

**SOCIETY AND GOVERNMENT
IN ANCIENT EGYPT
TO THE END OF THE NEW KINGDOM
(2nd. Edition)**

**BY
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In Gratitude to

Gustav Gfrerer

who proved to me that a friend in need is a friend indeed

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PREFACE

The origin of the following work was a doctoral thesis entitled “The Administration of Egypt in the Period of the Middle Kingdom”, which, owing to a mixture of a regrettable lack of determination on my part at that period in my life, and a lack of money, was never presented. In spite of every good intention to resume work, weeks turned into months, months into years and it was not until my retirement from business that I finally sat down to complete the job. Then, I was suddenly faced with several unpleasant and previously unexpected facts. In the first place, I was told that the wide subject of my work would no longer be acceptable for a thesis; strict specialization was the order of the day. Furthermore, and not altogether surprisingly, the powers to be viewed my sudden reawakening at quite an advanced age with a good deal of scepticism. So much so that I decided to abandon my lifetime ambition of placing a Ph.D or D.Phil after my name and turn the “thesis” into a book. This involved an extension of the period covered, but above all studying not only the immense volume of primary sources not previously included, but to my horror an even greater volume of modern work covering the subject. This, perhaps naively, I believe that I have done as far as humanly possible.

The structure of the work I retained in the form originally intended for the thesis, quoting from the sources as much as I felt was necessary, rather than merely referring to these sources, which would probably have made the book more easily readable. My reason was twofold. In the first place, the Egyptian language is far from being clearly understood and very often the translation of a text depends on the point of view from which it is being translated. I therefore felt that in such cases of ambiguity decision should rest with the reader. In the second place, a number of Egyptian words may attract only one translation. Such, for example is the case of the modern word “palace”, which can stand for Egyptian **ḥ**, **stp-s3**, **pr-nzwt**, **pr-ꜥ3** and even at times **hnw**. Conversely, Egyptian words and especially titles attract from scholars a variety of modern equivalents whose current meaning would probably mean nothing to an ancient Egyptian.

Finally, and to my great surprise and dismay, I discovered that the unified transliteration used by Gardiner, and to the best of my belief all other Egyptologists of my student days, is now replaced by the democratic principle of free choice. Thus, a simple, but extremely common word like , which in my early days was transliterated as **sš**, is now offered by modern scholars as **sh**, **zh**, **zh3** etc. all in addition to the original **sš**. The result of this proliferation makes the use of transliteration in passages of any length even more difficult to cope with, even ignoring the fact that transliteration avoids determinatives on which the meaning of Egyptian words largely depends. At this point I have to admit, not without regret, that I myself succumbed to this modern, optional system of transliteration often causing me the problem of maintaining continuity without changes.

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The government of ancient Egypt was a theocratic monarchy as the king ruled by a mandate from the gods, initially was seen as an intermediary... Egyptian art during the Middle Kingdom period shows a much greater variation than that of the Old Kingdom which suggests a greater value placed on regional tastes and distinct styles rather than only court-approved and -regulated expression. How was ancient Egyptian law & order maintained? Who was responsible for peace and calm in the land? How did law enforcement handle crime? Take a look! Through the bits and pieces of information, we can gather some conclusions about how the legal system operated in ancient Egypt and how it evolved over time. There was also ancient Egyptian wisdom literature, which offers us some insight on what "good conduct" was thought to be during certain periods, though these were not laws either. One way to know what kinds of things ancient Egyptian society saw as wrong or immoral is to read through the 42 Declarations of Innocence, also called the Negative Confessions of Maat. Later, during the New Kingdom, judges and high officials would wear images of the goddess as well. The end of the Old Kingdom was not the end of Egyptian civilization. The so-called 'First Intermediate' period was not a Dark Age. The calamity triggered by low Nile floods was the impetus to radical social changes and a reformulation of the notion of kingship. Fekri Hassan's principle topical interests deal with the cultural dynamics of state formation in Ancient Egypt. He has attempted to explain the role of gender in the early religious and political developments in previous studies of rock art as well as the attributes of earliest Egyptian goddesses. Top. More Egyptians. Map of ancient Egypt, showing major cities and sites of the Dynastic period (c. 3150 BC to 30 BC). With the rising importance of central administration in Egypt a new class of educated scribes and officials arose who were granted estates by the king in payment for their services. Kings also made land grants to their mortuary cults and local temples, to ensure that these institutions had the resources to worship the king after his death. After Egypt's central government collapsed at the end of the Old Kingdom, the administration could no longer support or stabilize the country's economy. Regional governors could not rely on the king for help in times of crisis, and the ensuing food shortages and political disputes escalated into famines and small-scale civil wars. Ancient Egypt's government became more centralized during the Old Kingdom. Building large stone pyramids meant the pharaoh had to make changes to the government. Pharaohs from Dynasties Three and Four maintained a strong central government and they had almost absolute power. Earlier pharaohs created a strong government that allowed them to summon large work forces. They appointed their high officials, and they chose members of their family. These men were loyal to the pharaoh. The government then let the pharaoh gather and distribute enough food to support huge numbers of workers, which a