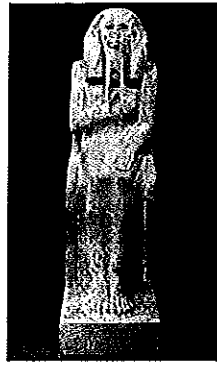
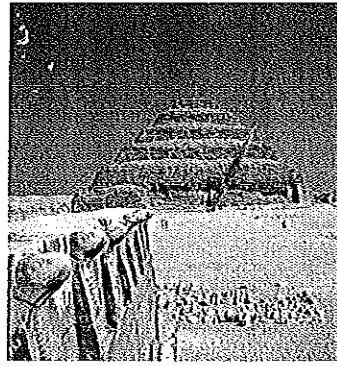


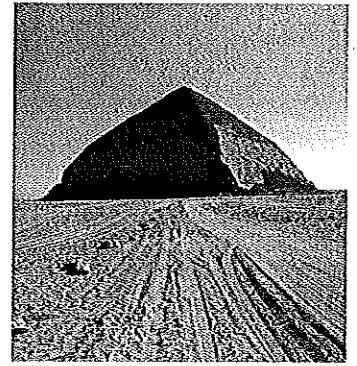
Pyramid text of Unas



Djoser



Step pyramid at Saqqara



Bent pyramid of Dashur

Prehistory

7000-3000 B.C.

After changes in the climate, more and more nomadic tribes settle on the banks of the Nile. Agriculture, cattle rearing

c. 3000

King Narmer presumably unites the areas of Upper Egypt (Aswan to Cairo) and Lower Egypt (Nile Delta) into one kingdom.

Founding of the state, administration, calendar

Invention of a script

Brick tombs in Abydos

Old Kingdom

2670-2195 (3rd to 6th Dynasty)

3rd Dynasty

Djoser

First monumental stone building: the Step Pyramid in Saqqara

4th Dynasty

Memphis becomes capital, administration is centralised.

Seneferu builds the Bent Pyramid at Dahshur.

Building of Cheops' pyramid in Giza

Building of Chephren pyramid and the Sphinx in Giza

Building of Mycerinus pyramid

5th Dynasty

Unas builds pyramids, adorns interiors with religious texts:

Pyramid texts

The first wisdom instructions are recorded.

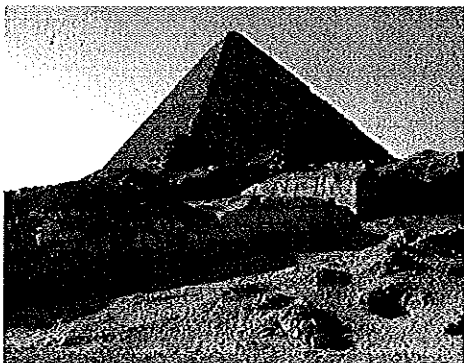
First Intermediate Period

2195-2040 (8th-11th Dynasty)

Anarchy, kingdom in decline, tomb robbing

It is questioned whether the state is the divine order.

Start of a diverse literature, harp songs.



Cheops' pyramid at Giza



Cheops



The Sphinx at Giza



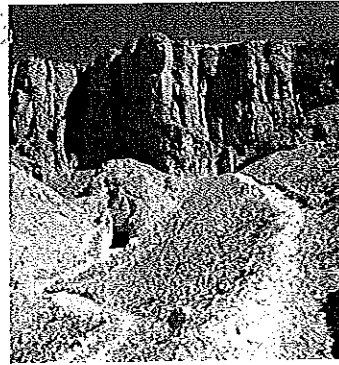
The Blind Harpist



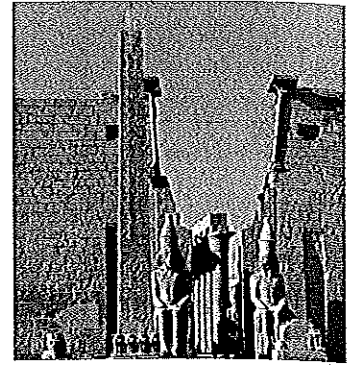
Pharaoh with horse and chariot



Tuthmosis's obelisk



The Valley of the Kings



The Temple at Luxor

Middle Kingdom

2040-1781 (11th-13th Dynasty)

11th Dynasty

Mentuhotep II subjugates local rulers, re-unifies Upper and Lower Egypt and makes Thebes the capital.

12th Dynasty

Amenemhet I-IV

Privately owned land becomes re-nationalised.

Campaigns against Libya and Palestine
Sesostris I-III

Conquests in Nubia

Significant literary works such as the Tale of Sinuhe

Second Intermediate Period

1650-1550 (14th-17th Dynasty)

Rule of the Asian interlopers, the Hyksos, in Lower Egypt (Delta area)

They introduce horses and chariots.

New Kingdom

1550-1075 (18th-20th Dynasty)

18th Dynasty

Amosis, Amenhotep I

Tuthmosis I and II

After driving back the Hyksos expansion, campaigns of conquest as far as Syria and the Euphrates makes Egypt a "world power".

Thebes becomes the capital and Amun the national god.

Temples of Luxor and Karnak, rock tombs in the Valley of the Kings

Hatshepsut

Temple of Deir el-Bahari

Tuthmosis III and IV

Like priests and officials, the military gains influence.

Amenhotep II and III

Kingdom and culture at its peak

Amenhotep IV = Akhenaten

Religious and cultural revolution, transfer of royal residence to Amarna

Tutankhamun

Transfer of royal residence back to Thebes

Horemheb

19th Dynasty

Ramesses I, Seti I

Ramesses II

Great buildings: Karnak, Ramesseum and Abu Simbel.

20th Dynasty

Ramesses III

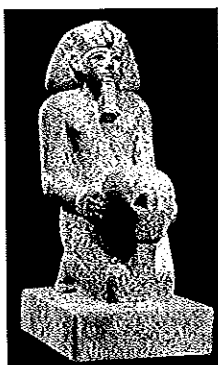
Unrest in Deir el-Medinah, village of the royal tomb workers

Ramesses IV-X

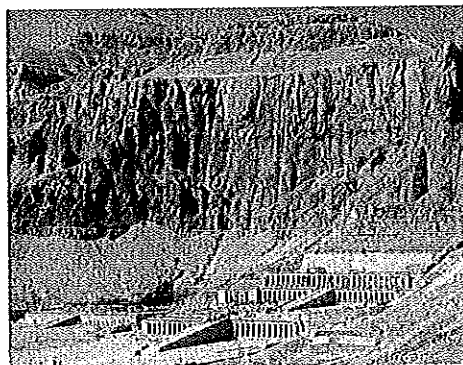
Ramesses XI

Tomb robbery trials, unrest

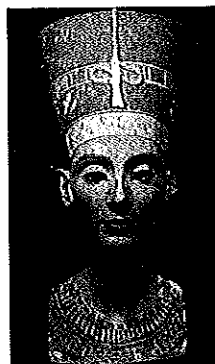
Tanis (in the Delta) becomes capital, Thebes under rule of priests



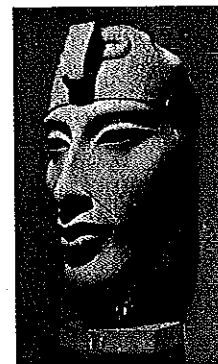
Hatshepsut



The Temple of Deir el-Bahari



Nefertiti



Echnaton



Tutankhamun





Cartouche

1. Hieroglyphic section
 2. Demotic section
 3. Greek section

The image shows a drawing of the Rosetta Stone with three distinct sections of text. At the top is the hieroglyphic section, in the middle is the demotic section, and at the bottom is the Greek section. A small cartouche containing the name 'Ptolemy' is highlighted at the top left. The drawing is a detailed representation of the original stone, showing its rectangular shape and the arrangement of the text columns.

Drawing and photograph of the Rosetta stone, key to the decipherment of the Egyptian hieroglyphs. The stone was recently cleaned in time for the bicentenary of its discovery in 1799, and the familiar black-and-white surface restored to its true appearance (shown here). The hieroglyphic section is at the top, the demotic section in the middle, and the Greek section at the bottom. One cartouche is highlighted (above).

𐎗 The single reed is an alphabetic phonogram with the approximate value *i*.

𐎎 The game board with playing pieces is a phonogram with the biconsonantal value *mn*.

𐎍 Water is an alphabetic phonogram with the value *n*. Functioning (as here) as a 'phonetic complement', it reinforces the sound of the *n* in *mn*.

These three signs are therefore read *imn*, which is normally pronounced *imen* or, more commonly, *amon* or *amun*. (Vowels are mostly absent in hieroglyphic spelling.) Amun was the god of Luxor, regarded as the king of the gods during the New Kingdom. Out of respect, his name is placed first.

𐎗 The half circle (familiar from the cartouche for Ptolemy) is an alphabetic phonogram with the value *i*. It appears twice in the cartouche.

𐎗 The chick is a phonogram with the value *w*, a weak consonant similar to the vowel *u*.

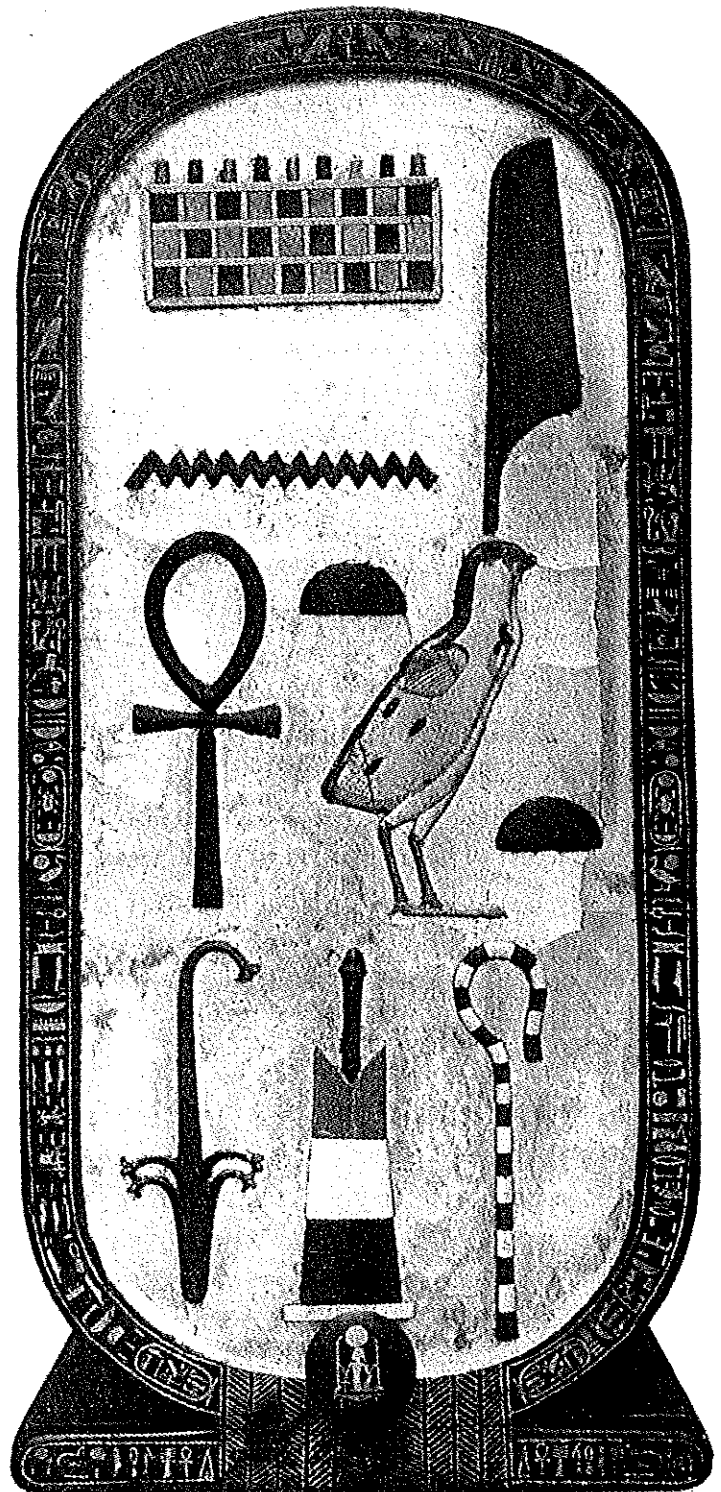
𐎗 This is the triconsonantal 'ankh' sign already seen in the cartouche of Ptolemy, meaning 'life' or 'living' (which later became the 'handled or eyed' cross, 'crux ansata', of the Coptic church).

These four signs are therefore read 'tutankh'.

𐎗 The shepherd's crook is a logogram meaning 'ruler'.

𐎗 The column is a logogram for Heliopolis, a city near Cairo.

𐎗 This is the heraldic plant of Upper Egypt. It is a logogram for Upper Egypt.



"Heliopolis of Upper Egypt' is another name for the city of Thebes. So the complete cartouche reads: 'Tutankhamun, Ruler of Thebes'.

AMARNA

There is little to be seen today of the ancient city of Akhetaten, which was founded by King Akhenaten soon after his accession in 1353 BC. Akhenaten (the prince formerly known as Amenhotep IV) had replaced the primacy of the god Amen as patron of the Egyptian empire with that of the Aten (the deified sun-disc) and had abandoned the capital city of Thebes – and particularly its great temple of Amen at Karnak – with its close associations with Amen, for a completely new capital city on a virgin site in Middle Egypt to be called Akhetaten, 'Horizon of the Aten'. The city was planned with everything the capital of the most powerful kingdom in the ancient world at the time would need: a central 'downtown' containing the main royal palace, administrative buildings and the great temple of the Aten. To the south and north of this central area were suburbs containing the houses of Amarnans of modest means, close to the villas of rich noblemen and the palaces of royalty. Although these were revealed only by a century of continuing archaeological work, the site was known to early travellers and antiquarians because of the fourteen rock-cut stelae (upright slabs or pillars) in the cliffs around the city, marking its boundaries and, to the east of the city, the tomb-chapels of the great and the good of Amarna, in-

The archaeological site known today as el-Amarna (or Tell el-Amarna) is the only Egyptian city for which we have any detail regarding its internal plan. By great fortune it is also a capital city, containing unique buildings and objects which are among the most famous from the ancient world.

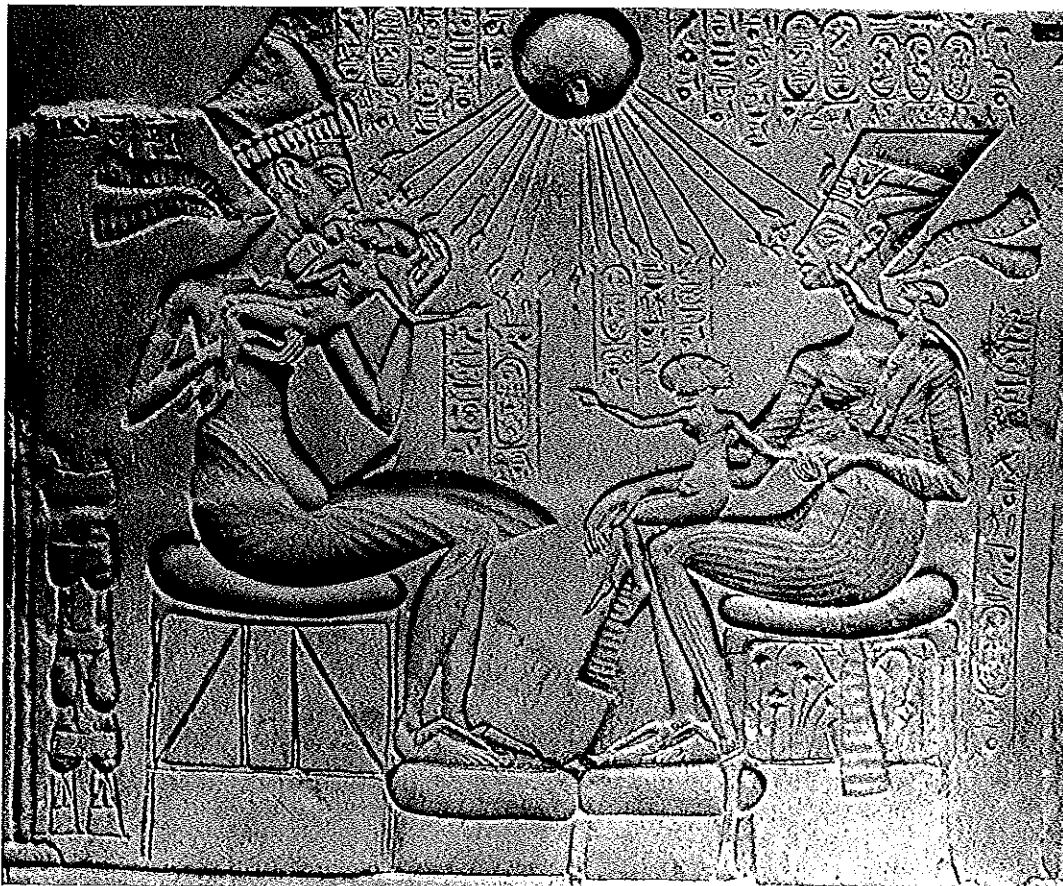
cluding the intended tomb of Akhenaten himself. On the walls of these tombs the strangely deformed images of the king and his family puzzled visitors, who had been accustomed to seeing images of

Egyptian kings as youthful and physically perfect individuals.

In 1887 a peasant woman was digging in the centre of what was the ancient city, apparently for *sebbakh* – degenerated mudbrick often used as natural fertilizer. In doing so she stumbled upon a cache of some 300 clay tablets inscribed with the wedge-shaped cuneiform script: she had discovered the 'House of Correspondence of Pharaoh', effectively the diplomatic archives of the state records office. The tablets, now known as the 'Amarna Letters', were written in Akkadian, the diplomatic language of the ancient Near East in the Late Bronze Age. The letters revealed Egypt's relationship both with her vassals in the Levant and with other kingdoms in



ABOVE: An 'Amarna Letter'. These small clay tablets, written in Akkadian using cuneiform script, document the relations between the King of Egypt, his vassals, and other great powers in the Near East.



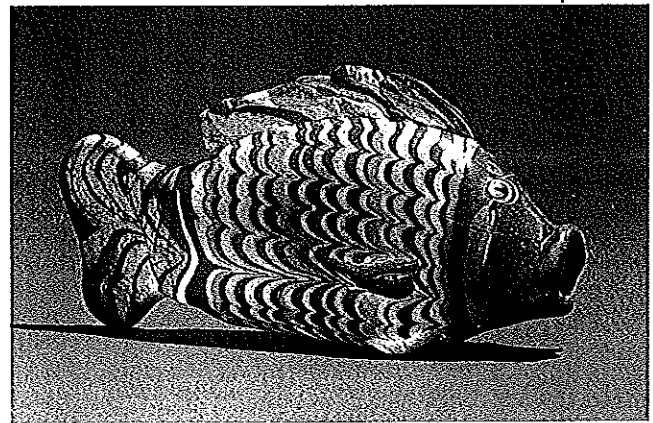
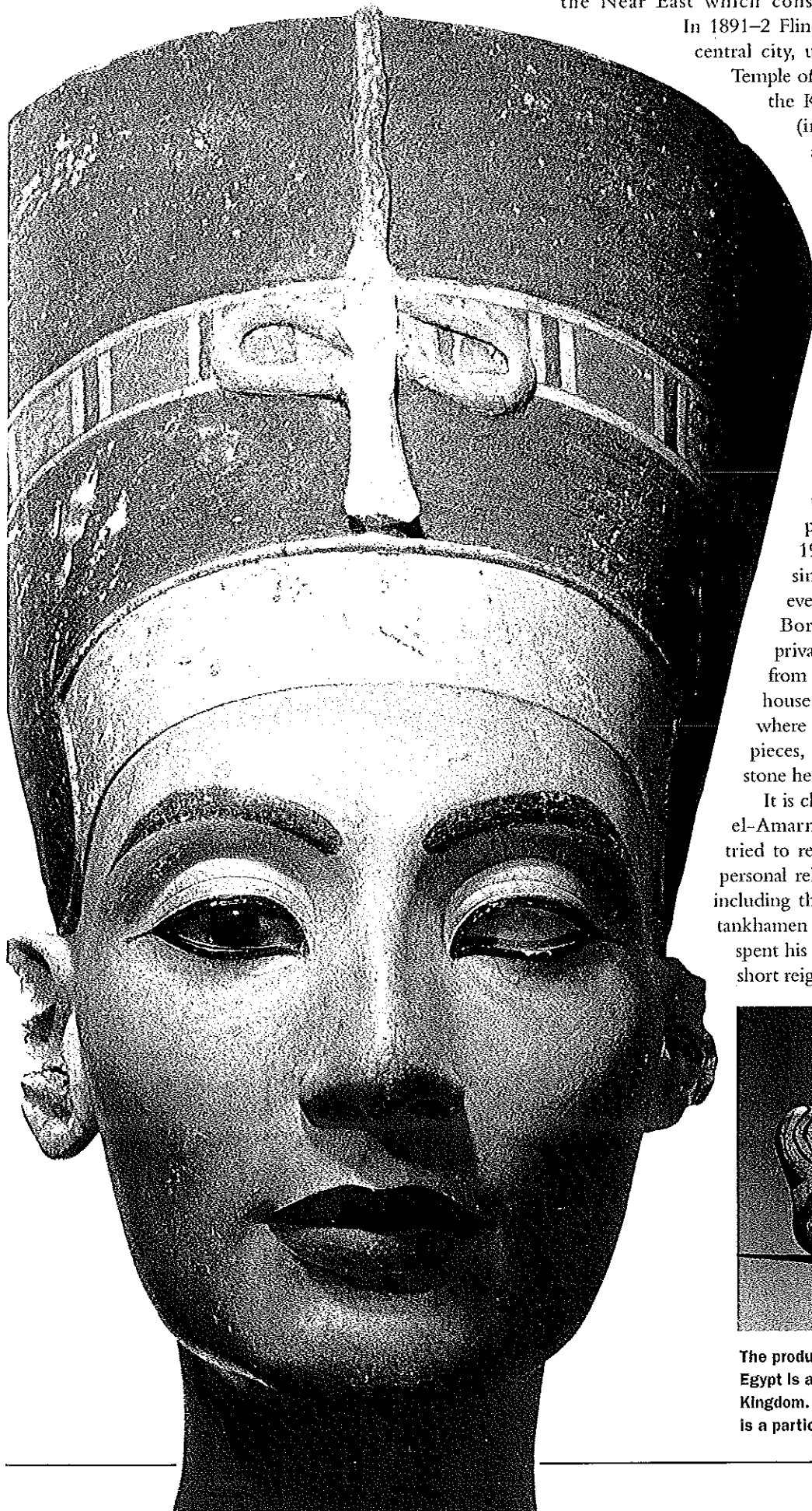
LEFT: Stone stelae recovered from private houses at Amarna, perhaps as objects of reverence, show the royal family sitting underneath the Aten. Depictions of the royal couple and their children in such informal poses are unique to the Amarna period.

RIGHT: The painted limestone bust of Queen Nefertiti. Excavated at Amarna in 1912, it was probably the work of the master sculptor Thutmose, and is one of the masterpieces of Egyptian sculpture.

the Near East which considered themselves her equals.

In 1891–2 Flinders Petrie began working in the central city, uncovering remains of the Great Temple of the Aten, the Great Royal Palace, the King's House, the Record Office (including more Amarna Letters) and a number of houses belonging to private individuals. The public buildings in the city were constructed quickly using unusually small stone blocks, so-called *talatat*, which were later reused in buildings across the Nile at Hermopolis Magna after Akhetaten was abandoned following the death of Akhenaten. Archaeological work in the city itself has continued sporadically until the present day, carried out largely by the Egypt Exploration Society, particularly during the period 1921–6. Some of the most famous single objects from Amarna, however, come from the work of Ludwig Borchardt. Digging chiefly in large private houses in the south of the city from 1908 to 1914, he excavated in the house of the royal sculptor Thutmose, where he discovered unfinished and trial pieces, most famously the painted limestone head of Queen Nefertiti.

It is chiefly by examining evidence from el-Amarna itself that archaeologists have tried to reconstruct the tangled history and personal relationships of the Amarna period, including the puzzle of the parentage of Tutankhamen (see p. 32) who, as Tutankhaten, spent his early life, and the beginning of his short reign, at Akhetaten. ■

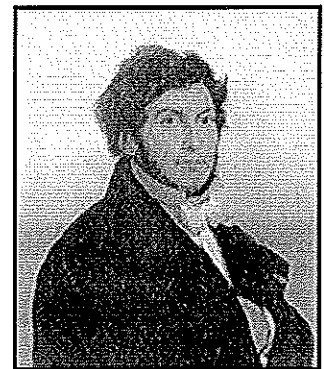


The production of elaborate glass vessels in Egypt is a striking development of the New Kingdom. This polychrome fish from Amarna is a particularly fine example.

Excerpts from
The Keys of Egypt:
The Obsession to Decipher Egyptian Hieroglyphs (2000)
 by Lesley & Roy Adkins

During the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries a number of ancient Greek and Latin texts had been discovered and published (becoming some of the earliest printed books), which revealed to the Renaissance world commentaries on **hieroglyphs** by Greek and Roman historians. **None of these ancient authors had understood hieroglyphs**, but they spread the false notion that the writing system (which largely comprises recognizable pictures of natural or man-made objects) contained **symbolic or allegorical messages** . . . In an age when literally everything—dreams, the landscape, comets—was analyzed for symbols that could be interpreted, hieroglyphs were seen as the key to true knowledge: ancient Egyptian religion was believed to contain prophecies about Christianity and **hieroglyphs to be symbols expressing the sacred truths** that could not be revealed in mere words, but had to be hidden from the uninitiated.

Over the next three centuries, the idea that hieroglyphs held **symbolic meanings rather than information conveyed by writing** in the form of words set in train a series of misguided attempts to decipher hieroglyphs, compounded by the ancient writers who implied that the Egyptians had used both a sacred allegorical script and an ordinary script . . . Unknown to early scholars, simplified cursive (handwriting) scripts had developed from hieroglyphs to enable faster everyday writing of the Egyptian language. **Hieratic** was the earliest such cursive script and was used during much of Egypt's history. As the Egyptian language changed over time, so did the hieratic script, until about 650 B.C. both the language and the script had changed so much that they are today given the name **demotic**. A script that is difficult to read and barely recognizable as a descendant of hieratic and hieroglyphs, demotic was also used on some monumental inscriptions, as on the Rosetta Stone, even though hieroglyphs continued to be employed. From the Roman period, a new script known as **Coptic** was used to write the slowly evolving Egyptian language and comprised a mixture of Greek and demotic letters of the alphabet . . . It was this Coptic language ['Copt' meaning 'Egyptian'] that was beginning to interest **Champollion**. In summary, the languages are:



Written script

Spoken language

Hieroglyphs (formal writing)
 Hieratic (cursive 'handwriting')

Ancient Egyptian

Demotic (from 650 B.C., used only
 for demotic language)

Demotic (late development
 of ancient Egyptian)

Coptic (from A.D. 250, used only
 for Coptic language)

Coptic (developed from demotic)

[Although] the Coptic language evolved from demotic, the written form of Coptic is completely different from hieroglyphic, hieratic and demotic scripts, consisting of letters of the Greek alphabet and a handful of demotic characters. For the first time, vowels were written down. [57-59]



Attempts at deciphering hieroglyphs had remained in limbo until the work of the savants participating in Napoleon's Egypt expedition became known, boosted by the discovery in 1799 of the **Rosetta Stone** . . . The Rosetta Stone is bilingual, having three inscribed texts but just two languages—the Greek is written in upper-case letters, the Egyptian was written in hieroglyphs (regrettably the most damaged part of the stone), and the third inscription was a later form of Egyptian written in the demotic script. Copies and casts of the Rosetta Stone brought back by the savants from Egypt had

already begun to be studied in Paris, and the Greek text had been translated. The contents of the texts on the Rosetta Stone are not in themselves important, or indeed interesting, being a record of a priestly decree in 196 B. C. setting up a cult of the reigning king, the Macedonian Greek Ptolemy V Epiphanes. Mainly consisting of a lengthy hymn of praise, it begins: 'In the reign of the young one who has inherited the kingship from his father, Lord of Crowns, great of glory, who has established Egypt and is pious towards the gods, triumphant over his enemies, who has restored the civilized life of mankind, Lord of the Thirty Years Festivals . . .' and continues in a similar vein . . . [62-63]

The problem of decipherment remained a daunting one, and it was exemplified by the texts on the Rosetta Stone: the text of the Greek script was written in the Greek language and could be understood, but neither the hieroglyphs nor the demotic script could be read, and nobody knew what languages or languages the texts of these two scripts were written in. To read the hieroglyphs it was necessary not only to understand how each hieroglyph functioned (whether it represented a sound [i.e., phonetic], an abstract idea [i.e., ideographic] or was merely a picture of what it represented [i.e., pictographic]), but also how it related to the language it was being used to record. Was it, for example, like the European alphabet that could be used for writing many different languages, or was it like the Chinese alphabet whose hundreds of pictograms can only be used for Chinese and some closely related languages? The relationship, if any, between the hieroglyphic, demotic and Greek scripts was also unknown . . . [95]

Questions [Based on handout, discussion, & documentary]

- 1) **What can the writing system called hieroglyphs tell us about the ancient Egyptians? Be specific.**
- 2) **In what ways are the ancient Egyptian hieroglyphs different from modern written English even though both are writing? Explain.**