

A Social "Pyramid"

A Brief History of Egypt

Going back to perhaps 5,000 B.C. people were living in Egypt under two different kingdoms. The Lower Kingdom in the north and the Upper Kingdom in the south. Around 3100 B.C. a military leader named Menes united Upper and Lower kingdoms under his sole control and became Egypt's first pharaoh.

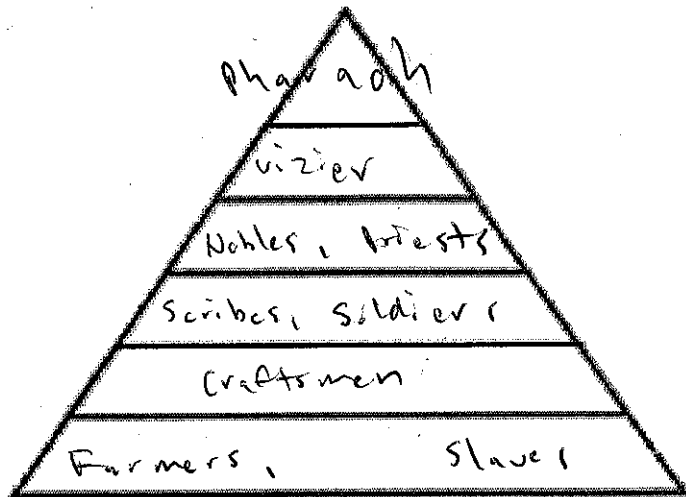
Egyptian Government

Menes set up a dynasty, meaning power would pass from generation to generation of his family. Not only was Menes and those to follow kings of Egypt, they were pharaohs. Pharaohs were God-Kings, who were to be both obeyed and worshiped.

Since the King of Egypt was also a God to be worshiped, ancient Egypt was a theocracy. A theocracy is a government where the leader is thought to be divine or the laws are dictated by religion.

Egyptian Society

Egyptian society was structured like a pyramid. Pharaohs sat at the top where they had absolute power over their subjects. Next came the viziers, or people who executed the orders of the pharaoh. Priests came next, followed by skilled artisans. Farmers and workers were near the bottom of the pyramid. Slaves were at the bottom of the societal pyramid. Slavery was both common and accepted.



Flocabulary - Walk Like an Egyptian

They say that the Nile gave us Egypt,
Try planting crops on the beach,
and you can believe it.
The yearly flood left rich dirt called silt.
So they planted in the silt and the farms got built.
Around the Nile, they got together
to feel alright like Bob Marley,
Planting cotton, wheat and barley.
Writing on papyrus in hieroglyphics,
That's the Egyptian alphabet you can get with.
"Am I a dimwit? I can't believe it, I can't read it,
Looks like symbol' to me,"
naw, it's simple you see:
The Rosetta stone let us know
how to decipher the code.
So now we study the old words that were written in stone.

They believed in an afterlife.
They'd get strips of cloth and they'd wrap you tight.
Yep, pharaohs would get mummified,
And buried with food and clothes for the great unknown, whoa.

Walk-walk like an Egyptian,
Walk-walk like an Egyptian.
We built the pyramids, we built the Sphinx,
And then we wrote it down in hieroglyphics.

Osiris:
I'm Osiris, lord of the Dead.
Don't mess with me, boy, I'll put a sword to your head.
We fight invaders effortlessly,
'Cause we're insulated by the deserts and seas.
Upper and Lower, we're divided up,
Yep, until Pharaoh Menes united us.

In 3100 BC, he said, I want my son to be pharaoh,
After me, I'll start a dynasty.

King Tut, died before he got old,
But King Tut got a mask made of gold.
So pharaohs sit back, sip tea, and get rich.
While workers break their backs to build the pyramids.
Fifty stories tall, that's incredible,
They used levers to move stones, so they're handicap accessible?
If you were pharaoh whose last breath goes,
You got buried in a pyramid, like it's your gravestone.

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