

Week 2, Tuesday

Death and Judgement (Egypt): Bodies, Death and Osiris

HPHP4006

Myth and Mythology: How stories shape the
world

Dr. Katharina Zinn

Associate Professor in Egyptian Archaeology
and Heritage

Readings

- ❑ Taylor, J. 2001. *Death and Afterlife in Ancient Egypt*. London: British Museum Press. 46-91.
- ❑ Ikram, S. *Death and Burial in Ancient Egypt*. London: Longman. 47-76.
- ❑ Ikram, S. 2010, Mummification. In J. Dieleman, W. Wendrich (eds.), *UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology*, Los Angeles. <http://escholarship.org/uc/item/0gn7x3ff>
- ❑ Andrews, C.A.R. (1984). *Egyptian mummies*. London. British Museum Press.

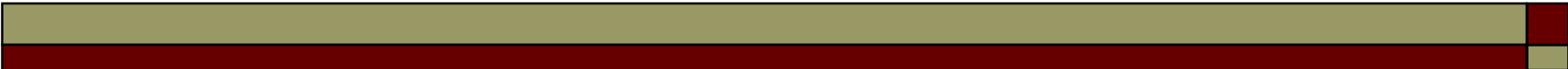
Mummies

**Seti I (Cairo Museum
CG6107; JE2)**

Abydos







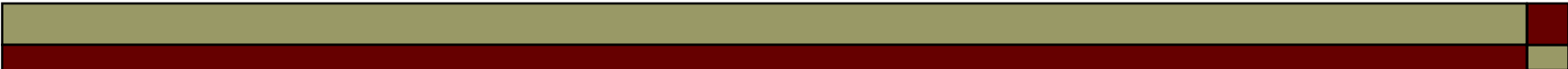
Why a mummy?

- ❑ funerary customs and beliefs of the ancient Egyptians called for preservation of the body and ample provisions for the after-life
- ❑ Afterlife as continuation of this life
- ❑ Needs provision for afterlife according the best as economic abilities would allow AND preservation of body
 - seen as important medium which was necessary to continue to exist after death
 - Indicates an association between preservation of corpse and life after death
- ❑ Since when???
- Latest mid 4th millennium BC

Earliest evidence

- Body of a woman
- Cemetery of Hierakonpolis
- Mid-Predynastic Period = about 3500 BC
- Artificial preservation of the body
- Was wrapped in linen and treated with resin

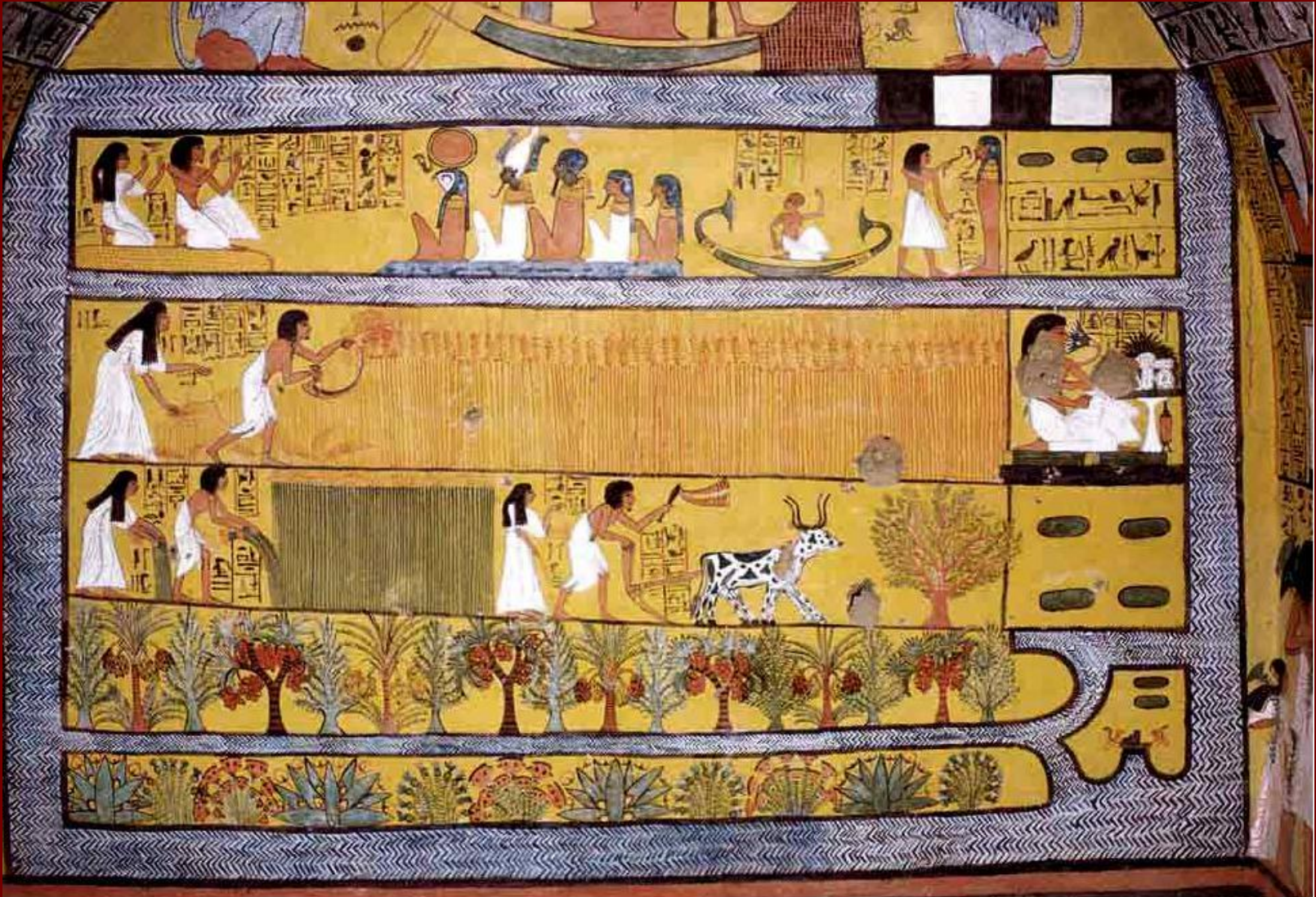




The mummy – Ancient Egyptian Beliefs

- ❑ **Seen as the eternal body!!!!**
- ❑ Egyptians believed, that personality consisted of several constituent parts (principle elements)

This photograph shows the interior of an ancient Egyptian tomb, likely from the Late Period. The walls are covered in vibrant paintings and hieroglyphs. The scenes depicted include: a family group in a boat at the top; a large central scene of a man and woman in white robes, possibly a ritual or social gathering; a scene of a man and woman in white robes, possibly a ritual or social gathering; a scene of a man and woman in white robes, possibly a ritual or social gathering; a scene of a man and woman in white robes, possibly a ritual or social gathering; a scene of a man and woman in white robes, possibly a ritual or social gathering; a scene of a man and woman in white robes, possibly a ritual or social gathering; a scene of a man and woman in white robes, possibly a ritual or social gathering; a scene of a man and woman in white robes, possibly a ritual or social gathering; a scene of a man and woman in white robes, possibly a ritual or social gathering. The paintings are set against a background of yellow ochre and are framed by a decorative border.

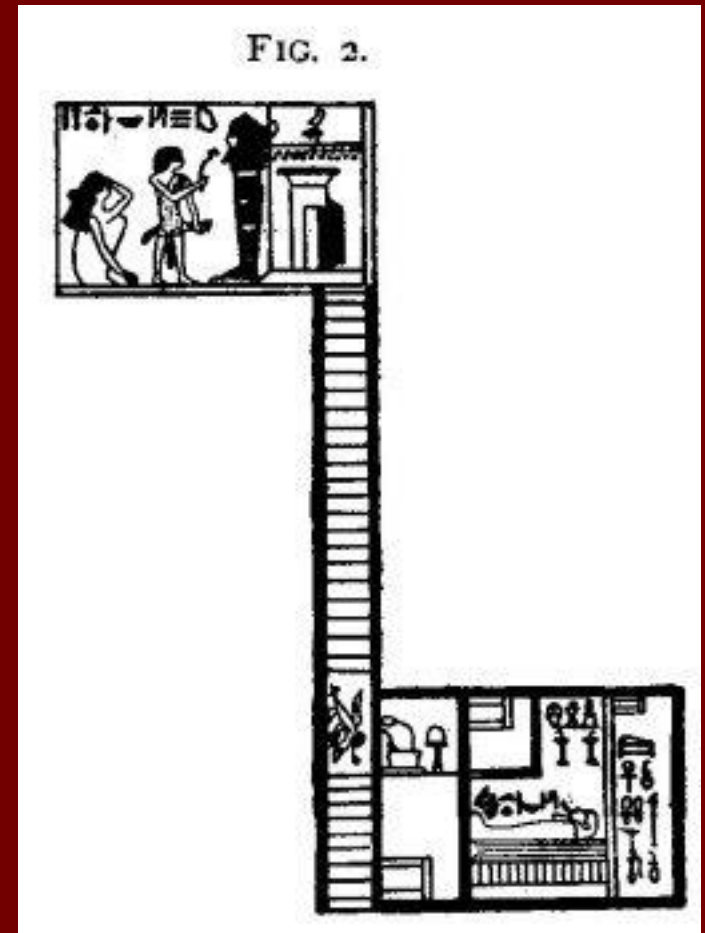




The mummy – Ancient Egyptian Beliefs

- ❑ **Seen as the eternal body!!!!**
- ❑ Egyptians believed, that personality consisted of several constituent parts (principle elements)
 - **Body** (mummy, corps), **Ka, Ba, Akh, Name, Shadow**
- ❑ Mummy served as vessel for the soul/spirit components **Ka** and **Ba**, who returned to the mummy every night to rest

Ba returning to tomb (from funerary papyrus Neb-Qed)



Ka statue



Ka

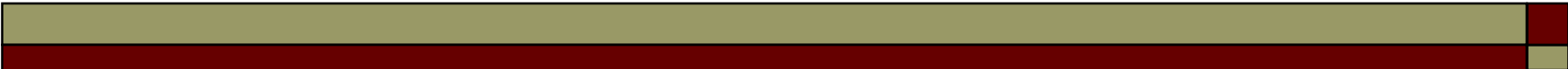
- ❑ Originally: **Ka** meant 'bull'
- ❑ Soon: intellectual and spiritual power
- ❑ impossible to translate concept into our words, best: creative power in any being
- ❑ Not equivalent to our concept of the 'soul'
- ❑ Khnum – one of the creator gods – forms the newborn and his ka on the potter's wheel



Ba

(Toledo Museum, MM: 117/648)





Ba

- sometimes described as soul, but represented the whole of all of the deceased's non-physical qualities that make up the personality of a human
- also connected with power
- gods as well as humans can have a **Ba**

Pap. Ani (BM)

- *...he shall go forth by day and His Ba shall not be restrained.*



Pap. Ani (BM)

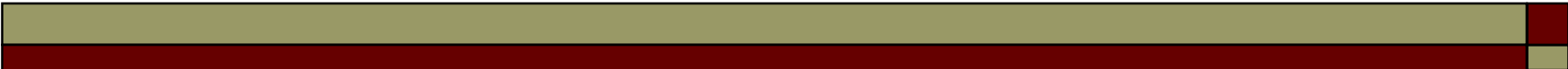
- May it see my corpse, may it rest on my mummy, Which will never be destroyed or perish.



Akh

- ❑ = form in which blessed dead lived on in the afterlife (fully resurrected and glorified form)
- ❑ result of union between the **Ba** and the **Ka**
- ❑ **Only aspect achieved after death**
- ❑ **Akh** lived on unharmed for eternity
- ❑ often translated as "spirit" or "spirit form"
- ❑ "akh" is represented in hieroglyphs by the symbol of the crested ibis

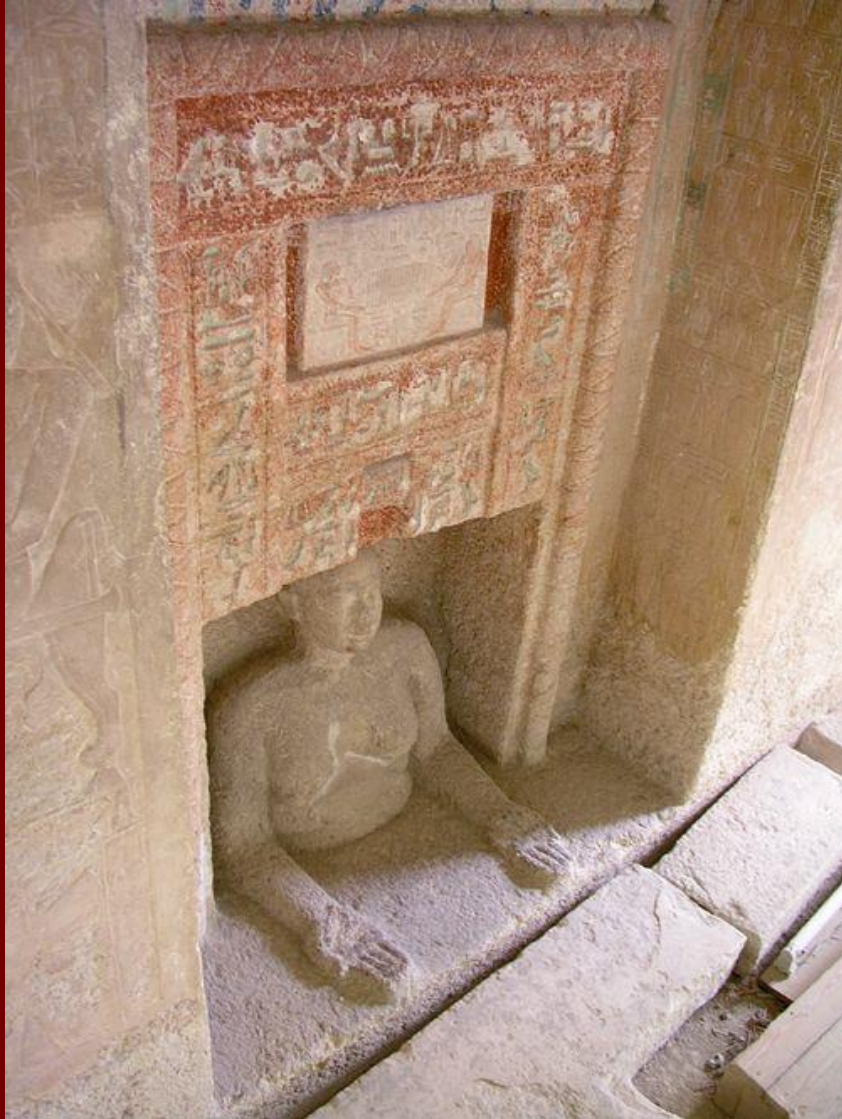




Supplies

- Food provided
 - Real food (offerings)
 - depicted on the walls (magically transformed to supply if expected regular offerings would cease): items which the tomb owner would have eaten in his lifetime and hoped to eat in the after-life
- representations of food, along with the accompanying prayers were thought to supply the tomb owner once the actual food offerings stopped

G7102: Offering Door Idu



‘Book of the Dead’

- ❑ Egyptian name: **The Chapter Of Coming Forth By Day**
- ❑ modern term for a collection of magical spells
- ❑ helped Egyptians get into the afterlife (guide)
- ❑ afterlife = hazardous journey to eternity
- ❑ → need magical help along the way
- ❑ not a finite text (no collection of doctrine nor a statement of faith) → practical guide to the next world
- ❑ ‘book’ usually on papyrus → roll with different spells, written in hieroglyphic or hieratic script

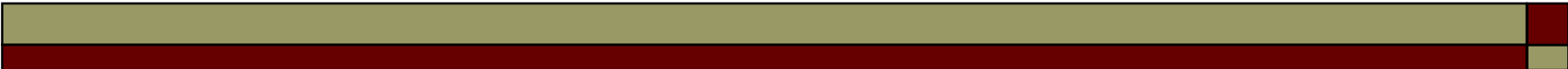
BM EA 10470/3 (BoD Ani)
The Final Judgement (chapter 125)
Discuss





Chapter 125 - 'Negative Confession'

- ❑ one of the most distinctive, innovative and best known features of the Book of the Dead
- ❑ deceased declares innocence of one sin in turn before each of forty-two assessors
- ❑ no written sources of the chapter earlier than the New Kingdom (about 1550-1069 BC), but precursors in the Coffin Texts and Pyramid Texts



Some spells of the Negative confession

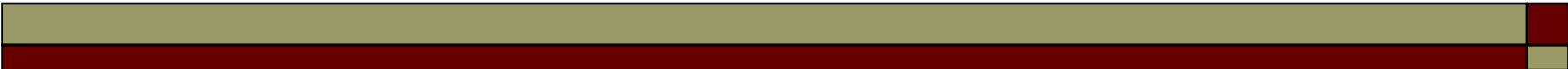
→ see link on [MOODLE](#)

- ❑ O broad of step who comes from Iunu – I have done no evil
- ❑ O flame embracer who comes from Kheraha – I have not robbed
- ❑ O beaked god who comes from Khemenu – I have not been greedy
- ❑ O swallower of shades who comes from the cavern – I have not stolen
- ❑ O flaming faced who comes from Rosetjau – I have not killed anyone
- ❑ O Double Lion who comes from the sky I have not taken from offering lists
- ❑ O fiery eyed who comes from Khem I have not committed corruption
- ❑ ... O breaker of bones who comes from Henennesut – I have not told lies ...
- ❑ O white of teeth who comes from Fayum – I have not broken rules

Osiris

- member of the Great Ennead
- god and chief judge of the Underworld
- god of resurrection, the Inundation and vegetation
- represented as a mummified king



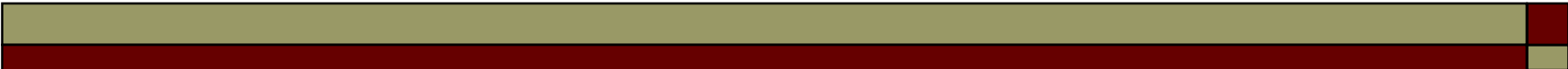


Osiris Myth

as the most prominent myth of Egypt

- ❑ Theological and popular religious beliefs
- ❑ Meanings:
 - Gain life in the afterlife
 - Behaviour reminiscent to people's life (triad, conflict with Seth)
 - Part of the Ennead and repetition of creation
- ❑ myth appears within many ancient texts and in an wide range of Egyptian literary styles with unusual amount of detail (myth otherwise fragmentary / vague) → not finalised version, not cohesive



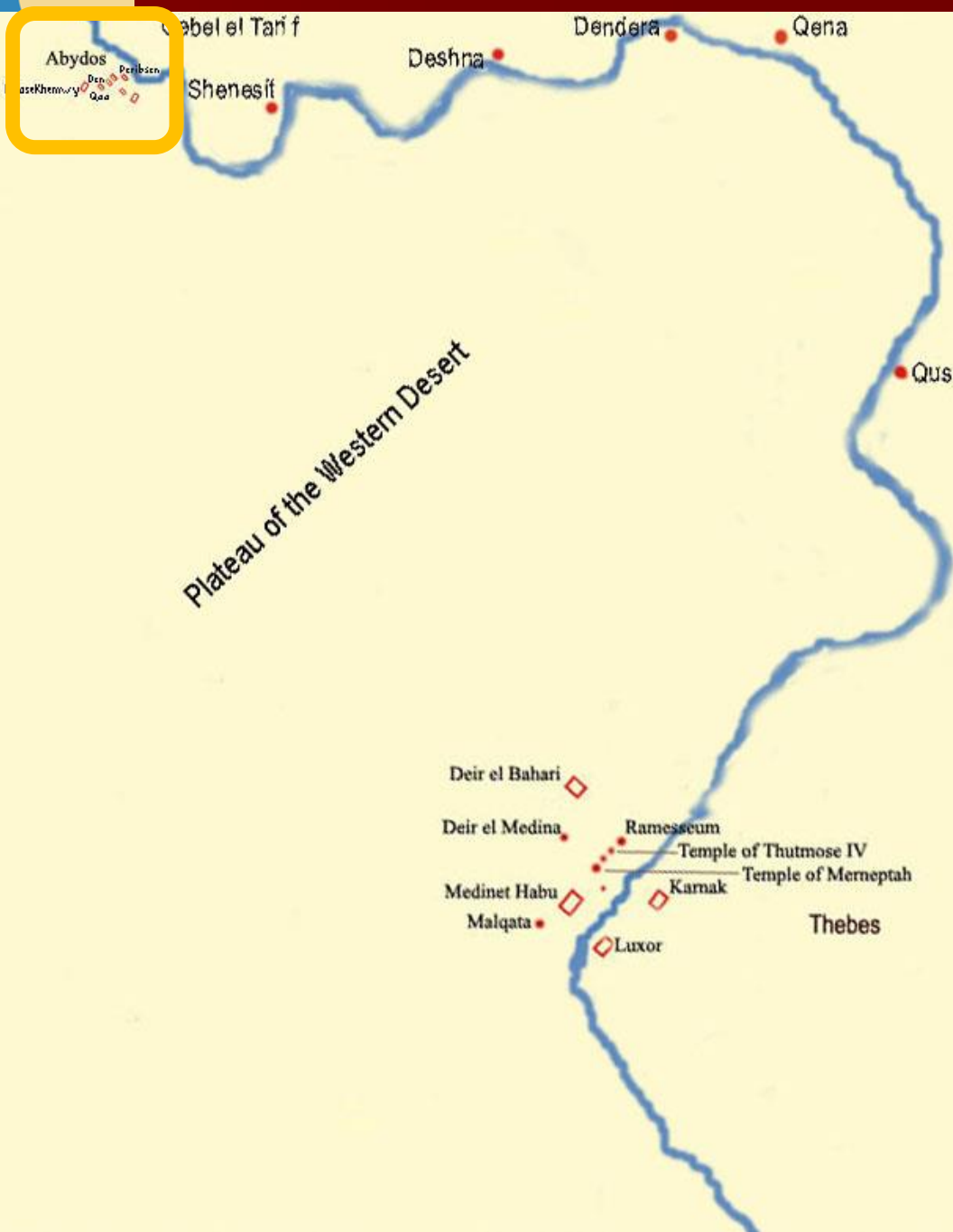


Osiris Myth

as the most prominent myth of Egypt

- ❑ Osiris first mentioned in *Pyramid Texts*
 - concerned with the afterlife of the king: death and restoration of Osiris, battle between Horus and Set
- ❑ Appears in elements in more funerary texts: *Coffin Texts* (Middle Kingdom), *Book of the Dead* (New Kingdom)
- ❑ Other religious texts: *Dramatic Ramesseum Papyrus* (describes coronation of Senwosret I), *Ikhernofret Stela* (rituals for Osiris – myth reenacted)
- ❑ most complete ancient Egyptian account: *Great Hymn to Osiris*, (Stela of Amenmose, Louvre C286, New Kingdom) – general outline, but little detail (Lichtheim II 81-86)
- ❑ Memphite Theology: Osiris as member of the Ennead, Osiris' death, resolution of the dispute between Horus and Set
- ❑ Osiris rituals as another major source

Mediterranean Sea



The scred landscape of Abydos

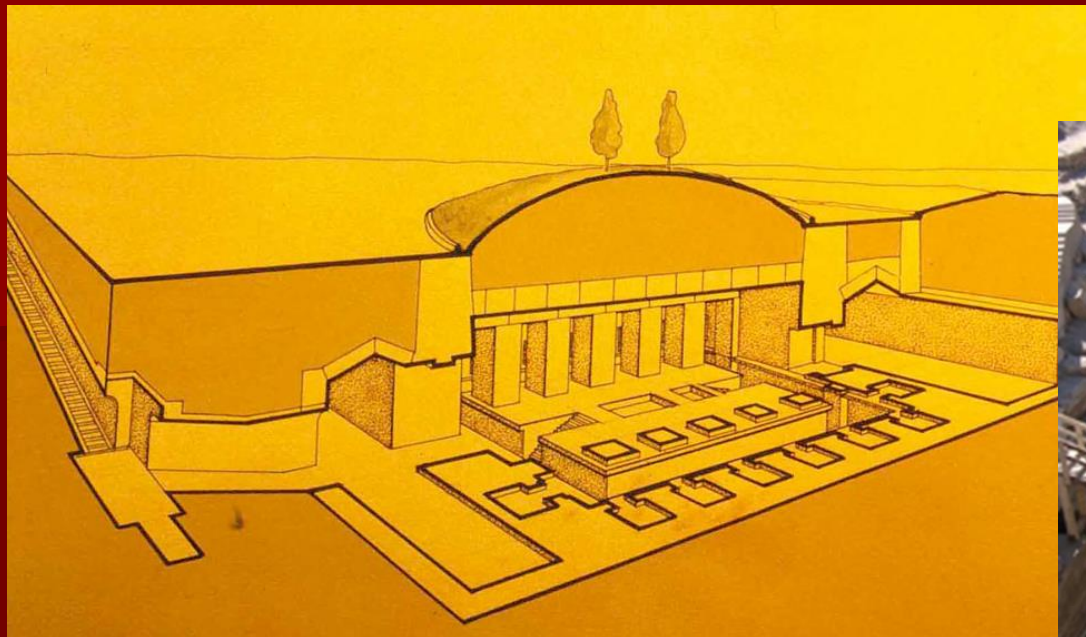


ANCIENT ABYDOS

- ◊ Early Dynastic
(1st-3rd dynasties)
ca 2950-2575 B.C.
- ◊ Middle Kingdom
(11th-13th dynasties)
ca 1975-1640 B.C.
- ◊ New Kingdom
(18th-20th dynasties)
ca 1539-1075 B.C.
- ◊ Late Period
(25th-31st dynasties)
ca 715-332 B.C.

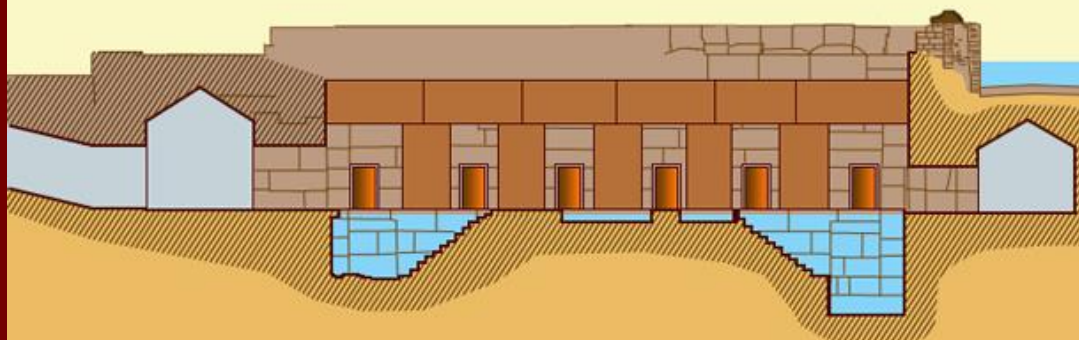
Scale varies in this perspective.
Distance from royal tombs
to funerary enclosures is
1.2 miles (1.9 kilometers).

ART BY RICHARD SCHLEGEL
NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC MAPS



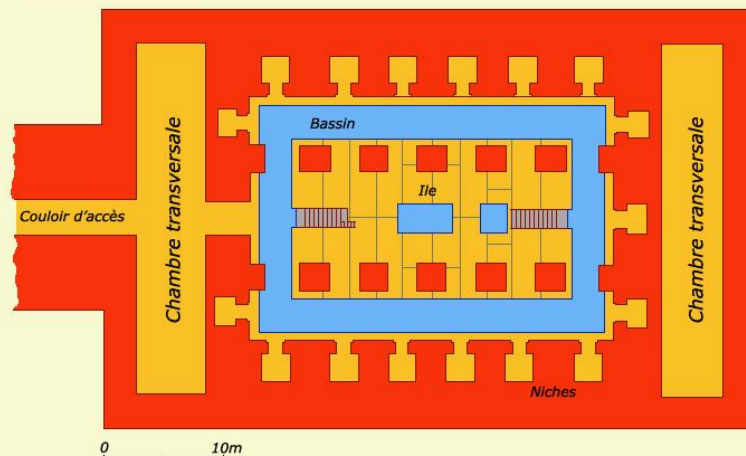
ABYDOS

Temple de Séthi I : l'Osireion - cénotaphe
XIX^e dynastie
COUPE

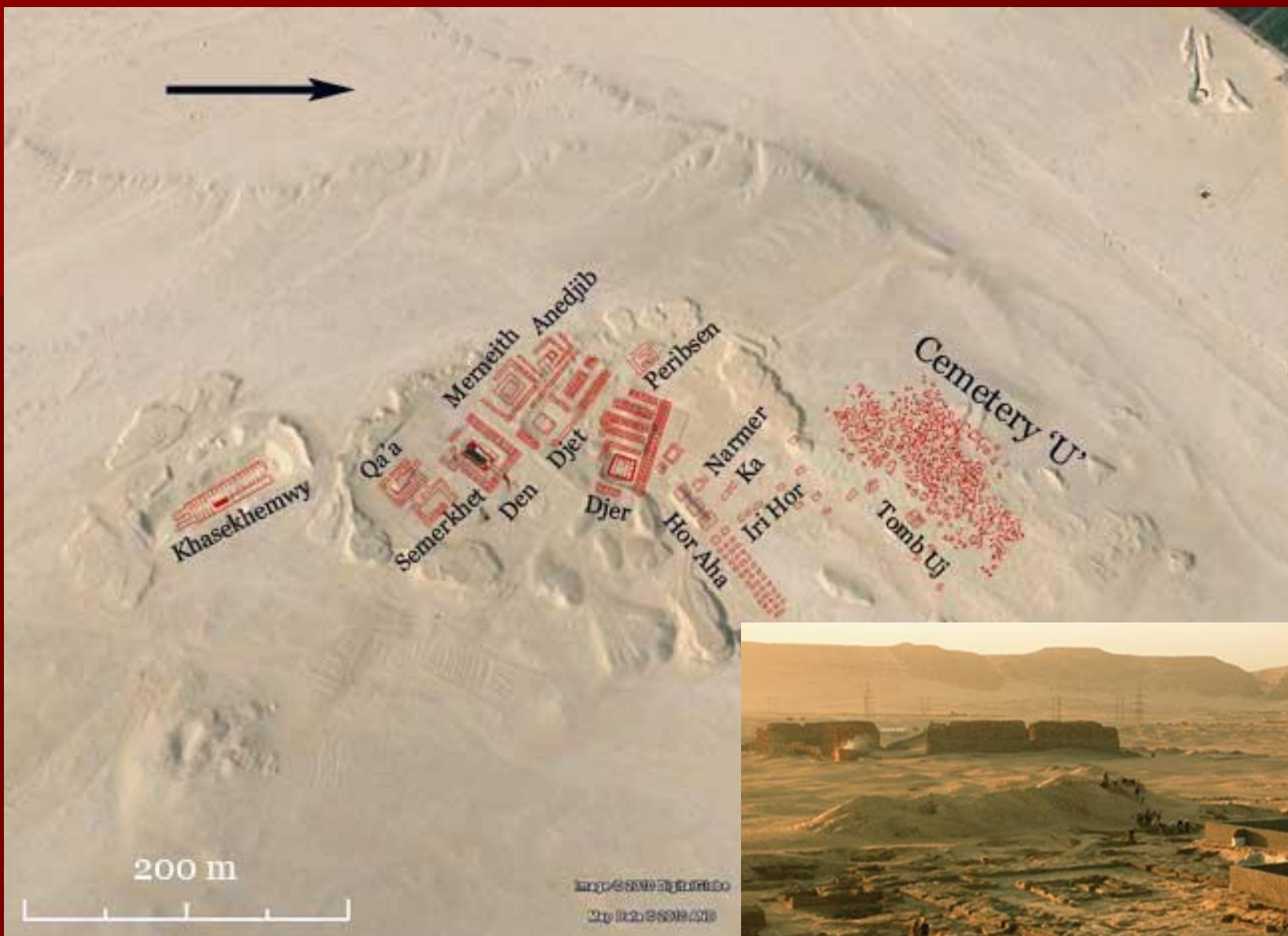


ABYDOS

Temple de Séthi I : l'Osireion - cénotaphe
XIX^e dynastie



0 10m

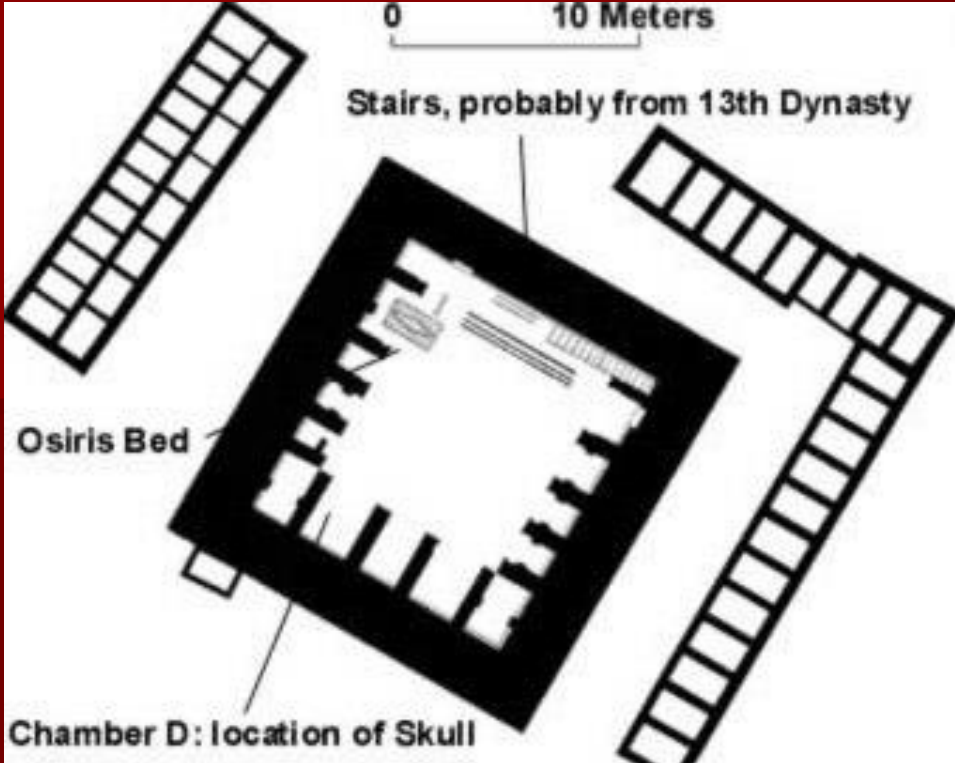


Mounds of sherds—the remains of cups, bowls, and other pieces of pottery smashed to the ground as offerings for Wesir (Osiris),—have inspired a modern nickname for the site of Egypt's earliest royal tombs: Umm el-Qaab, or "mother of offering pots." Abydos became an important pilgrimage center after Middle Kingdom priests proclaimed the tomb of Djer, a 1st-dynasty king, as the burial place of Osiris, god of the dead. An annual festival honoring the death and resurrection of Osiris brought crowds from around the country to this sacred place.

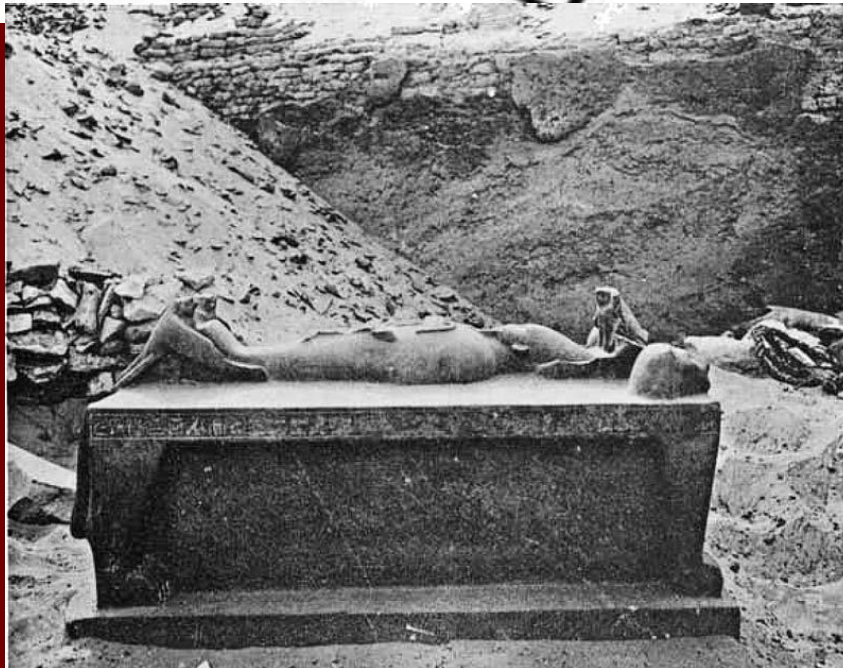


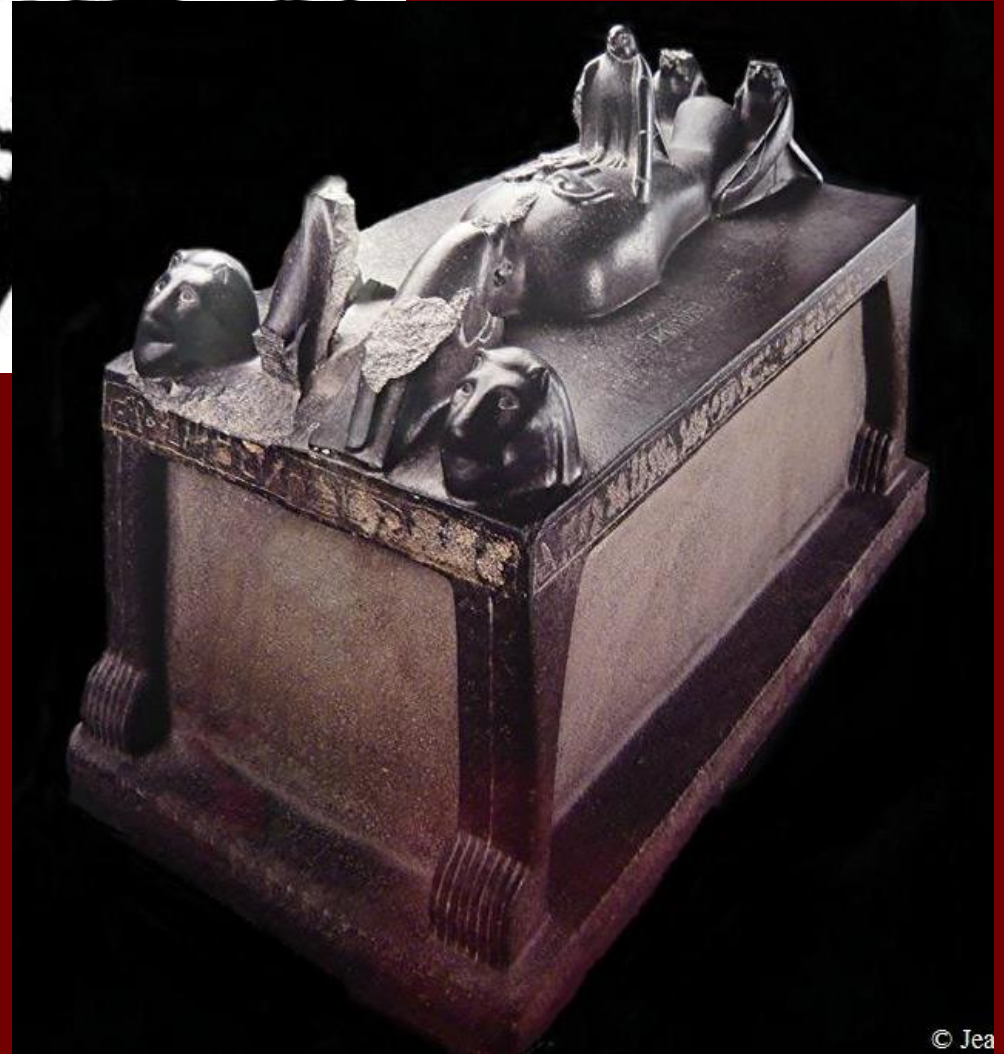
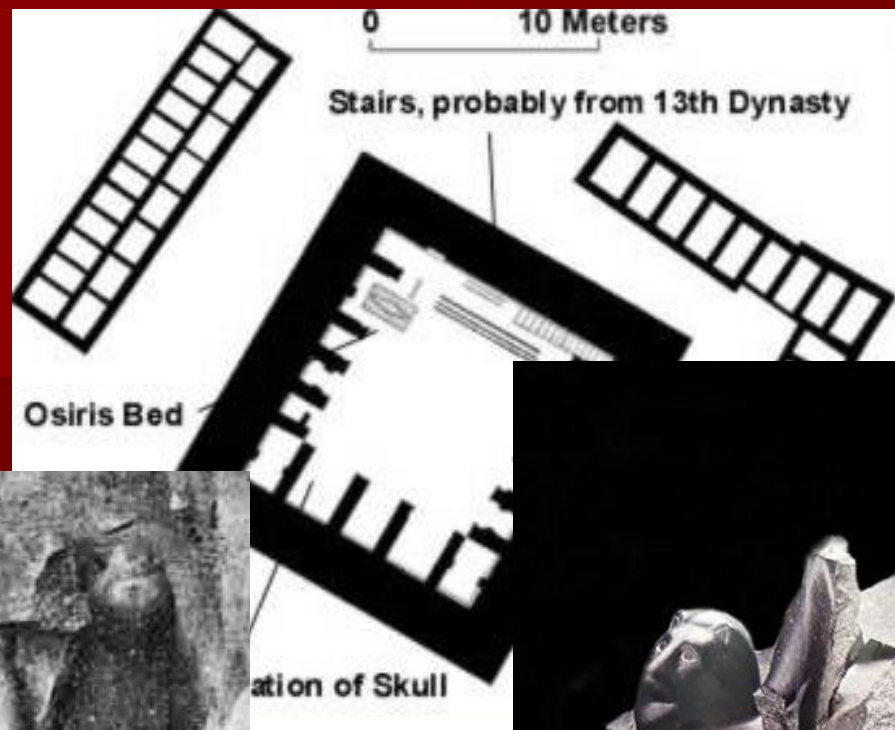
Djer





Stela of Wagaf - royal decree:
explains which parts of the
cemetery were available for use to
keep unimpeded processional way
to the tomb of Osiris at the Umm
el-Qa'ab

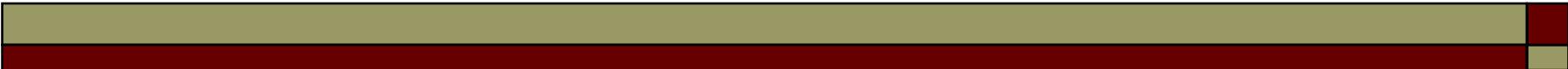






Ancient procession route: leads from Osiris' Tomb at Umm el-Qa'ab to the Temple of Osiris (lies along a natural fold in the valley formed by a large wadi, enters Abydos through cliffs along its southern border





The Cult of Osiris at Abydos

- ❑ Heart: annual festival –cult-statue sitting in a ritual boat carried by priests, went in procession from temple to his supposed tomb at Umm el-Qa'ab ('mother of pots')
- ❑ two fundamental components
 - public section during: divine image passed through cemetery
 - private section: in desert –secret rites concerning the mysteries and passion of Osiris were performed
- ❑ MK: members of elite dedicated stelae, erected offering chapels as cenotaphs → hope to ensure their continued participation in the festival after their own death

Festival processions in Abydos

- starting point: *Osiris Temple* – housing the statue of Osiris
- two outward processions
 - '*procession of Wepwawet*'
 - '*great procession*' of Osiris
- Stelae near the western entrance to temple (high ground, known as the '*terrace of the great god*') – deceased could look upon emergence and return of gods
 - owner expressed wish to participate in certain important festivals beyond death, particularly the Osiris mysteries
 - Deceased wished to participate in them
 - directly - through *seeing*, *adoring*, *kissing the ground*, or *giving praise* to the god (references to '*kissing the ground*' and '*giving praise*' as the images of the gods passing by)
 - having offerings made to the deceased at such times

Abydos Stelae BM EA 567



lengthy adoration
caption before
the figure of the
Amenemhet

