

Chapter 1 : BBC Bitesize - KS2 History - Working life in Ancient Egypt

The daily life in ancient Egypt was actually much different than the vision that commonly comes to mind. Relics found in archaeological digs as well as paintings and drawings on pyramid and tomb walls depict images of life in ancient Egypt that was, in some regards, not that much different than life in Egypt today.

Marriage and the Family The Egyptians appear to have reversed the ordinary practices of mankind. Women attend markets and are employed in trade, while men stay at home and do the weaving! Men in Egypt carry loads on their head, women on their shoulder. Women pass water standing up, men sitting down. To ease themselves, they go indoors, but eat outside on the streets, on the theory that what is unseemly, but necessary, should be done in private, and what is not unseemly should be done openly. Countless genealogical lists indicate how important family ties were, yet Egyptian kinship terms lacked specific words to identify blood relatives beyond the nuclear family. For example, the word used to designate "mother" was also used for "grandmother," and the word for "father" was the same as "grandfather"; likewise, the terms for "son," "grandson," and "nephew" or "daughter," "granddaughter," and "niece" were identical. To make matters even more confusing for modern scholars, the term "sister" was often used for "wife," perhaps an indication of the strength of the bond between spouses.

Marriage Once a young man was well into adolescence, it was appropriate for him to seek a partner and begin his own family. Females were probably thought to be ready for marriage after their first menses. The marrying age of males was probably a little older, perhaps 16 to 20 years of age, because they had to become established and be able to support a family. Virginity was not a necessity for marriage; indeed, premarital sex, or any sex between unmarried people, was socially acceptable. Once married, however, couples were expected to be sexually faithful to each other. Egyptians except the king were, in theory, monogamous, and many records indicate that couples expressed true affection for each other. They were highly sensual people, and a major theme of their religion was fertility and procreation. This sensuality is reflected by two New Kingdom love poems: Oriental Institute Demotic "marriage" papyrus. Marriage was purely a social arrangement that regulated property. Neither religious nor state doctrines entered into the marriage and, unlike other documents that related to economic matters such as the so-called "marriage contracts", marriages themselves were not registered. Apparently once a couple started living together, they were acknowledged to be married. As related in the story of Setne, "I was taken as a wife to the house of Naneferkaptah [that night, and pharaoh] sent me a present of silver and gold. He [her husband] slept with me that night and found me pleasing. He slept with me again and again and we loved each other" Lichtheim

Discussion Compare the legal weight of marriage among the ancient Egyptians with marriage practice in other cultures. How similar is this ancient concept and construct to contemporary Western notions of marriage? The ancient Egyptian terms for marriage *meni*, "to moor [a boat]," and *grg pr*, "to found a house" convey the sense that the arrangement was about property. Legal texts indicate that each spouse maintained control of the property that they brought to the marriage, while other property acquired during the union was jointly held. Ideally the new couple lived in their own house, but if that was impossible they would live with one of their parents.

Divorce Although the institution of marriage was taken seriously, divorce was not uncommon. Either partner could institute divorce for fault adultery, inability to conceive, or abuse or no fault incompatibility. Divorce was, no doubt, a matter of disappointment but certainly not one of disgrace, and it was very common for divorced people to remarry. Although in theory divorce was an easy matter, in reality it was probably an undertaking complicated enough to motivate couples to stay together, especially when property was involved. When a woman chose to divorce--if the divorce was uncontested--she could leave with what she had brought into the marriage plus a share about one third to two thirds of the marital joint property. One text Ostrakon Petrie 18, however, recounts the divorce of a woman who abandoned her sick husband, and in the resulting judgment she was forced to renounce all their joint property. If the husband left the marriage he was liable to a fine or payment of support analogous to alimony, and in many cases he forfeited his share of the joint property. Egyptian women had greater freedom of choice and more equality under social and civil law than their contemporaries in Mesopotamia or even the women of the later Greek and Roman civilizations. Her right

to initiate divorce was one of the ways in which her full legal rights were manifested. Additionally, women could serve on juries, testify in trials, inherit real estate, and disinherit ungrateful children. It is interesting, however, that in contrast to modern Western societies, gender played an increasingly important role in determining female occupations in the upper classes than in the peasant and working classes. Women of the peasant class worked side by side with men in the fields; in higher levels of society, gender roles were more entrenched, and women were more likely to remain at home while their husbands plied their crafts or worked at civil jobs.

Timeline View a timeline of the ancient Egyptian dynasties. Through most of the Pharaonic Period, men and women inherited equally, and from each parent separately. Real estate generally was not divided among heirs but was held jointly by the family members. If a family member wished to leave property to a person other than the expected heirs, a document called an imeyt-per "that which is in the house" would ensure the wishes of the deceased.

Child-bearing and Family Life The relationship between coitus and pregnancy was clearly recognized by the ancient Egyptians. For example, the Late Period story of Setna relates, "She lay down beside her husband. She received [the fluid of] conception from him"; and a hymn to Khonsu relates, "the male member to beget; the female womb to conceive and increase generations in Egypt. For example, they knew that the testicles were involved in procreation, but they thought the origin of semen was in the bones and that it simply passed through the testicles. Female internal anatomy was understood even less well. Anatomical naivety can be gleaned from the fact that, although the function of the womb was understood, it was erroneously thought to be directly connected to the alimentary canal. Thus, placing a clove of garlic in the vagina was supposed to test for fertility: Oriental Institute Images and symbols of fertility were of importance to the ancient Egyptians, as considered in this slideshow. In Egyptian households of all classes, children of both sexes were valued and wanted there is no indication that female infanticide was practiced. In addition to fertility tests, tests for pregnancy and the determination of the gender of the child were devised. One test involved watering barley and emmer wheat with the urine of a hopeful mother-to-be. If the barley sprouted, the woman was pregnant with a male child; if the emmer wheat germinated, she was pregnant with a female child. If the urine had no effect, the woman was not pregnant. Though there actually may be some scientific basis for this test--a pregnant woman produces a variety of hormones, some of which can induce early flowering in particular plants--there is no known relationship between these plants and the determination of gender. The birth of a child was a time of great joy as well as one of serious concern given the high rate of infant mortality and the stress of childbirth on the mother. Childbirth was viewed as a natural phenomenon and not an illness, so assistance in childbirth was usually carried out by a midwife. Data collected from modern non-industrial societies suggest that infant mortality in ancient Egypt was undoubtedly high. One of the best ways to maintain a healthy infant under the less-than-sanitary conditions that prevailed in ancient times was by breast-feeding. Prolonged lactation also offered a number of health advantages to the mother. Primarily, it reduces the chance of conceiving another child too soon by hormonally suppressing ovulation, which allows the mother more time between pregnancies. The three-year period for suckling a child recommended in the "Instructions of Any" New Kingdom therefore struck an unconscious but evolutionarily important balance between the needs of procreation, the health of the mother, and the survival of the newborn child. Egyptian children who successfully completed their fifth year could generally look forward to a full life, which in peasant society was about thirty-three years for men and twenty-nine years for women, based on skeletal evidence. Textual records indicate that for upper-class males, who were generally better fed and performed less strenuous labor than the lower classes, life expectancy could reach well into the sixties and seventies and sometimes even the eighties and nineties. Upper-class women also looked forward to a longer life than women from the lower classes, but the arduous task of bearing many children resulted in a lower life expectancy compared to their male counterparts. Dolls and toys indicate that children were allowed ample time to play, but once they matured past infancy i. Young girls assisted their mothers with household tasks or worked with them in some capacity in the fields. Similarly, young boys followed their fathers into their occupation, first carrying out simple chores, then later working and carrying out more important tasks. Parents also familiarized their children with ideas about the world, their religious outlook, ethical principles, and correct behavior. The end of childhood appears to have been marked by the onset of menses for girls and the ceremony of

circumcision for boys. That circumcision was a ritual transition from boyhood to manhood is indicated by references such as "When I was a boy, before my foreskin was removed from me. Some uncircumcised mummies, including King Ahmose and perhaps King Amunhotep I, indicate that the practice may have not been universal. Young men did not usually choose their own careers. Herodotus and Diodorus refer explicitly to a hereditary calling in ancient Egypt. The need for support in old age and to ensure inheritance made adoption quite common for childless couples; one New Kingdom ostrakon relates, "As for him who has no children, he adopts an orphan instead [to] bring him up. Purchased in Cairo, Mythically, kingship was passed from Osiris the deceased king to the "Living Horus" his successor ; in actuality, the eldest son of the king normally inherited the office from his father. Ramesses wears his hair in a side ponytail, a style characteristic of a youth or of a special type of priest, and he carries a slender fan that was a sign of rank. This relief was probably commissioned by the two priests shown at the right to commemorate their function in the religious cult of the royal family. Showing oneself in the presence of the king was a great honor. Reign of Philip Arrhidaeus, ca. Purchased in Egypt, This statue base, which once supported a magical healing statue, was dedicated by a man named Djedhor. He was Chief Guardian of the Sacred Falcon who, according to the hieroglyphic texts on this block, cared for flocks of sacred birds. On one side of the base he appears with his daughters, on the other with his sons, an indication that he revered his daughters as much as his sons which in turn reflects the high status of women in ancient Egypt. Although peasant children probably never entered any formal schooling, male children of scribes and the higher classes entered school at an early age. Young girls were not formally schooled, but because some women knew how to read and write they must have had access to a learned family member or a private tutor. Though we have no information about the location or organization of schools prior to the Middle Kingdom, we can tell that after that time they were attached to some administrative offices, temples specifically the Ramesseum and the Temple of Mut , and the palace. In addition to "public" schooling, groups of nobles also hired private tutors to teach their children. Because education had not yet established itself as a separate discipline, teachers were drawn from the ranks of experienced or pedagogically gifted scribes who, as part of their duties and to ensure the supply of future scribes, taught either in the classroom or took apprentices in their offices. Education consisted mainly of endless rote copying and recitation of texts, in order to perfect spelling and orthography. In addition, schooling included the memorization of proverbs and myths, by which pupils were educated in social propriety and religious doctrine. Not surprisingly, many of these texts stress how noble and advantageous the profession of scribe was: At about twenty he was appointed to a low level of the priesthood wab. In another documented case, one scribe in training was thirty years of age, but this must have been an unusual case. Ancient Egyptians were extremely interested in fashion and its changes.

Chapter 2 : Ancient Egyptian deities - Wikipedia

Egyptian Life. Daily life in ancient Egypt revolved around the Nile and the fertile land along its banks. The yearly flooding of the Nile enriched the soil and brought good harvests and wealth to the land.

The majority of the people were involved in farming, and the growing season lasted eight-nine months. Wheat, fruits and vegetables were the principal crops, although there was some pastoral farming of cattle, sheep, or goats. Farmers in ancient Egypt worked to reach a level of subsistence so that they could feed themselves and pay their taxes. During the annual flooding of the Nile, which typically lasted from July through November, farming was impossible. But when the waters receded, a thick layer of fertile silt over the farmlands remained to insure rich soil for their crops and thick grasses for their grazing animals. The country of Egypt consisted of two narrow strips of arable land lining either bank of the river Nile, from Aswan to the northern Delta. Just beyond the farmlands lay enormous deserts. The Nile was the lifeblood of Egypt. Its cycle of flooding -- growth, death, and rebirth to new growth -- became the cycle of everyday life, and also of Egyptian religion and understanding of an afterlife. The people of Egypt were dependent on the river for more than their food. It insured a line of communication and transportation among the provinces of the kingdom. The pharaohs took advantage of the Nile as a means to transport their armies, thus maintaining a strong, unified nation. By BC, Egypt had a centralized government controlled by a line of hereditary rulers. These kings, called pharaohs, kept a royal court of advisors and nobility, and oversaw the governors of the provinces of the kingdom. They were also commanders of the Egyptian army. Even the priests and priestesses who officiated at the complex religious ceremonies and attended on the gods served the pharaohs. The rule of the pharaohs is considered dynastic; it can also be considered absolute in the truest sense of the word. The pharaohs came to be considered as the representatives of the gods on earth and even as gods themselves. Women participated in the political, economic, and judicial world of ancient Egypt on the same terms as men. This social system reflects Egyptian mythology, where Goddesses played an equal, if not chief, role. The primeval mother-figures in the earliest prehistoric Egyptian myths are female. Female deities were kept separate from the males, with their own temples and followers. Egyptian goddesses are also creator deities, and the protectors of the pharaohs in the form of the cobra, vulture, or lioness. In ancient Egyptian mythology, Egypt was created from the Watery Waste of Nun, a chaos god from whose body all things were born. The continuous mission of the daily temple services and strictly followed religious codes was to keep ordered Egyptian society from returning to the state of chaos in which it was born. The two "protectors of the realm" of Egypt were originally Nekhbet, vulture goddess of Northern Egypt, and Wadjet, cobra goddess of Lower Egypt. The cobra and the vulture were chosen by the Egyptians as the royal symbols because they were thought to be self-producing and therefore creators, or divine. Egyptian mythology is a complex collection of often competing stories, traditions, and practices. This is partly because the culture is so ancient, and partly because each city had its own set of deities, whose unique personalities are lost as their cults age. Just as each city vied for supreme power before Egypt was a unified kingdom, the cities each tried to establish their gods as the supreme gods. Even after unification, each time the capital moved, the supreme god of the new city rose to be the supreme god of the kingdom. Below, a table listing some of the many gods and goddesses of Egyptian mythology. The deities are listed as closely as possible to the order of their appearance in the myths, from oldest to newest. Eventually, the pictures they used to represent words came to represent sounds. This form of Egyptian is called Coptic, and was in turn eventually replaced by Arabic, the language spoken in Egypt today. The ancient Egyptian tongue died out -- only the hieroglyphics remain to remind us that it ever existed. For more than years, the hieroglyphics were little more than mysterious symbols carved on ancient monuments. All kinds of theories abounded: The slab of basalt is inscribed with three texts, each in a different script: Scholars hoped to use the Greek text to translate the others. Twenty-three years later, the young Frenchman Jean-Francois Champollion became the first person in thousands of years to read hieroglyphics. The Hieroglyphic Phonetic Alphabet The following table explains the significance of the hieroglyphs and gives the phonetic equivalent of each in English.

Chapter 3 : Spices of Life in Ancient Egypt - HISTORY

Life in ancient Egypt was centered largely on agriculture. The majority of the people were involved in farming, and the growing season lasted eight-nine months. Wheat, fruits and vegetables were the principal crops, although there was some pastoral farming of cattle, sheep, or goats.

Technology Family Life Family was important in ancient Egypt, and family life began early for the ancient Egyptians. Men and women both tended to marry young, and most marriages were polygamous with the husband having several wives. The husband usually had a senior or chief wife who was considered higher than the other ones. Children Children were also an important part of the family unit. They were considered to be a blessing from the gods, especially in noble and royal families. For instance, paintings of Queen Nefertiti and King Akhenaten show a loving and close bond between the parents and their six daughters. Most peasants made their living off the land through agricultural means. Grain, particularly wheat, was a staple crop of life in ancient Egypt. As a result of few grazing lands and the expense of meat, most peasants subsisted off a diet of ground wheat foods, subsidized with meager vegetables. The Egyptians were one of the first people to introduce the use of the ox-drawn plow ; however the work of plowing, planting and harvesting would have still been very difficult. Taxes were also imposed on the crops, which would have also made it difficult for most peasant families to move beyond their poor means. Ox-Drawn Plow Modern views on slave life in ancient Egypt are largely contradictory. Many scholars theorize that slaves in ancient Egypt actually performed more in the role of servant than actual slave; others have contended that those who were less fortunate in ancient Egyptian society were forced to work in humiliating and degrading positions. A long held theory indicates that the great pyramids of ancient Egypt were built upon slave labor, although this theory has been open to much conjecture. Role of Women Statuette of Ahmose-Nefertari Contrary to popular belief, women were not treated as second-class citizens in ancient Egypt. In fact, there were oftentimes treated as equals to men. They were allowed to own their own property, testify in court and even conduct business dealings just like men could. More than once did a woman rule Egypt as the pharaoh as well. Still, even though women were treated better than other women in other parts of the world at that time, they were still seen as the primary caretakers of the home and children. Their primary responsibilities were still to overseeing the duties of the home, such as raising the children and preparing meals for the family. Role of Men Men, on the other hand, worked the fields to earn their family a living and raise them crops to eat. Even though women were considered equal to men in many ways, the man was still considered to be the head of the household, and women were expected to obey their fathers and husbands. Although there is much talk of slave life in ancient Egypt, many scholars theorize that the role of men slaves in Egypt was much more like that of servants than slaves. Some men became craftsmen by learning a trade from their fathers or artisans. Most peasants survived off a combination of wheat and vegetables. Because there were few grazing lands, meat was more expensive and difficult to come by. Although there was also wine in ancient Egypt, it was primarily found at the tables of the wealthy noblemen. With bread being the most common and important food in ancient Egypt, it was seasoned and flavored with honey, fruit, sesame seeds and herbs. [Click here to learn more about Food and Drink in Ancient Egypt](#) Shelter The primary form of shelter in ancient Egypt was houses made of adobe, which are simply bricks made of sun-dried mud. The windows and doors of adobes were covered with mats to keep flies and other insects out, and the homes were filled with decorations much like we decorate our homes today. Although noblemen usually had larger homes that were divided into three areas, the reception area, hall and private quarters, peasants lived in town homes that were usually two or three stories tall. The first floor of the town homes were usually reserved for business and reception purposes, whereas the top two floors served as private housing for the residents. Since there was no indoor plumbing back then, sewage had to be disposed of in rivers, pits and sometimes even in the streets. [Click here to learn more about Houses in Ancient Egypt](#) Religion The ancient Egyptians believed in the gods and goddesses of Egyptian mythology. Their religion was polytheistic, but towns and villages would often claim a particular god as the one they worshiped most. The religion was filled with rituals, rites and other special practices and ceremonies, and many temples were built

in honor of specific gods and goddesses. According to paintings and drawings found, Egyptians engaged in everything from fishing to river boating on the river Nile. There are depictions of them hunting crocodiles and hippopotamuses, swimming and playing boat games. Other sports included athletics and early versions of team sports we know today, such as rowing or hockey. Music was an important part of ancient Egyptian culture as well, and festivals were common too. Not only was the river the primary source for drinking water, but it also had the ability to produce the extremely fertile soil that the Egyptians needed for survival. Consequently, many cities and villages sprang up around the river Nile. Additionally, the Nile is where the Egyptians obtained the papyrus reeds that they used for making paper and building materials. [Click here to learn more about The Nile River](#) Fashion Men and women, different types of clothing The ancient Egyptians wore clothes made from linen, a light and cool material, in pieces draped over or wrapped around the body. Other items were sandals made of leather or plant fibers, and headdresses - often associated with gods and pharaohs. Cleanliness was actually very important to the ancient Egyptians. They had cleansing rituals daily in the river or bathed at home in water basins filled with water from the river. Instead, they washed with a cleansing cream that was made from oil, lime and perfume. Additionally, men, women and children of all classes all wore makeup. Kohl around the eyes was the most popular type of makeup, and it was worn for more than cosmetic purposes: Almost all ancient Egyptians wore jewelry. They wore amulets and rings for both fashion purposes as well as religious ones. Pierced ears, amulets, bracelets and necklaces were common among peasants while the wealthier folk wore jeweled or beaded collars and pendants as well as jewelry made from gold, silver and electrum. The main source of protein was fish when it was caught. Adobe houses built from mud were cool on the inside and had flat roofs so that in the summer time people could sleep on the tops of them. Houses were built around courtyards, and all the cooking was done outside in the courtyard.

Chapter 4 : Life in ancient Egypt (Book,) [calendrierdelascience.com]

The popular view of life in ancient Egypt is often that it was a death-obsessed culture in which powerful pharaohs forced the people to labor at constructing pyramids and temples and, at an unspecified time, enslaved the Hebrews for this purpose. In reality, ancient Egyptians loved life, no matter.

Share6 Shares 2K Egypt is the land of pyramids and pharaohs, tombs filled with glittering treasures, and powerful men who ruled a country like gods. When we think of ancient Egypt, we think of the wealth and glamour of kings. But we usually leave out the dirty and disgusting details. Today, though, historians are pretty sure they know why. Lice were everywhere in ancient Egypt. The tombs of Egyptian rulers are infested with lice, apparently flooding out from the remains of the bodies. Most people got so fed up with the nationwide infestation that both men and women shaved every hair clean off their bodies. Women usually wore wigs hair that could be discarded when it got infested while some others just went around completely shaved from head to toe. The Greek historian Herodotus watched Egyptians get together for a religious festival. Men gathered their families together into boats and sailed toward the city of Bubastis for a deeply spiritual and sacred ceremony. Live Science When Howard Carter found the untouched tomb of King Tutankhamen, he discovered a wealth of treasures and relics the likes of which historians had never seen before. The world was abuzz with writings of every single thing found in there except for one little detail that usually gets left out. There are a lot of theories, some crazier than others. According to one theory, the erection might not really be his. Some people think that his embalmers switched his real member with that of a more impressive donor. For the time, these were amazing innovations that show the ancient Egyptians had an incredible interest in and understanding of medicine. Women had a few options for birth control, including different mixtures for contraceptives. Some of the nicer ones involved honey, but the braver women mixed tree leaves and crocodile dung. Then the woman had to stick that concoction inside herself or else deal with nine months of pregnancy. Men had to rub onion juice onto their foreskins to keep themselves from having kids. But given the choice, the ancient Egyptians had a strong argument for staying celibate. Ancient Origins When a man died in Egypt, he was embalmed right away. Women, though, were a different matter. It was something that the Egyptians learned the hard way. An embalmer left in charge of mummifying a royal body was caught in the act by a coworker. The coworker ratted him out, and the Egyptians learned from their mistakes. Most members of the Egyptian royalty were massively overweight. Egyptian rulers had terrible diets. Their priests were ordered to prepare three banquets each day, all overflowing with wine, beef, and cake. They scarfed down food filled with saturated fats all day. Mummies have been found with clogged arteries, bulging bellies, and massive fat folds. Obesity was a reality for Egyptian pharaohs. They were so familiar with it that the Egyptians were already writing medical texts on the dangers of obesity as early as BC. Slim, muscular frames were still the beauty standard for Egyptian men. So they did what they had to do to keep themselves healthy. Most Egyptians would take laxatives three days each month. They used a laxative made of castor oil and then got ready to spend the rest of the day on the toilet. This was before plumbing, of course, so that meant they had to clean up their mess by hand afterward. Even diarrhea was treated with laxatives. Apparently, the idea was to get the disease out of their bodies by force and get through the whole mess as quickly as possible. Like we do today, ancient Egyptians had doctors for every body part of the body. They had dentists for their teeth, optometrists for their eyes, and of course, proctologists for their backsides. The Egyptians were proud of their enemas. They even had a whole myth behind them. Enemas, they believed, were developed by the god of Thoth and then passed on to man making Thoth a sort of Prometheus of the anus. They had ways to test fertility and pregnancy that were truly advanced for their time and incredibly weird. Others did something a bit weirder. If the doctor could smell the garlic, then the tubes were clear and the woman was fertile. Ancient Egypt was plagued with diseases. In particular, schistosomiasis infected nearly everyone there. Ancient Egyptians got schistosomiasis so often that they just thought they were menstruating. They accepted that men had to menstruate just like women, and they accepted the blood coming out of their bodies as a normal part of growing up. Peeing blood was even treated as a bit of a good thing. They believed

that a man who menstruated was fertile. To the Egyptians, there was no better sign that a man was ready to father a family than being infected with parasitic worms.

Chapter 5 : Daily Life in Ancient Egypt

*A Kid's Life in Ancient Egypt (How Kids Lived) [Sara Machajewski, Sarah Machajewski] on calendrierdelascience.com *FREE* shipping on qualifying offers. Pharaohs, hieroglyphics, and pyramids are just a few things most people think of when they hear the words Ancient Egypt.*

Visit Website Neolithic late Stone Age communities in northeastern Africa exchanged hunting for agriculture and made early advances that paved the way for the later development of Egyptian arts and crafts, technology, politics and religion including a great reverence for the dead and possibly a belief in life after death. Visit Website Around B. A southern king, Scorpion, made the first attempts to conquer the northern kingdom around B. A century later, King Menes would subdue the north and unify the country, becoming the first king of the first dynasty. Archaic Early Dynastic Period c. King Menes founded the capital of ancient Egypt at White Walls later known as Memphis , in the north, near the apex of the Nile River delta. The capital would grow into a great metropolis that dominated Egyptian society during the Old Kingdom period. The Archaic Period saw the development of the foundations of Egyptian society, including the all-important ideology of kingship. To the ancient Egyptians, the king was a godlike being, closely identified with the all-powerful god Horus. The earliest known hieroglyphic writing also dates to this period. In the Archaic Period, as in all other periods, most ancient Egyptians were farmers living in small villages, and agriculture largely wheat and barley formed the economic base of the Egyptian state. The annual flooding of the great Nile River provided the necessary irrigation and fertilization each year; farmers sowed the wheat after the flooding receded and harvested it before the season of high temperatures and drought returned. Age of the Pyramid Builders c. The Old Kingdom began with the third dynasty of pharaohs. Pyramid-building reached its zenith with the construction of the Great Pyramid at Giza, on the outskirts of Cairo. Built for Khufu or Cheops, in Greek , who ruled from to B. C and Menkaura B. During the third and fourth dynasties, Egypt enjoyed a golden age of peace and prosperity. The pharaohs held absolute power and provided a stable central government; the kingdom faced no serious threats from abroad; and successful military campaigns in foreign countries like Nubia and Libya added to its considerable economic prosperity. First Intermediate Period c. This chaotic situation was intensified by Bedouin invasions and accompanied by famine and disease. From this era of conflict emerged two different kingdoms: A line of 17 rulers dynasties nine and 10 based in Heracleopolis ruled Middle Egypt between Memphis and Thebes, while another family of rulers arose in Thebes to challenge Heracleopolitan power. After the last ruler of the 11th dynasty, Mentuhotep IV, was assassinated, the throne passed to his vizier, or chief minister, who became King Amenemhet I, founder of dynasty A new capital was established at It-towy, south of Memphis, while Thebes remained a great religious center. The 12th dynasty kings ensured the smooth succession of their line by making each successor co-regent, a custom that began with Amenemhet I. Middle-Kingdom Egypt pursued an aggressive foreign policy, colonizing Nubia with its rich supply of gold, ebony, ivory and other resources and repelling the Bedouins who had infiltrated Egypt during the First Intermediate Period. The kingdom also built diplomatic and trade relations with Syria , Palestine and other countries; undertook building projects including military fortresses and mining quarries; and returned to pyramid-building in the tradition of the Old Kingdom. Second Intermediate Period c. The 13th dynasty marked the beginning of another unsettled period in Egyptian history, during which a rapid succession of kings failed to consolidate power. As a consequence, during the Second Intermediate Period Egypt was divided into several spheres of influence. The official royal court and seat of government was relocated to Thebes, while a rival dynasty the 14th , centered on the city of Xoïs in the Nile delta, seems to have existed at the same time as the 13th. The Hyksos rulers of the 15th dynasty adopted and continued many of the existing Egyptian traditions in government as well as culture. They ruled concurrently with the line of native Theban rulers of the 17th dynasty, who retained control over most of southern Egypt despite having to pay taxes to the Hyksos. The 16th dynasty is variously believed to be Theban or Hyksos rulers. Conflict eventually flared between the two groups, and the Thebans launched a war against the Hyksos around B. Under Ahmose I, the first king of the 18th dynasty, Egypt was once again reunited. During the 18th dynasty, Egypt restored its

control over Nubia and began military campaigns in Palestine, clashing with other powers in the area such as the Mitannians and the Hittites. In addition to powerful kings such as Amenhotep I B. The controversial Amenhotep IV c. The 19th and 20th dynasties, known as the Ramesside period for the line of kings named Ramses saw the restoration of the weakened Egyptian empire and an impressive amount of building, including great temples and cities. All of the New Kingdom rulers with the exception of Akhenaton were laid to rest in deep, rock-cut tombs not pyramids in the Valley of the Kings, a burial site on the west bank of the Nile opposite Thebes. Most of them were raided and destroyed, with the exception of the tomb and treasure of Tutankhamen c. The splendid mortuary temple of the last great king of the 20th dynasty, Ramses III c. The kings who followed Ramses III were less successful: Egypt lost its provinces in Palestine and Syria for good and suffered from foreign invasions notably by the Libyans , while its wealth was being steadily but inevitably depleted. Third Intermediate Period c. The next yearsâ€™known as the Third Intermediate Periodâ€™saw important changes in Egyptian politics, society and culture. The 22nd dynasty began around B. Many local rulers were virtually autonomous during this period and dynasties are poorly documented. In the eighth century B. Under Kushite rule, Egypt clashed with the growing Assyrian empire. One of them, Necho of Sais, ruled briefly as the first king of the 26th dynasty before being killed by the Kushite leader Tanuatamun, in a final, unsuccessful grab for power. Persian rulers such as Darius B. The tyrannical rule of Xerxes B. One of these rebellions triumphed in B. In the mid-fourth century B. Barely a decade later, in B. Six centuries of Roman rule followed, during which Christianity became the official religion of Rome and its provinces including Egypt. The conquest of Egypt by the Arabs in the seventh century A.

Remarkably accurate for the time it was written (19th Century), this detailed overview of life in ancient Egypt contains beautiful black-and-white illustrations of Egyptian treasures, documents, and monuments.

Each summer the Nile flooded and provided water to grow crops. For irrigation Egyptians used a device called shaduf. When the Nile flooded it also deposited silt over the land near the banks, which made the land very fertile once the water had subsided. The Nile also provided a way of transporting people and goods. Prevailing winds in Egypt blew south so boats travelling in that direction used sails. Boats heading north used oars. Society in Ancient Egypt Ancient Egypt was ruled by a king. By about BC he was called the Pharaoh from the word per ao meaning great house. Originally it meant the palace he lived in but it came to mean the ruler himself. The Pharaoh was assisted by a kind of prime minister called a vizier sometimes there was more than one. Furthermore for administration Egypt was divided into areas called nomes. Below the Pharaoh were the nobility, priests, scribes and merchants. Then came soldiers and craftsmen then peasants and finally slaves. Ordinary Egyptians who were not slaves also had to some work for the Pharaoh each year building or mending irrigation canals. This was done when the Nile flooded and farm work was impossible. Farmers also had to pay part of their crops to the Pharaoh in tax. In Ancient Egypt women had a great deal of freedom. They could come and go as they pleased. They could own property and they could sign contracts. Women could also divorce their husbands. However most women worked in the home. There was a great deal of work to do as most homes were largely self-sufficient. The woman made the families clothes and prepared food such as grinding grain to flour to make bread. Even in a rich family the woman was kept busy organizing the slaves. There were some women doctors in Ancient Egypt. Merit Ptah was a famous woman doctor who lived around 2, BC. A woman called Sobekneferu ruled Egypt around BC. Later a woman named Hatshepsut ruled Egypt c. Another woman, Twosret ruled Egypt c. Bread was baked outside. Because of the desert sand was often blown into dough. In time eating bread with grains of sand in it wore down peoples teeth. In Ancient Egypt as in all early civilizations meat was a luxury and only the rich could afford to eat it frequently. The Egyptians ate sheep, pigs, cows and goats but meat often came from ducks and geese. However fish were plentiful in Egypt. The Egyptians ate many vegetables including, marrows, beans, onions, lentils, leeks, radishes, garlic and lettuces. They also ate fruit like melons, dates and figs. Pomegranates were quite expensive and were eaten mainly by the rich. The Egyptians also grew herbs and spices and they made cooking oil. Beer was made from crumbled barley bread and barley with water so it was lumpy. It was strained before it was drunk. Even so it was still lumpy so it had to be drunk through a wooden straw with a filter. Better off Egyptians drank wine. Ancient Egyptian farmers dug irrigation canals to take water from the Nile when it flooded and to hold it when the flood subsided. In Ancient Egypt oxen pulled plows and farmers used simple tools such as hoes, sickles, rakes and winnowing fans used to throw wheat into the air to separate light chaff from heavier grain. In Ancient Egypt there were three seasons. From July to October was the season when the Nile flooded. Seeds were planted from November to February. The harvest lasted from March to June. Egyptians divided days into 24 hours and they measured time with water clocks. Water was allowed to drip into a container at a steady rate. The container was marked at intervals and it took one hour for the water to rise from one mark to another. Like all early civilizations Ancient Egypt was an agricultural society. Most people lived in the countryside and made their living by farming. The most important crops were wheat and barley. The history of drinks Clothes in Ancient Egypt Not surprisingly given the hot climate Egyptians wore only light clothing. Men wore a loincloth and a kind of kilt. Women wore dresses with shoulder straps. Clothes were made of linen or cotton. Later in Egyptian history clothes became more elaborate and colorful. Egyptians shaved their hair and wore wigs. Children had their heads shaved to prevent lice although they usually had a braid left at the side of their heads. It was normal for children to go naked. Most people went barefoot much of the time but they sometimes wore sandals made from papyrus. Ancient Egyptians wore jewelry. Those who could afford it wore jewelry of gold, silver and precious stones. Poor people wore jewelry made of copper or bronze. Both men and women wore makeup. The history of clothes Houses in Ancient Egypt Rich Egyptians lived in large,

comfortable houses with many rooms. Walls were painted and floors had colored tiles. Most wealthy houses had enclosed gardens with pools. Inside their homes rich Egyptians had wooden furniture such as beds, chairs, tables and chests for storage. However instead of pillows they used wooden headrests. Toilets consisted of a clay pot filled with sand. It was emptied regularly. Ordinary people in Ancient Egypt lived in simpler homes made of mud bricks with perhaps four rooms. People may have slept on the flat roof when it was hot and they did most of their work outside because of the heat. Furniture was very basic. Ordinary Egyptians sat on brick benches around the walls. They used reed chests or wooden pegs on walls to store things. If a rich person invited you to a feast you would be entertained by singers, musicians, dancers, jugglers, wrestlers and jesters. Musicians played wooden flutes, harps, lutes, drums and clappers. It slowly melted leaving the wearer smelling nice. Ancient Egyptians loved hunting and fishing. For the rich hunting was for pleasure. For the poor it was for food. Men caught birds with nets or by throwing curved sticks. Fish were caught with hooks or harpoons. Men and women went swimming. Men also enjoyed boxing, wrestling and archery. They also played a game which involved standing on a boat and trying to knock the opposing team into the water with a stick. Egyptians also played a board game called senet. The board was divided into squares with counters. You threw sticks rather than a dice. Ancient Egyptian children played similar games to the ones children play today. They also played with dolls, toy soldiers, wooden animals, ball, marbles, spinning tops and knuckle bones which were thrown like dice. The history of games and leisure Education in Ancient Egypt Most boys and girls in Ancient Egypt did not go to school. Instead boys learned farming or other trades from their fathers. Girls learned sewing, cooking and other skills from their mothers.

Chapter 7 : Life in Ancient Egypt by Adolf Erman

In Ancient Egypt death was not necessarily the end of life. The Egyptians believed it was possible to live again, if the corpse was preserved in a lifelike form so that it might form a bridge between the spirit of the deceased and the land of the living.

Worksheets Egyptian Daily Life Egypt is a dry, hot desert country and ancient life depended on the waters of the River Nile. The Nile was used for: The palaces of the Pharaohs were built from stone. The mud was carried in baskets from the Nile and poured into moulds. When the mud in the mould was dry, it was turned out and left to bake in the heat of the sun. A house built from mud bricks: Cooking was done out of doors in the courtyard. We know about Egyptian daily life from the huge number of wall paintings in tombs and temples. The houses we are shown are the houses of wealthier people, priests and scribes, government officials, and master craftsmen. The paintings show a large number of servants, or probably slaves, working in the houses. From the paintings we know that the servants: The richer families in ancient Egypt had houses with beautiful gardens, looked after by slaves or servants. Men went wild-fowling hunting wild duck in the marshes and women are shown sitting on couches talking to each other and listening to music. Games and entertainment Children played with toys such as spinning tops and wooden models of animals which they could pull along on strings. They played with balls made of clay and they played at leapfrog. Girls played dancing games, holding hands in a ring, and little boys played at being soldiers. Adults played a number of board games. We know that they played a game for two people called Senet on a board with 30 squares. The aim was to reach the kingdom of Osiris through all the dangers on the way. The Egyptians also enjoyed story-telling, parties and music. There were a number of great public festivals, such as the celebration of the resurrection of Osiris see Egyptian religion where thousands of people danced to the music of harps and flutes. The Farmers The vast majority of people in Egypt, however, were farmers who farmed the fields on the bank of the Nile. Men, women and children from a young age all worked in these tiny fields. They ploughed the land with a wooden plough pulled by oxen. They sowed the fields with seed and watered the ground with water from the Nile. They harvested the grain using a sickle. They threshed beat out the grain from the husk it by getting their oxen to walk round and round treading on it. All the grain was controlled by royal officials and kept in a royal granary. You may remember the story of the Pharaoh who dreamt of the seven fat cattle followed by the seven lean cattle. Joseph interpreted his dream, telling him that there were going to be seven very good harvests, followed by seven poor harvests. He advised the Pharaoh to collect the grain during the seven good years so that the people would not starve during the seven poor years. The crops and vegetables meant that even the poorer Egyptians usually ate a balanced diet. The staple food was bread from the grain. They grew onions and leeks and salad vegetables They grew beans and dried them so that they could be cooked and eaten throughout the year They grew fruit such as figs and pomegranates. They caught fish from the Nile. They made beer from barley and richer people drank wine made from grapes. Clothes Farmers also grew flax. Linen cloth is made from flax and Egyptian clothing was made from linen. Men wore a short linen kilt and women usually wore a linen tunic that hung from their shoulders. Little children sometimes wore no clothes at all but often wore jewellery round their neck. Trades Although most people were farmers, there were many other trades, carpenters, metal-workers, bakers, goldsmiths, boat builders. Trade was carried out by way of exchanging goods. For example, a farmer might exchange a basket of onions for a bag of charcoal, or a cow for a small boat. Everything in Egypt depended on the Nile and everything was transported on boats and ships on the river. In order to fish and to transport goods from one place to another people had small boats made of papyrus stalks bound together. Bigger boats and larger ships were made of wood, which was mostly imported from Lebanon. We have many paintings of boats carrying cattle and other heavy goods on the Nile. It was a very busy river with constant traffic.

Chapter 8 : Life in Ancient Egypt - From Agriculture to art, science and many more

Ancient Egypt: Life in ancient Egypt Before your visit Wigs were worn by men or women and were often made from sheep's wool or human hair. They served a decorative function but may also have helped to protect the wearer's head.

Egyptian texts list the names of many deities whose nature is unknown and make vague, indirect references to other gods who are not even named. Allen estimates that more than 1, deities are named in Egyptian texts, [3] whereas his colleague Christian Leitz says there are "thousands upon thousands" of gods. The hieroglyphs that were used as ideograms and determinatives in writing these words show some of the traits that the Egyptians connected with divinity. Similar objects were placed at the entrances of temples, representing the presence of a deity, throughout ancient Egyptian history. Other such hieroglyphs include a falcon, reminiscent of several early gods who were depicted as falcons, and a seated male or female deity. These personified ideas range from deities that were important in myth and ritual to obscure beings, only mentioned once or twice, that may be little more than metaphors. One widely accepted definition, [4] suggested by Jan Assmann, says that a deity has a cult, is involved in some aspect of the universe, and is described in mythology or other forms of written tradition. From this perspective, "gods" included the king, who was called a god after his coronation rites, and deceased souls, who entered the divine realm through funeral ceremonies. Likewise, the preeminence of the great gods was maintained by the ritual devotion that was performed for them across Egypt. Predynastic artwork depicts a variety of animal and human figures. Some of these images, such as stars and cattle, are reminiscent of important features of Egyptian religion in later times, but in most cases there is not enough evidence to say whether the images are connected with deities. As Egyptian society grew more sophisticated, clearer signs of religious activity appeared. Others have argued that the most important predynastic gods were, like other elements of Egyptian culture, present all across the country despite its political divisions. Some important deities such as Isis and Amun are not known to have appeared until the Old Kingdom c. Some non-royal humans were said to have the favor of the gods and were venerated accordingly. Dedun, who is first mentioned in the Old Kingdom, may have come from Nubia, and Baal, Anat, and Astarte, among others, were adopted from Canaanite religion during the New Kingdom c. These people were the elite of Egyptian society and were very distinct from the general populace, most of whom were illiterate. Little is known about how well this broader population knew or understood the sophisticated ideas that the elite developed. The two traditions form a largely cohesive vision of the gods and their nature. Most Egyptian deities represent natural or social phenomena. The gods were generally said to be immanent in these phenomena to be present within nature. For instance, Khnum was the god of Elephantine Island in the midst of the Nile, the river that was essential to Egyptian civilization. Most prominently, Apep was the force of chaos, constantly threatening to annihilate the order of the universe, and Set was an ambivalent member of divine society who could both fight disorder and foment it. Although many deities were connected with the Nile, no god personified it in the way that Ra personified the sun. Despite this flexibility, the gods had limited abilities and spheres of influence. Not even the creator god could reach beyond the boundaries of the cosmos that he created, and even Isis, though she was said to be the cleverest of the gods, was not omniscient. Wilkinson, however, argues that some texts from the late New Kingdom suggest that, as beliefs about the god Amun evolved, he was thought to approach omniscience and omnipresence and to transcend the limits of the world in a way that other deities did not. Others wandered through the human world and the Duat, either as servants and messengers of the greater gods or as roving spirits that caused illness or other misfortunes among humans. The protective deities Bes and Taweret originally had minor, demon-like roles, but over time they came to be credited with great influence. Heka was a fundamental power that the creator god used to form the world and the gods themselves. The events of this past time set the pattern for the events of the present. They contain seemingly contradictory ideas, each expressing a particular perspective on divine events. They feel emotion; they can eat, drink, fight, weep, sicken, and die. Yet overall, the gods are more like archetypes than well drawn characters. They focus on different gods, each of which may act as creator deities. Each gives a different perspective on the complex process by which the organized universe and its many deities emerged

from undifferentiated chaos. The gods struggle against the forces of chaos and among each other before withdrawing from the human world and installing the historical kings of Egypt to rule in their place. They fight vicious battles with the forces of chaos at the start of creation. Ra and Apep, battling each other each night, continue this struggle into the present. In the process he comes into contact with the rejuvenating water of Nun, the primordial chaos. Instead of being changelessly immortal, the gods periodically died and were reborn by repeating the events of creation, thus renewing the whole world. Some poorly understood Egyptian texts even suggest that this calamity is destined to happen—that the creator god will one day dissolve the order of the world, leaving only himself and Osiris amid the primordial chaos. In Egyptian tradition, the world includes the earth, the sky, and the Duat. Surrounding them is the dark formlessness that existed before creation. The deities there sometimes interact with those in the sky. The Duat, in contrast, is treated as a remote and inaccessible place, and the gods who dwell there have difficulties in communicating with those in the world of the living. It too is inhabited by deities, some hostile and some beneficial to the other gods and their orderly world. Temples were their main means of contact with humanity. Each day, it was believed, the gods moved from the divine realm to their temples, their homes in the human world. There they inhabited the cult images, the statues that depicted deities and allowed humans to interact with them in temple rituals. This movement between realms was sometimes described as a journey between the sky and the earth. They could establish themselves in new cities, or their range of influence could contract. When kings from Thebes took control of the country at start of the Middle Kingdom c. In keeping with this belief, the names of deities often relate to their roles or origins. The name of the predatory goddess Sekhmet means "powerful one", the name of the mysterious god Amun means "hidden one", and the name of Nekhbet, who was worshipped in the city of Nekheb, means "she of Nekheb". Many other names have no certain meaning, even when the gods who bear them are closely tied to a single role. The names of the sky goddess Nut and the earth god Geb do not resemble the Egyptian terms for sky and earth. Among them were secret names that conveyed their true natures more profoundly than others. To know the true name of a deity was to have power over it. The importance of names is demonstrated by a myth in which Isis poisons the superior god Ra and refuses to cure him unless he reveals his secret name to her. Upon learning the name, she tells it to her son, Horus, and by learning it they gain greater knowledge and power. Some deities were androgynous, but usually in the context of creation myths, in which they represented the undifferentiated state that existed before the world was created. Shu and his consort Tefnut. Thus Isis, as the mother and protector of Horus, was a great healer as well as the patroness of kings. Such relationships were the base material from which myths were formed. Deities often form male and female pairs. Families of three deities, with a father, mother, and child, represent the creation of new life and the succession of the father by the child, a pattern that connects divine families with royal succession. The pattern they set grew more widespread over time, so that many deities in local cult centers, like Ptah, Sekhmet, and their child Nefertum at Memphis and Amun, Mut, and Khonsu at Thebes, were assembled into family triads. There were sets of gods for the hours of the day and night and for each nome province of Egypt. Some of these groups contain a specific, symbolically important number of deities. Ra, who is dynamic and light-producing, and Osiris, who is static and shrouded in darkness, merge into a single god each night. Amun, Ra, and Ptah. These deities stood for the plurality of all gods, as well as for their own cult centers the major cities of Thebes, Heliopolis, and Memphis and for many threefold sets of concepts in Egyptian religious thought. The most prominent ennead was the Ennead of Heliopolis, an extended family of deities descended from the creator god Atum, which incorporates many important gods. Gods with broad influence in the cosmos or who were mythologically older than others had higher positions in divine society. At the apex of this society was the king of the gods, who was usually identified with the creator deity. Horus was the most important god in the Early Dynastic Period, Ra rose to preeminence in the Old Kingdom, Amun was supreme in the New, and in the Ptolemaic and Roman periods, Isis was the divine queen and creator goddess. The spirits of the gods were composed of many of these same elements. The cult images of gods that were the focus of temple rituals, as well as the sacred animals that represented certain deities, were believed to house divine bas in this way. During the New Kingdom, one man was accused of stealing clothes by an oracle supposed to communicate messages from Amun of Pe-Khenty. He consulted two other local oracles of Amun

hoping for a different judgment. Horus could be a powerful sky god or vulnerable child, and these forms were sometimes counted as independent deities. A god could be called the ba of another, or two or more deities could be joined into one god with a combined name and iconography. Unlike other situations for which this term is used, the Egyptian practice was not meant to fuse competing belief systems, although foreign deities could be syncretized with native ones. Syncretic combinations were not permanent; a god who was involved in one combination continued to appear separately and to form new combinations with other deities. Horus absorbed several falcon gods from various regions, such as Khenti-irty and Khenti-kheti , who became little more than local manifestations of him; Hathor subsumed a similar cow goddess, Bat ; and an early funerary god, Khenti-Amentiu , was supplanted by Osiris and Anubis. Atenism In the reign of Akhenaten c. This new religious system, sometimes called Atenism , differed dramatically from the polytheistic worship of many gods in all other periods. Whereas, in earlier times, newly important gods were integrated into existing religious beliefs, Atenism insisted on a single understanding of the divine that excluded the traditional multiplicity of perspectives. There is evidence suggesting that the general populace was still allowed to worship other gods in private. For these reasons, the Egyptologist Dominic Montserrat suggested that Akhenaten may have been monolatrous , worshipping a single deity while acknowledging the existence of others. Images like this one represent the presence of a multitude of divine powers within a single being. Reasons for this debate include the practice of syncretism, which might suggest that all the separate gods could ultimately merge into one, and the tendency of Egyptian texts to credit a particular god with power that surpasses all other deities. Another point of contention is the appearance of the word "god" in wisdom literature , where the term does not refer to a specific deity or group of deities. Wallis Budge believed that Egyptian commoners were polytheistic, but knowledge of the true monotheistic nature of the religion was reserved for the elite, who wrote the wisdom literature. He points out that in any given period many deities, even minor ones, were described as superior to all others. He also argues that the unspecified "god" in the wisdom texts is a generic term for whichever deity the reader chooses to revere. Henotheism , Hornung says, describes Egyptian religion better than other labels. An Egyptian could worship any deity at a particular time and credit it with supreme power in that moment, without denying the other gods or merging them all with the god that he or she focused on.

Chapter 9 : Ancient Egypt - Wikipedia

Spices of Life in Ancient Egypt When 19th-century British explorers first discovered the tombs of the ancient Egyptians, the folks back home in England were captivated.

Introduction to ancient Egyptian civilization Life in ancient Egypt Ancient Egypt can be thought of as an oasis in the desert of northeastern Africa, dependent on the annual inundation of the Nile River to support its agricultural population. Between the floodplain and the hills is a variable band of low desert that supported a certain amount of game. To the south lay the far less hospitable area of Nubia , in which the river flowed through low sandstone hills that in most regions left only a very narrow strip of cultivable land. West of the Nile was the arid Sahara , broken by a chain of oases some to miles to km from the river and lacking in all other resources except for a few minerals. The eastern desert, between the Nile and the Red Sea, was more important, for it supported a small nomadic population and desert game, contained numerous mineral deposits, including gold, and was the route to the Red Sea. To the northeast was the Isthmus of Suez. From the late 2nd millennium bce onward, numerous attacks were made by land and sea along the eastern Mediterranean coast. At first, relatively little cultural contact came by way of the Mediterranean Sea , but from an early date Egypt maintained trading relations with the Lebanese port of Byblos present-day Jbail. Egypt needed few imports to maintain basic standards of living, but good timber was essential and not available within the country, so it usually was obtained from Lebanon. Minerals such as obsidian and lapis lazuli were imported from as far afield as Anatolia and Afghanistan. Agriculture centred on the cultivation of cereal crops, chiefly emmer wheat *Triticum dicoccum* and barley *Hordeum vulgare*. The fertility of the land and general predictability of the inundation ensured very high productivity from a single annual crop. This productivity made it possible to store large surpluses against crop failures and also formed the chief basis of Egyptian wealth, which was, until the creation of the large empires of the 1st millennium bce, the greatest of any state in the ancient Middle East. As the river deposited alluvial silt, raising the level of the floodplain, and land was reclaimed from marsh, the area available for cultivation in the Nile valley and delta increased, while pastoralism declined slowly. In addition to grain crops, fruit and vegetables were important, the latter being irrigated year-round in small plots. Fish was also vital to the diet. Papyrus , which grew abundantly in marshes, was gathered wild and in later times was cultivated. It may have been used as a food crop, and it certainly was used to make rope, matting, and sandals. Cattle may have been domesticated in northeastern Africa. The Egyptians kept many as draft animals and for their various products, showing some of the interest in breeds and individuals that is found to this day in the Sudan and eastern Africa. The donkey, which was the principal transport animal the camel did not become common until Roman times , was probably domesticated in the region. The native Egyptian breed of sheep became extinct in the 2nd millennium bce and was replaced by an Asiatic breed. Sheep were primarily a source of meat; their wool was rarely used. Goats were more numerous than sheep. Pigs were also raised and eaten. Ducks and geese were kept for food, and many of the vast numbers of wild and migratory birds found in Egypt were hunted and trapped. Desert game, principally various species of antelope and ibex, were hunted by the elite; it was a royal privilege to hunt lions and wild cattle. Pets included dogs, which were also used for hunting, cats, and monkeys. In addition, the Egyptians had a great interest in, and knowledge of, most species of mammals, birds, reptiles, and fish in their environment. Most Egyptians were probably descended from settlers who moved to the Nile valley in prehistoric times, with population increase coming through natural fertility. In various periods there were immigrants from Nubia, Libya , and especially the Middle East. They were historically significant and also may have contributed to population growth, but their numbers are unknown. Most people lived in villages and towns in the Nile valley and delta. Dwellings were normally built of mud brick and have long since disappeared beneath the rising water table or beneath modern town sites, thereby obliterating evidence for settlement patterns. In antiquity, as now, the most favoured location of settlements was on slightly raised ground near the riverbank, where transport and water were easily available and flooding was unlikely. Until the 1st millennium bce, Egypt was not urbanized to the same extent as Mesopotamia. Instead, a few centres, notably Memphis and Thebes , attracted population

and particularly the elite, while the rest of the people were relatively evenly spread over the land. The size of the population has been estimated as having risen from 1 to 1. Much higher levels of population were reached in Greco-Roman times. Nearly all of the people were engaged in agriculture and were probably tied to the land. In theory all the land belonged to the king, although in practice those living on it could not easily be removed and some categories of land could be bought and sold. Land was assigned to high officials to provide them with an income, and most tracts required payment of substantial dues to the state, which had a strong interest in keeping the land in agricultural use. Abandoned land was taken back into state ownership and reassigned for cultivation. The people who lived on and worked the land were not free to leave and were obliged to work it, but they were not slaves; most paid a proportion of their produce to major officials. Free citizens who worked the land on their own behalf did emerge; terms applied to them tended originally to refer to poor people, but these agriculturalists were probably not poor. Slavery was never common, being restricted to captives and foreigners or to people who were forced by poverty or debt to sell themselves into service. In the New Kingdom from about 1550 to 1070 bce, large numbers of captive slaves were acquired by major state institutions or incorporated into the army. Punitive treatment of foreign slaves or of native fugitives from their obligations included forced labour, exile in, for example, the oases of the western desert, or compulsory enlistment in dangerous mining expeditions. Even nonpunitive employment such as quarrying in the desert was hazardous. The official record of one expedition shows a mortality rate of more than 10 percent. Just as the Egyptians optimized agricultural production with simple means, their crafts and techniques, many of which originally came from Asia, were raised to extraordinary levels of perfection. Some of the technical and organizational skills involved were remarkable. The construction of the great pyramids of the 4th dynasty c. 2600 bce. This expenditure of skill contrasts with sparse evidence of an essentially neolithic way of living for the rural population of the time, while the use of flint tools persisted even in urban environments at least until the late 2nd millennium bce. Metal was correspondingly scarce, much of it being used for prestige rather than everyday purposes. In urban and elite contexts, the Egyptian ideal was the nuclear family, but, on the land and even within the central ruling group, there is evidence for extended families. Egyptians were monogamous, and the choice of partners in marriage, for which no formal ceremony or legal sanction is known, did not follow a set pattern. Consanguineous marriage was not practiced during the Dynastic period, except for the occasional marriage of a brother and sister within the royal family, and that practice may have been open only to kings or heirs to the throne. Divorce was in theory easy, but it was costly. Women had a legal status only marginally inferior to that of men. They could own and dispose of property in their own right, and they could initiate divorce and other legal proceedings. Lower down the social scale, they probably worked on the land as well as in the house. The uneven distribution of wealth, labour, and technology was related to the only partly urban character of society, especially in the 3rd millennium bce. In the 3rd and early 2nd millennia, the elite ideal, expressed in the decoration of private tombs, was manorial and rural. Not until much later did Egyptians develop a more pronouncedly urban character. The king and ideology: Of these groups, only the king was single, and hence he was individually more prominent than any of the others. He gives offerings to the gods and mortuary offerings to the spirits [the blessed dead]. His divinity accrued to him from his office and was reaffirmed through rituals, but it was vastly inferior to that of major gods; he was god rather than man by virtue of his potential, which was immeasurably greater than that of any human being. To humanity, he manifested the gods on earth, a conception that was elaborated in a complex web of metaphor and doctrine; less directly, he represented humanity to the gods. The text quoted above also gives great prominence to the dead, who were the object of a cult for the living and who could intervene in human affairs; in many periods the chief visible expenditure and focus of display of nonroyal individuals, as of the king, was on provision for the tomb and the next world. Egyptian kings are commonly called pharaohs, following the usage of the Bible. This term for palace was used increasingly from about 1550 bce as a way of referring to the living king; in earlier times it was rare. Rules of succession to the kingship are poorly understood. The choice of queen seems to have been free; often the queen was a close relative of the king, but she also might be unrelated to him. In the New Kingdom, for which evidence is abundant, each king had a queen with distinctive titles, as well as a number of minor wives. Sons of the chief queen seem to have been the preferred successors

to the throne, but other sons could also become king. In many cases the successor was the eldest surviving son, and such a pattern of inheritance agrees with more general Egyptian values, but often he was some other relative or was completely unrelated. New Kingdom texts describe, after the event, how kings were appointed heirs either by their predecessors or by divine oracles, and such may have been the pattern when there was no clear successor. Dissent and conflict are suppressed from public sources. From the Late period c. 1550–332 bce, when sources are more diverse and patterns less rigid, numerous usurpations and interruptions to the succession are known; they probably had many forerunners. By the 5th dynasty, fixed institutions had been added to the force of tradition and the regulation of personal contact as brakes on autocracy, but the charismatic and superhuman power of the king remained vital. The elite of administrative officeholders received their positions and commissions from the king, whose general role as judge over humanity they put into effect. They commemorated their own justice and concern for others, especially their inferiors, and recorded their own exploits and ideal conduct of life in inscriptions for others to see. These attitudes and their potential dissemination through society counterbalanced inequality, but how far they were accepted cannot be known. The core group of wealthy officeholders numbered at most a few hundred, and the administrative class of minor officials and scribes, most of whom could not afford to leave memorials or inscriptions, perhaps 5,000. With their dependents, these two groups formed perhaps 5 percent of the early population. Monuments and inscriptions commemorated no more than one in a thousand people. According to royal ideology, the king appointed the elite on the basis of merit, and in ancient conditions of high mortality the elite had to be open to recruits from outside. There was, however, also an ideal that a son should succeed his father. In periods of weak central control this principle predominated, and in the Late period the whole society became more rigid and stratified. Writing was a major instrument in the centralization of the Egyptian state and its self-presentation. The two basic types of writing—hieroglyphs, which were used for monuments and display, and the cursive form known as hieratic—were invented at much the same time in late predynastic Egypt c. 3250. Writing was chiefly used for administration, and until about 3000 bce no continuous texts are preserved; the only extant literary texts written before the early Middle Kingdom c. 2050. The use and potential of writing were restricted both by the rate of literacy, which was probably well below 1 percent, and by expectations of what writing might do. Hieroglyphic writing was publicly identified with Egypt. Perhaps because of this association with a single powerful state, its language, and its culture, Egyptian writing was seldom adapted to write other languages; in this it contrasts with the cuneiform script of the relatively uncentralized, multilingual Mesopotamia. Nonetheless, Egyptian hieroglyphs probably served in the middle of the 2nd millennium bce as the model from which the alphabet, ultimately the most widespread of all writing systems, evolved. The dominant visible legacy of ancient Egypt is in works of architecture and representational art.