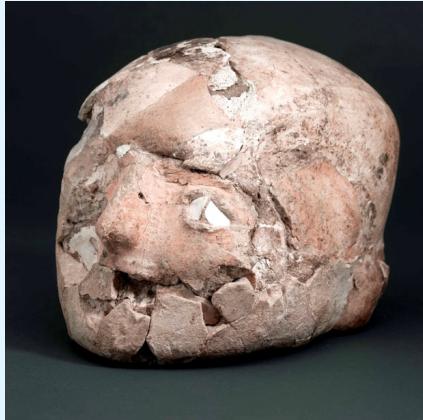


Egypt and Mesopotamia Level 3

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Expressions of Faith



To understand ancient spirituality, we must study their practices. In Jericho it was common for the dead to be buried under plastered floors of the house. In some cases after the body of an adult male had decomposed, the cranium (head) was removed without the mandible (jaw).

 The skull cavities were filled with plaster, and the head was painted, and placed beneath the floor.

What does this practice tell us about the Neolithic population of Jericho?

They believed in some kind of afterlife and, possibly, ancestor worship.

 **Find the plastered human skull from Jericho dating from 8500-7000 B.C.**

Name three other methods historically used to prepare the bodies of the dead.
Cremation, inhumation, mummification, water burials, sky burials.

They Wrote on Clay



 **Find the Sumerian cuneiform and presentation scene, c 2043 BC. They are carved into a sealing or "bulla".**

Writing, the recording of a spoken language, emerged in Mesopotamia around 3000 BC.

 The word Mesopotamia comes from Greek and means “the land between the two rivers”, the Tigris and Euphrates.

Why did people start writing?
Administrators in cities, especially those attached to large temple institutions, needed to develop new ways of recording information.

What are the pros and cons of writing in clay?

Pros: plentiful material, oven-baked clay tablets will preserve well.

Cons: Sun-baked clay tablets will melt in the rain.

 First records are of temple stores including beer rations.

Power through Architecture

Monumental architecture is used for statements of political will and state religion. Artists represented the realities of religious practice, depicted mythical characters, and made political statements.



 **Find and compare these wall reliefs from the ceremonial halls of the palaces of Ashurnasirpal II, 883-359 BC. in the north of Mesopotamia and Nebuchadnezzar II, 604-562 BC. in the south.**

What materials were used in the construction of these palaces? Glazed brick and stone.

Why are they using different materials in different areas of Mesopotamia? Stone was plentiful in the north but not in the south, so palaces in the north use stone while palaces in the south use glazed bricks.

Discuss what is happening in these scenes and what it tells us about the ideals of the people and the environment in which they live. 'Angels' guarding a tree in a desert environment - paradise is the garden with a focus on vegetation. 'Angels' are muscular and manly - militaristic society. Lion shows an animal that was common to that part of the world but are no longer there due to human intervention (climate change and over hunting).

Discuss how scenes like these could be used to make political statements? 'Angels' text is the king's name and his titles, an average person would be overwhelmed by the king's power. Lions served to protect the king and the city, strength is associated with royalty and kings would show their power by hunting lions.

Egypt Level 3

👁️ Gallery Search

📢 Important Facts

The Mighty Woman



👁️ Find life-sized granite statue of Sekhmet from the 18th Dynasty, circa 1360 B.C.)

Animal-headed gods are common in Egyptian art and Sekhmet is one of the oldest known deities from Egypt. Her name means “the Powerful Female-One”. But her other titles point to sometimes terrifying attributes: the “(One) Before Whom Evil Trembles,” the “Mistress of Dread,” and the “Lady of Slaughter.”

📢 This statue of Sekhmet was constructed during the reign of Amenhotep III, Tutankhamun’s grandfather.

Where would you find this type of statue?
In temples both divine and mortuary.

How did the Egyptian artist capture her awesome power?

Thickness of limbs, head of lioness, holding an ankh (means life in ancient Egyptian), seated on a chair/throne, made of stone - meant to last forever.

Wooden World



👁️ Find the model of cow giving birth, circa 2000 B.C.

The vignette of a cow giving birth is popular in tomb paintings from this period but this wooden model is the only three-dimensional example extant.

Why were models placed in tombs?

To ensure the deceased everlasting prosperity.

Look for other funerary models in the gallery and describe the daily-life activities that are represented.

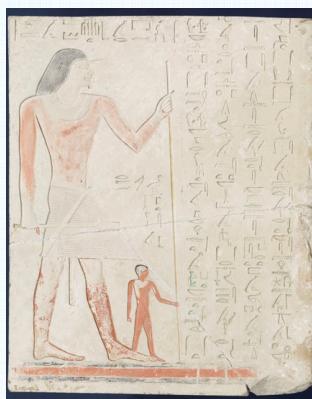
Food-preparation, butchery, brewing, tax payment

Can you see a division of labour based on sex?

Yes, skin colour distinguishes sex;
red=male, yellow= female

Size Matters

👁️ Find the relief sculpture of Metjetji, Old Kingdom.



The technique of sunken relief is most often used for decoration on the outside of monuments; thus, this piece is probably from the outside of the tomb.

Describe the image of the deceased. Walking, his left leg forward. A long wig with fine locks conceal his ears, and he wears a short beard. He holds two emblems signifying his importance, a staff and a scepter, he wears a kilt with fully pleated apron, bracelets, and a broad collar with many rows.

What can we learn about him by how he is represented? A noble of the royal court, in the prime of his life. He would wear a long kilt and no wig if he was older.

Who do you think the smaller figure is? Metjetji's son Sabu-ptah; walking ahead, holding tightly to Metjetji's staff; smaller scale signifies his lesser importance.

Compare this image to the wooden statue of Ibi-ref (in the case across from Metjetji). Ibi-ref is bald with a long kilt.

We think short kilt = prime of life while long kilt = old age.

Preparing for the Afterlife



👁️ Find the coffin and mummy of Djedmaatesankh, 945-715 B.C.

This coffin was made of moulded linen and plaster (cartonnage) that was decorated with bright paints and gold leaf. Djedmaatesankh's coffin is decorated with images of the Underworld found in the Book of Caverns. The sun-god appears in the form of a ram-headed falcon.

What does the practice of mummification and the use of various coverings, masks and coffins tell us regarding Egyptian burial practices? Ancient Egyptians preserved the dead through mummification, a process of drying the body with salt and various organic substances; they believed that the body had to survive intact in order for the soul to enjoy eternal life in the Afterworld; they designed coverings, such as masks and coffins, to protect the body physically.

Identify four major gods found on the coffin. What are they doing? Horus presenting the deceased to Osiris, Isis and Nephthys; the weighing of the heart ceremony by Thoth, Horus, and Sobek

Who would have decorated the coffin? A group of artists working under a master supervisor.

What were the paints made of?

Most pigments used by Egyptians were made of minerals.