



Head of Queen Nefertiti symbolizes the appeal which ancient Egyptian art holds for the modern world of fashion.

BELOW, Elizabeth Taylor as Cleopatra.

EGYPT

A Rich and Ancient Source of Fashion and Design





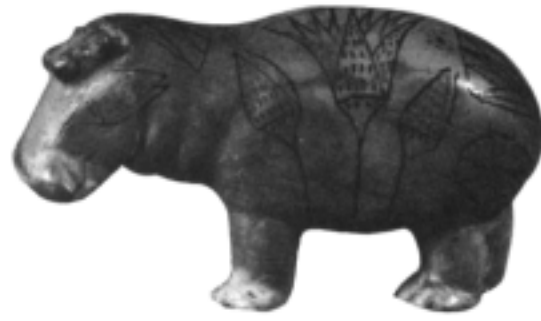
Rosettes in bichrome glaze pottery from the Palace of Rameses II.



The stylized rosette, symbolizing flower fertility, was frequently used as a decorative design motif.



Fragment of inlay tile was decorated in polychrome glazed Faience style. It was probably used in a doorway of the Palace of Rameses II.



ABOVE. Brilliant turquoise-colored hippopotamus from the XII Dynasty, with stylized lotus blossoms.

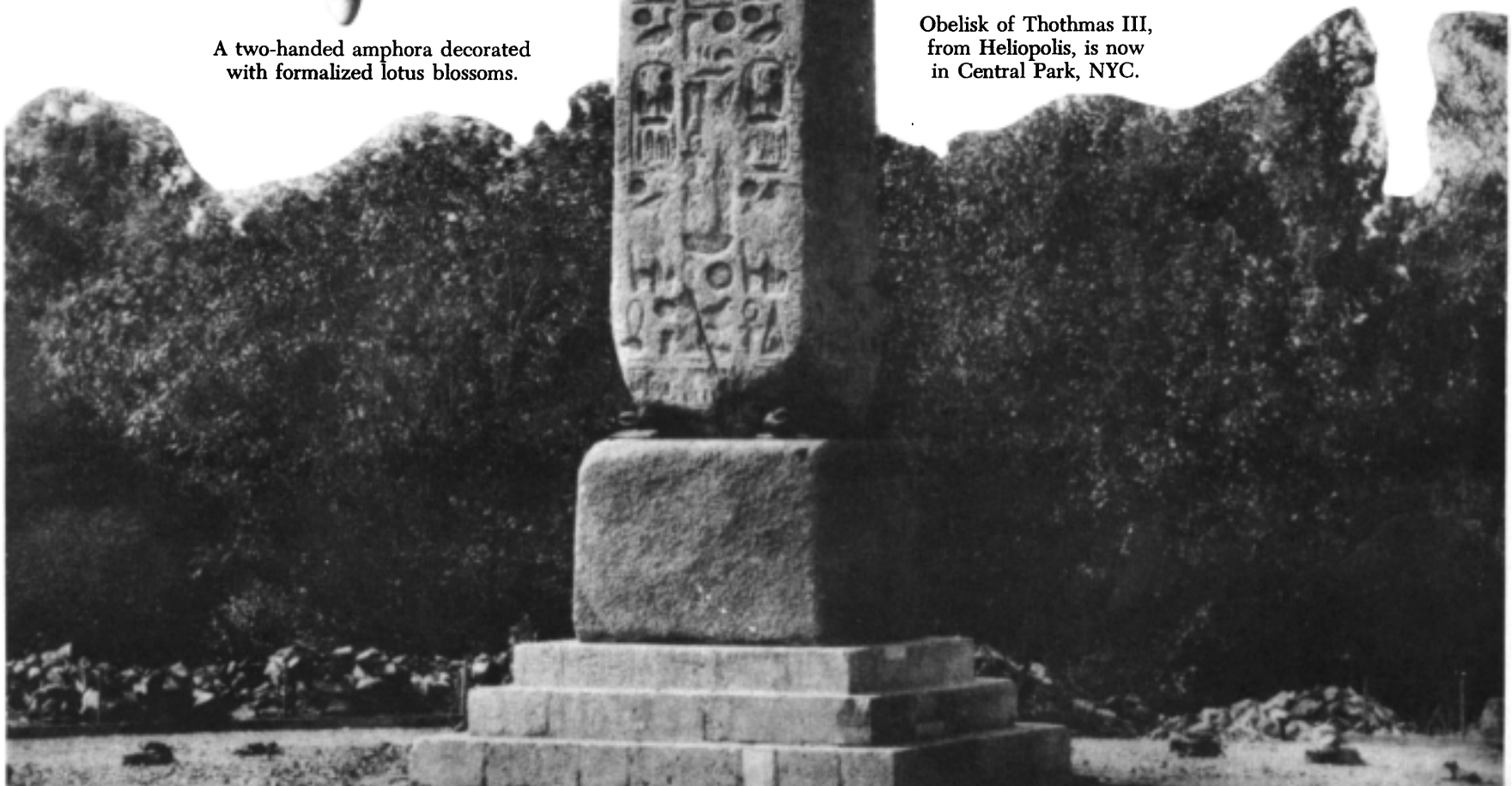


A two-handed amphora decorated with formalized lotus blossoms.

BELOW. Detail from a door panel. The "hawk" was a frequent motif.



Obelisk of Thothmas III, from Heliopolis, is now in Central Park, NYC.



EGYPT

American Fabrics explores a fascinating ancient culture whose artifacts, whose sense of color and design, offer fresh inspiration for sophisticated modern textiles.

Head of Princess Meryetaten
from lid of alabaster jar.



THE CIVILIZATION OF ANCIENT EGYPT was one of the earliest and most enduring in the world's history. It began some 6000 years ago, in pre-historic times, and in the annals of recorded history it flourished from 3100 B. C. until it merged with Rome in 30 B.C.

Every schoolchild is familiar with its great pyramids, its treasure-laden tombs, its impressive monuments and its hieroglyphics. But for designers the interest of this civilization lies more in its artifacts, in its decorations, in the rich sense of design and color which are its characteristic expressions.

To look carefully at an ancient Egyptian frieze or decorated amphora or glazed tile is to be immediately impressed with their modernity and sophistication. The object may be 5000 years old but to our modern eyes it might have been designed yesterday. The essence of its modernity stems from the refinement of line and form, from the careful abstraction of design motifs which we note in all the arts of ancient Egypt. Like our own modern culture it was very design-conscious but unlike much of our contemporary art it was firmly based on realism, abstracting its forms from the sharp

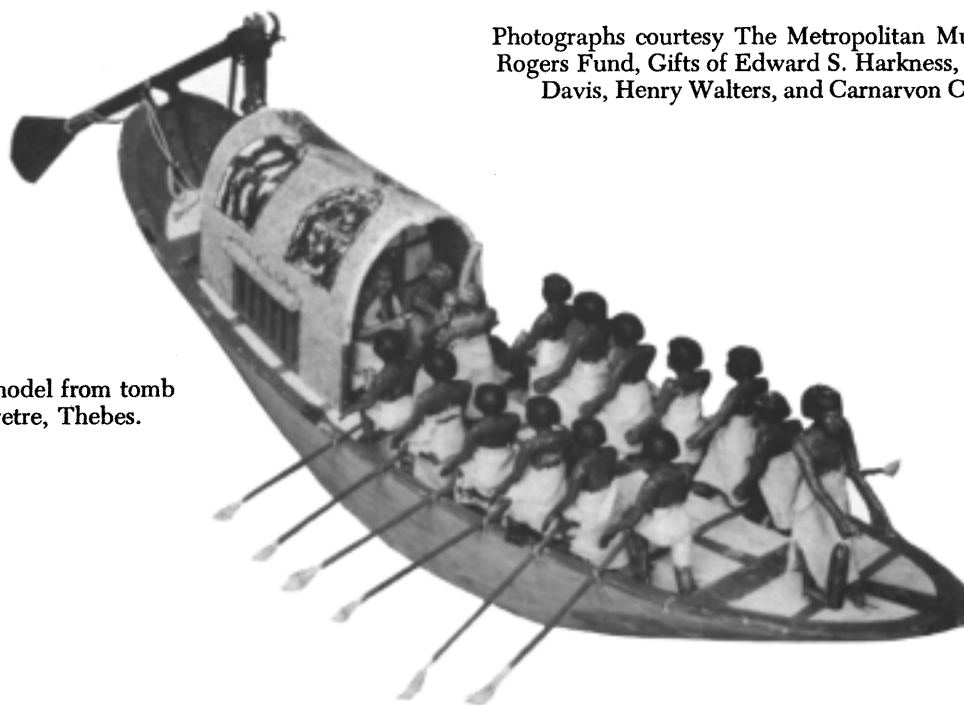
and trained observation of life. And this, we believe, lies at the root of its appeal for our own times – great simplicity, refinement of line and abstraction of form.

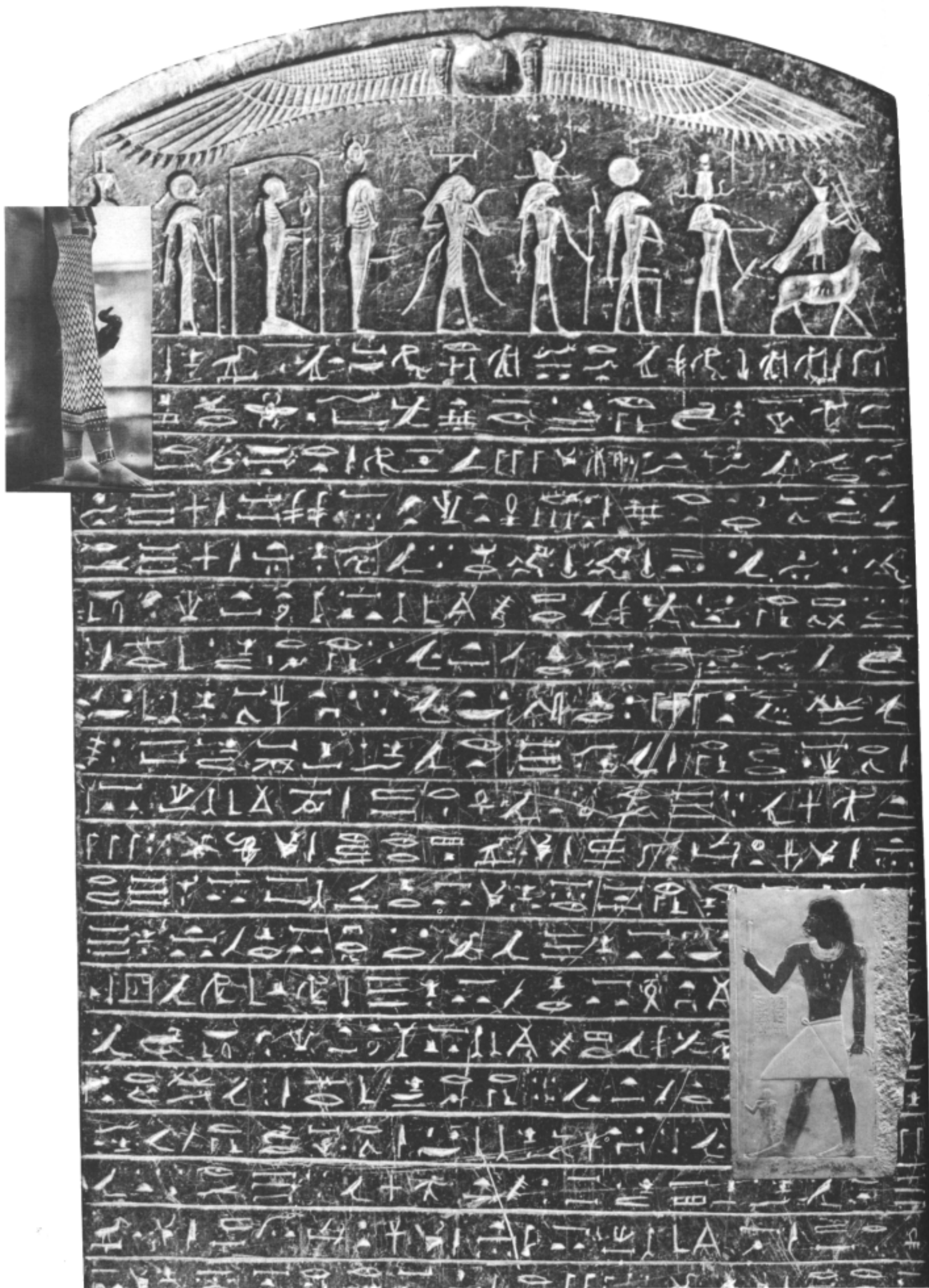
Color too played an important role in the life and art of Ancient Egypt. It was widely used in symbolic objects, in hieroglyphics, in statuary, in the pictorial representations of daily life and the life hereafter, in mummy cases, in useful and decorative objects of all types, on the walls and columns of its buildings. And because the Valley of the Nile is a dry region, many of these colors have been preserved for us to see in all their brilliance though they have been buried 5000 years.

The colors they used were primary derivations, largely of mineral origin. There was yellow ochre, cobalt and copper for blue, malachite for green, hematite for red and orpiment for bright yellow. Often the colors were outlined in vegetable or bone black. And though the Egyptians used only primary colors they also used white and by its addition to other colors they were able to extend the range of their palette. We hope the following pages may serve as an introduction to a rich source of inspiration for modern designers.

Photographs courtesy The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rogers Fund, Gifts of Edward S. Harkness, Theodore M. Davis, Henry Walters, and Carnarvon Collection.

Wooden boat model from tomb
of Mehenkwtre, Thebes.





EGYPTIAN CEREMONIAL & DECORATIVE OBJECTS



The Geese of Meidum, fragment from a frieze in the Cairo Museum which is almost 5000 years old.



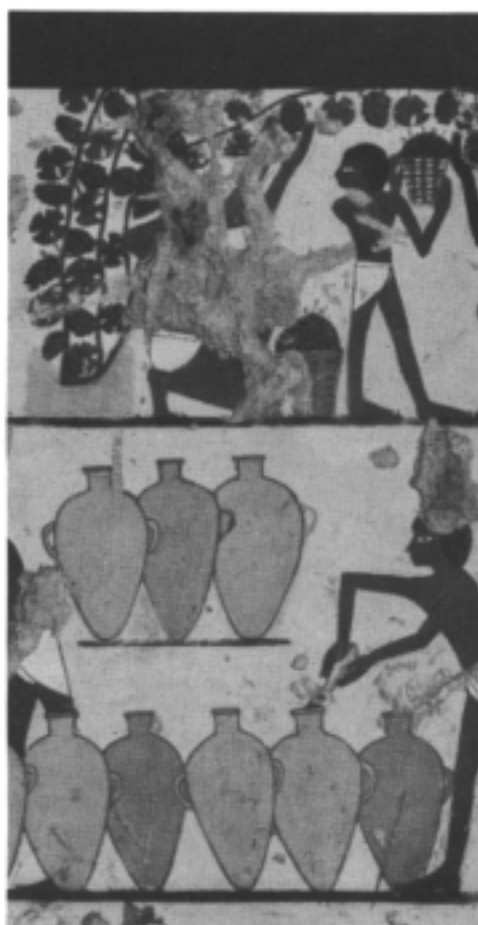
Bronze ceremonial object inlaid with gold. The lower part shows Horus, Hawk God of the Delta, surrounded by a thicket of papyrus motifs.



Dado tile of glazed Faience with fish and flower designs.



Hieroglyphics, the sacred Egyptian writings, carved in stone.



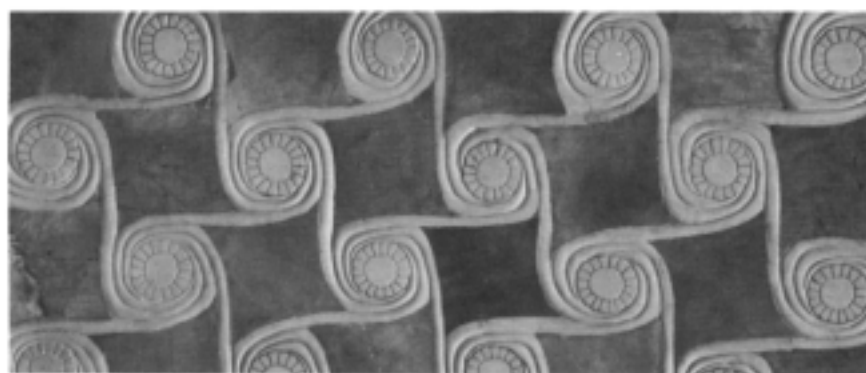
Painted wall from tomb in Thebes shows scenes from Egyptian life.



Vase with fantastic animals, birds, fish and fruit.



Inlaid gold headdress worn by lady at court, 18th. Dynasty.



Blue Faience wall decoration from Thebes, about 1400 B.C.

OPPOSITE PAGE. Magical stela (*upright stone*) of the god Horus. At the upper left, a painted wooden statue from Thebes. At the lower right, detail from a false door in tomb of Nekauhor, 2500 B.C.