

MESIR



<http://teachmideast.org/country-profiles/egypt/>

M E S I R



LIFE EXPECTANCY
71 (M), 74 (W)



CAPITAL
Cairo



LARGEST CITY
Cairo



NATIONALITY
Egyptians



RELIGIONS
Islam, Coptic
Christianity

EGYPT OVERVIEW



CURRENCY
Egyptian
Pound (EGP)



POPULATION
88,487,396



LANGUAGES
Arabic, English
French



AGRICULTURE
Cotton, Rice, Corn, Wheat
Beans, Fruits, Vegetables
Cattle, Water Buffalo, Sheep



INDUSTRIES
Textiles, Food Processing
Tourism, Chemicals, Metals
Pharmaceuticals, Hydrocarbons

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GEOGRAPHY

Egypt is located in northeast Africa, with the Mediterranean coast on its northern border; the Red Sea, Gaza Strip, and Israel on its eastern border; Libya on its western border; and Sudan on the southern border. Egypt controls the Sinai Peninsula, the only land bridge between Africa and Asia. Summers are usually hot, with temperatures reaching up to 40°C (104°F), and winters are generally mild with temperatures ranging from 0°C (32°F) to 18°C (64.4°F). The Nile River winds from south to north in the central part of the country, creating a narrow region of lush arable land where most Egyptians choose to live. Ancient Egypt was divided into two regions, namely Upper Egypt and Lower Egypt. To the north was Lower Egypt, where the Nile stretched out with its several branches to form the Nile Delta. To the south was Upper Egypt, stretching to Syene. These geographical divisions are still used today. The Nile is the longest river in the world, one of the few freshwater resources in Egypt, and an important transportation network. Thus, the Nile is often called Egypt's lifeline.

M E S I R

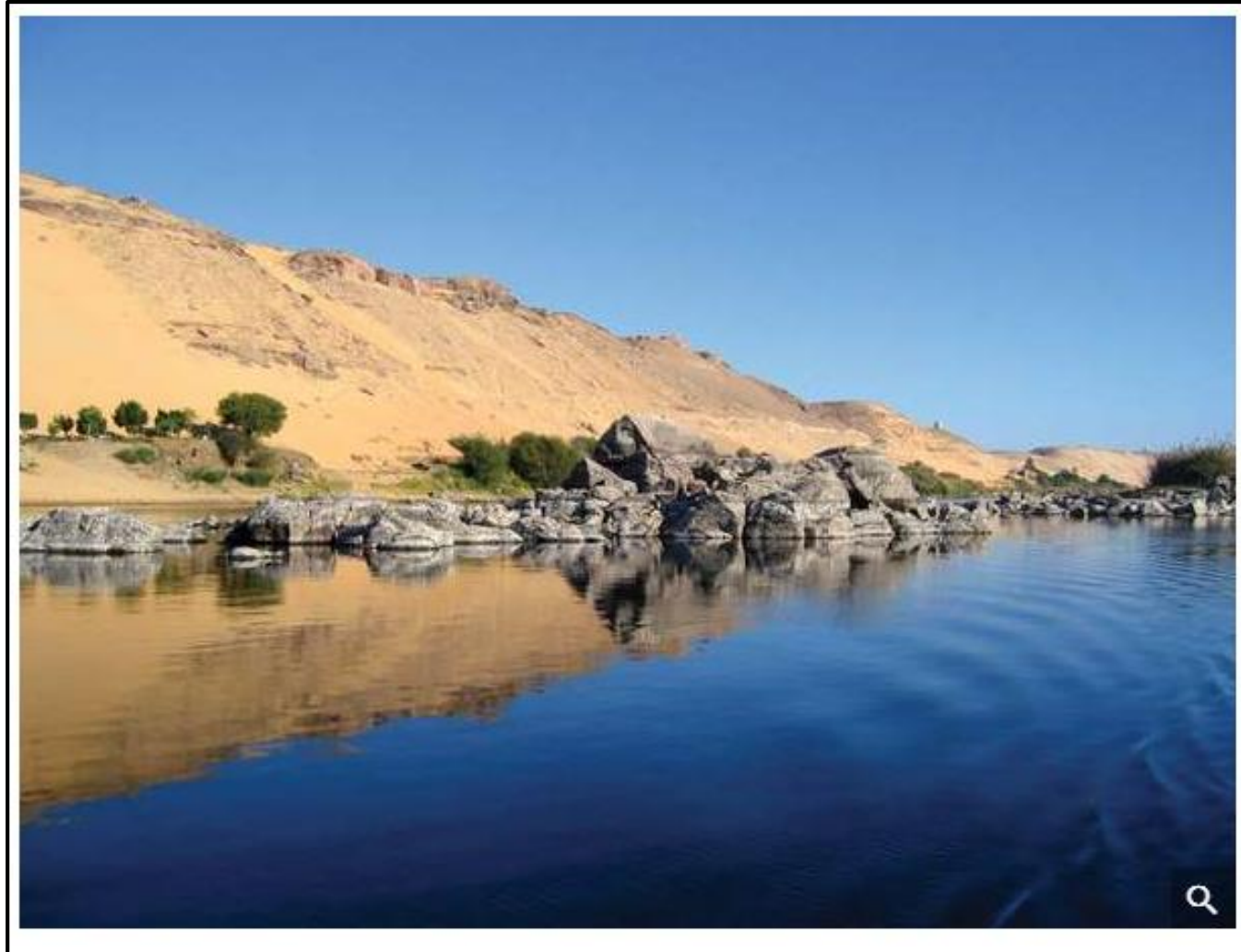
Climate change is a pressing concern for Egyptians who live and farm in the Nile Delta, where the Nile empties into the Mediterranean Sea. As the Mediterranean Sea rises, it increases salinity in the delta, making it impossible to grow crops in the affected areas. This problem is exacerbated by irrigation techniques that locals use which contribute to the salination of the Nile Delta. Another problem is water availability per capita. "Water poverty" is defined as having less than 1000 cubic meters available per person, and in 2013, Egypt only had 700 cubic meters available per person, most of this coming from the Nile and limited rainfall. In response to these issues, Egypt has adopted a **National Water Resources Plan** that attempts to achieve the optimal use and development of available water resources through the improvement of irrigation techniques and the implementation of strategies that minimize water losses.



Geography Resources

<http://teachmideast.org/country-profiles/egypt/>

SUNGAI NIL



<https://www.britannica.com/place/Nile-River>

Aliran Sungai Nil



<https://www.britannica.com/place/Nile-River>

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HISTORY & GOVERNMENT



Current archaeological evidence suggests that the earliest human settlements in prehistoric Egypt date to around 30,000 BCE, when nomadic groups began to settle, take up farming and form villages. There is some evidence that these villages engaged in periodic warfare with each other. This state of affairs is thought to have lasted for around 27,000 years, until the ancient Egyptian dynasties unified all of Egypt under one ruler, known as the pharaoh. Ancient Egypt was characterized by the rule of the pharaohs, who built large stone pyramids to serve as their tombs after they died. The largest of the pyramids is the Great Pyramid of Giza, which was built around 2560 BCE by the Pharaoh Khufu.

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For the 2,500 years following the rise of the pharaohs, Egypt was ruled by a succession of dynasties, a series of rulers usually sharing part of the same family. Ancient Egyptian history saw the rule of 31 dynasties. Dynastic succession could sometimes be brutal and violent, and whenever one ruler's death ended a dynasty it was not always clear who the next ruler should be.

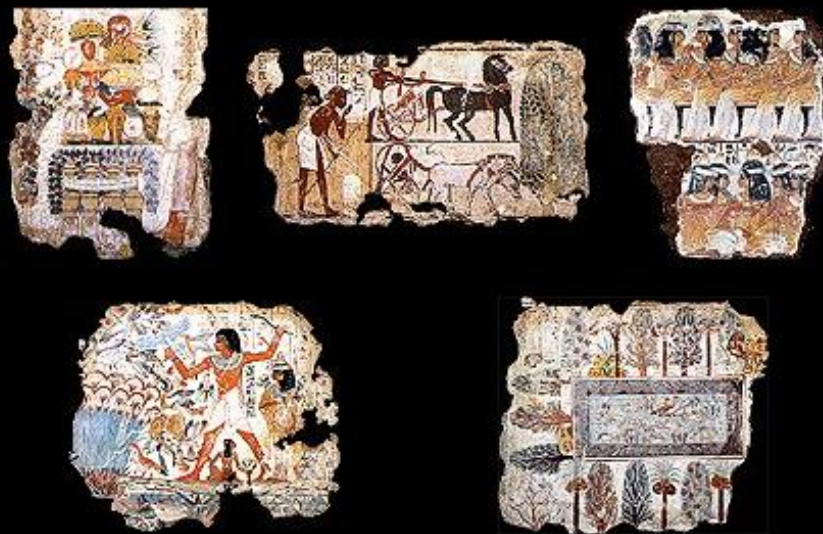
When this happened, Egypt would often fall into a state of warfare among various factions. These times of political instability are now called the "intermediate periods." There were three intermediate periods in Egyptian history. Historians use these periods as dividing markers that separate Egyptian history into what are called kingdoms. The Old Kingdom was the period from 2868 BCE – 2181 BCE, the Middle Kingdom from 2055 BCE – 1650 BCE, and the New Kingdom from 1550 BCE – 1069 BCE. The New Kingdom was followed by the Third Intermediate Period, while the next era is known as the Late Period of Ancient Egyptian History which lasted from 664 BCE-332 BCE.

The dynastic pattern was not broken when the Persian Achaemenid Empire conquered Egypt during the 26th dynasty in 525 BCE. Egypt even briefly regained independence in 401 BCE under Pharaoh Amyrtaeus, but it was reconquered by the Persians in 343 BCE. Greeks led by Alexander the Great conquered Egypt in 332 BCE, an event that marked not only the end of the Late Period but also the end of Egypt's dynastic rule. It did not mark the end of conquests by foreign powers though, and Egypt was conquered again by the Romans under Caesar Augustus in 30 BCE and by the Persian Sassanids in 619 CE.

MESIR

Nebamun's tomb

These wall paintings are from the tomb of a nobleman named Nebamun. Nebamun's tomb was built around 1400 B.C. near the town of Thebes.



Explore the paintings above to learn more about the life of a wealthy nobleman in ancient Egypt.

<http://www.ancientegypt.co.uk/life/explore/main.html>

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Brief Timeline of Ancient Egypt

Predynastic (ca. 4300-3000 B.C.E.)

Naqada I (Amratian) (ca. 4300 - 3600 B.C.E.)

Naqada II (Gerzean) (ca. 3600 - 3150 B.C.E.)

Naqada III (Semainean) (ca. 3150 - 3000 B.C.E.)

Early Dynastic (ca. 3000 - 2675 B.C.E.)

Dynasty 1 (ca. 3000 - 2800 B.C.E.)

Dynasty 2 (ca. 2800 - 2675 B.C.E.)

Old Kingdom (ca. 2675 - 2130 B.C.E.)

Dynasty 3 (ca. 2675 - 2625 B.C.E.)

Dynasty 4 (ca. 2625 - 2500 B.C.E.)

Dynasty 5 (ca. 2500 - 2350 B.C.E.)

Dynasty 6 (ca. 2350 - 2170 B.C.E.)

Dynasties 7-8 (ca. 2170 - 2130 B.C.E.)

First Intermediate Period (ca. 2130 - 1980 B.C.E.)

Dynasties 9-10 (ca. 2130 - 1970 B.C.E.)

Dynasty 11, Part I (ca. 2081 - 1980 B.C.E.)

Middle Kingdom (ca. 1980 - 1630 B.C.E.)

Dynasty 11, Part II (ca. 1980 - 1938 B.C.E.)

Dynasty 12 (ca. 1938 - 1759 B.C.E.)

Dynasty 13 (ca. 1759 - after 1630 B.C.E.)

Dynasty 14 (dates uncertain, but contemporary with later Dynasty 13)

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Second Intermediate period (ca. 1630 - 1539/1523 B.C.E)

Dynasty 15 (ca. 1630 - 1523 B.C.E.)

Dynasty 16 (dates unknown: minor Hyksos rulers, contemporary with Dynasty 15)

Dynasty 17 (ca. 1630 - 1539 B.C.E.)

NEW KINGDOM (ca. 1539 - 1075 B.C.E.)

Dynasty 18 (ca. 1539 - 1292 B.C.E.)

Dynasty 19 (ca. 1292 - 1190 B.C.E.)

Dynasty 20 (ca. 1190 - 1075 B.C.E.)

THIRD INTERMEDIATE PERIOD (ca. 1075 - 656 B.C.E.)

Dynasty 21 (ca. 1075 - 945 B.C.E.)

Dynasty 22 (ca. 945 - 712 B.C.E.)

Dynasty 23 (ca. 838 - 712 B.C.E.)

Dynasty 24 (ca. 727 - 712 B.C.E.)

Dynasty 25 (ca. 760 - 656 B.C.E.)

LATE PERIOD (ca. 664 - 332 B.C.E.)

Dynasty 26 (ca. 664 - 525 B.C.E.)

Dynasty 27 (ca. 525 - 404 B.C.E.)

Dynasty 28 (ca. 404 - 399 B.C.E.)

Dynasty 29 (ca. 399 - 380 B.C.E.)

Dynasty 30 (ca. 380 - 343 B.C.E.)

Dynasty 31 (ca. 343 - 332 B.C.E.)

MACEDONIAN PERIOD (ca. 332 - 305 B.C.E.)

Alexander the Great and his successors

PTOLEMAIC DYNASTY (ca. 305 - 30 B.C.E.)

Ptolemy I and ending with Cleopatra VII

ROMAN and BYZANTINE EMPIRE (ca. 30 B.C.E. - 642 C.E.)

Beginning with Augustus Caesar

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In 641, the Arabs conquered Egypt and brought Islam to the region. Control of Egypt shifted amongst different Islamic groups for the next six centuries. The Righteous Caliphs, the name given to the first four rulers of the Islamic world after the death of the Prophet Muhammad, ruled for a short period. The Umayyad Caliphs, the next four rulers, quickly replaced them, though their rule only lasted until 747. Smaller groups scrambled to control Egypt until 1174, when the Kurdish Ayyubids came to power. In 1252, the Ayyubids were overthrown by a group known as the Mamluks, who had previously formed the bulk of the Ayyubid military. Mamluk dominance of the country lasted until 1517, when Egypt was conquered by the Ottoman Empire. However, instead of deposing the Mamluks, the Ottomans declared Egypt a semi-autonomous province, allowing the Mamluk military regime to stay in power and granting them some control over Egyptian affairs. In 1798, Napoleon Bonaparte invaded Egypt with the intention of blocking British trade routes to India. Mamluk troops met the French at the pyramids, where the Mamluk forces were obliterated within an hour. Napoleon continued to Cairo, but was unable to defeat the Ottoman forces there. The French army retreated, and in 1805, an Albanian military commander for the Ottoman Empire, Muhammad Ali Pasha, took control of the country. He convinced the Ottomans to declare Egypt an autonomous vassal state, meaning that although legally Egypt still belonged to the empire, Egypt could deal with its own affairs without interference from the Ottomans. Pasha, now known as Khedive (Viceroy) Ali, then conquered parts of North Africa, including Ottoman territory. This upset Britain and France, as they feared he would topple the Ottoman Empire and upset the balance of power in the region. Ultimately, European powers forced Ali to return the land.

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In 1867, Khedive Ali's grandson, Ismail Pasha, officially became Khedive of Egypt. He had ambitious plans for the country, desiring to modernize it and bring it in line with European levels of development. He enacted bold initiatives such as the construction of a modern railway system, establishment of cotton and sugar industries, and the building of the Suez Canal. These initiatives were not without cost, however, and even with the aid of massive loans from Britain and France, Egypt soon found itself near bankruptcy.

France and Britain used this indebted status as a bargaining chip to leverage political influence over Egypt, but the massive debts Egypt had incurred eventually led it into financial crisis. Fearing they would not be repaid with Khedive Ismail in charge, the two powers convinced the Ottoman Empire to remove him from power and to replace him with his son Tewfik, who was predicted to be a weak ruler likely susceptible to European influence.

Nationalist sentiment in Egypt had steadily been growing in response to the increasing European influence over the country, and the appointment of Tewfik continued to stir up tension. In 1882, violent riots broke out in the city of Alexandria and a colonel in the Egyptian Army named Ahmed Urabi seized the opportunity to incite a nationalist uprising. In response to this, the British sent in a military expedition that crushed the uprising, securing Khedive Tewfik's authority and making Egypt an unofficial British protectorate.

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In 1914, Egypt was officially declared a protectorate, and the British changed the Egyptian leader's name from khedive to sultan. In 1919, during the reign of Sultan Fuad I, a group called the Wafd Party began utilizing demonstrations, strikes, and riots to challenge British control over the country. The Wafd Party enjoyed high levels of support from the Egyptian population. The British exiled Wafd Party leaders, hoping to prevent social unrest, but this backfired, sparking riots and demonstrations in which various British institutions were attacked.

In response to these outbursts, the British offered to make Egypt a sovereign nation (with a few conditions, including that the British army could stay in the country for "the defense of Egypt against all foreign aggression"). The offer was accepted, and Sultan Faud changed his title to King of Egypt. He ruled until his death in 1936, when his son, Farouk I, became the king at the age of 16. Farouk I's extravagant lifestyle soon quashed any excitement the Egyptians had for their new young king. One of his favorite activities was to go to Europe for expensive shopping sprees, which irritated the Egyptian citizens. In 1942, he was forced into a coalition government with the Wafd Party after the British army surrounded his palace.

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Farouk I remained king until 1952. The Free Officers Movement, led by Muhammad Naguib and Gamal Abdel Nasser, staged a military coup on July 23, 1952, and Farouk was forced to abdicate. In 1953, the Free Officers Movement abolished the monarchy and formed the Revolutionary Command Council (RCC). They declared the RCC would govern the country for a three-year transitional period. In 1954, the RCC demanded that the British and French relinquish control of the Suez Canal. After an initial refusal, Egypt signed a treaty for the removal of foreign control of the Suez Canal by 1956. In 1956, a new constitution was announced and Egypt became a republic; Abdel Nasser was elected president; and the Suez Canal was nationalized. To learn more about Nasser's ideology, achievements such as the construction of the Aswan High Dam, and missteps, view the chapter **The Era of Independence** by Joseph Stanik in the TeachMideast Resource Guide for Educators.

In the 1960s, Egypt was involved in two wars. The first was the North Yemen Civil War that pitted royalists from the Kingdom of Yemen against factions from the Yemen Arab Republic, who wanted Yemen to be a republic instead of a monarchy. Nasser had been waiting for a regime in Yemen that would support and align itself with Egypt, and he also felt the need to reassert his power in the Middle East, which he perceived as waning after the dissolution of the United Arab Republic in 1961 (a political union between Syria and Egypt). Thus, in a show of support for the Yemeni republicans, Nasser sent them as many as 70,000 troops, along with a supply of chemical weapons. Egypt had also gathered intelligence of an imminent Israeli attack on Syria. Although the report turned out to be false, Nasser nonetheless sent 100,000 troops to the Sinai Peninsula in preparation for possible hostilities. Jordan and Syria sided with Egypt and sent troops as well. Fearing they would be invaded, Israel launched a preemptive strike against the combined Jordanian, Syrian, and Egyptian air forces on June 5, 1967, an event that officially began the Six-Day War. A U.N. ceasefire agreement halted the conflict on June 10, but by then, Israel was in possession of the Sinai Peninsula and the Gaza Strip, land that Egypt had held since 1948.

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With the death of Nasser in 1970, Anwar Sadat became president. Egypt, along with Syria, attacked Israel in 1973 in an effort to regain the Sinai Peninsula. Their efforts failed, although the Israelis returned the Sinai after peace talks in 1979. Sadat then implemented the *Infitah*, an economic policy intended to promote foreign investment in the private sector to modernize Egypt. Due to the elimination of food subsidies (one of Infitah's principles), prices went up 50%, and the lower class rioted. The riots ended when this policy was repealed.

President Sadat made history in 1977 by going to Israel for the Sinai Peninsula peace talks. Some other Arab countries were infuriated by this action, as it was the first time that an Arab state officially recognized the existence of Israel, and in 1979 Egypt was expelled from the Arab League despite having helped found it in 1944 (they were let back in 10 years later in 1989).

On October 6, 1981, Sadat was assassinated by an Islamic extremist, and Vice President Hosni Mubarak became the new president just as a new, turbulent period in Egypt's history began. The period from 1980-2000 saw a rise in terrorist activity by groups like Tanzim al-Jihad and Al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya, and both the government and the tourist industry were targeted. One of the worst incidents occurred in 1997 near Luxor, where an attack suspected to have been a joint operation between the organizations Al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya and Talaa'al al-Fateh killed 62 people, most of whom were European tourists.

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Through various policies enacted under Mubarak, freedom of expression and association were greatly limited and parliament became mainly irrelevant. On January 25, 2011, protests began against Mubarak's regime, demanding greater freedom of expression as well as solutions for high unemployment rates and rising food prices. These protests were inspired by the Jasmine protests in Tunisia and are considered to be a part of the Arab Spring uprisings that took place in Jordan, Yemen, Bahrain, Syria, Libya, and elsewhere. In response to the uprising, Mubarak resigned in February 2011. An investigation in April of that year by the Egyptian government concluded that during the protests 846 people were killed. It is also thought that over 6,000 people were injured and 90 police stations were burned. Upon Mubarak's resignation, the military took control of the government.

In June 2012, Mohamed Morsi from the Muslim Brotherhood became the first democratically-elected president in Egypt's history. Morsi began making moves to strengthen Egypt's relations with other Middle Eastern countries, as well as organizing the writing of a new constitution. Morsi drew heavy criticism though, for some of his actions, such as a November 2012 decree that shielded him from any legal challenge.

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By June 2013, mass protests erupted and called for Morsi's resignation. Many in the protests were frustrated with the economic crisis, the new constitution supporting Sharia law, and President Morsi having granted himself temporary unlimited power. The Egyptian military issued an ultimatum: Morsi was to resign by July 3rd or face military intervention. Morsi refused to resign, and on July 3, General Abdul Fatah al-Sisi removed him from power in a coup d'état. Chief Justice Adly Mansour was appointed interim president, and Morsi was put under house arrest. In September 2013, Egyptian courts banned the Muslim Brotherhood from political participation and confiscated all their assets. On January 14-15, 2014, Egyptian voters, in a move that was interpreted as legitimizing the removal of Morsi, overwhelmingly approved a new constitution. For a comprehensive look at the rise and role of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, visit the chapter [The Roots of Modern Islamism](#) by Bram Hubbell in the TeachMideast Resource Guide for Educators.

Al-Sisi was elected with 97% of the vote in 2014. While he was popular due to his role in orchestrating the 2013 coup, the election was denounced as "unfair" due to a number of factors including Al-Sisi's use of state media to campaign, repression of freedom of speech and assembly, and voting extensions. Nevertheless, he took office in 2014 and has presided over Egypt since.

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Prior to his presidency, Al-Sisi had a long career as a general. He was promoted from director of military intelligence to the Minister of Defense under Morsi. After he led the 2013 coup, Al-Sisi acted as the deputy prime minister of the interim government.

Once in power, Al-Sisi called for the Egyptian people to brace for "hard work." Indeed, he has attempted to spur economic growth and slash deficits by eliminating long-popular fuel and food subsidies, liberalizing the economy, investing in infrastructure projects (like the Suez Canal extension), and seeking foreign investment. Unfortunately these projects haven't been especially successful, as foreign reserves have still remained quite low at \$16.5 billion as of May 2016. Al-Sisi receives significant funding from the Gulf countries and accordingly has made deals like the two island transfer to Saudi Arabia in April 2016 (see more in the **Economy** section below). Hopes for future economic growth seem are not optimistic, as revenues from the Suez Canal have actually declined in recent years and national industry is almost nonexistent. What economic growth has been achieved thus far is generally attributed to the huge amounts of capital inflows from the Gulf States.

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The security situation under current leadership has steadily worsened, contrary to his promises for stability buttressed by his military credentials. Al-Sisi faces a worsening insurgency in the Sinai with two downed jets and multiple terror attacks. He relies on heavy-handed methods to quell opposition to policies, often inciting complaints from human rights monitors. He has conducted raids on the Union of Journalists, imprisoned over 41,000 people between July 2013 and May 2014, and allows widespread abuse of the population at the hands of the police. Nonetheless, public approval of Al-Sisi has remained high, according to the Egyptian Center for Public Opinion Research. This can be attributed to his nationalist rhetoric and lingering enthusiasm for his role in the 2013 coup. However, Al-Sisi's approval rating among young people has seen a decline since 2015, although there are no ways for young people can organize, due to laws restricting NGOs and the general disarray in the Egyptian opposition parties. Young people have been able to express their political concerns mostly through protests and writing articles. Young people make up a vast majority of those who have so far been negatively affected by his economic policies, an area many consider to be his greatest political weakness. Demonstrations have been hampered by the **Egyptian protest law** (act 107)¹ that was signed into law on November 24, 2013, by former president Adly Mansour. The law requires three days notification before protesting; in addition, the Interior Ministry has the right to "cancel, postpone or move" the protest if it determines that protesters will "breach ... the law".

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The new constitution requires that Egypt be governed by a president and a parliament. The president is eligible for two four-year terms, though the parliament has the power to impeach him. Legal equality of the sexes is guaranteed, as are freedom of religion and freedom of expression (though there are exceptions to these freedoms). It also declares that Islam is the state religion and that political parties may not be formed on the basis of religion, race, gender, or geography.

M E S I R

The reconstructions, in this section, show the methods I use in Rebuilding Ancient Egyptian Temples in 3D and give an idea of how these ancient temples might have appeared to ancient eyes.



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<https://discoveringegypt.com/rebuilding-ancient-egyptian-temples-in-3d/>

MESIR

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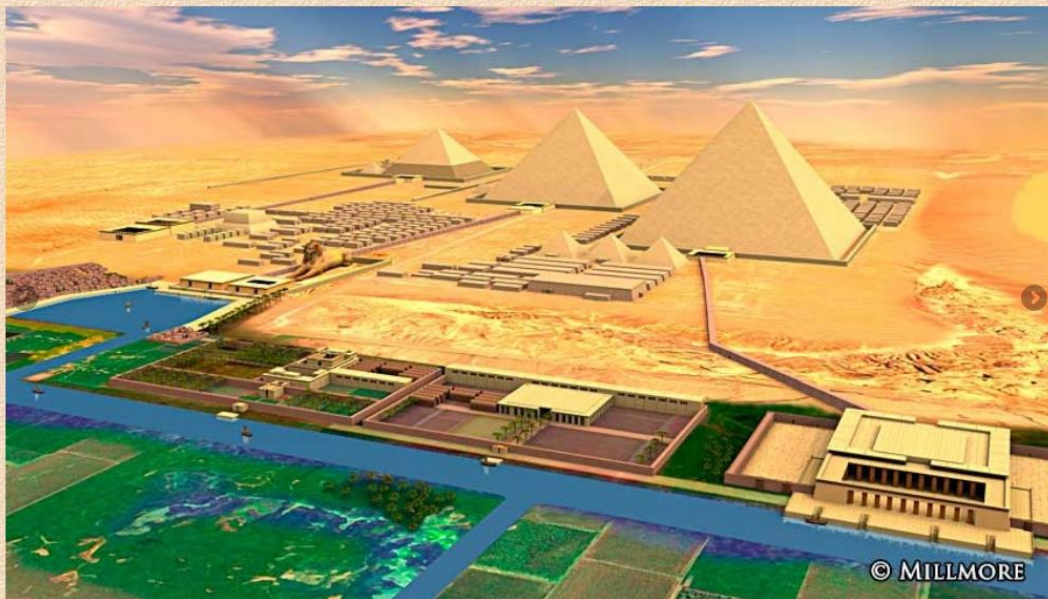


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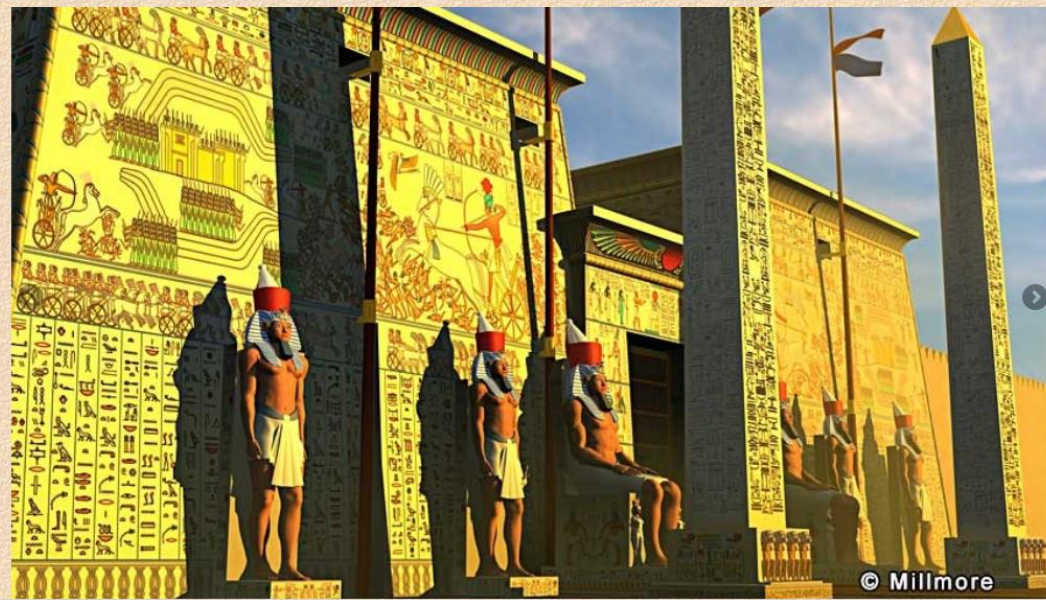


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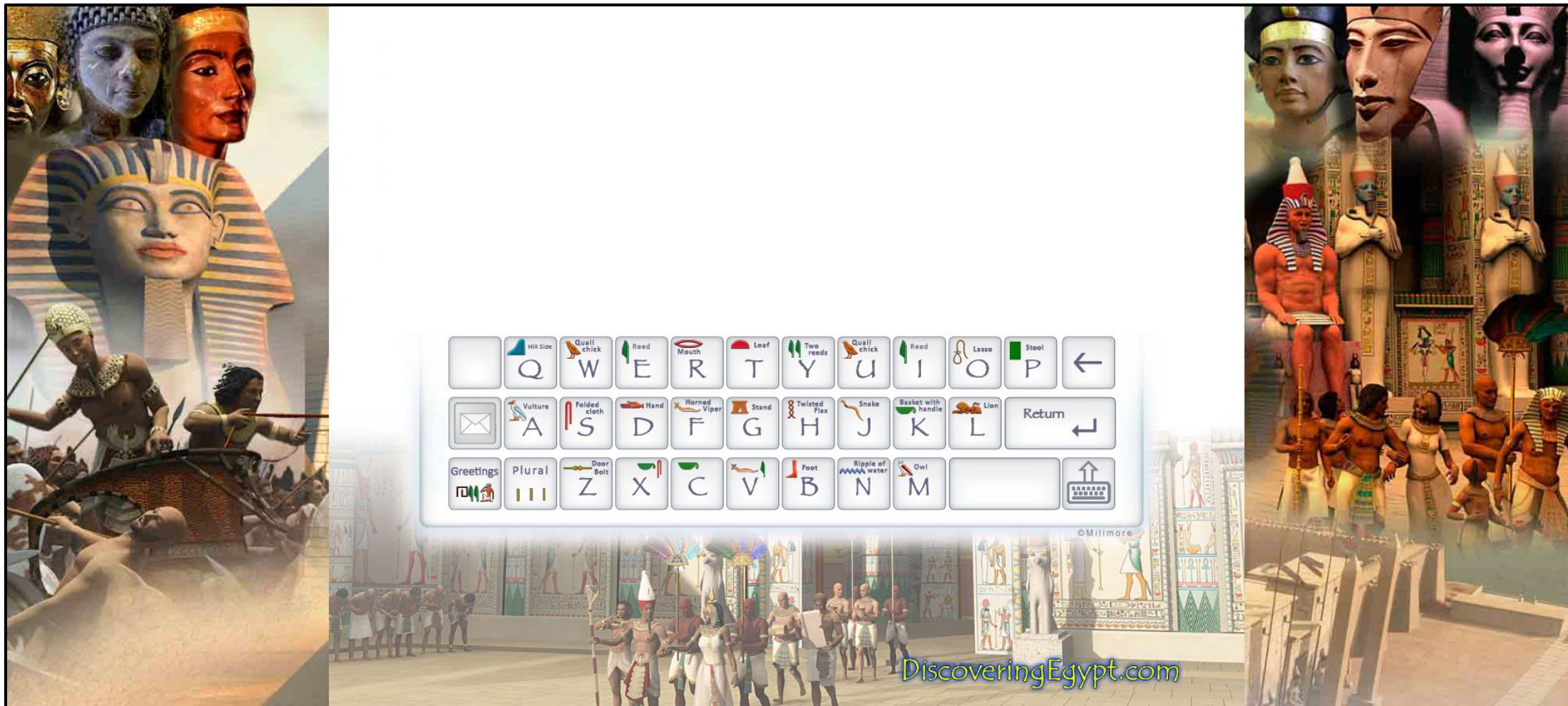
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<https://discoveringegypt.com/egyptian-hieroglyphic-writing/hieroglyphic-typewriter/>

M E S I R

INTERNATIONAL & REGIONAL ISSUES

The Hala'ib Triangle on the Red Sea has been disputed between Sudan and Egypt since the 19th century. The British placed the Hala'ib region under Egyptian power when the boundaries were drawn in 1899. In 1902, however, a separate "administrative" boundary was drawn in which the region was placed under Sudanese control, as the residents of the area had closer ties to Khartoum than Cairo. In 1992, the issue resurfaced when Sudan allowed an oil company to work off the coast of Hala'ib. Ownership of the Hala'ib Triangle is still disputed today, though the presence of Egyptian military units there grants Egypt *de facto* control over the area.

A longstanding similar dispute existed between Egypt and Saudi Arabia over the Tiran and Sanafir islands. These islands were Egypt-administered, but claimed by Saudi Arabia. The islands are a strategic point in the narrowest part between the Gulf of Aqaba and the Red Sea. With the exception of a few Egyptian soldiers, the islands were uninhabited. In April 2016, **Egypt transferred sovereignty** of Tiran and Sanafir to Saudi Arabia as a sign of the republic's gratitude for the kingdom's continued promises of investment and aid.

M E S I R

Refugees in Egypt

Egypt hosts refugees from various conflicts. The Egyptian government does not operate refugee camps, so refugees are scattered throughout the country, making it difficult for them to receive aid. The UN Human Refugee Agency, however, has stepped up efforts to increase refugee registration, deliver necessary aid, and help integrate them into Egyptian society.

Egypt has a unique geographical position in North Africa, being seen as the gateway to the Middle East. As such, it is a huge hub for migrants either fleeing conflicts from the east and south, or migrants attempting to travel to the Middle East (especially to Israel).

Egypt shares a Southern border with Sudan, as well as a common history as they have been under one rule at various points. It was under these conditions that the *wadi al nil* agreements were passed, which gave the Sudanese unfettered access to education and healthcare in Egypt. Egyptians in Sudan were also treated as citizens. However, after the 1995 assassination attempt on Mubarak (allegedly) by Sudanese Islamists, these rights were restricted and today the Sudanese are treated like any other foreigners. In order to receive protections by the Egyptian governments, they have to be classified as refugees, the criteria for which are very restrictive in Egypt. Thus today there are about two million Sudanese migrants in Egypt, much of them fleeing conflicts like Darfur and the South Sudan civil war, but only about 20,000 are officially registered as refugees.

The Sudanese face increasing discrimination in Egypt amid deteriorating economic conditions. The Sudanese are often charged exorbitant rent because they are not allowed to own property. Access to education and healthcare is expensive and hard to manage. Further, many Sudanese face abuse and discrimination by security forces.

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As of February 2019, according to the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) Egypt was hosting **55,656 registered refugees and 192,068 asylum seekers** from Syria as a result of the civil war. Similar to the treatment of Sudanese refugees, Syrians face discrimination at the hand of the Egyptian government, much of which conflicts with international law that dictates humane treatment of asylum seekers. If Syrians are not registered as refugees the Egyptian government does not have to provide them with any protections. Those without official status are frequently jailed in substandard conditions or repatriated to Syria or a 3rd country. This policy of sending asylum-seekers back into harmful and dangerous domestic situations is known as refoulement. Among those who are released into the population, they report many similar experiences to the Sudanese. Syrian refugees tend to work in the unregulated informal economy, leaving them further vulnerable to exploitation.

There are currently also around 70,000 refugees from the West Bank and the Gaza Strip living in Egypt, nearly 8,000 people from Somalia, and about 6,000 refugees from the Iraqi conflict.

M E S I R

Gaza Tunnels

Egypt shares a common border with Israel and the Gaza Strip. . Because of the economic and physical blockade imposed by Israel and Egypt on Gaza after the 2007 Hamas military and political takeover of Gaza from the Fatah political party, Hamas began to build a network of tunnels that extended across the Egyptian-Gaza border, through the border town of Rafah.

These tunnels have been used to smuggle everything from necessary construction materials, food, fuel, to actual people to and from the Gaza Strip. Though many of the people crossing the border through tunnels do so because of the expense and difficulty of leaving Gaza through legal means, the tunnels have also been used to smuggle cash, drugs, and weapons.

The Egyptian government has opposed the tunnels, actively searching for and destroying cross-border tunnels. This is done in a variety of ways, including the use of deadly chemical gas, sealing the ends of tunnels, and flooding by seawater. Recently it has come to light that the use of sea water to seal tunnels has had adverse environmental impacts on the region and negatively affects Palestinian agricultural output. Most recently, the Egyptian government has announced a buffer zone between the Rafah border crossing and Egypt itself.

Israel adamantly opposes the Gaza tunnel network, and vigorously uncovers and destroys tunnels. It cites tunnels as key points of entry for fighters and arms. Gaza also has tunnels that extend into Israel, though those are used mainly for military purposes, providing cover for fighters and weapons, as well as strategic points of entry into Israel.

M E S I R



Former Egyptian president, Mohamed Morsi, Muslim Brotherhood candidate, during his campaign. Later ousted in military coup.

Morsi took power in 2012 as Egypt's first democratically elected president. He struggled with the military's influence in government, purging top officials in the military. He also faced much opposition after decreeing his actions above judicial review, prompting some to call him "a new pharaoh." Morsi was also tasked with creating a new constitution. The new constitution provided important limits of presidential powers and empowered the parliament, but at the same time gave much power to the military, contained no protections for women and religious minorities, and stated that all laws should be Islamic in nature.

Because of the restrictive new constitution and Morsi's move to establish immunity from the courts, millions took to the streets in protest. Morsi responded with violence and attacks on the freedom of the press. It was with this pretext that the Egyptian

armed forces, under then-Minister of Defense Abdel Fattah al-Sisi removed Morsi in a coup.

The military then began a bloody crackdown on the Muslim Brotherhood, officially disbanding the group and prosecuting many of its former leaders. In 2015, Morsi and 105 other members of the Muslim Brotherhood were sentenced to death in what most international monitors deem "a show trial." The suppression of the Brotherhood combined with the rise of Salafist movements like the Islamic State call into question the future influence and viability of this political institution.

<http://teachmideast.org/articles/spotlight-on-egypts-muslim-brotherhood/>

M E S I R

ECONOMY

The economy of Egypt traditionally depends heavily on agriculture, tourism and cash remittances from Egyptians working abroad, mainly in Saudi Arabia and the Gulf countries. Egypt also relies on foreign aid from a number of countries. The 2016 unemployment rate rests at 13.1% but price hikes and austerity measures had resulted in an **inflation rate of almost 33 percent** by August 2017.

Since the tumult of the Arab Spring, the Egyptian economy has plummeted. Rapid population growth and the limited amount of arable land are straining the country's resources and economy, and political unrest has often paralyzed government efforts to address the problems. Weak growth and limited foreign exchange earnings have made public finances unsustainable, leaving authorities dependent on expensive borrowing for deficit finance and on Gulf allies to help cover the import bill. Tourism has been affected by the sporadic but ongoing violence targeting both Egyptian citizens and foreign visitors.

<http://teachmideast.org/country-profiles/egypt/>

M E S I R

In 2015-16, higher levels of foreign investment contributed to a slight rebound in GDP growth after a particularly depressed post-revolution period. In 2016, Cairo enacted a value-added tax, implemented fuel and electricity subsidy cuts, and floated its currency, which led to a sharp depreciation of the pound and corresponding inflation. In November 2016, the IMF approved a \$12 billion, three-year loan for Egypt and disbursed the first \$2.75 billion tranche (**CIA World Factbook**). Economists **have said** the government needs the IMF loan to ensure that Egypt's poorest people can afford to buy food—and to **prevent** riots by frustrated citizens. The rising prices of imported goods during the summer of 2016 caused a shortage of subsidized baby formula, basic goods like sugar and common **pharmaceuticals**. Nonetheless, at the end of September of that year, after announcing plans to build and launch a satellite, al-Sisi **asked** Egyptian citizens to donate their spare change to a fund to alleviate government debt. Public reaction was not **favorable**. The population generally also has disapproved of the island exchange deal with Saudi Arabia, accusing al-Sisi of selling the territory **in exchange** for Saudi largesse.

According to **Newsweek**, many Egyptians are increasingly willing to speak out about their economic hardship, a sign of desperation in a country that stifles political dissent. In October 2016, a taxi driver set himself on fire in Alexandria to **protest** rising prices; he later died. The same month, a video of an unnamed *tuk-tuk* driver **ranting** about the economy went viral.

M E S I R

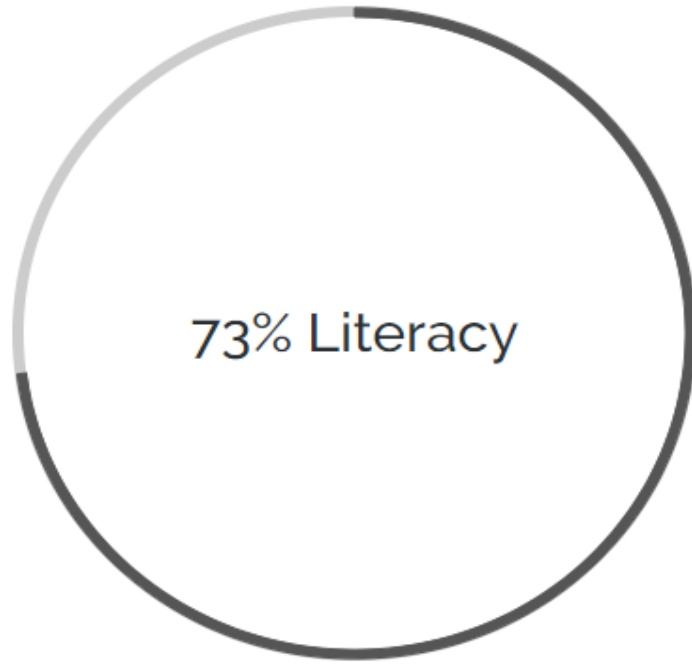
SOCIETY

Egypt is the most populous country in the Middle East with over 88 million citizens and an annual growth rate of 2.05%. The high population increase has been the cause of some concern in recent years. Coupled with droughts and climate change, food scarcity for its growing population is growing issue for Egypt. Along the same lines, youth unemployment in Egypt is over 30%, a huge cause for concern and instability, as seen during the Arab Spring of 2011. The median age is only 24.8 years old.

The official language of Egypt is Arabic, but many people (especially among the educated) also speak either French or English. Most of the population lives in the Nile Delta area, along the Nile, or on the Mediterranean coast. 43.1% of the population lives in urban areas. Egypt's population is 99.6% Egyptian, though there are small pockets of Nubians around the Aswan Dam in the south and Berbers around the Siwa Oasis in Western Egypt. These minorities make up 0.4% of the population.

Egypt is ranked fairly low on the HDI, placing 111. The country has seen significant improvements in the areas of here child and maternal mortality rates consistent with the global trend. The total per capita expenditure on healthcare has been steadily increasing since 2004, and with the population increase in Egypt right now that number is expected to rise much further as the population ages.

MESIR



Overall Egyptian Literacy Rate

Population Literacy Gap

Lower (northern/urban) Egypt Literacy 83.2%

Upper (southern/rural) Egypt Literacy 42.4%

Graduation Gap

Attend University 25%

Graduate University 12.5%

There are both public and private schools in Egypt. The public government schools are free for all Egyptians. Private schools charge tuition, but often offer subjects and curricula that government schools do not. Participation in basic level education is mandatory from ages 6-14. Students take an exam at the end of their basic education to determine which type of secondary school they will attend. The secondary level has three different tracks: general, vocational/technical, or dual-system vocational (two days spent in class, four days at a job). General education lasts three years, vocational/technical three to five years, and dual-system three years. In order to get into university, students from each track must earn their Secondary School Certificate, which is received after successful completion of a test given the last two years of secondary school.

<http://teachmideast.org/country-profiles/egypt/>

M E S I R

Female illiteracy in Egypt is more widespread than male illiteracy, and female literacy rates differ between rural and urban areas. Women in rural areas are also poorer than their urban counterparts, and are not granted as much access to educational opportunities. Rural areas in Upper (southern) Egypt have the lowest amount of literate residents, 42.4%, and urban areas in Lower (northern) Egypt have the highest, 83.2%. About 82% of Egyptian males are literate, and overall, 74% of the population can read and write.

Roughly 25% of Egyptians end up going to college, though only about half of those who go actually obtain their degree. QS World University Rankings judges American University of Cairo to be the best school in Egypt, though Cairo University, Al Azhar University, Ains Shams University, and Alexandria University are also considered excellent schools. Al Azhar University is the oldest university in Egypt, and for much of its history it was part of the Al Azhar Mosque, one of the oldest and most respected institutions in the Islamic world. The Grand Imam there is one of the highest authorities in Sunni Islam. This long history continues to influence the university, which includes the propagation of Islam and Islamic culture as part of its mission, and today it is the chief center of Islamic learning and Arabic literature in the world.

M E S I R

Of those 16 million, approximately 10.3 million are females.

According to CAPMAS, Upper Egyptian governorates had the highest rates of illiteracy, with illiteracy in Minya reaching 36.7 percent, Beni Suef 34.8 percent, Fayoum 34.7 percent, Sohag 34.3 percent, Assiut 31.7 percent and Qena 30.3 percent.

Illiteracy in Cairo was 17.4 percent, followed by Alexandria with 16.5 percent. The lowest rates of illiteracy were recorded in border governorates—al-Wadi al-Gadeed at 11.5 percent, South Sinai at 17.1 percent, and the Red Sea at 12 percent.

In Canal governorates, the illiteracy rates were 13.1 percent in Port Said, 14.9 in Ismailia, 16.8 in Suez and 14.3 percent in Damietta.

According to CAPMAS, illiteracy rates among youth aged 15 to 24 was only 8.5 percent whereas people aged 60 or more had a 62.3 percent illiteracy rate. This indicates that illiteracy may drop in the future.

Illiteracy rates among urban residents registered 17.7 percent compared to 31 percent for rural residents. Illiteracy rates among females in rural areas was 40.4 percent compared to only 22.8 percent in urban areas, and 21.4 percent of males in rural areas were illiterate compared to 12.8 percent of males in urban areas.

Edited translation from Al-Masry Al-Youm

<https://www.egyptindependent.com/capmas-more-16-million-illiterate-people-egypt-2012/>

M E S I R

A Positive Step in Egypt's Democratic Transition?

Some Nubians and Amazigh are apparently satisfied with the current constitution draft, however, atheists, Shi'ites, who have continued to call for fair representation in the constitution, and Baha'is, still fear the possibility of exclusion.

Egypt's path towards becoming a true democratic state where all citizens are equally treated is indeed long and daunting. A constitution that recognizes the state's different ethnicities and states their basic rights is the very first positive step in this long path. The constitutional articles tackling the issues of discrimination, Egypt's cultural diversity, and equal citizen rights look promising on the surface. However, more important is the actual enforcement and implementation of those broad guidelines, which do not detail how the state will protect minority rights and cultural diversity in Egypt, nor how it will tackle the long festering issue of social awareness surrounding minority rights.

***Fady Salah** is an Egyptian writer, journalist, political analyst, and author.*

M E S I R

RELIGION

Ancient Egyptians believed in a multitude of gods. Ra, the sun god; Osiris, the god of the underworld; Set, the god of evil; and Isis, goddess of magic and healing, are examples of some of well-known ancient Egyptian gods. The worship of Egyptian gods declined as the region was conquered, first by Christians and then by Muslims. Today, Islam is the state religion. Though freedom of religion is guaranteed by the constitution, in practice some restrictions do exist; for example, the right of Muslims to convert to other religions is not guaranteed.

Currently, 90% of Egyptians are Sunni Muslim and 9% are Coptic Christian. Coptic Christianity dates back to 42 CE and follows the Christian tradition introduced to Egypt by St. Mark. In 451, the Egyptian Christians chose to separate themselves from mainstream Christians after the Council of Chalcedon voted on the nature of Jesus. Coptic Christians believed he had one nature, a combination of divine and human, or Miaphysitism. The council rejected this belief, stating that Jesus had two distinct natures, one human, and one divine.



MESIR

CULTURE



Egyptian culture and society continue to captivate people across the world. Its diverse and storied history, and continued position as a major geo-political player ensure the ongoing global significance of the country. From its ancient architectural feats to artful portrayals of the 2011 revolution, Egyptian culture can satisfy all types of interests.

<http://teachmideast.org/country-profiles/egypt/>

M E S I R

Food

Egypt's cuisine stands out from the Levantine, North African and Gulf flavors with a style of its own. Of course, it draws on historical influences from the Ottoman and Greek periods. Much of the food is made from wheat, beans and peas, vegetables, and fruits, reflecting the diversity of crops that grow in the fertile Nile Delta. Bread is served at every meal in Egypt and sometimes can be the main dish for lower income Egyptians. Accordingly, the name for bread in Egypt is *aeesh*, which means life in Arabic. Bread has been famously subsidized by the government and its distribution long been used to offset the political repression Egyptians face every day.

Kushari (above right) is considered one of two national dishes in Egypt. *Kushari* is made up of macaroni, rice, and lentils and is garnished with chickpeas, fried onions and a tomato-vinegar sauce. *Kushari* originated from lower income families who at the end of the month had a smattering of everything left over and would create a dish made up of all the remaining ingredients. Today *kushari* is sold at every level, from street carts to high-class restaurants. (Photo: Dina Said, CC BY-SA 4.0, <http://ow.ly/jVsu30ejBeU>)

Ful medames (above left) is a dish made up of cooked fava beans, cumin, parsley, oil, and lemon. *Ful* is the second of Egypt's two national dishes. The food itself is inexpensive and can be found all over the Middle East, Somalia, Ethiopia, and Armenia. Typically *ful* is eaten at breakfast, but can be eaten anytime. (Photo: Nadia Stokes, <http://ow.ly/CL4330ejBkv>)

M E S I R

Clothing

Modern dress in Egypt today is similar to western clothing (think pants and t-shirt), though it is more modest in style. Some women choose to wear a hijab, which is a scarf-like material that covers one's hair. Others choose to wear no head covering while some opt for the more extensive coverage provided by the niqab which leaves an opening for the eyes. Some women may wear the *abaya*, a loose-fitting robe that cover women's bodies completely. Men typically wear Western attire but the robe-style *jellabiya* (below left) remains popular particularly amongst older generations.

The street scene (below middle) depicts a 2015 demonstration in Cairo. There is a variety of clothing styles and you will notice a mixed crowd of both men and women. (Photo: EPA via Daily Mail UK, <http://ow.ly/18g830ejB0l>). In the far right photograph, female Egyptian students with and without the hijab make their way through Cairo University. (Photo: Shawn Baldwin, The New York Times, <http://ow.ly/Zq8Y30ejMXb>)



M E S I R

Art

Much of the ancient Egyptian art that has survived to the present day consists of paintings on tomb walls. Many of these have a religious or symbolic nature, and often depict Ancient Egyptian notions of life, death, and the afterlife. Sculptures of gods or rulers are also common. One of the most famous and sought-after pieces of Ancient Egyptian art in the world is the bust of Nefertiti, thought to have been sculpted around 1350 BCE.

Hieroglyphs are another form of ancient art. This was the writing system used by Ancient Egyptians and is considered to be one of the earliest writing systems in the world, emerging around 3200 BCE. Many of the ancient writings painted onto the walls of tombs have survived because of the dry climate. There are over 700 hieroglyphic symbols, and they can be read left to right, right to left, or up and down. The Rosetta Stone, discovered by Napoleon's army in 1799, allowed Egyptologists to decode hieroglyphs because it featured the same lines of text written in hieroglyphs (for priests), demotic (for commoners), and Greek (for government administration).

<http://teachmideast.org/country-profiles/egypt/>

M E S I R

Modern art in Egypt varies — artists often weave political and religious themes into paintings, films, and sculptures. One form of modern art that played an important role in the Arab Spring was graffiti. Artists use this medium to express dissent with the established authority. Aya Tarek started producing graffiti in 2008 when she was 18 and is considered one of the pioneers of "urban art." Her work is known for dealing with social and political issues and can be seen around Alexandria and Cairo. Another female artist, **Nermine Hammam**, has received international acclaim for works which places representations of war and conflict in bucolic, postcard-like settings.



Nermine Hammam from series "Upekkha"

Art historian Bahia Shehab has long been fascinated with the Arabic script for 'no.' When revolution swept through Egypt in 2011, she began spraying the image in the streets saying no to dictators, no to military rule and no to violence. Learn about her story in the TED talk below.

<http://teachmideast.org/country-profiles/egypt/>

M E S I R

Mummy mask of a young woman, Dyn. 18



Period: Egypt, New Kingdom, Dynasty 18
Dating: 1570 BC-1300 BC
Origin: Egypt, Upper Egypt, Thebes
Material: Cartonnage (all types)
Physical: 66cm. (25.8 in.) -
Catalog: PLA.VL.00559

Links to other views:

⇒ Larger View
if scripting is off, click the ⇒ instead.

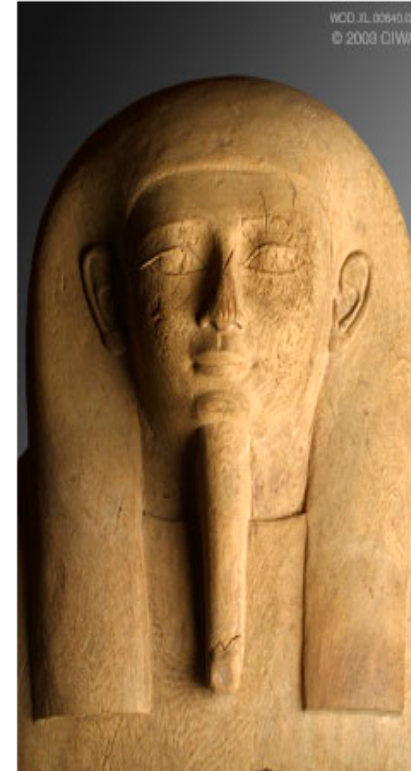
This is the mummy mask of a high ranking young woman of Dynasty 18. Such masks, which completely wrap around the back of the head, were slipped on the mummy before it was placed inside its decorated and inscribed coffin for its eternal voyage.

Rather than an impersonal idealized model, this appears to be a real portrait of this charming young woman. While her plain headdress draws attention to her immense eyes, her colorful *usekh* collar brightens the whole composition.

This work demonstrates not only the sensitivity of the artist, but also elaborate construction techniques employing a variety of materials. The face is carved out of wood, gessoed and painted, enlivened by inlaid stone eyes. The headdress and body are high quality cartonnage work, using many layers of finely woven cloth.

“During the First Intermediate Period and the early Middle Kingdom, the head of the mummy began to be protected with a cartonnage mask placed over the wrappings. These were meant to represent the deceased. . . Mummy masks remained in use through the Eighteenth Dynasty” (Russman 2001:204).

Sarcophagus of a king, Dyn. 18



Period: Egypt, New Kingdom, Dynasty 18
Dating: 1570 BC-1293 BC
Origin: Egypt, Upper Egypt, Thebes
Material: Wood (undetermined)
Physical: 58cm. (22.7 in.) -
Catalog: WOD.VL.00640

Links to other views:

This is the upper part of the sarcophagus made for a king of Dynasty 18. Bereft of any decoration, color, gilding, religious incantation, or personal inscription, it was left unfinished by its maker for reasons we will never know. We are left with the essential expression of an artistic tradition at the peak of its perfection. Some 3400 years old and yet extraordinarily immediate, this sculpture looks as if its maker lifted his chisel this very morning.

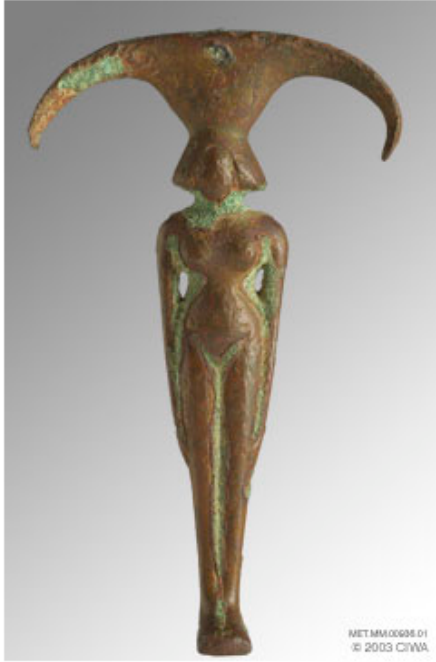
This portrait, with its wide eyes, long eyebrows, straight nose, faint smile, and subtle cheekbones, is profoundly Egyptian, expressing the splendor and aesthetic ideal of a culture gone forever.

Sarcophagus

Sarcophagus is a Greek term used in Egyptology to designate a container made to protect a mummified body (the term literally means “body eater”). Although we are guilty here of using the term loosely, the generally accepted convention today is to use ‘sarcophagus’ for a stone container, and ‘coffin’ for a wooden or metal container.

MESIR

Anthropomorphic mirror handle, Dyn. 18



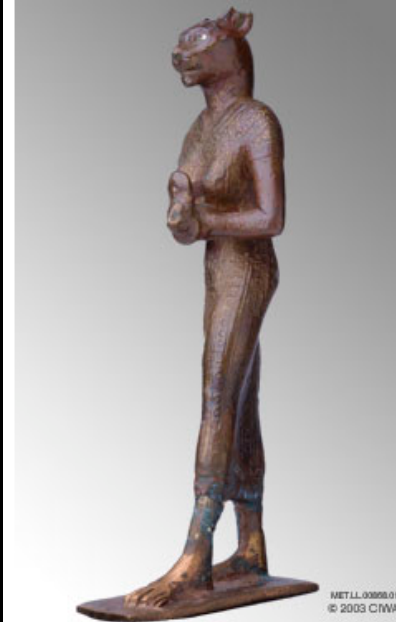
This mirror handle represents a nude woman capped with the umbel of a huge papyrus plant. The mirror itself (now missing) would have had the appearance of a solar disk and was attached by a tenon to the handle, part of which is still visible (which allowed us to estimate the disk thickness to 1.25 mm). Compared to other similar handles, the papyrus umbel of this one is fleshier, more tangible, and perfectly proportioned to the voluptuous subject.

Dating this object presents some difficulties. The hairstyle seems unusual for the New Kingdom, and much more like those seen from Dynasty 6 to Dynasty 11. The high waisted figure, and the style of the necklace (see Russmann 2001:78, 79, 84) further suggest a work of the First Intermediary Period. But such statuette mirror handles are apparently unknown before Dynasty 18 of the New Kingdom, as noted by Vandier d'Abadie (1972): "With the New Kingdom appeared statuette handles in bronze, wood, or ivory, depicting a young woman nude."

Period: Egypt, New Kingdom, Dynasty 18
Dating: 1570 BC-1320 BC
Origin: Egypt,
Material: Bronze
Physical: 12.3cm. (4.8 in.) - 157 g. (5.5 oz.)
Catalog: MET.MM.00936

MET.MM.00936.01
© 2003 CIWA

Gilded bronze of Bastet, Dyn. 22



This gilded bronze statuette represents Goddess Bastet of Bubastis, striding. She is shown with the body of a woman and the head of a lioness. She wears an elaborate triple collar dress woven in exquisitely patterned cloth, reminiscent of New Kingdom luxuries. Her figure from the back expresses a supreme elegance. She holds in her hands an Aegis with the head of the cow goddess Hathor, surmounted by the sun disc. On the top of the lioness-headed Bastet is inscribed the sign *Ka*.

When this piece was acquired into the collection thirty years ago, the feet were missing. For illustrative purposes, we had them reconstructed in an obvious manner.

Bubastis—literally the 'house of Bastet'—had been the most important cult center for Bastet since the beginning of the Old Kingdom. At the turn of the last BC millennium, it became the stronghold of the founders of Dynasty 22 (945-712 BC), who were Egyptians of Libyan origin.

Period: Egypt, 3rd Intermediate Period,
Dynasty 22, Osorkon II/Usermaatre-
Setepenamun
Dating: 874 BC-850 BC
Origin: Egypt, Lower Egypt, Bubastis
Material: Bronze
Physical: 15.7cm. (6.1 in.) - 406 g. (14.3 oz.)
Catalog: MET.LL.00868

MET.LL.00868.01
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MESIR

Polychrome glass cup, Dyn 18



This rare translucent polychrome glass cup was created in Egypt towards the end of Dynasty 18. The bell shaped body was probably made by trailing translucent aquamarine glass over a core mounted on a rod. Then, fifteen trails of red and yellow cane were applied in parallel horizontal bands. While still soft, these bands were dragged alternately up and down with a blunt tool. A solid opaque yellow trim on the rim, plus a ring foot and two small handles of blue and yellow cane complete the decoration of this exquisitely executed piece. Rare by its shape, its decoration, and its unusual theme.

“The earliest examples in glass, dating to the reign of Amenhotep II (1428-1397 BC.) have no handles. These were added from the time of Thutmose IV (1397-1387 BC.)... most perfect shape under Amenhotep III (1387- 1350 BC.). After the end of the Amarna Period, about 1330 BC., other shapes of unguent vessels became fashionable... Glass vessels were rare and valued possessions. They served as containers for scented oils, ointments, and cosmetics” (Stern and Schlick-Nolte 1994:130 #5).

Period: Egypt, New Kingdom, Dynasty 18
Dating: 1370 BC-1335 BC
Origin: Egypt, Middle Egypt, El-Amarna [Akhetaten]
Material: Glass (all types)
Physical: 9.2cm. (3.6 in.) - 124 g. (4.4 oz.)
Catalog: GLS.SS.00803

Links to other views:

⇒ Larger View

if scripting is off, click the ⇒ instead.

Large alabaster vase, 3150-2920 BC



This very large alabaster vase is a masterpiece of thin wall stone craftsmanship—a technology which reached its full potential as early as Dynasty 1 or 2. Vessels such as this one were created five thousand years ago by craftsmen who had no hard-metal tools. They worked for “... predynastic kings, such as Iry-Hor, Scorpion, and Ka, already shown in the form of the *serekh*, indicating the ownership of the vessel” (Rice 1991:71, Fig. 14).

“The making of stone vessels is one of the glories of ancient Egyptian craftsmanship. Even the hardest and most intractable stones were carved with extraordinary precision and assurance. The material also allowed the sculptor to indulge the Egyptian penchant for understatement, allowing the shape of objects and the materials from which they were fashioned to speak for themselves” (Rice 1991:72, Fig. 15).

Period: Egypt, Early Dynastic Period/Thinite Period, Dynasty 01, Dynasty 1
Dating: 3150 BC-2920 BC
Origin: Egypt, Upper Egypt, Abydos [Pre-Dynastic and Early Royal Tomb]
Material: Calcite - alabaster
Physical: 33.4cm. (13 in.) - 6000 g. (211.8 oz.)
Catalog: STO.XL.00610

Bibliography (for this item)

Arnold, Dorothea (editor)
1999 *When the Pyramids Were Built: Egyptian Art of the Old Kingdom.*

M E S I R

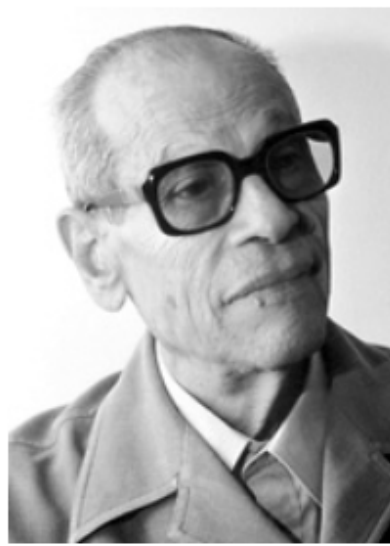
Literature and Film

Egypt has the longest literary tradition in the world. The first known book was written in Ancient Egypt on *papyrus*, a thick paper made from the pulp of a reed which grows along the Nile river bank. Ancient Egyptian literature was most often instructive in nature – a notable example is *The Book of the Dead*, which details the afterlife. However, mythology, poetry, and stories were also featured in ancient Egyptian literature.

Egyptian literature flourished for millennia. The famous library of Alexandria promoted Egypt as a literary hub for centuries before being burned down, possibly as part of the Roman conquest of Egypt.

There was a shift in Egyptian literature following Egypt's conquering by Muslim Arabs in the eighth century. Literature in this period began to focus on Islam, though Coptic Christian literature still persisted. Many stories from *One Thousand and One Nights*, or *Arabian Nights*, have been attributed to stories written in Egypt at this time.

MESIR



Egypt's Nabuib Mahfouz won the 1988 Nobel Prize for Literature

Egypt underwent a cultural renaissance in the late 19th and early 20th century. Referred to as *al-nahda* (the awakening), this literary movement took ideals from Western society and advocated their application in an Islamic context. This occurred during a period of instability and weak governance in the Ottoman Empire, and thus was the perfect time for a paradigm shift in Egypt and the Middle East in general. *Al-nahda* literature was characterized by an emphasis on contemporary social and political themes, like anti-colonialism, as well as a departure from classical forms both in prose and poetry. One notable example of an author from this period is Khalil Gibran, a Lebanese American poet whose work is popular worldwide.

Naguib Mahfouz is Egypt's most celebrated novelist; his stories focus on the everyday lives of modern city-dwellers. Born in 1911, Mahfouz was a civil servant who earned a Nobel Prize for Literature in 1988. He passed away in 2006, but not before writing over thirty novels, more than a hundred short stories, and more than two hundred articles. Half of his novels have been made into films which have circulated throughout the Arabic-speaking world.

There has also been a proliferation of printing presses, which makes publishing much more feasible. This has had a number of consequences for Egypt's literary scene, including the growing presence of female authors. Literature written by women is often criticized by more conservative elements of society; negatively, some call it *kitabab al-banat*, which means "girl books."

Graphic novels are also a popular medium for expression. They can be politically charged and used to express injustice and repression. Government and conservative forces have censored these novels because of political and moral concerns. A notable graphic novel is *Metro*, a novel about a young man who has a falling-out with a loan shark. In *Metro*, the Mubarak regime and its corruption is explored. Consequently, this book was banned in Egypt until 2012.

<http://teachmideast.org/country-profiles/egypt/>

M E S I R

Cairo is the Middle East's equivalent to Hollywood. Producing 75% of all Arab films, Egypt has long been at the center of Middle Eastern cinema and media in general. Egypt's first film was produced in 1896, kicking off nearly forty years of silent film production. Egypt then began its film renaissance with the advent of sound, creating feel-good films with plot lines similar to 1950s' Hollywood. After 1965, however, the film industry was nationalized and placed under the state's control during Nasser's regime. This limited the potential for political expression through the films. Some commentators believe this made Egyptian films start following a specific format, limiting the diversity in genres and plot. Today Egyptian film is venturing into more social and political commentary, with a number of small firms producing art films that receive a wide viewership internationally.

Egypt's position as a literary and cinematic giant has made it very influential across the Arab world. For example, it is widely said that the best understood dialect in the Arab world is Egyptian, simply due to its pervasive presence in Egyptian film and television.

MESIR

Music

The best record of early Egyptian music is from the Old Kingdom when Egyptians played harps, flutes, and double clarinets. Percussion instruments, lyres, and lutes were added during the Middle Kingdom. Egyptian music today is a combination of Turkish, Arabic and Western music. Egyptian-born Umm Kulthum, who was active as a singer and actress in the early to mid-20th century, remains one of the region's most revered singers and a national symbol of pride. She heavily influenced music and pop culture in her country and beyond such as is depicted in contemporary artist Huda Lutfi's work to the right in which her image is juxtaposed with militancy that followed the Egyptian revolution. Her songs of love, longing, and loss had a modern style that introduced Egypt to less traditional types of music. For much of the 20th century, Egypt was the center for Arab popular music, with only a few stars from other countries finding similar levels of international success.



Huda Lutfi, Democracy is Coming, 2008. Egypt.

Shaabi is a distinctly Egyptian genre that emerged in the 1960s. Translated as the "music of the people," shaabi music grew in popularity because its lyrics and social commentary resonated with the working class. Ahmed Adaweyah was one of the most popular shaabi artists in Egypt due to his use of popular slang and his fervent criticism of the middle class and broader Egyptian society.

The *al jeel* genre developed not long after shaabi, and was primarily influenced by Western pop and rock music. Similar to Algerian Rai music, al jeel draws sounds and rhythms from Bedouin and Nubian sources and brings in more modern sounds like synthesizers. Amr Diab is one of the most famous Egyptian al jeel artists. In 2017, based on his length of time in the industry, influence on pop culture and social media following, Diab earned the top position in **Forbes' Magazine's new Arab Celebrity 100 list**. Watch the video for his hit song "Leila Nahary" below.

M E S I R

Sites



Egypt contains some of the most recognizable historical sites in the world. One of the most well-known is the Great Pyramid of Giza. It is the last of the Seven Ancient Wonders of the World that still stands. Built by Pharaoh Khufu of the 4th Dynasty in 2550 BCE, the Great Pyramid stands at 481 feet tall. The pyramid was built using 2.3 million stone blocks, each weighing between 2.5 and 15 tons. There are three burial chambers inside the pyramid, one for the king in the middle, one underground to keep supplies for the afterlife, and one above ground for a statue of the pharaoh.

<http://teachmideast.org/country-profiles/egypt/>

M E S I R

The Valley of Kings was the burial place for royal members of the 18th-21st dynasties. The Valley was intended to be a more private and hidden cemetery in deliberate contrast to the visible pyramids of earlier dynasties. Hidden in the cliffsides of Thebes, south of modern-day Cairo, it holds 63 tombs and is now a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Some of the tombs are open to the public, including the tomb of Tutankhamen, which is an established and very popular tourist destination. Tutankhamen's tomb was almost completely intact upon its discovery in 1922, a rarity for tombs in the Valley of Kings. This, along with sensationalized media accounts of an alleged curse on the tomb, has contributed to Tutankhamen's modern-day fame.

Completed in 1971, after more than a decade of construction overseen by Gamal Abdel Nasser, the Aswan High Dam is a grand infrastructure project that indelibly changed life around the resource-rich and life-giving Nile River. Nearly 50 years after its opening, its effects continue to be important and investigated by researchers. On the one hand, the High Dam allowed Egypt to control the often volatile seasonal flooding of the Nile, harnessing a great power source and expanding farmable land by at least 30%. On the other hand, the dam displaced tens of thousands of people, submerged historical sites, and disrupted the natural fertilization process that the river for millennia had provided for its flood plains. The synthetic fertilizers that replace these nutrients change the nature of the soil. Lake Nasser, the enormous reservoir that the dam creates, has become an essential and major source of water for Egypt's large population. These competing and polarizing views of the dam as either a wonder of modern engineering or an environmental stressor is ripe for exploration in the classroom and continued independent research. There is no dispute, however, that the Dam was, in Nasser's view, one of his crowning achievements as president of Egypt, and its presence plays a major role in Egyptian life today.

A little known historical site was discovered during the construction of the Aswan Dam. Abu Simbel, among other major ancient Egyptian sites, was on track to be submerged by the Aswan Dam until conservationists and archaeologists intervened to excavate and in some cases move the artifacts out of the water's eventual path. Watch more about the preservation of this stunning discovery in the video below.

<http://teachmideast.org/country-profiles/egypt/>

M E S I R



Above left: visitors to Abu Simbel are dwarfed by the colossi of Pharaoh Ramses II, who sit high and dry along the shore of Lake Nasser. A great international effort, mobilized and led by UNESCO, saved the great monument; it was dismantled piece by piece, its components were moved to higher ground, and it was reassembled with painstaking precision. The rescued colossi have gazed upon waters of the huge man-made lake (above, right), not for millennia, but since the completion of the High Dam in 1971. Photos: Joseph Stanik.

The Sinai Peninsula, the land bridge that connects Africa to Asia, is popular due to its role in the Bible—rumored to be the Mount Sinai from which Moses received the Ten Commandments—and it is home to St. Catherine's Monastery, considered to be the oldest working monastery in the world. Originally, the peninsula was known for its turquoise deposits, but now it is also known for its coral reefs and beachside resorts.

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M E S I R



ABOUT LUXOR TEMPLE

The Luxor Temple in the city of Luxor, Egypt was once a sacred temple built in honour of the deity Amun.

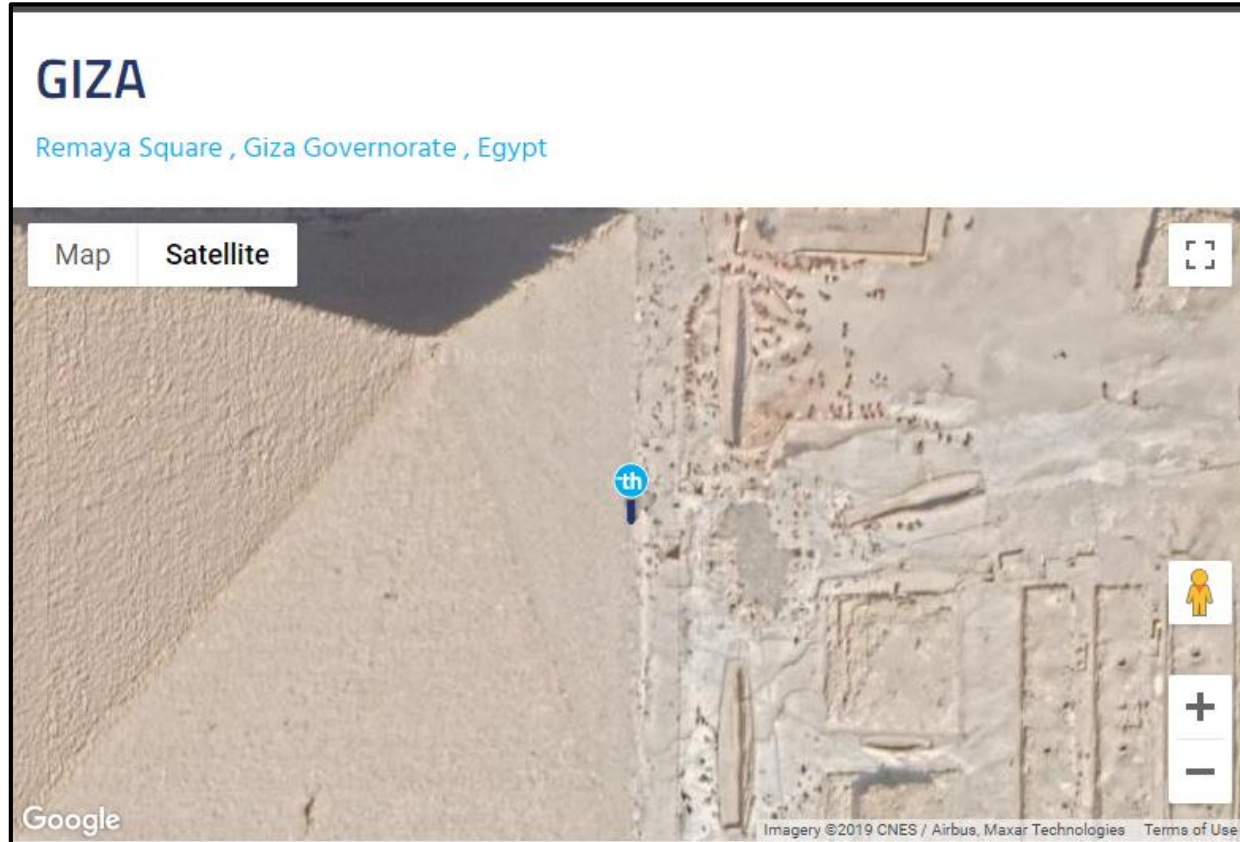
Constructed in the 14th century BC by Amenhotep III, the ninth pharaoh of the Eighteenth Dynasty, the Luxor Temple was part of the Ancient Egyptian city of Thebes.

Today, together with the Karnak Temple and the Valley of the Kings, Luxor Temple forms part of the UNESCO World Heritage Site of "Thebes and its Necropolis". It is incredibly well-preserved and, with its statues of Ramesses II, it is clear that several pharaohs and other leaders added to it at later stages, including Tutankhamun and later even Alexander the Great.

From its Avenue of the Sphinxes to its looming archways and giant statues, the enormous Luxor Temple is a breathtaking site, indeed it ranks among our top ten [tourist attractions to visit in Egypt](#).

<https://www.triphistoric.com/historic-sites/luxor-temple>

M E S I R



The second largest pyramid in Giza belongs to Khufu's son and fourth king of the Fourth Dynasty, Khafra (or Khephren). In fact, the elevation on which Khafra's pyramid is built is deceptive, making it appear larger than his father's.

The smallest of these three kings' pyramids belongs to the sixth king of the Fourth Dynasty, Menkaure and is one tenth the size of Khafre's.

A UNESCO World Heritage site, Giza is also where one finds the Great Sphinx. Estimated to date back to 2528–2520 BC, some Egyptologists believe that this majestic half man, half lion is modeled on Khafra.

Several other tombs and Queens' pyramids pepper Giza's landscape, some of which are open to the public, most notably, the tomb of Seshem-nefer IV. This site also features as one of our Top 10 [Tourist Attractions in Egypt](#).

<https://www.triphistoric.com/historic-sites/giza>

M E S I R

Sports

Ancient Egyptians participated in many sports that exist today, including gymnastics, weightlifting, and wrestling. They also played a version of handball, in which each team tossed a leather ball stuffed with plant fibers or papyrus leaves to the other team at the same time. Handball players could stand on their own feet or on top of their teammates' backs. In modern times, Egypt's handball team became the first non-European team to reach the World Championship semi-finals in 2001. They placed first in the 2011 and 2015 Pan Arab Games, 2011 Pan African Games, and 2013 Mediterranean Games.

Football (U.S. soccer) is one of the most popular sports in Egypt. Their national team, nicknamed "The Pharaohs," has won the African cup seven times (1957, '59, '86, '98, 2006, '08, and '10). Egypt first participated in the Summer Olympic Games in 1912 and has competed in all but two of the games (1932 and 1980) since. They have won a total of 26 medals – 7 gold, 9 silver, and 10 bronze. The majority of these medals come from weightlifting and wrestling. Weightlifting is one of the oldest sports in Egypt with the earliest depictions of it dating back to 3,500 BCE. Egypt participated in the Winter Olympics once in 1984, when they sent alpine racer Jamil El-Reedy to compete. El-Reedy placed 60th in downhill racing, 46th in slalom, and ended up not finishing in giant slalom.