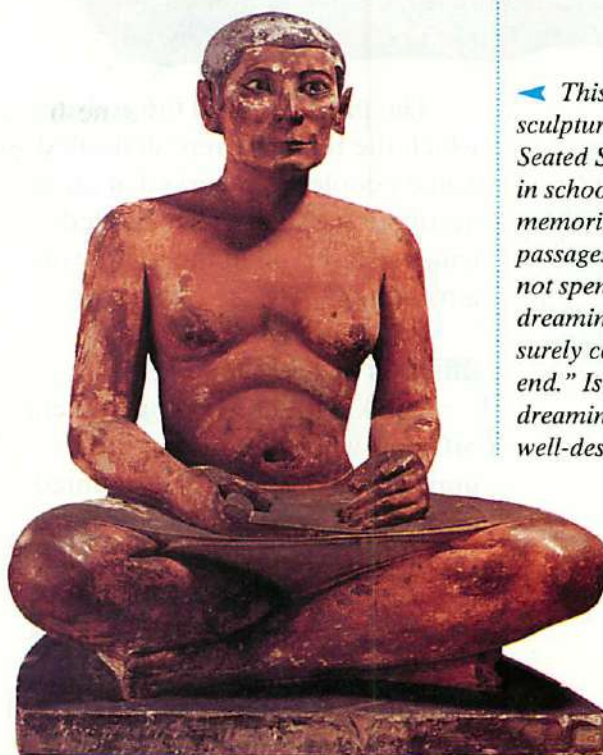
Now Champollion was able to decode the Rosetta Stone. Later, he went on to publish a dictionary of ancient Egyptian.

Fortunately, the Egyptians left us many written texts. Once scholars could decode hieroglyphic writing, they could read laws, songs, tales, jokes, magic spells, and business contracts. From these texts and others, scholars have learned about Egypt's past.

The hieroglyphic system was complex. It was made up of over 700 different signs that a person had to memorize in order to master it. Young people who wanted to be scribes spent years attending special schools. Their school day was long, sometimes lasting from just after sunrise until sunset. Teachers expected their students to pay attention, and punishments could be harsh. One father sent the following words of advice to his son, who was learning to be a scribe: "Learn to write, for this will be of greater advantage to you than all the trades. One day at school is useful to you and the work done there will last forever, like mountains."

Few Egyptian students, studying hard and copying the same lines over and over, would have found these words encouraging. However, those who completed the training would be well rewarded. Only a few people learned to read and write. As experts with special skills, they would have a good job and a respected place in society. ■

■ *Compare and contrast the writing systems of the Egyptians and the Mesopotamians.*



◀ *This Old Kingdom sculpture is called "The Seated Scribe." Students in schools for scribes memorized and copied passages like this: "Do not spend time in day-dreaming or you will surely come to a bad end." Is this scribe day-dreaming or taking a well-deserved break?*

## A Social Pyramid

Scribes and farmers, potters and brick makers—all Egyptians had a place in the social class system of ancient Egypt. A diagram of Egyptian society might look something like a pyramid.

### Kings and Priests

At the top of the social pyramid was the king. Remember that the Mesopotamians believed that their kings ruled on behalf of the gods. The Egyptians considered

their kings even more powerful. They believed that their kings *were* gods.

The Egyptian king was extremely powerful. He owned all the land and had complete control over all of his people. Every worker, from farmer to artist, served the king, directly or through royal officials. The members of the royal family and the nobility ranked just below the king on the social pyramid.





They assisted the tax collectors in making careful records of what everyone owed and how they paid their taxes.

### Artisans and Farmers

Below scribes on the social pyramid were the artisans and other skilled workers. These included carpenters, painters, jewelers, brick makers, and stone-masons. Many of these skilled workers provided goods for the king and his family. For example, they might create furniture, make jewelry, weave fine cloth, and paint pictures inside the royal tombs. The king paid them in food, such as bread, beer, and milk.

Farmers formed the large base of the Egyptian social pyramid. Most Egyptians were farmers, and they spent their lives growing and marketing the products they raised on their farms. In this way, they supported all the other levels of Egyptian society.

But the farmers didn't provide food only. During the flood season, they could not work in the fields. They were required to work on royal building projects. These included the irrigation works, the pyramids, and later the temples. The great stone monuments that the farmers helped to build have outlasted both kings and commoners. ■

▲ This fine painted woodcarving of a plowing scene was found in a Middle Kingdom tomb of around 2000 B.C. Why do you think it was put in the tomb? Where would these farmers have been on the social pyramid?

The priests served the gods to which the temples were dedicated. Some people who worked at other occupations, such as law or medicine, also served in the temple on a rotating basis.

### Officials and Scribes

The king relied on government officials, who were also in the upper level of society. He counted on them to assist him in governing the country. Many were tax collectors. Some were responsible for the royal storehouses. When crops were poor, officials distributed grain to the people.

The scribes, another group of officials, held a privileged position. They were Egypt's writers and record keepers. Scribes might work at the king's palace, travel with high officials, or serve as public letter writers or record keepers.

■ What were the occupations of people at the top, middle, and bottom of the Egyptian social pyramid?

## R E V I E W

1. **FOCUS** Describe the religious ideas and the social structure of the ancient Egyptians.
2. **CONNECT** Compare and contrast the Egyptians' beliefs about their kings and their gods with the beliefs of the Mesopotamians.
3. **ECONOMICS** What was the importance of farming to the economy of ancient Egypt?
4. **CRITICAL THINKING** Give reasons for and against a young Egyptian's decision to become a scribe.
5. **ACTIVITY** Work with a group of three or four classmates, and make a pyramid diagram to illustrate the social structure of ancient Egypt. Draw pictures of people with different occupations and place them on your pyramid.

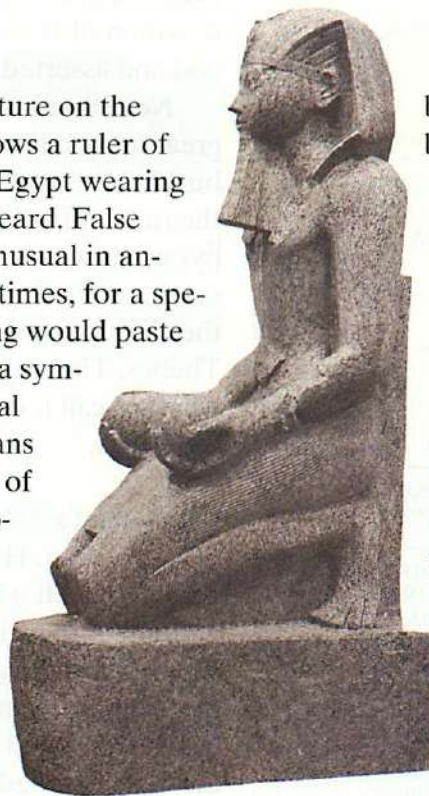


## LESSON 3

# The New Kingdom

**T**he sculpture on the right shows a ruler of ancient Egypt wearing a false beard. False beards were not unusual in ancient Egypt. Sometimes, for a special occasion, a king would paste one on his chin as a symbol, or sign, of royal authority. Americans had the same kind of custom when Colonial judges wore long white wigs, also as symbols of authority.

Look again at the sculpture in the picture. What you see is something more unusual than just a false



beard. It's a false beard pasted on the face of a woman. The woman is Hatshepsut (*hat SHEHP soot*), a ruler of ancient Egypt. Hatshepsut was the daughter of one king and the wife of another, but she is best remembered as a ruler in her own right.

But it seems that some Egyptian scribes became confused. In telling the story of their woman ruler,

they called her "his majesty herself."

### THINKING FOCUS

*What were the achievements of the Egyptians during the New Kingdom period?*

### Key Terms

- pharaoh
- obelisk

◀ *Hatshepsut's beard, a sign of her kingship, does not hide the beauty of the pharaoh. In this sculpture from her temple, Hatshepsut is presenting an offering to the god Amon.*

## New Kingdom Rulers

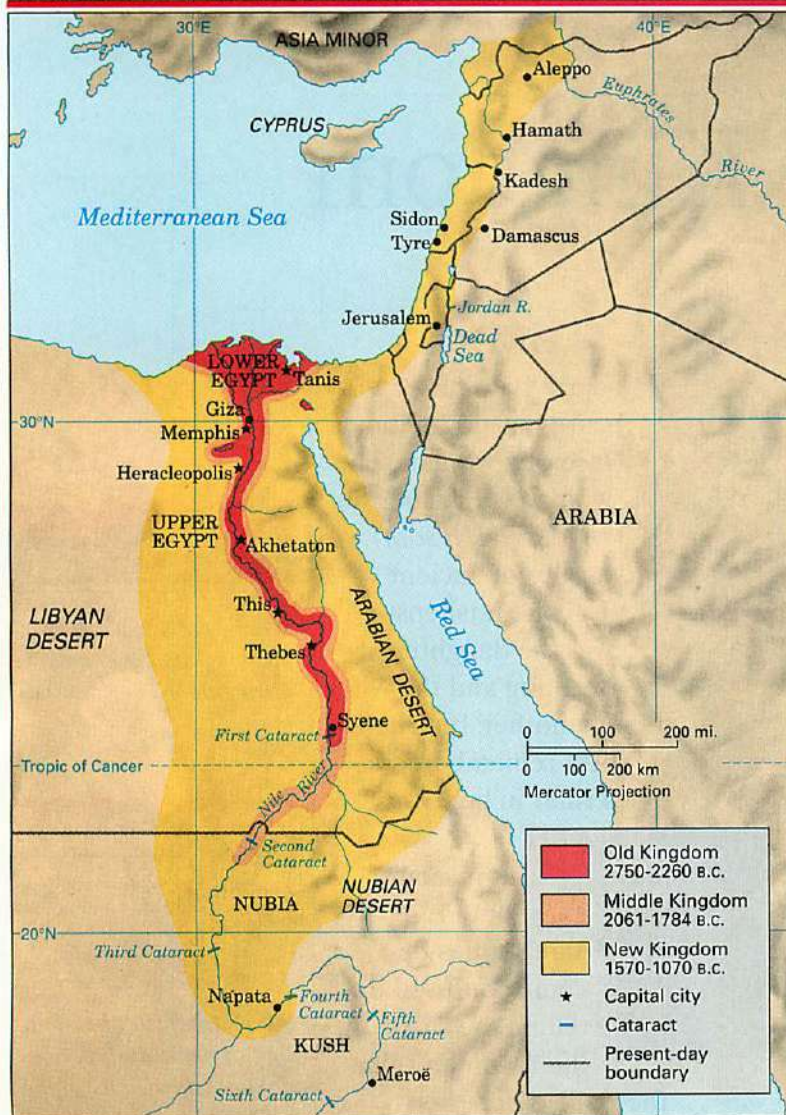
The New Kingdom period lasted around 500 years, from about 1570 to 1070 B.C. During that time, Egyptians began to call their kings pharaohs. The term **pharaoh** meant "great house." Earlier, during the Old Kingdom, the term referred to the royal palace. However, the Egyptians later used it to refer to the king himself. The word was used as a sign of respect. Today Hatshepsut, too, is often called an Egyptian pharaoh.

She was the daughter of the pharaoh Thutmose I (*thoot MOH suh*). After his death, his son, Thutmose II, became pharaoh. Hatshepsut, the new king's half-sister, became queen.

But Thutmose II lived only about seven more years. In ancient Egypt, the oldest male in line for the throne usually became the next ruler. Thutmose III, Hatshepsut's nephew, was next in line. But he was about 10 years old, too young



## Egyptian Expansion



▲ Notice the extent of ancient Egypt during the three periods of its greatness.

to govern Egypt. Hatshepsut took over the government in his place. The Egyptian people probably expected her to rule only until young Thutmose III was old enough to take over his royal duties.

### Hatshepsut's Reign

But Hatshepsut had other ideas. This bold queen seized power for herself and became the new pharaoh. She ruled Egypt for about 20 years, and she turned out to be a shrewd and skillful ruler.

Like earlier Egyptian rulers, Hatshepsut wanted to make sure

she would be remembered for all time. She ordered a great temple to be built along the banks of the Nile. She also had two enormous granite pillars called **obelisks** placed at the temple of the sun god Amon-Ra at Karnak. Stonecutters carved words on the four sides of each obelisk. They proclaimed the devotion of Hatshepsut to the sun god and asserted her right to rule.

Note that Hatshepsut built a great temple and erected obelisks, but she did not build a pyramid. By the time of the New Kingdom, pyramids were no longer built. Instead, rulers dug secret tombs in the cliffs west of their capital, Thebes. There they were buried in what we call today the Valley of the Kings.

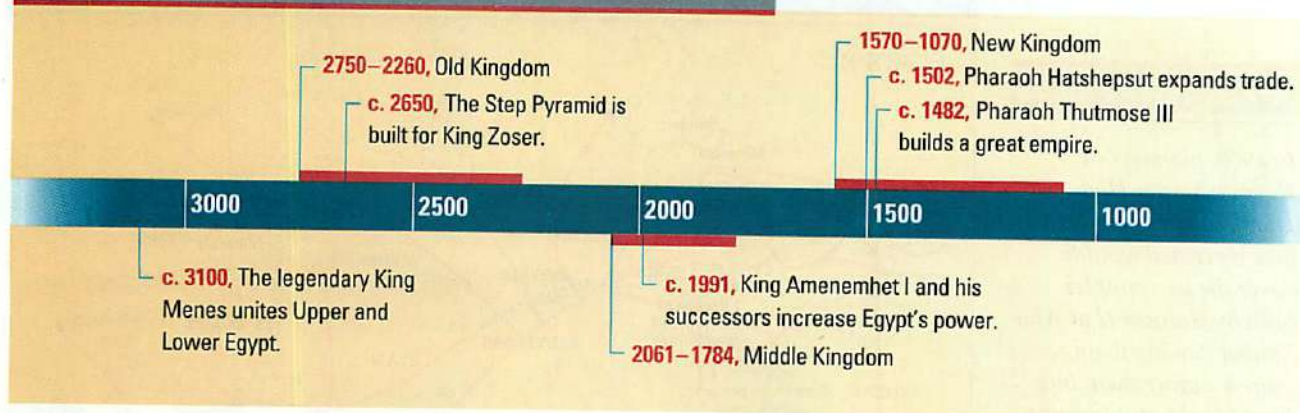
### Hatshepsut's Achievements

As a ruler, Hatshepsut concerned herself with improving life at home rather than expanding Egypt's borders and building a great empire. One example is a trade expedition she sent to Punt, an African kingdom that may have been in present-day Somalia or Ethiopia. Its exact location is unknown. Relief pictures on the walls of her temple portray five large sailing ships carrying Egyptian products. The artist also portrayed the people and houses of Punt, providing us with the oldest pictures we have of tribal life in Africa. The expedition returned to Egypt with many items, including gold, ivory, leopard skins, ostrich feathers, incense, rare woods, greyhounds, and monkeys.

Hatshepsut was responsible for a number of public projects. She restored old temples that had been destroyed during foreign invasions



## Ancient Egypt, 3100–1070 B.C.



of an earlier era, the time between the Middle and New Kingdoms. She also sent workers to mine the deserts for ores, a practice that those earlier invasions had interrupted. Under Hatshepsut's rule, Egypt enjoyed a time of renewed peace and prosperity.

### Later Pharaohs

After Hatshepsut died, her nephew Thutmose III took the power she had denied him. Now at last he had the chance to govern, and he became a successful military leader, one of Egypt's mightiest pharaohs.

In a period of 20 years, Thutmose led 16 military raids into the Middle East, conquering Syria and Palestine. Fear of him, and of the Egyptian army, maintained Egypt's southern border at the fourth cataract of the Nile. Find the fourth cataract on the map on page 200. Notice the extent of Thutmose's empire, stretching from

modern Sudan to the Euphrates River.

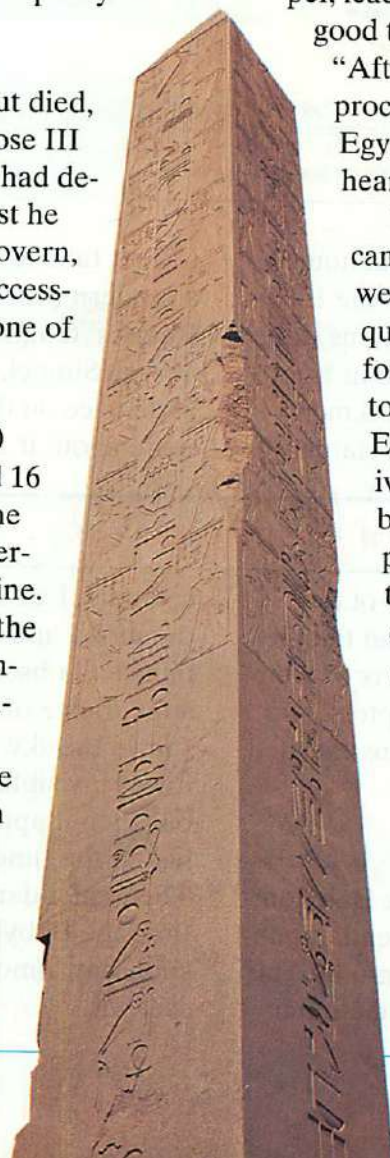
Scribes recorded Thutmose's campaigns in detail. In his fifth campaign, for example, a list of items taken from two ships that were seized includes slaves, copper, lead, wheat, and "every good thing." The scribe adds, "Afterwards his majesty proceeded southward to Egypt . . . with joy of heart."

Victories like the fifth campaign brought great wealth to Egypt. Conquered nations were forced to send yearly gifts to prove their loyalty to Egypt's rulers. Gold, ivory, and ebony, a beautiful dark wood, poured into Egypt's treasuries. Even rulers of unconquered states such as Babylonia and Assyria sent gifts to show their friendship with one of the Mediterranean's most powerful kingdoms.

Later rulers continued to enlarge Egypt's empire abroad and build

▲ During the Old, Middle, and New Kingdom periods, a number of strong and effective rulers were in power. Later, as you read more about ancient Egypt, you can add other great rulers to this timeline.

◀ The obelisk of Hatshepsut, erected in the temple of the god Amon-Ra, was carved from Aswan granite. The shaft is 97 feet tall. Its pyramid-shaped top was once covered with precious metal to reflect the sun's rays.





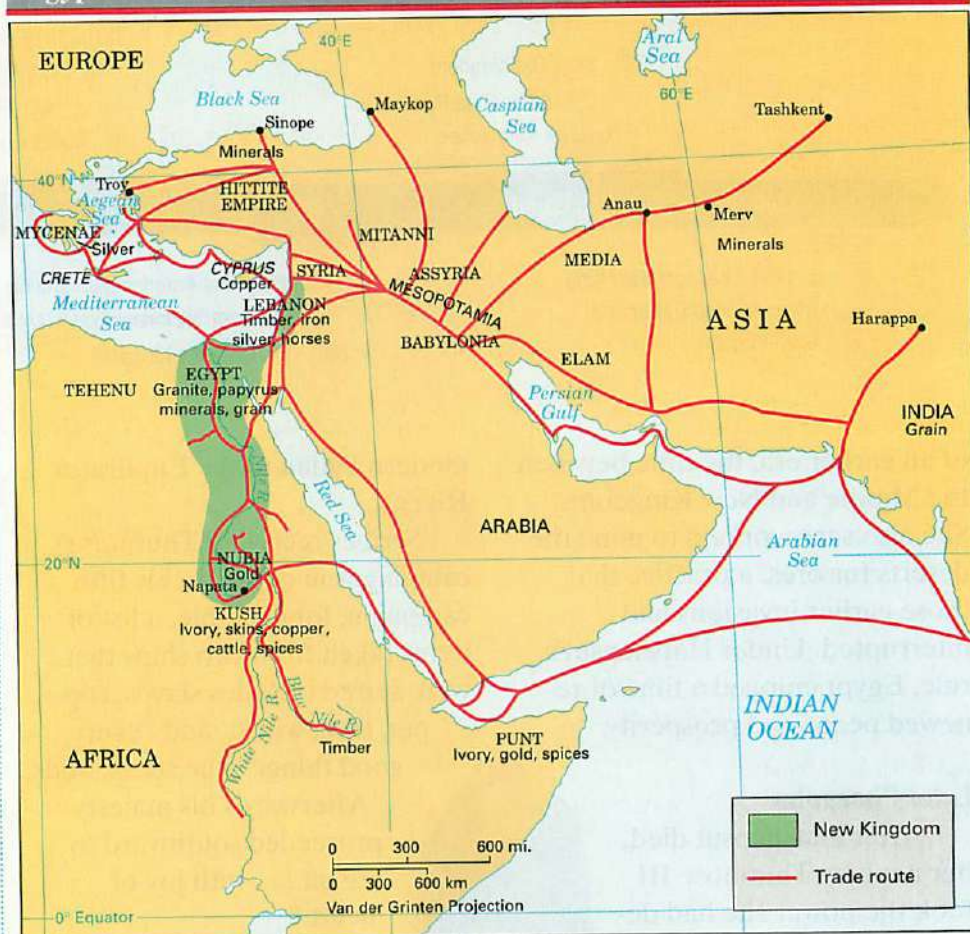
## Across Time & Space

In 1960, planners of Egypt's Aswan High Dam realized that the lake it created would cover the two temples built by Ramses II at Abu Simbel. Saving them required cutting them into huge blocks and hoisting them by machine to higher ground. There they were rebuilt to look as much as possible as they had before.

► How far did Egypt's trade routes extend during the New Kingdom? What products did Egypt give and receive in trade with other nations?

■ Compare and contrast the two strong rulers Hatshepsut and Thutmose III.

## Egyptian Trade Routes



impressive monuments at home. Ramses II, who ruled in the 1200s B.C., ordered four enormous stone statues of himself placed in front of the temple he had workmen build in his honor. Each statue was

67 feet tall, about the height of a modern four-story building. Ramses' temple can be seen today at Abu Simbel. Read Across Time and Space on this page to find out more about it. ■

## Achievements of the Egyptians

The Egyptian rulers of the New Kingdom built great temples that are lasting reminders of their skills as architects, sculptors, and engineers. The Egyptians excelled in other areas as well.

### A Better Calendar

Remember that the Babylonians created a lunar calendar, one that was based on the moon. The Egyptians also invented a lunar

calendar, but it was based on both the moon and a star. The Egyptians had observed the annual appearance of Sirius, the brightest star in the sky. They noticed that it was invisible for several months, but then it appeared each year just at the time of the flooding. Their calendar was more accurate than the Babylonian one, corresponding almost exactly to the seasons.



## Medicine

An unknown Egyptian doctor wrote the world's oldest known scientific document in the first part of the 1500s B.C. Scholars think it may have been a handbook for army surgeons. He described 48 injuries and illnesses, their symptoms, and their treatments. Although no modern doctor would use his cures, his attention to detail and the accuracy of his observations of the human body were remarkable for that time.

In one case the writer described the treatment of “a man having a wound in his head” but not “a perforation [hole], a split, or a smash.” He advised doctors to treat this type of injury by wrapping it “with fresh meat the first day and treat afterward with grease, honey, and lint every day until he recovers.”

## The Arts

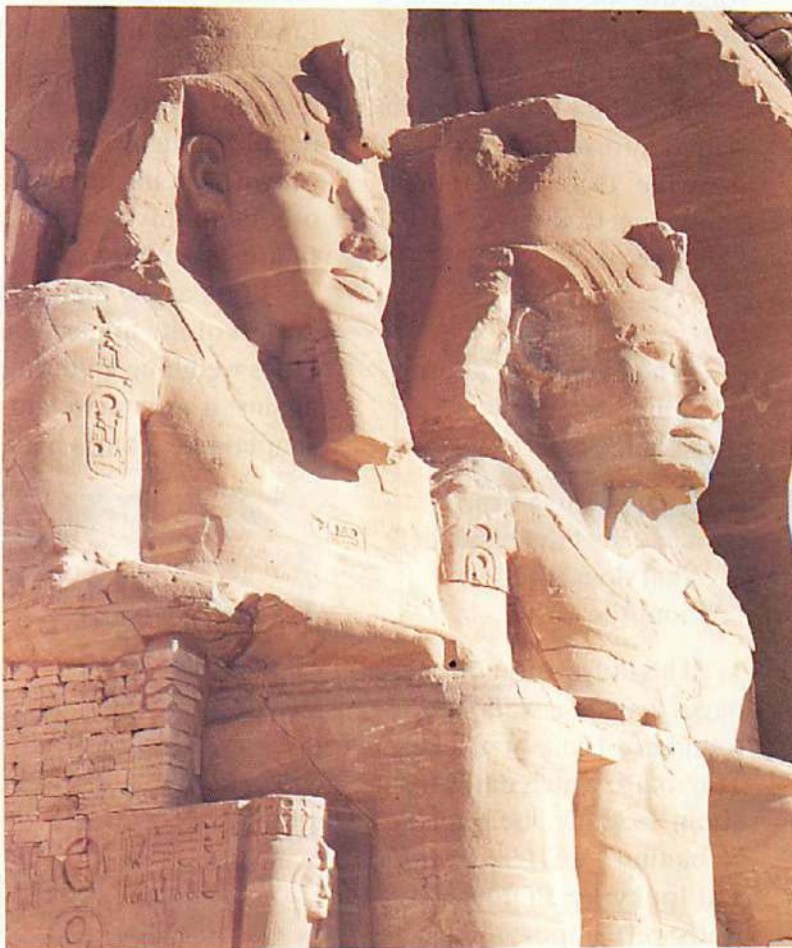
Some of the best information we have about the daily lives of the Egyptian people comes from the paintings on the inner walls of their tombs. Remember that these paintings were not meant to be interior decoration but were to provide for the afterlife of the deceased.

Unlike most modern artists, the painters and sculptors of

ancient Egypt did not seek to make a name for themselves. Instead, their works were done to serve the king, his officials, the community, and the gods. Nevertheless, the works of these artists reveal great ability and probably represent long years of apprenticeship. For us today, tomb paintings are among the finest achievements of ancient Egypt. ■

■ *What were some important achievements of the Egyptians during the New Kingdom period?*

▼ *These statues of Ramses II are part of the temple to the sun god Ra at Abu Simbel.*



## R E V I E W

1. **FOCUS** What were the achievements of the Egyptians during the New Kingdom period?
2. **CONNECT** Which Egyptian ruler was more like Sargon of Akkad in goals and achievements, Hatshepsut or Thutmose III? How?
3. **HISTORY** After the death of an Egyptian ruler, who usually ruled next? How does this custom explain why some texts call Hatshepsut a king?
4. **CRITICAL THINKING** Scholars have concluded that the Egyptians feared change and disorder. Both Hatshepsut and Thutmose III brought changes to Egypt. What changes might have worried the Egyptians?
5. **WRITING ACTIVITY** Imagine that you are Hatshepsut, and your first Egyptian trading ship has just returned from Punt. Write a diary entry describing the event and your feelings about it.



## Interpreting Egyptian Art

### Here's Why

One way to learn about the daily lives and beliefs of people of the past is to study their art. Suppose you wanted to learn more about what life was like in Thebes, the capital of Egypt at the time of the New Kingdom. Art from that time period is rich in information about daily life. But first you must know how to interpret art from the past.

### Here's How

When you look at art from the past, ask yourself these questions:

1. What was its purpose?
2. What is its main subject?
3. What does it tell you about the past?

The illustration on these pages is from a wall painting found in a tomb at Thebes. The tomb, which dates from about 1380 B.C., belonged to Nebamun (*NEHB uh muhn*) and Ipuky (*ee POO kee*). Both were important artists who worked for the king.

Now ask: What was the painting's purpose? Why was the painting created? The chapter tells you that a tomb painting's purpose was to help ensure a happy afterlife for the person buried in the tomb.

Next, what is the main subject of the painting? To

answer this question, you need to figure out who is shown in the painting and what each person is doing.

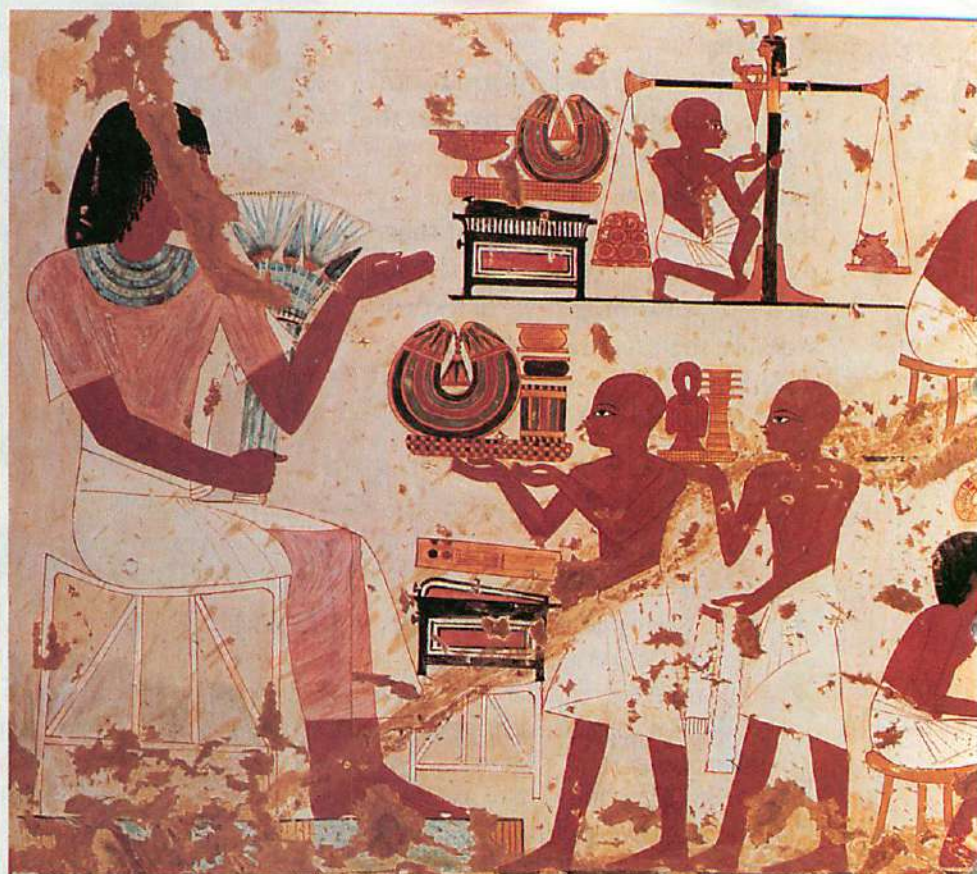
Notice that horizontal lines divide the painting into sections, called registers. Look at the large, seated figure to the left of the registers. In Egyptian paintings, people of high rank are often shown as being larger than others. In this case, the large figure is a supervisor.

Look at the man on the far left of the upper register. He is weighing gold rings against a counterweight shaped like a bull's head.

The four seated men in the upper register are all carving symbols. To the right, two craftsmen are fitting the symbols into a framework. They are building a catafalque (*KAT uh fawlk*), an ornamental structure used in funerals.

Now look at the bottom register. Here you see six artisans at work. To their left, two men show finished objects to the supervisor.

Now do you know what the painting is about? If you guessed that it shows a royal workshop of artisans, you are right. Both Nebamun and





Ipuky were supervisors in the royal workshop. The items being made were for the king's tomb.

Next, consider the third question. What does the painting tell you about the past? Most important, it shows how deeply the Egyptians believed in the afterlife. As you can see, much effort went into the crafting of items for the next life.

The painting also tells you about Egyptian customs. For example, think about how the people in the painting are dressed. Notice that the supervisor wears a large

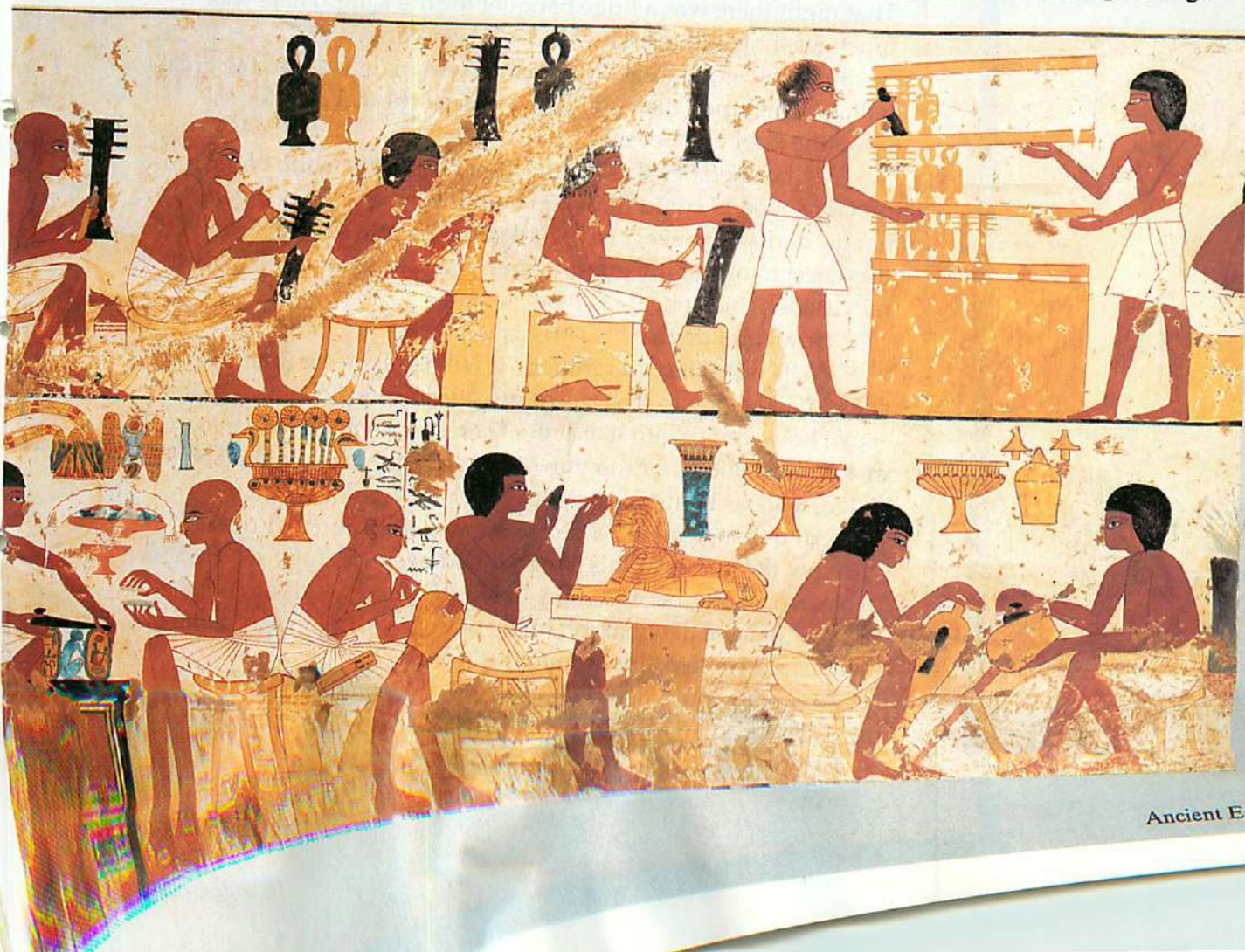
ornamental collar and a thin, full-length garment. The workers dress in simple cloths wrapped at the waist.

### Try It

Look closely at the bottom register. Try interpreting the rest of the painting by answering the following questions. What are the six seated men in the bottom register making? What kinds of tools are they using? What does this tell you about ancient Egyptian technology? What are the workers wearing? What does this say about Egypt's climate?

### Apply It

Now that you have learned some skills for interpreting wall paintings, try your hand at making a painting of your own. Working alone or in a small group, create a mural that shows some scene from your daily life. For example, you might paint a scene from the lunchroom. Or you could paint a scene of your classroom or a special area such as the library. Be sure to show a number of different activities in detail. Display your murals. Then study and interpret each other's paintings.





# Isis and Osiris

Charles Mozley

*This 5,000-year-old Egyptian myth tells the story of Isis, who became a goddess but lived as a mortal on earth, and her husband Osiris, who became a god and left earth to rule the underworld. In this excerpt from The First Book of Ancient Egypt, read how Isis and Osiris win over evil.*

**Osiris** (oh SY rihs)

*In Lesson 3 you read about some of the Egyptian gods. Now read a myth about two of the most popular gods.*

**U**nder the rule [of Osiris and Isis] Egypt prospered and all men loved them. All, that is, but a few who were under the influence of the jealous brother of Osiris, Set. Being a goddess, Isis could see the wickedness in Set's heart and she warned her husband against him. But Osiris could not believe that there was evil in his own brother.

One day, Set invited Osiris to his palace on the River Nile. That night there was a huge banquet for the King. There was much feasting and drinking and merrymaking.

Suddenly eight huge Ethiopian slaves marched into the great hall, bearing upon their shoulders a large chest. This they set upon the floor and Set said,

"My brother! See this magnificent chest. It is made of the most precious wood I could find. It is bound with gold and silver bands, and as you see, I have had gems set into the lid. I shall give this chest to one of my guests—and you, dear brother, shall help me decide which one it shall be."

"How can I do that?" Osiris asked.

"Well," said the evil brother. "It will really be simple. The chest shall belong to that one of my guests who best fits into it. He must, however, fit into it exactly. Therefore he must not be too tall or too short, too fat or too thin. And, you, my brother, shall be the judge of all, as befits your rank."

"An unusual game," Osiris commented smiling. "Proceed."

Now the guests at this banquet had been carefully selected for two reasons: one, because they hated the good Osiris and wished to make the evil Set Pharaoh in his place; two, because not one of them could comfortably fit into the chest.

After all had tried and this became evident, Osiris said, "Now what do you suggest, dear brother?"

Set had the answer ready. "Since obviously I am too short for



the chest, you are the only one left to try it—but first, let me hold your crown.”

“Of course,” replied the unsuspecting Osiris, and handing the crown over to his brother, he stepped into the chest and lay down full length. “Why,” he exclaimed, “it is a perfect fit! As if it were made for me!”

“And so it was!” shouted the traitor, Set, and with a mighty heave slammed the lid shut upon Osiris.

The Ethiopian slaves were then ordered to lock the clasps and take the chest up on their shoulders. Thus they marched out of the palace, straight to a deep part of the river, and heaved the chest into the rushing water.

So the good Osiris perished, and the chest bearing his body floated down the River Nile. Seeing it pass, the birds ceased their singing, the fish sank to the bottom of the river, and the wind, like a great sigh of sorrow, swept over the land.

Isis, playing in the royal palace with her little son, Horus, lifted up her face and listened to the wind. With a broken-hearted cry she buried her face in her hands. “Set has slain Osiris!” she wailed. “My beloved husband is dead.”

She had lived as a mortal woman for so long that in her sorrow she did not remember she was a goddess who knew the secret of life and death. All at once, however, power and knowledge came to her and she leaped to her feet. If she could but find the body of Osiris she might yet bring him back to life! But first she must put her little son, Horus, into a safe place.

Taking the child, she hastened to a distant part of the kingdom and gave him into the care of a dear friend. Then she cast a spell over the area, so none could find the boy and harm him. Having done this, Isis set out on her sad search along the River Nile.

Many people had seen the mysterious chest float down the river, but none knew where it had gone. At long last some children told Isis that they had found the chest, cast up by the waves into a bush near the shore.

“And then,” the children cried, “the bush grew into a great tree, all around the chest!”

“Yes, yes!” Isis cried. “Where is this tree? Show it to me!”

“We can’t,” said a little boy. “The tree was so tall and so straight, our King had it made into a pillar for his palace.”

Within that pillar was the body of her beloved husband, Isis knew, and hastened to the palace. But she did not go inside. Instead she sat weeping beside the fountain. Presently the Queen’s maidens came out and seeing the sad stranger, spoke kindly to her.

Isis smiled at the maidens. “You are so kind to me, a lonely wanderer,” she said, “that I wish to do something for you. I am skilled in beauty arts. Let me braid your hair more becomingly.”



*raven tresses* long,  
black and shiny hair

*Astarte* (a STAHR tee)

*pined for* missed

*treacherous* not to be  
trusted; dangerous

And this she did, and as she arranged the maiden's hair, each one seemed to become more beautiful. As Isis worked with the raven tresses of the girls, she breathed upon their hair and it instantly took on a wonderful fragrance.

When the maidens returned to the palace they ran to their Queen, Astarte, and told her of the stranger at the fountain.

"Remarkable," said the Queen, "and the scent which she has given you is exquisite. Bring this woman to me."

And so Isis came into the palace, looking like a humble servant, for all that she was a far greater Queen than Astarte. But though she served the Queen well, she spent every moment possible playing with one of the young princes, who was rather sickly. Whenever Isis was with the child, Astarte noticed that the little prince appeared stronger and rosier, and whenever she left him, he pined for her. Before long, Isis was made chief nurse for the child and the prince thrived under her care.

There were some in the palace who were jealous of the preference shown to the stranger, and they spied upon her. One night, after Isis had put the little prince to bed, these jealous ones peeked through a crack in the door and what they saw sent them racing to Astarte. They related so horrifying a tale, that the mother forgot all her queenly dignity. Picking up her fine linen skirts she ran down the palace halls and burst into the room where Isis had the young prince.

Imagine the mother's feelings when she saw her child lying in a pile of burning sticks and a swallow flying around the flames and twittering mournfully.

With a loud cry Astarte rushed forward and plucked her child from the flames.

In that instant Isis returned to her human form—and to all her queenly dignity. "You have deprived the prince of immortality!" she said. "Another few moments and all would have been accomplished." Then she told the frightened mother who she was, and Astarte fell on her knees and begged forgiveness.

"I forgive you," Isis said sadly. "But you must give me the central pillar from this palace, for it contains the body of my slain husband, Osiris."

"You shall have it," Astarte promised, and commanded slaves to take the pillar down at once. "Why did you not tell me your story in the beginning?" she then asked gently.

Isis shook her head. "After the treacherous murder of my husband, I dared trust no-one," she said.

When the slaves had taken the pillar down, Isis caused it to be split open, and there was the casket. A magic boat of papyrus reeds was built for Isis, and having had the casket put in it, she guided the boat into the marshes of the Nile.





There she opened the casket and gazed at the face of her beloved. At daybreak, she spoke magic words over Osiris, calling his soul back into his body, as she breathed into his nostrils.

Again and again she did this, but, alas, the soul of Osiris had been gone too long from his body. It was of no avail.

In her grief Isis gave a terrible cry. "By the secret name of Ra, let the sun stand in the heavens, for Osiris is indeed dead!"

And lo! the sun stood still, and time stood still, and everything all over the world stood still.

And then there was a mighty rushing through the air. Suddenly Thoth, the god of wisdom, stood before the grieving Isis. "What has happened here?" he asked, and Isis told him her story.

"And now," she finished, "all my power is as nothing, for I cannot bring my beloved back to life."

Thoth shook his mighty head. "It is not right that you should," he said. "He that has known the mysteries of death cannot walk among mortal men again. But because Osiris was a good man and a great King, and because your love is so strong for him, I will recall his soul into his body and make him live forever—"

Isis' eyes brightened, but Thoth held up his hand. "Osiris shall live forever as a king among the deserving spirits."

### Further Reading

*Ancient Egyptians.* Pierre Miguel. The Egyptians used hieroglyphic writing to tell the story of a person's life. This book uses hieroglyphs to recreate the history of ancient Egypt.

*Egyptian Adventures.* Olivia Coolidge. These 12 short stories tell about ancient Egyptian superstitions, magic, festivals, and funerals.

*Mara, Daughter of the Nile.* Eloise Jarvis McGraw. Spies and political intrigue in ancient Egypt are the backdrop for this story about a mistreated slave during the reign of Pharaoh Hatshepsut.

*Voyage of Osiris: A Myth of Ancient Egypt.* Gerald McDermott. Here is another version of Osiris's story.





## LESSON 4

# Egypt and Kush

### THINKING FOCUS

*Why does Kush deserve to be called one of the great civilizations of ancient Africa?*

### Key Terms

- access
- tribute

▼ *The Kushites gave their own style to Egyptian ideas, such as pyramids.*

**E**arly in the 1800s, two French explorers were visiting the African country now known as the Sudan when they came upon the ruins of an ancient city. One of them, Frédéric Caillaud, described his first glimpse:

*I imagine my joy when I saw the tops of a crowd of pyramids . . . tipped by the rays of the sun. I climbed to the summit of the highest of them. . . . Looking around, I saw a second group of pyramids to the west, and, not far from the river, a huge field of ruins . . . indicating the site of an ancient city.*

Frédéric Caillaud, *Voyage à Meroë*, 1822

No doubt these explorers had many questions about what they saw. For example, what was the name of this ancient city? Who were the people that had lived here? Why had they built pyramids, as the Egyptians to the north had done? Were these pyramids tombs, like the ones in Egypt?

The ancient city that those early French explorers saw was Meroë (*MAIR uh wee*). The city of Meroë was once the capital of the African kingdom of Kush (*kuhsh*). Who were the Kushites and what did they have to do with the Egyptians? To find out more about Kush, we have to go back in the history of ancient Egypt to the early part of the Middle Kingdom period.





## Egypt Dominates Kush

Find Kush on the map below. Note that it is south of Egypt in what is now known as the Sudan. In ancient times, it was part of the area known as Nubia. Like Egypt, Kush lies on both banks of the Nile River.

Beginning around 2000 B.C., Egypt's pharaohs sent ships south to buy or seize gold and cattle from Kush. Egyptian stonecutters carved huge granite blocks from the cliffs in Kush and floated them on barges back to Egypt. The pharaohs used the granite for their temples, tombs, and obelisks.

Egyptian rulers realized the riches that Kush offered. During the Middle Kingdom, they had their soldiers build forts and trading posts in Kush. In this way, they protected their trade routes and made sure they had **access** to, or the ability to reach, Kush's gold and ivory. Egyptian rulers came to depend on Kush for police and soldiers as well.

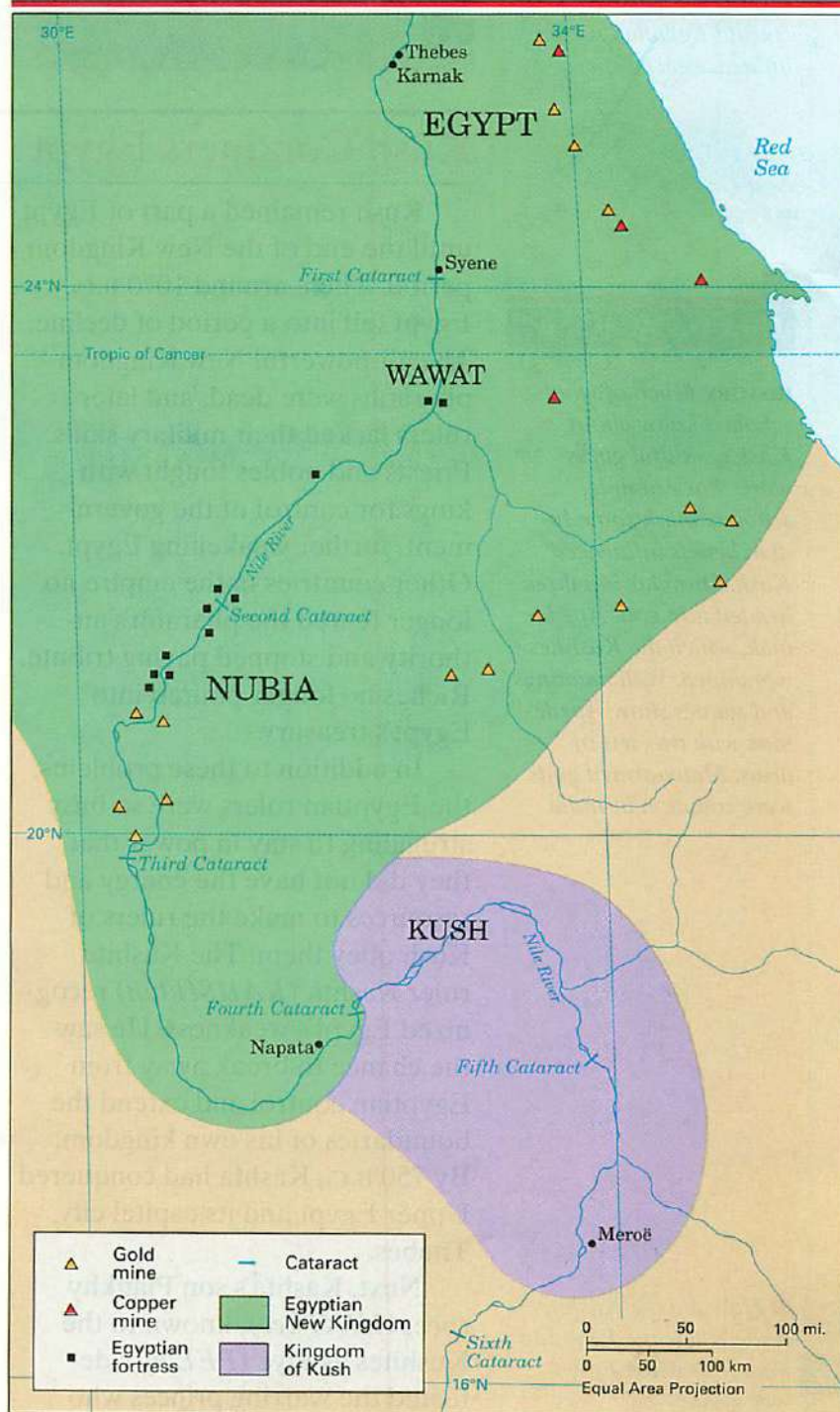
In the period between the Middle and New Kingdoms, the Hyksos (*HIHK sahs*) invaded Egypt from the north. Hyksos pharaohs actually ruled Egypt for more than 100 years. Eventually, Kushite soldiers aided the Egyptians in driving the Hyksos out of Egypt.

The Egyptians had long considered Kush to be a part of their empire. However, Egyptian rulers had to "reconquer" Kush from time to time in order to maintain their control. In the 1400s B.C., Thutmose III invaded Kush again. Egypt demanded that Kush pay an annual **tribute**, or gift—ebony, ivory, ostrich feathers, perfumes, oils, and grains. Sometimes the

tribute included exotic animals, such as giraffes and monkeys. Tribute scenes—pictures of Kushites carrying and presenting their tribute to Egyptian rulers—became popular during the New Kingdom.

▼ What did Kush have that Egypt wanted?

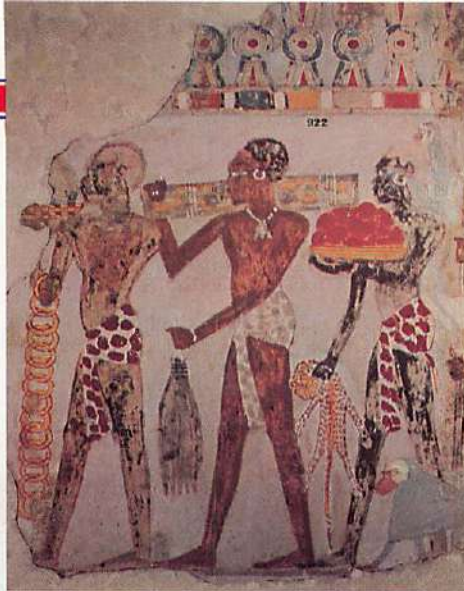
### Egyptian Occupation of Kush





► This painting was found in a c. 1420 B.C. Egyptian tomb. Kushites are carrying tribute to their Egyptian rulers.

■ How did Kushite society and Egyptian society influence each other?



Not surprisingly, Egyptian culture had a strong influence on the Kushites. For example, Egyptian priests built temples in Kush where the Kushites worshiped Egyptian gods. The Kushites also adopted the Egyptian belief in the afterlife. Kushites learned Egyptian crafts. Some learned Egyptian hieroglyphic writing, too. Some Kushite leaders even studied at the Egyptian court. ■

### How Do We Know?

**HISTORY** Much of what scholars know about Kush is skillful guesswork. For example, scholars think some Indian beliefs influenced Kush. One clue is a three-headed lion god, *Apedemak*, which the Kushites worshiped. Wall paintings and statues show *Apedemak* with two sets of arms. Many-armed gods were common in India.

■ How did the Kushite leaders become Egyptian pharaohs when Egypt was weak?

## Kush Conquers Egypt

Kush remained a part of Egypt until the end of the New Kingdom period. Then, around 1070 B.C., Egypt fell into a period of decline. The all-powerful New Kingdom pharaohs were dead, and later rulers lacked their military skills. Priests and nobles fought with kings for control of the government, further weakening Egypt. Other countries in the empire no longer feared the pharaoh's authority and stopped paying tribute. Riches no longer poured into Egypt's treasury.

In addition to these problems, the Egyptian rulers were so busy struggling to stay in power that they did not have the energy and resources to make the rulers of Kush obey them. The Kushite ruler *Kashta (KAHSH tuh)* recognized Egypt's weakness. He saw the chance to break away from Egyptian control and extend the boundaries of his own kingdom. By 750 B.C., *Kashta* had conquered Upper Egypt and its capital city, Thebes.

Next, *Kashta's* son *Piankhy (pee AHNG kee)*, known to the Kushites as *Piye (PEE ay)*, defeated the warring princes who

controlled the Nile Delta. Later, *Piankhy* put up a granite tablet on which he described the attack on the city of Memphis. It began:

**W**hen day broke, at early morning, his majesty reached Memphis. . . . Then his majesty saw that it was strong, and that the wall was raised by a new rampart, and battlements manned with mighty men. There was found no way of attacking it.

...  
But his majesty was enraged against it like a panther. He said, "I swear, as Ra loves me . . . this shall befall it [the city]. . . . I will take it like a flood of water."

*Piankhy*, from a granite tablet near Napata, 700s B.C.

The city of Memphis fell to the Kushite army. *Piankhy* then went on to complete his conquest of Egypt by taking the rest of Lower Egypt. His successor, *Shabaka*, became the first Kushite pharaoh of Egypt. *Shabaka's* kingdom extended from the shores of the Mediterranean Sea to the borders of what is today the country of Ethiopia in Africa. ■



## Kush's Last Thousand Years

The dynasty that began with Kashta did not last long. Kush controlled Egypt for less than a hundred years. By 671 B.C., Assyria, which was by now the strongest power in the Middle East, attacked Egypt and attempted to overthrow the Kushite ruler King Taharqa (*tuh HAHR kuh*). Assyrian soldiers, armed with iron weapons, easily defeated the Kushites, whose weapons were made of bronze and stone. King Taharqa's troops fled south. By 654 B.C., Assyrian troops had expelled the Kushites from Egypt.

Kushite kings continued to rule their former kingdom from their capital at Napata (*nuh PAH tuh*). No longer the rulers of Egypt, they still wore the double crown of the Egyptian pharaoh. Their court ceremonies and religious practices remained Egyptian, and scribes still used the Egyptian language for official documents.

### Meroë, a New Capital

In 591 B.C., an Egyptian army defeated Kushite forces. For reasons still unexplained, the kings of Kush soon after moved their capital city from Napata to Meroë, a city about 150 miles south on the

banks of the Nile River. Meroë became a great city, the center of Kushite culture.

Meroë was a good choice for the new capital of Kush. The area was rich in the natural resources necessary for iron production—iron ore and a good supply of wood. Iron was in great demand. Iron tools and weapons were much stronger than those of bronze. Kushite kings had learned iron making from the Assyrians, who had once used iron weapons to drive them out of Egypt.

Meroë became an important center of iron making. It also became a meeting place for traders from the Middle East, the Far East, and many parts of Africa. Camel caravans from the south brought leopard skins and ostrich eggs to Meroë's markets. Merchants from Syria and Palestine came to Meroë seeking gold and ivory. In ports on the Red Sea, Kushite merchants exchanged iron tools and spearheads for glass, fine cloth, and other luxury goods from China and India.

Arts and crafts flourished at Meroë. Workers made delicate vases and bowls, decorated with



▲ No one knows how this small gold sheath was used. Its intricate design illustrates the fine work done by the Nubians.

▼ Leopard skins, ostrich feathers, granite, and ivory were some of the products Kush traded with Egypt and other nations.





sketches of hunters, animals, and flowers. Jewelers cast bracelets and earrings of silver and gold.

Some Egyptian practices continued. As in Egypt, the Kushite kings built great palaces along the Nile. They built temples to honor the gods and pyramids in which royal families were buried.

But over time, Egyptian influence on Kushite life lessened. The Kushites developed their own hieroglyphic writing. Later they worshiped an African lion god called Apedemak, their god of war.

■ *What happened to the Egyptian influence in Kush in the centuries after the Assyrian conquest?*

► *This elaborate royal crown made of silver was found in an excavation of ancient Nubia. Archaeologists date the crown in the A.D. 200s or 300s.*



### The Fall of Kush

Meroë remained an important cultural and trade center for more than 600 years. In A.D. 350, King Ezana, the ruler of a neighboring African kingdom called Axum, invaded and conquered Meroë. Ezana left a record of the defeat:

*I made war on them. . . . They fled without making a stand, and I pursued them . . . killing some and capturing others . . . I burnt their towns, both those built of bricks and those built of reeds, and my army carried off their food and copper and iron . . . and destroyed the statues in their temples, their granaries, and cotton trees and cast them into the [Nile].*

*Ezana, ruler of Axum, A.D. 300*

For many centuries after this brutal conquest, Meroë was forgotten. Modern archaeologists have explored the city and other ruins of ancient Kush. They have learned much about them, but much more is still unknown. Meroitic hieroglyphic writing remains a mystery.

Almost everything we know about the kingdom of Kush today comes from two sources. One source is the writings of other ancient peoples whose languages have been deciphered. The other source is writings from the time when Egyptian writing was still used in Kush. Someday, when scholars learn to read the Meroitic language, we will learn much more about the kings, queens, and commoners of one of Africa's first great civilizations. ■

## REVIEW

1. **FOCUS** Why does Kush deserve to be called one of the great civilizations of ancient Africa?
2. **CONNECT** What was the meaning of the double crown of Egypt? What achievement of King Piankhy made it an appropriate crown for Kushite kings?
3. **HISTORY** What benefits did Egypt receive from Kush, and what benefits did Kush receive from Egypt?
4. **CRITICAL THINKING** Why did Meroë become an important center of culture and trade?
5. **ACTIVITY** Imagine that you live during the time of Kush's greatness. Using information from this lesson, draw or paint a travel poster urging people to visit your country.



## UNDERSTANDING DIAGRAMS

# Reading a Cross Section

### Here's Why

A cross section is a special kind of diagram. It shows how the inside of an object looks, how it is made, what it is made of, or how it works. Cross sections are often used to show how things such as toys and machines are put together.

Cross sections can be especially helpful for understanding how something works. For example, cross sections can help you understand how smelting furnaces, such as those used during the iron age, worked.

### Here's How

Look at the diagrams on this page. Get the "big picture" first—read the titles and look over the diagrams to see what they show in general. Then read the labels and refer to the glossary as you study each diagram closely.

Look at the cross section on the left. The labels tell you what each part of the diagram is. For example, the labels explain that the furnace walls were made of clay bricks covered by a layer of mud. The labels also identify hollow clay pipes and bellows. The bellows were used to pump air through the pipes. Find the arrows that indicate the movement of the bellows.

Now look at the contents of the furnace. The labels tell you there are alternating layers of charcoal and iron ore in the upper part of the furnace. What is in the bottom part of the furnace?

### Try It

The diagram on the right shows the same furnace after it was fired. Compare this diagram to the one on the left. What is the same in the two

diagrams? What is different? What happened to the charcoal? What happened to the iron ore?

### Apply It

Find a cross-sectional diagram in your science textbook or another source. Explain the diagram by answering these questions: What does the diagram show? What parts are labeled? Why is the cross section useful?

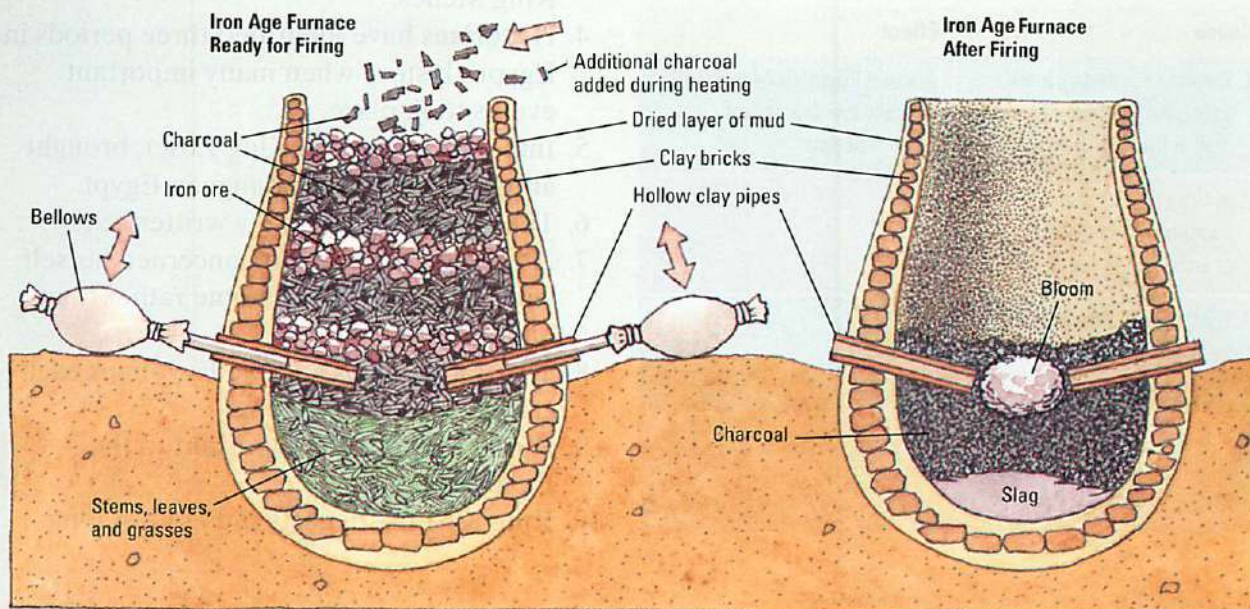
### Glossary

**bellows** (bĕl'ōz) A pump device used to produce a current of air

**bloom** (blōm) Purified iron that is the result of the smelting process

**slag** (slāg) Impurities and waste from the smelting process

**smelting** (smĕlt'ing) The use of heat to remove pure metal from ore





# Chapter Review

## Reviewing Key Terms

access (p. 211)	hieroglyphics (p. 196)
afterlife (p. 192)	mummy (p. 192)
cataract (p. 187)	obelisk (p. 200)
delta (p. 187)	papyrus (p. 189)
dynasty (p. 190)	pharaoh (p. 199)
embalm (p. 192)	tribute (p. 211)

**A.** The two words in each pair are related in some way. On your own paper, write a sentence explaining how the words are related.

1. cataract, delta
2. papyrus, hieroglyphics
3. pharaoh, tribute
4. dynasty, pharaoh
5. mummy, afterlife
6. hieroglyphics, obelisk

**B.** Some of the following statements are true. The rest are false. Write *True* or *False* for each statement. Then rewrite the false statements to make them true.

1. A dynasty was made up of several rulers from different families.
2. Cataracts are the plants from which papyrus is made.
3. Hatshepsut placed pillars called obelisks across the river from her temple.
4. The Egyptians built forts in Kush to protect their access to Kush's gold and ivory.
5. Embalming turned the body into a mummy.
6. The part of the Nile called the delta is found in southern Egypt.

## Exploring Concepts

**A.** The following cause-and-effect chart about ancient Egypt lists facts about the Nile, an important discovery, a new ruler, and a power struggle. Copy the chart on your own paper. Then, fill in a sentence to the right of each cause that tells the effect. The first one has been done for you.

Cause	Effect
1. The Nile flooded its banks each year, depositing rich mud in farmers' fields.	Ancient Egypt could grow crops in the desert and feed its people.
2. In 1799, soldiers found a stone with three kinds of ancient writing.	
3. Thutmose III was next in line for the throne, but he was only 10 years old.	
4. The rulers of Egypt could no longer make the rulers of Kush obey.	

**B.** Support each statement with facts and details from the chapter.

1. Natural borders isolated ancient Egypt and protected it from invaders.
2. The seasons in Egypt were based on the flooding of the Nile.
3. A famous Egyptian legend tells the story of King Menes.
4. Historians have identified three periods in Egypt's history when many important events took place.
5. Imhotep, advisor to King Zoser, brought about an important change in Egypt.
6. The Egyptians left many written texts.
7. As a ruler, Hatshepsut concerned herself with improving life at home rather than building an empire.
8. The Babylonians and the Egyptians each created a lunar calendar.
9. Kush's riches were important to the Egyptians.
10. King Kashta's dynasty did not last long.



# A Nubian Princess

9:11 A.M., May 10, 1341 B.C.

*In a house in Nubia, an ancient African kingdom south of Egypt*

## Makeup

Her mother helped her grind the colors and put them on in the cool air of early morning. Our princess wants to look as grown-up and royal as she feels.

## Hand

The princess is directing her servants. They are loading her boat with ivory, rare African wood, and other gifts for the king of Egypt. She'll be leaving for Egypt in a few minutes.

## Earrings

She has never worn such long earrings, but her older sister told her that Egyptian teen-agers wear even longer ones. The king is a teen-ager, too. She wonders what he looks like.

## Jewel Box

Carved from white stone, this is the gift that she will hand to the king of Egypt. Her parents asked her to pick the best jewelry from local craftspeople. She did, but not before she hid her favorite ring in her room.

## Gown

Late last night servants finally got the folds of her new linen dress to fall perfectly. The wooden machine that presses the folds broke last week and wasn't repaired until yesterday.

## Cat

Her shy pet, named Miu, has been rushing around the house with her all morning. All the princess's friends have cats, too.

## Sandals

She's wearing leather sandals for this special occasion. Her everyday sandals are made from the same plant used to make paper.

