

## 3220

### *Relief of Ramesses II*

**Edna Russmann:** All three of the images in this case are representations of the New Kingdom king Ramesses II, who is better known to us today as Ramesses the Great. He reigned for sixty-seven years, fathered dozens and dozens of children, and considered himself a great warrior. He was also a great builder of temples and some of the most famous temples in Egypt were built by Ramesses II. So he really deserves the name Ramesses the Great.

In the relief you see him in profile facing to our right. The king has a fine elegant profile, quite an aquiline nose, rather slanted eye, and a detail that's characteristic of people in this later part of the New Kingdom: he has a dent in his earlobe. That's because during the New Kingdom, both men and women wore earrings. Men are never shown wearing the earrings, but they are very often shown with the pierced earlobe.

This relief is unusual in preserving much of the original paint that covered it. You can see that the king was shown with the dark red skin that was conventionally used for representations of Egyptian men. He is wearing the royal head cloth, colored in yellow and blue stripes.

**Hugh Wilson:** This depiction of Ramesses the Great would indicate that he was Mediterranean. However his giant statues at Abu Simbel in Nubia clearly show black or Negroid features. Egyptologists define two artistic conventions depicting pharaohs: an idealized way, which tended to preclude individuality and stressing divinity; and a naturalistic way, which showed reality. Were the white-appearing features idealized and the black-appearing features naturalistic?