

ANCIENT EGYPT

CH 4: Section 2+3: pp. 90 -100 in *World History* textbook

THE 3 KINGDOMS OF ANCIENT EGYPT

Section 2: The Old Kingdom

THE BIG IDEA: Egyptian government and religion were closely connected during the Old Kingdom.

THE MAIN IDEAS:

1. In early Egyptian society, pharaohs ruled as gods and were at the top of the social hierarchy.
2. Religion shaped Egyptian life.
3. The pyramids of Egypt were built as tombs for the pharaohs

VOCABULARY:

1. **Old Kingdom [p. 90]:** a period in Egyptian history that lasted from about 2700 BCE to 2200 BCE
2. **nobles [p. 91]:** people from rich and powerful families
3. **afterlife [p. 92]:** life after death
4. **ka [p. 93]:** Egyptian word for a person's life force
5. **mummies [p. 93]:** specially treated bodies wrapped in cloth
6. **elite [p. 93]:** people of wealth and power
7. **pyramids [p. 94]:** stone tombs with four triangle-shaped walls that met in a point on top
8. **engineering [p. 94]:** the application of scientific knowledge for practical purposes

I. Early Egyptian Society

a. Rule by Pharaohs

- i. **Roles:** pharaohs served as both a king and god.
- ii. **Status:** pharaohs had absolute power over the land and people. People would blame pharaoh if crops did not grow, trade was not profitable, or war arose.
- iii. **Government:** pharaohs hired others, sometimes family members, to serve as government officials

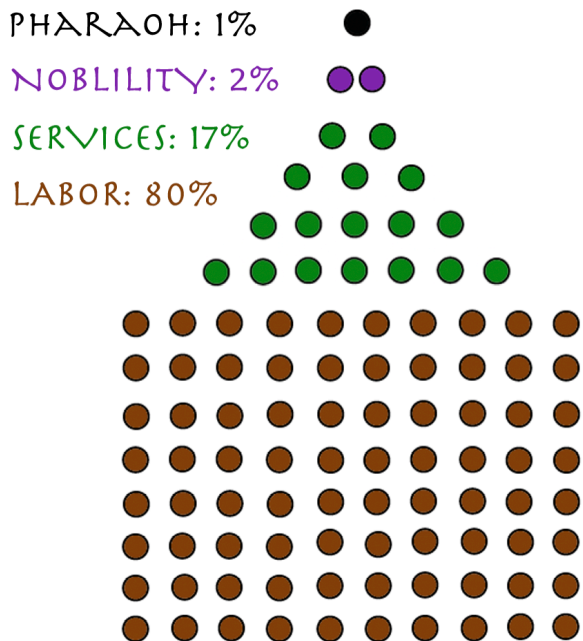
b. The Social Structure

- i. **Population:** 2 million around 2200 BCE
- ii. **Hierarchy:** ruler: pharaoh → upper class: **nobles** (priests, government officials) → middle class: scribes and craftspeople → lower class: farmers, servants, and slaves [about 80% of population).

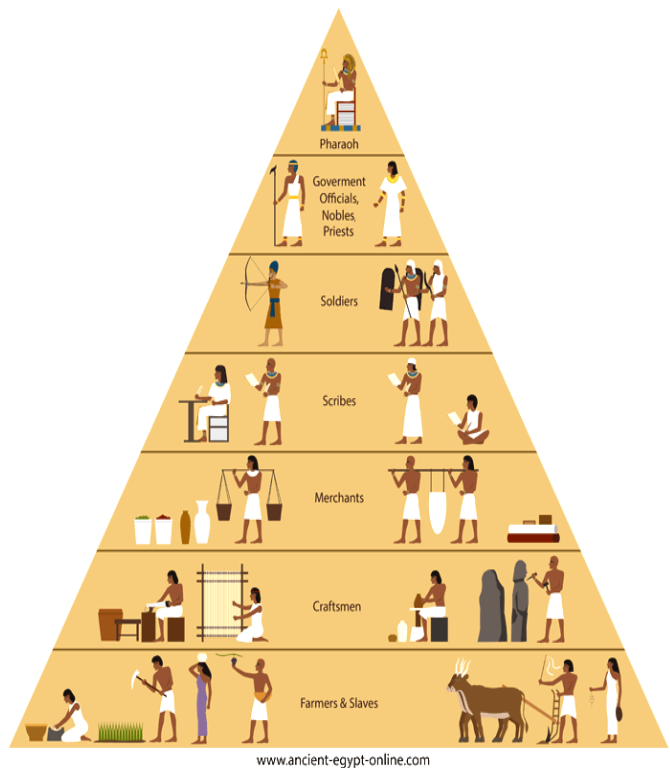
c. Egypt and Its Neighbors

- i. **Sumer:** Mesopotamian designs found in Egyptian art
- ii. **Nubia:** Egyptians traded gold ivory, slaves, and stone with Nubians
- iii. **Punt:** area on the Red Sea with incense and myrrh → perfume and medicine
- iv. **Syria (Phoenicia):** traded for wood

Egyptian Society: [p. 91] NOT a pyramid!



Levels of Society:



II. Religion and Egyptian Life

a. The Gods of Egypt

- System of religion:** polytheism (similar to Mesopotamians)
- Temples:** influential places of worship; collected payments from gov't and worshippers
- Cities:** centers for worship of certain gods. Memphis: Ptah (creator of the world)
- Gods:** sun (Re/Amon-Re), sky (Horus), earth (Geb) gods based in nature. Osiris: god of underworld; Isis: goddess of magic. Many mixed human and animal forms.

b. Emphasis on the Afterlife

- Afterlife** was a happy, ideal world where all people were young and healthy.
- Ka:** a person's life force. When a person died, the ka left the body and became a spirit linked to the body. It could not leave the burial site. Ka had same needs as the living so people filled tombs with objects like furniture, clothing, tools, jewelry, and weapons. Relatives would bring food and drink to the tombs.

c. Burial Practices

- In order to extend a person's ka, the body was preserved.
- If the body decayed, the spirit wouldn't recognize it and the link between body and spirit would break. Ka would no longer receive what it needed to enjoy the afterlife.
- Embalming:** complex process, took weeks, bodies were wrapped in linen cloth, placed in coffins, and preserved as **mummies**. Only royalty and **elite** could afford mummification. Peasants buried their dead in shallow graves and desert climate → natural preservation.

d. The Pyramids

- Great Pyramid of Khufu near Giza = the largest pyramids still standing today
- Historians still do not know exactly how pyramids were built/Egyptian **engineering**
- The bigger the pyramid, the greater the pharaoh. Pointing skyward, pyramids represented the link between life and earth and the afterlife. The happier the pharaoh in the afterlife, the happier the people would be in their afterlife.

Section 3: The Middle and New Kingdoms

THE BIG IDEA: During the Middle and New Kingdoms, order and greatness were restored in Egypt.

THE MAIN IDEAS:

1. The Middle Kingdom was a period of stable government between periods of disorder.
2. In the New Kingdoms, trade and military power reached their peak, but Egypt's greatness did not last.
3. Work and daily life were different for each of Egypt's social classes.

VOCABULARY:

4. **Middle Kingdom [p. 96]:** a period of order and stability that lasted until around 1750 BCE
5. **New Kingdom [p. 97]:** a period during which Egypt reached the height of its power and glory
6. **Trade routes [p. 97]:** paths followed by traders
7. **Queen Hatshepsut [p. 98]:** female Pharaoh who increased trade in Egypt: sent traders south to kingdom of Punt on Red Sea and north to Asia Minor/Greece. Supported arts and architecture.
8. **Ramses the Great [p. 98]:** one of the longest reigns in Egyptian history, fought Hittites (Asia Minor), signed a peace treaty with Hittites and became allies. After his death, Sea Peoples invaded and Egypt never regained its power.

I. The Middle Kingdom

- a. **Pharaohs Fall:** Pyramids cost more than Pharaohs could collect. Pharaohs lost power.
- b. **Nobles Rise:** Nobles challenged Pharaohs and battled each other for power. No central ruler → chaos, disrupted trade, and decline in farming → economic hardship and famine.
- c. **Hyksos Invade:** mid-1700s BCE, Hyksos from southwest Asia used horses, chariots, and advanced (iron/bronze) weapons to conquer and rule Egypt for 200 years.
- d. **Ahmosé Leads Revolt:** Ahmosé from Thebes led successful revolt and declared himself king.

II. The New Kingdom

- a. **Building an Empire:** Egyptians took control of invasion routes and established an empire.
- b. **Growth and its Effects on Trade:** Egypt conquered north to Syria and south to Kush and took advantage of new resources such as copper and turquoise from the Sinai Peninsula. **Queen Hatshepsut** was leader in trade increase followed by **Ramses the Great** who was a diplomat.
- c. **Invasions of Egypt:** Hittites and Sea Peoples → empire disappeared and Egypt fell into chaos

III. Work and Daily Life

- a. **Scribes:** kept records and accounts, wrote or copied religious texts. Scribes were honored in their position working for government and temples.
- b. **Artisans, Artists, and Architects:** below scribes in hierarchy. Sculptors, builders, carpenters, jewelers, metal and leather workers. Made statues, furniture, jewelry, pottery, footwear.
- c. **Soldiers:** served in army of the New Kingdom and received land as payment
- d. **Farmers, Peasants, Slaves:** bottom of social scale or off it completely. Laborers.
- e. **Family Life:** Women could own property, make contracts, and divorce husbands. School!