



T6: Egypt: Middle and New Kingdoms

Decline of the Middle Kingdom

- Gradual weakening of **Middle Kingdom** led to **Hyksos** invasion around 1650
- Hyksos – “rulers of foreign lands” from West Asia
- New methods of warfare with horses, chariots



New Kingdom (1550-1069 BCE)

- After Century-long Hyksos rule, foundation of the **New Kingdom** under the leadership of Ahmose I
- Invasion of Syria and Palestine
- Increased military power with a standing army
- Nobles became courtiers or members of royal bureaucracy under the complete domination of the Pharaohs

New Kingdom (Cont)

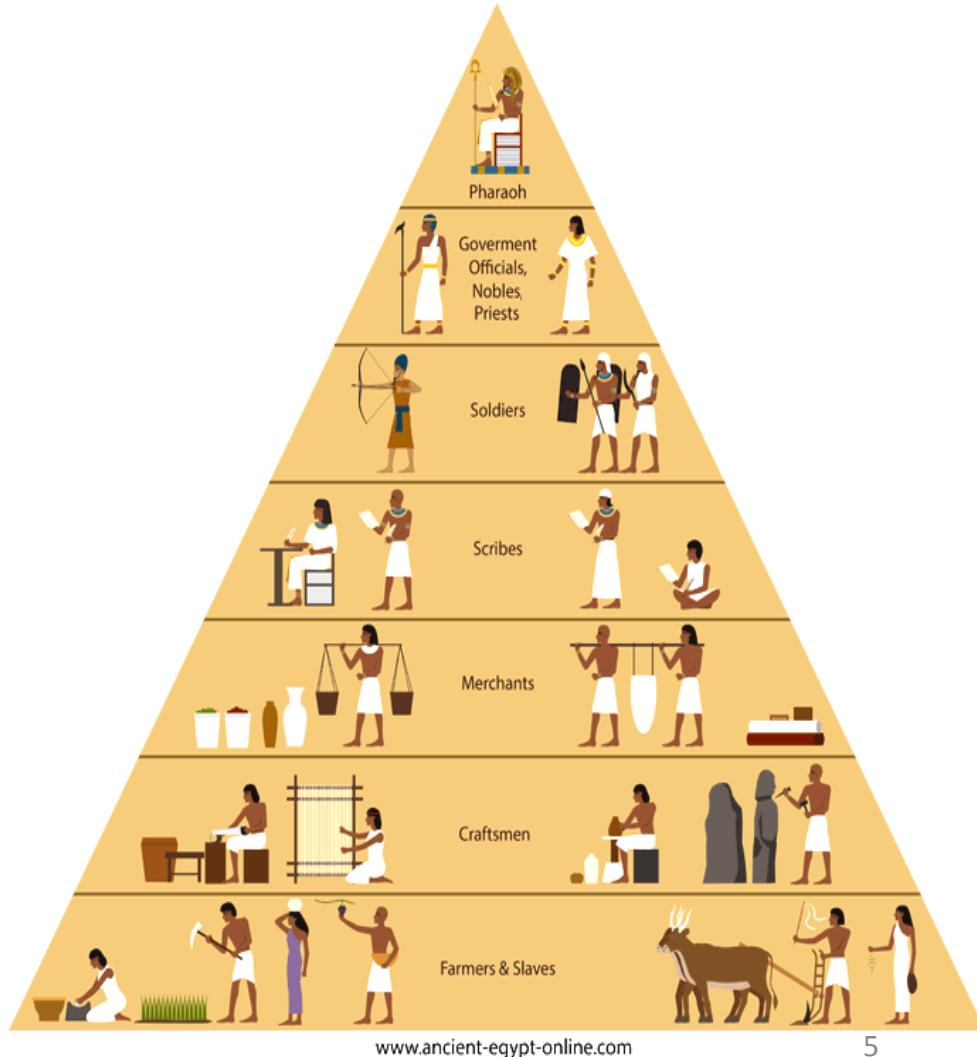
- **Ramesses II** (c.1303 BC - 1213 BCE) also known as (aka) **Ramesses the Great**
 - Most powerful and one of the longest serving (66 years) Pharaohs
 - Built cities, temples and monuments
 - Led many successful military campaigns
 - Signed the first known peace treaty in 1258 BCE with the **Hittites**
 - **Deified** during 30th year of reign (**Sed Festival**)



Ramesses the Great

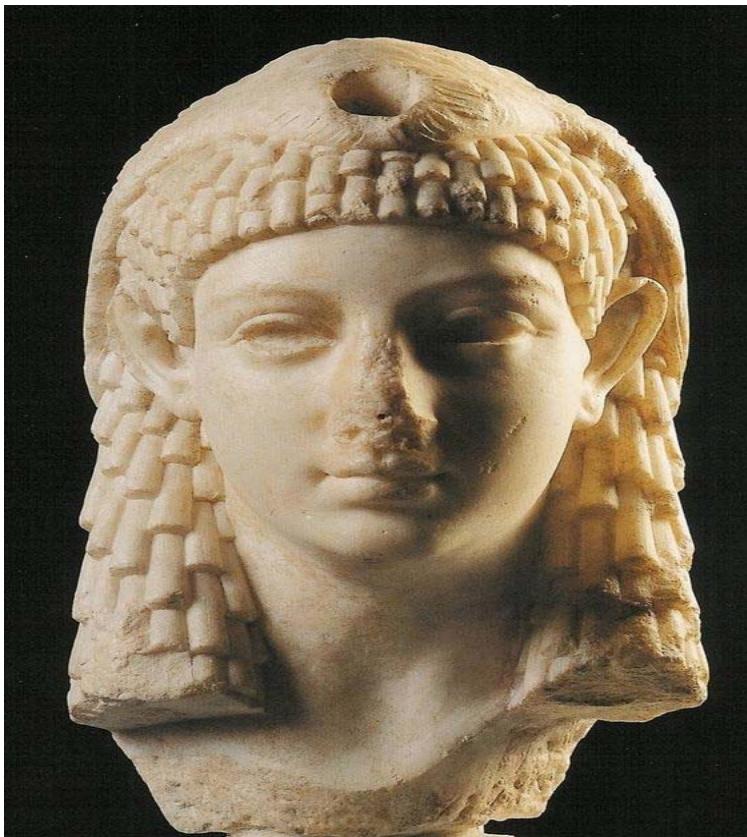
Society and family

- Class divided – male dominated
- Positions shifted over times
- Polygamy permitted - but basically monogamous



Position of women

Women were not entirely
subordinated to men - could
own and inherit property,
Engage in business



- Occasionally became rulers: Hatshepsut most powerful female Pharaoh of Egypt – ruled as her son's (Thutmose III) Regent (c.1479 - 1458 BCE) and Cleopatra ruled Egypt during 69 – 30 BCE

Economy

- Based on agriculture
- Trade with Crete Island and Lebanon
- Exported gold, wheat and linen fabrics
- Imported silver, ivory and Lumber
- Manufacturing of pottery, glass and textiles in factory; shipbuilding, division of labor
- Accounting and bookkeeping, deeds contracts and wills
- Dealings based on barter but sometimes gold or copper rings used as currency

Pottery and Glasswork



Pot



Glass Jars

DYNASTIC ANCIENT EGYPTIAN COSMETIC JARS

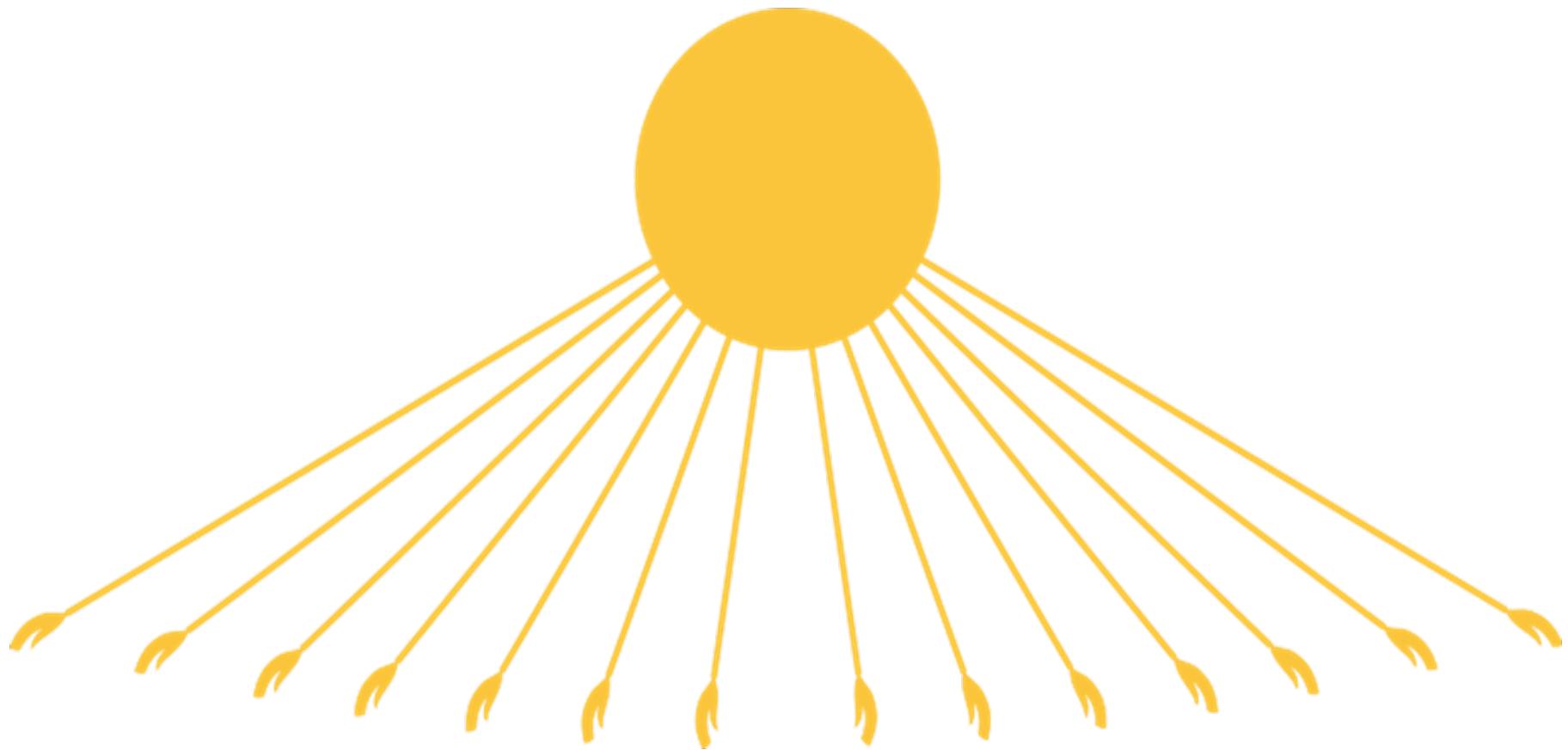
Religion

- Evolution: Polytheism – Monotheism – Polytheism; initially each city had its local deities
- Unification of the country brought a fusion of deities
- Pharaoh Amenhotep IV (Akhenaten) and his queen **Nefertiti** worshipped **Aten**, god of the Sun disk – Attempt to replace **Polytheism** with **Monotheism**
- Powers of nature fused into god Osiris
- Not accepted by the priests and the people
- Tutankhamen restored polytheism

Akhenaten and Nefertiti

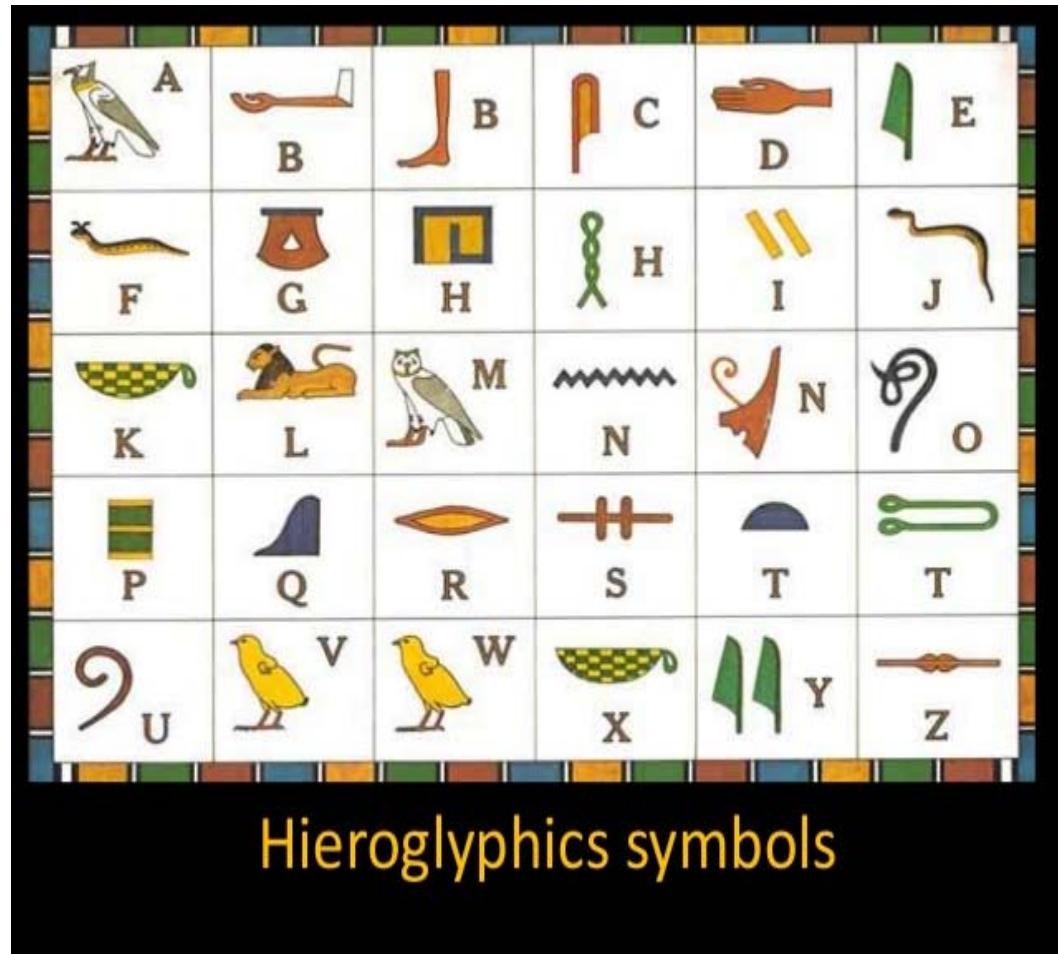


Aten (Aton)

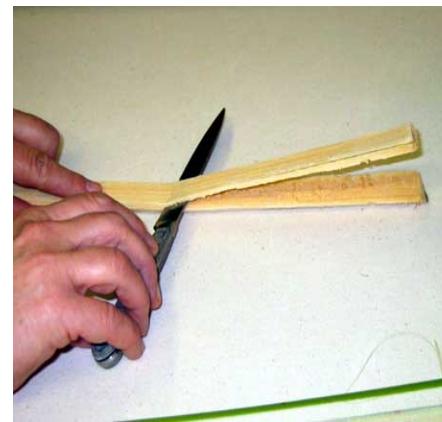
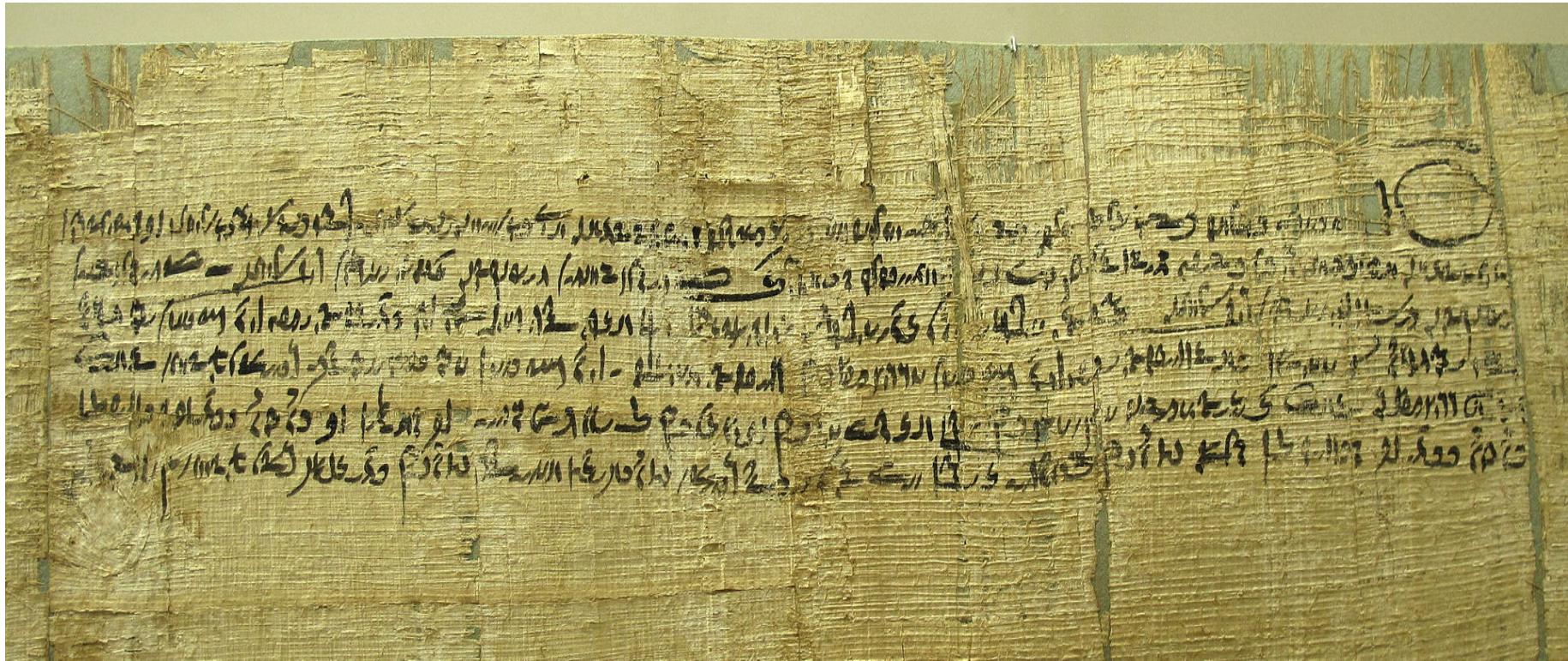


Achievements: writing system

- Hieroglyphic and Demotic scripts
- Three stages of development:
 - Pictographic
 - Syllabic
 - Alphabetic



Demotic (Cursive) Script on papyrus



Architecture and sculpture

Sphinx

Head of Pharaoh on
the body of a lion
symbolizing his
strength and
courage



Painting



Nefertari, wife of Ramesses II



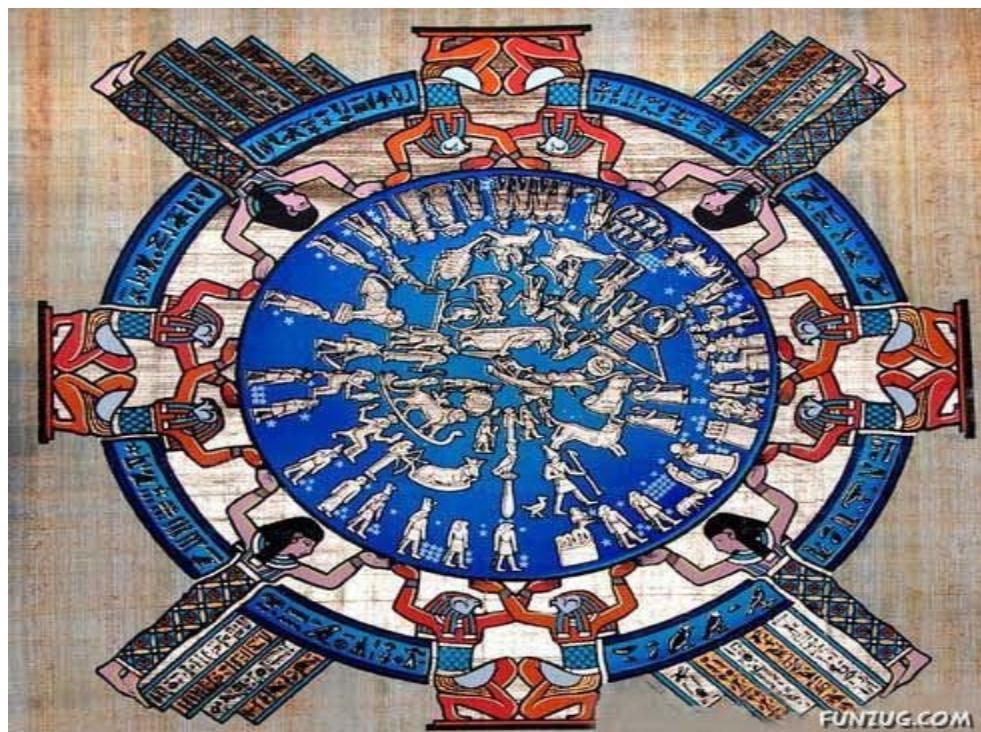
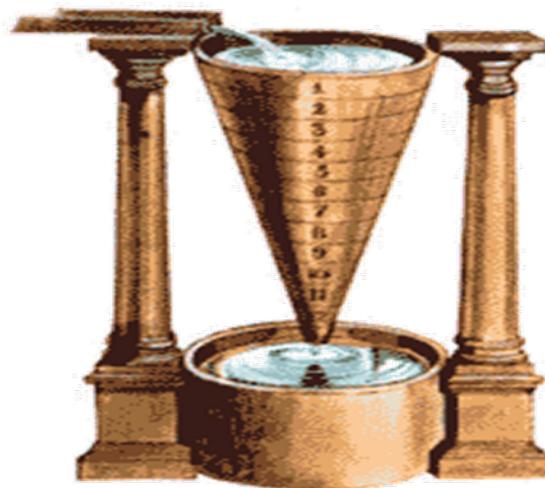
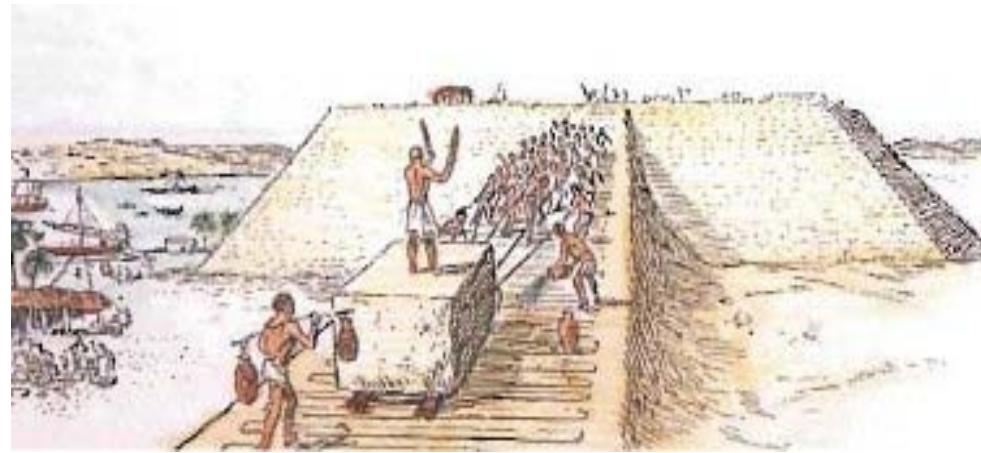
Painting



Other achievements

- Good understanding of mathematics and geometry - decimal system : 1, 10, 100, etc.
- Solar calendar instead of inaccurate lunar
- water clocks, ramp, lever etc.
- Mummification

Ramp, water clock, lever and solar calendar



Sarcophage of a mummy



Photo taken by M A Kawser at Louvre Museum, Paris

Sarcophagus of Ramses III

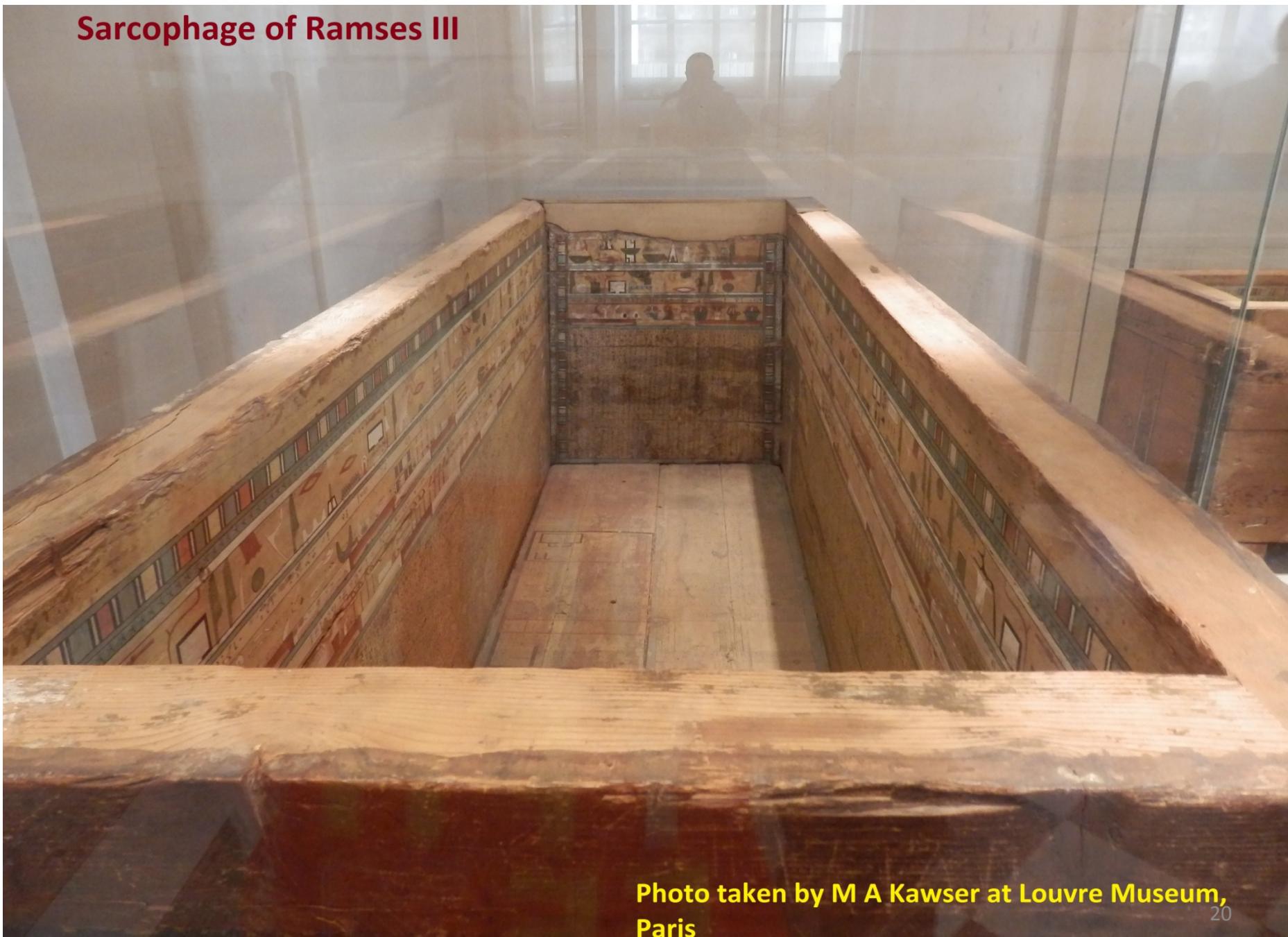


Photo taken by M A Kawser at Louvre Museum,
Paris

Study Questions

- Why did the Middle Kingdom decline?
- What changes were brought about during the New Kingdom?
- What made Ramesses II an exceptional Pharaoh?
- Do you think that Egyptian women were better off than their Sumerian counterpart?
- Who was Hatshepsut?
- What were the main features of Egyptian economy?
- What kind of religion did the Egyptians follow?
- Briefly narrate the writing system in ancient Egypt.
- How developed was ancient Egyptian art and architecture?
- What were the scientific inventions in ancient Egypt?
- How was mummification done?

Thank You