

Adorning the body

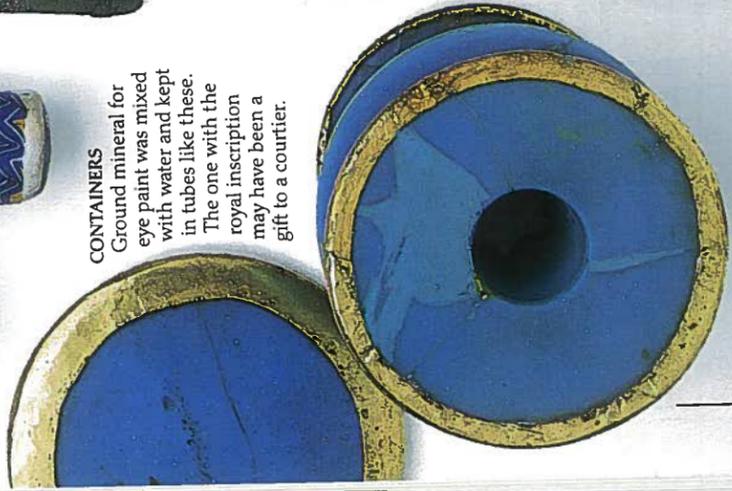
THE EGYPTIANS were lovers of beauty and fashion. Many of their personal names are based on the word "nefer," meaning beautiful—for example, Nefret, Nefertiti, and Nefertari. The goddess associated with adornment was "Hathor the Golden," who is seen as the ideal of beauty in love poetry of the time. Egyptian men and women used eye paint, which was made from minerals ground on fine slate palettes. They went to great lengths in adorning themselves with cosmetics, wigs, floral garlands, and fine linen. Many objects like combs, mirrors, and cosmetic holders have survived to show how important personal appearance was to them. "Put myrrh on your head and dress up in beautiful clothes" says one Egyptian song.



Tube with royal inscription



CONTAINERS
Ground mineral for eye paint was mixed with water and kept in tubes like these. The one with the royal inscription may have been a gift to a courtier.



Pot made of the rare stone anhydrite



Malachite



APPLICATORS
These were used for scooping, mixing, and applying pigment.



CRAFTSMAN'S MASTERPIECE
The mother duck's back wings slide across to give access to the face cream inside.



PERFUME POMADES
Courtiers tied cones of scented animal fat to their wigs, sometimes with a lotus blossom. The fat would melt and slide down the wig.

MIRROR
Courtiers used polished bronze or copper mirrors. Here a naked servant girl holding a bird forms the handle, suggesting love and beauty.



Galena

Polished metal reflective surface

Iron oxide

PIGMENTS

From malachite, a copper ore, the Egyptians produced green eye paint to symbolize fertility. The lead ore known as galena gave a gray-black eye paint (today often called "kohl"). Cheeks could be rouged and lips painted red by using others made of oxides of iron, which are plentiful throughout Egypt. Some fat would probably be mixed with the makeup when it was applied to the face.

FLORAL SPOON

The handle of this container represents a bunch of flowers tied together, with buds of ivory stained a light pink. The top swivels to reveal or cover the cosmetic.



BATH AND MASSAGE

This noblewoman kneels on a mat while a friend holds a flower for her to smell. Her bath is symbolized by water being scattered over her, she is also being given a shoulder massage.



CLOSE SHAVE

Bronze or copper razors were probably as uncomfortable to use as they look, unless in the hands of the professional traveling barbers of ancient Egypt.

Tweezers



PLUCKING AND CURLING

Priests and women used tweezers to remove hair. Women also curled their hair with tongs.

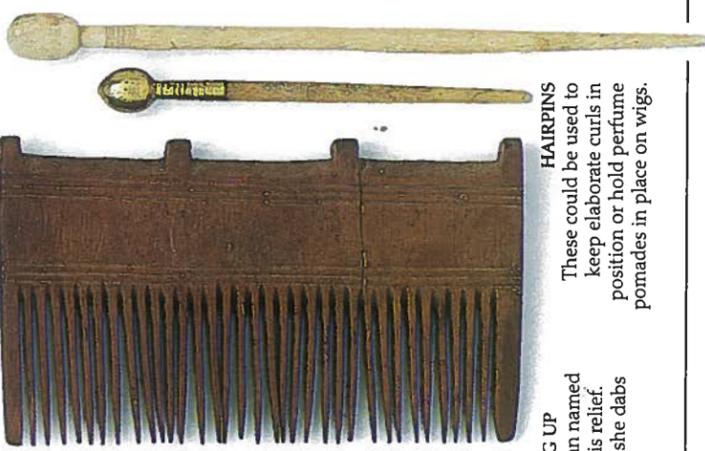
Hair curler

Double ends for different sized curls



WOODEN COMB

Most Egyptians did not have long hair, but their wigs could be quite long and heavy, sometimes with three different layers of curls and bangs, so they needed ivory and wooden combs.



TOUCHING UP

A noblewoman named Ipwet appears in this relief. She holds a mirror while she dabs powder onto her cheeks.



HAIRPINS

These could be used to keep elaborate curls in position or hold perfume pomades in place on wigs.