Middle and New Kingdom Art and Architecture
I. The Middle Kingdom
c. 2040-1640 BCE

- Political authority less centralized
- Pharaoh/King’s powers limited
- Change in preferred tomb type
Rock Cut Tombs

• Different from the great pyramids of the Old Kingdom.
• Burial places hollowed out of the faces of cliffs.
• The various chambers, ornamental columns, lintels, a false doors, and niches were all carved out solid rock.
• Usually include an entrance, a main wall, and shrine with a burial chamber below.
• The walls of rock cut tombs were usually painted.
Beni Hasan Rock Cut Tomb
Rock-cut Architecture
Tomb of Amenemhat
Interior of rock cut tomb
Middle Kingdom Tomb Art

- Reveals much about domestic life in Middle Kingdom.
- Wall paintings, reliefs and even models of houses and farm buildings reproduce scenes from everyday life.
- Man of these models survive, because they were made from inexpensive materials and were therefore never stolen by grave robbers.
Bakers from Meketre's model bakery, and brewery
Middle Kingdom, ca. 1975 B.C.
Scribes from Meketre's model granary
Middle Kingdom, ca. 1975 B.C.
Model of a Riverboat, ca. 1985 B.C.E. Middle Kingdom Egyptian
Harvest Scene, Tomb of Khumhotep, Middle Kingdom c. 1928 -1895 BCE

• Common for walls of rock-cut tombs to be decorated with painted scenes of daily life.
Funerary Stele of Amenemhat I
2055-1985 BCE

- Table heaped with food.
- Guarded by young woman, Hapi.
- Family sits on lion legged bench.
- Both parents, Amenemhat and Iji embrace their son, Antel.
- Hieroglyphs identify everyone and preserve theirs prayers to Osiris.
Relief of Nebhepetre Mentuhotep
c.a. 2040-2010 B.C.E. Middle Kingdom
Middle Kingdom Sculpture
• During the Middle Kingdom Period (about 2201 to 1600 BC) Egyptian sculpture is often described as an attempt at realism and exhibits an interest in reality.
• Images of the pharaohs were not idealized to the point of being godlike.
• For the first time, the face had lifelike bone structure and expression.
• Unlike the idealized emotionless features of Old Kingdom sculptures.
• **King Nebhepetre Mentuhotep II**
  painted sandstone

Dynasty 11,
c. 2061-2010 BCE

This portrait sculpture depicts a powerful Middle Kingdom king who reunited Egypt and reigned for 51 years.
The sculpture had been ritually buried in his funeral temple at Deir el-Bahri.
King Senusret III
King Senusret III is a dynamic ruler and successful general. His portrait reflects not only his achievements but also something of his personality. He appears to be a man wise in the ways of the world. Perhaps burdened and saddened by the weight of his responsibilities. His portrait is more human and emotional compared to the Old Kingdom statues of Khafra and Menkaura.
• Old Kingdom *Khafra*
  – C. 2500 BCE

Khafra gazes confidently into eternity. He appears distant and detached. He is youthful and athletic. His face reveals very little emotion. His attitude is positive.

• Middle Kingdom *Senusret*
  – C. 1874-1855 BCE

Senusret looks tired even sad. Deep creases line his sagging cheeks. His eyelids droop and his mouth is down turned. His attitude is more pessimistic.
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Advice on being a leader from Senusret’s great great grandfather, Amenemhat I

- Fill not thy heart with a brother.
- Know not a friend, nor make for thyself intimates.
- While thou sleepest, guard for thyself thine own heart.
- For a man has no supporters, in the day of evil
Small Objects found in Middle Kingdom Tombs

Small statues

Jewelry
Statuette of a Hippopotamus,
ca. 1981-1885 B.C.E.
Middle Kingdom
Egyptian Faience

• Small figures like the hippopotamus
• Glazed in bright glass like colors
• Often small objects to be placed in tombs
Cosmetic Jar in the Form of a Cat, Middle Kingdom ca. 1991-1783 B.C.E.
Statue of an Offering Bearer
ca. 1985 B.C.E.
Middle Kingdom
Ritual Figure,
ca. 1929–1878 B.C.E.
Middle Kingdom
Pectoral of Princess Sit-Hathor-yunet
Middle Kingdom
ca. 1887–1813 B.C.E.
Pectoral of Senusret

- Type of chest ornament
- Made of gold with inlaid semi-precious stones.
- Discovered in the funerary complex of Senusret II in his daughter’s tomb.
- The design incorporates the name of Senusret as well as other Egyptian symbols.
- Two Horus falcons
- Coiled cobras, representing Ra
- The snakes are wearing the ankh, the symbol of life.
- Cartouche oval in center holds hieroglyphics of king’s name.
- Disk of Ra rises above scarab beetle, symbol of rebirth.
- Kneeling figure at the base supports a double arch of palms, hieroglyphic symbol meaning, millions of years.
Combination of images on pectoral yields a message: “May the sun god give eternal life to Sensusret II”
Tomb of Sennedjem, Thebes, ca 1200 BC. A tomb painting reveals planting and harvesting techniques.
II. The New Kingdom
   c. 1570-1070 BCE

The Golden Age of Egypt
The New Kingdom

- Most prosperous time for Egypt (political and economic).
- Tuthmose III was first ruler to refer to himself as “pharaoh”, extended influence of Egypt as far as modern Syria.
- Marriages between Egyptian and Near Eastern royalty helped forge a cooperative network of kingdoms.
- Stimulated trade and secured mutual aid in disasters.
- Extensive building programs along the Nile (Hatshepsut, Rameses II).
- However over time Egyptian influence beyond the Nile diminished and Egyptian power began to wane.
Great Temple Complexes

- At height of New Kingdom prosperity, rulers undertook extensive building programs.
- They built palaces, forts, and administrative centers.
- Early in New Kingdom the priests of the god, Amun, in Thebes, Egypt’s capital became very powerful.
- Worship of the Theban triad of deities - Amun, his wife Mut and their son Khons - had spread throughout the country.
- Temples to these gods were a major focus of royal art patronage.
- Tombs and temples were also erected to glorify the kings themselves.
Temples to the Gods at Karnak and Luxor

Two temple districts consecrated to the worship of Amun, Mut and Khons near Thebes

One at Karnak to the north and one at Luxor to the south
Temple of Amun at Karnak, c. 1294 - 1212

• Access to heart of the temple, a sanctuary containing the statue of Amun, was through a courtyard.

• Hypostyle Hall
  – A vast hall filled with columns
  – And a number of smaller halls and courts

Massive gateways called Pylons, set off each of these separate elements
Diagram of Hypostyle Hall

Clerestory:
Long row of window openings in the higher section of the hypostyle hall
The Pylons of the Temple of Isis
Hypostyle Hall
May have been used for royal coronation ceremonies
Pylon of Rameses II
Temple at Luxor, c. 1279 – 1212 BCE

- Rameses II enlarged the temple and added a pylon, a peristyle court, or open courtyard ringed with columns.

- In front of his pylon stood two colossal statues of the king and a pair of obelisks - slender, slightly tapered square shafts of stone capped by a pyramid like block called a pyramidion.
Temples for Rulers: Hatshepsut and Rameses II
Hatshepsut

Dynamic female leader in a period dominated by men.
Besides Hatshepsut there were three other female leaders of Egypt, including Cleopatra.
• Daughter of Thutmose I, Hatshepsut married her half brother.
• He reigned for 14 years as Thutmose II.
• After his death she became regent for his underage son, Thutmose III.
• Had herself declared king by the priest of Amun,
• Prevented Thutmose III from assuming the throne for twenty years.
In art she was always represented as a male ruler.
Sculpted portraits show her in traditional royal clothing: the kilt, a linen head cloth, broad beaded color, false beard, and a bull’s tail hanging from her waist.
One-Handled Jug,
early Dynasty 18;
reign of Thutmose III
(1479–1425 B.C.)
Colossal Sphinx of Hatshepsut, (1479-1458 BCE) Granite
Funerary Temple of Queen Hatshepsut
about 1480 BCE
Diagram of Hatshepsut’s Funerary Temple
Not her actual tomb, Hatshepsut was to be buried in the Necropolis known as the Valley of the Kings.
Hatshepsut’s temple, with its open spaces and grandiose architecture, projects an imposing image of authority.

It is a remarkable union of nature and architecture, with many different levels, and textures—water, stone columns, trees and cliffs.
Rameses II
1279-1218 BCE

Under the rule of Rameses II, Egypt became a mighty empire.
He was a bold military commander and an intelligent political strategist.
During his reign, Rameses II initiated building projects on a scale rivaling the Old Kingdom pyramids at Giza.
Abu Simbel located in Nubia, Egypt’s southern most region

• Location of Rameses II most awe inspiring monuments.
• Two temples were constructed there, one for Rameses and one for his wife, Nefertari.
• Carved out of the face of a cliff.
• Dominate feature of Rameses’ temple is a row of four colossal seated statues of the king himself.
• Each statue is more than 65 feet high.
• The actual interior of the temple is inside the cliff in the form of a man-made cave cut out of the living rock.

• It consists of a series of halls and rooms extending back a total of 185 feet from the entrance.

• The long first hall is 54 feet wide and 58 feet deep and has two rows of Osiris statues of Ramses each 30 feet high.

• Those on the north side are shown wearing the White Crown of Upper Egypt, while those on the south wear the Double Crown of Lower Egypt.
The temple was constructed in such a way that on the most important day of the Egyptian calendar, the first rays of the rising sun shot through its entire depth to illuminate a row of four statues-the king and the gods Amun, Ptah, Ra-placed against the back wall.
Inside Temple of Nefertari
Colossus of Ramses II

- 33 feet long, although the feet are missing
- A museum was built at the site to house it
Ramses II ("the Great") may be the most famous of all Egyptian kings. He reigned for 67 years and lived well into his 80s. By the time of his death, he suffered from severe arthritis, arteriosclerosis, and abscesses in his teeth.
Prancing Horse, New Kingdom ca. 1391-1353 B.C.
Harp, New Kingdom ca. 1390-1295 B.C.E.
Chair of Renyseneb
c.a. 1450 B.C.E. New Kingdom
Heart Scarab of Hatnofer,
ca. 1466 B.C.E.
New Kingdom
Menna and his family fishing and fowling
New Kingdom ca. 1400-1350 B.C.

Facsimile of a wall painting from the tomb of Menna, Thebes, Dynasty 18, ca. 1400-1350 BCE., by Nina de Garis Davies, 1924. Tempera on paper, 74 x 39 1/2
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