

Inside Story
ANCIENT EGYPT



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Illustrated by Peter Dennis

 Orpheus

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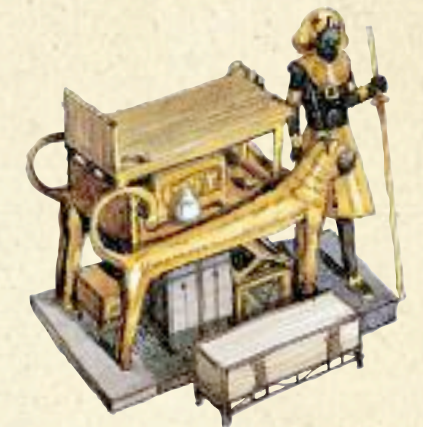


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Ancient Egypt

People have lived in the fertile land of Egypt beside the river Nile for thousands of years. Each summer the river floods, coating the earth with a layer of rich mud, ideal for growing crops. It was here, over 5000 years ago, that a great civilization emerged.



They built great temples to their gods and massive pyramids and spectacular tombs for their kings, known as pharaohs.

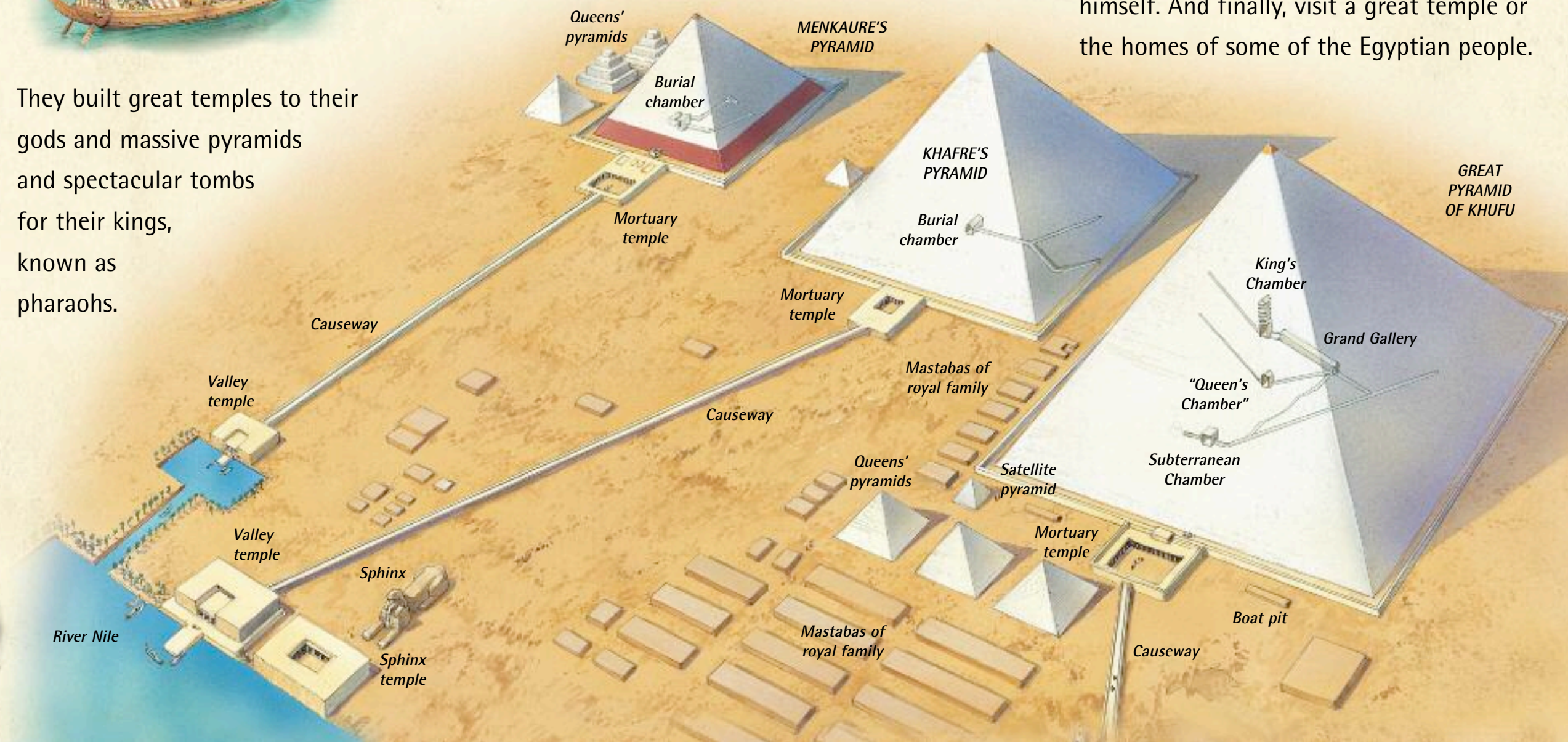
The ancient Egyptians believed in life after death. If you had lived a good life, then your soul would pass into the Next World where life was restful for evermore. The



ancient Egyptians preserved the bodies of rich and important people by mummifying them, so that they could come back to life again in the Next World. People were buried with all the things they might need in the Afterlife, including food and clothes and statues of servants to do their work for them. Pharaohs were also buried with gold and treasures.



This book tells the INSIDE STORY of ancient Egypt. What lies inside the Great Pyramid? What did a tomb in the Valley of the Kings look like? You can also tunnel down through the various shrines and coffins to see the face of Tutankhamun himself. And finally, visit a great temple or the homes of some of the Egyptian people.



The Great Pyramid

It is 2500 BC and the pharaoh of ancient Egypt has come to see how the construction of his great pyramid is progressing. Twenty years ago, when he first became pharaoh, he ordered the building of the pyramid to be both his tomb and a lasting monument to his greatness. Now the pyramid is almost finished. Thousands of workers are busily polishing and painting its outer surface made of perfectly fitting, smooth limestone blocks.

BUILDING THE PYRAMIDS

First the plan of the pyramid was marked out on the ground with stakes and string. Priests used the position of the stars to line up the pyramid's four sides so that they faced exactly north, south, east and west. Then the ground was levelled and the pyramid built up layer by layer from giant limestone blocks,

like a massive staircase. The blocks were hauled up the pyramid on a ramp built of earth and rubble that spiralled up the pyramid's sides.

CASING STONES

The outside of the pyramid was faced with triangular blocks called casing stones made of a finer limestone than the building blocks. These were levered into place starting at the top of the pyramid and working down to give a perfectly flat surface. They were polished by hand until they were completely smooth.

Workers shave and polish the limestone casing stones.

Workers hail the pharaoh

Passing up supplies

Stepped structure of pyramid

BUILDING STONES

Massive blocks of limestone were quarried using copper chisels and wooden mallets. They were cut and shaped at the quarry, which was close to the pyramid site. Huge blocks, most weighing 2–3 tonnes, but

some weighing as much as 15 tonnes, were then hauled to the pyramid and up the ramp by teams of men using ropes, levers and rollers. Once the pyramid was finished the ramp was demolished and all the rubble carried away.

GILDING THE CAPSTONE

The glowing red of the pyramid stood out against the sands of the desert making it visible for many kilometres. At the very top of the pyramid was a pointed capstone which was gilded—covered in gold—to reflect the sunlight.

PAINTING

Finally, the smoothed outer stones were painted a deep brick red that glowed like fire when the pyramid caught the rays of the sun.

Wooden frames act as ladders to help the workers reach higher.

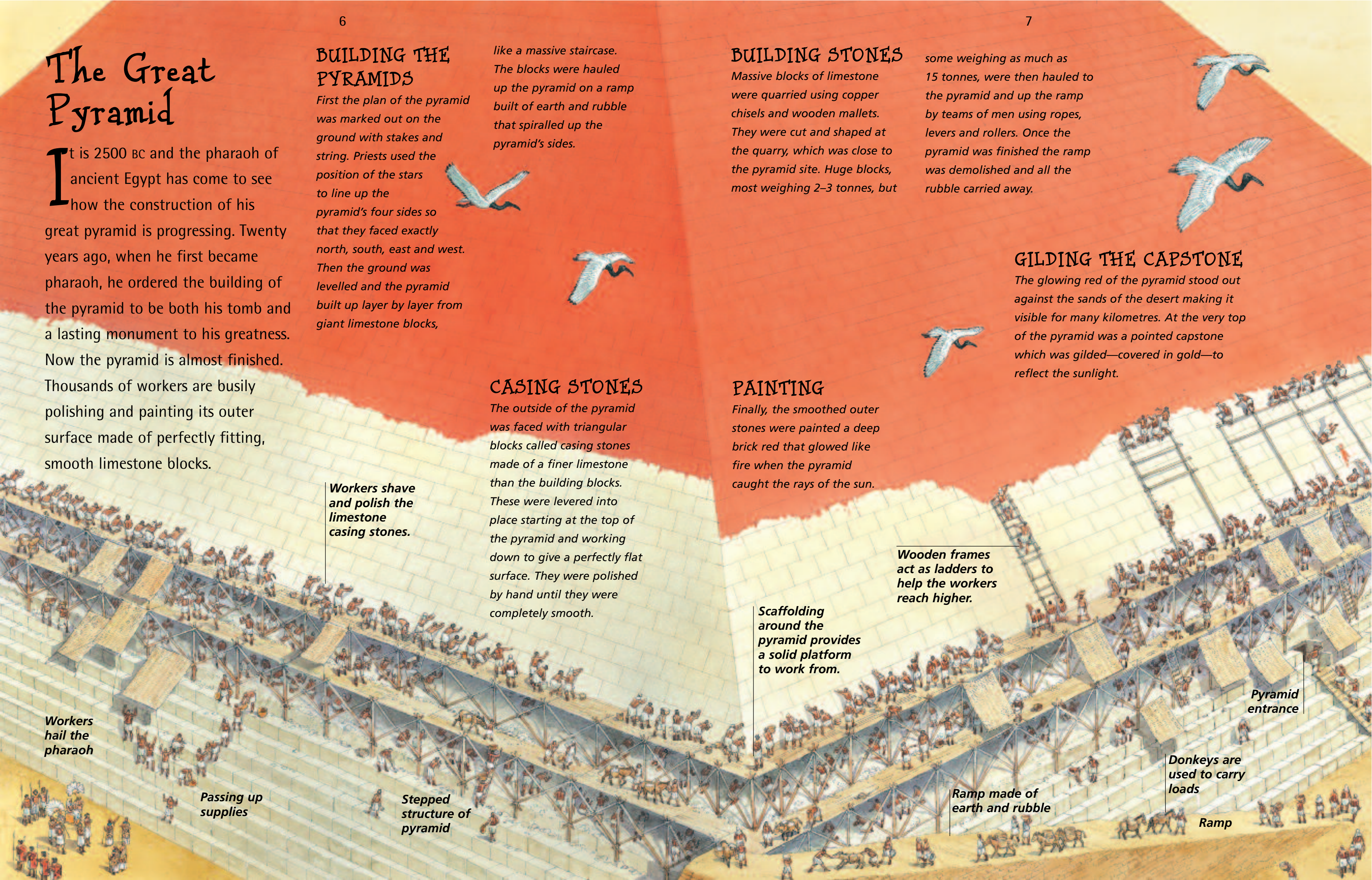
Scaffolding around the pyramid provides a solid platform to work from.

Pyramid entrance

Donkeys are used to carry loads

Ramp made of earth and rubble

Ramp

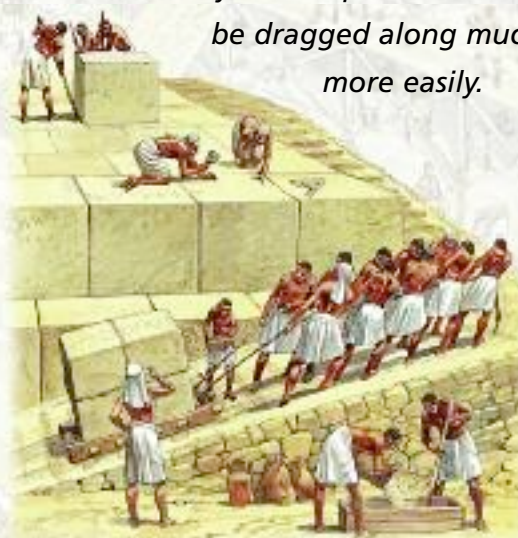


Inside the pyramid

The Great Pyramid is being built by King Khufu to house his own tomb. It will be completed in about 2530 BC. There are three chambers inside. The lowest chamber is cut into the bedrock upon which the pyramid is built. The Queen's Chamber and King's Chamber, where the pharaoh himself will be buried, are higher up within the pyramid structure.

HAULAGE TEAM

The teams of workers dragged sleds, each with a block firmly attached, along a "railway" made of wooden boards embedded in the ground and coated with mud. Keeping the track constantly wet helped the sled to be dragged along much more easily.



8

Weight-bearing chambers

Giant slabs of rock support the weight of the pyramid

Sarcophagus

King's Chamber

Steep gallery leading to burial chamber

Queen's Chamber

EMPTY CHAMBERS

Two other chambers were built beneath the King's Chamber. No one knows what these were for—perhaps the pharaoh just changed his mind about where he wanted his tomb to be.

Third chamber dug below the pyramid

KING'S CHAMBER

At the heart of the pyramid was the burial chamber of the pharaoh. In here his body rested inside a stone coffin, called a sarcophagus, surrounded by treasures and items he would need in the Next World. The weight of the pyramid above the chamber was supported by five solid slabs of granite.

SHAFTS AND GALLERIES

As well as the galleries leading to the chambers, there were narrow shafts to the outside for the pharaoh's soul to pass through on its way to the stars.

Closely fitting stonework

Narrow passage lit by torches

9

Narrow shaft points directly to the Pole Star



BUILDING UP

This (above) is an aerial view of the pyramid as it approached its full height. The spiral ramp, with two rising branches meeting at one corner, was built from rubble piled against the pyramid and held in place by an outer wall. As the pyramid was built up higher and higher, the ramp used by the hauling teams was built up with it. The ramp spiraled up on all four sides, obscuring much of the outer faces of the pyramid.

Not long after this stage, the flat area at the top would measure just a few metres on each side. Then it was time to place the very highest block, the capstone. This was also known as the pyramidion, since it was itself shaped like a miniature pyramid. After a ceremony, the capstone was hauled up and levered into place by workers standing on scaffolding (below).



THE PHARAOH'S LAST JOURNEY

The ancient Egyptians believed that if a person's soul was pure, after death it would journey by boat to the Next World where it led a peaceful Afterlife. The pharaoh's funeral was a long preparation for this journey. His coffin was carried on a boat to symbolize the

voyage. The solemn procession was led by the new pharaoh, or by a senior priest, followed by Egypt's most important nobles and officials. Ordinary people were not allowed to take any part in the funeral.

Watching the procession

Golden canopy

Priestesses representing the goddesses Isis and Nephthys accompany the coffin.

The pharaoh's gilded coffin

MOURNERS AND PRIESTS

Professional mourners, called kites, followed the coffin. They wailed and threw dust in the air as a sign of their grief. They wore dark blue mourning robes, painted their faces white and ringed their eyes with a dark make-up called kohl. Priests pulled the coffin and walked alongside carrying symbols of the gods on long staffs.

Chief priest wearing a leopard skin

Golden shrine containing canopic jars

VALLEY OF TOMBS

Pyramid tombs eventually went out of fashion—perhaps they were just too difficult and expensive to build. Instead, people began to bury their pharaohs in tombs in the ground. This winding valley, near the great city of Thebes, became a favoured royal burial place. Many tombs were cut into

the soft limestone rock here. It took years to carve out and prepare a tomb, which could have many rooms and passages, so the pharaoh usually started having his built as soon as he began his rule.

Mourners sob and wail as the funeral passes by.

Very little vegetation grows here in the dry hot desert.

Goods and treasures for the pharaoh to use in the Afterlife

The boat is a symbol of the pharaoh's journey to the the Next World.

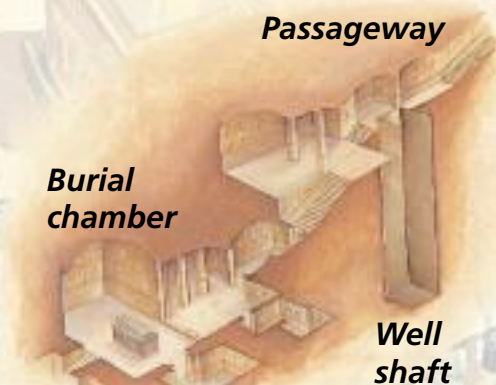
In the Valley of the Kings

Nearly 1500 years have passed since the great pyramids were built.

Pharaohs are now buried here, in the Valley of the Kings. The funeral party of a dead pharaoh has just arrived. It has crossed the Nile from the religious city of Thebes to the east, and now processes slowly to the pharaoh's newly finished tomb. As the procession wends its way through the valley, it passes the tombs of other long-dead pharaohs, all hidden from sight buried deep beneath the rocky ground.

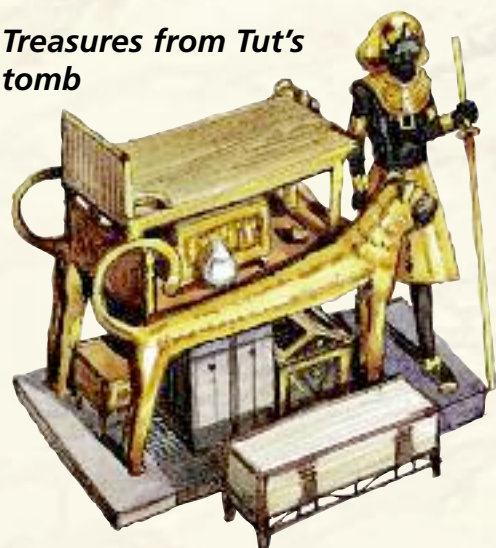
TOMBS AND TREASURES

The tombs in the Valley of the Kings were burial places for the pharaohs during the New Kingdom period (between about 1540 and 1070 BC). They were carved out of the rock by stonecutters.



The tombs all shared the same basic plan. Inside the entrance were a series of staircases and passageways leading down to the burial chamber itself. The well shaft acted both as a drain, should the tomb ever be flooded, and as a hindrance to robbers. The stone sarcophagus, which contained the pharaoh's coffin, lay inside the burial chamber beyond a pillared hall.

Treasures from Tut's tomb



GRAVE ROBBERS

Pharaohs' tombs proved irresistible to grave robbers, who tried to break in and steal the gold and treasures. But it was a risky business—if they were caught they were sentenced to death.

Antechamber

Staircase leading from a hidden entrance above

Underground passage filled with sand and rubble to deter grave robbers

Annexe

INSIDE THE TOMB

Cut deep into the rock, beneath the feet of the funeral party, lay the hidden tomb of an earlier pharaoh, Tutankhamun. Its chambers housed all the goods and treasures that might be needed by the pharaoh in the Next World.

Burial chamber

Shrine containing Tutankhamun's coffin

Treasury

Anubis

Shrine

The tomb of Tutankhamun

Here we see the tomb of the pharaoh Tutankhamun, who died aged only 19. The

shrines enclosing the stone sarcophagus where his coffin is placed are fitted into the burial chamber. The other chambers are filled with goods and treasures that the pharaoh might need in the Afterlife. After two early break-ins by robbers, Tutankhamun's tomb will remain undisturbed for more than 3000 years until it is discovered in 1922.

THE BOY KING

Tutankhamun became pharaoh at 9 years old and ruled for only nine years, from about 1334 BC to 1323 BC. The son of Akhenaten, he married to his half-sister Ankhesenamun.

It was once thought that Tut may have been murdered, but scientists now think he died as a result of a broken leg that became infected.



Burial chamber

Here, in the burial chamber of Tutankhamun's tomb, priests are about to seal the massive gilded outer shrine

containing his coffin.

The shrine only just fits inside the small chamber.

Paintings show Tutankhamun with gods and goddesses.

GOLDEN SHRINE

Shrines in ancient Egypt were containers made of wood, stone or precious metal in which a statue of a god or goddess was kept. They were also used to contain the coffins and canopic jars of important people, particularly pharaohs.

Tutankhamun's shrine is made of gilded cedarwood, decorated with blue inlay.

Polishing the gilded decoration on the shrine

PAINTED CHAMBER

Artists adorned the walls with scenes of the pharaoh's funeral and his journey into the Next World. Their last job was to paint the entrance when it was filled in. They left the chamber through an opening in the bottom, which was then sealed.

Priests prepare to seal the final shrine

An oil lamp throws light on to the door about to be sealed.



THE BURIAL

The pharaoh's coffin was lowered carefully into its stone sarcophagus. Priests covered it with a linen shroud as they said prayers for the king. The sarcophagus was made of a hard stone called quartzite and decorated with carvings of goddesses Isis, Nephthys, Neith and Selket.



FINAL FAREWELL

Four gilded shrines were built panel-by-panel around the sarcophagus. Just before the final shrine was put in place, the priests erected a wooden frame. On this they hung a linen shroud decorated with spangles to represent the starry sky.



The third shrine

The fourth shrine

Linen shroud with spangles

The coffin

The second shrine

Within the stone sarcophagus lies Tutankhamun's coffin. It is made of gilded wood.

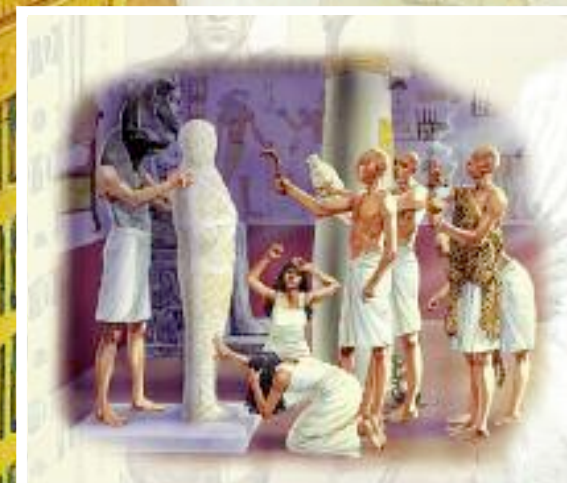
Wooden frame to support the shroud

The shrines were assembled inside the chamber itself.

Sarcophagus

The outer shrine actually contains three further shrines, each built inside the other.

Inside the fourth shrine is a stone sarcophagus where Tutankhamun's coffin lies.



PREPARED FOR THE NEXT WORLD

Before Tutankhamun's body was finally laid to rest in its splendid coffin, the mummy was held upright by a priest dressed as the jackal-headed god, Anubis, and a ceremony called the Opening of the Mouth was performed. While mourners looked on, the hands, feet, eyes, ears, nose and lips were touched by a priest to free the senses. Now the pharaoh would be able to see hear, speak and move about in the Next World. Then, the mummy was placed in the coffin and the tomb filled with things he might need in the Afterlife, including food, jewellery, and even furniture.

THE KING'S PROTECTORS

Tutankhamun wore a nemes, a long striped headdress that signified his kingship. It was decorated with the heads of a cobra and a vulture. These were the goddesses Wadjet and Nekhbet, the pharaoh's protectors.

JOURNEY TO THE NEXT WORLD

Once his body was buried, part of the pharaoh's soul, or ba, had a long and dangerous journey. First, he had to pass through many gateways guarded by vicious monsters. Then he had to recite a list of sins in front of 42 judges and swear he had never committed any of them. Finally, his heart was weighed by the god Anubis against a feather representing truth. The heart had to weigh less than the feather to show that the pharaoh has led a good life. If it did not, it was gobbled up by Ammut, the crocodile monster. Following this test, which all pharaohs passed, the king entered the Next World to meet his ancestors and the god Osiris.

SYMBOLS OF A KING

The crook and flail held by the king were symbols of his kingship. The flail was a farming tool and represented the fertility of the land of Egypt. The flail could also be used as a whip and symbolized the pharaoh's punishment of his enemies. The curved crook was used by shepherds to guide their sheep. This probably symbolized the pharaoh's duty to guide and protect his people.

Crook

Flail

Tutankhamun's coffin

Inside the stone sarcophagus is a magnificent coffin made of wood and plaster covered with gold. It is beautifully patterned and moulded in the shape of the dead pharaoh's body. He carries a crook and flail, symbols of his kingship, and his face is shown as that of Osiris, god of the dead. Inside lies the mummy of Tutankhamun, wrapped in linen bandages. Over his face he wears a solid gold mask once again showing him as the god Osiris. The mask is richly decorated with semi-precious stones. At his burial, priests poured fragrant resins over Tutankhamun's body before placing the heavy gold mask over his head and shoulders.

HURRIED FUNERAL

Tutankhamun died unexpectedly at a young age. Because of this, the preparations for his burial, which usually took many years during a pharaoh's reign, had not yet been made. There was no tomb cut ready for him, and one had to be hastily dug. This might explain why it is smaller than most other pharaohs' tombs. It is also possible that his coffins had originally been made for someone else. His outer coffin was too big to fit into the stone sarcophagus. It had to be shaved down so that the lid would close.

Cedarwood coffin covered with beaten gold



MUMMIFICATION

Priests prepared the body for mummification with much care.

First, they removed the organs, apart from the heart, and preserved them in canopic jars. They then packed the body with linen and dried it in natron salt, a water-absorbing powder. The body was then wrapped in linen bandages. The priest wore a jackal headdress to represent Anubis, the god of embalming.



FACE OF A PHARAOH

Beneath the golden mask and the linen wrappings lay the mummified body of Tutankhamun himself. Despite the care taken by his priest-embalmers, his body was not very well preserved, and, over time, it decayed slowly. The mummy was adorned with priceless gold jewellery, such as the vulture-shaped necklace around his neck.

The pharaoh's mummy

Inside the first coffin are two more, fitting one inside the other. The second coffin is also made of gilded wood and plaster, and is even more finely decorated than the first. It is inlaid with lapis lazuli, a semi-precious blue stone, and covered with a red and blue pattern called rishi. This is based on the shape of feathers and symbolized the soul. The final coffin is made of solid gold. It is also decorated with patterns and semi-precious stones. Inside the final coffin lies the mummy of Pharaoh Tutankhamun himself.



CANOPIC JARS

After the organs had been removed, they were dried in natron and placed in canopic jars. Each jar was in the form of one of the sons of the god Horus. Hapy, a baboon (1) protects the lungs; Qebehsenuef, a falcon (2) the intestines; Duamutef, a jackal (3) the stomach; Imsety, a human (4) the liver.

ROOFTOP ROADS

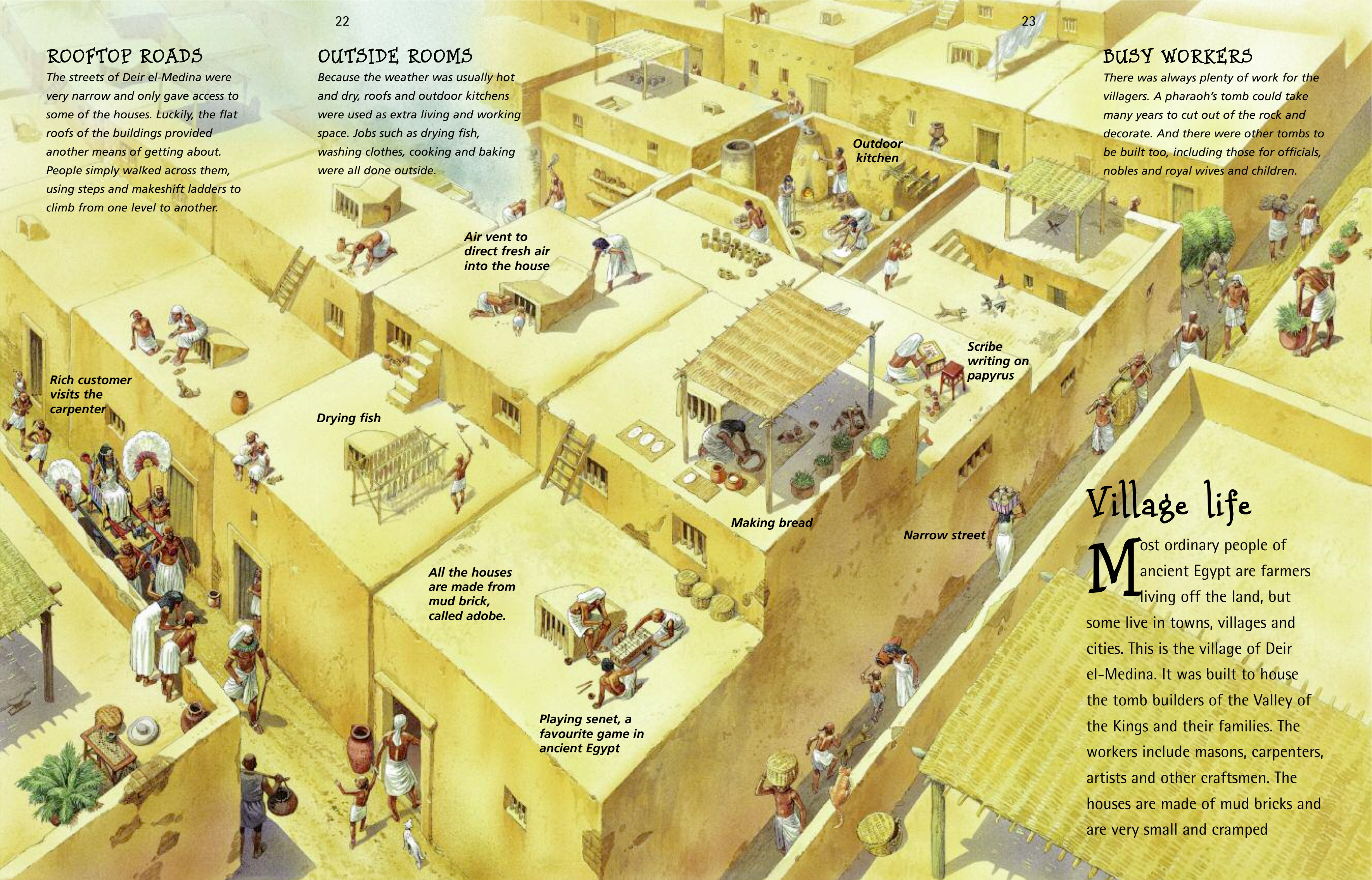
The streets of Deir el-Medina were very narrow and only gave access to some of the houses. Luckily, the flat roofs of the buildings provided another means of getting about. People simply walked across them, using steps and makeshift ladders to climb from one level to another.

OUTSIDE ROOMS

Because the weather was usually hot and dry, roofs and outdoor kitchens were used as extra living and working space. Jobs such as drying fish, washing clothes, cooking and baking were all done outside.

BUSY WORKERS

There was always plenty of work for the villagers. A pharaoh's tomb could take many years to cut out of the rock and decorate. And there were other tombs to be built too, including those for officials, nobles and royal wives and children.



Rich customer visits the carpenter

Drying fish

Air vent to direct fresh air into the house

Outdoor kitchen

Scribe writing on papyrus

Making bread

Narrow street

All the houses are made from mud brick, called adobe.

Playing senet, a favourite game in ancient Egypt

Village life

Most ordinary people of ancient Egypt are farmers living off the land, but some live in towns, villages and cities. This is the village of Deir el-Medina. It was built to house the tomb builders of the Valley of the Kings and their families. The workers include masons, carpenters, artists and other craftsmen. The houses are made of mud bricks and are very small and cramped



FARMS AND FISHING

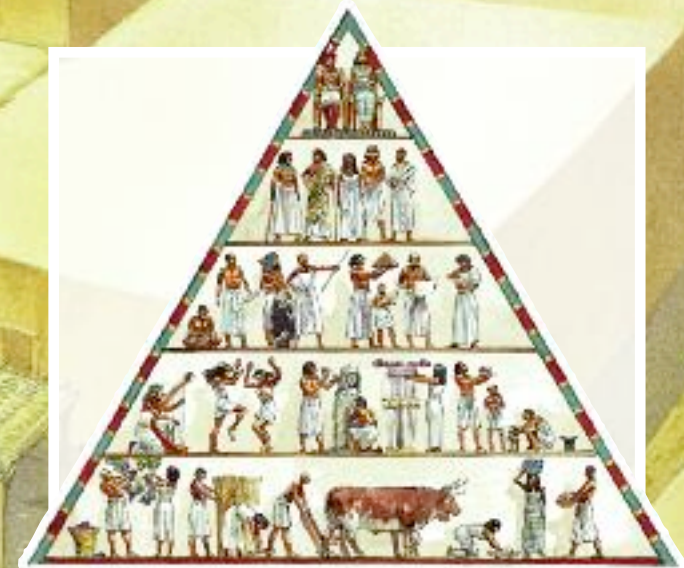
As soon as the Nile floods retreated in October, farmers used their ploughs to turn the mud into the soil before sowing their seeds. The main cereal crops were emmer, a kind of wheat used for making bread, and barley for making beer. Farmers also kept cattle, sheep, goats and geese. The harvest took place between March and June. The farmworkers cut off the ears using sickles. The ears were carried in baskets to circular threshing floors where cattle trampled over the crop to separate the grain from the stalks. The grain was then taken away for grinding into flour.

The Nile was constantly crowded with small fishing boats. These boats were mostly roughly constructed from bundles of reeds strapped tightly together. Fishermen trapped large numbers of fish at a time by slinging a net between their boats (above).



CRAMPED QUARTERS

Houses were generally very small with many people living in just one or two rooms. Storage cellars were dug beneath the houses. Windows were small and set high in the walls to keep the homes secure.



EGYPTIAN SOCIETY

Ancient Egyptian society was arranged in various levels, quite similar to the shape of a pyramid. At the top, beneath the pharaoh, were a tiny group of nobles, while peasants formed much the largest group at the bottom. In between are government officials, priests, soldiers, engineers, craftworkers and artists.

The people of ancient Egypt

Most craftsmen work at the temples, where they make the items needed for the burial of a pharaoh. Goldsmiths, jewellers and glassblowers make exquisite treasures that will eventually be buried in a tomb. Joiners and boat-builders work together to build the funerary boats. Painters, sculptors and engravers produce the fabulous decoration on the tomb walls.

AVENUE OF LIONS

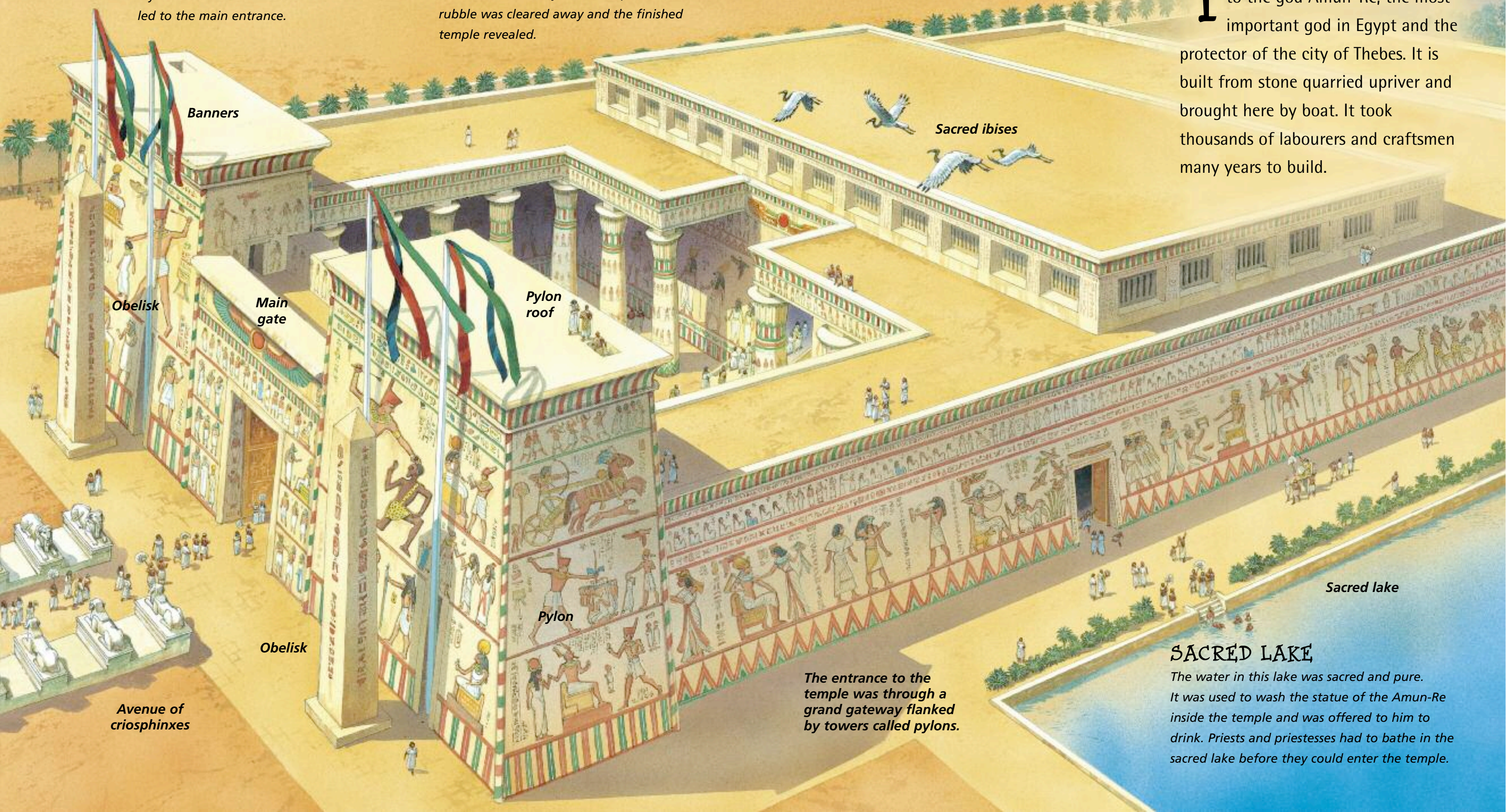
These criosphinxes, or ram-headed lions, represented Amun-Re, the chief god of Thebes. Statues of these mythical beasts lined the avenue that led to the main entrance.

TEMPLE BUILDING

As each layer of building stones was laid down, the surrounding area was filled with rubble. This acted as a platform from which to build the next layer. On completion, the rubble was cleared away and the finished temple revealed.

The temple

This great temple is dedicated to the god Amun-Re, the most important god in Egypt and the protector of the city of Thebes. It is built from stone quarried upriver and brought here by boat. It took thousands of labourers and craftsmen many years to build.



Banners

Sacred ibises

Obelisk

Main gate

Pylon roof

Pylon

Obelisk

Avenue of criosphinxes

Sacred lake

The entrance to the temple was through a grand gateway flanked by towers called pylons.

SACRED LAKE

The water in this lake was sacred and pure. It was used to wash the statue of the Amun-Re inside the temple and was offered to him to drink. Priests and priestesses had to bathe in the sacred lake before they could enter the temple.



GODS

The ancient Egyptians worshipped hundreds of gods and goddesses. Four of the most important are shown here. From the left they are: Amun, who later became Amun-Re, the king of the gods and father of the pharaohs. Isis was goddess of women, mothers and children. Horus was the god of the sky. His spirit entered the living pharaoh. Osiris was god of the dead. He ruled the underworld where the souls of the dead were judged.



HIEROGLYPHS

Hieroglyphic script was used for writing on monuments and walls of tombs. A simplified version, called hieratic, was used for everyday writing. Hieroglyphs were pictures of people, animals and objects, but most of them also represented a sound. There were more than 700 of them. Words were made up from a combination of sounds.

HYPOSTYLE HALL

Beyond the main courtyard was the hypostyle hall, a vast room with a roof held up by towering columns painted to look like giant papyrus reeds. Papyrus was an important plant used to make paper.

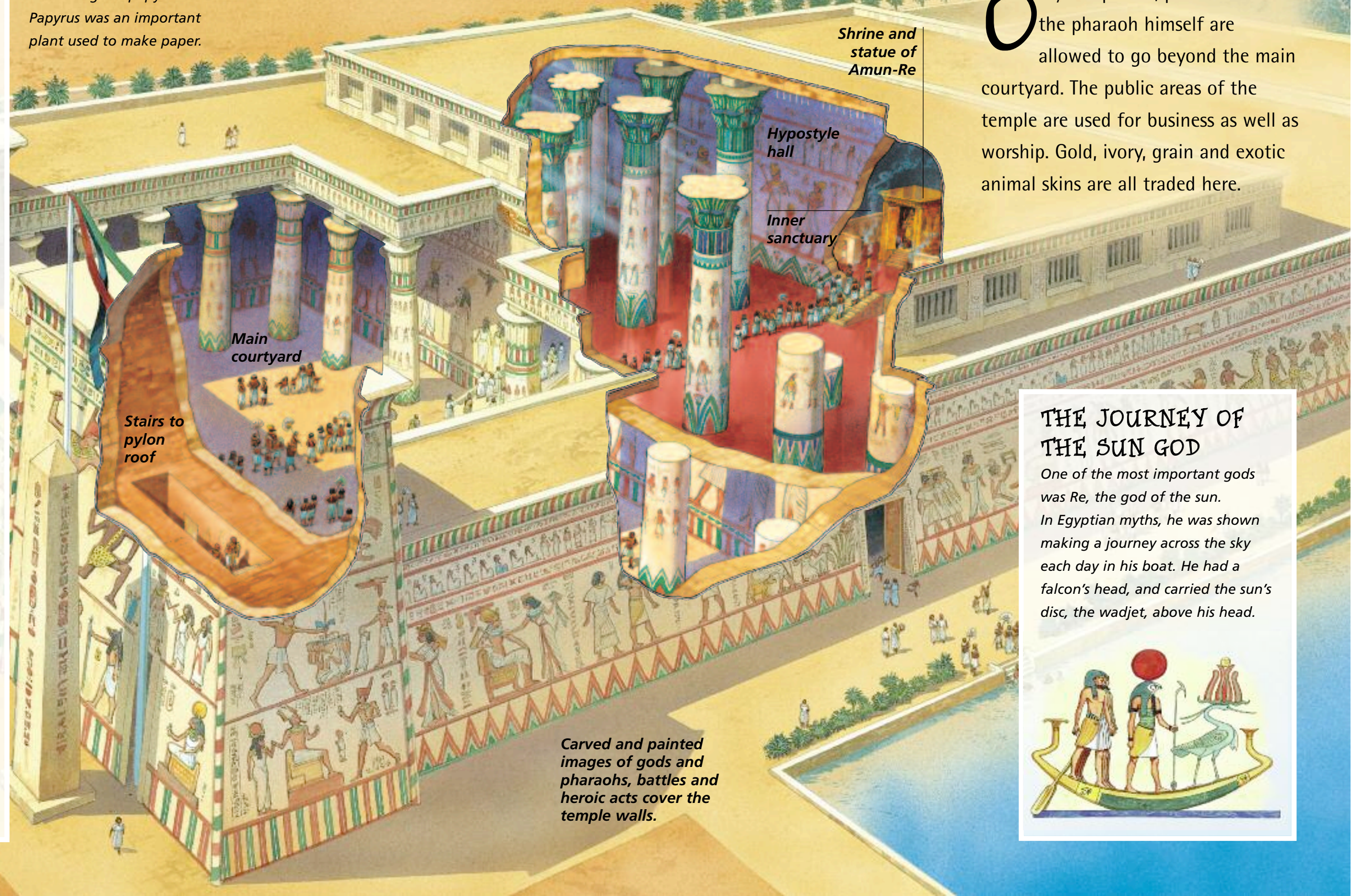
The inner sanctuary, containing the shrine and gold statue of the great god Amun-Re, could just be glimpsed through the hypostyle hall.

HOME OF AMUN-RE

The ancient Egyptians believed that the god Amun-Re came alive in his statue in the inner sanctuary. Priests woke the statue-god each morning, fed it, clothed it and made offerings to it.

Worshipping the gods

Only the priests, priestesses and the pharaoh himself are allowed to go beyond the main courtyard. The public areas of the temple are used for business as well as worship. Gold, ivory, grain and exotic animal skins are all traded here.



Shrine and statue of Amun-Re

Hypostyle hall

Inner sanctuary

Main courtyard

Stairs to pylon roof

Carved and painted images of gods and pharaohs, battles and heroic acts cover the temple walls.

THE JOURNEY OF THE SUN GOD

One of the most important gods was Re, the god of the sun. In Egyptian myths, he was shown making a journey across the sky each day in his boat. He had a falcon's head, and carried the sun's disc, the wadjet, above his head.



Glossary

Afterlife Life after death.

Ba The part of a person's soul that was judged by the gods after death before it could enter the Next World.

Canopic jars Containers in which a person's organs were preserved as part of the mummification process.

Capstone The topmost stone of a pyramid. It was covered in gold to reflect the sun's rays.

Criosphinx A mythical ram-headed lion, symbol of the god Amun-Re.

Crook A shepherd's curved staff, symbol of a pharaoh's kingship.

Embalm To preserve a body from decay by drying it out with chemicals such as natron.

Flail A farming tool. Symbol of a pharaoh's kingship.

Hieroglyphs Pictures used to write down the Egyptian language.

Hypostyle hall The large central hall of a temple with its roof held up by giant pillars shaped like papyrus reeds.

Mummy An embalmed body.

Natron A natural chemical used to dry out bodies during mummification.

Opening of the Mouth A funeral ceremony that gave back the senses and movement to a mummy in the Afterlife.

Next World The place a person's soul went to after death.

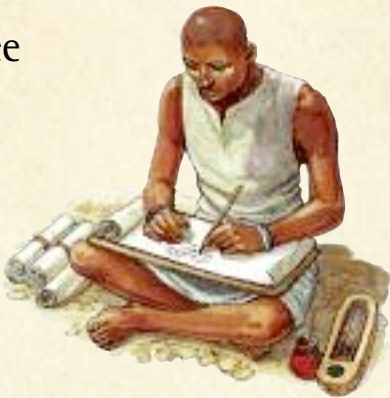
Papyrus A reed used to make paper.

Pharaoh A king of Egypt.

Pyramid A massive stepped or pointed building containing a pharaoh's tomb.

Sarcophagus A stone outer coffin.

Tomb A burial place cut out of the rock or marked by an elaborate building.



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