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Ancient Egypt Transformed: The Middle Kingdom



Synopsis

The first comprehensive survey of an artistically and culturally rich period in Egypt's history The Middle Kingdom (ca. 2030–1700 B.C.), the second great era of ancient Egyptian culture, was a transformational period during which the artistic conventions, cultural principles, religious beliefs, and political systems formed during earlier dynasties were developed and reimagined. This comprehensive volume presents a detailed picture of the art and culture of the Middle Kingdom, arguably the least known of Egypt's three kingdoms yet a time of remarkable prosperity and unprecedented change. International specialists present new insights into how Middle Kingdom artists refined existing forms and iconography to make strikingly original architecture, statuary, tomb and temple relief decoration, and stele. Thematic sections explore art produced for different strata of Egyptian society, including the pharaoh, royal women, the elite, and the family, while other chapters provide insight into Egypt's expanding relations with foreign lands and the themes of Middle Kingdom literature. More than 250 objects from major collections around the world are sumptuously illustrated, many with new photography undertaken specifically for this catalogue. This fascinating publication is a much-needed contribution to understanding ancient Egypt's art and culture, and shows how the Middle Kingdom served as the bridge between the monumentality of the previous centuries and the opulent splendor of later years.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This is a very beautiful book with excellent articles. It is, in part, the catalog of the like-named exhibit at the Metropolitan Museum, but it also contains many related articles. There is a catalogue section,

showing and discussing the items in the exhibit, as well as sections before and after that discussing aspects of the Middle Kingdom; those sections are profusely illustrated with photos of the catalogue items as well as other relevant illustrations. It is very rare to have an exhibit centering on the Middle Kingdom, and, to most people, the Middle Kingdom is surely the least-known of the major divisions of Egyptian history. This exhibit, therefore, is most welcome and this book will remain a major resource for future study. I've made a list of the articles, and I will apologize in advance for any typos or omissions. The first part of the book contains introductory materials (maps and such), and one chapter: Introduction: What Was the Middle Kingdom?, by Adela Oppenheim. The next section, Aspects of Middle Kingdom Art, contains the following: Architecture: Building for Eternity across Egypt, by Dieter Arnold. Statues in Their Settings: Encountering the Divine, by Dorothea Arnold. Artists and Workshops: The Complexity of Creation, by Adela Oppenheim. The Decoration of Elite Tombs: Connecting the Living and the Dead, by Janice Kamrin. The Art of the Stela: An Appeal to the Living, by Kei Yamamoto. Next is the actual catalogue of the exhibit, divided into the following chapters: A New Start from the South: Thebes during the Eleventh Dynasty, by Dieter Arnold and Dorothea Arnold. The Move to the North: Establishing a New Capital, by Dieter Arnold and Peter Janosi.

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