

A TIMELINE OF ANCIENT EGYPT

By Willow Browne

Prehistoric Period

Palaeolithic Period

- Lower Palaeolithic: ca. 250,000-200,000 years ago
 - Middle Palaeolithic: ca. 250,000-50,000 years ago
 - Upper Palaeolithic: ca. 33,000 years ago
 - Late Palaeolithic: ca. 21,000 years ago
 - Final Palaeolithic: ca. 10,000 years ago (Bard 2008:69)
-
- There is no evidence for continuous habitation of the Nile Valley in this period. (Van De Mierop 2011:21)

Neolithic Period

- Early Neolithic: ca. 8800-6800 BCE
- Middle Neolithic: ca. 6500-5100 BCE
- Late Neolithic: ca. 5100-4700 BCE (Bard 2008:80)
- The development of Egyptian culture becomes apparent between 5400-3000 BCE with the settling of hunter-gatherer tribes to use agriculture, particularly in the Nile Valley. (Van De Mieroop 2011:21-22)
- Burial traditions become more complex and show the beginnings of later Egyptian practices. (Van De Mieroop 2011:24)

Predynastic Period

Formation of the Egyptian State

- By 3400 BCE, people lived in settlements in the Nile Valley, relying on the river regime for farming and burying their dead in the deserts nearby. The elements of later Egyptian culture are in place. (Van De Mieroop 2011:24)
- Writing begins to emerge however most evidence remains archaeological. (Van De Mieroop 2011:30)
- The political ideals of kingship, as well as Upper and Lower Egypt are established. (Van De Mieroop 2011:29)

Dynasty 0 (Van De Mierop 2011:30)

- ca. 3200-3000 BCE
- This period refers to the rule of kings mentioned on objects and labels but do not fully correspond with later king lists. Examples include King Narmer and King Scorpion.
- The first attempts at unifying Egypt occur during this period.
- The Naqada period ends.

Old Kingdom

1st Dynasty (Van De Mieroop 2011:30-32)

- ca. 3000-2890 BCE
- Upper and Lower Egypt are unified however there is speculation over which king achieved this.
- Memphis is established near junction of Lower and Upper Egypt.

2nd Dynasty (Van De Mieroop 2011:30)

- ca. 2890-2686 BCE
- First royal tomb at Saqqara near Memphis.
- First complete Egyptian sentence written.

3rd Dynasty (Van De Mierop 2011:55)

- ca. 2686-2613 BCE
- ca. 2686-2648 BCE: King Djoser builds the first stone mortuary complex at Saqqara.

4th Dynasty (Van De Mieroop 2011:55)

- ca. 2613-2494 BCE
- ca. 2613-2589 BCE: King Sneferu builds three pyramids at Meidum and Dahshur.
- ca. 2589-2566 BCE: King Khufu builds the Great Pyramid at Giza.
- ca. 2566-2558 BCE: King Djedefra begins pyramid at Abu Rawash.
- ca. 2558-2532 BCE: King Khafra builds Great Sphinx and second pyramid at Giza.
- ca. 2532-2503 BCE: King Menkura builds third pyramid at Giza.
- ca. 2503-2498 BCE: King Shepseskaf builds colossal mastaba at Saqqara.

5th Dynasty (Van De Mierop 2011:55)

- ca. 2494-2345 BCE
- ca. 2494-2487 BCE: King Userkaf builds pyramid at Saqqara and solar temple at Abusir.
- ca. 2445-2421 BCE: King Nyuserra builds pyramid at Abusir and solar temple at Abu Ghurab.
- ca. 2375-2345: King Unas has earliest preserved Pyramid Texts in his tomb.

6th Dynasty (Van De Mieroop 2011:79-84)

- ca. 2345-2181 BCE
- ca. 2321-2287 BCE: the reign of King Pepy I is called a period of prosperity.
- ca. 2278-2184 BCE: King Pepy II has the longest rule in ancient Egyptian history. It is also in this period that the decline of the Old Kingdom occurs as the regionalisation of power causes local administrators to lose respect for the absolute royal rule. Inscriptions that were previously only in the tombs of Kings are found in the tombs of administrators and officials begin to claim personal importance in their tombs. Previously officials did not do so publically.

First Intermediate Period

6th Dynasty – Pepy's successors (Van De Mieroop 2011:84)

- Pepy's successors did not leave any evidence of themselves behind, even the number of them is unknown. This leads to the conclusion that they were weak and their reigns' unstable.
- The end of Pepy II's rule marked the beginning of the First Intermediate Period.

7th and 8th Dynasties (Van De Mieroop 2011:79, 84)

- ca. 2181-2160 BCE
- The kings of these dynasties had little to no actual power.
- Wealth was more equally shared within the upper class as it was consumed locally rather than diverted to the capital.
- The kings often called themselves 'Neferkara' after Pepy's throne name, perhaps in an attempt to resurrect his acclaim.

9th and 10th Dynasties

- ca. 2160-2025 BCE
- Ruled from Herakleopolis with power limited to northern Middle Egypt and the Delta.

Middle Kingdom

11th Dynasty (Van De Mieroop 2011:99-101)

- ca. 2125-1985 BCE
- ca. 2125-2055 BCE: rules the southern half of Egypt from Thebes.
- ca. 2055-2004 BCE: King Mentuhotep conquers the competing dynasty at Herakleopolis to unite Egypt and constructs a mortuary temple at Deir el-Bahri.
- However the court's power is limited as local officials inscribe bibliographies that focus on their own achievements.

Establishment of 12th Dynasty (Van De Mieroop 2011:99-101)

- ca. 1985-1956 BCE: King Amenemhat I seized the throne from Mentuhotep IV.
- He re-established order within Egypt and founded a new capital, Itjtawi, which took power away from Thebian nobles and ensured the workforce of Herakleopolis and Memphis were easier to draw on.

12th Dynasty (Van De Mieroop 2011:99)

- ca. 1985-1773 BCE
- ca. 1956-1911 BCE: King Senusret I built extensively across Egypt, including a pyramid at Lisht, and ran campaigns in Lower Nubia.
- ca. 1911-1877 BCE: King Amenemhat II left a now fragmentary account of his reign.
- ca. 1877-1870 BCE: King Senusret II started developing the Fayyum region.
- ca. 1870-1831 BCE: King Senusret III campaigned in the Levant, particularly Nubia. The office of nomarch is removed from official record.
- ca. 1831-1786 BCE: King Amenemhat III further develops the Fayyum.
- ca. 1777-1773 BCE: Queen Sobekneferu is the last ruler of the 12th dynasty.

13th Dynasty (Van De Mierop 2011:99, 107, 118)

- ca. 1773-after 1650 BCE
- There were numerous kings in this dynasty, most likely rotating between several families. It is likely that many of them did not have long reigns.
- The stability of the nation was preserved by the inherited nature of civilian positions, such as a Vizier's sons holding the same position.
- The royal court moved to Thebes ca. 1700.
- Rhetoric towards foreigners became increasingly hostile.

Second Intermediate Period

The fall of the 13th Dynasty (Van De Mieroop 2011:126-127)

- ca. 1700-1650 BCE
- After the move to Thebes, the royal court lost control of the region north of Abydos.
- During this period foreigners were in control of large parts of the country.

14th Dynasty (Van De Mierop 2011:127)

- ca. 1700-1650 BCE
- Minor rulers in northern Egypt, there are no known names for the kings of this dynasty.

15th Dynasty – the Hyksos (Van De Mieroop 2011:126-128)

- ca. 1650-1550 BCE
- Foreigners calling themselves Heqau-khasut ('rulers of foreign lands'), rendered to Hyksos by the Greeks, ruled large parts of Egypt during the Second Intermediate Period.
- The Hyksos absorbed and preserved Egyptian culture and lived alongside Egyptian people and kings with little evidence of hostility.
- Later they were depicted very negatively by Egyptians.

16th Dynasty (Van De Mieroop 2011:127-128)

- ca. 1650-1580 BCE
- Minor rulers in northern Egypt who were subject to the Hyksos.
- This dynasty followed the 14th dynasty.

17th Dynasty (Van De Mierop 2011:127)

- ca. 1650-1550 BCE
- Successors to the 13th dynasty at Thebes.
- King Seqenenra died violently, possibly in battle.
- ca. 1555 BCE: King Kamose initiated a campaign against the Hyksos and the kingdom of Kush.

New Kingdom

18th Dynasty (Van De Mieroop 2011:152)

- ca. 1550-1390 BCE
- ca. 1550-1525 BCE: King Ahmose expelled the Hyksos and unites Egypt. He conquered Sharuhin in southern Palestine and raided Nubia south of the second cataract. He builds the last royal pyramid at Abydos.
- ca. 1525-1504 BCE: King Amenhotep I campaigns against Nubia as far as the third cataract and possibly established a workers' village at Deir el-Medina.
- ca. 1504-1492 BCE: King Thutmose I campaigns in Nubia between fourth and fifth cataracts, defeats the kingdom of Kush, destroys Kerma and campaigns in Syria as far as the Euphrates

18th Dynasty cont. (Van De Mieroop 2011:152)

- ca. 1492-1479 BCE: King Thutmose II confronts rebellion in northern Kush.
- ca. 1473-1458 BCE: Queen Hatshepsut acts as regent for young Thutmose III from ca. 1479-1473 BCE before becoming king ca. 1473 BCE. She sent an expedition to Punt, built a mortuary temple at Deir el-Bahri then disappears from record ca. 1458 BCE.
- ca. 1479-1425 BCE: King Thutmose III ruled in name only until 1458. Once taking the throne he campaigned extensively in Palestine and Syria (ca. 1458-1449 BCE), fought the battle of Megiddo in 1447, possibly established control over Nubia and initiated much temple construction.

18th Dynasty cont. (Van De Mieroop 2011:152, 184)

- ca. 1427-1400 BCE: King Amenhotep II presented himself as a great charioteer, huntsman and archer. He initiated diplomatic contact in the Near East after a series of military campaigns.
- ca. 1400-1390 BCE: King Thutmose IV married a Mittanni princess.
- After this period of expansion, Egypt established strong trade connections with other countries and conducted relatively few military campaigns. This brought great wealth to the country.

18th Dynasty – Amarna revolution (Van De Mieroop 2011:184-186)

- ca. 1390-1352 BCE: King Amenhotep III initiates major construction throughout Egypt and particularly in Thebes.
- ca. 1352-1336 BCE: King Amenhotep IV changes his name to Akhenaten when he focuses all official attention on the Aten sun disk as the sole, true god. He moved his capital to Akhetaten and married Nefertiti and raised her to a status equal to his own.
- ca. 1336-1327 BCE: King Tutankhamun was forced to abandon Akhetaten for Memphis when he began the restoration of the traditional cults.

18th Dynasty – Amarna revolution (Van De Mieroop 2011:186)

- ca. 1327-1323 BCE: King Ay ascended to the throne as an old man with government experience.
- ca. 1323-1295 BCE: King Horemheb became king after a career as commander-in-chief. He finished the work Tutankhamun began by dismantling Akhenaten's buildings in Karnak and erasing the memory of his predecessors.
- All of the kings involved in the Amarna revolution, including Horemheb, were erased from official ancient Egyptian history.

19th Dynasty (Van De Mieroop 2011:214)

- ca. 1295-1186 BCE
- ca. 1295-1294 BCE: King Rameses I was crowned king after a career in the army and administration.
- ca. 1294-1279 BCE: King Sety I campaigned in Syria, the western desert and Nubia. He initiated much building activity and involved crown-prince Rameses in royal function from the age of seven.
- ca. 1279-1213 BCE: King Rameses II commissioned massive building activity throughout Egypt and Nubia, fought the Hittites in the battle of Qadesh (ca. 1275 BCE) before concluding a peace treaty with them (ca. 1259 BCE) and marrying a Hittite princess (ca. 1246 BCE). He received cult as a god while he was still alive.

19th Dynasty cont. (Van De Mieroop 2011:241)

- ca. 1213-1203 BCE: King Merenptah claimed victory over the invading Libyans and Sea Peoples.
- ca. 1203-1194 BCE: there was a civil war between King Sety II and Amenmessu.
- ca. 1194-1188 BCE: King Sety II is placed on the throne by bulter Bay, whom he later executes.
- ca. 1188-1186 BCE: Queen Tausret was the wife of Sety and acended the throne after her regency during Saptah's reign.
- This marks the end of the 'true' pharaohs as Queen Tausret's successor, King Sethnakht, was a non-royal who took the throne to restore order.

Bibliography

- Bard, K.A. (2008) *An introduction to the archaeology of ancient Egypt*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Van De Mieroop, M. (2011) *A History of Ancient Egypt*. Chichester: Blackwell.