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The Palermo Stone: the Earliest Royal Inscription from Ancient Egypt*

Abstract

The Palermo Stone of black basalt, which probably stood in Heliopolis, is housed today in the Museum of Palermo, while smaller fragments of it are kept in museums in Cairo and London. This fragment can be regarded as the earliest Egyptian royal inscription, because its faces preserve the earliest royal annals.

Its royal annals were comprised by the royal names from the Early Dynasty to the Fifth Dynasty and the principal events of that particular year. In addition, it provides us with significant information about the Old Kingdom, such as historical circumstances, the nature of these reigns and some king's ritual activities. These are great values to us knowing about the royal deeds of the Old Kingdom.

Keywords: Palermo Stone, Royal Annals, Royal Inscription

1. Introduction

1.1. Description

The Palermo Stone (hereinafter PS) is a large slab of black basalt, standing 43.5 cm high, 25 cm wide and 6.5 cm thick (Figs. 1–4). This large fragment has been associated with other fragments, five of which are currently housed at the Egyptian Museum in Cairo (abbreviated as CF1–5; Figs. 5–10)[1] and one at the Petrie Museum, University College London (abbreviated as LF; Fig. 11)[2]. The PS, CF1 and LF bear inscriptions on both faces, although

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[1] CF1 is ca. 42 cm (high) × 26 cm (wide) on the recto, and 36 cm (high) × 42 cm (wide) on the verso. Its thickness ranges between 6.0 cm and 6.5 cm. CF2 is triangular in shape, and is ca. 8.4 cm (high) × 9.2 cm (wide). CF3 (11 × 9 cm) and CF4 (11.5 × 7.5 cm) are irregular in shape. CF5 measures 9 cm by 9 cm, and is some 3 cm thick.

[2] LF is a triangular fragment and has a maximum height of 8.5 cm and a maximum breadth of 8 cm on the recto; it is 5.3 cm thick.

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those of the Palermo Stone are the best preserved. Its recto face is easily legible, and while its verso side is more worn, many inscriptions can be deciphered. It seems probable that CF1 was used as a door sill[3]. CF2–4 are now so badly worn that only one face (the recto in each case) is still legible. CF5 and LF are a little better preserved and easily legible.

1.2. Acquisition

Events surrounding the initial discovery of the Palermo Stone remain unclear[4]. It was, however, donated to the Archeological Museum in Palermo on 19 October 1877, where it was registered under the museum number of 1028[5]. In 1910, the Egyptian Museum of Cairo purchased three new fragments (CF1–CF3) on the local antiquities market. These were registered in the museum's *Journal d'Entrée* (abbreviated as JdE) under the numbers of 44859 (CF1), 39735 (CF2) and 39734 (CF3)[6]. Porter and Moss asserted that CF1–CF3 were "found in the neighborhood of El-Minya according to native report"[7], although this claim was challenged by Helck[8], without his offering an alternative origin. If El-Minya is their true provenance, they were undoubtedly brought by river from Lower Egypt[9]. A fourth fragment (CF4) was uncovered, apparently *in situ*, among the ruins of Memphis[10]. Later, it was to be registered under the JdE number of 44860. And, finally, CF5 was bought by Cenival in 1963, once again from a Cairo antiquities dealer[11] and today bears the JdE number of 18220. The London fragment was purchased by Petrie and it was he who demonstrated that these fragments originated from Upper Egypt, "it had been brought down and sold to a Cairo dealer"[12]. Petrie presented LF to University College London, where it forms part of the collection named in his honor at the Petrie Museum of Egyptian Archaeology. Its registration number is UC 15508.

1.3. Date

Scholars disagree as to the exact date of the Palermo Stone. Its inscriptions strongly suggest that the present Palermo Stone dates from the mid-Fifth Dynasty and that it had one

3 T. A. H. Wilkinson (2000), 18.
4 "Ciacomo de Gregorio nous apprend: 'Quant à la provenance de la pierre, M. Pensabene se rappelle que, vers 1859, celle-ci fut donnée, ou vendue, à son oncle Ferdinando Gaudiano, par un commandant, qui l'avait trouvée dans le lest de son navire' ". See G. Gordon (1952), 17.
5 G. Gordon (1952), 18.
6 G. Gordon (1952), 18–19; H. Gauthier (1915), 29; LÄ IV (1982), 652–653.
7 B. Porter – R. L. B. Moss (1934), 133.
8 "… was recht unwahrscheinlich ist". See LÄ IV (1982), 653, n° 8.
9 "Si telle est vraiment leur provenance, ils y ont été amenés, par voie fluviale sans doute, à l'époque". See G. Gordon (1952), 21.
10 G. Gordon (1952), 19.
11 J. L. Cenival (1965), 13–17.
12 W. M. F. Petrie (1916), 115.

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Fig. 1. Palermo Stone *recto*-side (H. Schäfer (1902), Taf. I.)

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Fig. 2. Palermo Stone *verso*-side (H. Schäfer (1902), Taf. II.)

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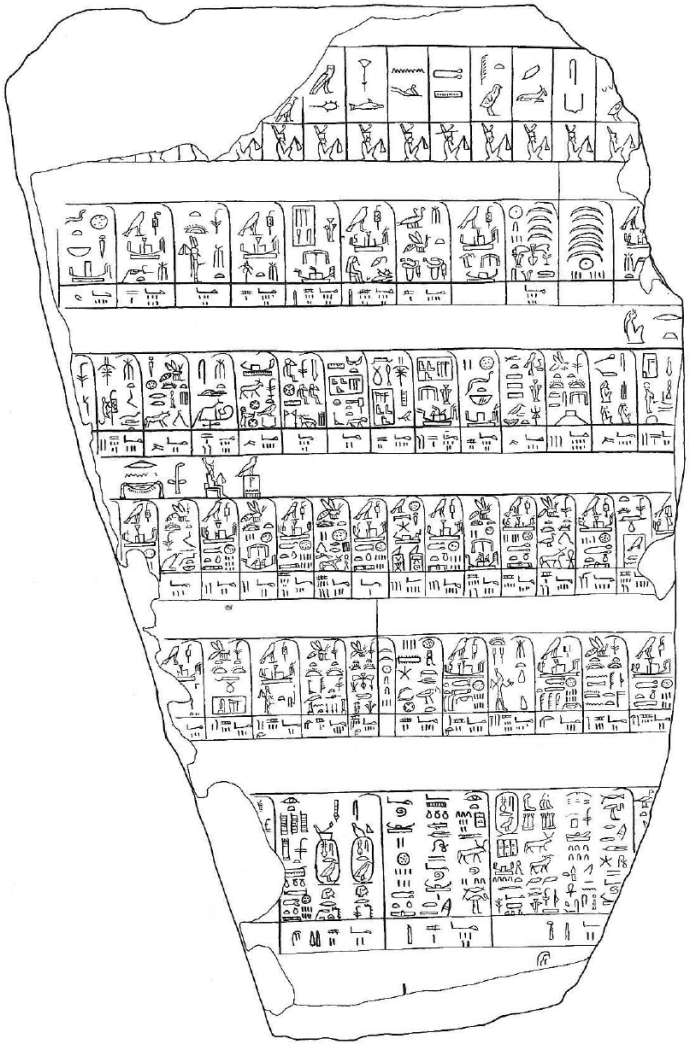

Fig. 3. Palermo Stone *recto*-side (T. A. H. Wilkinson (2000), Figure 1)

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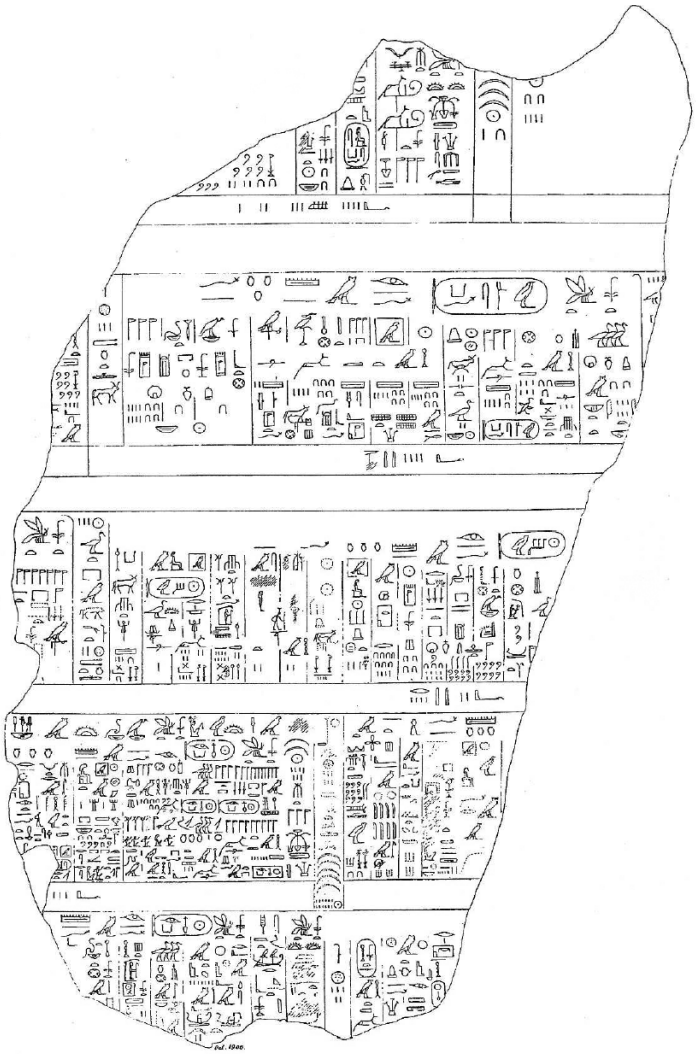

Fig. 4. Palermo Stone *verso*-side (E. Naville (1903), Taf. B)

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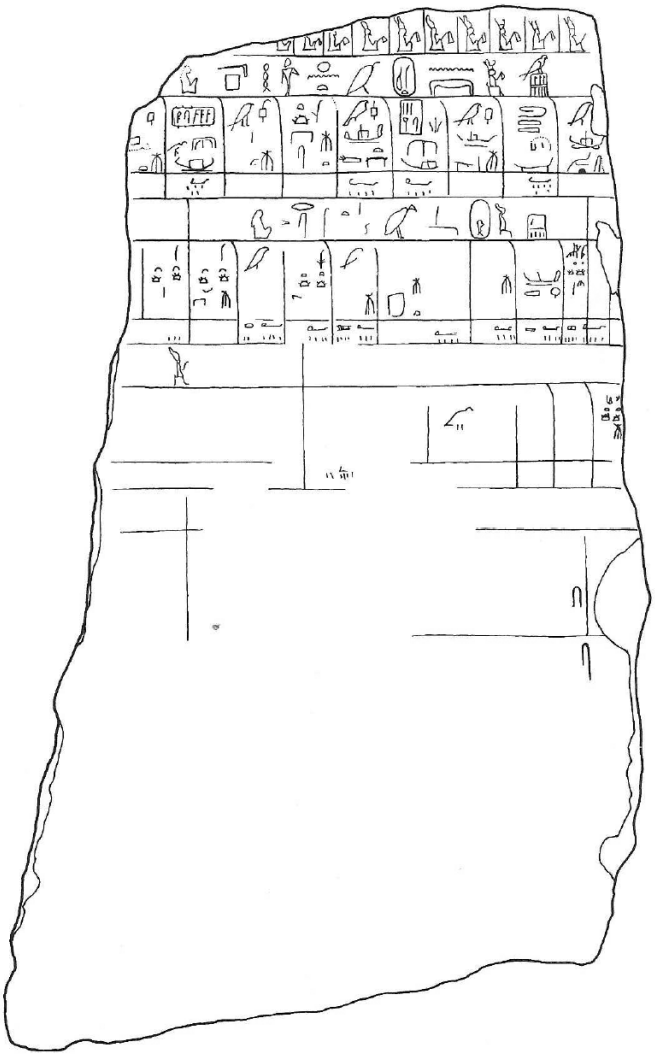

Fig. 5. CF1 *recto* side (T. A. H. Wilkinson (2000), Figure 5)

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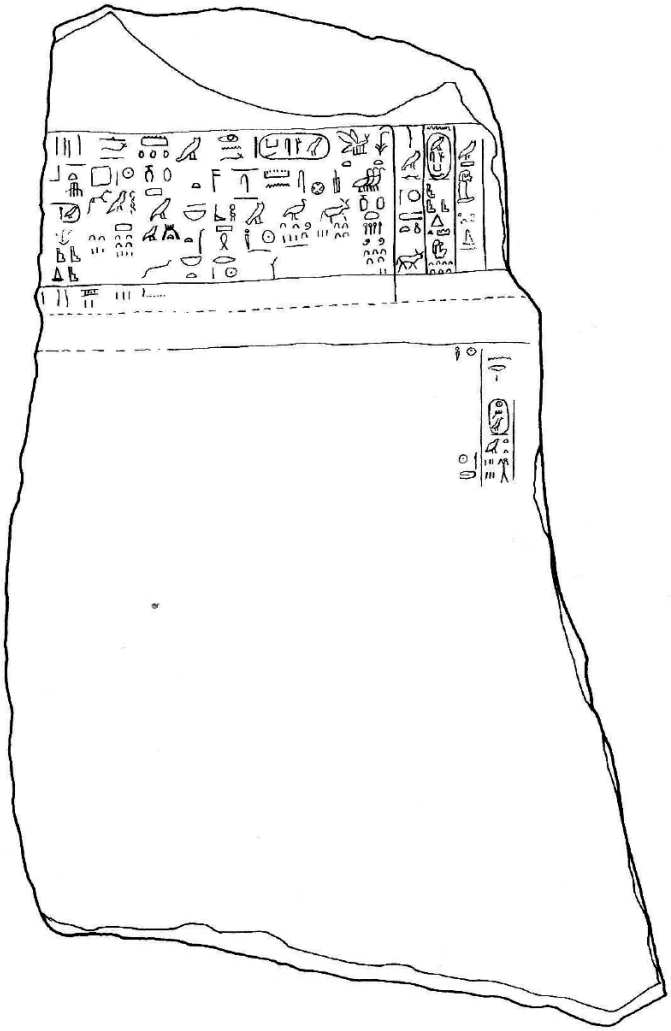

Fig. 6. CF1 *verso*-side (T. A. H. Wilkinson (2000), Figure 6)

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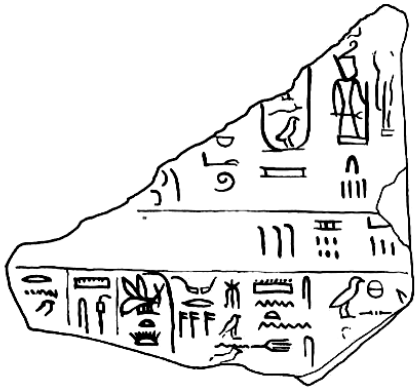

Fig. 7. CF2 *recto*-side (T. A. H. Wilkinson (2000), Figure 7)

Fig. 8. CF3 *recto*-side (T. A. H. Wilkinson (2000), Figure 8)

Fig. 9. CF4 *recto*-side (T. A. H. Wilkinson (2000), Figure 9)

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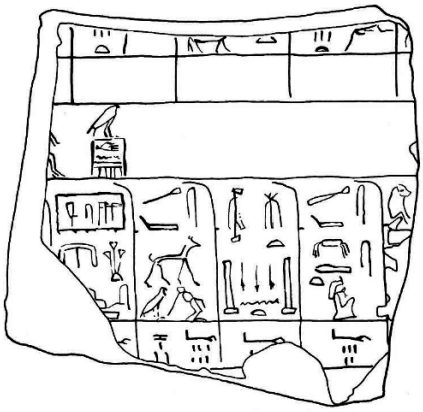

Fig. 10. CF5 *recto*-side (J. L. Cenival (1965))

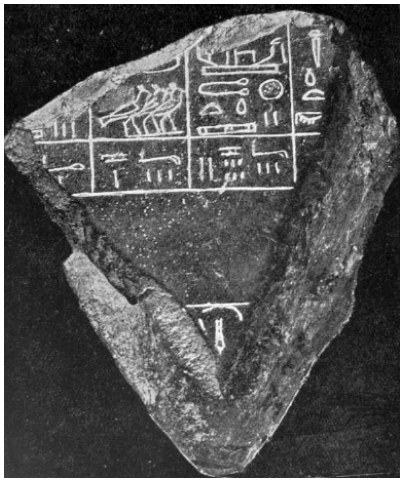

Fig. 11. LF *recto*-side (W. M. F. Petrie (1916))

or more earlier editions[13]. Since the annals of the PS end in the early Fifth Dynasty, this may well represent the date at which they were originally compiled[14]; Borchardt believed that the orthography of these fragments was known from the Old Kingdom[15]; Gardiner dated the compilation of the annals to the reign of Niuserra, in the late Fifth Dynasty[16]. However, it has also been suggested that the PS and CF1–4 may represent later copies of

[13] P. F. O'Mara (1996), 207.
[14] W. Helck (1956), 2.
[15] L. Borchardt (1917), 22–23.
[16] A. H. Gardiner (1961), 63.

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an Old Kingdom original[17]. But, in general, scholars prefer to date the PS and its associated fragments to the Old Kingdom – at least for the original Annals which are a rendition of the Early Dynastic royal names.

2. The PS as Royal Annals

The significance of the Palermo Stone lies in the fact that it preserves the inscriptions known as the "Royal Annals" of the Old Kingdom in Ancient Egypt. The "Royal Annals" is a historical document recording the names of the rulers, the lengths of their reigns and their activities. The "Royal Annals" of the PS begin with the predynastic kings, i. e., the kings ruling in the period before the union of the North and the South (ca. 2707 B.C.) and continue into the dynastic age up until the middle of the Fifth Dynasty: the *recto*-side (hereinafter *r*) presents the annals of the Early to the Fourth Dynasties and the *verso*-side (hereinafter *v*) presents the annals of the late Fourth and early Fifth Dynasties. Thanks to the Royal Annals of the PS, we can obtain information about the king's name, the regnal length, the names given to the years, and the height of the Nile flood.

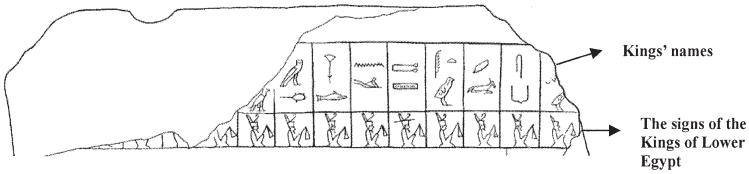

Fig. 12. The List of Predynastic Kings

1) In the first register, the names of nine predynastic Kings of Lower Egypt are preserved (Fig. 12). If the line were to have been fully preserved, there might have been as many as 120 names of predynastic Kings recorded here[18].

2) Below this first register of predynastic Kings is inscribed the second register including the length of the reign of the dynastic kings. These are separated by the vertical line of the hieroglyphic sign for "year" ⲓ (*rnpt*). Each compartment represents a single year in the reign of a king. Within each compartment, the names of the kings and the principal events which occurred that particular year are recorded (Fig. 13). Note, however, that these compartments record civil or calendar years rather than regnal years[19]. Thus, it is inscribed on the PS *r*. register II. 2–3 "6 months and 7 days, 4 months and 13 days; uniting Upper and Lower Egypt; circumambulating the wall; 6 cubits": Jéquier was the first scholar to

[17] "Pellegrini – the first scholar to publish the Palermo Stone – thought the epigraphy indicative of the Ptolemaic Period", see T. A. H. Wilkinson (2000), 23; W. Helck proposed that PS and the CFs belonged to the Twenty-fifth Dynasty, see W. Helck (1970), 83–85.

[18] J. H. Breasted (1906), 52.

[19] A. H. Gardiner (1945), 12–13.

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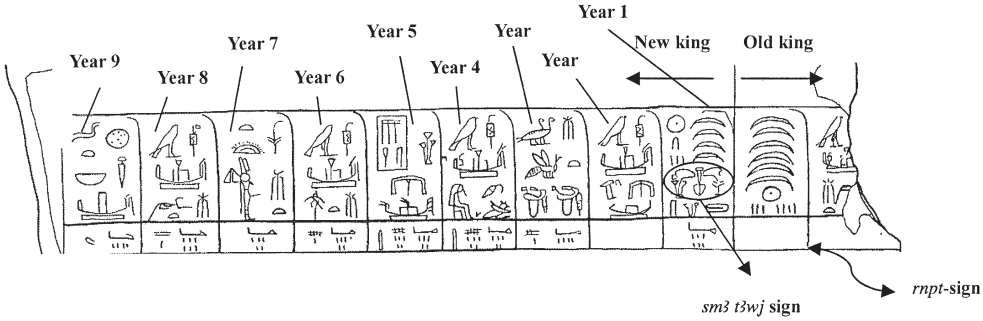

Fig. 13. The second register of the PS

realize that these enumerations represent periods of time (i.e., cardinal numbers), rather than dates (i.e., ordinal numbers). "Certainement ces deux chiffres appartiennent à la même année, coupée en deux par la mort de l'ancien roi et l'avènement de son successeur …"[20]. The first figure recorded that portion of the calendar year which had elapsed since the death of the former king. The second figure recorded the months and days in the same calendar year that fell within the reign of the new king[21]. The sign (*sm3 t3wj*) refers to the "union of the two lands", signifying a royal coronation and appears each time a new king acceded to the throne. A further example occurs in the *r.* register V. 7–8 (Fig. 14): "2 months 23 days; appearance of the dual king; uniting Upper and Lower Egypt; circumambulating the wall".

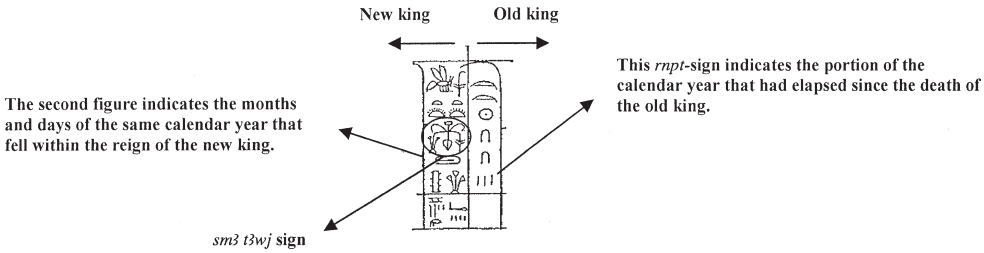

Fig. 14. The PS *r.* register V. 7–8

3) **On the *recto*-side**: The length of the reigns of the predynastic kings is unclear here. The regnal order of the dynastic kings is probably presented as follows: the First Dynasty occupies registers II and III, following directly on from the predynastic kings, while registers IV and V contain the Second Dynasty. Finally, register VI records the Third Dynasty. Note that the name of Senefru is not shown, although it does appear in the reference to the year[22].

[20] M. G. Jéquier (1906), 59.
[21] Ibid., 59–62.
[22] H. Schäfer (1902), 7; J. H. Breasted (1906), 55.

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On the *verso*-side: The first register bears inscriptions referring to the end of the Fourth Dynasty, but most of the verso is occupied with three reigns from the Fifth Dynasty (namely those of kings Userkaf, Sahure and Neferirkere in registers II–V)[23]. Although some inscriptions on the verso-side have been destroyed, Naville attempted to complete them and to offer new interpretations[24].

4) Some scholars have tried to reconstruct the complete Annals, e. g., Borchardt – at the beginning of the 20th century – was convinced that a purely mathematical method could be adopted to resolve the puzzle of Palermo[25]. He thought that the original length of the PS was distributed as follows: register II: 112 spaces; register III: 136 spaces; register IV: 166 spaces; register V: 130 spaces (Fig. 15). The totals he proposed for registers II and III (248 spaces) and registers IV and V (296 spaces) corresponded well with Manetho's proposal of 253 and 302 years for the First and Second Dynasties respectively. Unfortunately, his solutions have not been accepted by many scholars.

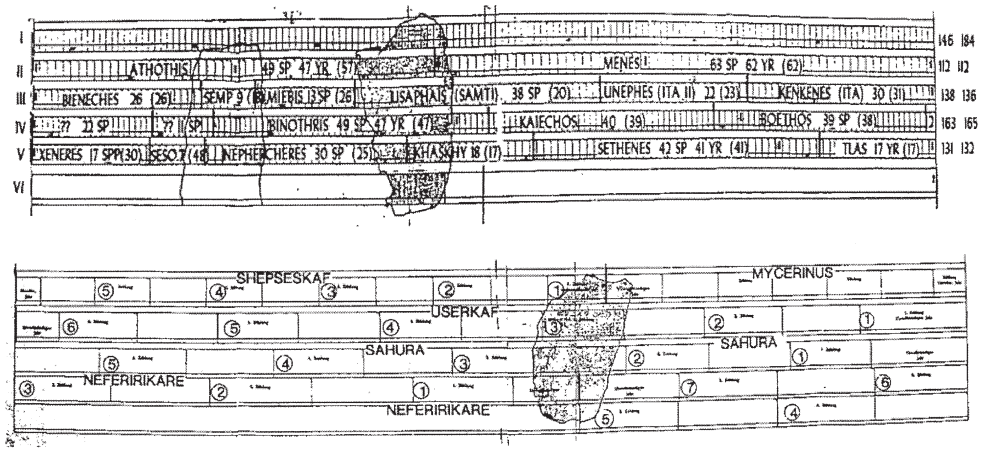

Fig. 15. Borchardt's Reconstruction

Following Borchardt, a number of different reconstructions have been proposed. O'Mara suggested that the PS originally contained 571 compartments divided into 17 registers, embracing the period from "Unification through to the end of the reign of Raneferef in the middle of the Fifth Dynasty"[26]. The most recent reconstruction was attempted by Barata in 1981. He attempted to bring the PS and the other fragments together and proposed a new chronology (Fig. 16)[27].

[23] Ibid.
[24] E. Naville (1903), 64–81.
[25] L. Borchardt (1917), 13–21.
[26] P. F. O'Mara (1979), 109.
[27] He presented a relative chronology of the Old Kingdom as follows: First Dynasty: 185 years; Second Dynasty: 151 years; Third Dynasty: 74 years; Fourth Dynasty: 120 years and Fifth Dynasty: 162 years. Thus suggesting that the First to Fifth Dynasties stretched over 692 years. In addition, he also proposed that the 0th Dynasty could be dated at ca. 75 years. See W. Barta (1981), 23.

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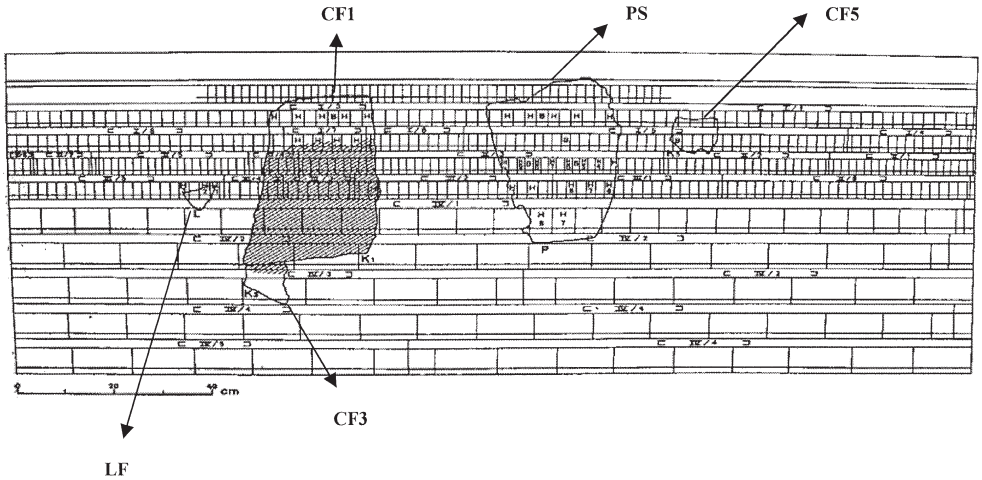

Fig. 16. Barta's Reconstruction, *recto-side* (PS; CF1; CF3; CF5; LF)

5) On the PS, the names of the kings and their years ruling over Egypt are presented as in the Royal Annals. The years were not just numbers, but year-names, i. e., the designation of the year through particular, significant or relevant events.

Ex. 1.

"The Year of the Smiting of the Troglodytes"[28].

"The Year of the Seventh Occurrence of the Numbering of Gold and Lands"[29].

Similar references to the years were used during the Old Kingdom too[30]. They might appear on vessels[31], small tablets[32] or rocks[33]. This occurred in parallel with a similar practice in Babylonia[34]. The first step towards a numbering of regnal years is seen in the

[28] PS *r*. register III. 2.
[29] PS *r*. register V. 3.
[30] H. Schäfer (1902), 8–10.
[31] "The Year of the fighting and the smiting the people of the north". See H. Schäfer (1902), 8.
[32] "The Year of the following of Horus". See W. M. F. Petrie (1900), Taf. 12 and n° 1.
[33] "The Year of the second occurrence of the numbering of big and small cattle of the north- and southland". See K. R. Lepsius (1849–), 116a.
[34] See M. J. A. Horsnell (1999); H. Schäfer (1902), 10; A. H. Gardiner (1945), 12–13.

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"First occasion of the *ḏt*-Feast" (PS *r*. register II. 11) in the reign of a First Dynasty king[35]. And this usage of year-names *"Year after the x'th Occurrence (of the Numbering)"* became popular and remained a system of dating in Ancient Egypt.

6) In addition to the leading events of the year, signs of measurement were inscribed at the bottom of the compartment: cubits, spans [36], palms and fingers . These are thought to record the height of the annual flood waters[37]. Similar records of the height reached by the Nile floods have been found in the 22nd and 23rd Dynasties at Karnak[38]. Clagett suggested that it was a reference to the maximum height of the Nile each year, which no doubt served as an indication of the produce that could be harvested. This was of great statistical importance in order to calculate the taxes due on agricultural land[39]. Helck made an analysis of these Nile Highs and maintained that they were closely connected to the *śd*-feast[40]. It remains, however, unclear as to whether these records of Nile Highs are real or fictional[41].

7) The annals of the PS are typically written in two formats: One is the basic format and the other is known as the "King's Label". The basic format of the Annals is: date + (name/epithet of kings) + events in infinitive[42].

Ex. 2.[43] **[King U]**

Year 1.	Fourth month, thirteenth day. Union of the Two Lands. Circuit of the Wall. Height of the Nile: 6 cubits.
Year 2.	Following of Horus. Feast of *dšr*.
Year 3.	Birth of the two children of the King of Lower Egypt. Height of the Nile: 4 cubits, 1 palm.
Year 4.	Following of Horus. Height of the Nile: 5 cubits, 5 palms, 1 finger.
Year 5.	[Design] of the House (called): *Śḫm-nṯrw*. Feast of Sokaris. Height of the Nile: 5 cubits, 5 palms, 1 finger.
Year 6.	Following of Horus. Birth of the goddess *Y3m.t* Height of the Nile: 5 cubits, 1 palm.
Year 7.	Appearance of the King of Upper Egypt. Birth of Min. Height of the Nile: 5 cubits.

35 A. H. Gardiner (1945), 13.

36 The distance between the tip of the thumb and the little finger with the hand fully. This sign later becomes sign of the bird's claw which was read as *šꜣt*. See H. Schäfer (1902), 12, n° 2; Wb IV, 402.

37 L. Borchardt (1917), 5–11.

38 J. von Beckerath (1966), 43–55; P. F. O'Mara (1996), 201, n° 7.

39 "This is of importance to the peasants for the management of the water, the embankments, the canals, etc., and to the officials on account of the taxes. For the higher the rise of water, the higher are the taxes". M. Clagett (1989), 109–113.

40 W. Helck (1966), 78.

41 W. Helck (1966), 78–79; P. F. O'Mara (1996), 201–203.

42 S.-W. Hsu (2006), 20.

43 PS *r*. register II. 3–12, H. Schäfer (1902), 15–18; J. H. Breasted (1906), 57–59.

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Year 8. Following of Horus. Birth of Anubis.
Height of the Nile: 6 cubits, 1 palm.
Year 9. First occurrence of the Feast of *ḏt*
Height of the Nile: 4 cubits, 1 span.
Year 10. *destroyed*

By contrast, the format of the "King's Label" is: date + *nswt-bjt* + KN + *jr.n=f m mnw=f n GN* (date + King of Upper and Lower Egypt + KN + the work that he made as his monument for GN)[44]. A label of this format was referred to as a "label of dedication" (Widmungsvermerke) by Jansen-Winkeln[45]. In the "label of dedication" the king is usually referred to as the founder of the endowment and the god as its receiver. Such labels were to be found on statues, temples or anything dedicated by a king to a god. The content of the labels is: "This is a work of the king N.N.[46] (The work) that he made as his monument for his father GN, namely make for him an object"[47]. In the Annals of PS we can also read this format[48], primarily for the Fifth Dynasty king, Userkaf.

Ex. 3.[49] **[King Userkaf]**

Year 5. (The Work) that the King of Upper and Lower Egypt, Userkaf, he made (it) as his monument for: *…following are names of gods…*
Height of Nile: 4 cubits, 2 $^1/_2$ fingers.
Year 6. (The Work) that the King of Upper and Lower Egypt, Userkaf, he made (it) as his monument for: *destroyed*

3. The PS as a Royal Inscription

The Royal Inscription can be identified by the following features[50]:

- The king appears as the central figure.
- The king's name, epithet and dates invariably appear in the inscription.
- The main content describes the acts of the kings, that is, specific events he has been involved in.
- These inscriptions were made on durable material, e.g. stela, stone, temple walls, obelisk, statue, etc.
- They served primarily to disseminate news of royal activities and influence, and as such served the purpose of royal propaganda.

44 KN: name of King; GN: name of god. See S.-W. Hsu (2006), 21.
45 K. Jansen-Winkeln (1990), 146–150; also S.-W. Hsu (2006), 11–14.
46 NN: nomen nescio.
47 K. Jansen-Winkeln (1990), 147.
48 K. Jansen-Winkeln (1997), 21–22.
49 After PS *v*. register II. 2. H. Schäfer (1902), 34; J. H. Breasted (1906), 68.
50 S.-W. Hsu (2006), 2–3.

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Given these characteristics, the PS can also, it would seem, be interpreted as an important document among royal inscriptions[51]. Indeed, it describes many of the events that occurred in the Old Kingdom, but not solely royal activities, but royal performances also. The ideology of the Ancient Egyptian kingship was compounded by a variety of issues and the king took on a multiplicity of roles: He was an absolute territorial ruler, the head of state and chief of government. He was also a channel of communication between the divine and human worlds, a high priest of all cults, the earthly incarnation of the sun- and sky-god Horus. All these royal activities were recorded in the Annals and reflected the king's multiple roles. These royal roles and activities included:

1) The most frequent action undertaken by the king was the biennial "following of Horus" (*šms-Ḥr*)[52], a royal tour on which the king, accompanied by his officials, traveled throughout the country. The purpose of the tour was to make himself known to his people and to exercise his control over the economic and political developments in the provinces. On occasions he would also settle any judicial or civil disputes. Garadiner describes these tours as "royal progresses by river"[53]. Beckerath also states that these tours involved traveling by ship throughout the country every two years, using the "ship of King"[54].

2) The king also performed various rituals. The most important ceremony was, beyond question, the accession to the throne or the coronation, which was a highly significant event and worthy of being recorded in the Royal Inscription. The king was depicted as a hero who brought an end to the chaos that ruled the land and reunited the Two Lands of Upper and Lower Egypt (*sm3 Šmᶜ T3-mḥw*)[55]. This constituted the most characteristic element of the accession and coronation celebrations[56]. Moreover, the expression "the appearance of the king of Upper and Lower Egypt" (*ḫᶜ nswt-bjtj*) emphasized once more his powerful might[57], while the expression "circuit of the wall" (*pḫr ḥ3 inb(w)*) indicated that the king had come to assert his territorial and political authority[58].

3) The battles the king fought with Egypt's neighbors and enemies were recorded in the royal inscriptions. These political events could give their name to the particular year ("The Year of the Smiting of the Troglodytes"). In places, the exact details of the events that unfolded in these years were inscribed: for example, King Senefru attacked Nubia and brought back 7,000 male and female live captives and 20,000 cattle[59]. These political events invariably comprise the main content of the royal inscriptions. Typically they illustrate a battle scene, in which the king is depicted as an omnipotent hero, with the gods' support,

[51] The Annals, in Ancient Egyptian *Gnwt*, are above all annual records of the events occurring during a king's reign. Thus, in preparing my Master's thesis I classified the Annals of PS as a particular text genre of royal inscriptions. See S.-W. Hsu (2006), 18–22.

[52] T. A. H. Wilkinson (1999), 220–221.

[53] A. H. Gardiner (1945), 13.

[54] J. von Beckerath (1956), 6–7.

[55] Ex. PS *v*. register I. 2.

[56] T. A. H. Wilkinson (2000), 67.

[57] Ex. PS *r*. register V. 8–11.

[58] Ex. PS *r*. register V. 8.

[59] PS *r*. register VI. 2.

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attacking the hostile enemy. These inscriptions sought to demonstrate the might of the kings, and can be safely interpreted as royal propaganda[60].

4) The royal endowments offered by the king involved a variety of different acts: building or decorating temples; erecting new statues or monuments to the gods; making offerings to the cult and visiting cult places of importance. These acts, in common with the aforementioned "King's Label", were recorded with the typical formula *jr.n=f m mnw=f n GN* ("he made his monument for GN", see n° 2, point 7). The king makes regular benefactions to the gods, in particular to those deities closely associated with his kingship including Re, Hathor, Horus and the "Two Ladies" Nekhbet and Wadjet[61].

5) The festivals were typically organized by the king. There are records of these festivals from as early as the First Dynasty, some of which were to gain considerable importance, such as the festival of Sokaris[62] and Min or the *śd*-festival of the king[63]. By contrast, some festivals remained unpopular and their practice was discontinued, e. g., the *dšr*-festival was celebrated only in the First Dynasty. The name itself translates as the "red festival" with the determinative of a "boat", which suggests that it was held on the water or celebrated in Upper Egypt to mark an episode in the life of Seth[64]. The *ḏt*-festival, the "festival of eternity", was perhaps connected with (*W3*)*ḏt*, the cobra goddess of Buto, one of the 'Two Ladies', and the ancient tutelary deity of Lower Egypt[65].

6) The Inscription describing the reign of king Sneferu provides direct evidence of commercial relationships between Egypt and foreign countries, e. g., importing timber from Byblos – the wood being used in shipbuilding[66]. In addition, at this time the king would appear to have sent out expeditions to foreign countries, including the land of turquoise or Punt[67]. The land of turquoise is thought to have comprised the mountains of south-western Sinai, especially the area around Wadi Maghara, where the Egyptians had been mining turquoise since the Third Dynasty[68]. Punt was the land on the Red Sea coast of Africa from where the Egyptians imported primarily the commodities of "myrrh" and "electrum".

60 S.-W. Hsu (2006), 50.

61 T. A. H. Wilkinson (2000), 69.

62 The festival of Sokaris was well established in Ancient Egypt, being celebrated from the First Dynasty to the Ptolemaic Age. On the PS, this festival is mentioned on two occasions together with the foundation of an important edifice – a temple or a palace, and on three occasions it is accompanied by the 'appearance' of the king. Thus, during this period the festival was associated with a procession around the walls of building. The setting for the festival of Sokaris included various shrines and barks. In the ceremony the king would appear before his people in his full regalia. C. J. Bleeker (1967), 69–71; LÄ V, 1074–1075.

63 Similarly, the *śd*-festival was another important event in Egyptian history. The *śd*-festival was usually organized by the king in the 30th year of his reign. The king would wear a white or red crown and hold a hostage. He also wore a *šnḏwt*- apron with an animal tail. Then the king had to tour all the cult centers. C. J. Bleeker (1967), 96–106; LÄ V, 782–790.

64 T. A. H. Wilkinson (2000), 96.

65 L. Borchardt (1917), 52.

66 PS *r*. register VI. 2.

67 PS *v*. register IV. 1.

68 T. A. H. Wilkinson (2000), 169.

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4. Summary

Although the Palermo Stone and its associated fragments remain incomplete, it is arguably the most valuable extant information about the Old Kingdom in Ancient Egypt. This claim is based, first and foremost, on the fact that the PS presents registers of the predynastic kings as well as of the pre-Old Kingdom monarchs of Lower Egypt. Second, this exemplar of the "Royal Annals" provides us with a rich source of information about the kings of Egypt from the First to the Fifth Dynasties. The annals record the names attributed to each of these years, the specific events that occurred during them and the height attained by the Nile floodwaters. Thus, it is an invaluable record for all Egyptologists in their attempts at reconstructing the chronology of Ancient Egypt. Third, this particular exemplar of the "Royal Annals" might be better classified as a royal inscription in that it constitutes the earliest royal inscription to provide details of the history of the Old Kingdom. Thus, on the PS we find references to all the most significant events that occurred in the reigns of the kings. All in all, the stone represents an extremely valuable source of information about early kingship since each of these events tells us much about the king's role and responsibilities at that time. For example:

- The "following of Horus": the king undertook a tour of his lands, presenting himself to his people. This biennial royal tour ensured that the king retained a tight central control over the country's economic resources, and guaranteed the prompt payment of taxes to the royal treasury.
- Royal dedications: The king made various offering to the gods (the "King's Labels"), which included the erecting of statues and monuments, the making of various offerings and the visiting of cult centers. In theory, the king presented himself as the ultimate high priest in every temple of the land, while dedicating himself to the various deities.
- Royal festivals: The king took responsibility for the organization of a range of ceremonies. The most important of these was the royal accession or coronation, typified by the ritual of the reunification of the Two Lands (*sm3 Šmᶜ T3-mḥw*). Its purpose would undoubtedly have been to display the strength of the monarch and to emphasize his might. In addition, the kings also celebrated festivals, including *ḏt*-festival, *śd*-festival and the festival of Sokaris.
- Military activities: The king mounted attacks on his enemies, sent expeditions to foreign lands and received booty in return. The specific campaigns gave their names to the calendar years. Thanks to these references we are able to appreciate the relationship between early Ancient Egypt and its foreign lands.

In short, the Palermo Stone constitutes a historical source and document of great significance, shedding considerable light on the Ancient Egyptian world.

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Appendix 1: Chronology of Ancient Egypt

Predynasty	ca. 3032–2707 B.C.
Old Kingdom	
3. Dynasty	ca. 2639–2589 B.C.
4. Dynasty	ca. 2589–2454 B.C.
5. Dynasty	ca. 2454–2297 B.C.
6. Dynasty	ca. 2297–2166 B.C.
First Intermediate Period	ca. 2166–2020 B.C.
Middle Kingdom	ca. 2119–1794 B.C.
Second Intermediate Period	ca. 1794–1550 B.C.
New Kingdom	ca. 1550–1070 B.C.
Third Intermediate Period	ca. 1070– 746 B.C.
Late Period	ca. 664– 332 B.C.

(chronology after Beckerath, v. J., *Chronologie des pharaonischen Ägypten*, MÄS 46, Mainz 1997)

Appendix 2: King's List of Early to Fifth Dynasties

Early Dynasty	
Scorpion I.	ca. 3200 B.C. ?
Iry-Hor	ca. 3150 B.C. ?
Ka	ca. 3100 B.C. ?
King Scorpion	ca. 3100 B.C.
Narmer	ca. 3100 B.C.
First Dynasty	
Menes	?
Hor-Aha	ca. 3030 B.C.
Djer	41 years
Merneith	?
Djet	23 years
Den	14–20 years
Anedjib	10 years
Semerkhet	9 years
Qa'a	2878–2828
Second Dynasty	
Hotepsekhemwy	2853–?
Raneb	39 years
Ninetjer	40 years
Wneg	8 years
Senedj	20 years
Seth-Peribsen	17 years
Sekhemib-Perenmaat	?
Khasekhemwy	17–18 years
Third Dynasty	
Sanakhte	2740–2720
Djoser	2720–2700
Sekhemkhet	2700–2695
Khaba	2663–?
Huni	2639–?
Fourth Dynasty	
Sneferu	2670–2620
Khufu	2620–2580
Djedefra	2580–2570
Chephren	2570–2530
Bicheris ?	2530?
Menkaura	2530–2510
Shepseskaf	2510–2500
Djedeftah	2500
Fifth Dynasty	
Userkaf	2500–2490
Sahure	2490–2475
Neferirkare Kakai	2475–2465
Shepseskare Isi	2465–2460
Neferefre	2460–2455
Niuserre	2455–2420
Menkauhor Kaiu	2420–2410
Djedkare Isesi	2410–2380
Unas	2380–2350

(after Schneider, *Lexikon der Pharaonen*, Zürich 1994)

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Abbreviations and Bibliography

APAW: Abhandlungen der Preußischen Akademie der Wissenschaften
BSFE: Bulletin de la Sociéte Française d'Égyptologie
CdE: Chronique d'Égypte
EEF: The Egypt Exploration Fund
JARCE: Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt
JEA: The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology
LÄ: Lexikon der Ägyptologie
MÄS: Münchner Ägyptologische Studien
MDAIK: Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Abteilung Kairo
Or: Orientalia
RecTrav: Recueil de Travaux Relatifs
SHR: Studies in the History of Religions
STSAAE: Studies in the Structural Archaeology of Ancient Egypt
UGAÄ: Untersuchungen zur Geschichte und Altertumsurkunde Ägyptens
Wb: Wörterbuch der Ägyptischen Sprache
ZÄS: Zeitschrift für Ägyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde

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