

W4 (Week 2, Monday)
Origins and Unity
Egypt

HPAR4010

What makes civilisation?

Dr Katharina Zinn

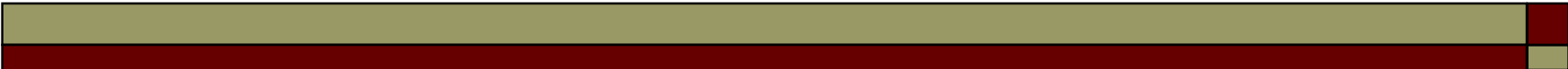


Origins

- ❑ “State”-formation
- ❑ The first Egyptians
- ❑ The first “real” Egypt
- ❑ → chronological and methodological problem(s)!
- ❑ What is the start?
- ❑ How to deal with change?
- ❑ How does unity come in?
- ❑ Are the origins the self-explanation of one’s culture – creation myths/religion?

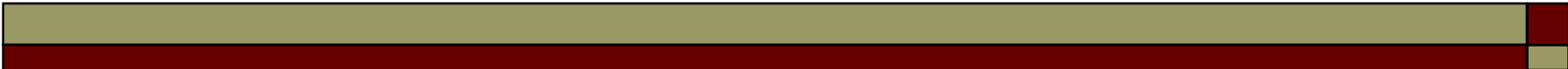
Readings

- ❑ Kemp: Ancient Egypt, chapter 2
- ❑ Dee M., et al. 2013. An absolute chronology for early Egypt using radiocarbon dating and Bayesian statistical modelling. In: *Proceedings of Royal Society A* 469(2013) 20130395
→<http://dx.doi.org/10.1098/rspa.2013.0395>
- ❑ Wilkinson, T.A.H. 2000. What a King Is This: Narmer and the Concept of the Ruler. In: *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 86(2000), pp. 23-32 →<http://www.jstor.org/stable/3822303>
- ❑ Wilkinson, T. A. H. (2001). *Early Dynastic Egypt*. Cambridge.
- ❑ Wengrow, D. (2006). *The Archaeology of Early Egypt: Social Transformations in North-East Africa, 10,000 to 2650 BC*. Cambridge.
- ❑ Wenke, R. J. (2009). *The Ancient Egyptian State: The Origins of Egyptian Culture (c. 8000-2000 BC)*. Cambridge.



Childe (1950): Definition of early civilisation

- Large urban centres
- Craft workers, merchants, officials, priests (supported by surplus of farmers)
- Primary producer paying surplus to deity / divine ruler
- Monumental architecture
- Ruling class exempt from manual labour
- Recording information
- Exact practical science
- Monumental art
- Resident specialist craft workers (under control of ruling class)
- Social solidarity under pre-eminence of temples / funerary cults
- Dominant and permanent state organisation



Egypt as the “cradle of civilisation”?

- ❑ Egypt as one of the earliest and most spectacular civilizations of antiquity
- ❑ Two main milestones to get from predynastic period to fully emerged civilisation
 - political unification of Egypt as marked critical break in Egyptian history – start of the dynastic period

Periods

Dynasties

- **Pre- and Early Dynastic Period**

- Old Kingdom
- First Intermediate Period
- Middle Kingdom
- Second Intermediate Period
- New Kingdom
- Third Intermediate Period
- Late Period
- Ptolemaic and Roman Period

- **Predyn. (5300-3000BC), 0-2**

- 3-6
- 8-11
- 11-12
- 13-17
- 18-20
- 21-24
- 25-"31"
- No dynastic time anymore (332BC -331AD)

Koehler: Chronology of prehistory

Table 2.1 Chronological table of prehistoric cultures in the Nile Valley

<i>Absolute date in years BC</i>		<i>General culture-historical phase</i>	<i>Relative chronology</i>
2700		Early Dynastic	Naqada IIIC–D
3100	Early Bronze		
	Age		
3300		Proto-Dynastic	Naqada IIIA–B
3600		Late Chalcolithic	Naqada IIC/D–IIIA
3900		Early Chalcolithic	Naqada IB/C–IIB
4500		Late Neolithic	Naqada IA/B Badarian el-Omari Merimde Benisalame
5100		Early Neolithic	Fayum A

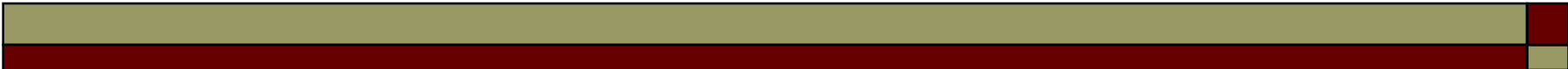
Egypt as the “cradle of civilisation”?

- Egypt as one of the earliest and most spectacular civilizations of antiquity
- Two main milestones to get from predynastic period to fully emerged civilisation
 - political **unification** of Egypt as marked critical break in Egyptian history – start of the dynastic period (around 3100 BC)
 - introduction of a south-west Asian-style subsistence economy into the Nile Valley – move from Early dynastic period to Old Kingdom (around 2700 BC)

Periods

Dynasties

-
- | | |
|---|--|
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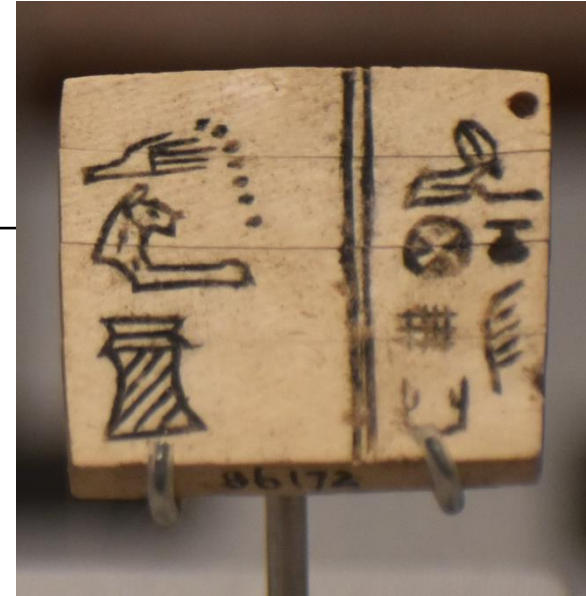


Egypt as the “cradle of civilisation”?

- ❑ evident that political unification played a major long-term role in shaping the cultural patterns of ancient Egypt
- ❑ BUT: this was part of a continuum of social and cultural change ranging from late Predynastic times + reached its culmination in the Old Kingdom
- ❑ → profitable to view the entire formative period of Egyptian civilization as single unit

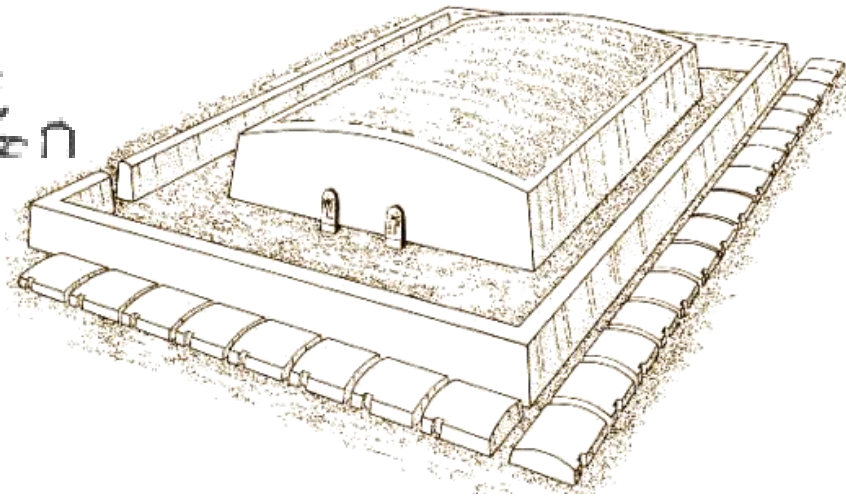
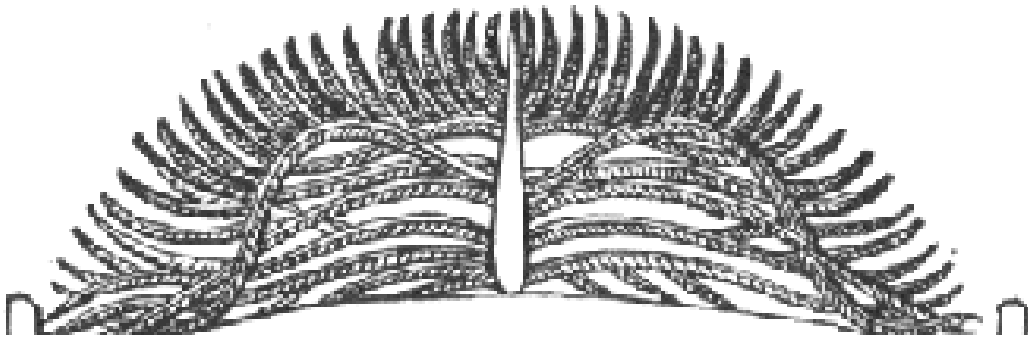
Egypt and “history”?!?

- ❑ Egyptian script developed during the Early Dynastic Period
- ❑ written sources extremely limited for this period
- ❑ If writing, then VERY short
- ❑ present numerous epigraphic difficulties
- ❑ even succession of kings and the identifications of the royal names appearing on the monuments are difficult to be compared with later kingslists



Emergence

= appearing, breaching, rising



Material culture of prehistory

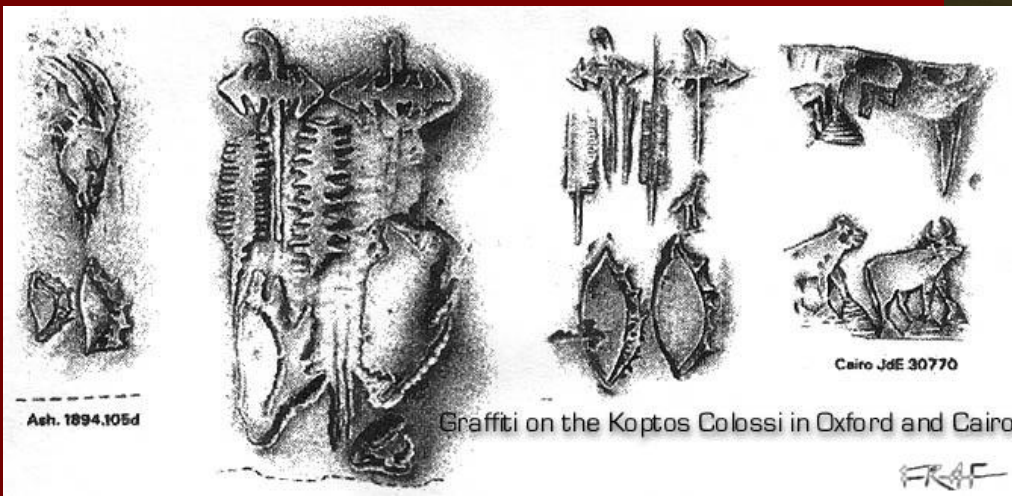
seems to be connected with the
emergence of religions

Slate
palette
(fish)
PUAM



The emergence of religion in AE

- Predynastic and Early Dynastic Periods → 5000 BC – to the end of 2nd dyn.
- → parallel to the emergence of civilisation and compilation of state
- Prerequisites for evolution of religion
 - Extended brain size in humans → looking for explanations
 - Use of tools
 - Use of language(s)
 - Living in groups → morality



Min colossi Ashmolean Museum

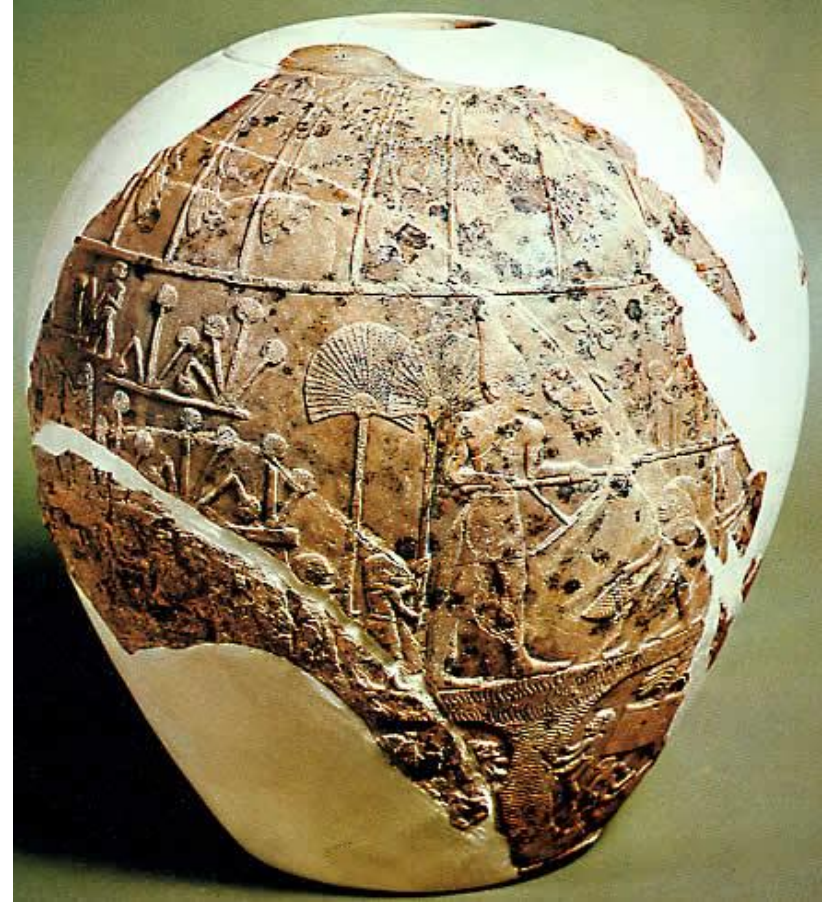


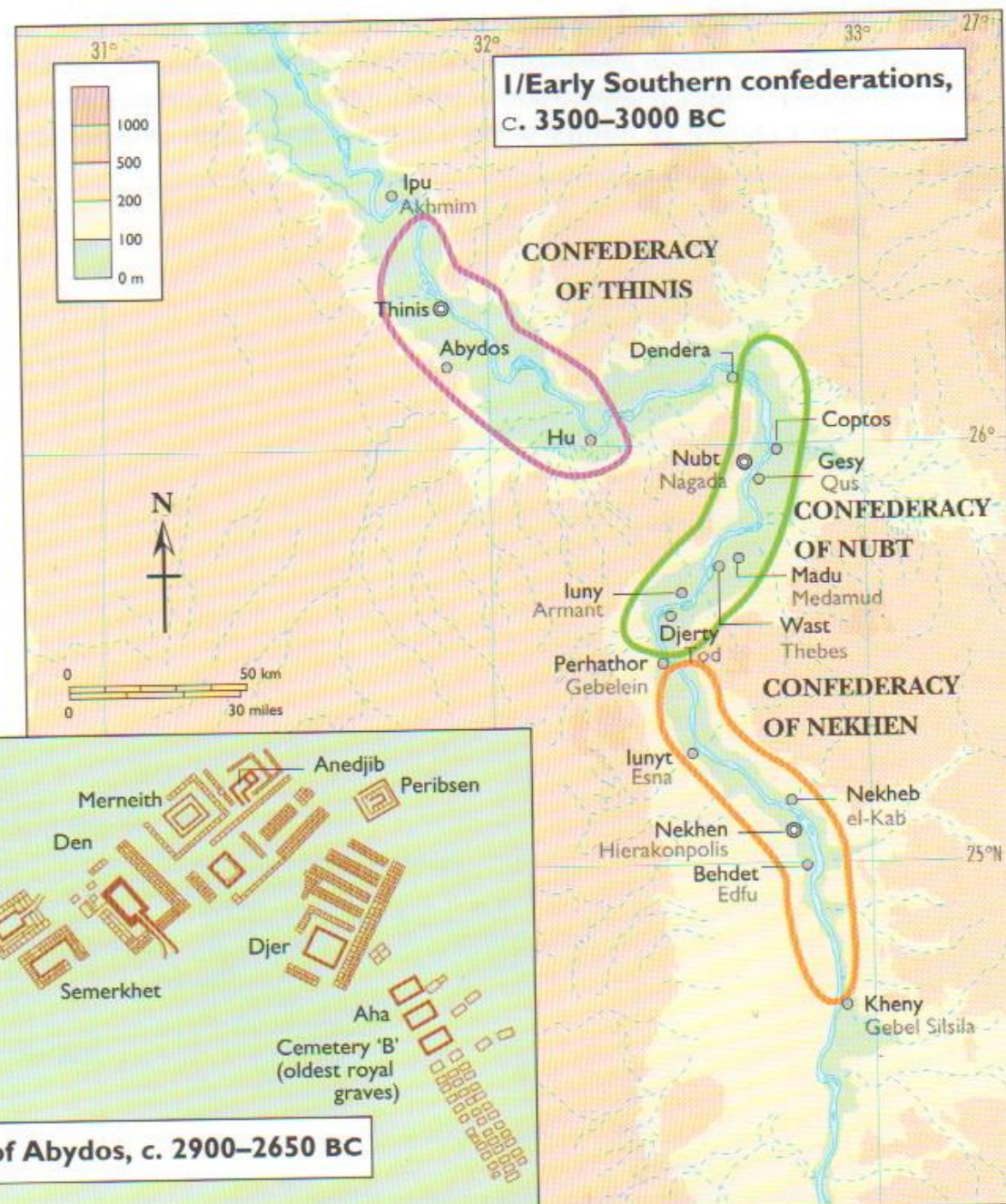
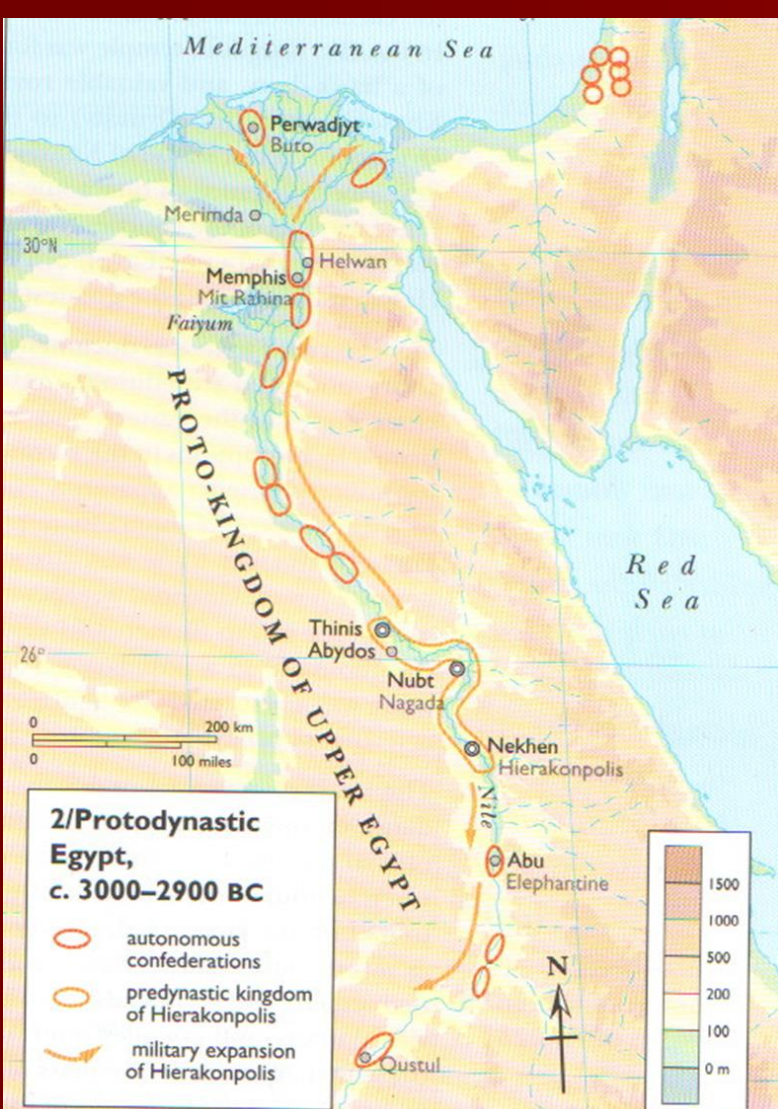
Koptos, Temple of Min (reconstruction)



Origins of Civilisation

- Emergence of **complex society**
 - Population size
 - Hierarchical organisation
 - Division of labour
 - Literacy & centralized organisation
 - Development of arts, literary traditions, sciences
 - Laws
- Usually equated with **state**
- → “kicked” off by religion as final human architect?

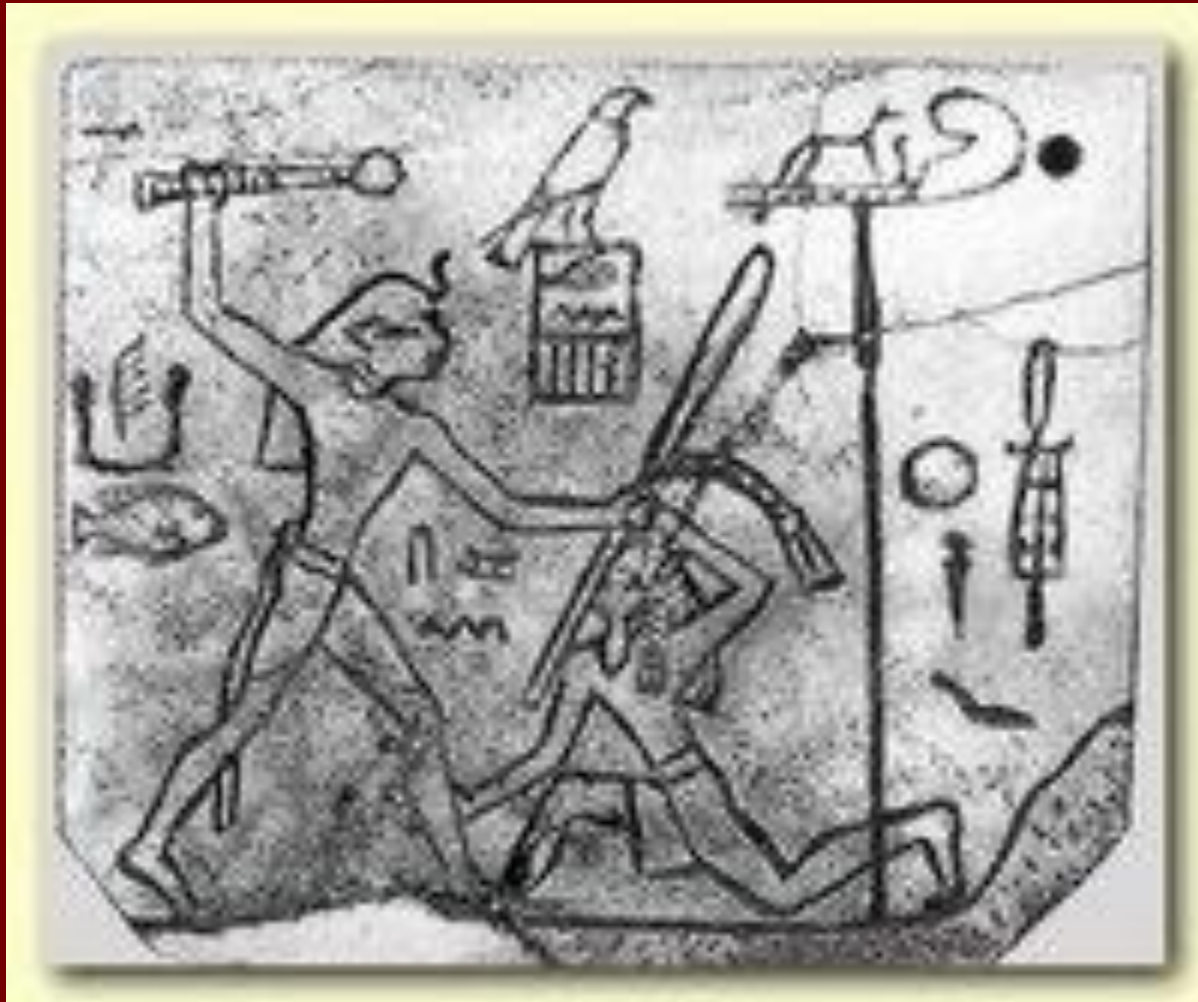




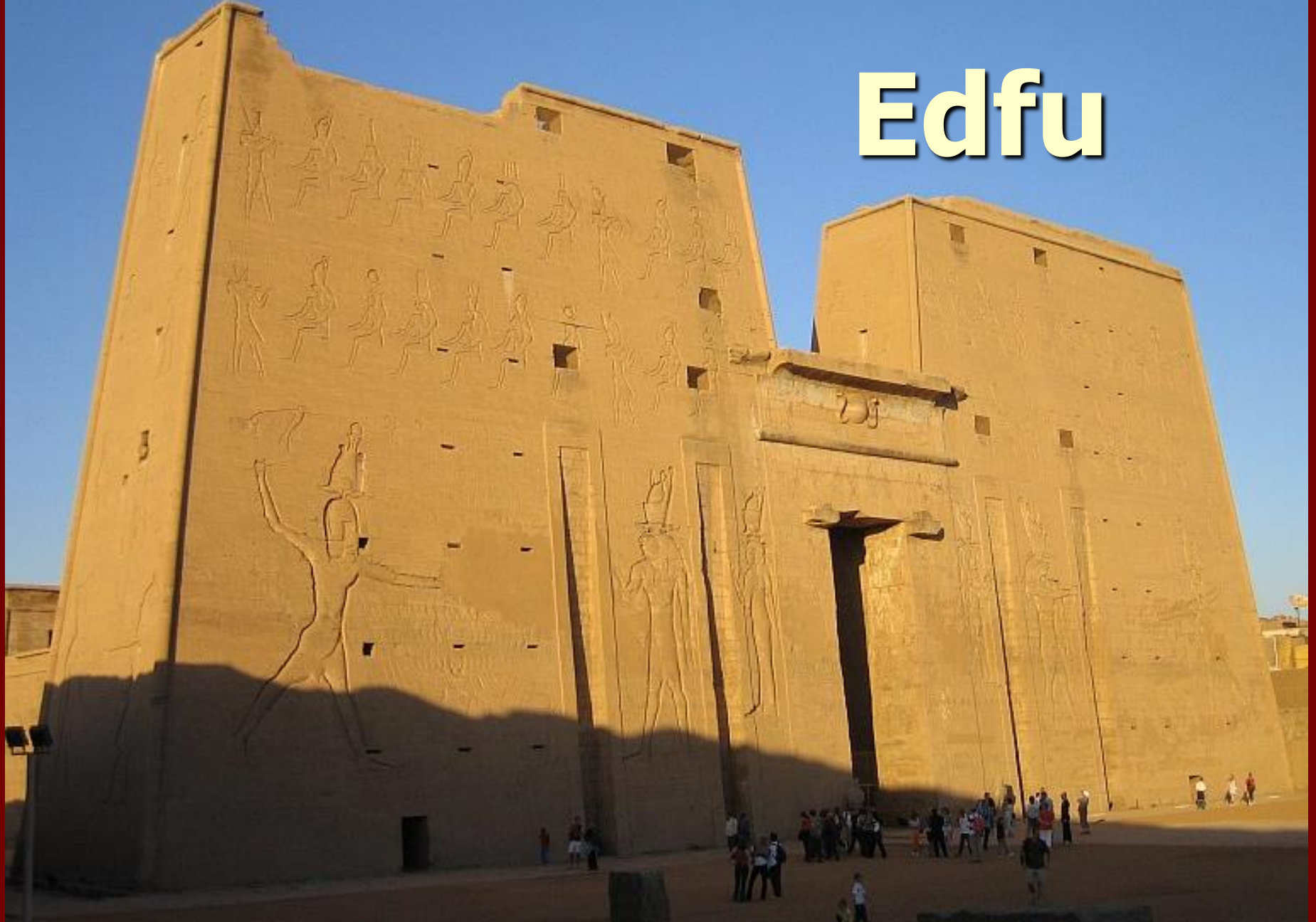
Narmer Palette (31st century BC): new composit figures typical for Eg. art

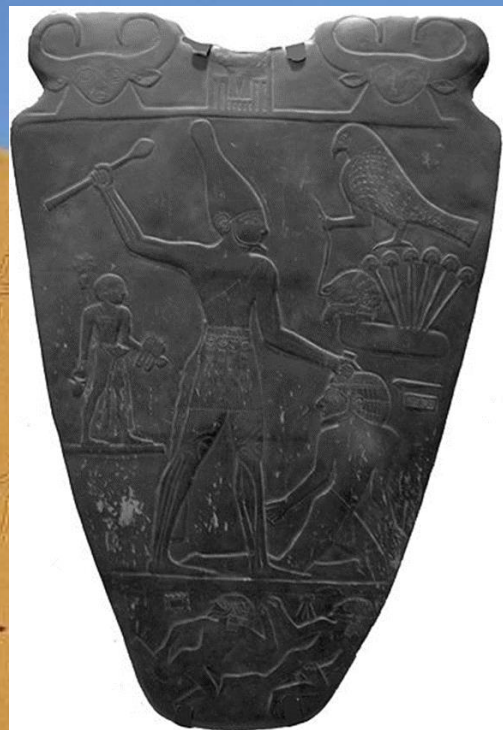


Ivory Label King De(we)n

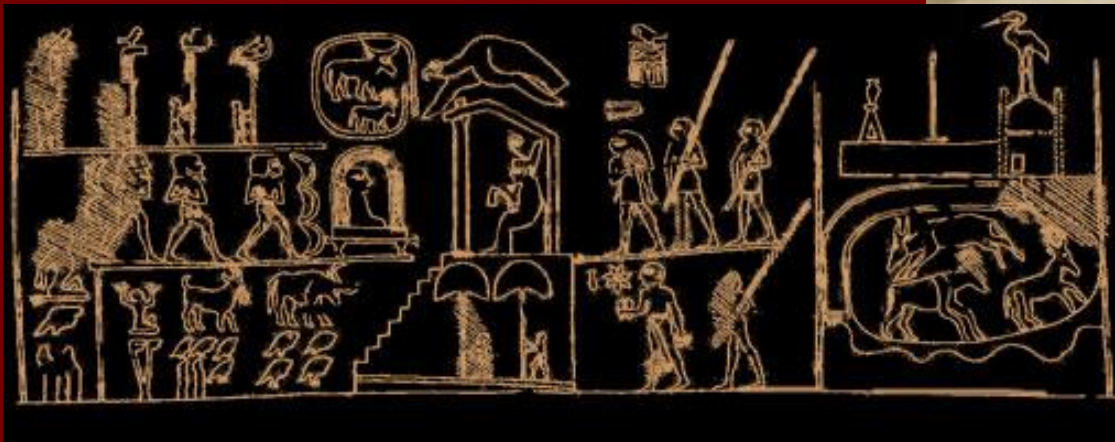
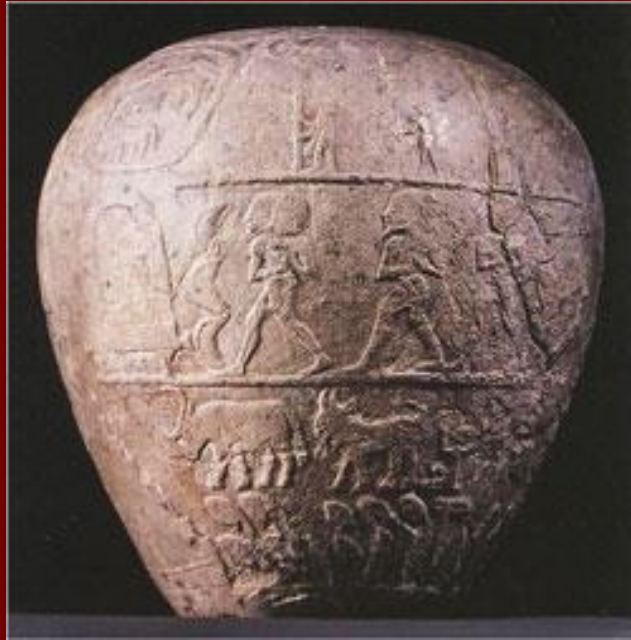


Edfu

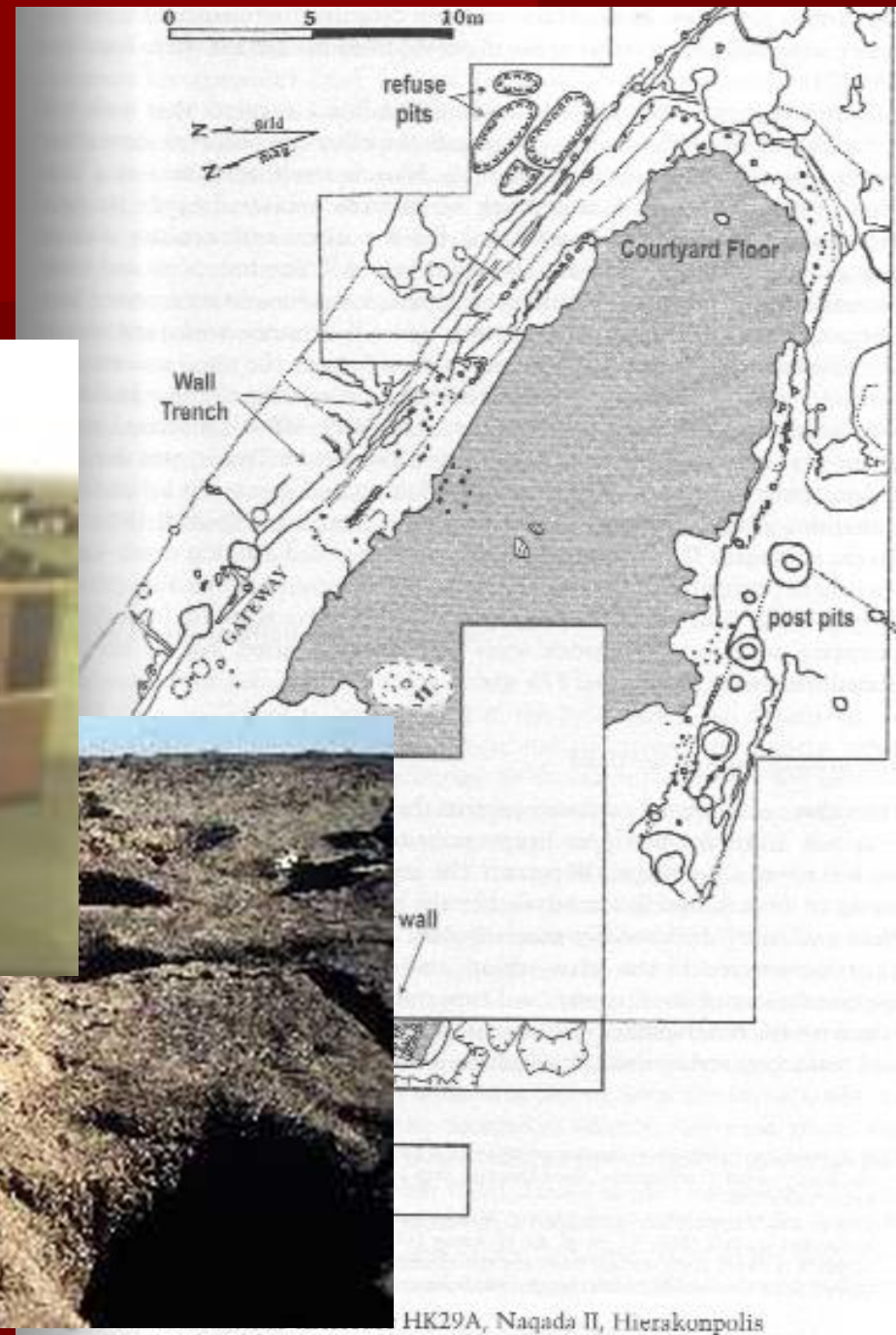




Narmer Macehead



HK29A – Excavated Areas



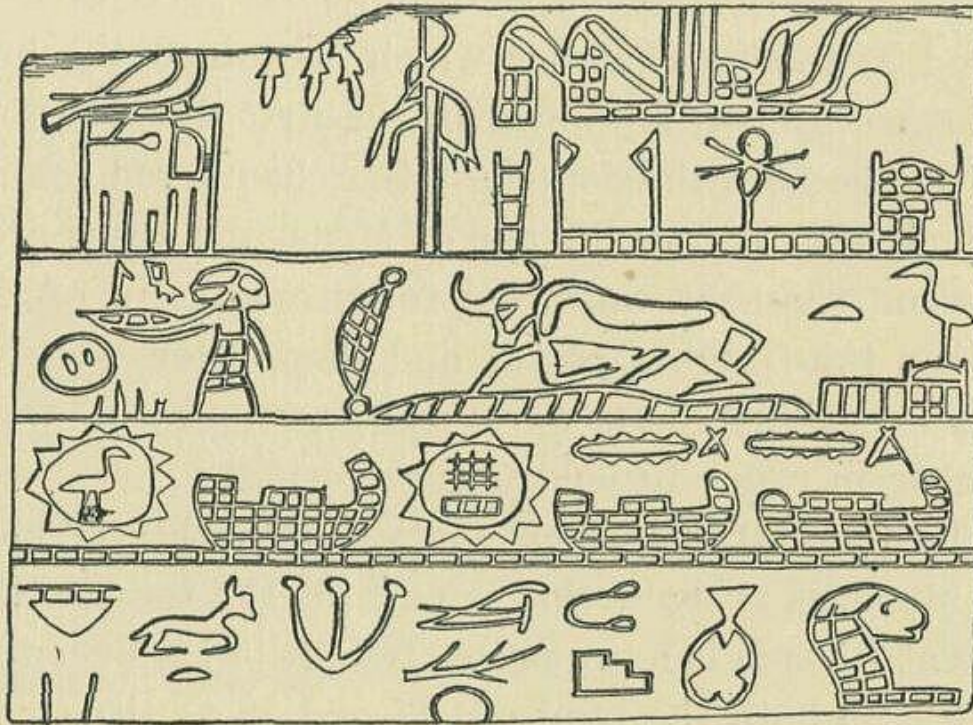
HK29A, Naqada II, Hierskonpolis



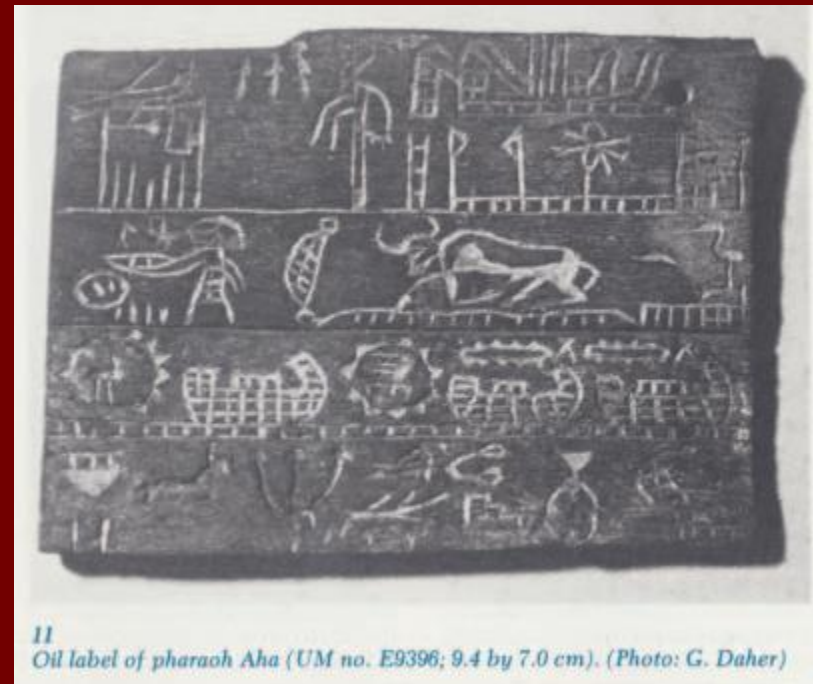
Comparison structure with Narmer- Macehead



From Abydos (tomb of AHA) – SACRED LANDSCAPES AS SPACES FOR ROYAL FESTIVALS



EBONY TABLET OF KING AHA-MENA.



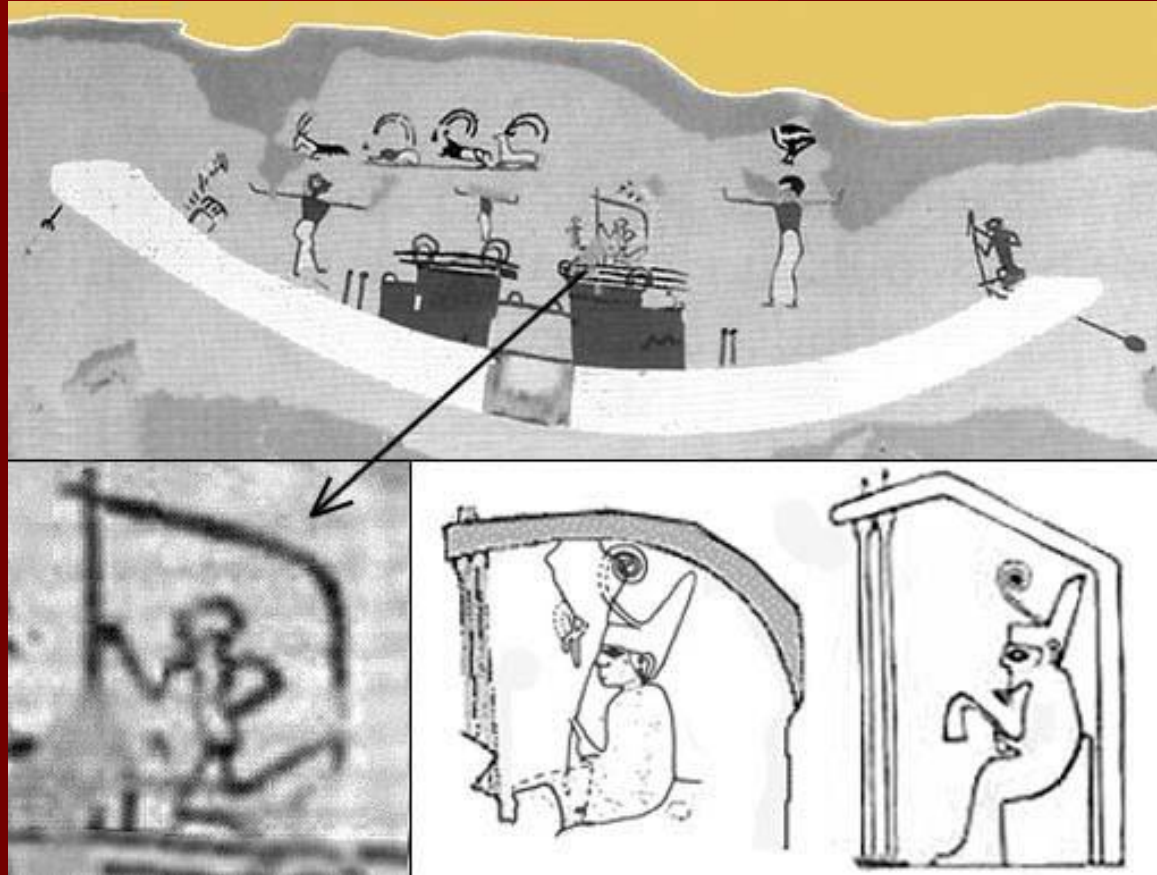
11
Oil label of pharaoh Aha (UM no. E9396; 9.4 by 7.0 cm). (Photo: G. Dahér)

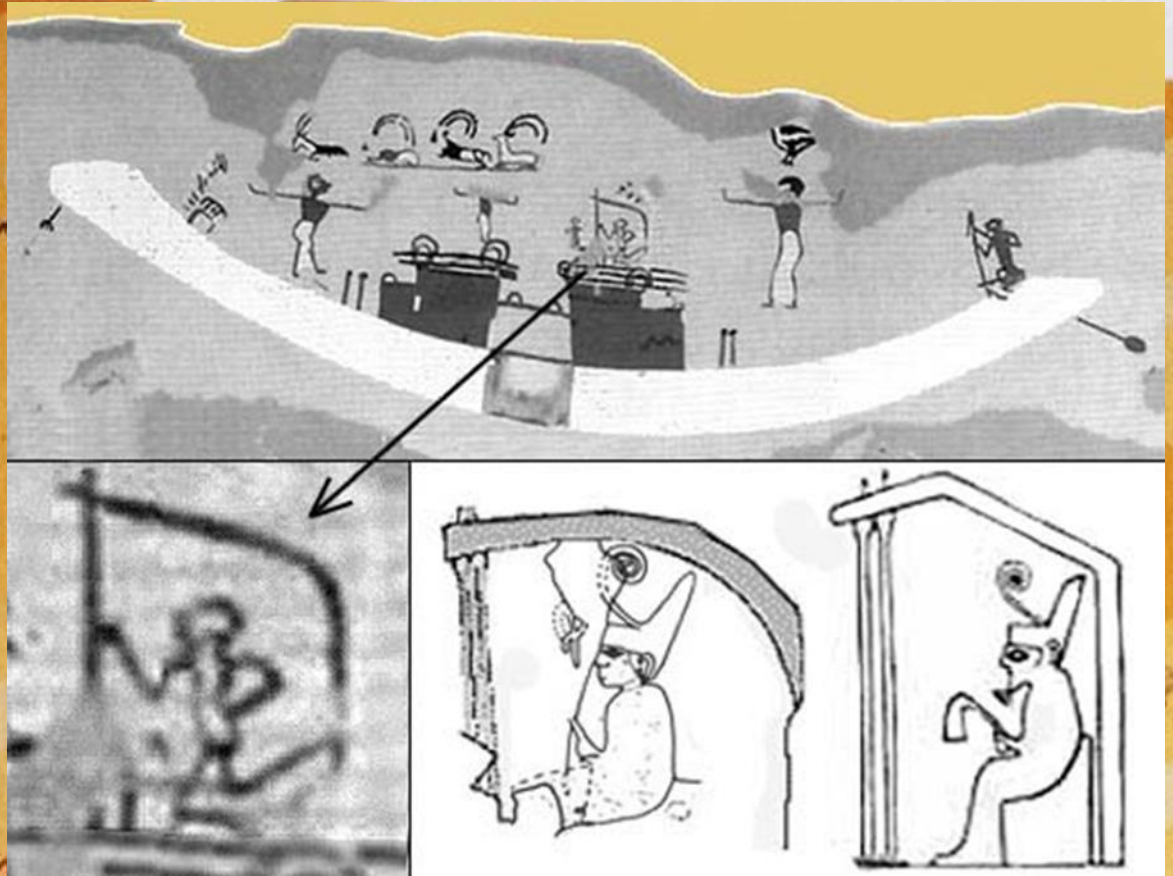
Hierakonpolis 100



Development: Hierakonpolis 100 – maceheads

- figure within the canopy king?
- Sedfest depictions?
- later depiction: pharaoh sitting (maceheads Scorpion and Narmer),
- king here stands up (no crown , no regalia).

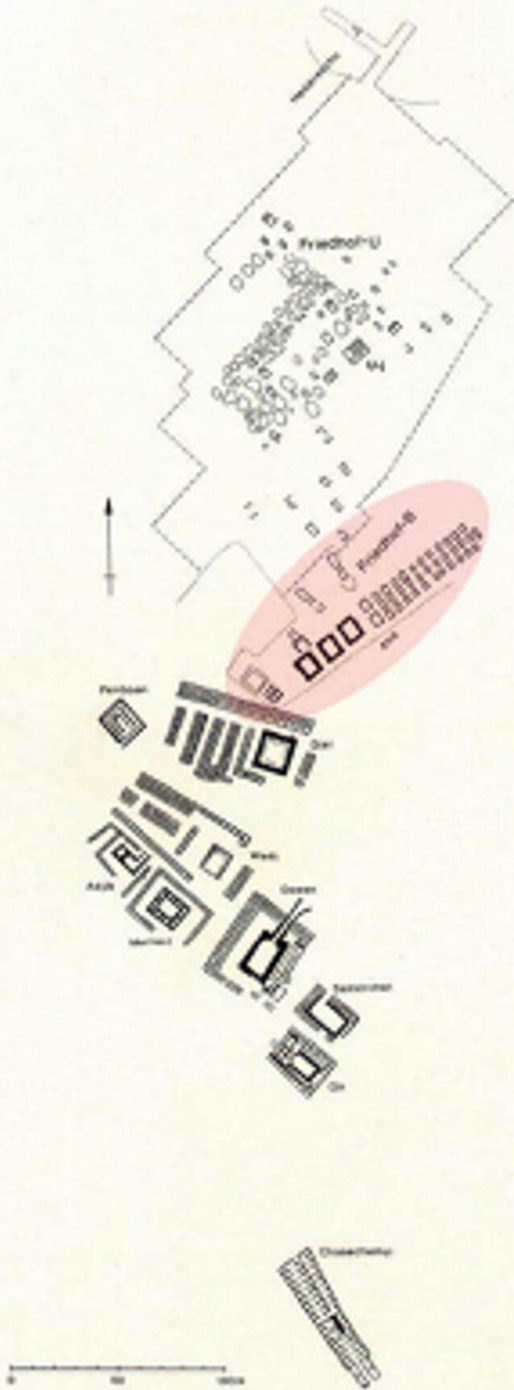






BM EA 37996: Ivory statuette of a king in jubilee robe

- From the Temple of Osiris, Abydos, Egypt
- Early Dynastic period, perhaps mid-1st Dynasty
- one of the earliest surviving royal portraits - which one?
- robe with a diamond pattern = distinctive worn by kings at coronation / jubilee festival

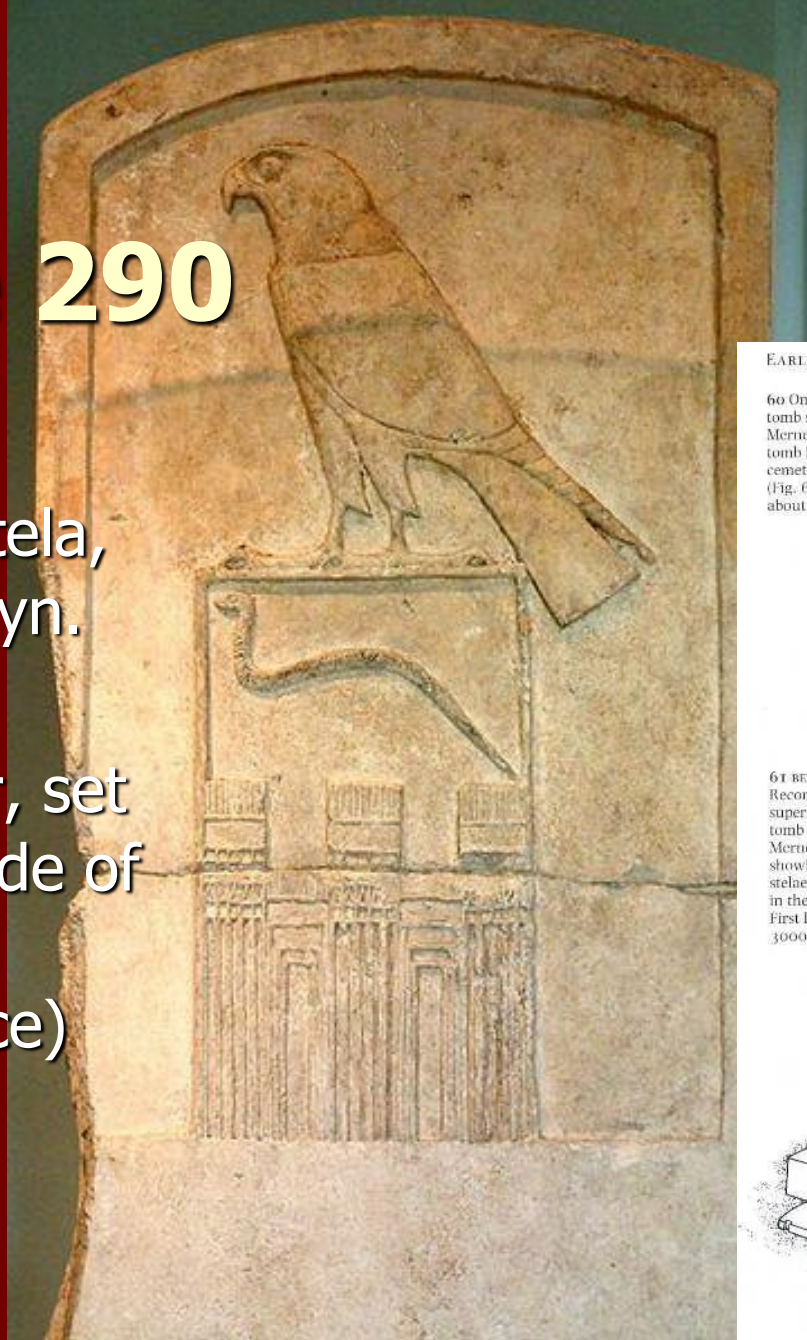


Paris, Louvre 290

Limestone

Upper part stela,
king Wadj (dyn.
1)

One of a pair, set
up on east side of
king's tomb
(offering place)

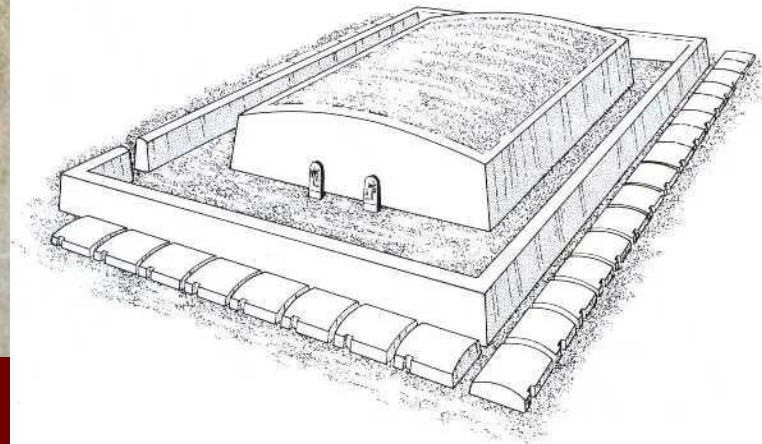


EARLY EGYPT

60 One of the pair of
tomb stelae of Queen
Mernueith, from her
tomb in the royal
cemetery at Abydos
(Fig. 61). First Dynasty,
about 3000 BC.



61 BELOW
Reconstruction of the
superstructure of the
tomb of Queen
Mernueith at Abydos,
showing the paired
stelae (see Fig. 60)
in the offering place.
First Dynasty, about
3000 BC.





MMA 1.4.93

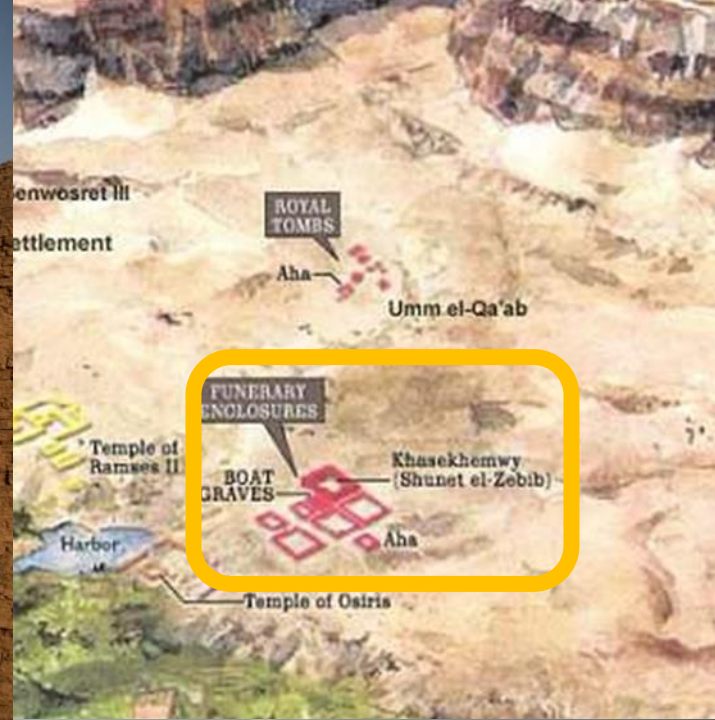
Private stela
Senba

Abydos,

King Djer

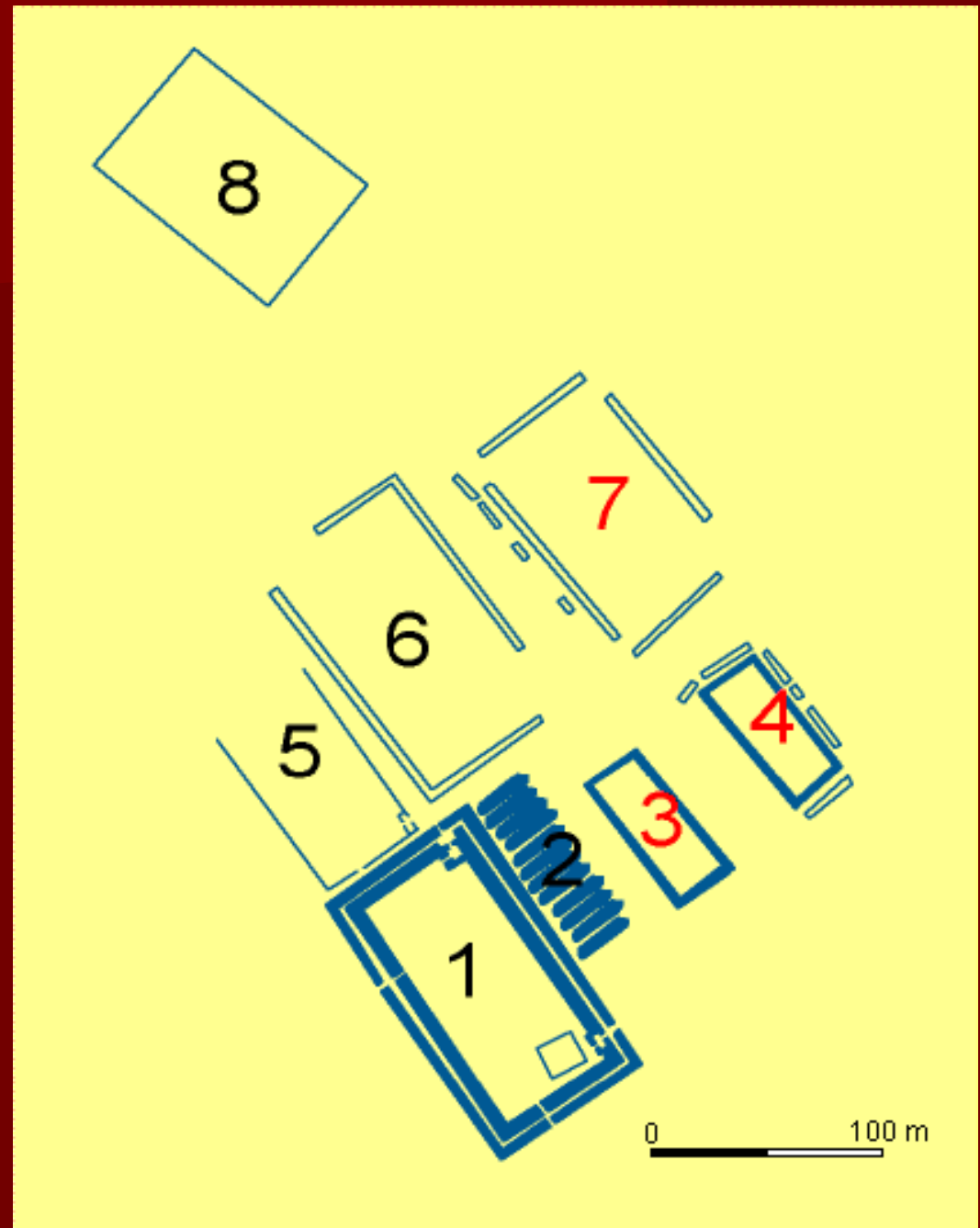
→ Early writing
(name of the
deceased)





Abydos – Royal Enclosure

1. Khasekhemwy
2. Funerary Boats
3. Anedjib or Semerkhet
4. Merytneit (or Den ?)
5. Peribsen
6. Djer
7. Djet
8. Qaa (?)



Khasekehmui (Shunet ez Zebib, Abydos)



Abydos Kinglist



•Meni / Menes

- Teti (unknown, but possibly a version of hor-Aha's name)
- Iti (Djer)
- Ita (Djet)
- Septi (Den)
- Mer-ba-pen (possibly Anedjib)
- Semsem (Semerket)
- Qebah (Qa'a)

Who was Menes?



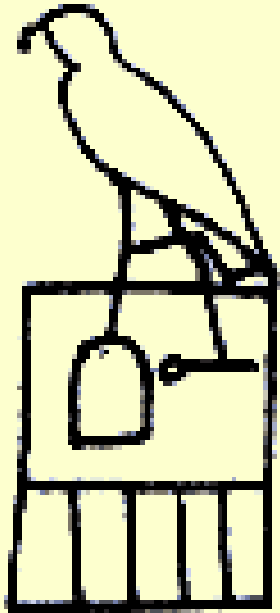
Who was Menes?



Head of an unknown king, probably 2nd
dyn.
Petrie Museum, UCL

Who was Menes?

**Aha ("the
Fighter")**

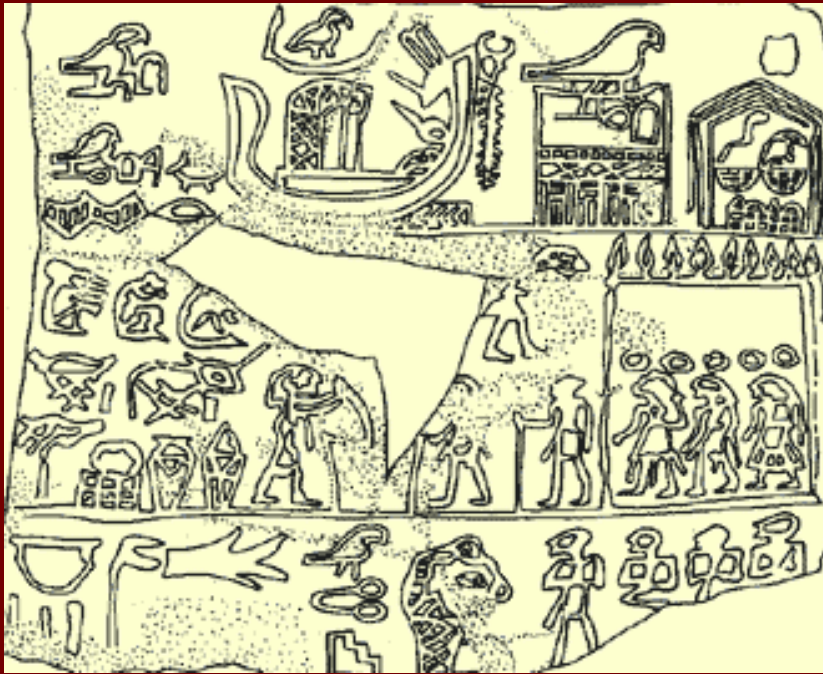


**Narmer ("Strong
Catfish")**



Who was Menes?

Aha ("the Fighter")

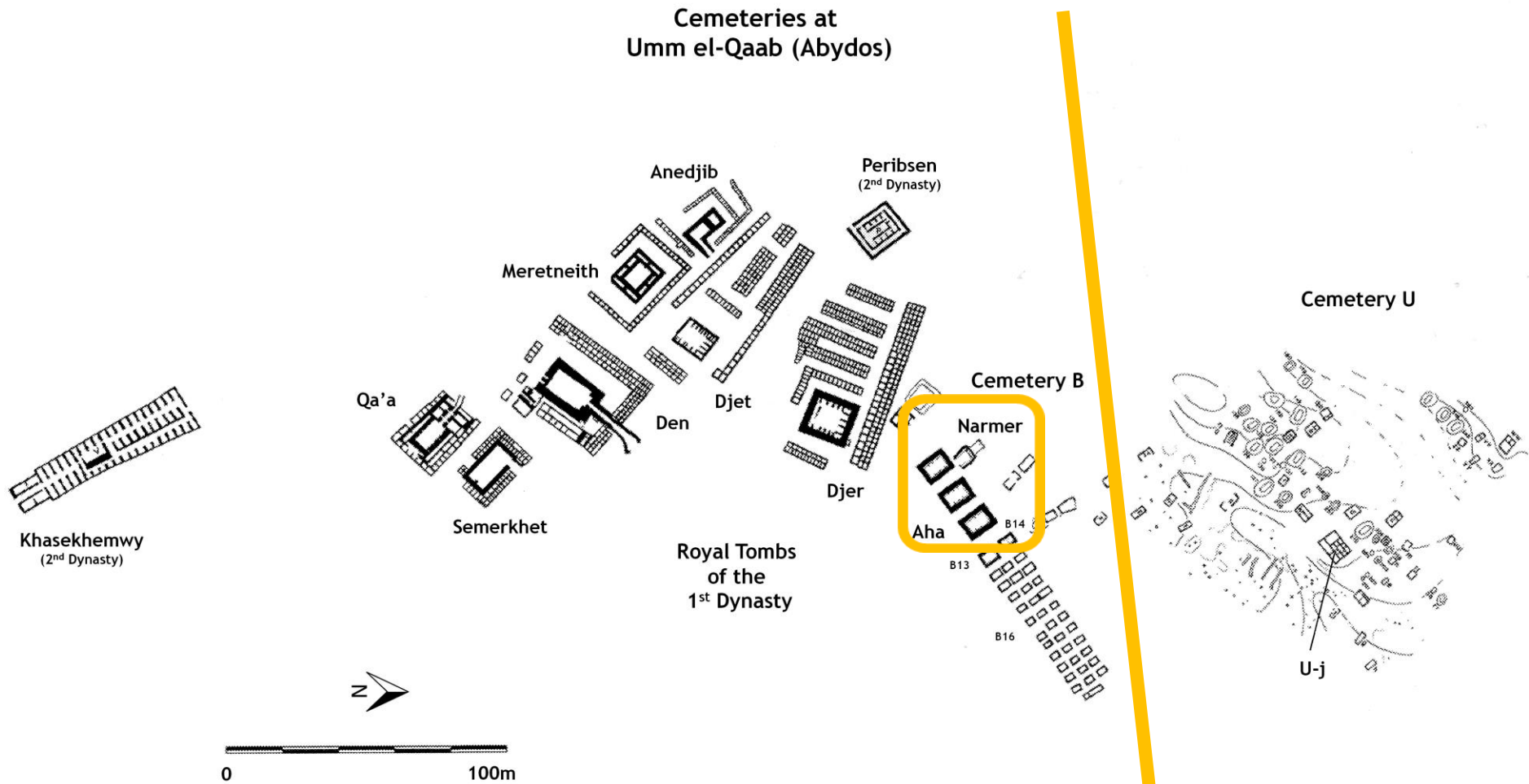


Narmer ("Strong Catfish")



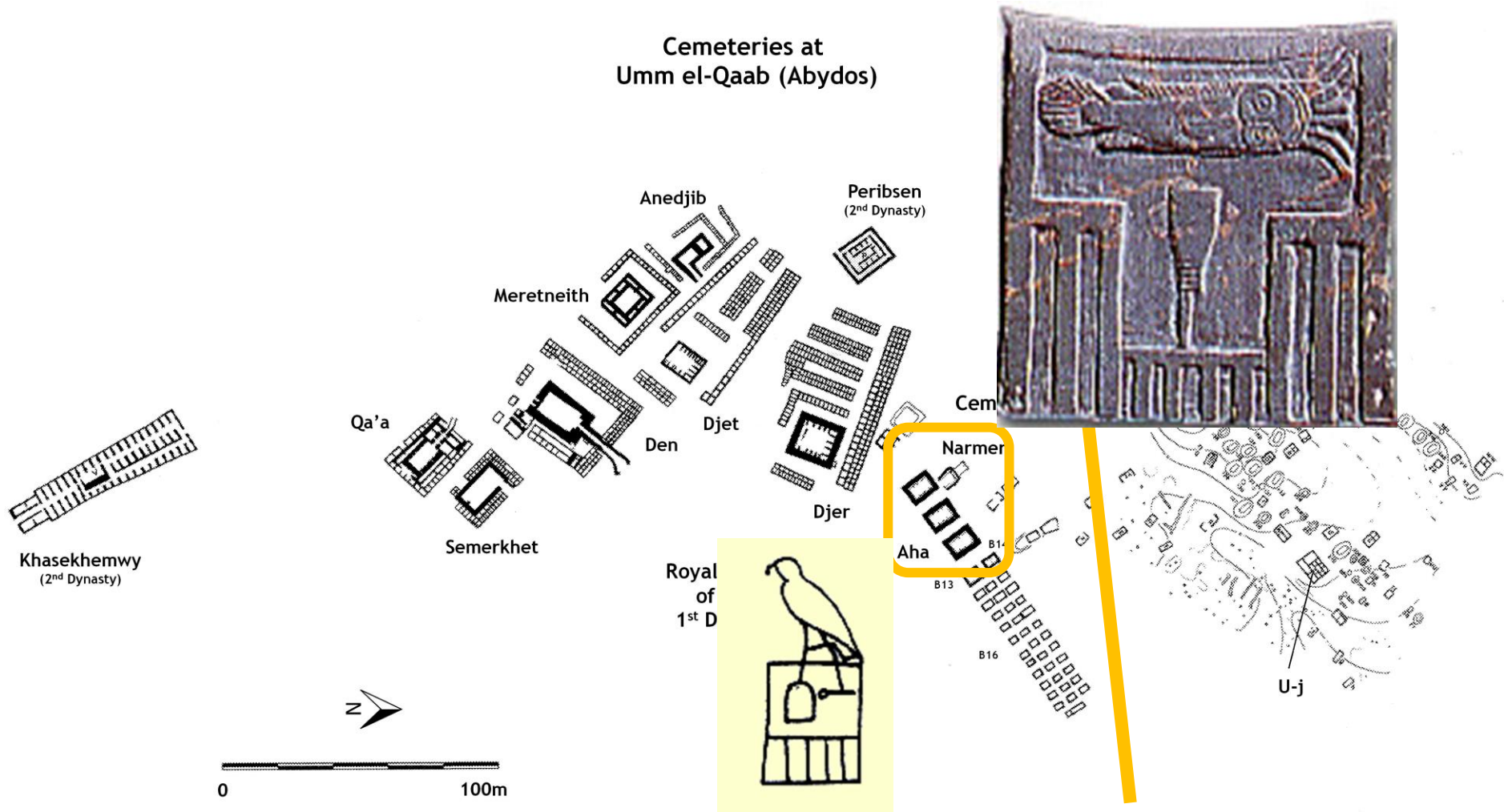
■ Early dynastic time

■ Predynastic period

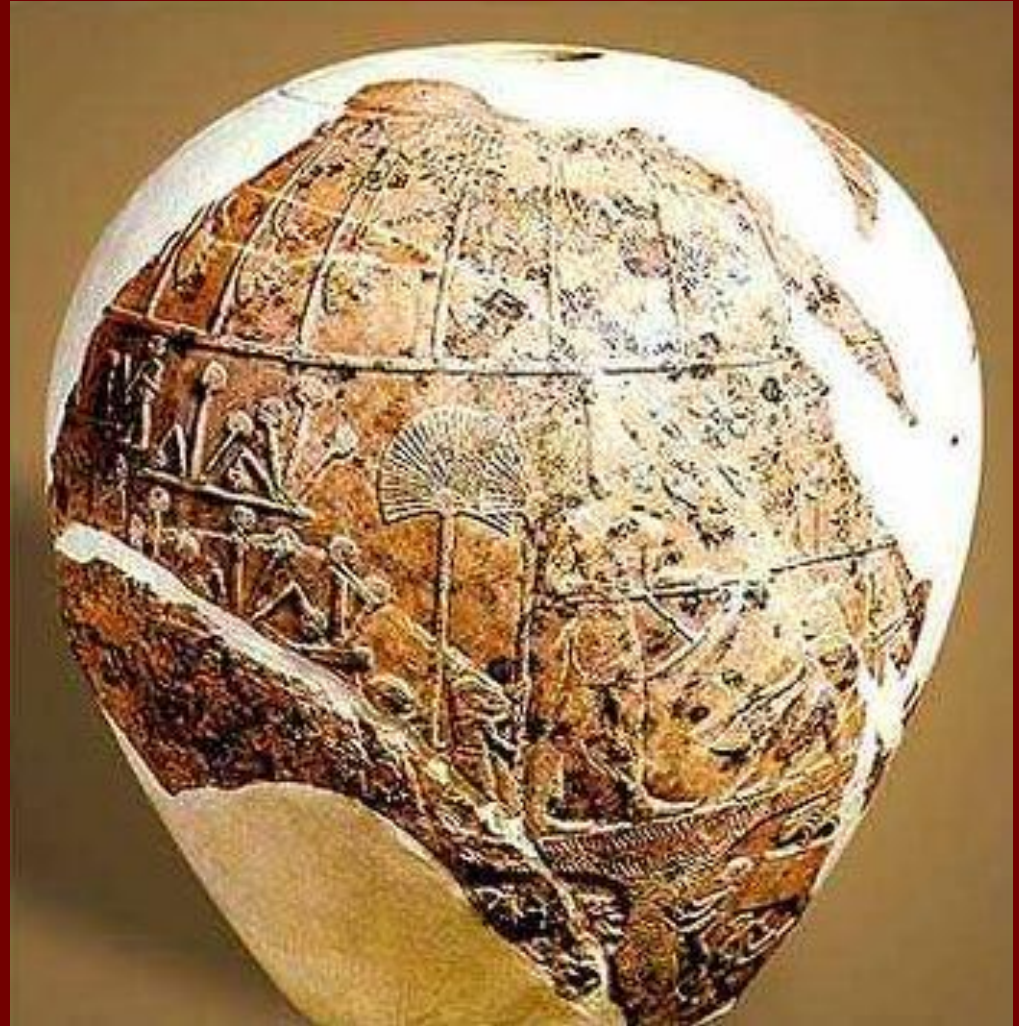


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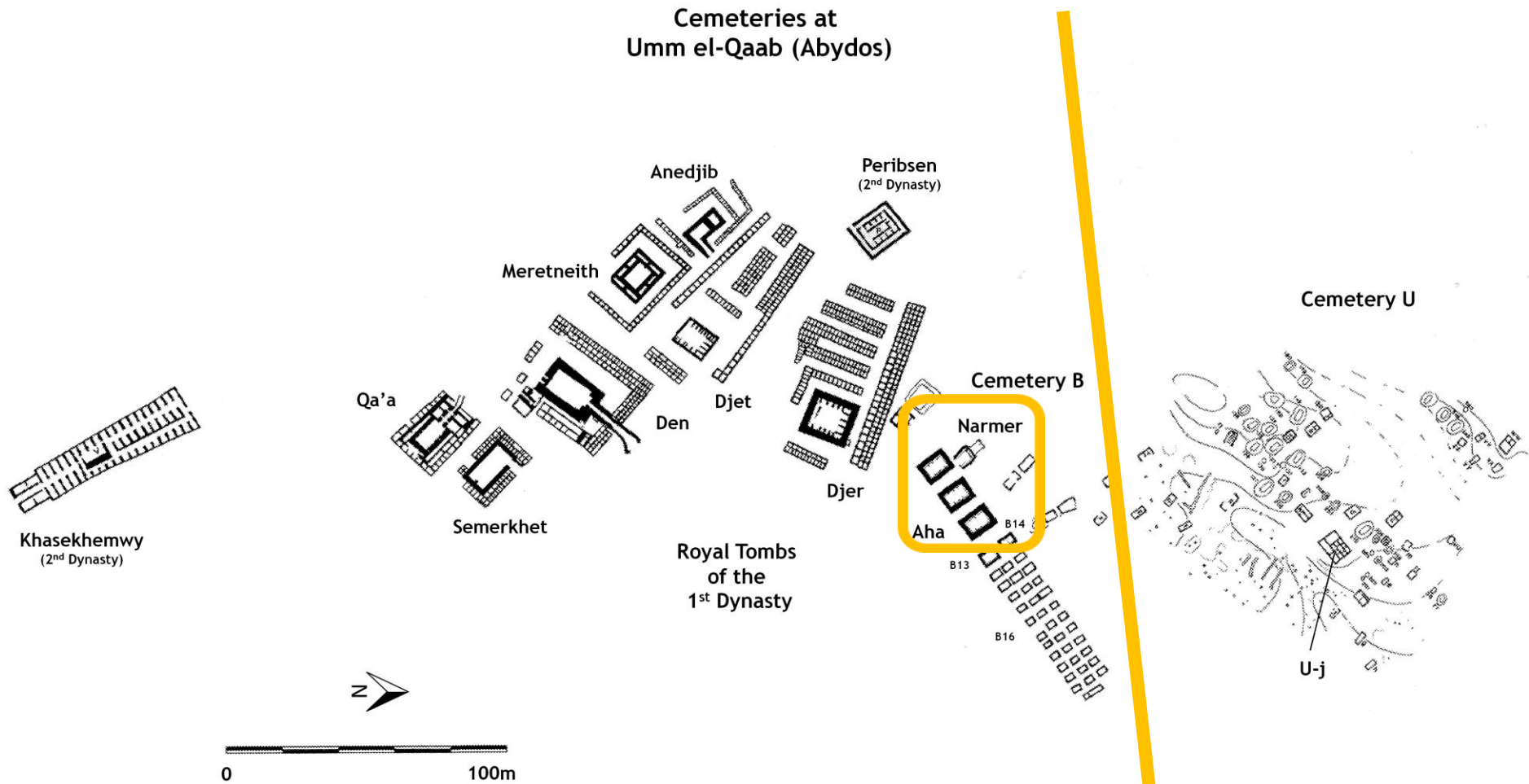


Another possible candidate: King Scorpion (Ashmolean Macehead)

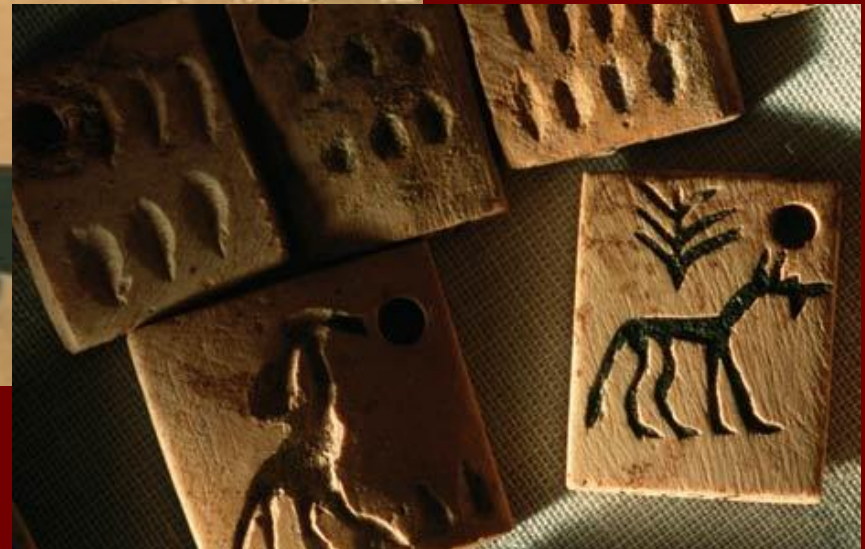


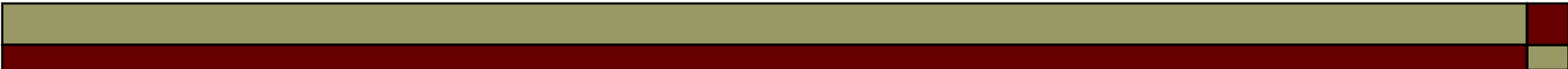
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Early writing: The important tomb Uj in Abydos – by some identified as Scorpion II

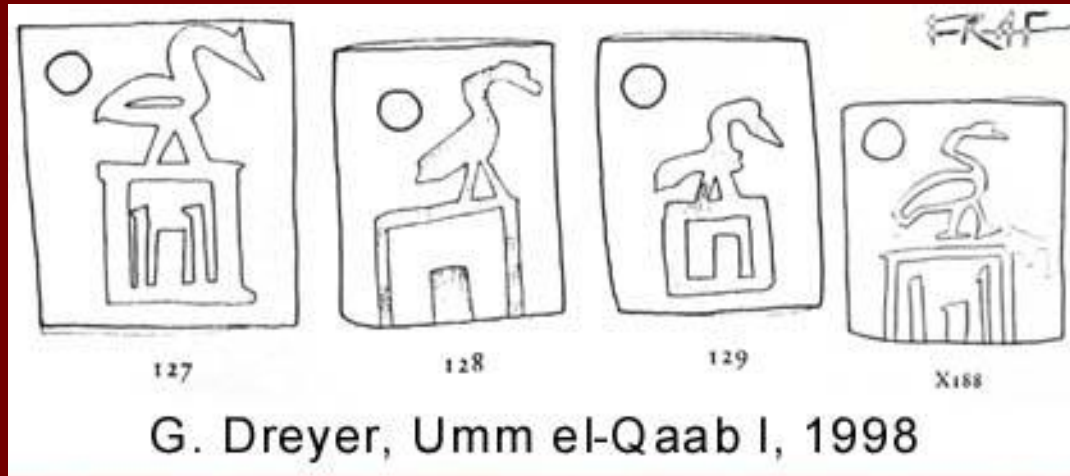




Defining early Egyptian writing

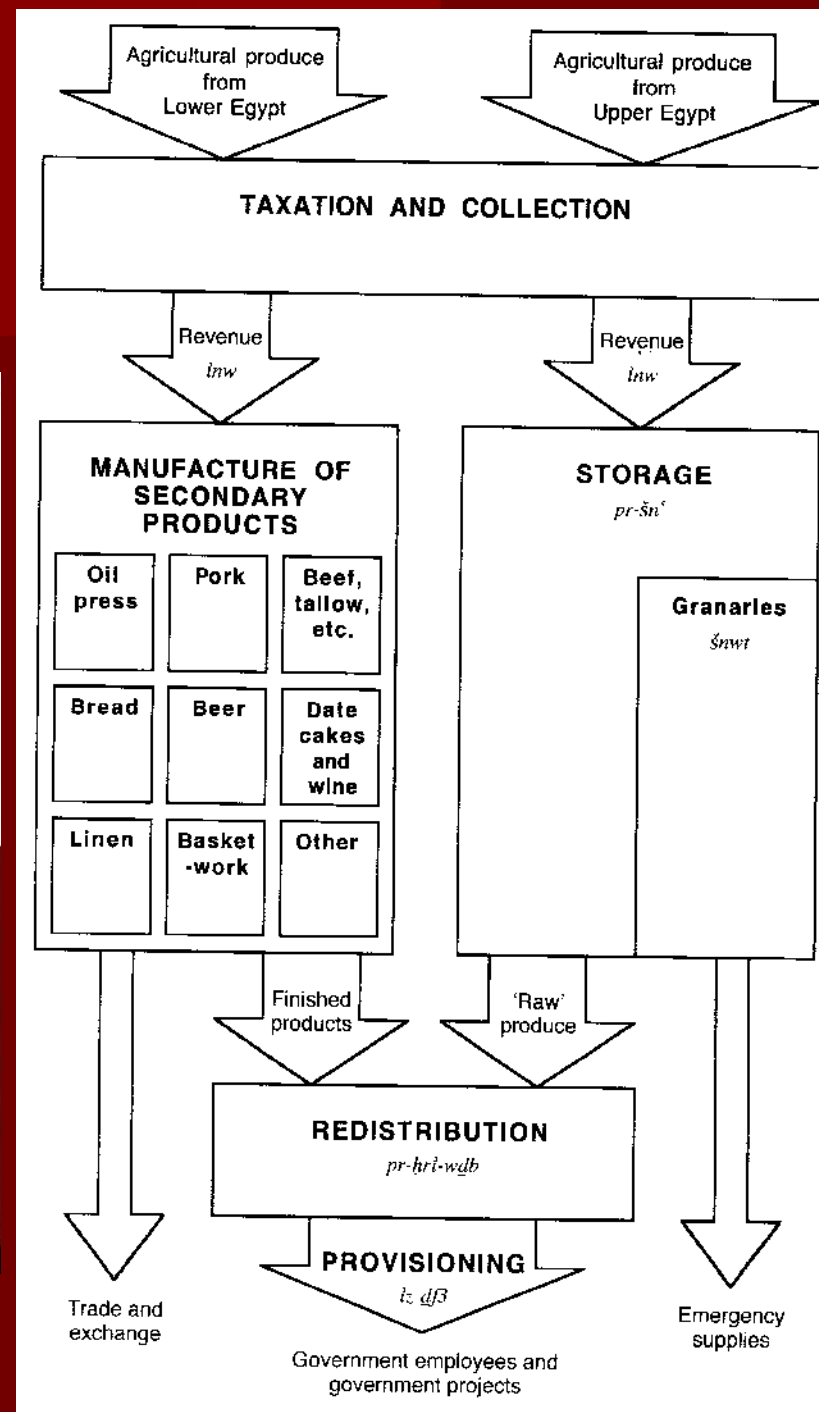
- Very short inscriptions (“principle of scarcity” – J. Baines)
- Fluid boundaries between art and writing – encoding meaning, but also specific words?
 - What is iconography?
 - What is word?
 - Do we need to differentiate?
- expression of relationships between king + those close to him (court, family, high officials) during life + death
- Establishing authority in this life
- Writing displays prestige

The Establishment of Authority



COURTESY GÜNTER DREYER

Tags from Cemetery U, Abydos



DIS-UNITY (Egypt breaks apart and needs to develop its origins again)

Periods

Dynasties

- | | |
|---|--|
| ☐ Pre- and Early Dynastic Period | ☐ Predyn. (5300-3000BC), 0-2 |
| ☐ Old Kingdom | ☐ 3-6 |
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UNITY

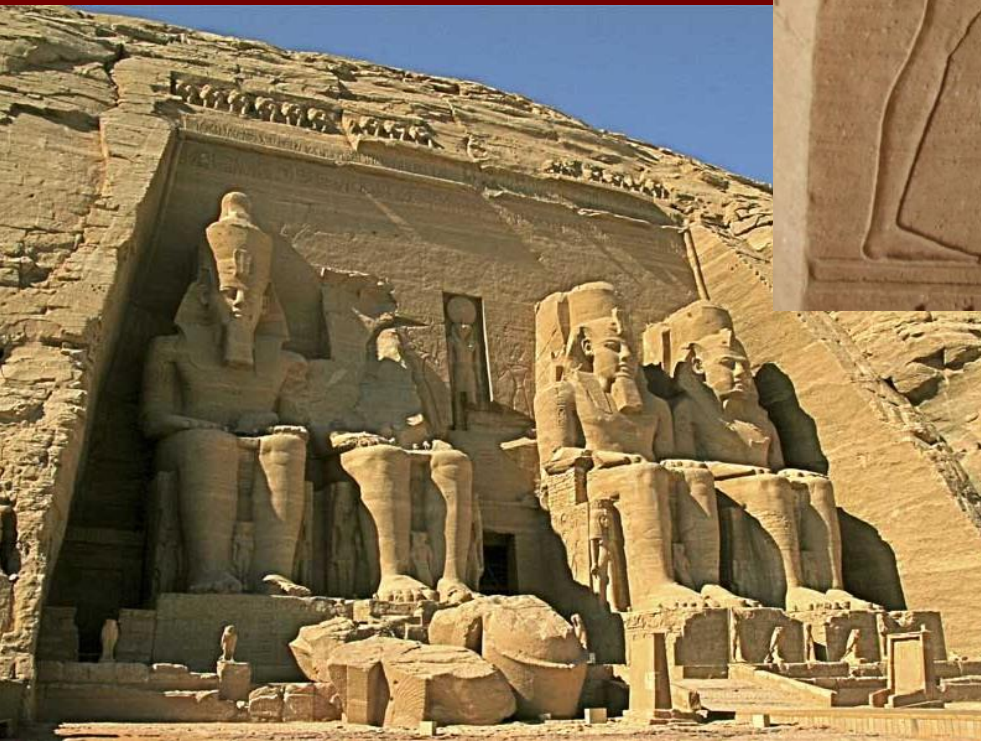
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Unity as
recurrent and
constant origins
– repeating the
first unification



- *sm3 t3.wj*
- The binding (together)
of the two lands
- = unity

Kingdoms



Old Kingdom



Middle Kingdom

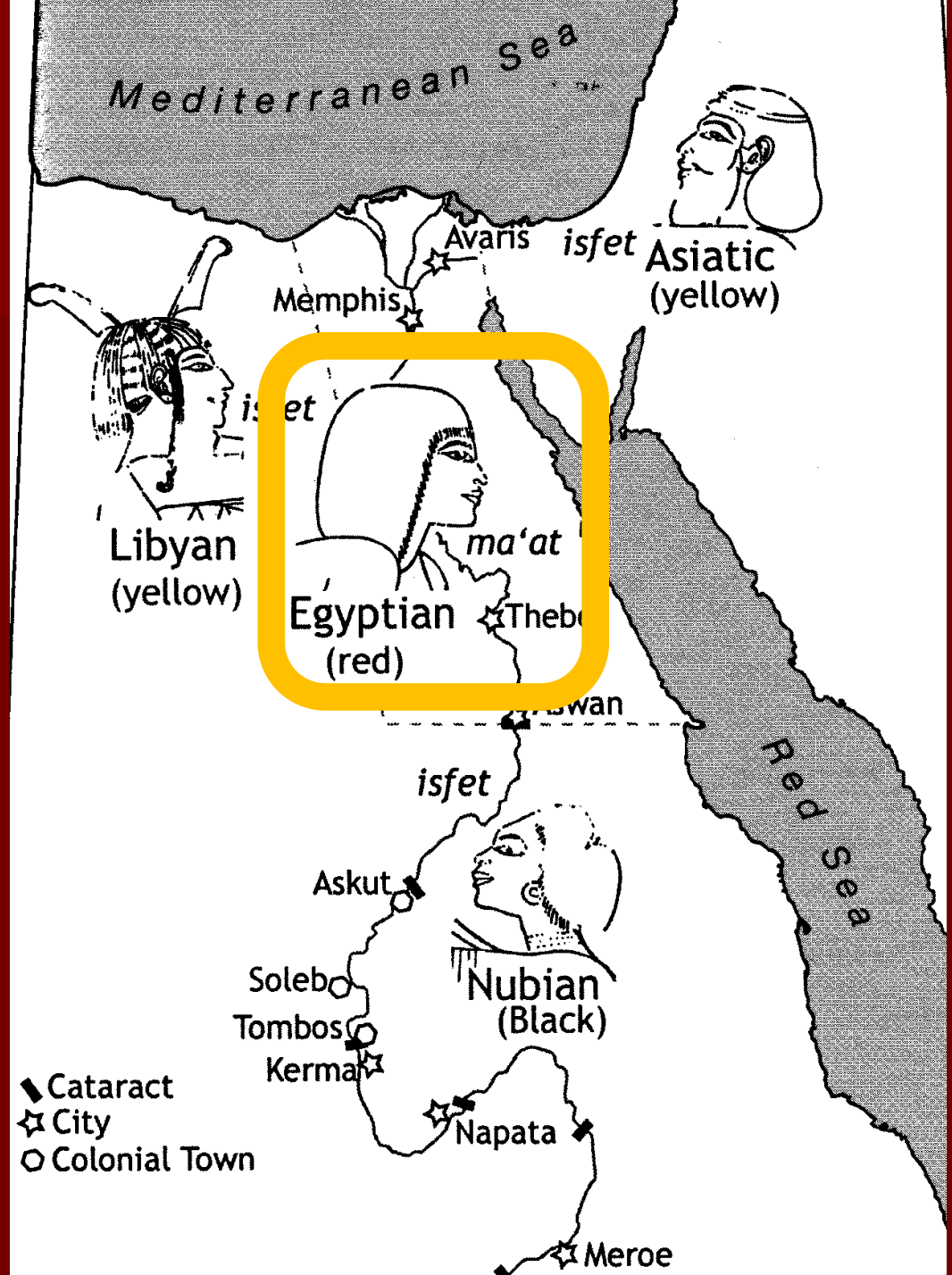


New Kingdom



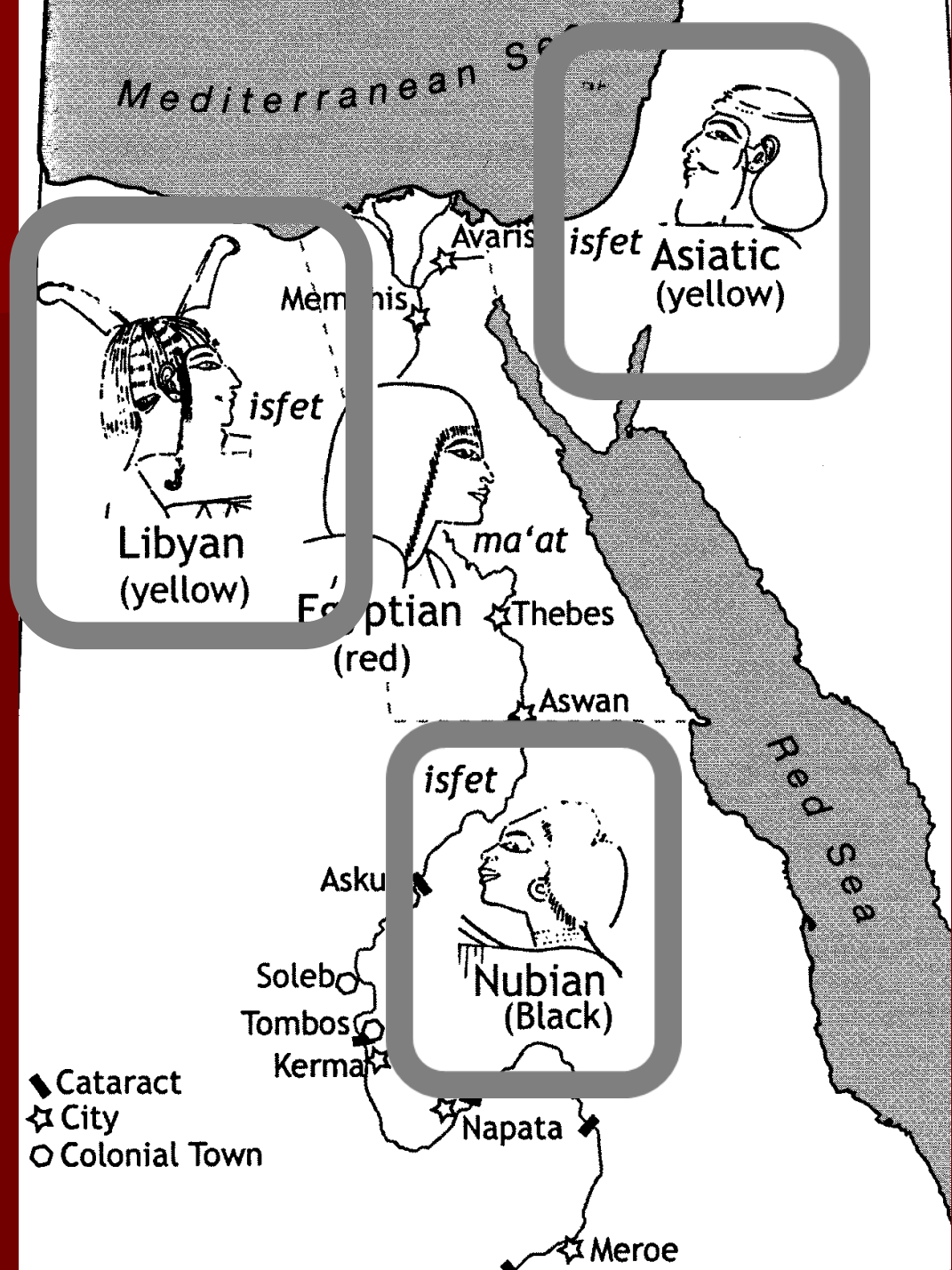
Ethnicity and monumental discourse

THE Egyptian
part of Ma'at –
the right order



Ethnicity and monumental discourse

THE
foreigner
part of Jsfet –
the area of
chaos



Duality as existence



Double Crown (Pschent) of Ancient Egypt



White Crown
"Hedjet" of
"Upper Egypt"

Red Crown
"Deshret" of
"Lower Egypt"

Unified crown
"Pschent" of
"Unified Egypt"



Hedjet



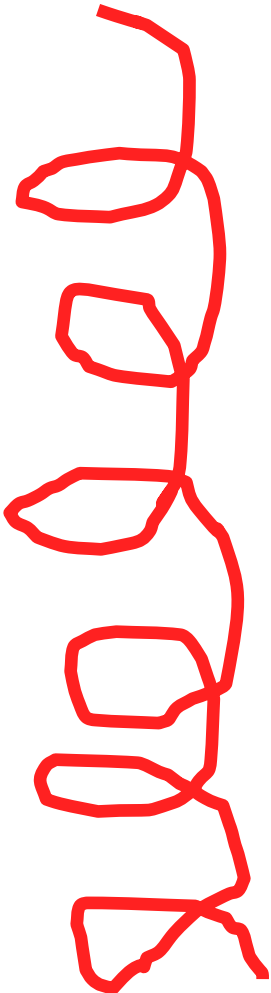
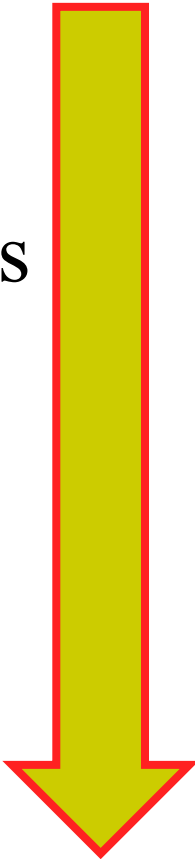
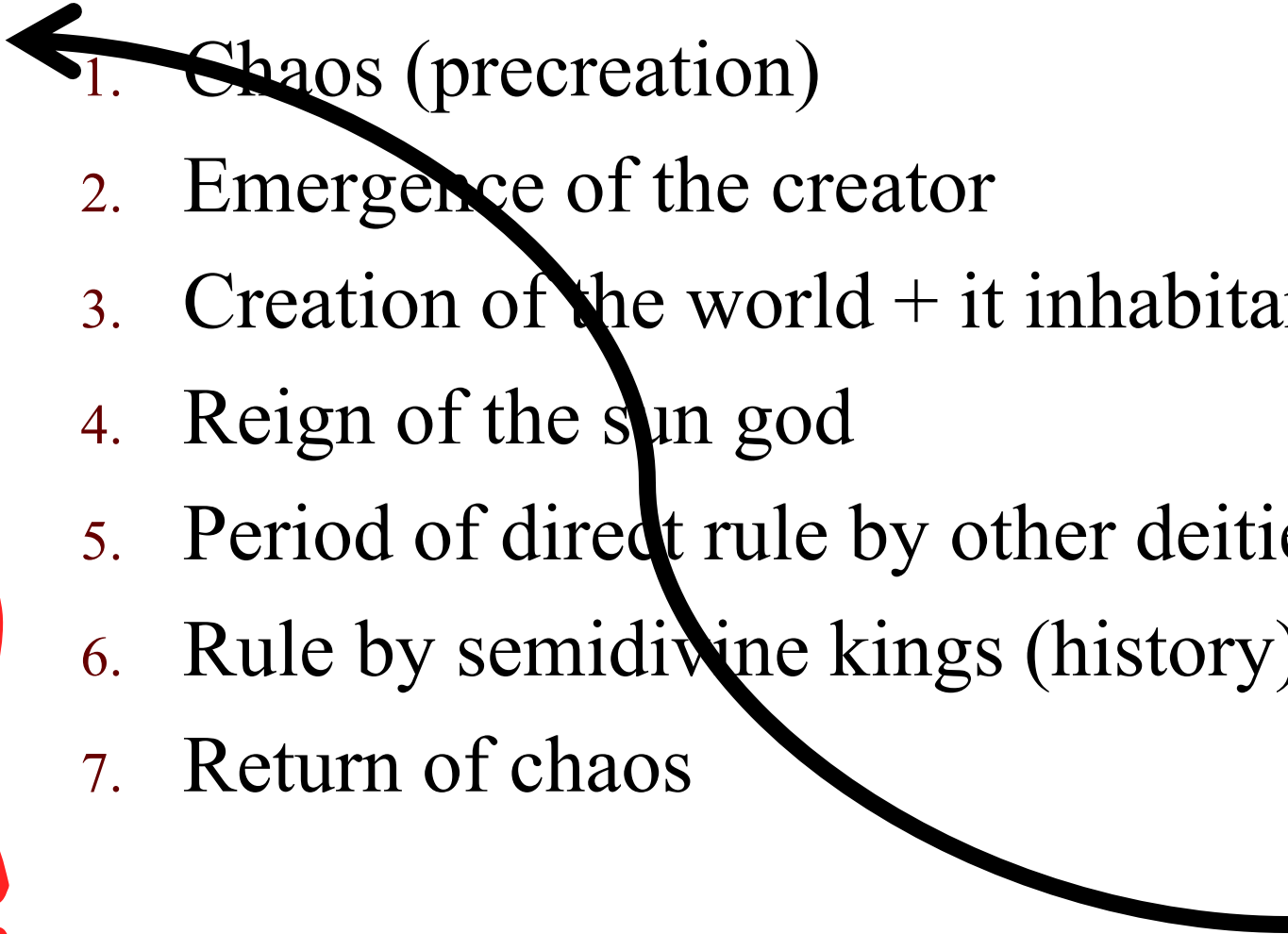
Deshret



Pschent

The mythical story of Egypt

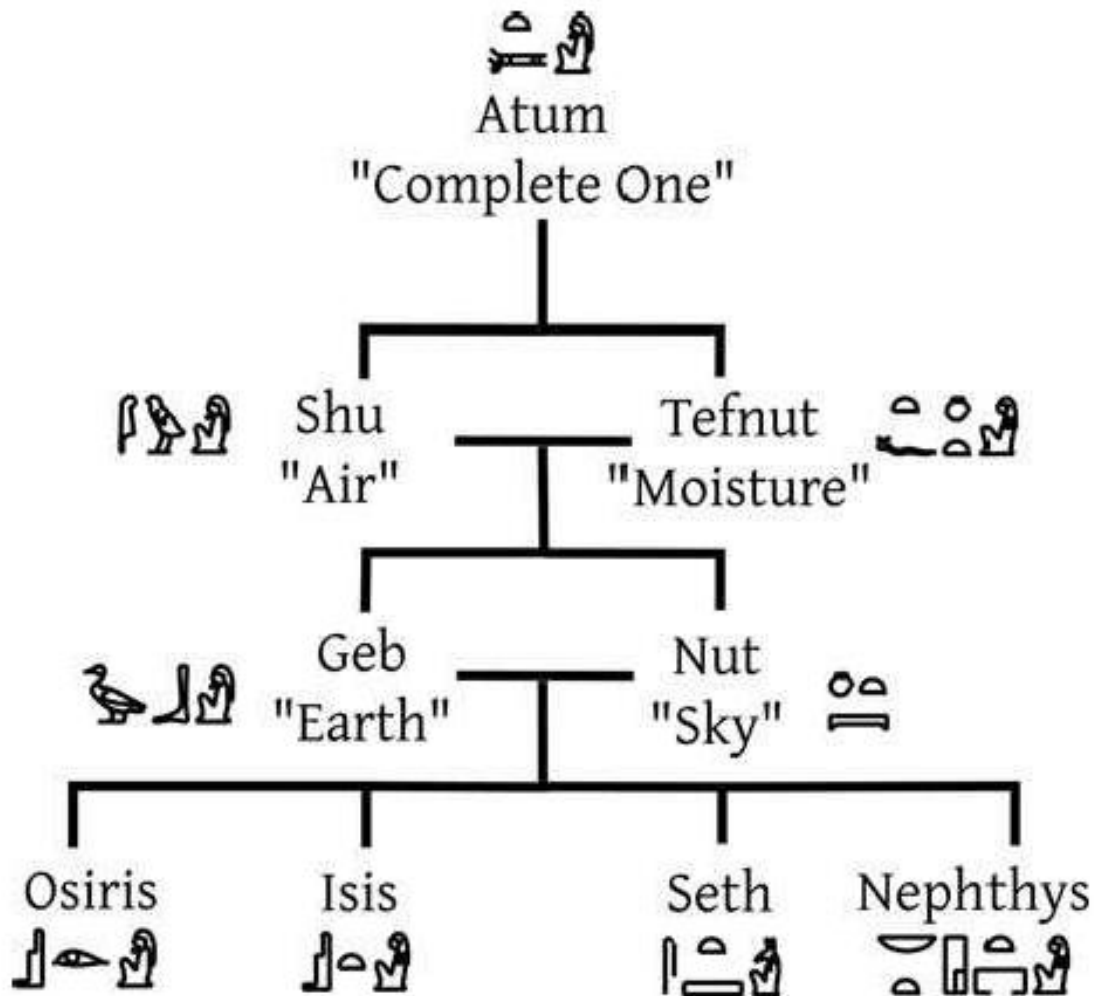
1. Chaos (precreation)
2. Emergence of the creator
3. Creation of the world + it inhabitants
4. Reign of the sun god
5. Period of direct rule by other deities
6. Rule by semidivine kings (history)
7. Return of chaos



Creation myths

Egyptian  *Iwnw*

Heliopolitan Ennead



Greenfield Papyrus (BM EA10554,87)

