

**College of Engineering**  
**Department of Interior Design**

# History of Interior Design

2nd year – 1<sup>st</sup> Semester

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## Course Reading List and References:

- A History of Interior Design  
by John Pile & Judith Gura



# Early Civilizations

## ▶ Assyrian Architecture

- ▶ Assyria is the name for a part of ancient Mesopotamia located on the upper Tigris
- ▶ The principal cities of Assyria were Nineveh, Dun, Khorsabad, Nimrud and Assur.
- ▶ The Assyrians were great warriors and hunters, and this was reflected in their art
- ▶ They produced violent sculptures and relief carving in stone that was used to ornament their houses



# Early Civilizations

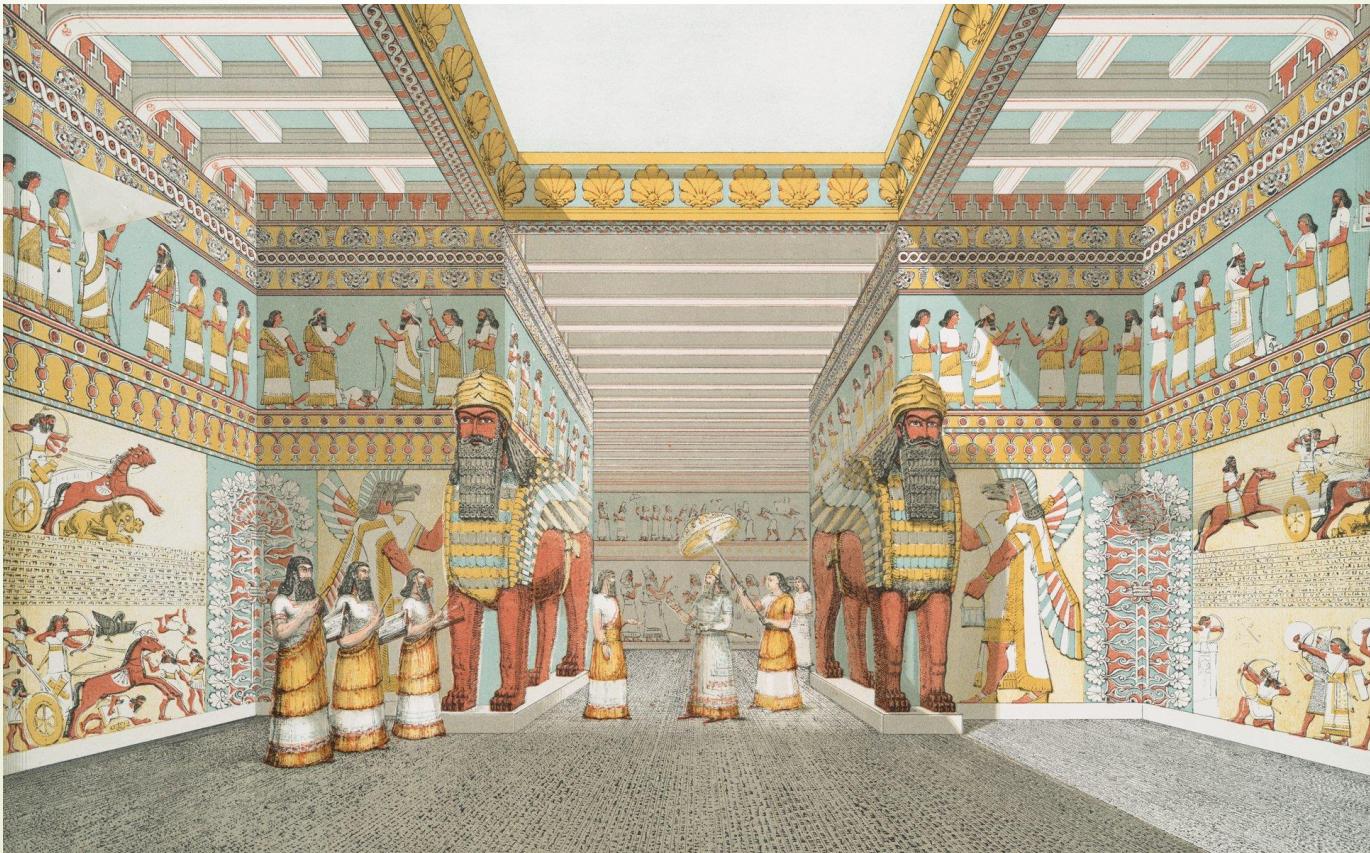
## ▶ Assyrian Architecture

- ▶ During the Assyrian periods, temples lost their importance to palaces.
- ▶ Assyrian kings built walled cities, in which palaces took precedent over religious buildings.
- ▶ Palaces were raised on **brick platforms**, and their principal entrance ways were flanked by guardian figures of human headed bulls or lions of stone.

# Early Civilizations

## ▶ Assyrian Architecture

- ▶ Their halls and corridors were lined with pictures and inscriptions carved in relief on stone slabs up to 9 feet high



# Early Civilizations

## ► Assyrian Architecture

- The interiors were richly decorated and luxurious.
- The walls of cities were usually strengthened by many towers serving as defensive positions.
- The city of Khorsabad demonstrate the might and authority of the Assyrian kings.
- It is also at this place that the remains of Assyrian architecture can be found.

# ► Early Civilizations

- Materials
- Stone and timber suitable for building was rare in the plains of the Tigris and Euphrates.
- Clay was however in abundance
- This was compressed in moulds and dried in the sun to provide bricks for all buildings.
- Sun dried brick became the standard building material.
- It was used across all the cultures of the ancient Near East.

# Early Civilizations

- ▶ Materials
- ▶ Wood was scarce but was imported from Lebanon
- ▶ Wood was probably applied mainly for roofing or for producing tools and ornaments
- ▶ Stone was used by the Assyrians but only for relieve carving and for columnar support.
- ▶ The Babylonians introduce glazed brick, which was used in the façade of their gates and prominent buildings.

## ► Early Civilizations

- Principles of Arch. Organization
- Three principles appear to predominant in the organization of architectural form and space:
  - Courtyard organization.
  - Lifting of buildings on artificial mountains.
  - Organic organization of city fabric.

# Early Civilizations

## ► Ancient Egypt

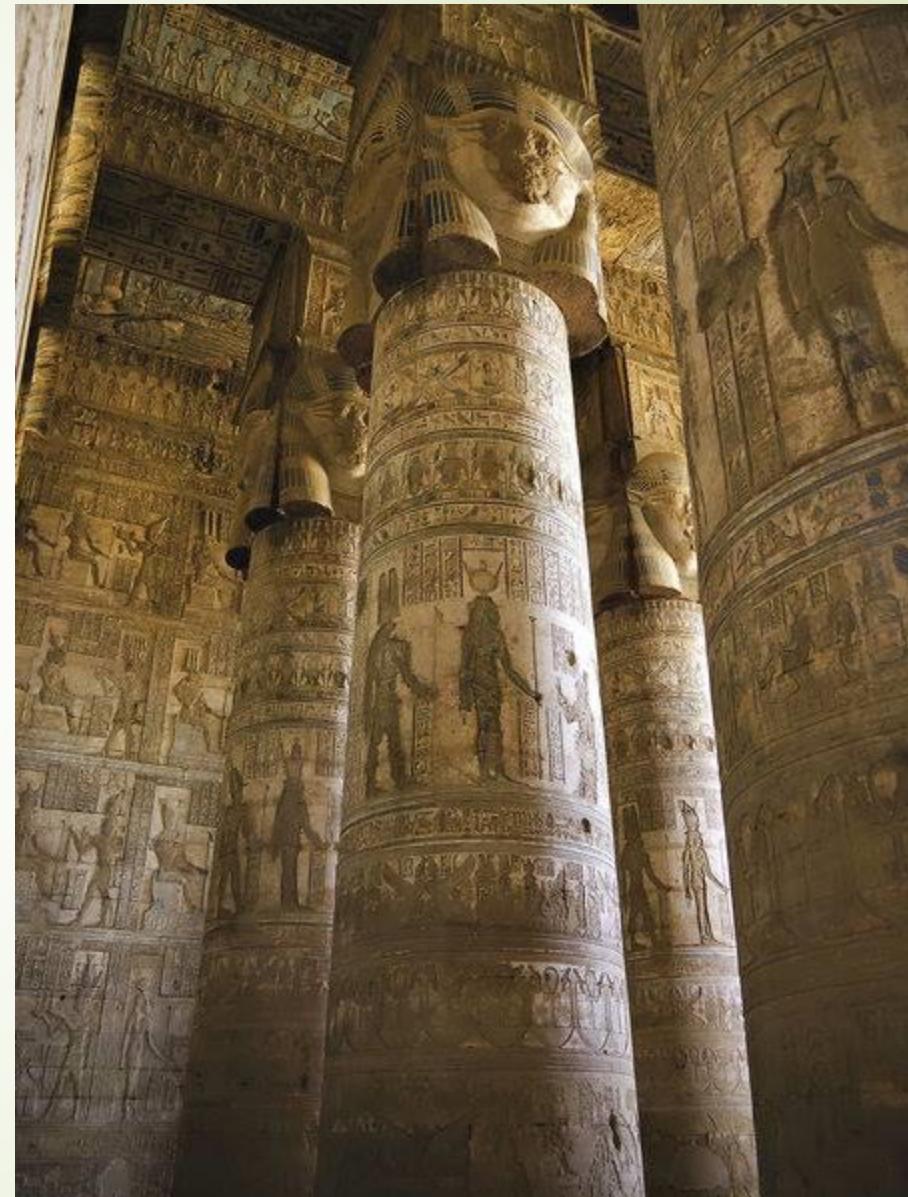
- The civilization of ancient Egypt has left far more evidence for study. Stone of good, lasting quality was available in the Nile valley, and the Egyptians learned to use it for important buildings, although the everyday architecture of houses and even palaces continued to rely on mud brick.
- Many Egyptian structures of stone have survived, some ruined to a degree, but some, like the famous **Pyramids**, are in quite good condition.
- The pyramids were built as tombs and they call attention to the religious beliefs that were central to ancient Egyptian society.

# Early Civilizations

- ▶ **Geometry and Proportion**
- ▶ Ancient Egypt developed great knowledge of, and skill in, geometric planning. The pyramids at Giza are positioned with a north–south axial orientation of great precision (particularly impressive since the spherical form of the earth with its north and south poles was unknown).
- ▶ In numerical terms, the only value that satisfies this relationship is the ratio of 0.618:1, which is equal to the ratio 1:1.618. This relationship, often called the **Golden mean**, has been discovered and rediscovered at various times in history as a unique proportion believed to have both aesthetic and mystic significance.

# Early Civilizations

- ▶ **Egyptian Temples and Houses**
- ▶ The hypostyle hall is a vast space almost filled by the columns that supported a stone roof, the columns are built up of stone drums topped with capitals carved in papyrus bud or flower forms.
- ▶ Incised (decorative) hieroglyphics covered the columns.



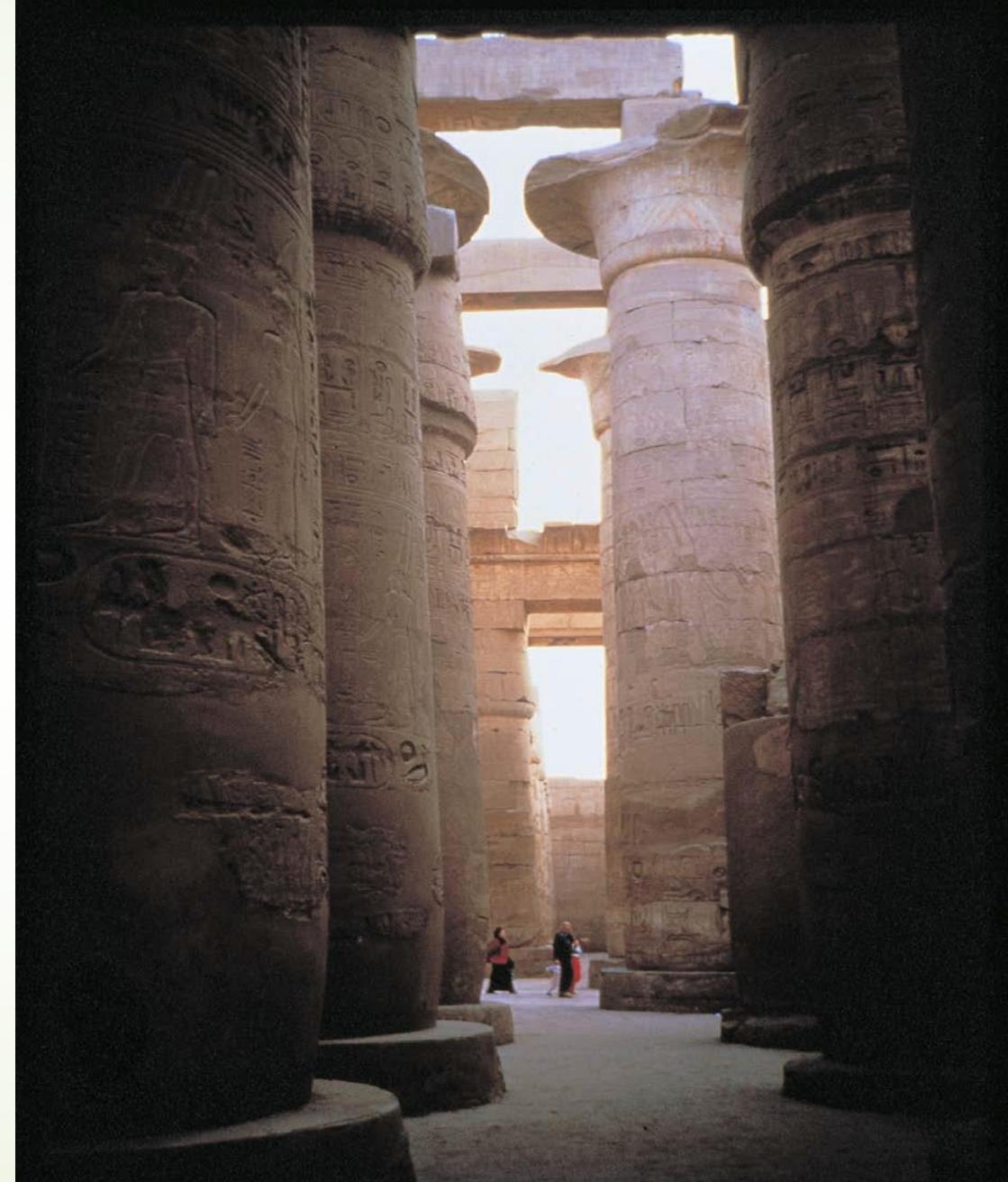
## ► Egyptian Temples and Houses

- Originally, the surfaces were painted in bright colors (still partially visible).
- The center portion of the hall is higher than the sides so that high, unglazed **Clerestory** windows could admit light



# Early Civilizations

- ▶ Egyptian Temples and Houses
- ▶ Temple of Amon, Karnak, Egypt, hypostyle hall (170 × 338 feet).



## ► Egyptian Temples and Houses

- Egyptian use of color was both strong and effective. Pigments in clear primaries (red, yellow, and blue) as well as green were used, along with white and black.
- In interiors, ceilings were often painted in a strong blue, representative of the night sky. Floors were sometimes green, possibly symbolic of the Nile.



# Early Civilizations

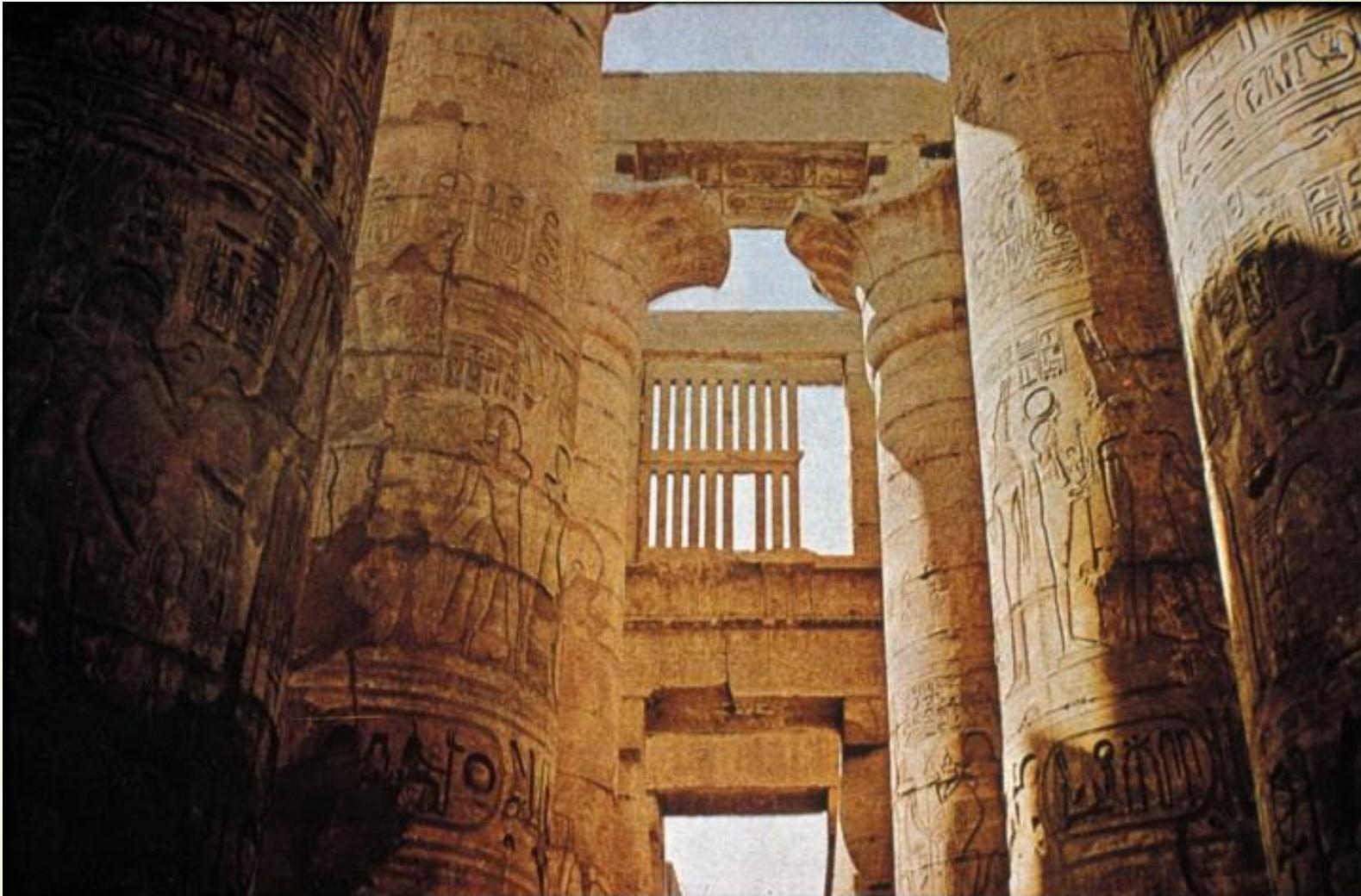
## ► Egyptian Temples and Houses



# ► Early Civilizations

## ► Egyptian Temples and Houses

**DECORATION ON  
COLUMNS**



## ► Early Civilizations

- **Egyptian Furniture and Other Interior Furnishings**
- Knowledge of Egyptian furniture comes from 2 sources: images in wall paintings that show scenes of everyday life in royal or other aristocratic houses, and actual examples that were placed in tombs and that have survived.
- The latter include chairs, tables, and cabinets, many of them richly decorated for use and display in the homes of the wealthy and powerful.
- The typical preserved chair has **a simple wooden frame** with a low seat webbed with bands of leather.
- Legs usually end at their base with carved, clawed animal foot forms.

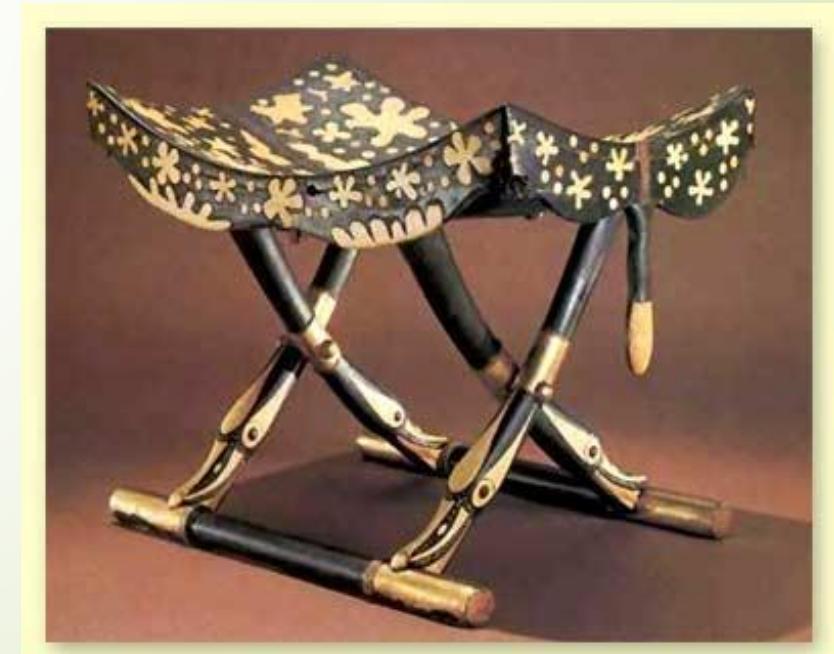
# Early Civilizations

- ▶ Egyptian Furniture and Other Interior Furnishings.
- ▶ The basic structure of ebony wood can be glimpsed only in the legs of the chair, which is encrusted with inlays of gold and ivory with panels of painted, symbolic imagery.
- ▶ The seating function is clearly subordinated to the display of wealth, grandeur, and power conveyed by the richness of material and sublime craftsmanship with which they have been assembled.



# Early Civilizations

- ▶ Egyptian Furniture
- ▶ Stools were the most common items of furniture in Egyptian homes.
- ▶ it was the Egyptians who invented the folding stool.
- ▶ Since these were much used by army commanders in the field, they became a status symbol, and were often heavily carved and decorated.



## ► Egyptian Furniture

- The beds They are among the most intriguing of furniture items because of their structure.



## The Characteristics of Egyptian Furniture.

- ▶ **PATRICIAN:** mostly the royal and wealthy people used furniture.
- ▶ **RANGE:** stools, chairs ,tables , beds
- ▶ **VISUAL IMPACT:** Highly decorative with graphic elements
- ▶ **SYMBOLIC PRESENTATION:** Used symbols especially ceremonial as inlays or painting on the furniture
- ▶ **MATERIAL:** Ebony wood was mostly used , it was imported at great expense.
- ▶ **TECHNICAL:** Excellent craftsmanship and used plain butt joint

# Early Civilizations

- ▶ **The Influences of Egypt Architecture**
- ▶ Ancient Egyptian civilization survived, up until Roman times. Its influence on later European development is a matter for debate.
- ▶ Certainly, other peoples around the Mediterranean visited Egypt, but the extent to which the design of ancient Greece may have been influenced by knowledge of design in Egypt can only be guessed.
- ▶ Whether or not there is a direct path of progressive development, the design of ancient Egypt was clearly demonstrative of the power of strong conceptual thinking in generating a powerful aesthetic expression.



THANK  
YOU  
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ATTENTION