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ABOUT THIS TEXT

This text is divided into four parts which cover:

- the historical periods of Egyptian history referred to as the Old, Middle and New Kingdoms (these are terms used by scholars to focus on certain changes that occurred in Egyptian history)
- Egyptian society as it developed and changed in each of these periods
- the impact of significant individuals and groups on the society and historical period in which they lived.

Because it has been difficult to establish an accurate chronology for Egyptian history, scholars, museums and writers of texts are often at variance with one another over dates. The dates ascribed to historical periods, important events and significant individuals in this text tend to follow the chronology used by J Baines and J Málek in the *Atlas of Ancient Egypt*.

There is extensive use in the text of both written (primary and secondary) and archaeological sources as well as diagrams, tables, maps and line drawings. At the end of each chapter there is a diagrammatic summary of the preceding information, a number of activities based on the sources and essay topics.

It is hoped that the written and pictorial material presented in this book will help students and those interested in Egyptian history to:

- appreciate the difficulties of writing a connected history of Egypt due to the nature of the sources
- understand the need to use a variety of sources in trying to piece together the mosaic of ancient life and society
- assess the different interpretations of the sources by archaeologists and historians as well as scholars in scientific fields
- ask historical questions, particularly with regard to controversial issues
- understand the impact of particular individuals, groups and institutions on their own and later times
- identify some of the beliefs on which ancient Egyptian society was based
- recognise factors contributing to change in particular periods of Egyptian history
- feel a sense of responsibility to conserve the monuments of Egypt's past and develop an interest in reading more about ancient Egypt and in studying history for leisure.

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The summaries and activities at the end of each chapter have been designed to help students analyse and make deductions from a wide range of written and archaeological sources and evaluate the reliability of those sources; organise information in a variety of ways; present, in written form, an argument supported by evidence and empathise with individuals and groups from the past.

The following icon, which is the hieroglyphic symbol for the equipment of an Egyptian scribe, indicates that there is a series of tasks to be completed.

