

## The misfortunes of the peasant

Let me explain to you the condition of the cultivator, that other hard profession . . . [Whilst] the water is in flood, and he is soaked [in the river], he attends to his equipment. He spends the day cutting implements for cultivating corn. He spends the night twisting rope. He spends [even] his midday hour in work [typical] of the cultivator . . .

He spends three days seeking it, and finds it in the mire. He finds no hides on them, for the jackals have chewed them. He comes out [of the mire], his loin-cloth in his hand, to beg for himself a team . . . He spends time cultivating corn regularly, but the snake is after him, and finishes off the seedcorn when cast to the ground. He sees not a green blade. He does it with three sowings of borrowed barley . . . Now the scribe has landed at the river bank. He registers the harvest-tax, apparitors [officials from the religious court] being after him with staffs and Nehsyu with clubs. One says: 'Give corn,' and there is none. He is beaten furiously. His children are in fetters. His neighbours abandon them and are fled. It's all up! No corn!



## SOURCE 10

## The importance of the scribe

The profession of a scribe is superior to all others. Be a scribe. It saves you from toil and protects you from all manner of work. It spares you bearing hoe and mattock, so that you do not carry a basket. It sunders you from plying the oar and spares you torment, as you are not under many lords and numerous masters.

To see Source 11 in colour, use the book *Pharaohs and Pyramids*. Sources 9, 5, and 10 are primary sources. Is Source 11 a primary or secondary source?

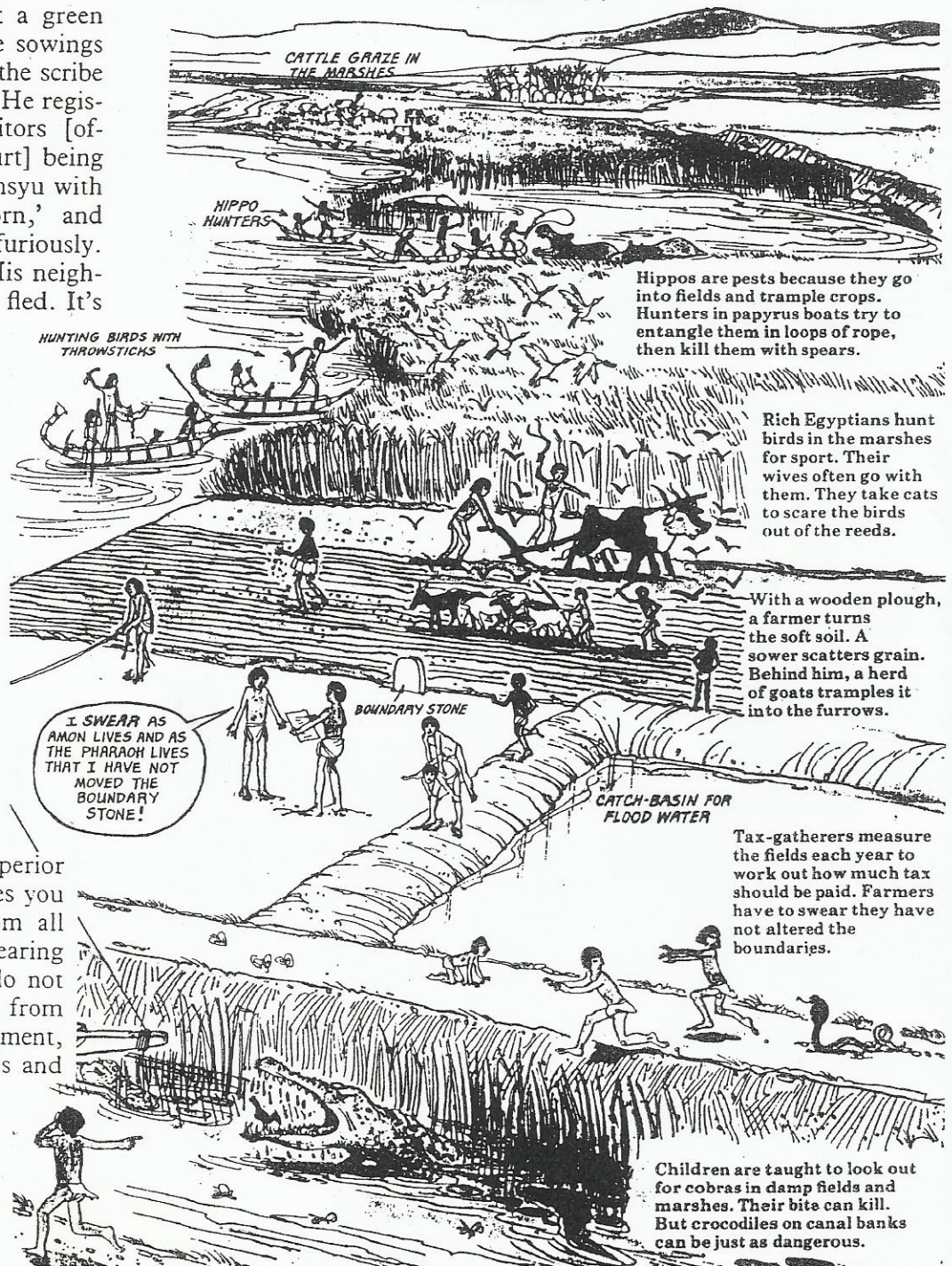
## The construction of the Great Pyramid as described by Herodotus

To build the pyramid itself took twenty years; it is square at the base, its height (800 feet [about 244 metres]) equal to the length of each side; it is of polished stone blocks beautifully fitted, none of the blocks being less than thirty feet [9 metres] long. The method employed was to build it in steps, or as some call them, tiers or terraces. When the base was complete, the blocks for the first tier above it were lifted from ground level by contrivances

made of short timbers; on this first tier there was another, which raised the blocks a stage higher, then yet another which raised them higher still. Each tier, or storey, had its set of levers, or it may be that they used the same one, which, being easy to carry, they shifted up from stage to stage as soon as its load was dropped into place. Both methods are mentioned, so I give them both here. The finishing-off of the pyramid was begun at the top and continued downwards, ending with the lowest parts nearest the ground.

Herodotus, *The Histories*, 2.126ff

## SOURCE 11



Hippos are pests because they go into fields and trample crops. Hunters in papyrus boats try to entangle them in loops of rope, then kill them with spears.

Rich Egyptians hunt birds in the marshes for sport. Their wives often go with them. They take cats to scare the birds out of the reeds.

With a wooden plough, a farmer turns the soft soil. A sower scatters grain. Behind him, a herd of goats tramples it into the furrows.

Tax-gatherers measure the fields each year to work out how much tax should be paid. Farmers have to swear they have not altered the boundaries.

Children are taught to look out for cobras in damp fields and marshes. Their bite can kill. But crocodiles on canal banks can be just as dangerous.