

THE ART OF ANCIENT EGYPT

What do you know about the treasures of King Tut? Have you ever heard the story of Cleopatra? Why do you think the Egyptians built the huge pyramids? Traveling up the Nile river in Egypt today, you would be amazed to see mighty monuments at almost every bend. Most of these huge stone structures are tombs and temples, reminders of a once powerful ancient Egyptian civilization. The Egyptian stela in Figure 7.1 adorned a temple built in the Twenty-sixth Dynasty. Who were the Egyptians who built and decorated such impressive monuments? Where did they come from? What were their beliefs?

FOCUS ON READING

Read to Find Out In this chapter, read to find out about the origins of Egyptian civilization and the evolution of the pyramids and temples. Learn about the development of Egyptian sculpture and painting.

Focus Activity Divide your paper into three columns and label them *the Old Kingdom*, *the Middle Kingdom*, and *the New Kingdom*. Notice where these time periods are on the Time Line. As you read the chapter, list and organize what you learn about Egyptian monuments, sculpture, and painting in the time periods in which they were built or created.

Using the Time Line Examine the stela in Figure 7.1 and note that it was created during the New Kingdom. This particular stela commemorates the daughter of a ship's captain. What does it tell you about the New Kingdom and what life might have been like during this period in Egyptian history?

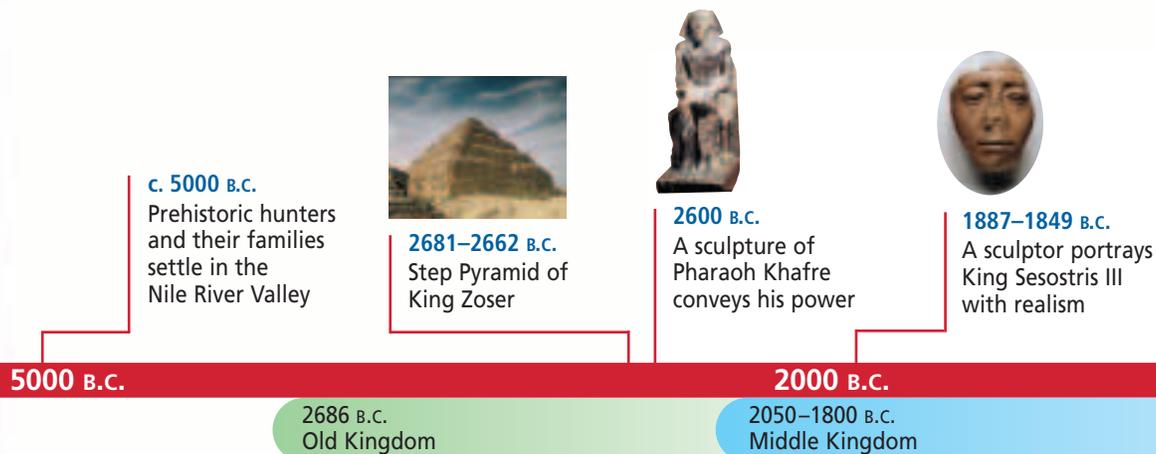




FIGURE 7.1 Stela of a Chantress of Amun. 664–525 b.c. Wood, resin, and pigment. Height 41.5 cm (16 1/8"). Rosicrucian Egyptian Museum, San Jose, California.



1361–1352 B.C.
The Golden Throne
of Tutankhamen



664–525 B.C.
Stela of a Chantress
of Amun

TIME & PLACE
CONNECTIONS

Refer to the Time Line on page H11 in your *Art Handbook* for more about this period.

1500 B.C.

1570–332 B.C.
New Kingdom

500 B.C.

332. B.C.
Alexander the Great conquers Egypt

The Growth of Egyptian Civilization

Vocabulary

- pharaoh
- dynasty
- sarcophagus
- mastaba

Discover

After completing this lesson, you will be able to:

- Name the three major historical periods of ancient Egypt.
- Explain the relationship of religion to the development of the pyramids.

Around 5000 B.C., prehistoric hunters and their families settled in the fertile valley of the Nile River (**Figure 7.2**). As far as experts can tell, these people came from western Asia. Because there is no evidence that they moved on or died out, they are regarded as the direct ancestors of most Egyptian peoples. The Nile River valley in which they settled was about 750 miles long but measured no more than about 31 miles at its widest point. It was lined on both sides by cliffs ranging in height from around 300 to 1000 feet. Beyond these cliffs was nothing but desert.

Early Inhabitants Along the Nile

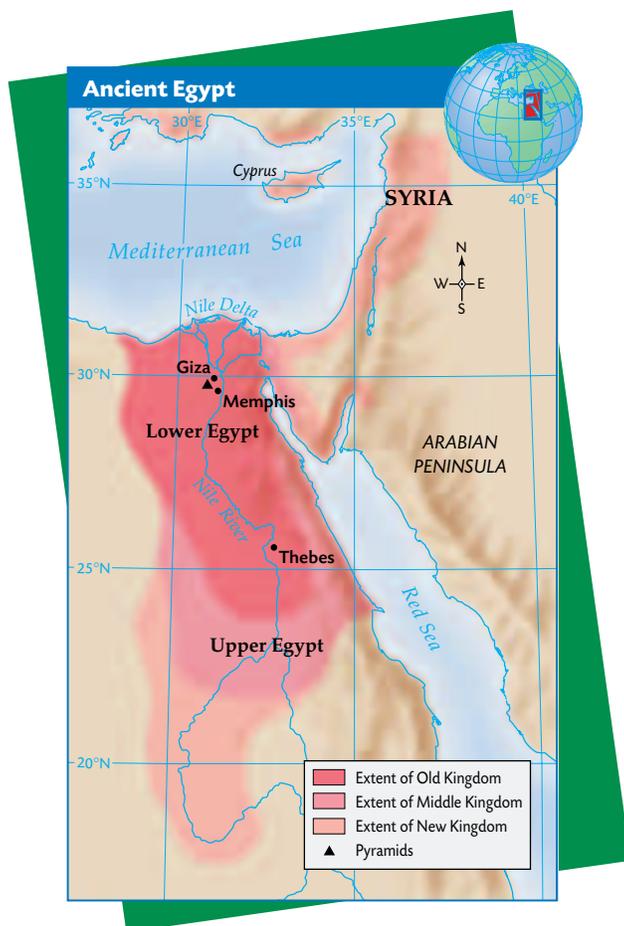
Each summer the Nile River flooded its banks and deposited layers of fertile soil in the valley. This soil had been carried for thousands of

miles from the African interior. In some places, the rich soil deposits reached a depth of more than 30 feet. In this fertile environment, people gradually changed from food gatherers to food producers. Discovering that the wild vegetables and grains they gathered grew from seeds, they began to collect these seeds and planted them in the fertile soil of the valley.

Although the people continued to hunt animals for food, they came to rely more and more on the animals they raised themselves. This gave them an advantage over their ancestors. They were no longer entirely dependent on the game they hunted for survival. Because they did not have to move from one location to another in search of food, they began to build more permanent houses of mud, wood, and reeds.

The Formation of Kingdoms

This settled existence brought about an increase in their population and led to the growth of villages and towns. Some towns grew so large that they took control of neighboring villages and, in this way, formed kingdoms. As the prehistoric period came to a close, there were only two large kingdoms in Egypt. One of these was Lower Egypt, which included the fan-shaped delta region at the mouth of the Nile. The other was Upper Egypt, which was the valley carved in the desert by the river (**Figure 7.2**).



MAP SKILLS

■ **FIGURE 7.2** People first settled in the valley of the Nile River about 7,000 years ago. **How do you think the Nile River affected the daily life of the ancient Egyptians? How do you imagine it affected the artworks they created?**

Thus, an Egyptian civilization emerged along the banks of the Nile more than 3,000 years before the birth of Christ. It continued to exist for nearly another 3,000 years. During that period, Egypt became a thriving nation in which a **pharaoh**, or *ruler*, governed with complete authority. Agriculture and trade grew, art flourished, and majestic monuments and temples were constructed.

The Three Major Periods of Egyptian History

The history of Egypt can be divided into three periods: the Old Kingdom, the Middle Kingdom, and the New Kingdom, or Empire. Each kingdom is further divided into dynasties. A **dynasty** was *a period during which a single family provided a succession of rulers*.

One reign ended with the death of a pharaoh and another began with the crowning of a successor from the same royal family. For this reason, every precaution was taken to keep the blood of the family pure. One of these precautions was to forbid the pharaoh to marry outside of the immediate family.

The Old Kingdom

The earliest dynastic period began around 3100 B.C. when Upper and Lower Egypt were united by a powerful pharaoh named Menes. Menes established his capital at Memphis and founded the first of the 31 Egyptian dynasties. The Old Kingdom dates from the start of the third of these dynasties, in about 2686 B.C. It ended about 500 years later, when the strong centralized government established by the pharaohs was weakened by the rise of a group of independent nobles. These nobles split the country into small states. Civil war and disorder soon broke out between these states, and the authority of the reigning pharaoh collapsed.

The Middle Kingdom

After a long period of turmoil, the nobles in Thebes, a city on the upper Nile, were able to gain control of the country. They

managed to unify Egypt once again into a single state, and order was restored to their troubled land. The success of these nobles marked the beginning of the Middle Kingdom, a period of about 250 years from around 2050 to 1800 B.C.

The Middle Kingdom was a time of law and order and prosperity in Egypt. This was true even though the pharaoh, while still the supreme head, was not as powerful as pharaohs had been during the Old Kingdom. Around 1800 B.C., Egypt was overrun for the first time by foreign invaders. Using horses and chariots, the Hyksos from western Asia swept across the country. They easily defeated the Egyptians, who fought on foot. The Hyksos inhabited Lower Egypt and for 200 years forced the Egyptian people to pay them tribute. Finally, the Egyptians, having learned how to use horses and chariots, drove the invaders from their country and restored independence.

The New Kingdom

The third and most brilliant period of Egyptian history, which began in 1570 B.C., is known as the New Kingdom, or Empire. Warrior pharaohs used their expertise with horses and chariots to extend Egypt's rule over neighboring nations.

Under one of these pharaohs, Amenhotep III, the New Kingdom reached the peak of its power and influence. Thebes, the royal capital, became the most magnificent city in the world. Suddenly Amenhotep's son and heir, Amenhotep IV, broke with tradition. He tried to bring about changes in Egyptian religion that for centuries had recognized many different gods. Amenhotep IV moved the capital from Thebes to Tel el-Amarna. There he established Aton, symbolized by the sun disk, as the one supreme god. In honor of his god, Amenhotep IV changed his name to Akhenaton, which meant "it is well with Aton." Unfortunately, while Akhenaton was absorbed in his new religion, Egypt's enemies began to whittle away pieces of the once-mighty nation.

The Decline of Ancient Egypt

Akhenaton's new religion did not survive after his death. Tel el-Amarna was destroyed by Egypt's enemies, the capital was returned to Thebes, and the old religion was restored. Although other pharaohs after Akhenaton tried to recapture the glories of the past, Egypt's long chapter in history was coming to an end. In 332 B.C., Alexander the Great of Macedonia conquered Egypt, bringing the New Kingdom to a close. Several centuries of Hellenistic rule followed.

Finally, in 30 B.C., Egypt was made a province of Rome.

The greatness of ancient Egypt has not been forgotten over the centuries. Works of art of all kinds remain. They range from huge pyramids and tombs to skillfully formed stone statues, wall paintings, and carved and painted reliefs (**Figure 7.3**). These and other treasures are fascinating reminders of the magnificent civilization that flourished on the banks of the Nile. (See Figure 7.1, page 146.)



■ **FIGURE 7.3**
Tutankhamen followed Akhenaton, or Amenhotep IV, as pharaoh. He restored the practice of traditional religious beliefs. **Why and how were artworks such as this throne preserved?**

The Golden Throne of Tutankhamen (ruled 1361–52 B.C.), detail. Wood overlaid with gold, silver, semiprecious stones, and glass paste. Egyptian Museum, Cairo, Egypt.

The Pyramids

Try to picture the pyramids as they once were: covered with a smooth layer of polished white limestone. They were massive, pure-white monuments standing against a backdrop of constantly shifting brown sand and blue sky. What purpose did the pyramids serve? How were they built? What is inside?

The Pyramid of Khufu

■ **FIGURE 7.4**

Before considering these questions, consider one example of these great monuments. The Pyramid of Khufu (**Figure 7.4**) presents rigid, straight contour lines that clearly define and accent the simple triangular shape of this monumental structure.

Its size is truly massive: The Pyramid of Khufu covers an area of almost 13 acres. This means that the five largest cathedrals in the world could be placed within its base with room to spare. It was made by piling 2.3 million blocks of stone to a height of 480 feet. This makes the pyramid about as high as a modern 48-story building.

The Design of Pyramids

Each pyramid was built on an almost perfectly square ground plan. The pyramid base is much greater than the height. Because the pyramid is wider than it is tall, it lacks an upward movement. Rather than a vertical, soaring quality, the shape and proportions of the pyramid suggest solidity and permanence.



■ **FIGURE 7.4** The visual impact of this huge structure conveys a feeling of permanent solidity. **What response do you think this pyramid evoked in the people of ancient Egypt?**

Pyramid of Khufu, Giza, Egypt. c. 2545–2520 B.C.

Looking at it from the outside, you might expect the inside of the pyramid to be spacious. This is not the case. Except for passageways and a few small rooms called galleries, the pyramid is made of solid limestone. Why build such a massive structure and then provide such little space inside? To answer this question, you must first learn something about the religious beliefs of the ancient Egyptians. As you will see, religion influenced every phase of Egyptian life.

Influence of Religion

Egyptian religion placed great importance on the resurrection of the soul and eternal life in a spirit world after death. The Egyptians believed that the soul, or *ka*, came into being with the body and remained in the body until death. At death, the *ka* would leave the body for a time and eventually return and unite with the body again for the journey to the next world and immortality. If the body were lost or destroyed, the *ka* would be forced to spend eternity wandering aimlessly. For this reason, the Egyptians went to great lengths to preserve and protect the body after death. Following a complicated

embalming process, the body was wrapped in strips of cloth and placed in a fortress-like tomb, where it would be safe until the *ka*'s return. Such a tome served as a kind of insurance against final death.

The Pyramids as Tombs

The most impressive tombs were built for the pharaohs. Each pharaoh was more than a king; in the eyes of the people, he was also a god. When he died, the pharaoh was expected to join other gods, including *Re*, the sun god; *Osiris*, the god of the Nile and ruler of the underworld; and *Isis*, the great mother god.

Each pyramid was built to house and protect the body of the pharaoh and the treasures he would take with him from this world to the next. His body was sealed in a **sarcophagus**, a stone coffin. It was then placed in a burial chamber located in the center of the pyramid. Dead-end passages and false burial chambers were added to the building. These were meant to confuse tomb robbers and enemies who might try to destroy the pharaoh's body. To an Egyptian, the destruction of the body was the most horrible form of vengeance.

TIME & PLACE CONNECTIONS

c. 3100 B.C.

300 B.C.

Ancient Egypt

See more Time & Place events on the Time Line, page H11 in your *Art Handbook*

STONE PALETTE OF NARMER. This flat stone palette shows images and symbols of King Narmer, also called Menes. The other side of the palette has a small indentation in the center, used for mixing eye paint.



SHIPPING TRADE. Egyptians traveled in boats up the Nile to other Mediterranean cities. Their cargo boats could be filled with items for trade with cities in Mesopotamia and Arabia.



ACTIVITY **Map Skills.** Locate a map showing Egypt and the Mediterranean Sea. Trace water routes that linked cities along the Nile River with other settled areas that carried on trade with Egypt.



■ **FIGURE 7.5** Structures of this kind were one step in a long tradition of Egyptian tomb building. **Why were tombs such an important concern for the Egyptians?**

Step Pyramid of King Zoser. Saqqara, Egypt. c. 2681–2662 B.C.

Evolution of the Pyramid Shape

The pyramid shape developed gradually. Originally, the Egyptians buried their dead in hidden pits and piled sand and stone over the top. Later this practice changed, and the Egyptians began to use sun-dried bricks to build mastabas. A **mastaba** is a *low, flat tomb*. These rectangular tombs had sloping sides and contained a chapel and a false burial chamber in addition to the true one hidden deep inside. In time, several mastabas of diminishing size were stacked on top of each other to form a step pyramid (**Figure 7.5**). Finally, they were built without steps, and a point was added on the top, thus creating the true pyramid form.

Construction of the Pyramids

Thousands and thousands of workers toiled for decades to build a single pyramid. Limestone was quarried and dragged to the construction site and then carefully fitted into place. How the Egyptians managed to lift and fit these huge blocks of stone, each averaging 2.5 tons, into place remains unclear.

By the time of the Middle Kingdom, the weakened position of the pharaohs and the threat of invasion made construction of

large-scale structures such as the pyramid impractical. Many small pyramids and mastabas may have been built during this period. However, these were probably made of mud bricks, which soon crumbled and disintegrated. More permanent tombs prepared for the pharaoh were cut into the rock cliffs of a valley across the Nile from the capital city of Thebes.

The Temples

If the pyramids are evidence of the skill of Old Kingdom builders, then the great temples are proof of the genius of New Kingdom architects.

The practice of burying pharaohs and nobles in tombs hidden in the cliffs west of the Nile continued throughout the New Kingdom. Meanwhile, architects took on more important tasks. Temples were erected along the eastern banks of the river near Thebes, and these became more and more elaborate. Each of these temples was built by command of a pharaoh and was dedicated to the pharaoh's favorite god or gods. When the pharaoh died, the temple became a funeral chapel where people brought offerings for the pharaoh's *ka*.

The Temple of Amon

■ FIGURE 7.6

A temple built to honor a particular god often was enlarged by several pharaohs until it reached tremendous proportions. The ruins of the Temple of Amon at Karnak, dedicated to the all-powerful chief god of Thebes, will give you an idea of what these gigantic structures must have looked like.



LOOKING *Closely*

DETAILS OF THE TEMPLE OF AMON

A wide avenue led directly to the front of this massive temple complex.

- The great doorway was flanked by **obelisks**, *tall, four-sided, pointed stone shafts*.
- Statues of the pharaoh and huge banners opened onto an uncovered courtyard.
- Entry to the great hall lies beyond the courtyard.
- Massive stone columns reached a height of nearly 70 feet.
- The sanctuary was the small, dark, and mysterious chamber where only the pharaoh and certain priests were allowed to enter.

■ FIGURE 7.6

Hypostyle Hall, Temple of Amon.
Karnak, Egypt. c. 1279–1212 B.C.

LESSON ONE REVIEW

Reviewing Art Facts

1. **Describe** How did the fertile soil of the Nile River valley influence the lives of the people in ancient Egypt?
2. **Recall** When did an Egyptian civilization develop along the banks of the Nile. How long did it continue to exist?
3. **Identify** What are the three major historical periods of ancient Egypt?
4. **Explain** Why and for whom were the pyramids built?

Sharpening Your Skills

Designing a Cartouche Egyptian hieroglyphics continue to interest and amaze us because of their complexity. With over 600 characters, this language remained a mystery for many years until it was deciphered by scholars in 1799 during the reign of Napoleon.

Activity Egyptian rulers had special ways of writing their throne names. These symbols, called cartouches, may be found on many Egyptian works of art. They can be identified as ovals that are filled with vertical hieroglyphics (Figures 7.3). Research hieroglyphics. Then design your own personal cartouche. Exhibit your designs in class.

Egyptian Sculpture and Painting

Vocabulary

- hieroglyphics

Discover

After completing this lesson, you will be able to:

- Discuss the uses of sculpture, relief sculpture, and painting in ancient Egypt.
- Explain the strict set of rules imposed on Egyptian artists.

Ancient Egypt's most impressive achievements in the field of art were the publicly visible pyramids and temples. Within the pyramids, however, were sculptures and paintings. Many of these treasures have survived over the centuries.

Sculpture

Despite every precaution taken by the Egyptians, the fortress-like pyramids and tombs of the pharaohs were soon robbed of their treasures. Frequently the mummified bodies of the pharaohs were mutilated or destroyed in the process. To make certain the *ka* still would have a body to unite with, sculptors were ordered to carve the pharaoh's portrait out of hard stone. These sculptures were placed in the tomb near the sarcophagus, where they acted as substitutes for the body inside. The Egyptians believed that even if the real body were destroyed, the *ka* would be able to enter the stone substitute for the journey to the next world.

The Great Sphinx

■ FIGURE 7.7

The strength and dignity that were a trademark of the pyramids also characterized the sculptures produced during the Old Kingdom. Perhaps



■ **FIGURE 7.7** The massive size of the Great Sphinx was intended to demonstrate the power of the pharaoh. **Why do you think the pharaoh's head was placed on the body of a lion?**

Great Sphinx, Giza, Egypt. c. 2600 B.C.

the most familiar and impressive example of Old Kingdom sculpture is the Great Sphinx (**Figure 7.7**). Carved from rock at the site, the Sphinx presents the head of a pharaoh, probably the Fourth Dynasty pharaoh, Khafre, placed on the body of a reclining lion. It towers to a height of almost 65 feet.

Portrait of Khafre

■ FIGURE 7.8

In the seated portrait of Khafre, the figure has the solid, blocklike form of the hard diorite stone from which it was carved. (See **Figure 7.8**, page 156.)

The pharaoh is shown sitting-erect and attentive. His body appears stiff and rigid, but the head has a more lifelike appearance.

Symbolism in Egyptian Art

In studying Khafre's p... may have the feelin... pharaoh is aware of, the concerns of ordina... He looks straight ahe... eyes seem alive to ev... place around him. It i... aloofness that makes t... a symbol of eternal st... power—befitting a king... Look below at some of... symbolism in this scul...



2

His right ha... forms a fist... which mus... once gripped... some symb... his high off...

1

The pharaoh's throne is inscribed with symbols proclaiming him the king of Upper and Lower Egypt.

FIGURE 7.8 Pharaoh Khafre, (front view only). c. 2600 B.C. Diorite. 1.7 m (66") high. Egyptian Museum, Cairo, Egypt.

Portrait of a Middle Kingdom Ruler

■ FIGURE 7.9

The Middle Kingdom, which lasted from around 2050 to 1800 B.C., was a time of law and order that ended when Egypt was invaded by the Hyksos. Much of the sculpture produced during this period was destroyed by the invading Hyksos and by the New Kingdom rulers who followed.

The works that survived have a wide range of quality. A fragment of a portrait of King Sesostri III (**Figure 7.9**) is an example of the skill and sensitivity demonstrated by the best of the Middle Kingdom carvers. The expression on this surprisingly realistic face suggests none of the confidence and aloofness noted in the portrait of Khafre. In this work, the firmly set mouth and the “worry” lines above the eyes convey a look that is troubled and weary.

The great pharaoh Khafre never would have been portrayed with the expression seen on the sculpture of Sesostri III, but Khafre ruled during the Old Kingdom—a time when no one dared question the pharaoh’s divine power or authority. Conditions had changed by the Middle Kingdom, when this pharaoh’s portrait was carved. The sculptor captured a look of concern and resignation on the face of this ruler, whose authority depended largely on his personality, strength, and cleverness.

Egyptian Empire Expands

By about 1570 B.C., all of the conquering Hyksos who had not been killed or enslaved had been driven out of the country. Egypt then entered a period of expansion and prosperity known as the New Kingdom.

The Egyptians maintained their powerful army, which had been formed to defeat the Hyksos invaders. They waged a series of successful raids both to the east and into the rest of Africa. Eventually, Egypt found itself in control of a vast territory.

The expansion of the Empire, which now extended from the upper Nile to the Euphrates River, brought new wealth to the country, and this wealth encouraged artistic activity. During the New Kingdom, sculptors were commissioned to complete a variety of works. These ranged from huge tomb sculptures carved in the native rock to smaller pieces used to decorate temples. Statues of pharaohs were often gigantic, reaching heights of 90 feet. Some statues were painted and had eyes made from rock crystal, which heightened their realistic appearance.



■ **FIGURE 7.9** The sculptor recognized that King Sesostri III was a careworn individual as well as a ruler and a god. **Compare this portrait with a formal photograph of a current head of state.**

Fragment of Head of King Sesostri III. 1887–49 B.C. Red quartzite. 16.5 cm (6½") high. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, New York. Purchase, Edward S. Harkness Gift, 1926. (26.7.1394).



■ **FIGURE 7.10**

Akhenaton (Amenhotep IV). 18th Dynasty. 1348–1336 B.C. Fragment of a limestone statue from the Temple of Aton, Karnak. Egyptian Museum, Cairo, Egypt.

Portrait of Akhenaton

■ **FIGURE 7.10**

During the New Kingdom, the pharaoh Amenhotep IV, or Akhenaton, refused to follow the religious customs of his ancestors. Many of Akhenaton's portraits depict him realistically, with an elongated head, pointed chin, heavy lips, and a long, slender neck (**Figure 7.10**). Much of the art created during Akhenaton's reign also took on a more realistic look. Instead of the solemn, stiff likenesses favored by earlier pharaohs, Akhenaton's portraits are more natural and lifelike. They often show him in common, everyday scenes in which he is playing with his daughters or strolling with his wife, Nefertiti (**Figure 7.11**).

Although Akhenaton's revolutionary religious ideas died with him, much of the art produced after his death continued to exhibit the realistic, relaxed poses favored during the reign of this unusual king.

Relief Sculpture

About 4,500 years ago, a relief panel was carved showing a man of that period and two of his children (**Figure 7.12**). This panel illustrates an artistic style practiced without change throughout the long history of Egyptian art.

Methethy with His Daughter and a Son

■ **FIGURE 7.12**

Notice the unusual appearance of the figure of Methethy. His head, arms, legs, and feet are in profile, but his shoulders and eye are shown as seen from the front. The man even appears to have two left feet, since there is a big toe on the outside of each foot. Furthermore, the figure seems to have been twisted in some way, making it look flat. All parts of the body seem to be at the same distance from the viewer's eye.

Did the artist who carved this panel simply lack the skill needed to make his portrait more lifelike? A close examination of the figure reveals that this explanation is not reasonable. The head, for instance, is skillfully modeled and looks realistic. The body is correctly proportioned, and details on the other parts of the panel show that the sculptor



■ **FIGURE 7.11**

Notice the similarities in the expressions shown on the faces of Akhenaton (**Figure 7.10**) and his wife, Queen Nefertiti. **How did the sculptors convey a feeling of authority?**

Queen Nefertiti. c. 1360 B.C. Limestone. Approx. 51 cm (20") high. Ägyptisches Museum, Staatliche Museen, Berlin, Germany.

could carve realistically when he chose to. He also knew how to achieve effective design relationships. The detailed areas at the top and left edge of the panel offer a pleasing contrast to the large area occupied by the figure of the man.

Rules of Egyptian Art

The carving's unusual features adhere to a strict set of rules followed by all Egyptian artists. These rules required that every part of the body be shown from the most familiar point of view. For this reason, the head, arms, legs, and feet were always shown in profile, whereas the eyes and shoulders were presented as seen from the front. Following these rules meant that paintings and relief sculptures of the body looked distorted and unnatural. It is a credit to the skill of Egyptian artists, however, that this distortion was kept to a minimum and did not detract from the appealing appearance of their works.

The Egyptians were greatly concerned about life after death. Paintings and relief sculptures of the dead were meant to serve as substitutes for the body. When artists created images of the pharaoh, they wanted to make sure that all parts of the body were clearly shown. This was more important to them than making the image beautiful or accurate. A complete image was vital.



■ **FIGURE 7.12** This limestone relief conforms to the rules governing ancient Egyptian art. **Why does this figure look appealing and familiar, in spite of the distortions required by the rules of Egyptian art?**

Methethy with His Daughter and Son. c. 2565–2420 B.C. Polychromed limestone relief. 143 × 76 cm (56¼ × 30"). The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, Missouri. Purchase: Nelson Trust.

TIME & PLACE CONNECTIONS

c. 3100

300 B.C.

Ancient Egypt

See more Time & Place events on the Time Line, page H11 in your *Art Handbook*

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NECKLACE. This gold and jeweled ornament represents the falcon god Horus. Small statues and symbols like these were created to honor and protect the pharaohs.



CARTOUCHE. Early Egyptians used a form of picture writing to create a pictogram called a cartouche. These carved oval symbols represent the name of an important person.



ACTIVITY Compare and contrast.

Symbols were significant to society and were used in various forms in the Egyptian culture. Look through the text and identify two other cultures that used symbolism in writing and ornamentation. How do these symbols differ and how are they similar?

After all, if an arm were hidden behind the body in a relief sculpture or painting, it would mean that the *ka* would enter a body that was without an arm. It would then be forced to spend eternity in a deformed body. Thus, a strict set of rules was developed over the years to make sure that all parts of the body were shown—and shown correctly—in sculptured and painted images.

Art in Egyptian Tombs

At one time, it was customary for a pharaoh to have his wife, servants, and slaves sealed in the tomb with him when he died. Then, when he arrived in the next world, he would have his loved ones and servants with him for eternity. They would make sure that his new life would be just as pleasant as the old one. In time, this practice of burying others with the pharaoh was discontinued. Instead, painted relief sculptures or sculptures in the round were substituted for real people and placed in the tomb with the dead king.

Painting

Eventually the tomb of every important or wealthy person was enriched with painted relief sculptures. When it became difficult and costly to carve reliefs on the rough, hard walls of cliff tombs during the Middle Kingdom, painting came into its own as a separate art form.

First, the walls of the cliff tombs were smoothed over with a coating of plaster. When the plaster was dry, the artist went to work, drawing a series of horizontal straight lines on the plastered wall. Figures and animals were carefully arranged

along these lines to tell a story, usually an event from the life of the deceased. The pictures were then colored with rich red and yellow hues, with black and blue-green added for contrast. Typically, little shading was used, so the figures tend to look flat, as if they had been cut from paper and pasted on the wall. This method of arranging pictures in horizontal bands and using bright colors with little shading resulted in a style similar to that of contemporary comic strips.

Nakht and His Wife

■ FIGURE 7.13

A look inside a New Kingdom tomb prepared for a priest named Nakht will add to your understanding of Egyptian painting.

Portraits of Nakht and his wife are found on one wall of this tomb (**Figure 7.13**). They are surrounded by busy servants engaged in various hunting and fishing activities on the priest's land.

The way in which the figures have been painted should look familiar. This artist, like the relief sculptor who created the portrait of Methethy, was bound by the standard rules of ancient Egyptian art.

The figures of the priest and his wife are much larger than the other figures, to show that Nakht and his wife are more important. They are also stiff and solemn because the Egyptians believed that such a pose was



■ **FIGURE 7.13** Several scenes are shown in this wall painting. **What does this painting indicate about the social structure of ancient Egypt?**

Nakht and His Wife. Copy of wall painting from Tomb of Nakht. c. 1425 B.C. 2 × 1.53 m (6.5 × 5'). Egyptian Expedition of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, New York. Rogers Fund, 1915. 15.5.19e.

fitting for people of high rank. In contrast, the smaller servants are shown in more natural positions as they hunt and fish.

Hieroglyphics

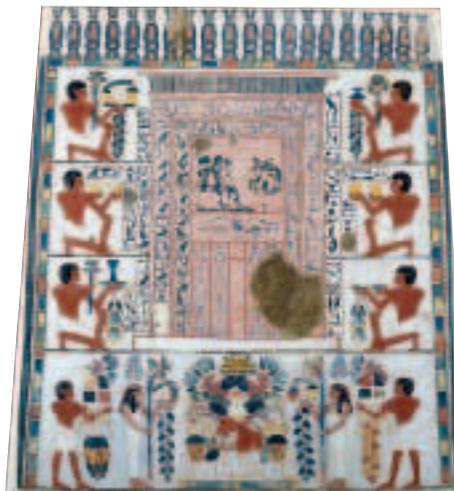
Under the border at the top of the painting in Figure 7.13 are rows and columns of small birds and other shapes. These are Egyptian **hieroglyphics**, an early form of picture writing. These symbols, some of which represented objects, communicated information and were included in wall paintings and other art forms to help tell the story. The signs were generally spaced to form attractive patterns, frequently clusters of squares or rectangles.

False Door Stela

■ FIGURE 7.14

Painted on another wall of the small chapel within Nakht's tomb is a false door. The priest's *ka* was expected to pass through this door in search of offerings. Arranged in bands on either side of the door are painted substitutes for servants bearing food and drink for the *ka*. An assortment of offerings is painted in the section directly below the door where the *ka* would be sure to find them when it entered.

Egyptian artists were content to echo the art of the past until they encountered new ideas from outside sources, such as Greece and Rome. As the influence of these new ideas grew, Egyptian art lost much of its unique character, and Egyptian artists ceased to create the unique art of the pharaohs.



■ FIGURE 7.14 The priest's *ka* was expected to pass through the door painted on the wall of his tomb. **How does this false door demonstrate the important relationship between religion and art in ancient Egypt?**

False Door Stela. Copy of a wall painting from the Tomb of Nakht. Thebes, Egypt. c. 1425 B.C. 1.69 × 1.54 m (5.5 × 5'). 1:1 scale with original. Egyptian Expedition of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, New York. Rogers Fund, 1915. 15.5.19c.

LESSON TWO REVIEW

Reviewing Art Facts

1. **Explain** Why were sculptures of the pharaoh created?
2. **Compare** How are the portraits of Akhenaton different from portraits of earlier pharaohs?
3. **Describe** What rules were Egyptian artists required to follow when painting or sculpting a figure?
4. **Explain** What is the purpose of a false door painted on the wall of an Egyptian tomb?

Visual Arts Journal

Using Perspective The ancient Egyptians produced wall paintings that allow us to learn about their lives and customs. Wall painting was done according to strict rules that developed over Egypt's long history. The Egyptians did not use the rules of perspective, so their works have a distinctive look (Figures 7.13 and 7.14). Many of them tell stories and depict the passage of time, much like a cartoon does.

Activity In your visual arts journal, write an Egyptian-style story about an event in your life. Create a design for a wall painting based on your story. Explain your story and design to your class.

Treasures in the Sand

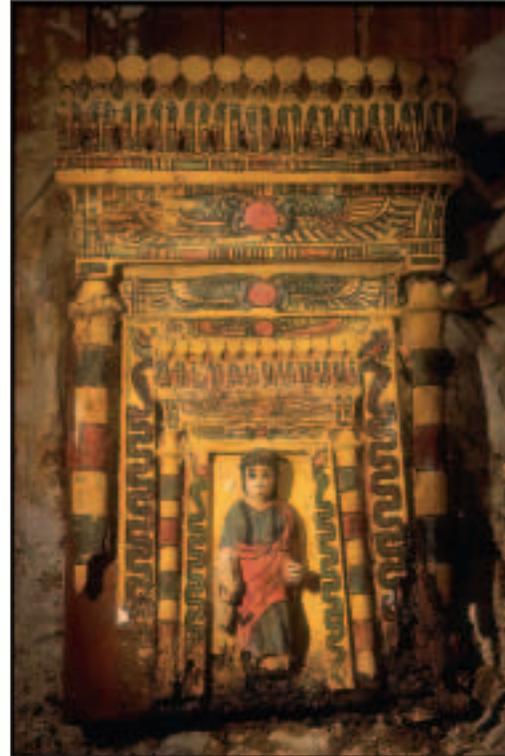
A mummy burial ground gives a look at ancient Egyptian life.

In 1996, a man and his donkey were riding along a dusty road near El Bawiti, Egypt, when the donkey tripped and its leg slipped into a hole. The man peered into the opening and saw a tomb stacked with gold-covered mummies.

The 2,000-year-old tombs—and the mummies found inside—are in nearly perfect condition. The tombs are full of bracelets, charms, statues, and other treasures. There are also offerings of date and olive seeds for the gods. The ancient Egyptians buried their dead with food and other items that they believed would be helpful in the afterlife. Each burial chamber has its own entrance, two burial rooms, and a “handing-over” room. There, Egyptians believed, the mummies were delivered to the land of the dead, where their souls were judged by the Egyptian god Osiris.

This burial site has earned the nickname “Valley of the Golden Mummies” for the gold-covered masks and chest plates discovered on many of the mummies. In one year the archaeologist in charge of the dig, Zahi Hawass, uncovered 105 mummies in four tombs. He estimates that there could be as many as 10,000 more.

Hawass believes it will take archaeologists 50 years to explore the whole area. What other secrets of Egyptian life will they discover?



ZAHİ HAWASS/ABRAMS

This painted wooden shrine near a female mummy was found in 1996 near the oasis town of Bawiti.



AP PHOTO

Archaeologist Mohammed Ayadi brushes a 2,000-year-old mummy. Ayadi and other scientists kept the tomb’s location secret for many months to protect its treasures from thieves.

TIME to Connect

A great deal can be learned about the belief systems of ancient cultures from the way they buried their dead.

- Using the Internet and your school’s media center, research the burial traditions and beliefs of the ancient Egyptians, the Aztecs of Mexico, and the Asante people of Africa.
- Write a paper comparing their burial practices. How are they alike? How are they different?
- Share your findings with the class. Include illustrations if possible.

CHAPTER 7 REVIEW

Reviewing the Facts

Lesson One

1. How long did each of the three major historical periods of ancient Egypt last?
2. How did the Egyptians view the pharaoh?
3. Name three other gods that the Egyptians believed the pharaoh would join when he died.
4. Why were dead-end passages and false burial chambers added to pyramids?
5. Describe the development of the true pyramid form.
6. Why and when were temples built?

Lesson Two

7. How did the expansion and prosperity of the New Kingdom affect artistic activity?
8. Explain why Egyptian paintings show the head, arms, legs, and feet in profile, but show the eyes and shoulders as seen from the front.
9. Why were sculptures or painted relief sculptures buried in the tomb with the dead king?

Thinking Critically

1. **COMPARE AND CONTRAST.** Compare the reigns of Menes, Amenhotep III, and Amenhotep IV. Which reign do you think contributed the most to the development of Egyptian arts? Why? Support your opinion.
2. **ANALYZE.** What clues do sculptures such as the portrait of Khafre (Figure 7.8, page 156) provide about the Egyptians' beliefs concerning the afterlife and the pharaoh's divinity?

YOUR DIGITAL PORTFOLIO

Choose one symbol from this chapter to use as a design element for an original artwork for your portfolio. You might choose the mastaba, hieroglyphics, obelisk, or sarcophagus. Make notes or sketches describing how you would use the design. Determine what qualities are associated with the symbol, and how you might combine two symbols to create a single design. Scan your selected symbol into a computer paint program. You can then manipulate it and try different possibilities.

Standardized Test Practice

Reading & Writing

Read the paragraphs below and then answer the question.

The Great Pyramid of Khufu is considered one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. Indeed, the structure exhibits a level of precision that would be hard to match today. In its original state, the pyramid had swivel doors weighing 20 tons each. Each door was so perfectly balanced that a slight push would open it. When closed, the doors fit into place so flawlessly that the structure appeared seamless.

The Great Pyramid is the most accurately aligned structure on earth. It is situated at the exact center of the earth's land mass and faces true north. At noon on the spring equinox, the pyramid casts no shadow. Each of its sides at the base measures 365.24 cubits—the exact number of days in a year!

The passage tries to persuade the reader

- A that the Great Pyramid was immense.
- B of the genius of the ancient Egyptians.
- C that modern technology is inferior.
- D that the Great Pyramid is superior to other ancient wonders.