

Egyptian Achievements

Mummification

Preparing a body for the afterlife in Ancient Egypt was a long and complicated process. The Egyptians believed that preserving the body in death was important to keep their soul alive. The embalmers were priests who were trained in the mummification process. Mummification was a ritual, so the priests who participated were trained to perform the process with both surgical and ritual precision.

The head priest wore a mask in the form of Anubis. Anubis was the chosen god of surgeons, and for priests performing the mummification process. By wearing the Anubis mask, it symbolized that Anubis was watching over them to guide the ritual. The first step in the process was to make a cut in the abdomen, below the ribs on the left side of the body. They had to cut into the body to remove the special organs which were the liver, lungs, stomach and intestines. Once removed the organs were placed in canopic jars, which were inscribed with spells that would enable the organs to rejoin the body when it was resurrected.

After the organs are placed in jars, the brain must be removed. A long hook is used to smash the brain and pull it out through the nose. Resin was then poured in the head to keep it from collapsing. The heart was left in place because in the underworld, Anubis would weigh the heart and guide the soul. Every body part and rag that was used is placed with the body in the tomb. Then the body and organs were preserved with spices and dried out with natron salt.

The entire preservation took about 70 days. After the process was complete, the body was wrapped in linen. Death masks were placed on the head of the mummy around the bandages to be used as a replacement head in case something happened to the real skull. Special amulets were placed within the wrapping of the mummy to protect it. Finally, a “mummy tag”, similar to a toe tag, was placed around the mummy’s neck to identify it.

Egyptian Art and Science

Pyramids, temples and other monuments show the artistic ability of the Egyptians. Artists and sculptors followed particular formulas in style. This gave Egyptian art a distinctive look. Statues were made of kings, queens, scribes, animals, and gods and goddesses. Frequently, human and godlike attributes and symbols were combined.

Drawings depicted in tombs and temples are scenes of everyday living, models of people and animals, glass figures and containers, and jewelry made from gold and semi-precious stones. The wall and pillar drawings are perhaps the best known. In these drawings, it can be seen that people are going about the everyday business of baking, fishing, boating, marketing, and meeting together in family groups. Such drawings were also used to help the deceased to live forever by giving them all of the instructions they would need as they met the gods on their way to eternal life.

Egyptians also made advances in mathematics and science. They used geometry and learned how to calculate area and volume. This helped the Egyptians build the pyramids. They also developed a 365-day calendar. This calendar used three seasons each made up of four months. The seasons corresponded with the cycles of the Nile.

They were also experts in human anatomy. They used splints, bandages, and compresses to treat fractures, wounds and diseases. They learned many of these techniques from the mummification process. They had a basic understanding of the functions of the body, except for the brain and heart (which they believed served opposite functions). Some of the early medical procedures Egyptians used were embalming, surgery and autopsy.

Fill out the chart below discussing the impact of the achievements of the Ancient Egyptians.

Achievement	Description	Impact/Significance
Mummification		
Art, Science & Medicine		
Architecture		
Writing		

Hymn to the Nile

Greetings, Oh Nile,...who comes in peace to give Egypt life; hidden god who guides the darkness,...irrigator of the meadows...to give all animals life;...you feed the earth;...friend of bread and fruitfulness, benefactor of the grain,...

Lord of the fish, when the flood comes no bird invades useful belongings; you make the corn...If your level falls...the gods fall on their faces, men waste away.

...When you shine, the world is filled with joy, all bodies are happy, every creature has been fed, and every tooth can chew.

...(the flood) makes the grass grow for the cattle;...it takes hold of North and South, filling the warehouses, choking the barn, enriching the miserable...During the flood, the people shows its joy; every heart is happy...

Oh flood of the Nile, offerings are made to you, oxen sacrificed, birds immolated (burned)...

...Rise and make yourself heard, Oh Nile! Rise and make yourself heard, Oh Nile!

1. Why did the Egyptians consider the Nile a god?
2. What does this tell us about religious beliefs in ancient Egypt?
3. How did they express their appreciation to the Nile?
4. How did the Nile benefit ancient Egypt?
5. What do you think the last two lines of the hymn mean?

Meet the Pharaohs of Egypt

Menes- Aha is known by millions of people as King Menes of Memphis. He was the founding king of the first dynasty, and was the first king to unify Upper and Lower Egypt into one kingdom. Menes founded the city of Memphis, and chose as its location an island in the Nile, so that it would be easy to defend. During his time, the Egyptian army performed raids against the Nubians in the south and expanded his sphere of influence as far as the First Cataract. His death is a mystery, for, according to legend he was attacked by wild dogs and Nile crocodiles.

Amenhotep III was an 18th dynasty king who ruled at the time when Egypt was at the peak of her glory. He lived a life of pleasure, building huge temples and statues, but unlike his predecessors, encouraged realism in art. A rarity among Egyptian kings, he married Tiye, a non-royal. Most royal marriages are not ordinarily made of love because there is no political motive. But there is evidence of Amenhotep's genuine regard for Tiye.

Their son Akhenaten was an even more unusual character. He tried to change the Egyptian people to a concept of godhead which was both monotheistic and abstract. He worshipped the sun (Aten) as the one true god and it is possible that the Hebrew prophets' concept of a universal God was derived in part from this cult. He also introduced an entirely new and more intimate form of expression into Egyptian art. Among the surviving works of this period are the colossal statues of Akhenaten, the painting from his private residence, the bust of his wife, Nefertiti, and his mother Queen Tiye. These works are unique in Egyptian art; they do not flatter the king and his family but reveal the real people in all their beauty and decay. This artistic renaissance was short-lived because Akhenaten made himself unpopular by closing temples, and his lack of respect for other gods. Historians refer to him as the heretic king.

Queen Hatshepsut was the first great woman in recorded history: the forerunner of such figures as Cleopatra, Catherine the Great and Elizabeth I. Her rise to power went against all the conventions of her time. She was the first wife and Queen of Thutmose II and on his deathbed, she proclaimed herself Pharaoh. She denied the old king's son, her nephew, his inheritance. To support her cause she claimed the God Amon-Ra spoke, saying "welcome my sweet daughter, my favorite, the king of Upper and Lower Egypt, Hatshepsut. Thou art the King, taking possession of the Two Lands." She dressed as a king, even wearing a false beard and the Egyptian people seem to have accepted this behavior. She ruled for twenty years. Her successor became the greatest of all Pharaohs, Thutmose III, "the Napoleon of ancient Egypt." He had her name cut away from the temple walls.

Tutankhamen ruled from 1336-1327 BCE, the twelfth king of the 18th dynasty was only eight or nine years old at his succession. He spent his early years being tutored in many skills such as reading and writing. When he took control he was not responsible for decision making; that was handled by high officials. He died during his ninth year as king from a skull fracture. Some say he fell from a chariot, others insist he was murdered. His tomb was discovered in the 1922 fully intact.

Ramses II is the most famous of all Egyptian Pharaohs. He is believed to be the Ramses from the Exodus, when the Hebrews were freed from Egypt. He reigned for 67 years during the 19th dynasty of the 12th century BC, was known as "Ramses the Great". His glories surpassed all other Pharaohs, and Egypt reached an overwhelming state of prosperity during his reign. Not only is he known as one of Egypt's greatest warriors, but also as a peace-maker and for the monuments he left behind all over Egypt. He was the first king in history to sign a peace treaty with the Hittites, ending long years of wars and hostility.

Cleopatra was the last Pharaoh of Egypt. She was responsible for strengthening the alliance between Egypt and Rome. She is known for uniting her family with Julius Caesar, but this alliance was short-lived because eventually her alliance would end when Augustus Caesar declared war and won Cleopatra committed suicide, ending the Egyptian dynasty and becoming a new Roman province.

After reading the document, fill out the chart below about the Egyptian Pharaohs. Discuss their beliefs, their achievements and their downfalls.

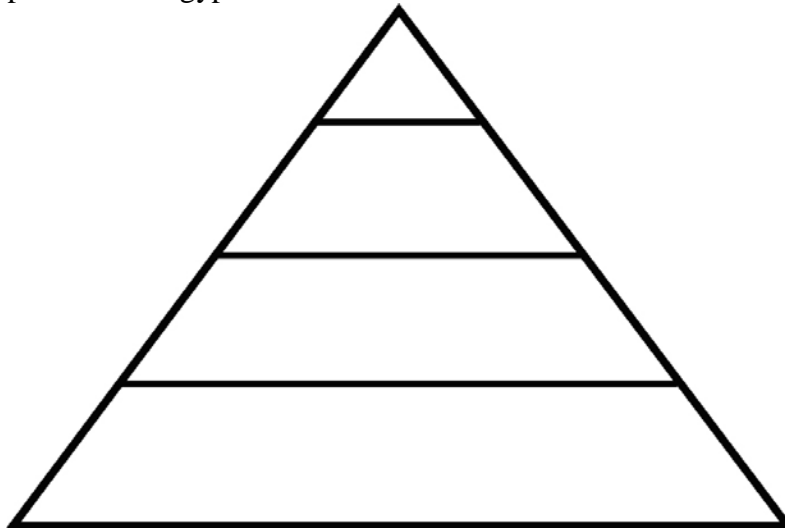
Menes	
Amenhotep III	
Akhenaten	
Hatshepsut	
Thutmose III	
Tutankhamen	
Ramses II	
Cleopatra	

Society and Daily Life in Ancient Egypt

Society in Ancient Egypt

Egyptian society was organized like a pyramid. The Pharaoh was at the top of this pyramid. Under him was a small upper class of the viziers, nobles and priests. Below the upper class were the merchants, artisans, scribes and tax collectors. Merchants traded goods up and down the Nile River. Some merchants were known to have traded with other countries in the Mediterranean. Artisans made many different goods, such as paper, stone dishes, painted boxes, wooden furniture, linen clothes, and gold, silver and copper items. Most of the people in Egypt, however, were in the lower classes. They were mainly peasants who farmed the land. They paid taxes from the crops they grew, and they lived in small villages. They also served in the military and were forced to work on building projects.

1. In the chart below, provide the Egyptian social classes.



Daily Life in Ancient Egypt

Ancient Egyptians had a positive attitude toward daily life. They married young, and a man normally had only one wife. Parents arranged marriages for their children. The main purpose of marriage was to produce children, especially sons. Only sons could carry on the family name, but daughters were valued too. If a marriage ended in divorce, the wife was compensated. Men were the masters in their houses, but women were well respected. Wives were in charge of the household and the education of children. They kept control of their property and their inheritance even after they were married. Some women operated businesses. Upper class women could become priestesses, and four queens became Pharaohs.

1. What is marriage like in Egyptian culture?

2. How are Egyptian women viewed?

The Course of Egyptian History

Historians have divided Egyptian history into three major periods, known as the Old Kingdom, Middle Kingdom, and New Kingdom. These periods were times of stability. Between these periods were times of chaos and invasion, known as intermediate periods.

Egyptian history begins around 3100 BCE, when King Menes united Upper and Lower Egypt into one kingdom. King Menes also created the first dynasty. A dynasty is a family of rulers who's right to rule is passed on within the family.

The Old Kingdom lasted from about 2700 to 2200 BCE. It was a time of prosperity and splendor. The monarchs of the Old Kingdom were powerful rulers. The most common title for Egyptian monarchs was pharaoh. The word pharaoh originally meant "great house" or "palace." The Egyptians believed that pharaohs were gods. By obeying their pharaoh, they believed that they were helping to keep their world stable. Pharaohs had unlimited power to rule their people, but they developed a bureaucracy to help them rule. A bureaucracy is an administrative organization with officials and regular procedures. The most important official was the vizier ("the steward of the whole land"). He reported directly to the pharaoh and was in charge of the government bureaucracy.

One of the greatest achievements of Egyptian civilization was the building of the pyramids. This took place during the Old Kingdom. Pyramids were tombs for the bodies of dead pharaohs. The tombs were stocked with food and other supplies. The Egyptians believed that human beings had two bodies, a physical one and a spiritual one. The spiritual body was called the *ka*. If the physical body was preserved after death and its tomb and its tomb was stocked with food and supplies, the *ka* could return. To preserve the physical body after death, the Egyptians used mummification. Mummification is the process of slowly drying a dead body to prevent it from rotting.

The largest of the pyramids was built at Giza around 2540 BCE. It was built by King Khufu and is called the Great Pyramid. Tradition says that it took 100,000 Egyptians 20 years to build the Great Pyramid. Guarding this pyramid is a huge statue, known as the Great Sphinx. It has the body of a lion and a human head. The Great Pyramid still stands as a symbol of the power of the Egyptians pharaohs.

The Old Kingdom eventually collapsed. It was followed by a period of chaos that lasted about 150 years. Around 2050 BCE, a new dynasty gained control of Egypt. This marked the beginning of the Middle Kingdom. The Middle Kingdom lasted until 1652 BCE and was a time of stability. During the Middle Kingdom, Egypt conquered Nubia and sent armies to Syria and Palestine. The pharaohs of the Middle Kingdom were concerned about their people. They drained the swampland in the Nile Delta to give the people more land to farm. They also dug a canal to connect the Nile and the Red Sea. This aided trade and transportation.

The Middle Kingdom ended around 1652 BCE, when the Hyksos invaded Egypt. The Hyksos were people from western Asia who used horse-drawn chariots. They ruled Egypt for almost a hundred years. The Egyptians learned some important skills from the Hyksos. They learned how to make bronze tools and weapons. They also learned how to use chariots.

Eventually a new dynasty of pharaohs used the new skills and weapons to drive out the Hyksos. The New Kingdom lasted from about 1567 to 1085 BCE. During the period of the New Kingdom, Egypt created an empire and became the powerful state in Southwest Asia. The pharaohs of the New Kingdom built new temples. Hatshepsut, the first woman to become a pharaoh, built a great temple at Deir el Bahri, near Thebes.

There were also problems during the New Kingdom. The pharaoh Amenhotep IV forced the people to worship a single god, Aton. He closed the temples of the other gods, and changed his name to Akhenaton ("it is well with Aton"). After he died, the new pharaoh, Tutankhamen, restored his old gods. But the problems caused by Amenhotep's changes led to a loss of Egypt's empire.

Under Ramses II, the Egyptians tried to regain control of their earlier empire, but they were only partly successful. During the thirteenth century BCE, "Sea Peoples" invaded the Egyptian Empire and it came to an end. The New Kingdom itself ended in 1085 BCE.

For the next thousand years, Libyans, Nubians, Persians, and Macedonians dominated Egypt. In the first century BCE, the pharaoh Cleopatra VII tried to regain Egypt's independence. But she was defeated, and Egypt became part of the Roman Empire.

Directions: Based on the reading, fill in the chart below.

	Old Kingdom	Middle Kingdom	New Kingdom
Time Period			
Rulers			
Achievements			
Decline			