EGYPTIAN ART

CONCEPTS OF DEATH
The Egyptian fascination with the afterlife is the focus of much of the art of this region and time period. Refer back to the discussion in Chapter 2 about the use of art in the service of religion. Look up the Book of the Dead for additional background.

THE AMARNA REVOLUTION
The artistic revolution of Akhenaten is a major concept in the survey of Egyptian art, and one likely to appear on the AP* exam. Students should be able to explain how art of Dynasty 18 differed from the art that preceded it. Constructing a table of characteristics is a useful way to help students learn and understand the changes.

PATRONAGE AND SYMBOLISM
The concepts of patronage and symbolism in ancient Egyptian art should be compared with examples from the Near East (Chapter 2a).

EGYPTIAN MYTHOLOGY
Study the importance of the afterlife in Egyptian mythology in conjunction with this chapter can be useful in helping to see the pervasiveness of this concept. The story of Osiris is a good example. The annual flooding of the Nile serves as a loaded metaphor for this cycle of death and rebirth. Be able discuss how Egyptian pharaohs used symbols associated with Osiris in their own funeral trappings—for example, the inner coffin of Tutankhamun's sarcophagus.

EGYPTIAN ART

CHRONOLOGY

Three major periods of Egyptian history:

Pre-Dynastic Period 4350-3150 BCE
Early Dynastic Period 3150-2670 BCE
Old Kingdom 2670-2150 BCE
Middle Kingdom 2150-1800 BCE
New Kingdom 1550-1070 BCE (includes Amarna period-1370-1350 BCE)

In 1799, Napoleon took a small troop of scholars, linguists and artists on a military expedition of Egypt and found the Rosetta Stone (named for the Rosetta coast of the Mediterranean where it was discovered)

Composed of three languages:
Formal Egyptian Hieroglyphic
Demotic (Late Egyptian)
Classical Greek
(which they knew how to read)

This stone became the key to unlocking the meanings behind Egyptian hieroglyphics!

The Palette of King Narmer
Hierakonpolis, Egypt, Early Dynastic 3000-2920 BC

Egyptians prepared eye makeup on tablets such as this for protecting their eyes against irritation and the sun’s glare. This palette is not only important because of its historical content, but it also served as a blueprint of the formula for figure representation that characterized Egyptian art for 3000 years.

The Palette of Narmer is one of the earliest historical artworks preserved.

It was, at one time, regarded as commemorating the foundation of the first of Egypt’s thirty-one dynasties around 2920 BC (the last ended in 332 BC)

This image records the unification of Upper and Lower Egypt into the “Kingdom of Two Lands,” at the very end of the Predynastic period.

The back of the palette depicts the king wearing the bowling pin-shaped crown of Upper Egypt accompanied by an official who carries his sandals. The king is in the process of slaying his enemy and is significant in the pictorial formula for signifying the inevitable triumph of the Egyptian god-kings.

The falcon is a symbol of Horus, the kings protector.

Below the ground-line are two of his fallen enemies.

Above the king are the two heads of Hathor, a goddess of favorable dispose to Narmer and shown as the cow with a woman’s face. Between these two faces is the hieroglyph of Narmer’s name with a frame representing the Royal Palace.

Used to hold the eye makeup

The front of the palette depicts the king wearing the red cobra crown of Lower Egypt. The bodies of the dead are seen from above, as each body is depicted with its head severed and neatly placed between its legs.

Symbols of the unification

The image is of the king’s head and shoulders, with symbols representing the unification of Upper and Lower Egypt.

The palette is a blueprint for figure representation that characterized Egyptian art for 3000 years.
Each person must provide for the happiness of his after-life, which is a religious belief in ancient Egypt. The Ka (spirit) of the deceased would live in the tomb, enjoying the offerings provided. Tomb art was used to express the belief in the after-life.

Tomb was like afterlife insurance. It was a place where the dead person’s Ka could reside and enjoy offerings. Knowledge of civilization and the arts was also essential for the after-life.

Imhotep: First recognized artist or architect in history. He built Djoser’s Step Pyramid, which was a mastaba, a burial chamber deep underground with a shaft linking it to the pyramid. It was meant to serve as a great monument. It was part of a huge funerary district with temples and other buildings, scenes of religious celebration before and after death.

Imhotep was the chief architect and builder of the Step Pyramid of Djoser at Saqqara, Egypt, which was completed around 2630 BC. He is considered the first professional architect in history.

Knowledge of civilization and the arts was essential for the after-life. Tomb art was used to express the belief in the after-life.

Imhotep was the chief architect and builder of the Step Pyramid of Djoser at Saqqara, Egypt, which was completed around 2630 BC. He is considered the first professional architect in history.

Imhotep was the chief architect and builder of the Step Pyramid of Djoser at Saqqara, Egypt, which was completed around 2630 BC. He is considered the first professional architect in history.
The Sphinx
65 feet tall
The Sphinx commemorated the pharaoh and served as an immovable, eternal silent guardian of his tomb.
This guard stood watch at the entrances to the palaces of their kings. It gives visitors coming from the east the illusion that it rests on a great pedestal.
The face of the Sphinx is thought to be an image of the pharaoh Khafre.

EGYPTIAN ART
Great Sphinx, Giza, Egypt, Dynasty IV ca. 2520-2494 BCE

EGYPTIAN ART
Khafre, Giza, Egypt, Dynasty IV Ca 2520-2495 BC

now it’s time for a POP QUIZ!

What function did the Palette of NARMER serve, and why was it important?
 What was the name of the first recorded architect in Egyptian history?
 ANSWER: Imhotep (designed Djoser’s mastaba)

What were the names of the three Egyptian rulers to whom the Great Pyramids were built?
 ANSWER: Khufu, Khafre and Menkaure

EGYPTIAN ART
Khafre, Giza, Egypt, Dynasty IV Ca 2520-2495 BC

The intertwined lotus and papyrus plants between the legs of Khafre’s throne are thought to be symbolic of the united Egypt.

Khafre wears the royal fake beard fastened to his chin and wears the royal linen nemes (the royal headdress worn by the pharaoh containing the uraeus cobra of kingship on the front.)

His proportions are idealized and are appropriate for representing majesty.

This sculpture is indicative of the block statue standard of Egyptian sculpture.
EGYPTIAN ART
Menkaure and Khamerernebty
Gizeh, Egypt, Dynasty IV, ca. 2490-2472 BC

Standing (common pose), both have left foot forward, yet they are not moving forward.
Figures are sculpted in the same height, provide a comparison of male and female beauty.
The stone from which they were created still is still visible, maintaining the block form.
These figures were meant to house the ka.
This was the stereotypical pose that symbolized marriage. Notice how the figures are idealized and emotionless. The artist's depiction of these two people is indicative of the formula for depicting royalty in Egyptian Art.

EGYPTIAN ART
Seated Scribe
Saqqara, Egypt, Dynasty IV, ca. 2450-2350 BC

The Scribe is a high court official- most scribes were sons of pharaohs. (Alert expression in face, individualized tonsorial middle-aged)
Old kingdom also invented the portrait bust- whether it was an abbreviated statue or had some greater significance is unknown.
Notice the realism depicted in this sculpture, when compared to that of the Pharaoh. His depiction in this manner is a result of his lower hierarchy in Egyptian society than that of a Pharaoh.

EGYPTIAN ART
Ka-Aper
Saqqara, Egypt, Dynasty V, ca. 2450-2350 BC

Here Ka-Aper assumes the traditional pose of an official, but notice the attention to detail in the face. The artist has imbedded rock crystal into the eyes of the sculpture for added life.
The 5th Dynasty in Egypt produced many wooden statues such as this one with an increased realism and relaxed formality. This is only the wooden core for the statue which was, at one time, covered with painted plaster.
The walking stick and baton (missing from his right hand) were symbolic of his rank as an official.

EGYPTIAN ART
Menkaure and Wife
Gizeh, Egypt, Dynasty IV, ca. 2490-2472 BC

Compare and Contrast the two poses.

EGYPTIAN ART
Ti watching a hippopotamus hunt
Saqqara, Egypt, Dynasty V, ca. 2450-2350 BC

About 2150 B.C., the Egyptians challenged the pharaoh's power, and for more than a century the land was in a state of civil unrest and near anarchy.

The Middle Kingdom
Interior hall of the rock-cut tombs of Amenemhet
Beni Hasan, Egypt, Dynasty XII, ca. 1950-1900 BC

Rock-cut tombs of the Middle Kingdom largely replaced the Old Kingdom mastabas and pyramids.
The columns in this tomb serve no supportive function.
Notices the finishing on the columns, it is clear that the columns are not supporting the ceiling of the tomb, as many of the columns were broken, yet still attached to the ceiling in some cases.
**EGYPTIAN ART**

Queen Hatshepsut’s Funerary Temple

Built 1480 BC (New Kingdom) against rocky cliffs, dedicated to Amun. linked by ramps and colonnades to a small chamber deep in the rock.

This is a great example of architecture within natural setting - ramps echo shape of cliffs and the horizontal rhythm of light and dark in the columns mimics that of the cliffs above.

Queen Hatshepsut became the Pharaoh when her husband Thutmose II had died. The heir to the throne was to be given to his twelve year old son, but he was too young to rule. Hatshepsut then assumed the role of King, and became the first great female monarch whose name was recorded.

Many of the portraits of Hatshepsut were destroyed at the order of Thutmose III (the son too young to rule), as he was resentful of her declaration of herself as pharaoh.

Hatshepsut with offering jars, Deir el-Bahri, Egypt, ca 1473-1458

This statue has been carefully reassembled after its destruction. Most of the statues of Hatshepsut had to be reassembled due to their destruction, as ordered by Thutmose III. Thutmose III was the son of Hatshepsut’s husband (from a minor wife) and had to share the throne at one point with Hatshepsut.

The female Pharaoh is seen here in a ritual that honors the sun god. A pharaoh could only be seen kneeling before a God – but never anyone else.

Her depiction as pharaoh is clear, as she is seen wearing the royal male nemes headdress and the pharaoh’s ceremonial beard. The uraeus cobra that once adorned the front of the headdress was hacked off by the agents of Thutmose III.

Thutmose III was the son of Hatshepsut’s husband (from a minor wife) and had to share the throne at one point with Hatshepsut.

The figure is represented as anatomically male, but other statues have been found that represent her with woman’s breasts.

**Queen Hatshepsut**

Seated Queen Hatshepsut

Early 18th Dynasty, joint reign of Hatshepsut and Thutmose III (1479-1458 B.C.)

Western Thebes, Deir el-Bahri

Limestone, painted
Ramses was Egypt’s last great warrior pharaoh and ruled for two thirds of a century. This monument was moved in 1968 to protect it from submersion. Ramses was very proud of his accomplishments and proclaimed his greatness by placing four colossal images of himself on the temple façade.

The New Kingdom

Temple of Ramses II
Abu Simbel, Egypt, Dynasty XIX, Ca 1290-1224 BC

These atlantids were 32 feet tall and were carved from the cliff. They contain no load-bearing function (similar to those of Beni Hasan).

The tomb is decorated with paintings and reliefs depicting Ramses and his royal sons with the major deities of Egypt—Osiris, Isis, Hathor, Horus, and Thoth decorate the tomb walls.

This tomb was robbed within a half-century after its construction. The royal burials have not been found.
**Temple of Amen-Re, Karnak**

Egypt, Dynasty XIX. ca 1290-1224 BC

This temple is mainly the product of the Eighteenth Dynasty pharaohs, but some of the Nineteenth Dynasty pharaohs contributed to it as well. Contributors include: Thutmose I and II, Hatshepsut, and Ramses II.

This temple is a great example of the hypostyle hall. (One roof supported by many columns).

The central section of the roof is raised. This architectural feature is called a clerestory. The function of this architectural feature was to allow light to filter into the interior. The columns were decorated with a series of sunken relief sculpture.

**Temple of Horus**

Edfu, Egypt, ca 237-47 BC

The façade of this temple depicts Horus and Hathor witnessing an oversized King Ptolemy XII striking down undesired enemies.

The architecture of this temple is still rooted in the basic scheme that architects had worked out more than a thousand years before.

This type of temple with a simple massive gateway or pylon with sloping walls is known as a pylon temple.

**Fowling Scene, from the tomb of Nebamun**

Thebes, Egypt, Dynasty XVIII, ca 1400-1350 BC

Nebamun’s official title in Egypt was “scribe and counter of grain.” Here he is shown standing in his boat, hunting birds in a papyrus reed swamp. Notice the hierarchy of scale and how the artist emphasized the important character. This was created in the tomb to ensure the recreational enjoyment in the afterlife. Notice the contrast between this work and that of the relief sculpture in the tomb of Ti. The deceased is actually participating, not just looking on. The technique used in the creation of this painting is known as Fresco Secco. The artists would let the plaster dry prior to painting on it. This contrasts the true fresco technique on wet plaster.

**Ti on a Hippo Hunt**

(Old Kingdom)

- Ti was an official in the 6th Dynasty
- Painted limestone relief
- The deceased is looking on, not participating – sign of high status

**Fowling Scene (New Kingdom)**

Nebamun was a scribe and counter of grain.

- Painted in a Fresco Secco (where the plaster is applied and dried first)
- The deceased is actually participating, not just looking on
Akhenaton, infamous for his religious revolution in Egypt during the eighteenth Dynasty.

The revolution in religion gave way to an artistic revolution in which the figures became elongated and androgynous in their appearance.

The pharaoh Akhenaton IV abandoned the worship of most of the Egyptian Gods in favor of the God Aton (the god of the Sun). In honor of the new monotheistic religion, Amenhotep IV changed his name to Akhenaton.

He then moved the capital city of Egypt down the Nile River to the city of Thebes, now called Tell el-Amarna, where he built his own city and shrines.

Stylistic Changes during the Amarna Period included:

- Effeminate body with curving contours
- Long full-lipped face, heavy-browed eyes, and a dreamy expression.

The body of Akhenaton is oddly misshapen with weak arms, a narrow waist, protruding belly, wide hips, and fatty thighs.

Akhenaton’s god was unlike any other Egyptian God in that it was not depicted by animal or human form. Instead, Aton was depicted only as a sun disk emitting life-giving rays.

Nefertiti, the queen of Akhenaton, exhibits the features indicative of the Amarna Style. The delicate curving contours demonstrate a clear stylistic difference from that of the traditional Egyptian depiction of royalty.

Nefertiti’s name means, “The Beautiful One is Here”.

The subject’s likeness has been adjusted to the new standard of spiritual beauty.

Features to be noted in this piece are the serpentine narrow neck that supports the heavy weight of the royal crown.
Tutankhamen inherited the throne when he was only 8 years old. The high officials associated with the young pharaoh made many of the decisions for the young ruler. The first order of business for Tut was to reestablish the cult and priesthood of Amun and restore the temples and inscriptions of his name. Once Amun's religious revolution was undone, artists returned to the old conservative manner.

Tutankhamen only ruled for only 10 years, and died when he was 18 years old. His death and funeral were sudden, and many scholars believe that it was no accident. The evidence of his murder lies in bone fragments found in his skull, and the lacking attention to detail in his burial tomb. The lack of detail suggests a hurried burial, which is suspicious considering the status of Tutankhamen.

Scientific studies of the remains of Tutankhamen have lead researchers to believe that he had two rare spinal cord diseases. His spinal cord had a slight curve to it and the vertebrae were non-flexible where they met his skull. The result of these rare diseases caused the pharaoh to need a walking stick as well as restricted the turning of his head. Many depictions of the pharaoh illustrate him using a cane with his feet twisted beneath his body.

Pu-Nefer was the royal scribe to the pharaoh Seti I. This tomb painting depicts the jackal-headed god, Anubis, leading Hu-Nefer down the hall of judgment. His soul has been favorably weighed and he is being brought by Horus to the presence of the green-faced Osiris.

This formula for imagery in Hu-Nefer's tomb demonstrates a return to the Old Kingdom funerary illustrations.

The Late Period in Egyptian art demonstrates a return to the conservative. Pharaohs are again depicted as they were during the Old Kingdom, idealized and emotionless. Only the double wig, characteristic of the New Kingdom, and the realism of the head, with its rough and almost brutal characterization, differentiate the work from that of an earlier age.

Conservatism was Egypt's character trait, perhaps the principal trait. The ancient Egyptian's resistance to significant change for almost three thousand years is one of the marvels of the history of art.