

FINE ORNAMENTS

No Egyptian's costume was complete without a selection of amulets, necklaces, bracelets and other ornaments. Poor people's were made from cheaper substances such as copper or faience. The rich wore spectacular pieces made from gold, silver and electrum, often set with semi-precious stones and glass.

The most striking items were the big decorative collars that were often worn by servants as well as their masters. These were usually made of several strings of beads or jewels that sat in a big semi-circle around the neck. Women wore them more often than men, but they were popular among both sexes.

Chunky bracelets like this were worn on the upper arm



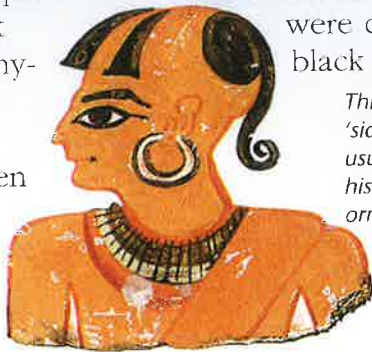
These necklaces are made of gold and semi-precious stones.

WIGS AND HAIRCUTS

Most men kept their hair very short, though noblemen often had longer hair. They were generally clean-shaven (Rahotep's moustache is unusual – see left). Boys shaved their heads, apart from one section that formed a kind of ponytail to one side. This was called the 'side-lock of youth'. Women wore their long hair either loose or braided in a variety of styles, and decorated it with flowers, pins and beads.

especially in later periods, with lots of braids and curls. The wigs also had ornaments hung over them, or were decorated with beads and jewels. The best wigs were made of real hair, but there were cheaper ones of black wool.

This young boy has a 'side-lock of youth', the usual hairstyle for boys of his age, and plenty of ornaments.



The painting on the right is of a New Kingdom woman wearing a long, elaborate wig, decorated with a sacred blue lotus flower.

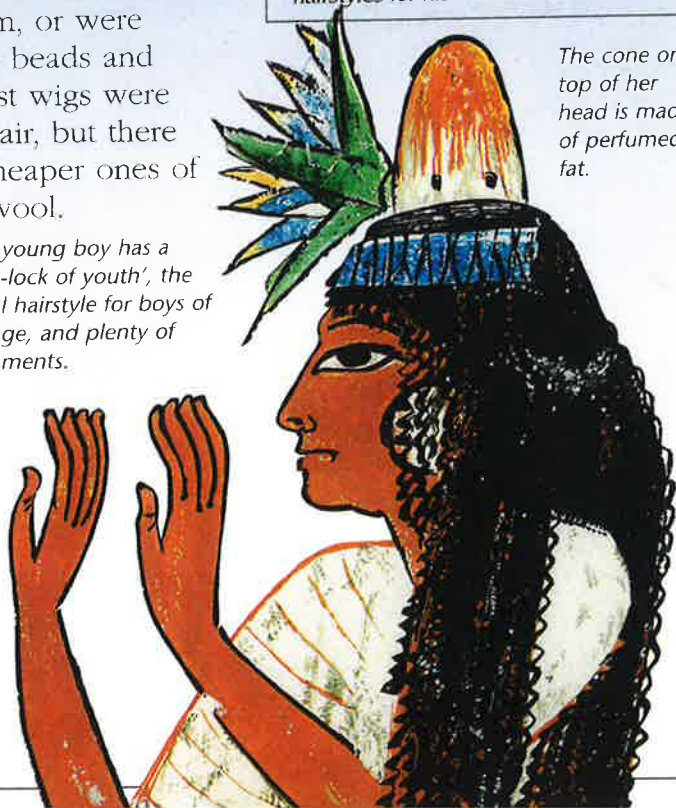
At parties, both men and women wore wigs. Among the rich these could be amazingly elaborate,



INTERNET LINK

At www.usborne-quicklinks.com you'll find a link to the **Seattle Art Museum Web site**, where you can help the Egyptian barber create new hairstyles for his customers.

The cone on top of her head is made of perfumed fat.



ALL DRESSED UP

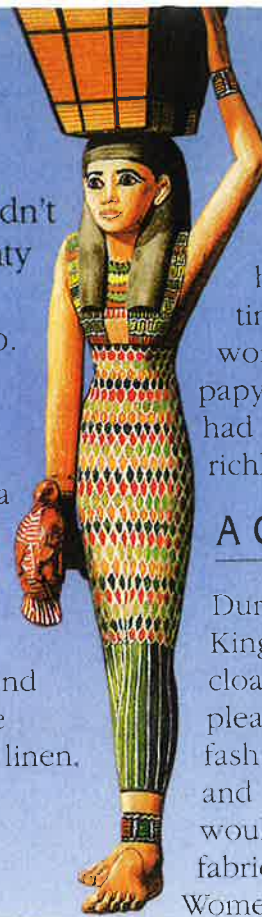
The Egyptians went to a lot of trouble over their appearance, but their clothes were simple and didn't change much over the centuries. They did wear plenty of showy ornaments, though. Richer people wore fancier cloths and a wider range of accessories, too.

DAY-TO-DAY WEAR

Most clothes were made of linen. Rich people wore very thin, fine linen, while ordinary people wore a thicker, coarser cloth. Until the New Kingdom, women wore a simple, tight-fitting ankle-length dress, with two shoulder straps. Men

wore a kilt, made from a piece of linen wrapped around the waist and tucked in. This could be either knee or ankle length. In winter, men and women sometimes wore cloaks made from thick linen.

These statues are of an Old Kingdom couple, Rahotep and Nofret. Rahotep wears a simple kilt and Nofret a dress, wig and cloak.



A servant girl wearing a brightly patterned dress.

Egyptians went barefoot most of the time. They sometimes wore sandals made of papyrus reeds, and nobles had sandals made of richly decorated leather.

A CHANGE OF STYLE

During the New Kingdom, tunics and cloaks made of very fine pleated linen became fashionable for both men and women. The pleats would have made the fabric hang very elegantly. Women began to wear

another garment over their basic tunic, which as well as having pleats sometimes had a bright fringe with little ornaments attached to it. Some men had two kilts – a longer one made of the finest, almost transparent linen, was worn over the basic short tunic.



This New Kingdom tomb painting shows the more elaborate fashions for men and women, which used much more fabric, and many pleats.