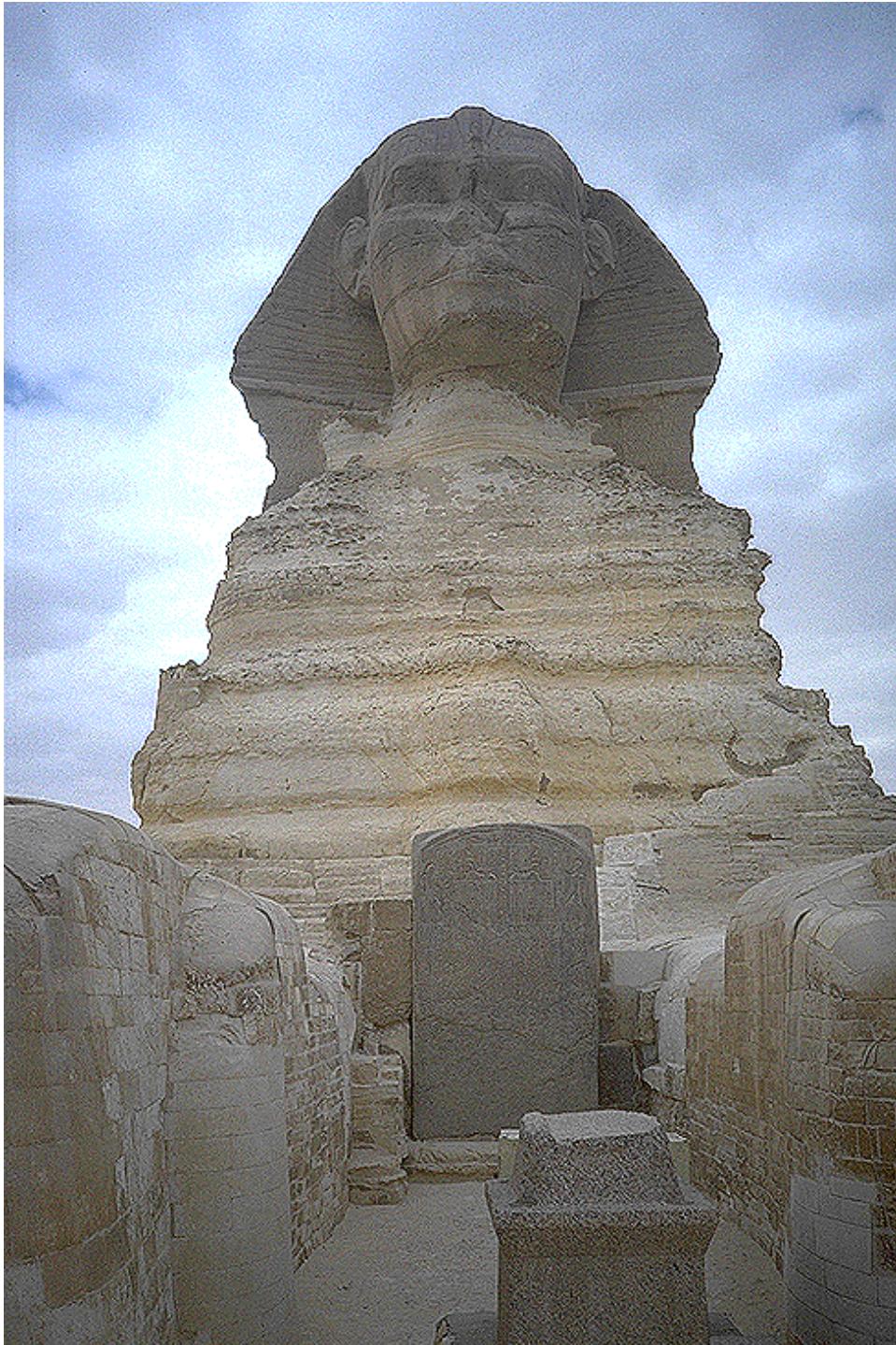


# Egyptian Art





## Nature of Egyptian Art:

- Rich
- Rigid
- Conservative

*Art from 3000 - 500BC have certain sameness.*

The basic patterns of Egyptian institutions, beliefs and artistic ideas formed during the first few centuries of that vast span.



In the ancient societies the king based his authority by:  
**claiming the power as gift of Supernatural forces.**

*In Egypt the Pharaoh or the king, went steps further.*

**He ruled:**

**“BY THE GRACE OF GOD”,**

**“IN THE NAME OF GOD”**, embodying the divine will in  
his own person assuming the status of a deity himself  
and enjoyed a great obedience from his subjects.

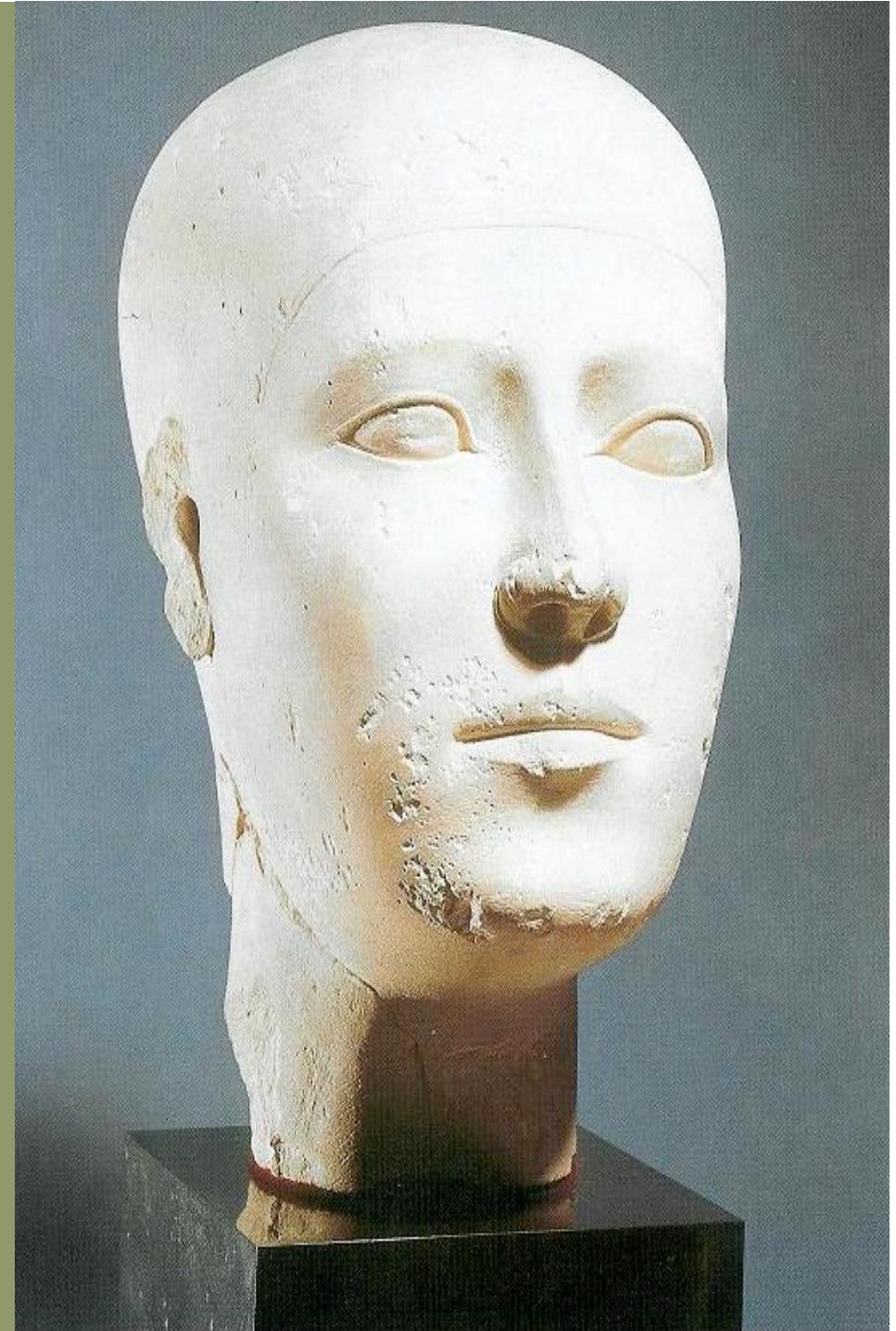


## How?

With the aid of favored ruling elite or the aristocracy, to whom he delegates some authority.

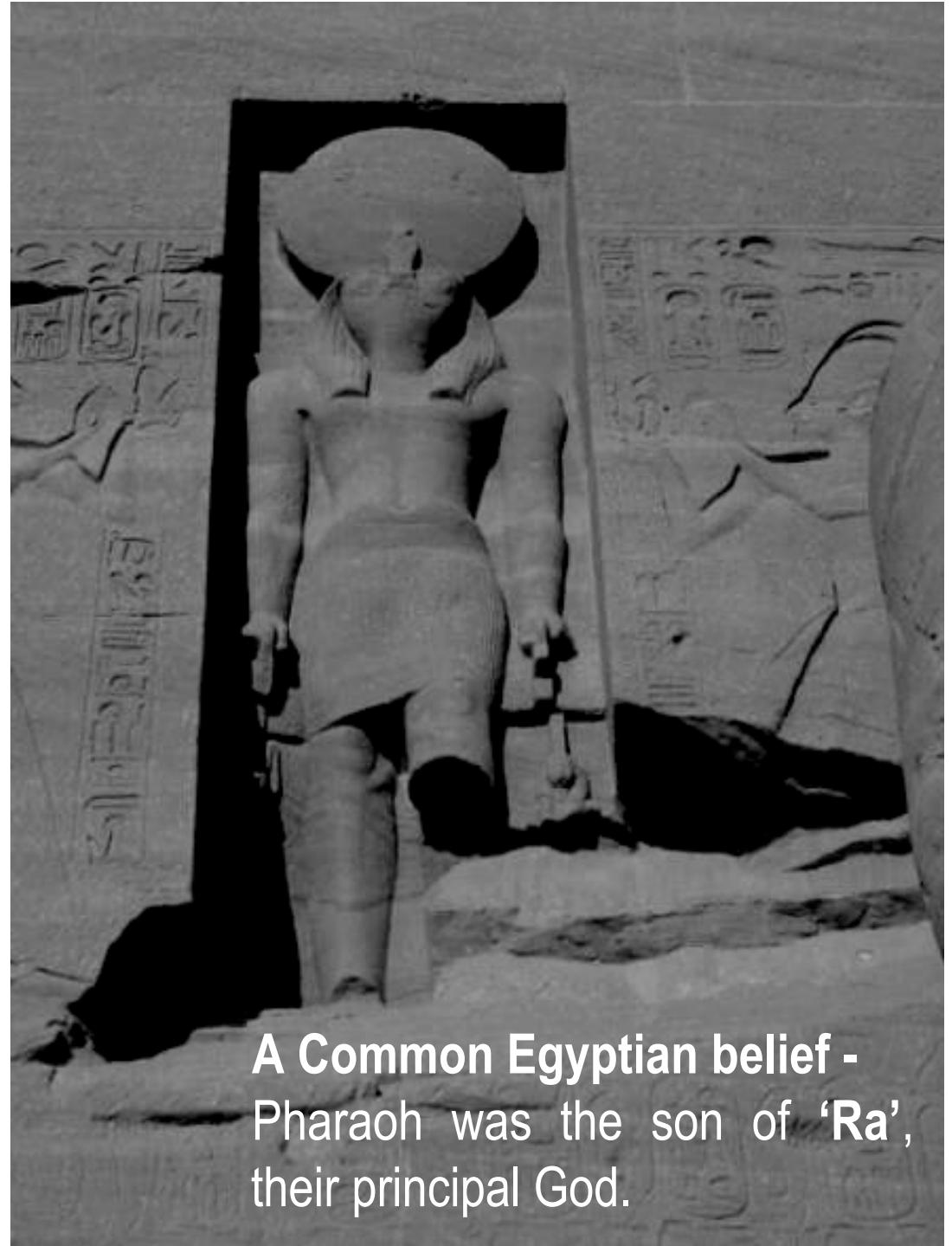
They enforced security and order among the common mass, which in return supported the aristocracy and the royal court by contributing a share of its goods and services.

For ***PHARAOH*** kingship was not a duty or privilege derived from the supernatural sources. Pharaoh's considered them selves absolutely divine.





However absurd and ineffective in practice at the times of political disturbances but this is particularly important for us, because it largely determines the character of Egyptian art.



A Common Egyptian belief -  
Pharaoh was the son of 'Ra',  
their principal God.

Knowledge of Egypt rests entirely on the Pyramids and their contents.

Pyramids built to last forever.

The dark fear of the spirits of the dead, which dominated the primitive ancestor cults, replaced here by quite a new and different meaning.



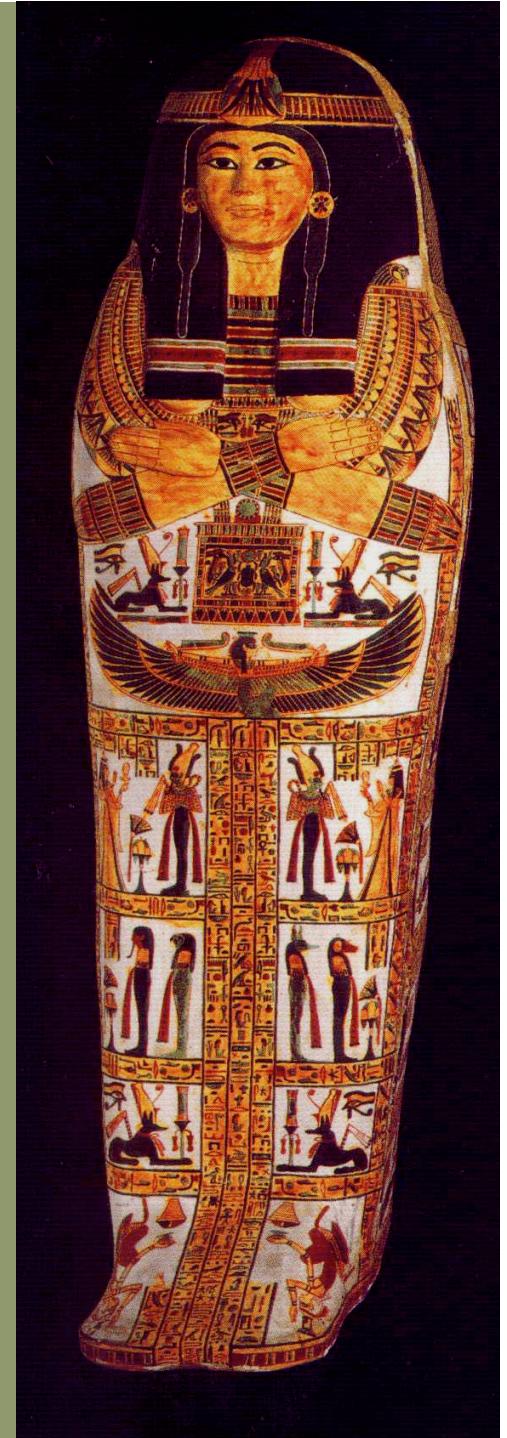


Egyptian art initiated for the dead. Created to provide something for afterlife.



Graves equipped as a replica of their daily environment, for their spirit (RA) to enjoy. Grave was regarded as a deceased person's home for all eternity.

Making sure to provide RA a body to dwell in (his own mummified corpse or, if that is destroyed –a statue of himself).

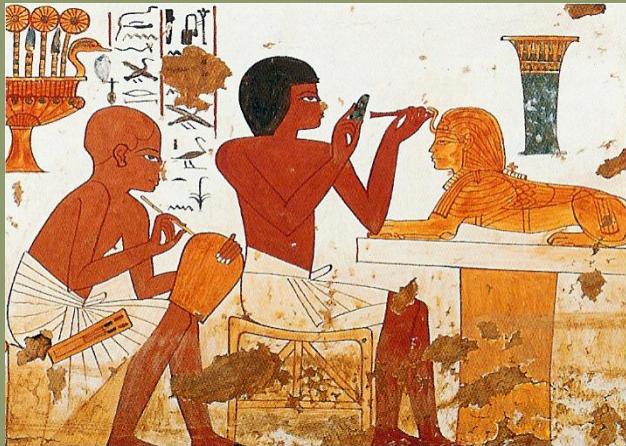


The Egyptian style of art comprised a set of very strict laws, which every artist had to learn from his earliest youth.

In this theocratic governing system the artists did not enjoy the freedom to express themselves.

The canons imposed (particularly to the representation of human figures) by the priests had to be followed respectfully.

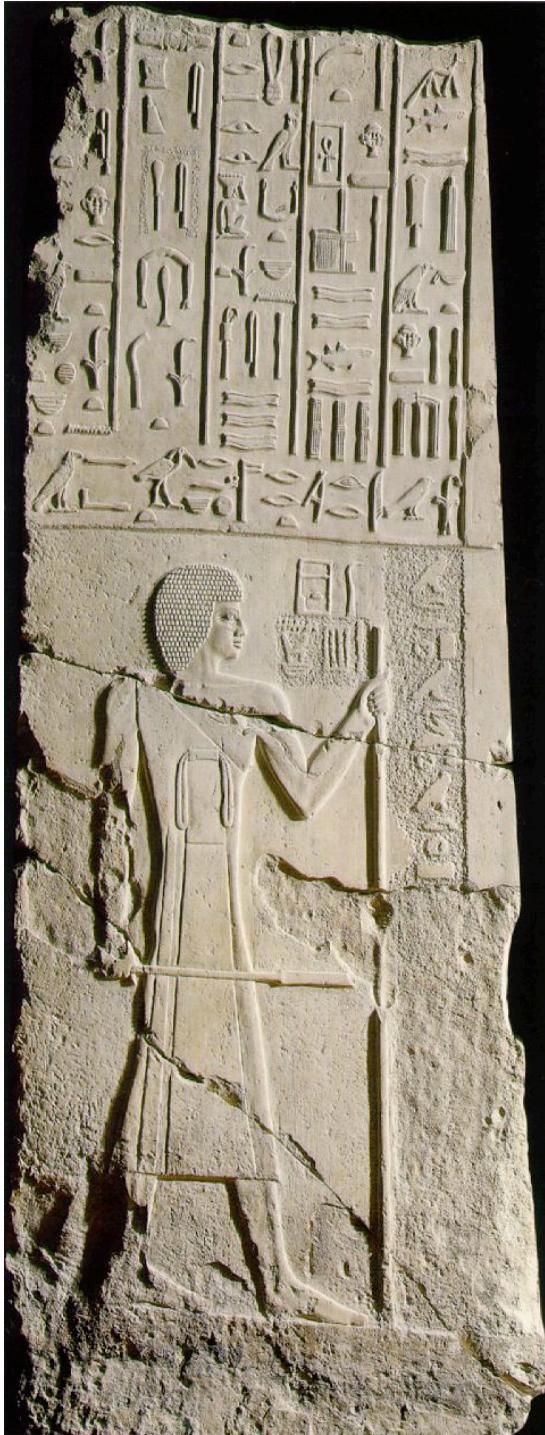




Chief idea in the whole of Egyptian art: Everything had to be represented from its most characteristic angle.



Egyptian art is not based on what the artist could see at a given point, but rather on what he knew belonged to a person or a scene.



## Canons for painting

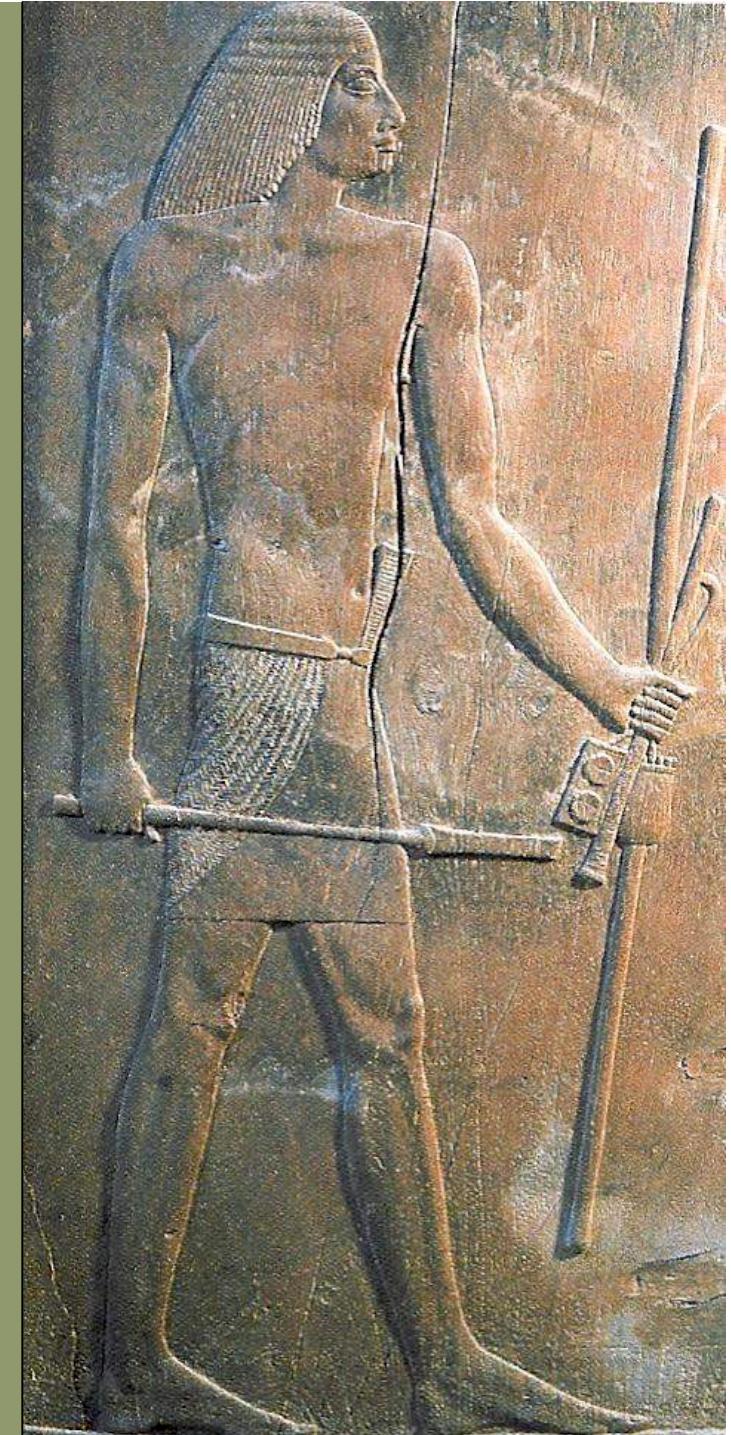
Men to be painted with darker skin color than women.

Pharaohs and queens to be always thin, beautiful and young.

Face in profile with a frontal eye.

Regular propositions in the body measures:

The body to be four shoulders long





## Canons for painting

Men's shoulders to be 6  
fists wide

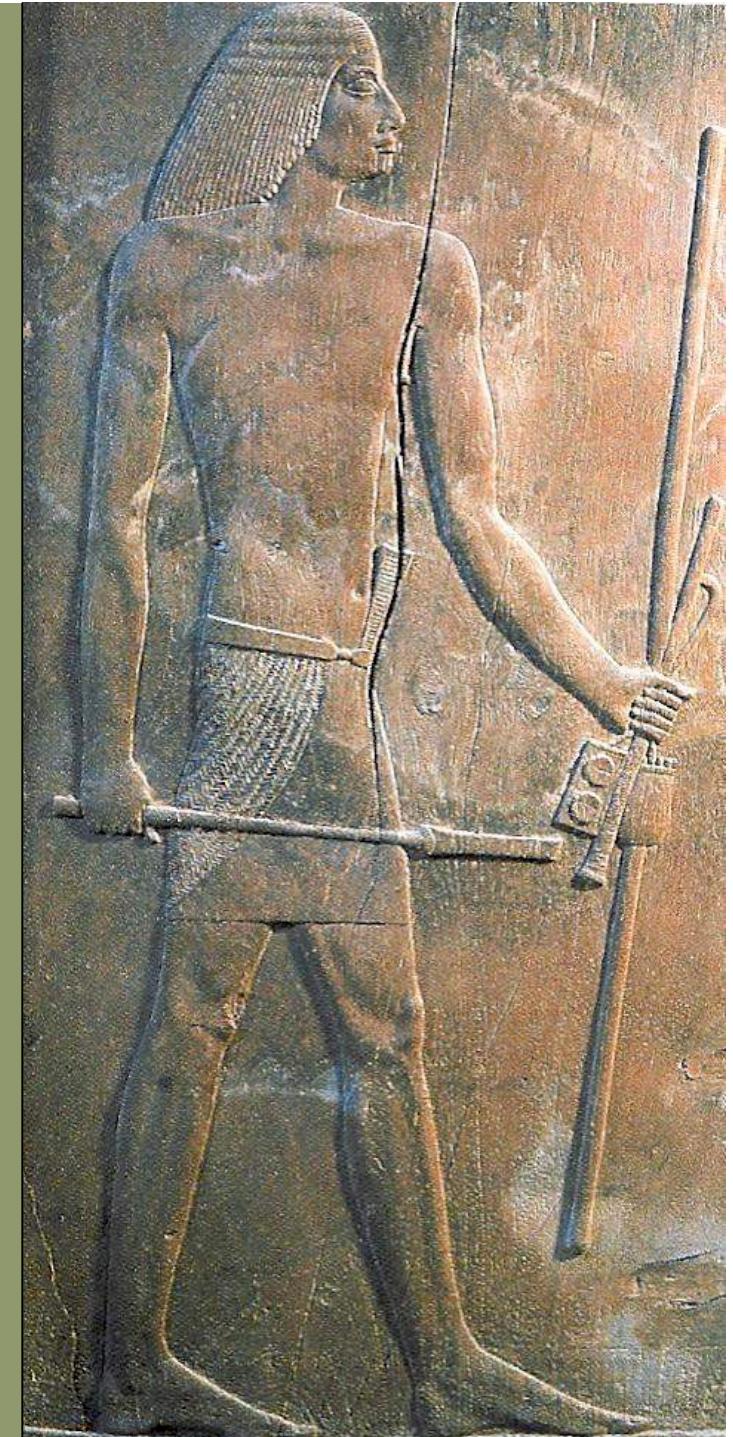
Women's shoulder to be  
5 fists wide.

Frontal view of shoulders

The naval to either edge

Side view of the middle  
half of body

Feet in profile on toes



## Reasoning the idea on human representation



The features of a head are most easily realized in profile (the skull, the nose, the chin etc) so they drew it sideways.

Human eye is better realized as seen from the front - accordingly one eye as seen from a frontal view was planted into the side view of the face.



In the top half of the body, if the shoulder and the chest are seen from the front, we see how the arms are hinged to the body. Arm and leg movements are most clearly seen sideways.

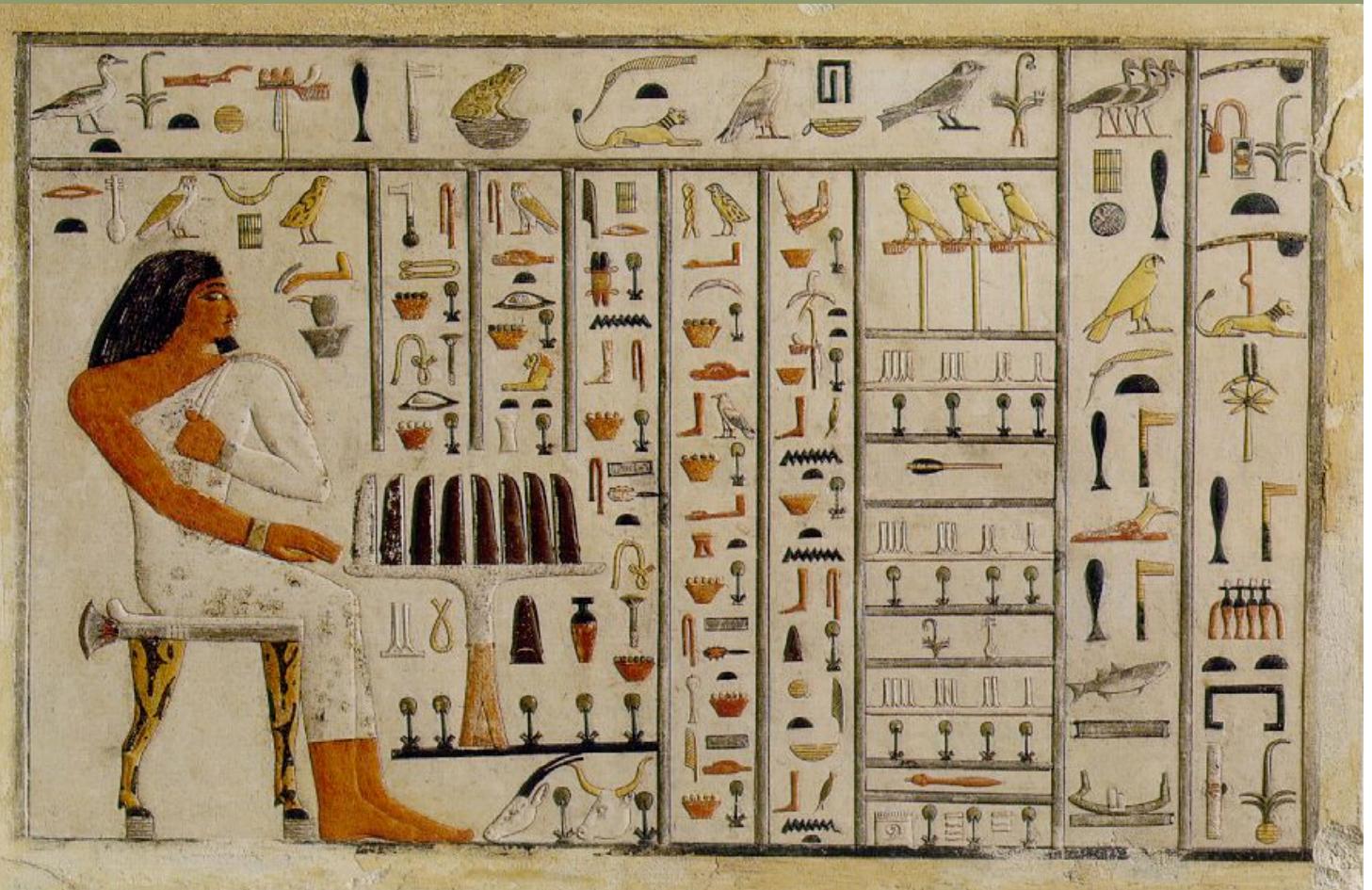


Artists and artisans merely followed a set of rules which allowed them to include everything in the human form that they considered important

Egyptian art was meant to be seen by no one but the dead man's soul.

Such compulsion of the rules laid down in the canons had to do with the magic purpose that the paintings were believed to serve.

Art works were not intended to be enjoyed or done for pleasure.





## Ancient Custom of Sacrificing Slaves

In the distant past it had been the custom that when a powerful man died his servants and slaves were sacrificed so that they could accompany their master into the grave, and serve him even after life.



Later these horrors were considered either too cruel or too costly and art came to the rescue. Instead of real servants, the dead souls were given images as substitutes.



Painted images and models found in the Pyramids with the idea of providing the dead with the earthly pleasures that he once enjoyed and documenting important incidents of his life.

Relief sculptures and wall paintings provide a vivid picture of life as it was lived in the Egypt. Yet looking at them first time one feels confused and puzzled.

Paintings had a different purpose to serve altogether was the reason why Egyptian painters represented real life in a different way.

What mattered was not prettiness but completeness.

Artist's task to preserve everything as clearly and permanently possible.

**Some thing that they rarely did -**

Sketch nature as it appeared to them from any given angle or points.

Use the methods of scientific perspective for object placements in a given space.

## Drew from:

- Memory
- According to strict rules
- Ensured that the objects represented stand out sharply in perfect clarity.
- Mapmakers tendency.
- *The children often employ similar methods when they are asked to draw. Although the Egyptians were much more consistent in their application of such methods.*

## Multiple viewpoints



The complete view and shape of the pond visible only if seen from above.

## Multiple viewpoints



The shape and the character of the trees to be seen clearly from the sides.

## Multiple viewpoints



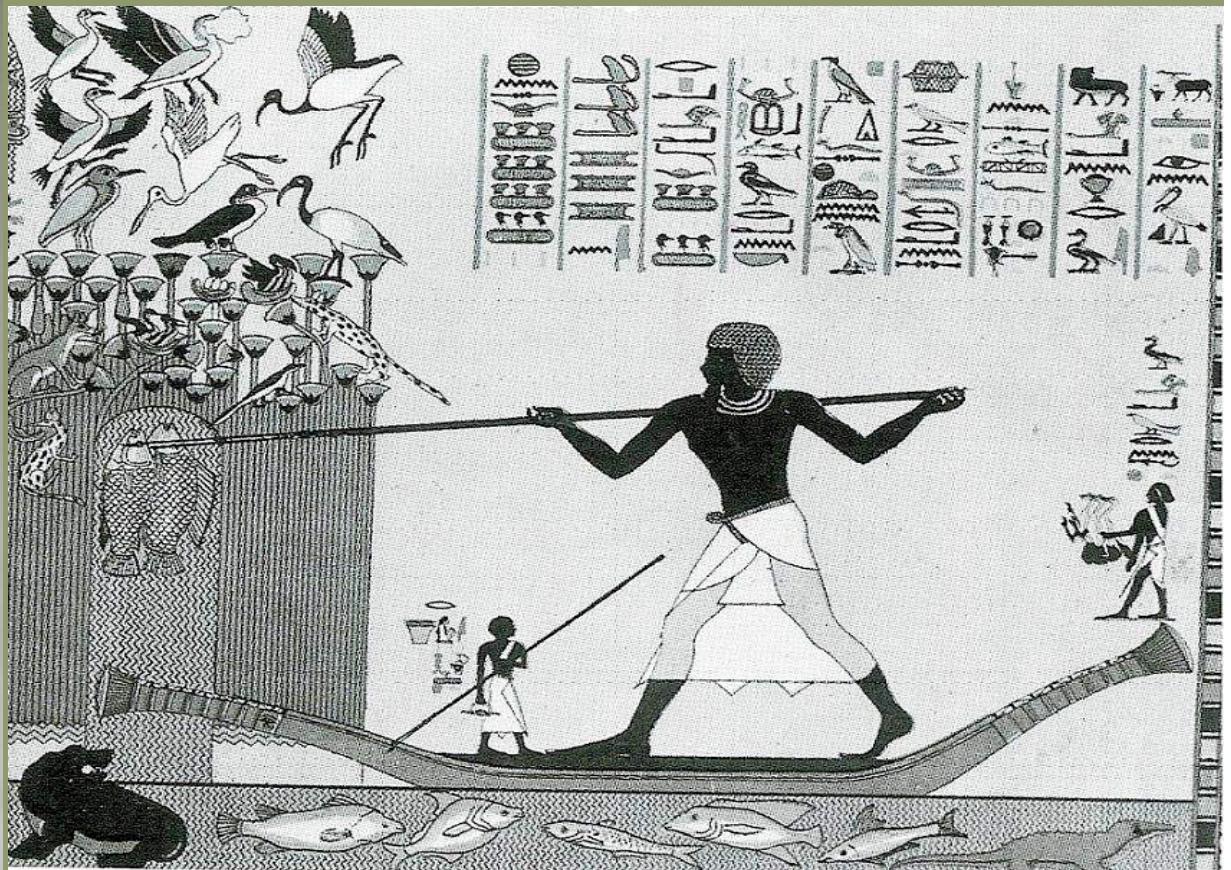
The fishes and birds in the pond, could hardly be recognize if seen from above, so they were drawn in profile.

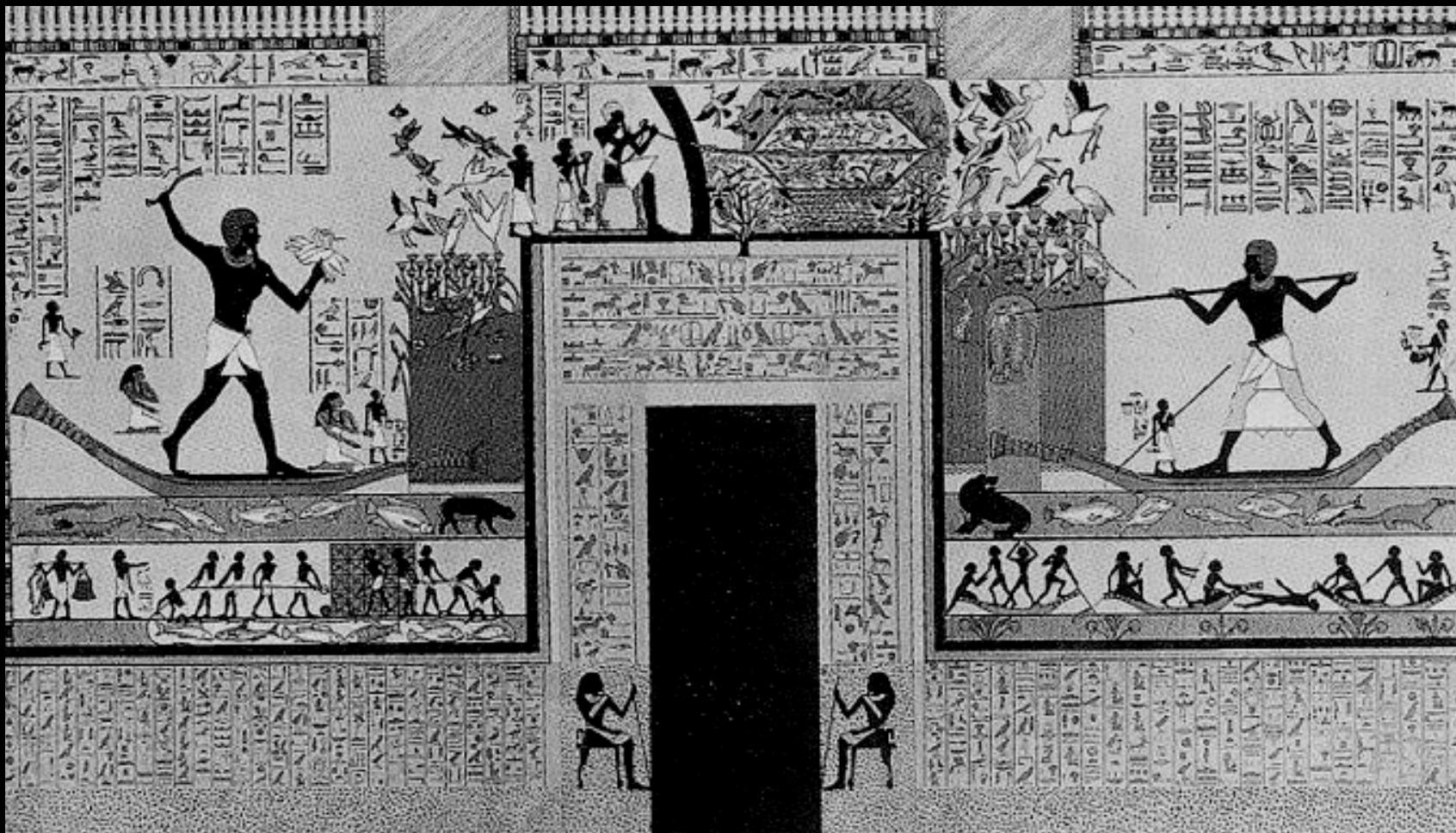
Not only the knowledge of forms that was important but their significance also effected representation.

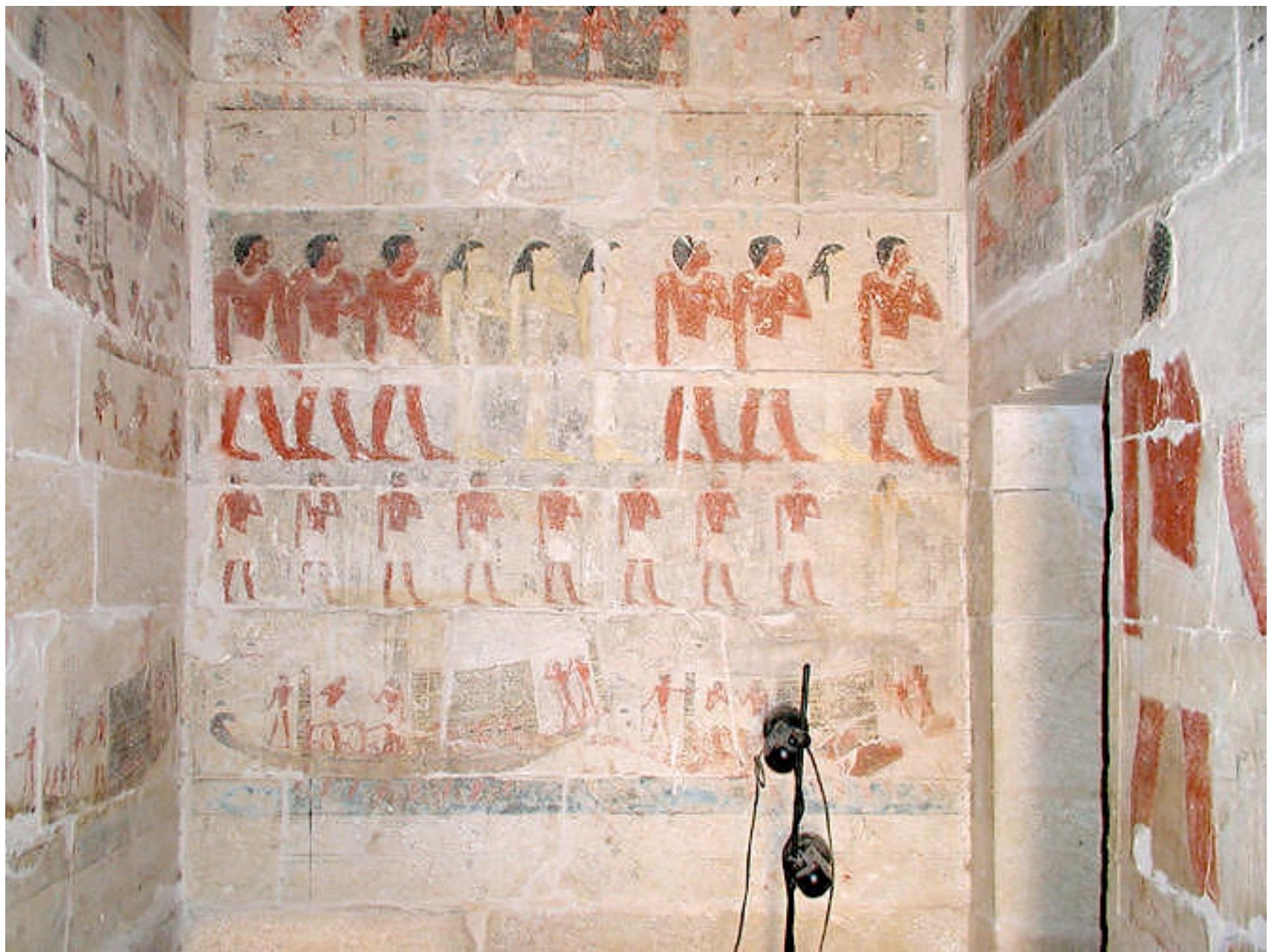




Based on the hierachal order the Egyptians drew the main characters bigger than the subordinate characters









In the human figure paintings of Egyptian art one observes a great deal of static, rigid, less vigorous and decorative quality.

Prevalence of the unrealities in Egyptian art did not prevent painters from observing the details of nature.

This has been expressed with an amazing accuracy and truthfulness while delineating the birds and animals.

The animals and birds are more naturalistic, dynamic and lively as compared to human figures.

