

# Egyptian History I

## EARLY DYNASTIC, OLD KINGDOM and FIRST INTERMEDIATE PERIODS

Egyptian history constitutes an awesome period of time. Including the Ptolemies, it covers at least three thousand years (c.3100-30 BC). By contrast, the Roman Emperor Augustus was living just two thousand years ago. Only China, with a continuous history since the Shang (c.1500 BC), has at least equaled this, but just barely if we bring Egyptian history down to the last hieroglyphic inscription (394 AD).

Basic knowledge of Egyptian history largely comes from Egyptian sources, i.e. in the early days nobody else was telling us about what was going on. Details come from monumental inscriptions, which really only become common in the New Kingdom (there are really none, for instance, from the III or IV Dynasties), but the fundamental structure is from king lists like the "Turin Canon" hieratic papyrus (which dates from the time of Ramesses II), so called because it ended up in Turin, the capital of the Kingdom of Sardinia, having been found in Egypt by the consul Drovetti. There are also sources like the "Table of Abydos" or "Abydos King List," carved on the Temple of Osiris at Abydos (begun by Seti I and finished by Ramesses II), and the "Table of Saqqara" -- from the reign of Ramesses II again. A slightly earlier list is the "Table of Karnak," from the reign of Thutmose III. All these epigraphic Egyptian texts, however, when discovered, could be compared with an already existing list from ancient literature, from the history of Egypt written by the priest Manethô in the Hellenistic Period.

Manethô certainly had access to the old king lists like the Turin Canon. With such vast numbers of names to deal with, he divided all of Egyptian history, down to Alexander the Great, into thirty dynasties. This is still a useful and reasonably accurate system. One or two extra dynasties have been suggested by ancient and modern writers, and the whole has, in modern history, been divided into the classic "Old," "Middle," and "New" Kingdoms, with various "Intermediate" Periods and other flourishes. There are some drawbacks to Manethô, however. (1) He was writing in Greek and thus produces versions of the Egyptian names that are sometimes hard to match up with Egyptian originals. (2) His historiography was uncritical and so, among other things, assumes that all dynasties are successive, when at times they appear to be contemporaneous. And (3) the original text of Manethô's history is lost, and we are dependent on fragments that appear in later writers, e.g. the Jewish historian Josephus (c.70 AD) and Christians like Sextus Julius Africanus (early 3rd century AD), Eusebius (early 4th century AD), and George "the Monk" Syncellus (c.800 AD). Each of these introduces his own errors into the text, apart from the kind of errors that creep into any Mediaeval manuscripts that must be periodically recopied.

The fragments of Manethô, in both Greek and translation (by W.G. Waddell), are available in the Loeb Classical Library, No. 350, Manetho [Harvard University Press, 1940, 1980]. A good discussion of all these sources is in Sir Alan Gardiner's *Egypt of the Pharaohs* [Oxford, 1961, 1966]. As the greatest expert on Egyptian in his age, present, for instance, to read inscriptions as Tutankhamon's tomb was opened, Gardiner had to deal with all the king lists and other evidence first hand.

Actual Greek and Roman writers are almost worthless as sources on Egyptian history. For instance, the Greek historian Herodotus does no more than repeat popular stories, in which the sequence of Ramesses II and the pyramid builders is actually reversed. The king lists were apparently not public knowledge at the time, especially for foreign tourists. Similarly, writers from the Roman period introduced the idea that Egyptian hieroglyphics represented allegorical and mystical meanings rather than the plain Egyptian language. This is the view of Plutarch (c.46-c.120 AD), who must have known nothing about Egyptian, in his *Isis and Osiris*. Other writers, like Clement of Alexandria (c.200 AD, in *Stromateis*) were at least aware that some hieroglyphics were phonetic and mundane. A more sensible account might have been expected in the *Hieroglyphica* of the Egyptian Horapollo (late 5th century AD), but, unfortunately, this was not a systematic grammar book or lexicon. Accurate meanings are combined with allegorical explanations, in a period when use of hieroglyphics themselves had already lapsed.

Surviving ancient literature, then, did not contain accounts of facts that must have been familiar to many Greeks and Romans, i.e. that hieroglyphics wrote the Egyptian language and could simply translate, for instance, a Greek text -- as on the Rosetta Stone. This confused picture could then produce grotesque speculations, like the "translation" by

Athanasius Kircher (in his *Prodromus Coptus sive Aegyptiacus* of 1636) of the name of the king Apriês, of the XXVI Dynasty, as "the benefits of the divine Osiris are to be produced by means of sacred ceremonies and of the chain of the Genii, in order that the benefits of the Nile may be obtained." On the other hand, Kircher already had good information about Coptic, the surviving Egyptian language written in the Greek alphabet, which in the fullness of time would be one of the keys for the true decipherment of hieroglyphics.

## The Archaic or Early Dynastic Period of Egypt

The trouble with the earliest days of Egyptian history is that there isn't much history. We know from pictorial representations, like the Na'rmer Palette, as well as from later sources, that Upper Egypt was conquering Lower Egypt. The details, however, are lost.

It has even taken a while to identify the king who traditionally was said to be the first king of a united Egypt, Mênês (in Greek). Na'rmer, evidently assuming the distinctive crown of Lower Egypt, was a good candidate, but then a tablet of Horus 'Ah.a appears to use the hieroglyph mn, "endure," as a name. Although the argument about this has been going on for years, it looks like more people than not now accept that this is where the name "Mênês" comes from, and that Horus 'Ah.a was the first king of a united Egypt. Nevertheless, Na'rmer and the previous "Scorpion" king are given in the I Dynasty here just because the line of kings is certain to antedate the unification of the country. "Mênês" does not need to start the Dynasty. This argument over names is complicated by the incomplete development of hieroglyphic writing at the time. Partaking as much of the nature of cartoons as of linguistic representation, Egyptian writing at this point poses many of the same problems of interpretation as Aztec codices or Mayan inscriptions.

The "Scorpion" King has recently become the subject of fantastic a-historical movies (e.g. *The Mummy Returns*, 2001, and *The Scorpion King*, 2002) and a matter of increasing archaeological interest with some new discoveries. There may even have been more than one Scorpion King, with an earlier Scorpion I as long ago as 3250 BC. With a "Scorpion" tomb at Abydos, it may be that this traditional city of Osiris united Upper Egypt by conquering the power, perhaps of the god Seth, based in the city of Naqâda, across the great bend in the Nile from which the Coptos road leads to the Red Sea. The relationship of this conflict to the later twin capitals of Nekhen and Nekheb (Hierakonpolis and El Kâb), further up the River, is more obscure. That tomb itself has yielded matter that may be of revolutionary importance. Precursors of writing, abundant in Mesopotamia, have hitherto been missing in Egypt. Now the Scorpion King has provided them, with what look like many small pictorial tabs, very unlike in form and material from what existed in Sumer. Hopefully new discoveries will expand on this novel window into Egyptian pre-history. Meanwhile, Kings like the Scorpion and Na'rmer are sometimes assigned to a "Dynasty Zero," probably much the horror of ordinalists everywhere.

All these kings are titled "Horus." The queens, on the other hand, seem to be titled "Neith," after the goddess familiar at Sais in later centuries. This has overtones of a political marriage between an Upper Egyptian king and a Lower Egyptian princess; but this inference is about as far as we can go with it.

The cult symbol of Neith, crossed arrows, occurs later associated with the goddess Athena in Mycenaean Linear B tablets. The identity of the two goddesses is mentioned by Plato, "a goddess whose Egyptian name is Nêith, and in Greek, as they assert, Athênâ" [Timaeus 21e]. Since goddesses such as Athena are, one suspects, pre-Greek, even Minoan, an ancient connection between Crete and the Egyptian Delta is not beyond consideration. How Plato would know, or guess, about this is a good question.

When W.B. Emery excavated the I Dynasty necropolis at Saqqara, just outside the new capital at Memphis (Mn Nfr, "Enduring Beauty"), he thought he had found royal tombs of the period. Since I Dynasty royal tombs were also known from Abydos, the sacred city of Osiris, this posed a difficulty. Emery concluded that the Abydos tombs, which often were smaller, were cenotaphs, created out of deference for the sacred and traditional location. The Saqqara tombs are flat and oblong, "mastaba" tombs, with a distinctive, palace-like and Sumerian looking façade --

which we also see in the serekh or the square frame, topped by the hawk of Horus, for the name of the king. Some of the tombs seem to include the burial of retainers, killed to attend the king in the afterlife, like similar practices in contemporary Sumer (and later in Shang China). However, opinion now seems to have swung against the Saqqara tombs being the actual royal burials, or even having been royal tombs at all, and attribution has been made for some of them to specific Court individuals. To me, this seems stranger than the idea that there were cenotaphs at Adydos (or that the Saqqara tombs are cenotaphs). To have people, even royal relatives, building great (for the period) tombs, larger than the royal tombs, within sight of the capital of Egypt, seems wholly bizarre and out of line with all later Egyptian practice. That III Dynasty royal tombs are at Saqqara is unquestioned, and it was always thought that the wall around Djoser's pyramid complex was simply the distinctive façade of the I Dynasty tombs made large. Now this comparison would seem to lapse, unless the I Dynasty tombs represent something upon which everyone has failed to reckon. I await developments.

**FIRST DYNASTY GENERAL:** There is no army or navy; men and vessels are commandeered as the need arises. The nomes become administrative districts. The king's cemetery is at Helwan.

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### **FIRST DYNASTY: 3110 - 2890**

**MENES, Mena, Meni, Min, Aha - The Fighting Hawk**

Menes is one of the archaic Egyptian kings bearing the name Scorpion. Some sources say he was the son of Narmer while others say he was Narmer. There is no tangible proof either way. Menes was the founding king of the 1st Dynasty, and was considered to be the first king to unify Upper and Lower Egypt into one kingdom. Whether unification was achieved by military or peaceful means is uncertain, though many suspect it was by war and administrative measures.

Menes founded the city of Memphis, near modern day Cairo. He chose as its location an island in the Nile, so that it would be easy to defend. He was also the founder of Crocodopolis where he and built the first temple to the god Ptah. During his time, the Egyptian army performed raids against the Nubians in the south and expanded his sphere of influence as far as the First Cataract. He sent ambassadors to Canaan and Byblos in Phoenicia to establish peaceful commercial trade links. He introduces a code of gold values (the "Code of Menes") in relationship with silver: Gold = 2.5 parts silver.

According to Manetho, Menes was killed by a hippopotamus or by crocodiles after a 62 year reign. His was buried at Saqqara, the necropolis of Memphis. Excavations at Saqqara, the cemetery for Memphis, have revealed that the earliest royal tomb located there belongs to the reign of Menes. His wife Neithotep became regent until his son Djer, was old enough to reign.

**AHA, Iti, Athothis.**

Aha was the second king of the first Dynasty. There are few records for his reign. He campaigned against the Nubians – i.e., he conducted a war in the northern Sudan or it was he who extended the southern boundary of Egypt beyond Gebel es-Lilsila to the Nubian nome terminating at Elephantine. His main preoccupation was to consolidate the work of his predecessor in unifying the country and to establish the authority of the Double Crown over the whole length of the Nile Valley from the First Cataract to the Mediterranean coast.

Anxious to placate the conquered northerners, he places on record the foundation of a temple to Neith, the goddess of Sais. According to Manetho, Athothis is the author of some works on anatomy.

**DJER - Horus who Succours Rules about 47 years.**

Djer was the third king of the first Dynasty, when the crown still resided at Memphis. He was the son of Menes and one of his lesser ranked wives, a woman named Hent. Heiroglyphs on Ivory and wood labels from Abydos and Saqqara say he reigned for 57 years. He launched a successful military campaign to fight the Hekssus in Sinai. His name was found in an inscription on the Wadi Halfa, south of the first Cataract, proving the boundaries of his reign. Djer's wife was Queen Herneith. He was buried in a mortuary complex which is called the 'True Grave of the God Osiris'.

**WADJ - King Djet - Horus Cobra**

Horus (hawk) name of Wadj snake over palace facade

Wadj was the fourth king of the first Dynasty. His stela is displayed at the Louvre in Paris. It is made of limestone carved by the sculptor Serekh. The stela was discovered near the ancient city of Abydos where Wadj's mortuary

complex is located. The only other place that Egyptologists found a reference to him was in an inscription near the city of Edfu, to the south of Egypt.

His wife was Queen Mereneith, who acted as mentor and advisor for his son and successor, King Den. Queen Merenith ruled Egypt as regent when Den became king as a child. This essentially meant that she ruled Egypt until he was capable of doing so himself. There are many scholars who think that Merenith was a ruler in her own right. Stone vessels and sealings bearing her name were found at Saqqara, as was a stela with her name written in an archaic form with crossed arrows signifying the name of Neith. Merenith has two burial sites, one at Abydos and one at Saqqara (Mastaba 3503). The Saqqara tomb contains some artifacts that show the name of a high court official called Seshemka. The Abydos burial complex is amongst those of the kings of her dynasty. A stela had her name blended with royal emblems, as did her coffin.

#### DEN - Horus who Strikes

Den ruled Egypt from 55 to 60 years after Wadj. He was an energetic and athletic person, and was artistic as well. He conducted military campaigns in the Sinai desert in order to gain control of the mineral deposits there. He was buried at Saqqara, even though he built his mortuary complex in Abydos. The cult of Apis was introduced during his reign. He figures in the Ebers papyrus as well as the Berlin medical Papyrus. Den was militarily active in the Sinai, which was justified by his interest in protecting the mineral resources of the peninsula. His mortuary complex was built in the ancient city of Abydos, but his body was buried at Saqqara.

#### ANEDJIB - Safe is his Heart

Anedjib was the sixth king during the 1st dynasty. He kept Memphis as his capitol city throughout his seven years of rule. Anedjib's crown carried the symbols of both Upper and Lower Egypt, a representation of the unification of the country under his power. Historians, however, doubt that Anedjib really controlled the north, due to the fact that the northern Nomes rebelled against him constantly throughout his reign. His wife, Queen Betrest, was the mother of King Semerkhet, who was his successor. The queen provided Anedjib with legitimacy and power since she was a descendant from the Memphite royal line. Order broke down during his reign when conflicting factions caused changes that would end this great dynasty. The practice of subsidiary burial where retainers were killed in order to serve the ruler in the afterlife ceased after the reign of Qa'a.

#### SEMERKHET

Semerkhet was the seventh king of the 1st Dynasty. He was the son of King Anedjib and Queen Betrest, and for unknown reasons, only ruled for about eight years. He is thought by some to have been a usurper.

According to Manetho disasters occurred during his reign. He may have caused the unrest during Anedjib's reign. He is responsible for erasing Anedjib's name from stone vases. A little black stela bearing his name is the only direct evidence found.

#### QA'A - His Arm is Raised

Qa'a is the last king of the first Dynasty. He is mentioned on jar sealings and two damaged stela. One of these stela he is shown wearing the White Crown of Upper Egypt and being embraced by the God Horus. According to Manetho he reigned for about 25 years. He was buried at Abydos in the tomb designated Tomb Q. A German archaeological expedition in 1993 re-excavated the tomb and discovered that several alterations had been made in the tomb.

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Something serious seems to have happened in the transition from the I to the II Dynasty, but we are at a loss to say what it was. The line of tombs at Saqqara abruptly ends, and the epigraphic sources, miserable as they were, become more so. So there seems to be some kind of compromise to the authority or the power of the kings. Soon another indication emerges. The fourth king, Sekhemib, abandons his name and Horus title and becomes a "Seth" king with a new name (Peribsen). The serekh is now topped by the dog of Seth rather than the hawk of Horus. This could reasonably be taken to indicate some kind of religious conflict or revolution. No contemporary evidence of the next three kings occurs. This can be taken to mean that they never existed, or it could be taken to mean that the country was so disrupted that too little in the kings' names was made to survive.

**SECOND DYNASTY GENERAL:** The office of Vizier makes its first appearance. With the invention of the potter's wheel, the production of carved stone-ware begins to decline.

## **SECOND DYNASTY: 2890 – 2670**

**HOTEPSEKHEMWHY** - 'Pleasing in Powers'

He was the first king of the Second Dynasty. His name is a reference to the gods Horus and Seth "The Two Mighty Ones at Rest". The king ruled Ancient Egypt for more than thirty five years. During his era, an earthquake hit the vicinity of Bubastis in the Nile Delta. Some historians say that his brother started a military coup and threw him out of power. He sends expeditions to Byblos, Phoenicia, for cedar logs.

Information about him has been identified only by some sealings discovered at Sakkara near the Pyramid of Unas. He may have been given his name which translates as 'Pleasing in Powers' for having ended the political strife that occurred during the 1st Dynasty. His rule may have been as long as 35 years and may have been ended by a military coup organized by his brother.

**RENEB** - Re is the Lord

Reheb was the second king in the 2nd Dynasty. He controlled Egypt after a coup to overthrow his brother. He is thought to have ruled for 39 years. Many sealings found at Sakkara and a stela located at Abydos bear his name. Reheb had, according to Manetho, initiated the worship of the sacred goat of Mendes.

**NINETJER** - Godlike

Ninetjer was the third king of the 2nd Dynasty. Memphis was his capitol. He ruled ancient Egypt for almost 40 years (other sources say between 45 and 47 years). He was famous for his festivals and elaborate temples. He had many festivals dedicated to deities of Egypt - among them the Running of the Apis Bull. The wrecking of the city of Shem-Re is connected to him. The Palermo Stone records a number of events that occurred between the 6th and 26th year of his reign. He reorganized the calendar by beginning a biennial nationwide count (inventory of taxable property) preceded by a "Following of Horus"; a royal tour of inspection.

**The Palermo Stone**

The stone is an ancient Egyptian stone of black diorite engraved toward the end of the 5th dynasty (2565?2420 B.C.) and containing the earliest extant annals. It is only a small fragment of what was once a large slab. It is a hieroglyphic list of the kings of ancient Egypt before and after Menes, with regnal years and notations of events, and also includes such information as the height of the flooding of the Nile in various years. The stone was so named because it is housed in a museum in Palermo, Italy; small pieces of the stone are also in Cairo and in London.

**WENEG**, Wadjnes

Fourth king of the dynasty of whose evidence is rather scarce. His name is inscribed on vases found under the Step Pyramid. His name was misrepresented as Wadjnes ("Green of Tongue" – which in Coptic would be rendered Wetlas) and which Manetho gives as Tlas. Associated with the Solar Cult, his name is significant because a god Weneg is described in the Pyramid Texts of the Fifth and Sixth dynasties as the 'son of Re'. He rules perhaps 19 years.

**SENED**, Wethenes

Fifth king of the dynasty is known from a fragment of an inscribed vase discovered at Giza. There are also inscriptions in the Fourth Dynasty tomb at Saqqara whose owner styles himself 'Overseer of the Priests of Sened in the (Saqqara) necropolis, Shery'. He is listed as Sethenes by Manetho.

**PERIBSEN** - Sekhemib - 'Powerful in Heart'

Peribsen was the sixth king of the 2nd Dynasty. He was actually not the legitimate heir of Ninetejer. In fact, many historians believe that the king was an outsider who instigated a coup against King Ninetejer. King Peribsen used the designation of Seth in his titles. Unfortunately, nothing from Peribsen's era is well documented except for his mortuary complex near Abydos.

He made sweeping political changes. The serekhs bearing the royal names are not surmounted by Horus anymore but by his religious rival, Set, who became the primary royal patron deity. A stela bearing Peribsen's name found at Abydos illustrates this change in loyalties. He may have been a usurper or a member of a collateral branch of the ruling family. Peribsen was buried at Abydos.

**AKA**, or Neferkare

Seventh king of the second dynasty. His name is known only from the Turin Canon and the Saqqara list.

## NEFERKASOKAR

Eighth king of the dynasty. His name is known only from the Turin Canon and the Saqqara list. He rules for about eight years.

## KHASEKHEM

Likely the ninth king of the dynasty. There is speculation that he ruled concurrently with Peribsen, indicating that for a time the country was divided north and south, being divided at Gebelein. He rules for about 21 years.

Known for his military achievements of successes over Nubia in the south. He conducted campaigns in the north, which indicates that the authority of the crown had broken down, perhaps because of the time spent campaigning in the south.

## KHASEKHEMWY - "The Two Powerful Ones Appear"

The last king of the 2nd Dynasty was probably responsible for the unification of Upper and Lower Egypt. Not much is known about him, save the fact that he undertook massive military campaigns. He rules for about 17 years. A statue of him which resides in the Cairo Museum, demonstrates the first use of hard stone work during this period. He is responsible for the construction of a large granite door jamb within the temple of Hierakonpolis, and for the building of many of the mortuary complexes at both Saqqara and Abydos. Under him sea trade with Byblos continued.

He ascended the throne he had to put down a Northern rebellion. The rebels reached as far south as Nekheb and Nekhen, the ancient southern capital. His victory is described on two statues. Both portraits show the king with northerners cringing at his feet wearing the White Crown symbolizing the South. It is recorded that there were more than 47,000 casualties. A statue of him, which resides in the Cairo Museum, is the first example of use of hard stone. He married Nemathap, a woman of royal Northern lineage. The marriage consolidated the kings rule in both regions. Nemathap is documented as being a "King Bearing Mother". She is also credited with being the ancestor of the 3rd Dynasty.

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The Dynasty ends with another interesting turn. Two names occur, "Kha'sekhem," "The Power Arises," and "Kha'sekhemui," "The Two Powers Arise." The serekh of Kha'sekhemui is uniquely topped by both Horus hawk and Seth dog. The inference is irresistible that Kha'sekhem restored the country with a compromise and fusion between the two cults or factions, changing his name to reflect this. The restoration seems to have worked, but not the fusion, since the III Dynasty immediately begins with strong rule but not a hint of Seth again as a royal title. With such mysterious and tantalizing clues, our frustration at the limited evidence is considerable.

The chronology of this period is largely speculative. The figures given, from Clayton, 210 years for each dynasty, add up to about 23 years per reign for the I Dynasty and 26 years per reign for the II Dynasty -- but leaving out the three questionable kings raises that to 42 years per reign. This compares with averages of 18 years per reign for the IV Dynasty, 17 for the V, 26 for the XII, 20 for the XVIII, 14 for the XIX, and only 10 for the XX. The average length of reign in the VI Dynasty is anomalous, 40 years, because of small number of kings and the unusual reign of Pepi II. Thus, 23 years for the I Dynasty is possible, but seems optimistic. On the other hand, 26 years per reign for the II Dynasty sounds suspicious, while 42 years, with the three kings left out (whose reigns must have been short anyway), is really impossible given the unsettled nature of the times and absence of indication, let alone the probability, of another reign as long as Pepi II. A reasonable device would be to use an average of 20 years for the I Dynasty and 15 years for the II. This would put the beginning of the II Dynasty at 2800 and the I Dynasty at 2980. Lengths of 180 years for the I Dynasty and 120 for the II are in the range of variation for Old Kingdom dynasties. [For this work, see A Note on Determining Dates]

W.B. Emery, *Archaic Egypt* [Penguin, 1961]; Sir Alan Gardiner, *Egypt of the Pharaohs* [Oxford, 1966]; Peter A. Clayton, *Chronicle of the Pharaohs* [Thames and Hudson, 1994].

# The Old Kingdom of Egypt

The III Dynasty begins a relatively brief period that has to be one of the most astounding in human history. The small stones that were used in the place of bricks in the elaborate Step Pyramid of Djoser quickly grew into gargantuan blocks weighing many tons, placed with no more apparent difficulty than Lego blocks. In less than two centuries all the really big pyramids were built, during the III but mainly the IV Dynasties. And there is no avoiding or disparaging the fact they were BIG....big beyond the budgets and will, if not actually the technology, of the modern world.

OLD KINGDOM GENERAL: There is no army or navy; men and vessels commandeered as needs arise. Literature: Compilation of religious lore; establishment of a system of enduring records (hieroglyphics). Writing is laconic. contradicting statements put down without attempts at resolution.

THIRD DYNASTY GENERAL: No birth-based chaste system. Vizierate not determined by birth (i.e., membership in a royal family) but on ability: Offices are many and varied; government is growing more centralized. Nobility holds a prominent place at court. Egypt is interested in the Sinai area for its turquoise deposits (and perhaps copper?). Architecture is light in spirit. Experimentation in art and a high level of technical proficiency in sculpture and painting.

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### **THIRD DYNASTY: 2670 - 2600**

The Pharaohs of the Third Dynasty were the first to have actual pyramids constructed as shrines to their deaths. Although crude, these step pyramids were the predecessors to the later Pyramids of Giza and others. The first of these pyramids was designed by Imhotep for Djoser. Prior to, and during the construction of the step pyramids, rulers were buried in a structure called Mastaba.

The Mastaba were non-pyramidal shaped structures which did not contain walls or stone art and closely resembled burial mounds, with long shafts leading down into the tomb area. Sanakhte and Djoser, the first two Pharaohs of this Dynasty, began exploitation of the Sinai Peninsula, which was rich in turquoise and copper. Little else was done by the kings during this dynasty

#### **SANAKHTE - Nebka - Strong Protection**

Sanakht was the founder of the 3rd Dynasty, and was the older brother of King Djoser. His name is listed in the 'Abydos Book of Kings', the 'Turin Canon' and the 'Westcar Papyrus'. He rules less than or up to 19 years. He raids into Sinai against Bedawins to gain Turquoise mines. Monuments at Wadi Maghara. His tomb at Saqqara was incorporated into the Step Pyramid.

#### **DJOSER - Zoser - Netjerykhet - Divine of the Body**

The second king of the 3rd Dynasty was Netjerykhet, the son of Khasekhemwy. He ruled for almost two decades (16 to 19 years) - is accredited with building the Step Pyramid at Saqqara.

The king's vizier, Imhotep, was the architect of that great tomb, and of the magnificent Funerary Complex of Djoser at Saqqara. Egypt experienced a seven year famine during Djoser's reign, so he sought the counsel of Imhotep and one of his governors, Medir, and agreed to travel to Elephantine at Aswan. Once there he erected a temple to the god Khnum, who was said to control the flow of the Nile. The famine ended, miraculously enough, and people believed it was due to this act of faith. Imhotep introduces a new architectural form and techniques of building in stone; i.e., leaning courses to ensure stability as structures reach new heights. He also employs use of larger blocks.

Djoser led several campaigns against Asiatic peoples in Canaan and extended his influence over the copper mines and maintain control over the turquoise mines in Sinai where some graffiti and his serek were found at Wadi Maghara.

#### **SEKHEMKHET - Djoser Teti**

The third king of the third Dynasty. He raids into Sinai against Bedawins. His name is carved on a cliff near Wadi Maghara, Sinai. He rules between six and eight years. The king has an unfinished pyramid at Saqqara with an alabaster coffin inside.

### KHABA - The Soul Appears

Khaba was the fourth king during the 3rd Dynasty. His rule is between four and six years. Egyptologists discovered his name carved into the walls of Sahure's tomb. His name was also found at the stone bowl in Naqada. The Layer Pyramid at Zawiet el-Aryan, in the desert of Giza, is believed to be his resting place.

### The Zawiyat el-Aryan Pyramids

These pyramids are about halfway between Giza and North Saqqara. There are two pyramids located here and can only be reached by riding through the desert. The most southern of the two is probably a 3rd Dynasty step pyramid. The granite of the other is probably from the 4th Dynasty. This pyramid appears to have been abandoned after its foundations had been laid.

### HUNI - The Smiter

Huni was the fifth and last Egyptian King of the 3rd Dynasty. His rule lasts for about 25 years. Not much is clear about his reign as much of his work was completed by his son and heir King Snefru. The writing of the name Huni is found in the Turin Papyrus and Saqqara king list, but not in the Abydos king list.

Probably during his reign Vizier Kagemni writes *Admonitions to the Vizier Kagemni* – advice on how to get on in the world and how to behave in the presence of equals or those who are superior or inferior. Good manners, truth and justice are emphasized.

Huni is responsible for the construction of a fort at Elephantine Island, Aswan. His wife was Queen Meresankh I was the mother of Snefru. Huni built a Pyramid at Meidum on the edge of the Faiyum. However, it is still in dispute whether the Pyramid of Meidum was started by Huni and later finished by the Pharaoh Snefru, or whether Snefru started the Pyramid of Meidum. Unique to the pyramid; however, is the first square ground plan. This was an architectural invention which lasted well into the future of Egyptian pyramids.

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Seth was now forgotten in the royal cult. Tombs are again built at Saqqara, and the palace façade of the I Dynasty tombs (royal or not), although returning in stone with Djoser, disappears forever by the time of the IV Dynasty.

Plenty of people still find it hard to believe that the mere Egyptians, at such a time, could have done anything of the sort. Something miraculous, or at least extraterrestrial, seems called for. Unfortunately for such theories, the Egyptians, although leaving no contemporary record of their techniques, did leave some of their tools in the limestone quarries and quarry marks from the work gangs on many blocks (from which the organization of the gangs can be reconstructed), and, before too long, the tombs of nobles responsible for later projects begin to show us the means of their realization. Sadly, the III and IV Dynasty tombs do not yet show that, and the whole period is gravely lacking in inscriptions, especially in comparison to the thoroughness with which the Egyptians later covered every surface available. Where at Karnak hardly a square foot goes without the name of the king who had it made, the major pyramids never bothered to officially display the names of their owners. We are reduced to the few remaining quarrymen's marks, given fortunately in regal years, to positively identify several pyramids. Only one such mark survives (on accessible surfaces) to identify the Great Pyramid of Khufu, as only one small figure survives to represent the king himself.

The real mystery of the IV Dynasty is not so much how Khufu could have built his pyramid on such a scale but how his father, Seneferu, could, apparently, have done three of them nearly as big, one at Meidum and two at Dahshur, all within sight of each other. The pyramid at Meidum was begun as a step pyramid, perhaps by Huni of the III Dynasty (although evidence of this is missing, Huni is usually credited with a long enough reign to have completed a large pyramid), but was then certainly finished as a true pyramid, with the steps filled in, by Seneferu. Why this was done is a good question, but one thing for certain is that it was not done well. The structure was unstable. At some point the outer parts actually collapsed, leaving the core looking rather like a huge cube. The first pyramid at Dahshur, the "Bent Pyramid," was then begun as a true pyramid from scratch, but it too had stability problems, and had to be finished with a flattened top. The full mastery of the medium then appears in the third pyramid, with a good foundation, larger blocks, and successful completion. The whole technique of truly large scale construction thus rapidly evolved in just one reign. Seneferu seems to have had money to spend, time to spare (in 24 some years),

and a very clear end in mind. A shame he can't tell us about it.

One key feature we should note about the pyramid building is that the quarries for the finest limestone were on the opposite side of the Nile from the pyramid sites, and that the quarries for all the granite were far up the Nile at Aswan (rough internal blocks for the pyramids were quarried nearby). This means that the best time to move all that rock to the pyramid sites was during the season of the Flood, when the Nile would be the widest and deepest.

Indeed, an essential part of all pyramid architecture was the dock at the edge of the desert, i.e. at the high water mark, with a causeway leading up to the pyramid foundation. It is not hard to imagine the government of Egypt impressing all the farmers idled by the Flood into a great effort to move a year's worth of stone up and/or across the Nile. The rest of the year, the more skilled stone masons would work to place the blocks, or would quarry the rougher, interior stone for the pyramids adjacent to the sites.

Another feature we should note is that the Old Kingdom kings of Egypt did not, as far as we know, engage in the scale of foreign military adventures that become familiar in later dynasties. Many countries have impoverished themselves through war -- Louis XIV's gratuitous wars may have ultimately brought on the French Revolution -- but Seneferu through Menkaure focused the whole resources of their state on building their tombs. Not even the Egyptians were long able to keep that up.

**FOURTH DYNASTY GENERAL:** The king at Memphis holds absolute power. The vizierate is restricted to blood ties with the king. The vizier holds a concentration of the highest administrative duties. Architecture is trending toward heavier monumentality. Sculpture attains kingly majesty yet human individuality is superficially eliminated. Modeling is superb but simple – the sculptor's material is mastered.

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## **FOURTH DYNASTY: 2600 - 2490**

**SNEFRU - Snofru**

The first king of the 4th Dynasty was an active military leader. He ruled for 24 years. His campaigns against the Nubians and the Libyans are recorded on the Palermo Stone. He began trade with the Mediterranean nations and initiated a series of construction projects throughout Egypt. In order to supply Egypt with timber, he sent a fleet of forty ships to Lebanon. While there, he erected monuments to commemorate the event. For the first time cattle are figured in the census. He carries out expeditions against the Nubians, Libyans and into Sinai. He establishes control over Nubia. Begins the practice of governing through his family. The vizierate is given to nobles who may covet the throne.

He built his mortuary complex at Dashur, including the Maidum Pyramid, the Bent Pyramid, and the Red Pyramid. The Bent Pyramid is thought to be an architectural link between the Step Pyramid and the true pyramids. Snefru was deified by the kings of the 12th Dynasty. Many of the rulers of that time built their own mortuary complexes beside his.

**CHEOPS - Khufu - Suphis - Protected by Khnum**

Cheops was the second king of the 4th Dynasty and was the builder of the Great Pyramid of Giza and founder of the Giza Plateau near modern Cairo and Memphis. Unlike his grandfather Huni, and his father Sneferu, both of whom were remembered as benevolent and compassionate rulers, Khufu was reported by Herodotus to have been a cruel despot. He was an autocratic ruler, holding absolute control over a unified country. Full use of the land's productivity is utilized.

Khufu's Horus name was Medjedu, and his full birth-name was Khnum-Khufu, meaning, "the god Khnum protects me." Khnum was considered the local god of Elephantine, near the first Nile cataract, who created mankind on his "potter's wheel" and was also responsible for the proper flooding of the Nile. Khufu may have been already on in years when he took the throne. His kinsman and vizier, Hemiunu, was also the architect of the Great Pyramid. Khufu's senior wife was named Merityotes, and she and his other two wives were each buried in one of the three smaller subsidiary pyramids that lie just south of the mortuary temple of the main pyramid.

Khufu had several sons, among them Kawab, who would have been his heir, Khufukhaf, Minkhaf, and Djedefhor, Djedefre and Khephren or Khafre. The so-called Papyrus Westcar contains tales of some of these sons.

Though the Great Pyramid somehow represents the very essence of "ancient Egypt," the King for whom it was built as a tomb has left little recorded information of his actual reign. Khufu probably reigned for 23 or 24 years. There is evidence that he sent expeditions to the Sinai, and worked the diorite stone quarries deep in the Nubian desert, north-west of Abu Simbel. He also campaigned against the Bedawins of Sinai. During his reign is written *Tales of King Cheops and the Magicians*.

Inscriptions on the rocks at Wadi Maghara record the presence of his troops there to exploit the turquoise mines, and a very faint inscription at Elephantine indicates that he probably mined the red granite of Aswan as well. Herodotus, who wrote his histories and commentaries on Egypt around 450 BCE, centuries after Khufu had reigned around 2585 BCE, recorded this about the King: Kheops brought the country into all kinds of misery. He closed the temples, forbade his subjects to offer sacrifices, and compelled them without exception to labor upon his works the Egyptians can hardly bring themselves to mention Kheops so great is their hatred.

It was even said that Khufu set one of his daughters into a brothel so that she could raise revenue to build the pyramid, also asking each client for a block of stone so she could build her own pyramid. No evidence exists for such a story, though there are smaller pyramids which probably belonged to half-sister/wives of Khufu, and he did have at least three daughters of record. Even prior to Herodotus, the author of the document now known as the Papyrus Westcar depicts Khufu as cruel. The text was inscribed in the Hyksos period prior to the 18th Dynasty, though its composition seems to date from the 12th Dynasty. One story, Kheops and the Magicians, relates that a magician named Djedi who can reputedly bring back the dead to life. He is presented to Khufu, who orders a prisoner brought to him, so that he may see a demonstration of the magician's talents. Khufu further orders that the prisoner should be killed, and then Djedi can bring him back to life. When Djedi objects, the King relents his initial decision, and Djedi then demonstrates his talent on a goose. It should be noted that while Khufu has acquired this reputation, accurate or not, the years and labor that went into building his Pyramid tomb was surpassed by the three pyramids built by his father Sneferu, who was contrarily remembered as an amiable ruler.

The Great Pyramid originally stood 481 feet high complete with its original casing, but since it lost its top 30 feet, it stands only 451 feet now. It covers about 13 acres. The exterior casing was shining white limestone, laid from the top downwards. It was largely robbed in the Middle Ages to build medieval Cairo. Nothing now remains of the limestone mortuary temple, which was 171 feet by 132 feet, except its black basalt floor. The complex's valley temple has disappeared under the Arab village, though traces of this temple could be seen when new sewer systems were being laid down.

Along with the pyramid itself, the remains of a magnificent 141-foot long ship of cedar wood had also been found in a rock-cut pit close to the south side of the Great Pyramid. A second ship may also rest in a second sealed pit, though not in as good condition as this first. The ship was restored over many years, and now lies in a special museum built near the pyramid itself. The ship may have symbolized the solar journey of the deceased king with the gods, particularly the sun-god Ra.

It is ironic indeed that for all the magnificence of his pyramid, his funeral boat, and the wonders of the funerary furnishings that were discovered belonging to his mother, Queen Hetepheres, wife to Sneferu, the only portrait we have of Khufu is a tiny 3-inch high statue sculpted in ivory. During his 15th year of rule, thieves break into Hetepheres' tomb; he establishes a secret one at Giza.

It may have been once easy to contemplate the builder of such a monument as the Great Pyramid to have virtually enslaved his people to accomplish it, and to order a royal princess to prostitute herself. Sneferu, Khufu's father, had three separate pyramids built during his reign. Surely the workmen or nobles would have left some evidence of their dissatisfaction at least at the whimsicality of their sovereign if not his despotism. Yet Sneferu is remembered as amiable and pleasure-loving. And Khafre, Khufu's son, left not only a pyramid but quite possibly a Sphinx as well. And history, or at least, historians, do not record Khafre is being a despot.

Continuing work at Giza is further showing that the men responsible for the building of the pyramids led normal lives. They baked bread, ate fish, made offerings to their blessed dead and the gods, and cared for their families. They left funerary stelae and tombs behind to give us an indication of how they considered their lot. It is more likely that the Greeks could less easily conceive of such a project of long-term labor as being anything but forced. Perhaps some archaeologist millennia in our own future may find rusted iron skeletons of some of our finest skyscrapers and wonder to what cruel overlords we owed the sweat of our own forced labor.

#### RADJEDEF - Djedefra - Enduring Like Re

Radjedef was the third king of the 4th Dynasty. He was the son of Khufu from one of his lesser wives, and killed his own brother, Prince Kewab, who was the rightful heir to the throne. He married Hetepheres, who was the widow of his murdered brother. His chief wife was Kentetenka. His pyramid was discovered at Abu Rowash in Giza and had not been completed.

CHEPHREN - Khafre - Khephren - Rakhaef - Chephren - Suphis II - Appearing Like Re.

The fourth king of the 4th Dynasty was Khafre (Chephren), the son of Khufu. He becomes king after the viziers Minkhaf, Ankhhaf and Nefermaat depose Radjedef. He adopts the title "Son of Re". He built the Pyramid of Chephren (second largest) and the Great Sphinx next to his father's pyramid at Giza. The sphinx appears to be guarding his pyramid which is called 'Khafre is Great'.

Egypt was prosperous during his reign, but Khafre is best remembered for his pyramid and the sphinx. Khafre's mummy has been lost, but his mortuary temple at Giza yielded one of the finest extant Old Kingdom statues - an almost undamaged life-size seated diorite figure of the king enjoying the protection of the god Horus. A statue of Khafre under the protective shadow of a falcon is in the Cairo Museum.

#### BAUFRE

A son of Cheops and brother of Hordedef. He is known from the mastaba of a prince whose name is lost which adjoins that of Hordedef on the east at Giza. A cult was established for him. Baufre's rule lasted perhaps up to four years, but he is considered a usurper and probably lasted only one or a few months.

#### MYCERINUS - Menkure - Menhaure - Eternal Like the Souls of Re

Menkaure with his wife Khamerernebty II appearing as Hathor and the goddess of the seventeenth nome of Egypt. The fifth king of the 4th dynasty was the son of Khephren and Khamerernebty I. Menkaure is the son of Khafre and the grandson of Khufu of Dynasty IV. He bore the titles Kakheth and Hornub. There are doubts that Menkaure could be the son of Khafre, because the Turin Papyrus mentioned a name of a king between Menkaure and Khafre, but the name was smashed. A Middle Kingdom text written on a rock at Wadi Hamamat includes the names of the kings: Khufu, Djedefre, Khafre, Hordedef and Baufre. This text indicates to some that Hordedef and Baufre ruled after Khafre. But it seems that their names were not written as kings because Menkaure's names were not mentioned. It has been suggested that Hordedef's name was mentioned because he was a wise educated man in this period and perhaps Baufre was a vizier.

He built the smallest pyramid at the Giza plateau, and is called Menkaure is Divine. Menkaure's pyramid is two-tone in color: the top half covered with bright white limestone casing, while red Aswan granite was used for the casing on the bottom. El-Makrizi, the Arab historian named Menkaure's pyramid as the colored pyramid because of the red granite casing. The pyramid stands 66.5m high, which is much smaller than the other two pyramids at Giza. The pyramid is remarkable because it is the only pyramid in Dynasty IV that was cased in 16 layers of granite, Menkaure planned to cover the surface with granite but he could not because of his sudden death; the pyramid was left incomplete.

The pyramid complex of Menkaure was completed by his son and successor Shepseskaf but the temples has architectural additions which were made during Dynasties V and VI. This suggests that the cult of Menkaure was very important and perhaps differed from the cults of Khufu and Khafre. Shepseskaf completed the pyramid complex with mud brick and left an inscription inside the Valley Temple indicating that he built the temple for the memory of his father.

At the pyramid's entrance, there is an inscription records that Menkaure died on the twenty-third day of the fourth month of the summer and that he built the pyramid. It is thought that this inscription dates to the reign of Khaemwas, son of Ramesses II. The name of Menkaure found written in red ochre on the ceiling of the burial chamber in one of the subsidiary pyramids.

When pyramid was explored in the 1830's, a lidless basalt sarcophagus was found in the burial chamber. Inside it was a wooden mummiform coffin inscribed with Menkaure's name. This is curious because mummiform coffins weren't made until much later. Best guess is that the coffin was provided in an attempted restoration during the 26th dynasty (that's 2000 years later!) when there was a renewed interest in the culture of the Old Kingdom.

The wooden coffin and basalt sarcophagus were sent on separate ships to England to end up on display in the British Museum, but a storm at sea sank the boat that was transporting the sarcophagus. It sank to the bottom of the sea and was never recovered. The sarcophagus was supposedly lost in the Mediterranean between ports of Cartagena and Malta when the ship "Beatrice" sank after setting sail on October 13, 1838. There still exists the wooden anthropoid coffin found inside the pyramid which bears the name and titles of Menkaure.

Menkaure's main queen was Khamerernebty II, who is portrayed with him in a group statue found in the Valley Temple. It is believed that she is buried in Giza. Menkaure ruled for 18 years. There are two inscriptions found in his pyramid complex. The first was a decree bearing the Horus name of Merenre of Dynasty VI. The decree stated that the Valley Temple was in use until the end of the Old Kingdom. The objects found in some of the storage

rooms of the temples show that the king's cult was maintained and that the temple had a dual function as a temple and a palace.

The second decree of Pepi II was found on the lower temple vestibule, awarding privileges to the priests of the pyramid city. In the adjacent open court and in the area just east of the temple lie the remains of the Old Kingdom houses. Pepi II's decree indicates that these houses belonged to the pyramid city of Menkaure. Here lived the personnel responsible for maintaining the cult of the deceased king.

The statuary program found inside the complex displays the superb quality of arts and crafts. The triads in Menkaure's valley temple suggest that his pyramid complex was dedicated to Re, Hathor, and Horus. In addition, they show the king's relationship with the gods and are essential to his kingship, indicating both a temple and palace function. The textual evidence indicates that the high officials had more privileges in his reign than in any other period. They had many statues in their tombs; the inscriptions and the scenes increased and were set on rock-cut tombs. In the tomb of Debhen an inscription was found describing the kindness of Menkaure. When Debhen came to visit the king's pyramid, he asked the king for permission to build his tomb near the pyramid. The king agreed and even ordered that stones from the royal quarry in Tura should be used in building his tomb. The text also mentions that the king stood on the road by the Hr pyramid inspecting the other pyramid. The name "Hr" was also found written in the tomb of Urkhuu at Giza, who was the keeper of a place belonging to the Hr pyramid. It is not clear what the Hr pyramid is. Is it a name of a subsidiary pyramid, or the name of the plateau? The Debhen texts is a revelation of how the king tried to inspire loyalty by his people giving them gifts.

Menkaure also had a new policy - he opened his palace to the children of his high officials. They were educated and raised with the king's own children. Shepsesbah is one of those children. The textual and archaeological evidence of the Old Kingdom indicates that the palace of the king was located near his pyramid and not at Memphis. Menkaure explored granite from Aswan and he sent expeditions to Sinai. Excavations under the author revealed a pair of statues of Ramses II on the south side of Menkaure's pyramid. The statues were made of granite, and one represents Ramses as king while the other as Atum-Re.

The name of Menkaure was found written on scarabs dated to the 26th Dynasty, which may imply that he was worshipped in this period. Herodotus mentioned that Menkaure died suddenly and added that there was an oracle from the Buto statue that foretold that he would live for 6 years. Menkaure started to drink, and enjoy every moment of his remaining years. However, Menkaure lived for 12 years, thus disproving the prophecy. Herodotus also said that his daughter committed suicide. The Greek historian also wrote that the Egyptians loved Menkaure more than his father and grandfather. The Late Period tales were based on Menkaure's reputation during the Old Kingdom. He ruled with justice, gave freedom to his officials to carve statues and make offerings, and stopped the firm rules.

**SHEPSESKAF – Shepsesykhet - 'His Soul is Noble'**

Shepseskaf was the sixth king of the 4th Dynasty.

Pharaoh Menkaure has died after an 18 year long reign. His son and heir by queen Khamerernebt II, the young Prince Khuenre, has tragically died before he could take to the throne. Menkaure is therefore succeeded by Shepseskaf, a son of Menkaure by an unknown minor wife. Although a half brother to Prince Khuenre, he was not an ideal choice for the role of Pharaoh, as he is not of complete royal blood. His major wife was Bunefer. He has no known sons and one daughter, Khamaat.

He was in power for just a short period of time, about four years. This was another difficult political period, during which there were many confrontations with various priests. Many desired independence and rebelled against Shepseskaf's authority. Shepseskaf completed his father Menkaure's Pyramid. He chose not to be buried in a Pyramid and as he returned to Saqqara after most of his 4th Dynasty predecessors had either preferred Dashur in the South (Snofru) or Abu Rawash (Djedefre) and Giza (Kheops, Khefren and Mykerinos) in the North to build their funerary monuments. This return to Saqqara has often been interpreted more as a distancing of Giza and of the supposedly oppressive politic followed by Kheops and Khefren, but there are, in fact, no valid arguments that support this theory.

Whatever Shepseskaf's motivations for returning to Saqqara may have been, it is perhaps also telling that he moved to an area in Saqqara that does not appear to have been used before: Saqqara-South. In fact, his tomb is the southern-most royal tomb of Saqqara. Even in the choice of his funerary monument, Shepseskaf chose not to follow the standard established by his ancestors. His tomb consists of a mastaba-shaped superstructure with a small mortuary temple to the east. No satellite or queen's pyramids appear to have been built.

The mastaba, which has earned this monument the name Mastabat el-Fara'un, was 99.6 meters long and 74.4 meters broad. It was originally encased in limestone, except for its base course, which was in granite. It had a slope of 70° and certainly was shaped like a shrine: a rounded top flanked by two almost vertical walls. The mastaba

is entered from the north side, from where a corridor descends for 20.95 meters with a slope of 23°30'. At the end of the passage is a horizontal corridor passage followed by a second passage blocked by three portcullises and an antechamber. A short passage to the west goes down into the vaulted burial chamber that measures 7.79 by 3.85 meters and has a height of 4.9 meters. Fragments of the sarcophagus indicate that it was made of a hard dark stone and decorated like Mykerinos'. To the south of the antechamber a corridor extends with 6 niches to the east, again similar to the niches found in the pyramid of Mykerinos. The mastaba is enclosed within two mudbrick walls: the first also incorporates a small mortuary temple that had some open courts, an offering hall and a false door, flanked by 5 magazines. The long causeway that extended towards the east has not (yet) been excavated.

After Shepseskaf died, Khentkawes, another child of Menkaure by a minor wife and Shepseskaf's half-sister, married a nobleman named Userkaf, who was the great grandson of Pharaoh Khufu. Upon his marriage to Pharaoh Shepseskaf's half sister Khentkawes, Userkaf was in a strong enough position to be crowned Pharaoh over all Egypt, and begin the 5th Dynasty of Kings.

DEDEFPTAH – Thampthis – Ptahdedef.

Possibly a usurper, he rules not more than two years. Nothing is known of him but his placement here gives an agreement between Manetho and the Turin Canon for eight kings of the Fourth Dynasty. The Saqqara list appears to have nine kings.

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The Fifth Dynasty, indeed, ushered in an era of less colossal, but also more articulated, works. The mortuary temples became larger and more elaborate, private tombs began to tell the everyday stories of the time (though without the kind of historical narrative that we would like), and soon the pyramids themselves acquired a voice, as the "Pyramid Texts," starting in the pyramid of Unas, related the perils of the voyage to the afterlife.

**FIFTH DYNASTY GENERAL:** Growth of importance of provincial families, weakening centralized control of Upper Egypt from Memphis. Growing preference for the cults of Re and Hathor. Great expansion of trade, possibly reaching Crete. Large scale art and architecture begins to diminish as increasing wealth enables more people to engage craftsmen and artists: Wide range of materials in use; copper, limestone, basalt, alabaster, gold, etc. Literature: "Memphite Drama" of continuous narrative with stage direction, is concerned with the magnification of the god Ptah.

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### **FIFTH DYNASTY: 2490 - 2340**

**USERKHAF - Irmaat - "His Soul is Powerful"**

Although he started a new dynasty, Userkaf was a grandson of Djedefre. To secure his hold on Egypt, he married Khentkawes, Menkaure's daughter and half-sister of Shepseskaf. He ruled about seven years. Like his predecessor, he built his funerary complex at Saqqara, which was innovative, in that the mortuary temple was to the south of the pyramid, not to the east, as was traditional. Userkaf returned to the more traditional pyramid-tomb. From then on, the dimensions and shape of the pyramid, and the temple connected to it, would become more and more standardized. This is now seen as being due to the increasing importance of the sun god, in the south, the temple would be bathed in the sun's rays throughout the day. When completed, the pyramid was 161 ft (49 m) high and encased in limestone, though the core was sloppily built and therefore crumbled when this casing was removed by robbers. Although the complex is now ruined and largely inaccessible, limited excavations there have produced a huge pink granite head of Userkaf. Userkaf also built the first of the Solar Temples of Abu-Gurob. He continues the priesthood for Nyhkaankh, the son of Khenuka.

Userkaf, as the originator of the fifth dynasty, clearly felt he should associate himself with one of his great predecessors. To achieve this, he build his pyramid complex at Saqqara, near the northeast corner of that of Djoser. When completed, the pyramid was 161 ft (49 m) high and encased in limestone, though the core was sloppily built and therefore crumbled when this casing was removed by robbers.

Userkaf's pyramid complex is notable for the fact that his mortuary temple is separate from the pyramid itself. Here, the offering chapel is alone on the east side of the structure, with the mortuary temple some distance to the south. This has been seen by some as indicative of a slight change in ideology, the fifth dynasty was more involved with the sun cult at Heliopolis than any previous dynasty, and a building to the south would be bathed in sun throughout the day. Others have proposed a more practical reason, namely that the ground to the east of the pyramid was not stable enough to support any construction placed upon it.

Userkaf was the first pharaoh to build a sun temple; an obelisk on a platform. Named Nekhen-Re ("Stronghold of Re", Re was the sun god), it was probably built in up to four phases, almost certainly completed under different pharaohs. In the first phase, a symbolic mound was constructed in a rectangular enclosure. The second phase took place under Neferirkare, who set a granite obelisk on top of a pedestal building, placing two shrines in front. Later on, Niuserre undertook the third and fourth phases. The third one involved rebuilding the inner enclosure in limestone and extending the outer enclosure, rebuilding the valley temple in the process. The final phase saw the construction of a new, larger altar, along with various embellishments.

SAHURE – Nebkhou - "He Who is Close to Re"

The second king of the 5th Dynasty, Sahure was a son of Khentkaus I, who, in her tomb at Giza, is said to have been the "mother of two kings". His father probably was Userkaf. There are no wives or children known to him and at least no children of his seem to have outlived him, since he was succeeded by his brother.

Like Userkaf, Sahure built a solar-temple, named Sekhet-Re, which has not yet been located. It is sometimes assumed that instead of building his own solar-temple, he in fact modified his father's and gave it another name. The textual evidence however, shows that Sekhet-Re was a different temple that was in use at the same time as Userkaf's. He was the first king to build his pyramid complex at Abusir. It was called Kha-bai-Sahurea and is a few kilometers North of Saqqara. The move to Abusir was perhaps already started by Userkaf, who built his solar-temple there. The reliefs in his mortuary and valley temple depict a counting of foreigners by or in front of the goddess Seshat and the return of a fleet from Asia, perhaps Byblos.

Sahure established the Egyptian navy and sent a fleet to Punt and traded with Palestine. His pyramid at Abusir has colonnaded courts and reliefs of his naval fleet, but his military career consisted mostly of campaigns against the Libyans in the western desert. He campaigned against the Bedawins in Sinai. Reliefs on the walls show evidence for trading expeditions outside Egypt as ships are shown with both Egyptians and Asiatics on board. These ships are part of an expedition to the Lebanon, searching for cedar logs. This is corroborated by inscriptions found in the Lebanon testifying to an expedition there under Sahure. As part of the contacts with the Near-East, the reliefs from his funerary monuments also hold the oldest known representation of a Syrian bear. Trade expeditions are also sent to Punt on the Somali coast.

A relief showing a war against Libya is believed by some to be historical and by others to be merely ritual. The Palermo-stone also mentions expeditions to the Sinai and to the exotic land of Punt, as well as to the diorite quarries North-West of Abu Simbel, thus far into Nubia.

According to the Turin King-list, Sahure ruled for 12 years. The Palermo-stone notes 7 countings, which either indicates a reign of 14 years or that the countings did not occur with a frequency of once every two years.

NEFERIRKARE KAKAI – Userkhau - "Divine of the Body"

Neferirkare was the second son of Khentkaus I to have ruled Egypt. As with his brother Sahure, it is not known whether Userkaf was his father. Neferirkare was married to a name-sake of his mother's, Khentkaus II. It is not unlikely that Khentkaus II too was related to Khentkaus I. At least two children are believed to have been born of this marriage: Neferefre and Niuserre. Other wives and children are not known.

The length of his reign is unfortunately lost on the Turin King-list and the Palermo-stone breaks off after having recorded a 5th counting, which, if the counting occurred every two years, would mean that Neferirkare at least ruled for 10 years. According to Manetho, his rule lasted for 20 years, a number which is not to be generally accepted.

Neferirkare was the first king to have his birth-name made part of the official titulary, thus adding a second cartouche. He was the first king to have employed both a prenomen and nomen (two names and two cartouches), a custom that later kings would follow. He was buried at Abusir, his funerary temples are incomplete. The hieratic papyrus found at his pyramid complex are probably his most notable contributions to Egyptology. They were originally discovered in 1893 by local farmers and consist of 300 papyrus fragments. They remained unpublished for some seventy-five years, even as the first archaeologists were excavating Abusir. Only later did a Czech mission, which explored the site in 1976, take full advantage of these documents.

The Neferirkara archive reveals a world of detailed and very professional administration. Elaborate tables provide monthly rosters of duty: for guarding the temple, for fetching the daily income (or 'offerings') and for performing ceremonies including those on the statues, with a special roster for the important Feast of Seker.

Similar tables list the temple equipment, item by item and grouped by materials, with details of damage noted at a monthly inspection. Other records of inspection relate to doors and rooms in the temple building. The presentation of monthly income is broken down by substance, source and daily amount. The commodities are primarily types of bread and beer, meat and fowl, corn and fruit. They also mention a mortuary temple of a little-

known king, Raneferef, who's tomb was yet to be discovered but thanks to these papyrus, is now known and has yielded significant discoveries. He also completed (or modified) the solar-temple built by Userkaf in Abusir. His own solar-temple, called Set-ib-Re, has yet to be located. He was also the second king to erect his funerary monument at Abusir. The seals and papyri discovered in his mortuary temple give some insights into the functioning of this temple. The documents are dated to the end of the 6th Dynasty, which indicates that the cult for the deceased Neferirkare at least lasted until the end of the Old Kingdom.

#### SHEPSESKARE ISI – Sekhemkhau - "Noble is the Soul of Re"

Little to nothing is known about Shepseskare nor his relationship to the other kings of the 5th Dynasty. According to the Turin King-list, he ruled for seven years. Some seal impressions dated to his reign have been found at Abusir, and these are about the only witnesses of Shepseskare's reign. It is not known whether he built a pyramid or a solar-temple, although the unfinished pyramid located at Abusir between the pyramid of Sahure and the solar-temple of Userkaf, has, by some, been credited to him.

#### NEFEREFRE – Neferkhau - "Beautiful is Re"

The Fifth King of the Fifth Dynasty. Neferefre was the first son of Neferirkare and Khentkaus II to come to the throne. The Turin King-list is too fragmentary to provide us with the length of Neferefre's reign, but he is figured to have ruled around seven years. He built a solar-temple named Hetep-Re, which has not yet been discovered, and, at Abusir, started with the building of his own pyramid complex near that of neferikare. The complex was left unfinished. He also works on Shepseskare's tomb.

#### NYUSERRE - Isetibtowy - " Possessed of Re's Power"

Niuserre was the second son of Neferirkare and Khentkaus II to have ascended to the throne. He was married to a woman named Reputneb (chief queen), of whom a statue was discovered in the valley-temple connected to his and Neferirkare's pyramid complex. It is not known whether he had any children (that out-lived him). He completes the tomb of Shepseskare.

The Turin King-list is somewhat damaged at the point where Niuserre's name is mentioned, and only allows us to state that he ruled for more than 10 years. The 44 years credited to him by Manetho is considered unreliable. The representation of a Sed-festival found in his solar-temple may indicate that he ruled at least for 28 years, with three of them being as a regency. Ptahshepses is high priest of Ptah.

An inscription found in the Sinai shown Niuserre triumphant over his enemies. It is debatable whether this inscription refers to an actual victory of Niuserre, or whether it was merely symbolic. It does, however, show that Niuserre was active in the Sinai, subduing the Bedawin. He built a solar-temple, named Shesepu-ib-re, in Abu Gurab, a kilometer or more to the North of Abusir. Not only is this the biggest and most complete solar-temple, it is also the only one that was constructed completely of stone. The many finely carved reliefs that remain show the king during a Sed-festival and the world as created by the solar god, with representations of the seasons and the provinces of Egypt. With the reign of Niuserre, the solar-cult appears to have come to its summit.

The sanctuary consisted of an entrance hall that was leading to a court of 100x75 m / 330x250 ft. in size which was surrounded by a stone wall. In the middle of the courtyard stood a huge obelisk, a stone that looked like the modern-day Washington Monument. The obelisk was the cultic symbol for Re, the sun-god. The pyramid-complex of Nyuserre is located at Abusir, between the pyramids of Sahure and Neferirkare. Instead of building his own valley temple, he had his pyramid complex connected to the valley temple of Neferirkare. His two wives, Reputneb and Khentikus, were buried near him at Abusir.

#### MENKAUHOR AKAUHOR – Menkhau - "Eternal Like the Souls of Horus"

Menkauhor was the seventh king of the 5th Dynasty, but never achieved the level of fame that the rest of the kings in his dynasty did. The relationship of Menkauhor with his predecessors or successors is not known. His reign is attested by an inscription in the Sinai (campaigning there) and a seal from Abusir and lasted some eight years. He is reputed as having sent his troops to Sinai in order to acquire materials for the construction of his tomb. His solar-temple, called Akhet-Re and his pyramid are mentioned in texts from private tombs, but have not yet been identified. There is a small alabaster statue of Menkauhor located in the Egyptian museum in Cairo.

## DJEDKARE ISESI – Kjedkhau - The Soul of Ra Endures

The relationship of Djedkare with his predecessors or successors is not known. According to the Turin King-list he ruled for 28 years, although some Egyptologists would prefer to read the number given as 38. Manetho records 44 years for this king. Baurdjed is chancellor. Vizier is Shesese, earliest known governor of Upper Egypt.

Djedkare's was a very smart and energetic king, and he was able to take full advantage of all the available mineral resources in Egypt at Wadi Hammamat and Sinai. His name has been found in the Sinai, demonstrating a continued Egyptian interest in the rich regions Abydos and Nubia. Trade missions reach Punt and Byblos. He campaigns in Sinai (4th and 16th years). He uses the diorite quarries west of Lower Nubia – as far as Tomas between Aswan and Wadi Halfa. During his reign (?) the vizier Ptahhotpe writes *Instruction of Ptahhotpe* (or *Maxims of Ptahhotpe*) on manners and other practical advice for one to succeed in the world.

His reign is marked by some important changes: the solar cult, although not abandoned, loses some of its importance and predominance, and the power of the central government is weakened to the advantage of the provincial administration. Another important change that occurred during Djedkare's reign was the return to Saqqara as a burial place. This does not mean, however, that the funerary temples of Abusir were abandoned. The larger part of the papyri found in the funerary temple of Neferirkare are dated to Djedkare.

His pyramid is now an 80ft X 24m high rubble heap. An inscription found inside in 1946 showed that it belonged to Djedkare, hitherto the owner of the pyramid had been unknown, as it had been smashed in antiquity and used as a burial ground in the eighteenth dynasty.

His heir was his son, Prince Remkuy, who died before he assumed the throne.

## UNAS – Unis - Wenis

Unas was the last king of the 5th Dynasty. The relationship of Unas with his predecessors or successors is not known. His viziers are Seshatseshemnefer and Iynefert. Kagemni becomes a government official.

Wenis had two wives, Queen Nebet, who was the mother of Prince Wenisakh, and Queen Khenut. It has been proposed that Iput the first was his daughter. Both of Unas' Queens were buried in mastaba tombs outside of Unas' pyramid complex, which, in itself is unusual since often in this period the Queens would be buried in smaller pyramids near their husband's.

According to the Turin King-list, Unas ruled for 30 years, or perhaps slightly more of part of the number is in the lacuna, which is confirmed by Manetho, who recorded 33 years. His name has been found in Elephantine, at the Southern border of Egypt (Aswan) where he received a Nubian chieftain, and also on an alabaster vessel found in Byblos, the latter perhaps indicating some commercial or diplomatic activities between Egypt and the Near East during this period. He seems not to have left any apparent heirs after his death, which may have resulted in some political instability following his death. An inscription raised at Elephantine shows a giraffe that was brought to Egypt with other exotic animals for ancient Egyptians, during Wenis' reign. During his reign, successful trade expeditions were conducted with neighboring nations. Another drawing found on a discovered vase shows battle scenes during his reign, but it is not known whom he campaigned against. There was a major famine during this time.

Unas is mostly known from his pyramid complex, which he built to the North-west of Djoser's at Saqqara. He begins the practice of carving the king's "utterances" on the walls of burial chambers. His is the oldest known royal tomb to have contained these religious texts, the so-called Pyramid Texts, which are a collection of spells, litanies, hymns and descriptions of the King's life after death. These texts are the oldest known religious writings known to mankind. The pyramid of Unas, the last pharaoh of the Old kingdom, now lies in ruins on the Saqqara Plateau. It is near the Step Pyramid of Zoser, the great king of the First Dynasty. Beneath the rubble, in the burial chamber, we find one of the finest examples of the Pyramid Text inscriptions hewn in the polished stone walls and ceiling.

Rise up my father, great king  
so that you may sit in front of them.  
The cavern of the broad sky is opened to you  
so that you may stride in the sunshine.  
Stand up for me, Osiris, my father.  
I am your son. I am Horus.  
I have come that I might cleanse and purify you,  
that I might preserve you and collect your bones.  
I say this for you.

Unas was adored in the Saqqara region for many centuries after his death.

**SIXTH DYNASTY GENERAL:** Great increase in the importance and influence of the provincial families with a concomitant decline in the resources and power of the royal family at Memphis – particularly the Thinite nome (capital is This). Important people carve rock tombs on a promontory overlooking Elephantine.

### **SIXTH DYNASTY: 2340 - 2180**

All kings of the 6th dynasty, except for Merenre II and Nitocris, are attested by archaeological sources. Merenre II and Nitocris are only known through the king-lists and Manetho. No known monuments give their names and they are not even mentioned in inscriptions of high officials.

Because the king-lists often give Merenre II the same titulary as Merenre I, it is believed that at least his titulary may be the result of a mistake. The Turin King-list makes a summation of regnal years for the first five dynasties, before listing the kings of the 6th through 8th dynasties. This may suggest that with the 6th Dynasty, a new royal house came to power. The relationship between the founder of the 6th Dynasty and his predecessor is debated. It is believed by some that he was married to his predecessor's daughter.

From a cultural point of view, the 6th Dynasty is the continuation of the end of the 5th Dynasty. The kings continued to commission pyramids for their mortuary cult. The pyramids and mortuary temples of this period are of a standard size and basically have the same layout.

The burial chamber, antechamber and entrance corridor of these pyramids are inscribed with Pyramid Texts, following the example set by Unas of the 5th Dynasty. Most kings of the 6th Dynasty also chose to build their funerary monument in Saqqara and here too they were following the example of the last two kings of the 5th Dynasty. Governmental reforms were intended to strengthen the residence's hold on the rest of the country. It is often claimed that the policy of instating local governors in the provinces eventually caused the downfall of this dynasty and of the Old Kingdom.

It can indeed be noted that during the 1st Intermediate Period, the power of these local rulers appears to have increased, to the detriment of the central government. The long reign of Pepi II is also often considered the cause of the end of the Old Kingdom. In this view, the elderly king's court was the stage of intrigue and plot, with different members of the royal family and some high ranking officials conspiring to get a grasp on the government. It must, however, be noted that there is no evidence to support this "romantic" fantasy. Even if the ageing Pepi II were unable to rule the country by himself, the central administration was organised well enough to govern in his place. It is believed more and more that changes in climate and a lower inundation of the Nile are likely to have played an important part in the downfall of the dynasty.

**TETI – Sehetepwyt - "He Who Pacifies The Two Lands"**

Manetho considered Teti as the founder of a new dynasty, a tradition which may go back at least as far as the composition of the Turin King-list, where Teti is listed as the first of a new group of kings. Most of his reign was not documented. According to Manetho, an Egyptian historian of the third century BC, Teti was murdered by his body guards. Teti's internal policy appears to have been directed at stabilizing the power of the central government, thus countering a move towards more power for the local administration started under the reign of Djedkare.

Teti sent his army several times into southern Canaan under Weni, a long lived official who served also under Pepi I and Merenre. Missions are sent to Byblos, Punt, Tamas (Nubia) and Abydos. After a conspiracy in the royal household, Weni was appointed to try the case. His embattled vizier Fefi (Meref-nebef), whose grave has just been discovered, held power over the finances as head of the administration. Kagemni is now vizier. Isesikha is High Priest of Heliopolis.

He issued a decree in favor of the temple of Abydos. Teti granted more lands to Abydos and his name was inscribed in Hatnub. He is the oldest known king to be associated with the cult of Hathor in Dendara.

Teti built a pyramid in Saqqara which is called by modern Egyptians the "Prison Pyramid". His pyramid on a spot in North Saqqara, north-east of Userkaf's pyramid. Originally 172 ft (52.5 m) high, it slumped to little more than a rubble mound when the outer casing was robbed in antiquity. The pyramid is northeast of Userkaf's. Nearby are those for Iput and Khuit. His pyramid was discovered in 1853 by Mariette. Inside, there is a steep pathway that leads to the funerary chamber. The chamber ceiling is decorated with stars. The layout mimics that used by Unas. When it was discovered, it was found that the basalt sarcophagus was inscribed with a band of Pyramid Texts, the first time such a thing had been seen. The walls had been likewise decorated, but these reliefs were not in as good condition as they had been in Unas's pyramid. During the early Middle Kingdom and the 19th Dynasty, Teti's memory was especially honored as "Teti, beloved of Ptah". Egyptologists discovered a statue of him made of black and pink granite, which is located at the Egyptian museum.

His wife, Queen Ipwet, is the daughter of King Unas who was the last king of the 5th Dynasty. She was the mother of Teti's heir, King Pepi I. Historians believe that she is the one that gave him the royal power. Almost all the major court officials of King Wenis remained in power during Teti's reign.

His daughter, Watet-khet-her, also named Sasheset, may have been married to Mereruka, who held the office of vizier. The Mastaba of Mereruka is located in Saqqara.

## USERKARE

Known by the Abydos list. He "rules" but Queen Iput assumes rule as regent for her son Pepi. Perhaps she shares the rule with Userkare? His reign is considered ephemeral.

## MERYRE PHIOPS I – Pepi I - "Beloved of Re"

The son of Teti and Queen Ipwet (Iput) was the third king of the 6th Dynasty, assuming the rule in his 20th year. The internal policy of Pepi I was a continuation of his father's attempts to consolidate the power of the central government. This is demonstrated not only by his marriage to two daughters of a nobleman from Abydos, but also by the extensive building policy of this king. Monuments were erected in Bubastis, Abydos, Elephantine and Dendara. In Dendara, his memory would be preserved by a now lost statue that shows him adoring Hathor, as shown in a few reliefs in the temple from the Greek-Roman era. During his reign, which lasted about 49 years, is written *Instruction for Kagemni*.

An innovative leader, Pepi took the offensive military role. He attacked the Bedouins in Sinai and southern Palestine. He also led a campaign in Nubia (14th year) to establish garrisons and trading posts. Trade relations with Byblos were flourishing and Punt in the Horn of Africa was frequently reached. Nekheby builds canals. Uni is appointed judge. Expedition against the nomads of the northeast in which some Nubian mercenaries are used. Later, these "sand dwellers" revolt and a second campaign quells them. This last extends into southern Palestine reaching Antelope nose (Mount Carmel?). Campaigns (37th year) against the Asiatics in Sinai. This year too, Nekhebu goes on an expedition to Wadi Hammamat.

He had to enlist the support of noblemen from Upper Egypt in order to defeat a usurper and Upper Egyptians came to play an important part in his administration.

He married two of his vizier's sisters, and Uni, a close advisor, led Nubian troops against the Bedouins in Sinai and southern Canaan. His first wife disappeared soon after she was discovered in a harem plot to overthrow the throne. Afterwards he married two daughters of a nomarch and named them both Ankhnesmeryre. One of them was the mother of Pepi II. In his 40th year, Pepi places his son Merenre in a regency to assume the succession which is claimed by several nobles of (?) the Thinite nome.

His funerary complex, called Men-nefer, was built at Saqqara South, a few kilometers to the South of his father's. It was built at some distance from the temple of Ptah of Memphis. Its name would be transferred to this temple from the 18th Dynasty on, and from there on would be applied to the entire city of Memphis. Copper statues of Pepi were discovered in Hierakonpolis, and are on display in the Cairo Museum.

Pepi I moved his pyramid site to South Saqqara. It is probable that all the land in North and Central Saqqara was now occupied. Originally the same height as Teti's (172 ft / 52.5 m), it is now a rubble mound about 39 ft (12 m) high, the result of the core collapsing following the robbing of the outer casing. In the centre of this mound is a large crater, dug by stone robbers looking for building materials. Inside the pyramid, it is similar to Teti's, the principal difference being that the Pyramid Texts had expanded to cover most of the walls, not just the end of the corridor, antechamber and burial chamber. Interestingly, the canopic chest survived, and a packet of viscera, presumably belonging to Pepi I, was found nearby. The sarcophagus was covered inside and out with Pyramid Texts. To the south of the pyramid, an inscription made by Khaemwaset, the same man who had restored Unas's pyramid, was found in 1993.

The 6th Dynasty Name Game - Pepi I apparently married two daughters of an influential official (Probably governor of the region) at Abydos named Khui. Pepi apparently then had their names changed to Ankhesenpepi (Ankenesmerire) I and II. Now we have a Ankhesenpepi III and IV. We know a little of Ankhesenpepi I and II, but almost nothing of the latter two women, other than that they were most likely married to Pepi II, and that Ankhesenpepi III was most likely the daughter of Merenre, Pepi II's brother and predecessor on the throne of Egypt. We know nothing of their mothers, though by the names, we might wish to assume that Ankhesenpepi III and IV were perhaps daughters of one or the other of the prior two queens. However, Ankhesenpepi I and II's names had been changed, there is some suspicion that the latter two queens may not have been related to them at all. It is an interesting mystery that current excavations may eventually shed new light upon.

## MERENRE ANTYEMSAF I - "Beloved of Re"

A copper statue, found with a much larger copper statue of Pepi I, has long been assumed to be of Merenre and a boy or young man. However, it has been questioned lately whether it is instead a statue of Pepi II. These are believed to be the oldest, large copper statues ever found, but some are now questioning whether the statue of the boy is actually that of Merenre, or rather a young Pepi II. There is also a very small sphinx of Merenre in the National Museum of Scotland, Edinburgh.

Merenre I was the oldest surviving son of Pepi I and Ankhenesmerire II, the Ankhenesmerire that Pepi I married during the second half of his reign. [There was a much later king by the same name]. He is sometimes referred to as Merenra. His birth name was Nemty-em-sa-f, which means, "Nemty is his Protection". His Horus name was Ankh-khau. He had a daughter, Iput II, but the name of the mother of this child is not known. Merenre, sometimes referred to as Merenre I as there was a much later king by the same name, was the third ruler of Egypt's 6th Dynasty.

As the oldest living son of Pepi I, he succeeded his father, we believe, at a fairly young age, and probably died unexpectedly young, perhaps between his fifth and ninth year of rule. He was succeeded by his younger half brother, Pepi II.

The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt places the years he ruled as 2287-2278 BC while Chronicle of the Pharaohs gives him from 2283 until 2278. Nevertheless, the first nine years of his 14 year rule was in a regency.

Merenre was this king's throne name, which means "Beloved of Re". He is sometimes also referred to as Merenra. His birth name was Nemty-em-sa-f, which means, "Nemty is his Protection". His Horus name was Ankh-khau. His mother was Ankhenesmerire I (Ankhesenpepi I), who, along with her younger sister by the same name, married Pepi I in the later part of his rule. Labrousse, who's team is excavating in South Saqqara where Merenre's pyramid is located, now believes that Ankhenesmerire II (Ankhesenpepi II), married Merenre. She was a late wife of Pepi I, Merenre's father, and by him, the mother of Pepi II, Merenre's half brother. She may have not been as old, or much older than Merenre, but sometimes working out relationships is interesting. Not only would she be Merenre's queen, but also his stepmother and aunt.

Pepi II would not only be his half brother and his cousin, but also his stepson. In addition, the Labrousse team excavating at Saqqara now believes that a Queen Ankhenesmerire III (Ankhesenpepi III) who's pyramid is located very near Pepi I's was a daughter of Merenre, and became the wife of Pepi II. That would make her Pepi II's wife, niece and if Ankhenesmerire II was her mother, also his half sister. He had another daughter named Ipwet (Iput II) who's pyramid is also in the South Saqqara pyramid field.

Merenre may have served as his father's coregent for a few years prior to Pepi I's death. Uni (Wenis), nomarch of Upper Egypt, who had worked under Pepi I, continued to make expeditions, one to the first cataract to fetch a sarcophagus and stone for the king's pyramid. He also cuts five transportation canals. The governor of Aswan (Elephantine), Harkhuf, also led trade expeditions to Aswan and perhaps into Kerma in Sudan.

Around, his ninth regnal year, Merenre himself visited Aswan to receive a group of Nubian chieftains. It is interesting to note that this was a time when new people, who archaeologists refer to as the Nubian C Group, were migrating from the south into northern Nubia. Because of the growing relationship with Nubia during this period, Merenre also attempted to improve travel in the first cataract region which was navigated by way of the Dunqul Oasis and canals. The Nubian rulers are said to have helped by supplying the wood needed to construct the barges. (Since there was no wood in Lower Nubia, they would have had to procure it from sources much farther south). At the same time the Lower Nubian rulers seem also to have profited greatly by sending their fighting men to Egypt for hire. By the end of the Old Kingdom, the Egyptian armies were mainly composed of Nubian mercenaries, many of whom would ultimately settle in Egypt, marry Egyptian women, and become assimilated into the Egyptian population.

During the Old Kingdom, Egyptian texts speak of a land in Upper Nubia called "Yam." Besides troops from "Wawat, Irtjet, and Setju" (Lower Nubia), troops from Yam, too, were hired for service in the Egyptian army. The only source that provides any real information about Yam is a biography of the Aswan governor, Harkhuf, preserved in his tomb at Aswan. Harkhuf tells us that, on behalf of the pharaohs Merenre and Pepi II, he led four expeditions to Yam, each of which took eight months.

It is believed that during his reign, Merenre not only continued his father's policies in northern (lower) Nubia, but actually sent officials to maintain Egyptian rule as far south as the third cataract. We are told that the conquest of Nubia resulted from the control of the caravan routes and the Western Oasis that relied on trade. Three successive expeditions to Tomos in Nubia, which connected the Nile to the caravan routes. Merenre, like his predecessors, maintained diplomatic and commercial relations with Byblos, and we know from inscriptions and tomb biographies that he had alabaster quarried from Hatnub and greywacke and siltstone from Wadi Hammamat.

Merenre is further attested to by a Box (Hippopotamus ivory) in Paris, Louvre Museum, a rock inscriptions near Aswan, the inscriptions on an ivory mother monkey that was probably a gift to an official, decrees of the king found at the pyramid temple of Menkawre and in biographies of Uni (Weni) in his tomb at Abydos, Djaw from his tomb also at Abydos, The tomb of Harkhuf at Elephantine, The tomb of Ibi at Deir el-Gabrawi, the Tomb of Qar at Edfu, and an unknown persons tomb at Saqqara. He is also mentioned in an inscription in the tomb of Maru at Giza (though this inscription is now in Brussels).

Recently another inscription has also been found by a Polish team that mentions Merenre on a rock wall at Deir el-Bahari on the West Bank at Luxor (ancient Thebes). Merenre was probably buried in his pyramid at South Saqqara, though apparently because of his unexpected death, this pyramid was not yet completed.

Until fairly recently, it was believed that the first ever mummy was that of Merenre I, though in reality the mummy found in his pyramid may not have been that of Merenre. Nevertheless, in 1997, excavations began at Hierakonopolis revealing a large predynastic cemetery full of older mummies. However, if the mummy is indeed that of Merenre, it would remain the oldest known royal mummy. The mummy discovered by Gaston Maspero in 1881, while working at the pyramid of Merenre I at Saqqara South, presents us with somewhat of a problem with regard to its identification.

Based on the place where it was discovered, in the black granite sarcophagus inside the pyramid, it has been identified as belonging to Merenre I. If this identification is correct, this mummy would be the oldest complete royal mummy known to us today. An important part of the problem is the fact that the current whereabouts of the mummy are unknown, making it impossible to examine it with more modern tools and equipment than was available in the late 19th and the early 20th century.

#### NEFERKARE PHIOPS II - Pepi II - Pepy II - Piopi II - - - "Beautiful is the Soul of Re"

According to tradition, Pepi II was the last ruler of Egypt's 6th Dynasty, and in fact the last significant ruler of the Old Kingdom prior to the onset of what Egyptologists call the First Intermediate Period.

According to the Turin King-list, he ruled for over 90 years, which appears to be confirmed by Manetho, who recorded 94 years. This would make Pepi II the longest ruling king of Ancient Egypt. Some doubt has however been shed on this high number, and some researchers believe that it was the result of a miss-reading of 64. However, because of the onset of the First Intermediate Period, the latter part of his reign was probably ineffectual, perhaps at least somewhat due to his advanced age. As his reign entered its later days, there was growing unrest beyond Egypt's borders. A weakening of the central government. Provincial nobility had become wealthy enough to rival the king. Increase in foreign attacks on Egyptian trading missions. Hekayeb puts down Nubian inter-tribal disturbances beyond Aswan that interfere with Harkhuf's third expedition.

His mother was Ankhnesmerire II (Ankhesenpepi), who was the sister of his older brother, Merenre and probably acted as Pepi II's regent during his youth. She may have probably been assisted by her brother, Djau, who was a vizier.

An alabaster statue shows Queen Ankhnesmeryre I with the young but regal Pepi II on her lap, somewhat reminiscent of Isis with the young Horus. After Pepi I's death, she seems to have married Merenre. He had a number of wives. These included Neith, the daughter of Pepi I and Ankenesmerire I and Ipwet (Ipu II), the daughter of his brother Merenre.

There is some confusion here, because we are told that he also married Ankenesmerire III, who was another daughter of Merenre, possibly by his mother Ankhnesmerire II. A final wife that we know of was Udjebten (or Wedjebten). Pepi II probably had at least one son named for his brother, Merenre.

Pepi II continued foreign relations in a very similar manner to both his predecessors of the 5th and 6th Dynasties and even developed new links with southern Africa. He maintained diplomatic and commercial relations with Byblos in ancient Syria/Palestine. However, we also learn of an incident where Pepi had to send Pepynakht (Heqaib) to bring back the body of an official who was killed on a mission in the area of Byblos.

In Nubia, Pepi sought a policy of pacification. We know of several trips and campaigns made south into Nubia both by Harkhuf, and his successor, Pepynakht. In fact, these powerful local governors managed to control Nubia long after the death of Pepi II from their base in Elephantine (near modern Aswan)

Pepi II appears to have been fascinated with some of these travels, particularly by his father's old retainer, Harkhuf, governor of Aswan. One interesting account concerns a pygmy secured by Harkhuf on one of his African adventures. When Pepi II learned of this he wrote Harkhuf a letter that Harkhuf later incorporated into his funerary autobiography:

You have said...that you have brought a pygmy of the god's dances from the land of the horizon-dwellers, like the pygmy whom the god's seal-bearer Bawered brought from Punt in the time of King Isesi. You have said to my majesty that his like has never been brought by anyone who went to Yam previously...Come north to the

residence at once! Hurry and bring with you this pygmy whom you brought from the land of the horizon-dwellers live, hail and healthy, for the dances of the god, to gladden the heart, to delight the heart of King Neferkare who lives forever! When he goes down with you into the ship, get worthy men to be around him on deck, least he fall into the water! When he lies down at night, get worthy men to lie around him in his tent. Inspect ten times at night! My majesty desires to see this pygmy more than the gifts of the mine-land and of Punt! When you arrive at the residence and this pygmy is with you live, hale and healthy, my majesty will do great things for you, more than was done for the god's seal-bearer. Bawarded in the time of King Isesi.

Pepi II continued long established mining practices. We know from an inscription that turquoise and copper continued to be mined at Wadi Maghara in the Sinai. Alasbaster was quarried at Hatnub and Greywacke and siltstone from Wadi Hammamat. However, some scenes attributable to Pepi II may be ritualistic. For example, one scene depicting the submission of Libyan chiefs during his reign is a close copy of representations in the mortuary temples of Sahura, Niuserra and Pepi I.

Some Egyptologists believe that such scenes are more symbolic expressions of the achievements of the ideal king and bore little resemblance to the reality. Some would have us believe that the First Intermediate Period, a time of decline in Egyptian power, was brought on by low inundation of the Nile and crop failure. This is mostly because they believe Pepi II's mortuary complex was built and decorated in a much poorer manner than his predecessors. It is possible that this may have been a contributing factor. However, during Pepi II's reign, we find increasing evidence of the power and wealth of high officials in Egypt, with decentralization of control away from the capital, Memphis. These nobles built huge, elaborate tombs at Cause, Akhmin, Abydos, Edfu and Elephantine, and it is clear that their wealth enhanced their status to the detriment of the king's. Because the positions of these officials was now hereditary, they now owned considerable land which was passed from father to son. Therefore, their allegiance and loyalty to the throne became very casual as their wealth gave them independence from the king. Administration of the country became difficult and so it was Pepi II who divided the position of vizier so that now there was a vizier of Upper Egypt and another of Lower Egypt. Yet the power of these local rulers continued to flourish as the king grew ever older, and probably less of an able ruler.

Foreign relations, particularly concerning Nubia, were also a drain on Pepi II's treasury. In fact, in the latter part of Pepi II's rule, some foreign relations were actually broken off. Hence, we see that towards the end of his reign, the government of Egypt simply unraveled. Long reigns have proven to create succession problems. As powerful as Ramesses II was, his successors likewise had problems because of their advanced age when they themselves ascended to the throne. Hence, we find that Pepi II may have been succeeded by a son, Merenre II, but perhaps for only one year. According to Manetho, he was married to a Queen Nitocris, who succeeded her husband to become the last ruler of the 6th Dynasty. However, very little archaeological evidence of Merenre II or Nitocris exists. Merenre II's mother would have probably been Neith. After Pepi II, the marvelous building projects ceased almost entirely until the reign of Mentuhotep II of the 11th Dynasty.

A temple at Abydos may have been a ka-chapel built by Pepi II. His pyramid and mortuary complex are located in South Saqqara. Most (if not all) of his wife's smaller pyramids have been discovered nearby. Pepi II is further attested to by a Calcite statuette of the young king and his mother, now in the Brooklyn Museum of Art, a decree of the king found at the mortuary temple of Menkawre, a decree found at Abydos, and three decrees at Koptos (Coptos). One inscription, now in Cairo, records his Sed festival and another inscription is has been found in Iput II's mortuary temple. The king was further mentioned in the biography of Djau (now in Cairo) in his tomb in Abydos and is mentioned in the tomb of Ibi at Deir el-Gabrawi. Smaller items attesting to Pepi II include faience plaque from various places mentioning both his first and second Sed festival, a calcite vessels attributed to his reign, an Ivory headrest inscribed with his full titles and several objects found at Byblos.

#### MERENRE ANTYEMSAF II

Pepi II is followed in the king-lists by Merenre II, sometimes also called Nemtimsaf II. If the name of Nemtimsaf II was indeed Merenre, this would make him indistinguishable from Merenre I, so it is generally believed that the name Merenre has been given to Nemtimsaf II by mistake. Merenre II is only known through king-lists, among which the Turin King-list, that credits him with a reign of slightly more than 1 year. He is assumed to have been a son of Pepi II. He was perhaps married to Nitocris, who may have been his sister. During his reign the Egyptian government begins to collapse.

#### NETJERYKARE

In some schemes, this ruler marks the beginning of the First Intermediate Period, for Egypt by this time is wracked by chaos. His evidence is slight at best, probably occupying the next broken space in the Turin Canon which continues with Nitocris. It is unknown how long he may have ruled.

MENKARE (?) NITOCRIS – Queen Nitokerty

Nitocris is not attested by any contemporary source: no decrees, no building projects and not even a mention in some highly placed official's biography. She is, however, mentioned in the Turin King-list, by the Greek traveler Herodotos and by Manetho, which may indeed confirm her existence.

According to Manetho, Nitocris constructed the "third pyramid". It is generally assumed that he meant the third pyramid of Giza, which has been built by Mykerinos. He may have confounded the name of Mykerinos (Men-kaw-re) with Nitocris' probable prenomen, Men-ka-re, which is mentioned in some of the king-lists. Still according to Manetho, Nitocris has come to power when her brother was murdered. She took it upon herself to have her brother's murderers punished.

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The entire period substantially ends with the child king, Pepi II (who later boasted perhaps the longest reign in world history), writing charming letters to his expedition leader, urging him to keep safe the pygmy or dwarf he was bringing back from deep in Africa -- how deep we do not know -- so that the king could enjoy seeing him. The wandering mind of an octogenarian and nonagenarian king, however, may have left the nobles too much to their own devices. The country broke up when the power that devolved on them lost its last remaining unity in the death of the old king.

The king lists (and Manetho) contain the names of VI Dynasty Kings for whom tombs have never been found and whose existence has evidently been dismissed by many recent historians. Clayton and Lehner here are contrasted with James Henry Breasted, whose History [1905, 1909] accepted two other kings from the king lists -- but not Nitokerty (from the Turin Canon), Manetho's Nitôcris. Clayton and Lehner do leave a year or two for a minor king (Userkare), but then they don't mention him. Now, a new VI Dynasty cemetery has been uncovered at Saqqara, apparently as part of a search for unfinished tombs of Userkare and others; but so far no dramatic new evidence about the kings has turned up.

I.E.S. Edwards, *The Pyramids of Egypt* [Penguin Books, 1961]; Peter A. Clayton, *Chronicle of the Pharaohs* [Thames and Hudson, 1994]; Mark Lehner, *The Complete Pyramids* [Thames and Hudson, 1997]; Sir Alan Gardiner, *Egypt of the Pharaohs* [Oxford, 1961, 1966]; James Henry Breasted, *A History of Egypt* [1905, 1909, Bantam Classic, 1964].

## The First Intermediate Period of Egypt

Peter A. Clayton, *Chronicle of the Pharaohs* [Thames and Hudson, 1994]; Mark Lehner, *The Complete Pyramids* [Thames and Hudson, 1997]; Sir Alan Gardiner, *Egypt of the Pharaohs* [Oxford, 1966].

The 30+ year difference between the dates for the Old Kingdom given by Clayton and Lehner originates in the First Intermediate Period, specifically in the X Dynasty. Since so little is known about the First Intermediate Period, while the XII Dynasty is tied fairly securely with astronomical observations, Old Kingdom chronology has always depended on estimates for the First Intermediate Period -- James Henry Breasted, for instance (*A History of Egypt*, 1905, Bantam Classic, 1964, p.500), estimated the length of the period at 315 years, as opposed to 141 years for Clayton and 110 years for Lehner. Manetho himself, whose figures are often wild exaggerations, only gave 185 years for the X Dynasty -- this implies that he may have had better information about it than for the IX Dynasty, which he put at 409 years (in one version). If four kings are allowed for the X Dynasty, then Clayton has an average of 30 years per reign, which is rather high. Lehner's time for the dynasty only gives an average of 23.5 years per reign, which is much more in line with the averages previously considered. However, there can well have been more than the four kings. Manetho said there were 19, and the Turin Canon gave 18 (cf. Gardiner, p. 438). The last word about the dynasty, and the Period, therefore may well depend on some discovery to clarify who and how many the historical kings were.

The First Intermediate Period seems to have been a time of great instability in Egypt. As a result, the records kept were obscure and vary.

Pepi II died after ruling 96± years. With his death, everything collapsed. There are various accounts of what happened in Egypt during this time. People sought stability, but things continued in turmoil. Pepi II's long reign had weakened central government, as the nomarchs (local governors) increasingly began to assert their independence from Pharaoh. Any nominal authority exerted by central government disappeared, as the nomarchs jostled for position, attempting to found their own dynasties.

There was a downside to the technological progress made during the Old Kingdom. Feats of engineering like the Sphinx and the pyramids at Giza had made the Egyptians complacent. This feeling of invincibility was exacerbated by the position of their country, hidden as it was in the fertile Nile Valley. A word encapsulated how Egyptians felt about their civilization - 'Ma'at' meaning 'Stability' or 'Balance'.

Papyri dating from the Middle Kingdom show this breakdown very clearly. Due to the unstable nature of this period, no firm historical records survive from the First Intermediate Period. There are some sources that mention a seventh dynasty which had 70 kings and which reigned for a total of 70 days. These are apocryphal, but nevertheless show how much the system had broken down.

We can place an eighth dynasty, which was possibly descended in some way from Pepi II and which ruled from Memphis, but we must assume that any influence they exerted was confined to the area immediately around Memphis, as the Nile Delta has been invaded by "asiatics" (the name given by Egyptians to people from what we now call the Middle East). The kings of the eighth dynasty are somewhat ephemeral, but we know of 2 possible ones - Wajdkare and Qakare Iby.

After perhaps between 20 and 30 years, the eighth dynasty fell and the nomarchs once again jostled for supreme power. We now see the emergence of a ninth dynasty, ruling from Herakleopolis, perhaps founded by one Meryibre Khety. Both this dynasty and its Herakleopolitain successor, the tenth dynasty, seem to have been highly unstable, with frequent changes of ruler.

Running concurrent to the tenth dynasty, another dynasty was being established in Thebes (the eleventh dynasty). Founded by Intef I in c. 2134BC, the first 3 kings of XI (all called Intef, by the way, and buried in an area called Dra Abu el-Naga, near to what would later become the Valley of the Kings) fought an ongoing conflict with the Herakleopolitain X monarchs, with frequent clashes in the area around Abydos, where their two spheres of influence met.

**SEVENTH AND EIGHTH DYNASTIES GENERAL:** Strife ranges across the land. Central authority in Memphis collapses in all but name. Local governments (the nomes) rise in importance, especially Thebes and Heracleopolis. Egypt has become a land of independent states. Asiatic peoples, called "Hyksos", begin moving into the Delta region. The official Ipuwer writes *Life-weary-Man's dispute with his Soul* in which he describes Egyptian society at this time: The breakdown of law and order; widespread violence and tomb pillage; peasant farmers keeping weapons; valuable flaunted but unused; etc.

Art and architecture: Work is often technically inept, but simple and direct; fresh and spontaneous.

Religion: With the collapse of Memphite power, so does state religion, ending its national unifying force. Local divinities arise to power and major significance.

Funerary: Rites and rituals are taken over first by the nobles then by those with enough wealth.

Literature: Appearance of *Story of the Shipwrecked Sailor*, a Sinbad-like romance with moral undertones.

## **SEVENTH DYNASTY 2180 - 2175**

NOTE: Some listings place Netjerykare (Netrikare) and Menkare, the last two rulers of the sixth dynasty, as the first two of the seventh. The listing as used in the CAH is used here.

NEFERKARE II "The Younger"

Son of Pepiankhnes, fourth queen of Pepi II

NEFERKARE III NEBY

DJEDKARE II SHEMAY

NEFERKARE IV KHENDU

MERYENHOR

NEFERKAMIN I

NYKARE

NEFERKARE V TERERU

NEFERKAHOR

## EIGHTH DYNASTY 2175 - 2160

WADJKARE PEPYSONBE (Horus Kha-(bau?)) Rules four (or more?) years.  
NEFERKAMIN ANU Rules two years and one month.  
KAKARE IBI

Known from a monument in the Memphite region. He builds a small pyramid not far from that of Pepi II. It contains the usual Pyramid Texts, carrying on the latter fifth dynasty tradition. It is unfinished, however, not being cased with stone and not provided with a mortuary chapel. He rules four years and two months.

NEFERKARE Rules two years and one month.  
NEFERKAUHOR KAPUIBI (Horus Netjerybau) Rules one year and a half month.  
NEFERIRKARE (Horus Demedjibtowy)

At his succession, Memphis 'rule' is being challenged by other nomes. In his second year, Achthoes, governor of the 20th nome, Heracleopolis, leads a revolt, ending the eighth dynasty.

**NINTH AND TENTH DYNASTIES GENERAL:** Taking advantage of Egypt's disruption, desert tribes raid the country's borders and harass the people. About this time a renegade official from Egypt establishes himself as king of Nubia: Qakare In(yotef) (Horus Senefertowyef). He is succeeded by Iyebkhentre (Horus Goregtowyef).

Art: Crude and style less. Architecture: Small and unimportant.

Funerary: Solar version of life hereafter, ruled by the sun god Horus or Re, is popular.

Literature: Contemplative and quasi-prophetic, assumes a deep note of pessimism (to dynasty XII).

## NINTH DYNASTY 2160 - 2130

MERYIBRE ACHTHOES I

Spreads rule as far as Aswan (First Cataract) quite ruthlessly but perhaps does not control the eastern delta which has become populated by Egyptian-Asiatic peoples.

[ UNKNOWN ]

NEFERKARE

The three southern nomes acknowledge his rule. Thebes, allied with Koptus, tries to regain rule but is defeated by Neferkare allied with Edfu and troops led by Ankhtify of Hieraconopolis. The nomarch of Thebes is Inyoutef. About this time is written *Story of King Neferkare and GeneralSisenet* by an unknown author.

NEBKARURE ACHTHOES II

Rule includes both sides of the delta though Asiatics there maintain autonomy but pay taxes to Heracleopolis. Perhaps during this reign is written *Tale of the Eloquent Peasant* and *Admonitions of an Egyptian Sage* by unknown authors.

SETUT [?]

[ UNKNOWN ]

MERY- [?]

SHED- [?]

H- [?]

[ UNKNOWN ]

[ UNKNOWN ]

[ UNKNOWN ]

USER(?) [?]

Revolt of Thebes. Mentuhotpe I (Horus Tep(y)a), son of nomarch Inyotef, repudiates Heracleopolitan rule – see Dynasty XI – and begins a civil war.

## TENTH DYNASTY 2130 - 2040

This dynasty was also known as the Heracleopolis Dynasty because the rulers controlled lower Egypt from Heracleopolis. This dynasty is also often called the "House of Khety" because many of the ruler's names were Khety, but it is considered to be fairly unstable due to frequent changes in rulers. The Heracleopolitans expelled Asiatic immigrants from the Nile delta and fortified the eastern border of Egypt. This dynasty was responsible for establishing the importance of Memphis. The Heracleopolitans improved irrigation works, reopened trade with Byblos, and began the "Coffin Texts". One of the kings wrote the "Instruction to Merikara." They also had frequent outbreaks of fighting against the Thebans north of Abydos. Eventually they were conquered by the Thebans and this marked the end of the Heracleopolis Dynasty and the beginning of the Middle Kingdom. The only person from this

era to have left an impression on posterity is a woman called Nitokris who appears to have acted as king. There are no contemporary records but Herodotus wrote of her:

"She killed hundreds of Egyptians to avenge the king, her brother, whom his subjects had killed, and had forced her to succeed. She did this by constructing a huge underground chamber. Then invited to a banquet all those she knew to be responsible for her brother's death. When the banquet was underway, she let the river in on them, through a concealed pipe. After this fearful revenge, she flung herself into a room filled with embers, to escape her punishment."

For a time petty warlords ruled the provinces. Then from the city of Herakleopolis there emerged a ruling family led by one Khety who for a time held sway over the whole country. However, this was short lived and the country split into two, the north ruled from Herakleopolis and the south ruled from Thebes. Whereas the Theban dynasty was stable, kings succeeded one another rapidly at Herakleopolis. There was continual conflict between the two lands which was resolved in the 11th dynasty.

MERYHATHOR (?)

NEFERKARE

WAHKARE ACHTHOES III

The delta nomarchs end the Asiatic's autonomy and emplace new colonies, strengthen the borders and reopen ports to trade, which resumes with Syria. Memphis is administrative center and cemetery. In the civil war, Inyotef II is pushing Theban rule into the nome of Aphroditopolis.

Wahkare taught his son, the future king Merykare thus : (Papyrus of the Hermitage Museum - NO. 1115 at Copenhagen.)

"Life on earth passes quickly, and happy are those without sin, because a million men will serve as nothing to the king of heaven and earth when they appear as sinners in the next life. The memory of the good man will live for ever. The essence of life is in the word of the ancestors; it is contained in books. Open and read them.

Practice justice as long as you are on earth, Comfort those that cry, do not oppress the widow and the orphan.

God knows the treacherous and paid for their sins in His blood... Go down the difficult path, because the soul of the man is drawn to the place that it knows, does not depart from the way of truth; and no-one can prevent it!

Know that the judges in the courthouse of the next world will examine a life as if it were only an hour. Happy is the one that reaches the next life : he will be like a god, he will move freely like the masters of eternity, because there is no-one who can oppose the CREATOR, who is omnipresent and omniscient. Honor your invisible God on your way, practice truth and justice, Act for God so that he can do the same for you. After having punished men (in the deluge?), his light (Re) again shines in the sky, so that men may see it.

MERYKARE

Concludes a treaty with Thebes that allows Heracleopolis to obtain red granite from Aswan. About this time famine strikes Abydos; prince Ideni tries to alleviate it. Achthoes II (?) is raised to nomarch of Asyut.

[UNKNOWN] Rules for an unknown number of months before the dynasty is ended by Mentuhotpe II.

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Additional reference: Cambridge Ancient History; Volume I part 2, *Early History of the Middle East*; Cambridge University Press, 1971

Chapter XI: *The Early Dynastic Period in Egypt*; I.E.S. Edwards, FBA

Chapter XIV: *The Old Kingdom in Egypt and the Beginning of the First Intermediate Period*, W. Stevenson Smith

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