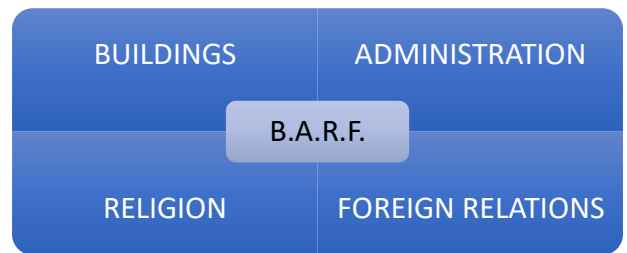


2. SOCIAL STRUCTURE AND POLITICAL ORGANISATION

Roles and images of the pharaoh; concept of maat

Roles of the pharaoh

- Buildings
 - Important for each pharaoh to display his respect for the gods and emphasise power
 - Restoring and building new temples and shrines to gods
 - Construction of their own mortuary temples and tombs
 - Building new cities and establishing new capitals as sites of propaganda to advertise their military or religious policies
 - Abu Simbel and Ramesseum built by Ramesses II
- Administration
 - Responsible for appointing heads of each branch of government (royal estate, civil administration, religious administration and the army)
 - Worked closely with the vizier, who handled most of the work and specific political affairs for the pharaoh after consulting with them
 - Application of justice and the law
- Religion
 - The pharaoh was a representative of the gods; sometimes, they even claimed to be an incarnation or descendent of the gods
 - They upheld *maat* – the concept of truth, justice and harmony between the gods and Egypt
 - They also kept *isefet*, chaos, at bay (i.e. drought, famine, plague, civil unrest, war)
 - As long as the gods were appropriately honoured, most notably by the pharaoh, then peace and prosperity would be ensured
 - Observance of religious rituals and festivals
 - Construction and maintenance of temples
- Foreign relations
 - Preserving peace between Egypt and surrounding countries
 - Keeping control of vassal states such as Syria-Palestine and Nubia
 - Going to war with threats to preserve the Egyptian way of life
 - Attempting to quash new powers like Libya and the Sea Peoples



Images of the pharaoh

- Pharaoh as a god
 - The Pharaoh was a manifestation of Horus, son of Osiris
 - Reflected by royal regalia worn and used as well as royal titulary (i.e. 'The Good God' and 'Living Horus')
 - Although Egyptians made offerings to living rulers, this did not signify divinity
 - Hatshepsut was the first to depict her own divinity, claiming to be the daughter of Amen with her Divine Birth Inscription in her mortuary temple at Deir el Bahri
 - Ramesses II commissioned colossal statues of himself and named them 'Ramesses the God'; some reliefs show Ramesses making offerings to his deified self; at Abu Simbel, he depicts himself as an actual god, equal in size and seated beside Amen-Re, Re-Herakhte and Ptah in the inner shrine; in temples in Nubia, he was the sole god
- Warrior pharaoh
 - Sacred duty to protect Egypt
 - King in a war chariot is a recurrent image on Ramesside temples (Seti I against the Syrians, Ramesses II at Kadesh, Merenptah besieging Ashkelon, Ramesses III fighting the Libyans)

- Many scenes depict: the pharaoh preparing for war, mustering the army, advancing against the enemy, fighting in the battle, returning to Egypt, presenting the spoils to the gods of Thebes
- Advertises the foreign policy of the king and publicises the king's courage and strength
- Pharaoh as sportsman and hunter
 - Pharaohs had to be physically strong in order to protect Egypt from danger, both human and divine
 - Artistic convention developed in New Kingdom illustrated pharaohs strength and skill as bowman and hunter
 - Hunting wild animals like bulls, lions and elephants which symbolise using power to overcome the forces of chaos
 - Ramesses III hunting wild bulls at Medinet Habu

Concept of maat

- Maat = truth, justice, harmony between the gods and the people of Egypt
- Pharaoh had to uphold maat and keep chaos (*isefet*) at bay
- Chaos could be natural, like drought, famine and plague, or caused by humans, like civil unrest and war
- As long as the gods were appropriately honoured, mostly by the pharaoh as a representative of the gods, there would be peace and prosperity

Roles of the vizier and members of the religious, administrative and military elites

Roles of the vizier

- Head of a multifaceted, highly centralised system of administration with an extensive bureaucracy
- Responsible for seeing that officials followed correct conduct
- For most of the Ramesside period, there were two: one for Upper Egypt and one for Lower Egypt
- Three main roles:
 - King's deputy:
 - Personal executive assistant to king
 - Main channel of communication with king
 - Met daily and provided reports about current events, gained from an extensive network of subordinate officials
 - Acted as a mediator when someone petitioned the king
 - Listened to royal decrees and saw they were enforced
 - Allocated state-owned plots of land to officials
 - Withdrew land from officials found guilty of misconduct
 - Head of palace administration
 - Responsible for security
 - Appointed key personnel to the palace, gateways and guard posts
 - Issued orders to open and close city gates
 - Received detailed reports about the people and goods entering and leaving the palace
 - Every day, with the overseer of the treasury, opened the Golden House (royal workshops and storehouses at the palace)
 - Responsible for official communication between the palace complex and the outside world
 - Head of civil administration
 - Responsible for the proper operation of the machinery of government
 - Appointed leading officials in central government departments and local administration
 - Representatives of the vizier (*wehemu*) in each district; established deeds of property ownership, registered changes of ownership and lodged deeds in the central

government archives; informed the vizier of the activities of all departments and affairs of each district

- Vizier could summon local authorities, like district councillors and overseers of the fields
- District councils (*kenbet*) reported to the vizier every four months

<i>The Duties of the Vizier</i>	Text with four versions from tombs of viziers of southern Egypt, one of which is Paser, a 19 th dynasty vizier who worked under Seti I and Ramesses II. Has enough detail to gain understanding of the vizier has the head of a multifaceted, highly centralised system with an extensive bureaucracy.
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Roles of the religious elites

- High priests played political, economic and religious roles
- Temples were supported by estates and gifts given by the king
- Temple estates and workshops employed thousands
- Position of high priest could be given by the king as a reward for loyal service in other branch of government (e.g. In Heliopolis, Ramesses II appointed one of his chief charioteers as High Priest of Re and in Thebes, he rewarded Paser with the position of High Priest of Amen)
- Religious positions were often concentrated in a single family (e.g. In Abydos, position of High Priest of Osiris was held consecutively by 6 members of the same family)
- High Priest of Amen was the most powerful religious official, known also as 'Overseer of the Prophets of All the Gods'

Roles of the administrative elites

- Administration of the royal estate
 - Royal estates were handled by a separate bureaucracy headed by the Chancellor, a trusted confidant of the king
 - Under him was the Chief Steward, the Chamberlain and a host of officials and scribes
- Civil administration
 - Under the pharaoh were the two viziers (one for each Upper and Lower Egypt), Viceroy of Kush, Overseer of the Treasury, High Priest of Amen, Overseer of Granaries, Overseer of Works for the King, and an assortment of regional and local officials like nomarchs (governors) and mayors of districts and cities
 - Career as an administrator involved working through a succession of positions
 - One could hold multiple administrative offices at once as well as priestly positions

Roles of the military elites

- Leading the army was the pharaoh or one of his sons as commander-in-chief (e.g. Ramesses II held this role during the reign of his father, Seti I)
- Army was divided into a northern and southern corps
- Viceroy of Kush also headed a military force

Nature and role of the army

Military administration

- Led by the pharaoh or his son
- Assisted by the vizier who oversaw troops, and an advisory council of generals
- Included both career soldiers and conscripts

- 3 (under Seti I) or 4 (under Ramesses II) divisions of 5000 men, made up of 20 companies of 250 men, led by standard bearers, each company made up of 5 platoons of 50 men led by a Chief of Fifty; chariotry were elite and usually noblemen since they had to upkeep their own chariots
- Not all were Egyptian; there were Nubian archers, Libyan mercenaries and Sherden units (possibly prisoners of war who had been inducted)
- During the 19th dynasty, a division of 5000 might include only 1900 Egyptians and 3100 mercenaries
- Army scribes registered everything from enlistments, weapons and equipment to casualties, booty and prisoners; also recorded enemies killed by individual soldiers by the number of severed hands they presented
- Paid well and provided opportunity for soldiers to improve social status and gain wealth; could be rewarded with gold, land, slaves and senior positions in administration
- Many competent military men were promoted from the military to civil administration like general Suty, who became chief of the treasury

Duties on the home front

- Honour guards for the pharaoh
- Accompany him on hunting expeditions and at sporting tournaments
- Provide labour for special projects (e.g. transport of royal statues)
- Suppress riots and other disturbances
- Border security, maintaining military fortresses which protect wells, grain stores and chariot depots
- During peace time, some troops were left behind to garrison foreign cities and states, many returned home, some were settled as military colonists, others returned to farm work; chariot forces were employed on public works

The army on campaign

- Pharaoh could consult with war council, but did not have to follow their advice
- Called up troops and issue them with weapons; scribes recorded the name of the soldier and their equipment
- Organised marching order: part of the infantry, trumpeters, chariot bearing the standard of Amun-Re, two parasol bearers on foot, the royal chariot driven by the king himself, more infantry, chariotry, supplies carried by asses and wagons
- Soldiers were supplied with rations and received some share of the booty
- When the army returned, celebrations began immediately; some prisoners were ceremonially executed and there was a dedication ceremony later on



Ramesses II in chariot, relief of the Battle of Kadesh against the Hittites at Abu Simbel

This source depicts the concept of the warrior pharaoh image, as Ramesses is shown to be participating in a battle, riding in a chariot and wielding a bow, in what is a very active and physically impressive feat. Fighting in war also helped to uphold the concept of maat, which was one of the pharaoh's main roles. This also relates to the nature and role of the army, as Ramesses would have led them into battle and assumed control over the tactical aspect of it.

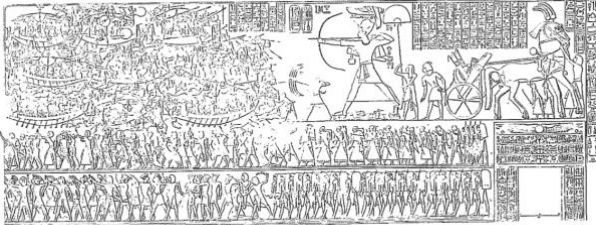


Figure 7.5 Ramesses III and the naval battle against the Sea Peoples (Medinet Habu)

Ramesses III and the naval battle against the Sea Peoples at Medinet Habu

Ramesses participating in this battle is an example of the warrior pharaoh image, as he wanted to be portrayed as a physically able warrior. We also see soldiers in the midst of battle against the Sea Peoples, which provides insight into their nature and role. Because this battle is naval in nature, it also relates to the Nile as a means of both transportation and providing a means for this battle to take place.



Captives depicted on the walls of Medinet Habu

The soldiers of the Egyptian army took slaves and prisoners of war; some were executed in ritualistic fashion by priests, some sold into slavery, and some were enlisted into the Egyptian army.



Counting severed hands, Medinet Habu

Soldiers removed the hands of their felled enemies to prove how many they killed; this was then recorded to keep track of the casualties.





Counting severed genitals, Medinet Habu

Hands as well as genitals were removed in order to count killed enemies.



Ramesses II storming the Hittite fortress of Dapur, Thebes

Demonstration of military strength against a strong super power of the time, the Hittites. Ramesses II is shown to be the focal point of the battle, showing his military might and strength and assisted by his powerful army.

 <p>Tablet of the Egyptian-Hittite peace treaty between Hattushili III of Hatti and Ramesses II</p>	<p>Shows the result of Egypt's militaristic displays strength in going to war against the Hittites, eventually resulting in strengthened foreign relations and a treaty.</p>
 <p>Ramesses II charging the Nubians, temple of Beit el-Wali in Northern Nubia</p>	<p>Again, Ramesses II demonstrates the warrior pharaoh image by being depicted as the focal point of the battle against an opposing army.</p>
<p>"He [the pharaoh] favoured me again for my excellence and he appointed me overseer of works in all his monuments. He favoured me again for my effectiveness and he appointed me overseer of works in [the Ramesseum]..."</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inscription on a limestone statue found in Deir el Bahri of Amenemone, an army commander 	<p>Shows how officials were rewarded with various positions in other branches of government for their commendable military service.</p>

Roles and status of women: royal and non-royal

Non-royal women

- Known as the lady of the house (*nebet per*)
- Derived status from their husband
- Organised household and brought up children
- Women of higher status had servants
- Wealthy men had more than one wife
- Poorest women ground corn, baked bread, brewed beer, cooked food, spun flax, wove cloth from it and worked in the fields alongside men as corvee (forced labour for the state)
- Could also work outside the home as bakers, weavers, musicians, dancers, acrobats, professional mourners, brewers, grain grinders, textile factory workers, sometimes prostitutes and supervisors
- In the tomb of Kenamun, mayor of Thebes, some women were shown as merchants in the marketplace
- In terms of legal and economic rights, could:
 - Own, buy and sell property (whether land, goods or slaves)
 - Lend and borrow money
 - Conduct business
 - Witness documents
 - Adopt children
 - Bring lawsuits against people in court
- Ostraca from Deir el Medina indicate that some women in the village were literate and participated in business transactions, although women did not serve as scribes or officials in admin

Royal women

- Pharaoh had many wives, but one was designated the Great royal wife
 - Associated with Maat and Hathor
 - Accompanied the pharaoh at important events and religious rituals
 - Owned her own palace and estates
 - Could administer property, donate goods to temples and loyal officials, appoint nobles to official posts and direct services from them
 - Evidence that some were literate; Queen Tuya (Ramesses II's mother) and Nefertari (his wife) wrote letters to the Hittite queen, Pudukhepa
 - Were mostly ceremonial and held little political power
- Mother of the king was important
- Diplomatic marriages took place between pharaohs and royal foreign princesses to ensure good relations
- Ramesses II married a Hittite princess in Year 34
- However, Egyptian princesses never married foreign princes (they may have made some claim on the royal succession)
- Harem contained several hundred women made up of pharaoh's principal and secondary wives, female servants, women who did weaving, and nurses for the royal children
- Great royal wife also acted as regent if a king was too young to rule alone

Women in religion

- Religion reflected a balance between male and female
- Ra-Atum and Osiris were male, but those who protected and regenerated them were female (Hathor, Nwt, Isis and Nephthys)
- Gods of fertility embodied male and female attributes
- Pharaoh's possessed masculine and feminine titles and epithets
- Within temples, a noble woman could become a *shemayit* (temple chantress), shaking the *sistrum* (divine rattle) and wearing the *menat* (religious necklace)
- Could be a part of the elite male and female priestly group known as the *henw* and *henwt* who accompanied the God's Wife in rituals
- Commoners could join the temple troupe (*khener*) and perform dances and clapping
- Commoner could act as *ka* preist when offering to the dead

Source 2.14

The Instructions of Ani—on the importance of mothers

Double the food your mother gave you,
Support her as she supported you,
She had a heavy load in you,
But she did not abandon you.
When you were born after your months,
She was yet yoked [to you],
Her breast in your mouth for three years.

...
When as a youth you take a wife,
And you are settled in your house,
Pay attention to your offspring,
Bring him up as did your mother.

Lichtheim, pp. 141, 143.

Shows how mothers in Egyptian society were honoured and deeply respected and that their children should show gratitude.

Source 2.12



Queen Nefertari shaking a Sistrum before Hathor, wearing the royal headdress, in her temple at Abu Simbel

Demonstrates the role that women could take in religion, but also the fact that it was incredibly ceremonial and passive in nature. The Great Royal Wife is shown to be more of a figurehead than anything else.

Source 2.13



Ostrakon of a mother nursing a child from Deir el Medina

Shows that a nursing mother was considered acceptable to portray in artwork by the Egyptian people.

Source 2.11

Letter to the Hittite queen from Nefertari

Thus says *Naptera* [Nefertari], the Great Queen of Egypt: 'To Pudukhepa, the Great Queen of Hatti, my Sister, speak thus:

With me your sister, all goes well, with my country all goes well.

With you my Sister, may all go well, with your country may all go well! See now, I have (duly) noted that you, my Sister, have written to me, to enquire after my well-being. And (that) you have written to me about the (new) relationship of good peace and brotherhood in which the Great King, the King of Egypt (now stands) with his brother, the Great King, the King of Hatti.

May the Sun-god (of Egypt) and the Storm-god (of Hatti) bring you joy, and may the Sun-god cause the peace to be good, and give good brotherhood to the Great King, the King of Egypt, with his brother the Great King, the King of Hatti, for ever. And (now) I am in friendship and sisterly relations with my Sister, the Great Queen (of Hatti), now and forever.'

Kitchen, p. 80.

Evidence that royal women could be literate and engage in foreign affairs and interaction with neighbouring countries.



The wife and mother of Userhat (tomb of Userhat)

Userhat's wife *and* mother being present shows that both female figures were important in a man's life.



Limestone statue of Renenutet, Chantress of Amen-Re, and her husband Yuni; in her left hand Renenutet holds a *menat* necklace.

Evidence of women gaining positions of importance in the religious system.



Ancient Egyptian queen Nefertari (right) greeted by the goddess Hathor in her fully anthropomorphic guise. 19th Dynasty. Tomb of Nefertari. Valley of the Queens. Western Thebes.

Demonstrates women in religion and positions of influence, as Nefertari was a Great Royal Wife.



Two professional mourners at both extremes of the corpse. Papyrus of Ani.

Evidence of a job that women could pursue outside of the home.

Scribes, artisans and agricultural workers


Scribes

- Cornerstone of society
- Clerks, copyists, entire class of bureaucratic officials
- Mid-level managers who gave orders, checked results, took records, granted or denied permission to low-level requests, drew up wills and private documents for the illiterate
- Only 1% of the population were literate
- Equipment: stone or wooden palette containing two cakes of ink (black and red), a small leather bag with water, and brushes made from rush stems
- Trained in the House of Life
- Wrote in both hieroglyphs and faster hieratic text
- Patron deity was Thoth
- Not only wrote and transcribed, but were trained in mathematics and calculations
- Specialised areas to train in were diplomacy, medicine, taxation, law, engineering and architecture
- Military scribes kept detailed records of battles, number of enemy dead based on count of amputated hands, number of prisoners and amount of booty as well as recruitment, manpower, weapons, equipment and provisions
- Temple scribes wrote sacred texts and recorded instructions for rituals, as well as administration
- Roles:
 - Writing and reading letters for the public because many were illiterate
 - Writing and reading stories and poetry for audiences
 - Drawing up legal documents
 - Drawing up private commercial contracts
 - Recording court proceedings and witness statements
 - Recording official proclamations and regulations issued by government
 - Conducting and recording surveys to establish property boundaries
 - Recording title deeds
 - Documenting rainfall and water levels of the Nile
 - Measuring crops and collecting and recording taxes
 - Recording the harvest and distribution of grain
 - Conducting census of population
 - Maintaining inventories of temples and workshops
 - Keeping records of trade missions
 - Writing medical treatments and prescriptions
 - Drawing up architectural plans
 - Writing funerary texts on papyrus scrolls and walls of tombs
 - Drawing up engineering plans
 - Supervising construction projects, including planning and surveying

<p>Source 2.16</p> <p>Papyrus Lansing—Praise of the scribe's profession ... Befriend the scroll, the palette. It pleases more than wine. Writing for him who knows it is better than all other professions. It pleases more than bread and beer, more than clothing and ointment. It is worth more than an inheritance in Egypt, than a tomb in the west.</p> <p>Lichtheim, p. 168.</p>	<p>Shows this particular individual's regard for the scribing profession, which may have been widely held considering that scribes were a cornerstone of society and high up in the Egyptian societal hierarchy.</p>
<p>Anastasi Papyrus, popular practice piece for trainee scribes in Ramesside period.</p>	<p>Satirical exchange between two scribes to ridicule the incompetent scribe who mismanages multiple assignments.</p>

Artisans


- Employed in the royal workshops and those of temples, sometimes in private workshops of senior officials
- High standard of woodworking and carving for luxury furniture and boatbuilding
- Used semi-precious stones for inlays (turquoise, lapis lazuli, carnelian and amethyst)
- Faience used for decoration and on amulets
- Inscriptions carved on temple walls with drills and copper chisels
- Egyptian alabaster (calcite) was used for funerary vessels, statues and altars
- Building stone was quarried by cutting a series of small holes, driving timber wedges between them and pouring water over the timber to make it expand, thus cracking the stone

<p>Source 2.18</p> 	<p>Demonstrates the type of work that artisans carried out in Egypt, and how important it must have been considering that they are producing goods for burial purposes, which was a major part of their society.</p>
<p>Carpenters and painters finishing two anthropoid coffins in the tomb of Ipuy.</p>	

Agricultural workers

- Many worked on estates of the pharaoh, temples, or land of high officials
- For eight months, planted, watered and harvested cereal crops (mainly wheat and barley)
- Sowed seeds into fertile silt left behind by receding Nile
- Seeds may have been scattered on surface then trampled in by animals
- Growing crops were irrigated with water diverted into canals and channels
- Shadouf was used to water domestic gardens
- Before it was harvested, tax assessors measured it to determine amount of tax paid
- Then threshed (oxen walking over grain to separate it from stalks)
- Then winnowed to remove chaff
- Agreed amount of grain was taken by landowner and farmer kept the balance
- Farmer also had vegetable plot where he grew vegetables (maybe watermelon, grapes, figs or pomegranate trees)

- Shortage of workers
 - On larger royal or temple estates, gangs of workers were sometimes used when there was a shortage of local
 - Some were paid, prisoners of war, conscripts, convicts or slaves
 - Conscripted for agricultural work: decree of Seti I for the Temple of Osiris at Abydos, says the penalty for stealing temple cattle is “the cutting off of the nose” and forced labour on temple lands
 - During Ramesses III time, gangs of prisoners of war were used

<p><i>The Tale of Two Brothers</i>; gives a glimpse into the life of a successful peasant farmer.</p>	<p>Must be analysed closely due to being a fictional story, but may provide account of what life was like for agricultural workers.</p>
<p><i>Misfortunes of the Peasant</i>; satire, negative impression of a farmers life as written by scribes</p>	<p>Not terribly useful, as it is a biased account meant to satirise the profession.</p>
 <p>Agricultural and fowling scenes in the tomb of Imiseba, recorded by Dr Boyo Ockinga of Macquarie University.</p>	<p>Shows the type of work that agricultural workers would have carried out.</p>