



*Hail to you, O Nile, sprung from the earth,
Come to nourish Egypt,
Food-provider,
Bounty-maker,
Who creates all that is good. (Ancient Hymn).*

Egypt is a land of shifting desert sands, a land of giant pyramids and a place of great rulers from the past. It is the land of the Nile.

THE GEOGRAPHY OF EGYPT

If it can be said that nature plays favorites, then Egypt was her favorite child. There are several geographical features which combine to make this a unique land.

1. An Isolated Land.

Ancient Egypt was isolated from the rest of the world by its topography. To the west was a vast desert. To the north was the Mediterranean. To the east was the Red Sea. There were only two points of entry into Egypt aside from sea routes.

a. The south.

The Nubians to the south of Egypt often proved to be troublesome, but they were rarely a match for the more advanced military of Egypt.

b. The Northeast.

Most of the invaders who came against Egypt moved down through Palestine and then across the northern section of the Sinai Peninsula. To counter this threat, the Egyptians built a line of fortresses along the western edge of the Sinai.



2. The Nile River.

The Nile is the longest river in the world. It flows from three branches: The Blue Nile, the White Nile and the Atbara. They join far south of Egypt to become a single river a mile wide.

The Nile was the lifeline of Egypt. It fashioned the nation's economy, determined its political structure, and molded the values it chose to live by.

Just as the surrounding deserts and oceans gave Egypt security, so the Nile gave Egypt prosperity. The Nile was almost wholly responsible for Egypt's economy.

a. It made Egypt an agricultural nation.

The Nile River flooded on a regular basis each year, depositing rich sediments on the plains. Crops were planted in the fertile soil as soon as the river had receded. The result was a full harvest.

b. It determined all real estate values.

The value of land was determined by how close to the Nile it was located and whether or not it was flooded annually.

c. It provided transportation.

Ancient Egypt was made up of a long narrow strip of land over 700 miles long and only a few miles wide. The Nile was the unifying factor of Egypt. It provided the best means of north-south transportation. This factor led to the political unity of Egypt very early in her history.

The Nile might have also served as a path for invading forces from the south, had it not been for the many waterfalls to the south of Egypt.

3. The Climate of Egypt.

Because of the warm climate and the rich, fertile soil, the Egyptians were able to take life rather leisurely. This gave them time to engage in philosophy, religion, and developments in architecture, astronomy and mathematics.

Egypt sees very little rainfall. Its water comes from the mountains of Central Africa, many hundreds of miles to the south. This dry climate has brought the added benefit in the preservation of thousands of monuments and papyrus scrolls.

Interesting Note:

Many archaeologists used to mistakenly believe that the people of Palestine were mostly illiterate.

- The truth is that, except for a few areas around the shores of the Dead Sea, papyrus has a very short life span in Palestine due to its high humidity.
- The absence of papyrus documents in Palestine is not a sign of illiteracy, but only the lack of longevity in the documents.

Egypt did not suffer from this problem.

The dry climate was perfect for the preservation of papyrus. It is for this reason that some of our oldest copies of the Bible were found in Egypt.

We have already contrasted the geography of the Mesopotamian River Valley with that of the Nile, but it would be well to repeat some of those points of contrast.

Mesopotamia	Egypt
The flooding of the Euphrates and Tigris was irregular and destructive.	The flooding of the Nile was both predictable and beneficial.
No natural borders to keep out invaders.	Bounded by natural borders of desert and sea.
Ruled by a vast succession of rulers of differing nationalities.	Most of Egypt's history saw a dynastic succession of domestic rulers.
People tended to have a pessimistic outlook on life.	Literature demonstrates a cheerful outlook on life.
The gods of Mesopotamia were cold and cruel and could not be trusted.	The gods of Egypt were considered to be good and benevolent.

PROBLEMS IN STUDYING EGYPTIAN CHRONOLOGY

There are several key problems that the archaeologist faces as he attempts to unravel the history of ancient Egypt.

1. The Lack of a Fixed System for Reckoning Time.

Like many people of the ancient world, the Egyptians had no unified time scale or way of referring to dates. Instead of having numbers to describe their years (May 7, 2000), they used several alternate means.

a. The naming of years.

In the earliest years of Egypt's history, the years were named according to significant events.

The year of the great hailstorm.

The year of fighting and smiting the northerners.

The year of the second enumeration of all large and small cattle of the north and the south.

The Bible also uses this kind of numbering system.

In the year of King Uzziah's death (Isaiah 6:1).

In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, on the seventeenth day of the month...(Genesis 7:11).

And it came to pass in the seven and thirtieth year of the captivity of Jehoiachin king of Judah (Jeremiah 52:31).

b. Regal years.

The next method of reckoning time was to align it with the reigning monarch.

The 12th year of Amenhotep.

In the fourth year of king Darius (Zechariah 7:1).

In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah (Daniel 1:1).

Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar (Luke 3:1).

This meant that you had to know the name of every Egyptian king who ever ruled and the order in which they ruled.

Another problem with the fact that many kings had sons who were given the same name. They did not call themselves Thutmose 1st, Thutmose 2nd, Thutmose 3rd. We add these numbers for our own benefit.

c. Priestly records.

It was not until the Hellenistic Period that the Egyptian priests began to compile and to record detailed lists of kings, their names and the number of years in which they reigned. These were inscribed on temple walls where they can be found today.

2. The Lack of any Objective Egyptian Historians.

Egypt has yielded more in archaeological finds than any other area of the ancient world. Yet in spite of this, we have been limited in our understanding of Egyptian history.

The Egyptian did not emphasize originality or individuality. In his style of writing, he attempted to be like all other Egyptians and their ancestors as much as possible. It is not that we are unable to read his diary, it is that he writes the same thing that everyone else has written in their diaries.

The Egyptians never produced a native historian to evaluate or to give an objective account of their civilization. It was not until the Hellenistic Age when the Greek Ptolemies were ruling Egypt that her history began to be analyzed and interpreted by her own people.

3. The Use of Astronomical Dating Methods.

The Egyptians used a solar rather than a lunar calendar. They had 365 days in their year and divided their year into 360 days of twelve equal 30-day months and then added five additional feast days at the end of each year. It was this same calendar that was adopted by Julius Caesar and made the official

calendar of the Roman Empire. It is essentially the same calendar that we use today.

The Egyptian months were grouped into three seasons of 4 month durations:

- **Inundation**
- **Germination**
- **The warm season**

The Egyptian astronomers were able to calculate and to keep records of three events.

- a. The rising of the sun.**
- b. The rising of Sothis (Sirius, the dog star).**
- c. The start of Inundation.**

These three events took place simultaneously once every 1460 years. Modern research has established that this event took place between 1325 and 1322 B.C. during the 19th dynasty of Egypt. This fact is confirmed by ancient scribal records (the previous cycle would have begun the Pyramid Age in 2785-2782 B.C.).

4. The Translating of the Hieroglyphics.

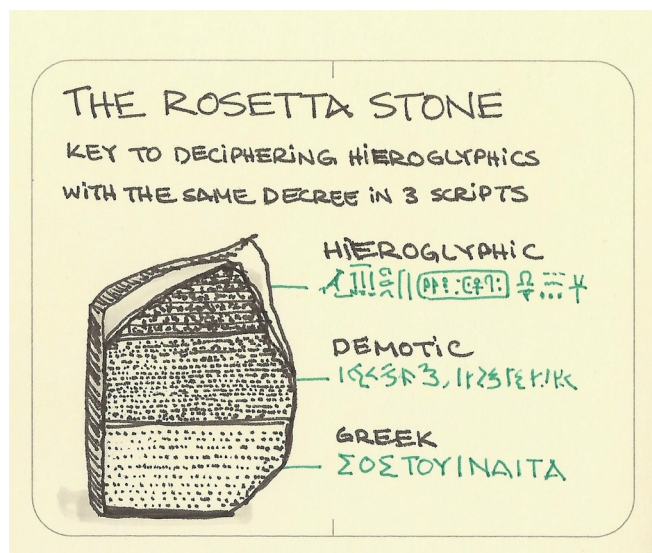
Until the 1800's everything that historians knew of Egypt came from Herodotus and the Bible. This began to change in 1798 when Napoleon invaded Egypt with a fleet of 328 warships. The expedition was a military failure, but led to an archaeological victory with the discovery of the Rosetta Stone. This small stone contained an inscription in three languages.

- a. Hieroglyphics.
- b. Demotic.
- c. Greek.

It was thought at first that the hieroglyphics were a form of picture writing where each picture represented a complete thought.



Thus, It did not immediately occur to scholars that a picture of an O means the word "ear." might merely stand for the sound "ear."



It was left to Jean Francois Champollion to painstakingly decipher the Egyptian hieroglyphics using the key in the Rosetta Stone.

AN OUTLINE OF EGYPTIAN HISTORY

Manetho, an Egyptian historian who studied in the days when the Ptolemies were ruling Egypt, divided the rulers of Egypt into 30 dynasties. This list goes back to the earliest king and ends with the conquest of Alexander the Great.

PERIOD	Dynasty	YEARS
The Archaic Period	1-2	3100-2686 B.C.
The Old Kingdom	3-6	2686-2181 B.C.
1st Intermediate Period	7-11	2181-1991 B.C.

Middle Kingdom	12	1991-1786 B.C.
2nd Intermediate Period	13-17	1786-1567 B.C.
New Kingdom	18-20	1567-1085 B.C.
3rd Intermediate Period	21-24	1085-712 B.C.
Late History	25-30	712-332 B.C.

THE PREDYNASTIC PERIOD

Early in Egypt's history, the people living along the Nile River polarized into two distinct kingdoms.

1. Lower Egypt.

- This was the northern kingdom. It was called "Lower Egypt" because it lay in the lowlands of the Delta region. Its capital was Pe.
- The symbol for Lower Egypt was the papyrus reed which grew throughout the Delta. The king of Lower Egypt wore a red crown.

2. Upper Egypt.

- The southern kingdom was called "Upper Egypt" because it lay in the highlands to the



south of the Delta. It stretched over a greater area, all the way to the First Cataract. Its capital was Hierakopolis.

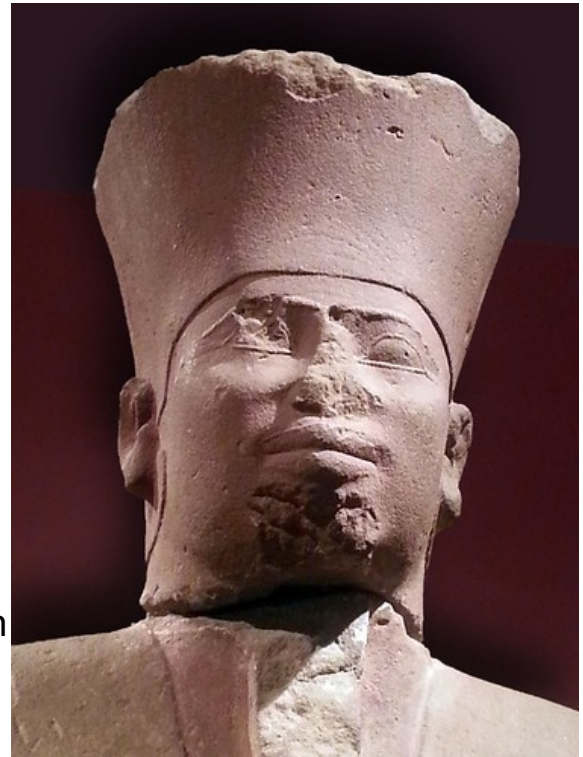
- The symbol for Upper Egypt was the white lily and the king of Upper Egypt wore a white crown.
- This division of Upper and Lower Egypt remained throughout antiquity. Even when one pharaoh ruled over all the land, his title was "Pharaoh of Upper and Lower Egypt" and he wore a combined red and white crown.

THE ARCHAIC PERIOD

1. The Unification of Upper and Lower Egypt.

Around 3000 B.C. Lower and Upper Egypt were finally welded into a single kingdom under one ruler. This was the result of conquest, but it served to bring peace and prosperity to the land.

Tradition has it that this new ruler was Pharaoh Menes, also known as Pharaoh Narmer. The capital of this new kingdom was Thes (located near Abydos), but was soon moved north to Memphis, 20 miles south of the Delta, where it remained for the next 600 years.



2. Achievements of the Period.

This period saw the building of many brick temples and palaces. Hieroglyphic writing was fully formulated and several fragmentary inscriptions from this period still exist.

THE OLD KINGDOM: 2666 - 2161 B.C.

Now began one of Egypt's most prosperous periods in history. Within just a few years, Egypt moved from a few city-states into a great kingdom, producing architectural feats which have amazed even modern engineers of today.

- The Old Kingdom was seen as the Golden Age of Egypt. The Pharaohs, ruling from Memphis, divided the country into provinces and appointed governors of royal blood to oversee them.
- The Egyptians were not by nature a warlike people. At this period they had no standing army, but only a civilian militia which could be drafted in times of national troubles. This militia was also used in peacetime for peaceful enterprises such as building or trading. When its task was completed, it was disbanded.

1. The Third Dynasty.

The Pharaoh was considered to be a god. He was worshiped throughout the temples of Egypt. Because of this, no expense in serving the Pharaoh was considered too great, both in life and in death.

- During the 1st and 2nd Dynasties, the Pharaohs had been buried in small brick structures called "mastabas." With the advent of this dynasty began the building of the pyramids.



- The first Egyptian pyramid was the famous Step Pyramid. It was built by the imperial architect for Pharaoh Zoser, first ruler of the Third Dynasty. With its series of six terraces, it more closely resembled one of the ziggurats of Mesopotamia. However, the ziggurats were temples; the pyramids served as tombs.

2. The Fourth Dynasty.

This Dynasty saw the height of Egypt's prosperity. Pyramids assumed their more regular shape. The most famous of these being the great pyramids at Gizeh.

The pyramid of Khufu (called Cheops by the Greeks) was the largest to be built. It stood 480 feet high and was overlaid with a smooth facing of limestone.



- It was constructed with more than 2 million blocks of stone, most weighing about 2½ tons.
- Although the core blocks were obtained locally, the granite face blocks were mined at Aswan, 500 miles to the south, and ferried down the Nile.
- These weighed up to 30 tons a piece.

3. Decline of the Old Kingdom.

With the advent of the Fifth Dynasty, Egypt began to show signs of trouble. The last two dynasties of Egypt would see a growing decline.

a. Religious problems.

Prior to this time, the king had been a god, equal to all of the other gods of Egypt. Now the priests declared that the king was only the son of god and a power struggle between the king and the priests ensued.

b. Economic problems.

Egypt had paid a great price to build the pyramids and now found them very expensive to maintain.

The pyramids built during this dynasty were only half the size of the Great Pyramid and had a central core of such poor construction that most have collapsed into low mounds of rubble.

c. Political problems.

In addition to the priests, there were other high officers and officials that began to be a threat to the king's omnipotence.

THE FIRST INTERMEDIATE PERIOD: 2181 - 1991 B.C.

With the death of Pepi II, Egypt rapidly broke up into several small feudal kingdoms. These kingdoms were constantly at war with each other, each trying to conquer his neighbor. This was a period of anarchy as the ruling classes lost their wealth and power.

1. Entrance of Bedouins.

During this period, various bedouins began to filter into Egypt, pushed from the northeast by migration pressures that were taking place throughout the ancient world.

- It was during this period that Abraham visited Egypt during a time of famine in Canaan (Genesis 12:10).

2. Pessimistic Literature.

It was during this First Intermediate Period that Egypt began its Pessimistic Literature. Finally a ruler arose at Thebes who succeeded in overcoming the other kingdoms and uniting Egypt under one government.

THE MIDDLE KINGDOM: 1991 - 1786 B.C.

While the Eleventh Dynasty united Egypt into one kingdom, the Twelfth Dynasty consolidated and strengthened the kingdom so that it achieved a form of stability.

1. Accomplishments of the Twelfth Dynasty.

a. Political power.

These pharaohs curbed the power of the individual governors by installing their own loyal nobles from Thebes.

b. Economic growth.

By the Twelfth Dynasty, the building of royal pyramids had ceased. The resources of the country were now put to other uses.

The pharaohs rebuilt canals, dikes and catch basins which were so important to Egypt's agricultural economy.

c. Military advances.

They expanded the military, sending expeditions into Nubia in the south and into Palestine in the northeast.

d. Growth in trade.

They organized regular trade with the Minoans and the Phoenicians.

2. Entrance of Joseph and the Israelites.

It was during this period that Joseph became the Prime Minister of Egypt and, under his influence, the Israelites were allowed to settle in the area of Goshen, on the eastern edge of the Delta.

Pharaoh Amenemhat 2nd was upon the throne of both Upper and Lower Egypt while Joseph was in the house of Potiphar.

- It was Amenemhat 2nd who had his butler and baker thrown into prison with Joseph.

Sesostris 3rd became pharaoh in 1887 B.C.

It may have been this new pharaoh who released the butler restoring him to service in the court while condemning the baker to death.

Two years later (1885 B.C.), Joseph was released from prison and instituted as the Prime Minister of Egypt, second only to the Pharaoh. It is noteworthy that the forces of Sesostris 3rd were the first to campaign in Palestine, raiding the region of "Sekmem in Retenu" (Shechem in Canaan?).

Sesostris 3rd also invaded Nubia, bringing back such wealth that gold became more common and therefore of less value than silver.

- When Joseph's brothers were accused of stealing a silver cup, it was the most valuable one in the household.

Sesostris 3rd reigned until the year 1849 B.C., well after the Israelites had settled in Egypt.

As the years passed and the Israelites began to prosper and multiply, a new king came to the throne of Egypt who was suspicious of these foreigners. There were several reasons for these suspicions:

a. They were foreigners.

- The Egyptians were very race conscious and naturally looked upon foreigners with suspicion.

b. They were shepherds.

- The wild border tribes who lived in the deserts around Egypt were also shepherds.
- Shepherds were persona non grata in Egypt.

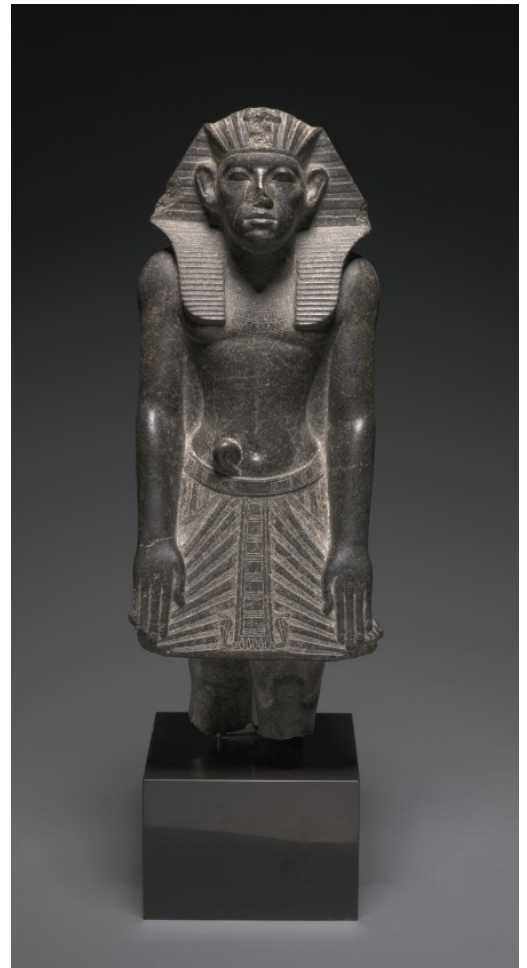
c. They lived in Goshen.

Goshen controlled the northeastern frontier. It was the doorway to Egypt and whoever controlled Goshen had a stranglehold on Egyptian security.

d. Religious differences.

The Israelites did not honor the gods of Egypt. They sacrificed bulls which the Egyptians held to be sacred.

3. Amenemhet 3rd.



Amenemhet 3rd took the throne at the death of his father in 1849 B.C.

- His primary achievement was in developing an irrigation system.
- He ordered his officials at the Fortress of Senineh at the Second Cataract to record the height of the Nile each year so that he could more accurately plan for the economic needs of his country.
- He developed a plan to irrigate the entire Fayum Basin, building a wall 27 miles long to control the flood waters and adding 27,000 acres of farmland.

The following song, praising his benevolent accomplishments has been found:

*He makes the two lands green more than a great Nile,
He has filled the two lands with strength. He is life, cooling the nostrils.
The treasures which he gives are food for those who are in his following;
He feeds those who tread his path.
The king is food and his mouth is increase.*

As we read these words, we cannot help but wonder if this preoccupation with the agricultural economy looked back to the famine in the days of Joseph.

THE SECOND INTERMEDIATE PERIOD: 1786 -1567 B.C.

Egypt's period of political strength did not last after the advent of the Thirteenth Dynasty. The ineffectual reign of the Thirteenth Dynasty failed to provide any central authority. Before long, Egypt had split and Upper and Lower Egypt were once again at war with each other.

Upon this scene, a dynasty of foreigners arose to take over the Delta region. They were known to the Egyptians as *Heka Khasewt* ("Chieftains of a foreign hill country"), but are known in history as the *Hyksos* ("Rulers of Countries"). Manetho identified them as Phoenicians and Arabs. We know only that they were Semitic foreigners.

1. Identity of the Hyksos.

The Hyksos seem to have been a Semitic people who began filtering into Egypt near the end of the Middle Kingdom, about the same time that the Israelites were settling in Goshen.

"The scarabs of a pharaoh who evidently belonged to the Hyksos time give his name as Jacob-her or possibly Jacob-el, and it is not impossible that some chief of the Jacob-tribes of Israel gained the leadership in this obscure age." (James H. Breasted, History of Egypt; 1909; Page 220).

The Bible treats these as silent years, telling us nothing of the history of the period.

2. Conquest over Egypt.

With Egypt greatly weakened by the civil war, the Hyksos were able to move in and take control of the leadership of Lower Egypt. They were able to do this because of several military advantages.

The Egyptians were not advanced in the art of war. They fought almost nude, carrying heavy, man-sized shields. Their two primary weapons were the small axe and the light bow.

The Hyksos had the finest weapons in the world. They had come down from Padam-aram where they had enjoyed much contact with the Hittites who were the largest arms manufacturers in the ancient world at that time. Thus, they came into Egypt with the latest in modern weaponry.

- a. Body armor which the Hittites had obtained from the Mycenaeans.
- b. Long, slim swords and short daggers.
- c. Powerful bows made of wood and horn.
- d. The six-spoked, light, horse drawn chariot.

The result was the equivalent of matching a modern tank corps against a tribe of African Bushmen.

3. Resistance at Thebes.

In spite of all their advances in warfare, the Hyksos did not succeed in advancing past Thebes. A resistance movement at Thebes managed to hold off the Hyksos for over 100 years.

4. The Hyksos Dynasty.

The Hyksos now set up their own dynasty, ruling from Avaris. They set up military garrisons all along the Nile to protect their new holdings.

- Other than this, they erected no monuments of which we are aware. Quite the contrary, they burned many books and objects of art.
- Egyptian inscriptions describe the Hyksos as being a destructive race, matched only by the Assyrians for their cruelty.
- This is not too surprising when we consider that the Hyksos and the Assyrians were probably from the same stock.
- They are described as torturing their captives, cracking heads open, smashing teeth, gouging eyes out and hacking off arms and legs.

5. The Expulsion of the Hyksos.

During this period of Hyksos domination, the Theban nobles had not been idle. Learning from their Semitic enemies, they began to train an army in the use of the war chariot and the short sword.

a. Senekenre.

Their leader was a Theban nobleman named Senekenre. He was killed in one of the early battles and for a time the revolt was quieted.

b. Kamoses.

The son of Senekenre was Kamoses. He was recognized as the leader in Thebes and he decided to fight a naval battle against the Hyksos. Gathering a fleet of warships, he sailed down the Nile, meeting and defeating the Hyksos forces who were poor sailors. The defeat of the Hyksos marked the beginning of the New Kingdom in Egypt. The first and greatest part of this period was ruled by the Eighteenth Dynasty.

THE EIGHTEENTH DYNASTY

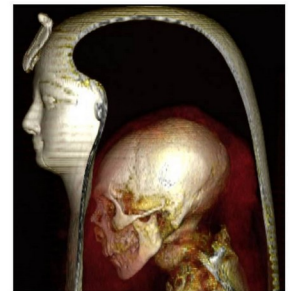
Egypt had beaten off the Hyksos in a major battle, but they still held onto many of their garrisons and their capital at Avaris.

1. Ahmoses (1570-1546 B.C.).

- Ahmoses was the younger brother of Kamoses. After the death of his brother, Ahmoses completed the systematic expulsion of the Hyksos, driving them up into Palestine.
- Returning to Egypt. Ahmoses found the country once again racked by civil war. Putting down all opposition, Ahmoses made himself the pharaoh of all Egypt.

2. Amenhotep 1 (1546-1526 B.C.).

- Amenhotep was the son of Ahmoses. When he came to the throne following his father's death, he was faced with rebellion by the Nubians in the south and the Libyans in the west.
- First, he marched south and defeated the Nubians, pushing them back to the 3rd cataract. Then he swung back around, conquering the Libyans in the west.
- Back in Egypt, Amenhotep proved himself to be an able administrator. The government of Egypt was reorganized and order began to be restored. No trace of the old feudalism of the past was left in this reorganization. The rule of the pharaoh became absolute. After 21 years of rule, he died and his son came to the throne.



3. Thutmoses 1 (1525-1512 B.C.).

- During the first year of his reign, Thutmoses had to put down a revolt in Nubia, marching all the way to the 4th cataract. Next, he led an expedition into Palestine, setting a precedent in the years to come.

- The chariot became a regular part of the Egyptian military at this time (riding a horse was always repulsive to the Egyptians).
- The pyramids had long since been abandoned as far too costly. Thutmoses began a new tradition, having a tomb for himself built in an area which was to become known as the Valley of the Kings. Luxor lay on the east bank of the Nile; the Valley of the Kings was on the west bank, in the direction of the setting sun.



The kings of the 18th, 19th and 20th dynasties were buried here. A second valley to the southwest became known as the Valley of the Queens. It became the resting place of both queens, princes and other nobility.

Thutmoses had no surviving male heirs, but he did have a daughter named Hatshepsut and an illegitimate son who took for himself the name Thutmoses 2nd, marrying Hatshepsut to legitimize his right to the throne.

4. Thutmoses 2nd (1512-1504 B.C.).

Thutmoses 2nd was only 20 years old when he came to the throne. He was totally dominated by his energetic and ambitious wife. When the Nubians revolted, Thutmoses II stayed home while his army went out and put down the revolt.

a. Moses.

If we are correct in dating the Exodus at 1446 B.C., then it may well have been Hatshepsut who found the child Moses in the Nile River and who adopted him and raised him as her own.

Josephus tells of an account how it was Moses who let the armies of Egypt to put down the revolt of the Nubians.

The fact that there is no mention of either Moses or the Exodus from Egypt in any of the extant inscriptions should not surprise us. The Egyptians did not

record their own defeats and would have carefully edited anything in the way of the exodus event.

b. Quest for an heir.

Thutmose 2nd and Hatshepsut had no legitimate sons, but they did have two daughters. Thutmose 2nd also had a son by a concubine. This son took the name Thutmose 3rd.

Thutmose 3rd was still under age when his father died after a short reign. Therefore his mother assumed the throne in his place, taking the position of regent, but effectively acting as pharaoh and even wearing the ceremonial beard of the pharaohs (Egyptians were clean-shaven, so the wearing of a ceremonial beard was not unusual).

5. Hatshepsut (1503-1482).

Following the death of her husband, Hatshepsut ruled as the regent for the next 21 years. She engaged in at least four military campaigns, leading one of the campaigns herself. However, she is best remembered for her peaceful quests to bring economic prosperity to Egypt.

a. Building programs.

Hatshepsut built great monuments all over Egypt. Her royal tomb was carved out of the mountainside at Thebes.

*I have restored that which was ruins,
I have raised up that which was
unfinished.
Since the Asiatics were in the midst of
Avaris of the northland,
And the barbarians were in the midst of them,
Overthrowing that which has been made,
While they ruled in ignorance of Re. - Hatshepsut*



She adorned the great temple of Karnak with four huge granite obelisks, cut out of the quarries at Aswan and floated down the Nile. One of them, which is still standing, is the tallest in the whole of Egypt, being nearly ninety feet high.

b. International trade.

She also opened up the trade routes to other countries which had been closed since the Hyksos domination.

The reliefs at the beautiful mortuary temple of Deir el-Bahri depict her voyage to Punt and show an extremely fat queen of that land as well as the plants and animals to be found there.

c. The decision of Moses.

It would have been at this time that Moses made a decision which was to affect the rest of his life.

By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; 25 choosing rather to endure ill-treatment with the people of God, than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin: 26 considering the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he was looking to the reward. (Hebrews 11:24-26).

Moses could have lived a life of ease and luxury in the palaces of Egypt. Instead, he chose to identify himself with the people of Israel who were still enslaved in Egypt.

6. Thutmoses 3rd (1482-1450).

There had been no love lost between Thutmoses 3rd and his step-mother. The first thing he did upon her death was to destroy or obliterate all of her monuments. We would know nothing of her at all were it not for the fact that some of the concealing plaster had fallen off certain monuments.

If Moses was still in Egypt at this time, then we could understand how the incident of the murder of the Egyptian taskmaster might be all that Thutmoses 3rd needed in the way of an excuse to rid himself of this past rival.



Thutmoses 3rd has been called the Napoleon of Egypt.

- Like Napoleon, his mummy shows him to have been a short man in stature.
- Also like Napoleon, he was the greatest military strategist that his country ever produced.
- In a period of 19 years, he made 17 military campaigns into Palestine and Syria, defeating the Kingdom of Mitanni and beating the cities of Syria into submission.
- Unlike Napoleon, he never lost a battle.

6. Amenhotep 2nd (1450-1425 B.C.).

Amenhotep 2nd was tall and broad in physique. He was reputed to be one of the best charioteers in all of Egypt. It was said that no man could draw his bow.

a. Campaign into Palestine.

When the princes of Syria heard of the death of Thutmoses 3rd, they stopped payment of their annual tribute to Egypt. Amenhotep 2nd personally led his army into Syria, crossing the Orontes, crushing the revolt, and bringing the seven ringleaders back to Thebes.



Here, he sacrificed them alive and hung the bodies of six of them on the walls of the city. The seventh he sent to be similarly arrayed on the walls of the southernmost fortress in the south as a warning to the Nubians.

b. Building projects.

He entered into a vast building project including a court, colossal statues, a funerary temple for himself and temples in many other cities.

If we are to accept the Massoretic text, then it seems that it would have been early in the reign of Amnenhotep 2nd when Moses and Aaron entered his courts with the demand that the people of Israel be released.

It was against this Egypt, an empire at the very peak of its glory and strength — that the Lord sent the ten plagues which would leave Egypt a ruin from which she would never fully recover.

There were three primary purposes that God had for sending these terrible plagues upon Egypt.

1. Passing Judgement on the gods of Egypt

...the Lord had also executed judgment on their gods. (Numbers 33:4b).

The following chart is only a partial breakdown of the Egyptian gods who were judged in the plagues.

The Plagues	Corresponding Deities of Egypt
Nile turned to blood	Hapi, spirit of the Nile.
Frogs	Heqt, the god of resurrection had the form of a frog.
Dust and Gnats	Directed against the priests who were required to be clean.
Flies in swarms	The Ichumeuman fly was considered a manifestation of the god Vatchit.
Death of cattle	Hathor, the mother goddess had the form of a cow. Apis, the bull-god of Ptah was a symbol of fertility.
Boils	Imhotepwas was the god of medicine.

	Sekhmet, a lion-headed goddess was supposed to have the power to begin and end plagues.
Hail	Nut was the sky goddess.
Locusts	Seth was the protector of crops.
Darkness	Re was the sun god.
Death of firstborn	The pharaoh himself was worshiped as a god.

2. The plagues were to encourage and build up Israel's faith.

Then the Lord said to Moses, "Go to Pharaoh, for I have hardened his heart and the heart of his servants, that I may perform these signs of Mine among them, and that you may tell in the hearing of your son, and of your grandson, how I made a mockery of the Egyptians, and how I performed My signs among them; that you may know that I am the Lord. (Exodus 10:1-2).

God had beaten Egypt when she was at her STRONGEST. This was to teach Israel that the God they worshipped was the omnipotent Lord of all creation.

Finally, the plagues served as a means of worldwide evangelism.

"But indeed, for this cause I have allowed you to remain, in order to show you My power, and in order to proclaim My name through all the earth." (Exodus 9:16).

When Joshua sent two spies to look over Jericho, they found a woman named Rahab who had heard of what the Lord had done to Egypt and who had become a believer (Joshua 2:6-9). Hundreds of years later, the Phihistines still

remembered that the God of Israel had brought plagues against Egypt (I Samuel 4:8).

Egypt never fully recovered from the disasters which she had met in the ten plagues. From this point onward, she would begin to decline.

Amenhotep 2nd never against led a campaign out of the boundaries of Egypt.

7. Thutmoses 4th (1425-1417 B.C.).

Thutmoses 4th remained on the throne for only eight years, dying at the young age of 30. He has recently been identified as a more possible leader during the exodus,

His best known monument is a stone which he erected between the paws of the Great Sphinx during the first year of his reign.



- On the stone he records how a prophet had appeared to him many years before in a dream and told him that he would someday rule Egypt in place of his older brother.
- He was also told that when he had become a pharaoh, he must remove the mountain of sand which almost covered the Sphinx.
- It is interesting to note that the older brother of Thutmoses 4th could have died in the plague of the firstborn.

Thutmoses 4th found himself facing the rising power of the Kingdom of Mitanni, located on the plains of northern Syria. Instead of attempting a dangerous war, Thutmoses entered into a political alliance with Mitanni, sealing it with his marriage to Mutemwiya, a princess of Mitanni. He also entered into a treaty with Babylon.

8. Amenhotep 3rd (1417—1379 B.C.).

The military power of Egypt continued to decline during the reign of Amenhotep 3rd. In fact, he conducted only one campaign during his reign. The was against the Nubians in the fifth year of his reign.

The Tell el-Amarna Tablets date from his reign. Among these inscriptions are a number of letters from the king of Jerusalem to Amenhotep 3rd asking for help against invaders known as the Habiru.

The Habiru are plundering all the lands of the king. If no troops come in this very year, then all the lands of the king are lost. (King of Jerusalem).

The Habiru were not a specific racial group, but rather were thought of as barbarians. These particular Habiru may have been the Israelites under Joshua who were now moving into Canaan and taking the land. Because of her military decline, Egypt made no attempt at intervention.

Amenhotep 3rd went against tradition by marrying Tiye, the daughter of a commoner. It was highly unusual for a commoner to be chosen as the wife of a pharaoh and Queen Tiye was expressly called the First Wife of the King. They named their son and heir Amenhotep 4th.

9. Akhenaton (1379-1362 B.C.).

Amenhotep 4th has the distinction of being the first pharaoh of Egypt to be a monotheist. He chose to worship only one god Aton, the sun god, as the creator and sustainer of the universe.

a. Physique and character.

Amenhotep 4th was a teenager when he came to the throne. The Tell el-Amarna inscriptions show his physical appearance to be sickly and effeminate. However, his strong personality made up for his weak physique.

b. A new name.

He changed his name from Amenhotep ("Amon is satisfied") to Akhenaton ("He who is beneficial to Aton").

c. Religious reform.

Aton was declared to be Egypt's national god and all other temples were closed down. Anyone still holding to the old gods was pronounced a heretic.

Most of the priests of Egypt did not share in the support of the new religion. The following power struggle brought Egypt to the brink of civil war.

d. Incest.

When his wife, Nefertiti, fell into disgrace and was banished, Akhenaton married his 13-year old daughter, Ankhesenpaton.

e. His death.

It seems that Akhenaton was killed in a revolt against the new religion. The details of his death have been lost to history.

Akhenaton had no sons to succeed him, but he had seven daughters who were married to various Egyptian nobles. Disputes over succession arose and the country was plunged into civil war.

10. Tutankhamun (1361-1352 B.C.).

The civil war came to a close when the new husband of Ankhesenpaton was placed upon the throne by the priests of Egypt. The young king Tutankhaton was only nine years old. His bride and queen, Ankhesenipaton was fourteen.

With the new boy-king and his bride upon the throne, Egypt returned to modicum of stability.

a. Religious return.

The first order of business was to turn back to the traditional religion of Egypt.

Ankhesenpaton's name was changed to Ankhesenamun ("She lives for Amon"). Tutankhaton now became Tutankhamun ("Beautiful is life in Amon").

The new religion which had prospered under Akhenaton was now outlawed. The name of Akhenaton was erased from the official king list. His name and figure were stricken from the monuments.

b. Political strength.

The military prestige of Egypt had been lost and no attempt was made to regain it at this time.

c. An archaeological treasure.

The tomb of Tutankhamun was discovered in 1922 by Howard Carter. He had already dug methodically in the Valley of the Kings for many years and had only one location left to explore when his sponsor, Lord Caernarvon, decided to pull out.

Carter sailed back to Britain and personally pleaded with Lord Caernarvon for one more year, offering to pay all the expenses himself and Caernarvon generously consented to underwrite one more expedition. Within days of starting work the head of a flight of steps was uncovered - and then covered up again while Carter waited impatiently for Caernarvon to come out from Britain by ship.

Together the two men pried a stone out of the blocking and then Carter cautiously held a candle up to the opening and peered into the tomb.

"What do you see?" Carnarvon demanded after a long silence.

"I see wonderful things!" Carter replied in a hushed whisper, for in front of him the whole room seemed to be filled with gold.

The enormous quantity of gold in the tomb - nearly a ton in the coffin alone - staggered historians and archaeologists alike. They had been used to dismissing the Biblical record of the tabernacle as myth because it was thought that there was not that much gold in all the world at that time. Now, however, we see that in Egypt at least, there was plenty of gold and other precious metals.

d. Death.

Tutankhamun died after a short reign of only nine years. The young king was 18 years old and had produced no heir to the throne. Therefore his co-regent, Ay, tried to take the throne.

11. Ay (1352-1348 B.C.).

Although Ay had been the co-regent of Tutankhamun, his position on the throne of Egypt was somewhat unstable. In order to secure that position, he tried to marry Ankhesenamun, the wife of the late pharaoh.

Queen Ankhesenamun had other ideas. She sent a letter to Suppiluliumas, king of the Hittites, requesting that he send one of his sons to Egypt to marry her and thereby become pharaoh. We have recovered a portion of the letter.

My husband, Nibkhururia [the official name of Tutankhamun], has recently died and I have no son. But your sons, they say, are many. If you will send me a son of yours, he shall become my husband.

After the Hittite king had thoroughly investigated the situation, a Hittite prince was sent to Egypt. Before he arrived, his company was ambushed and he was killed. Soon after this, Ankhesenaraun was murdered.

Egypt now stood balanced on the brink of collapse. The last few pharaohs had shown little interest in the administration and this only served to add to the troubled situation. Only a small spark would have been necessary to plunge Egypt into revolution and civil war.

12. Horemheb (1348-1320 B.C.).

Into this picture stepped a deliverer who was to prove strong enough to stabilize the desperate situation.

Horemhab was the Commander-in-chief of the Egyptian army. Following the assassination of Ay, he marched his army to Thebes where he had himself crowned king.

As pharaoh, he began a campaign designed to restore to Egypt the power and prosperity that she had enjoyed in the days of Thutmoses 3rd.

a. Legal reforms.

He passed many new laws which would guarantee the freedoms, the property and the privacy of the citizens of Egypt.

He set strict penalties for all violations of the law.

b. Military career.

He began a series of military campaigns to the south, designed to drive back the Nubian tribes who had invaded the southern frontier.

c. Economic policies.

He restored trade relations with the land to the south. This trade had been disrupted during the reigns of Akhenaton and Tutankhamun.

Horemhab died after a long reign and was succeeded on the throne by the commander of the Egyptian army, Rameses.

THE NINETEENTH DYNASTY OF EGYPT (1320-1200 B.C.)

The advent of Rameses marks the beginning of the 19th Dynasty of Egypt. This family would rule over Egypt for the next 100 years.

1. Rameses 1st (1320-1318 B.C.).

Rameses was an old man when he came to the throne. He died after a short reign, and was succeeded by his son Seti.

2. Seti 1st (1318-1304 B.C.).

Seti began his reign with a project designed to build up the sagging military. The Bedouin tribes in the Sinai desert had been threatening the borders of Egypt.

After driving back the Bedouins, Seti advanced northward along the coast of Canaan, defeating several cities in northern Palestine and Syria, including Tyre and Kadesh. It was only a matter of time before the Egyptians clashed with the Hittites.

When Seti did clash with the Hittites, the result was indecisive. A temporary truce was made and both sides withdrew to prepare for future warfare. When the war finally did come, it was not Seti who was the pharaoh of Egypt, but his son, Rameses 2nd.

3. Rameses 2nd (1304-1237 B.C.).

Rameses 2nd was to be the most colorful leader that Egypt ever produced, not because of his great military prowess (which is questionable) or even his building accomplishments (which are extensive), but because he had an excellent public relations program.

a. The Battle of Kadesh.

Early in his reign, Rameses personally led his army north to meet the Hittites on the Orontes River, to the north of Palestine. Near the city of Kadesh, he was hit by a surprise attack that nearly wiped out the Egyptian army.

Rameses himself escaped and made it back to Egypt with the remnants of his army. He staged a great triumphal entry, declaring that he had defeated the Hittites by his own great strength. Huge monuments were built to commemorate this great Egyptian "victory."

b. The results of the Battle of Kadesh.

The Battle of Kadesh had ended with an expensive stalemate between the Egyptians and the Hittites. As a result, both kingdoms pulled back, halting the expansion which had brought them into conflict.

Because of this resulting power vacuum, Israel would be left free to grow up into a great nation under Saul, David and Solomon.

Eventually, an Egyptian-Hittite treaty was agreed upon and confirmed by the marriage of Rameses to a Hittite princess and her elevation to the rank of "Royal Wife."

c. Building programs.

Rameses conducted more building programs than any other pharaoh. These projects ranged from the Delta to Thebes and included gigantic images of himself.

d. The beginnings of decline.

One interesting indication of decline during the reign of Rameses began when the government fell two months behind on the payment of wages. The Egyptian workers in Thebes threw down their tools and walked off the job. They marched

to the Temple of Rameses and sat down outside the walls, refusing to move until they were paid. This is the first recorded labor strike in history and it lasted eight days.

Other strikes followed this initial one as discontent grew and people took to robbing the royal tombs by night.

4. Merenptah (1236-1223 B.C.).

Since Rameses had outlived many of his 79 sons, it was his 13th son who came to the throne under the name Merenptah.

a. Conflict with Lybians.

In his fifth year, Merenptah repelled an attack of Lybians from the west, driving them from the Delta which they had attempted to enter.

b. The Merenptah Stele.

One of the earliest Egyptian references to Israel is seen in the Merenptah Stele. It is a large granite stele, located in the mortuary of Merenptah in Thebes. It is a poetic description of the conquests of the pharaoh. Near the end of the text, it lists the various cities and countries which had been invaded.

*The princes are prostrate, saying, "Mercy!" Not one raises his head among the Nine Bows. Desolation is for Tehenu; Hatti is pacified; plundered is the Canaan with every evil; carried off is Ashkeloni; seized upon is Gezer; Yenoam is made as that which does not exist; **ISRAEL** is laid waste, his seed is not; Hurru is become a widow for Egypt.*

This inscription indicates that the tribes of Israel were already a recognized entity in the land of Palestine at this time.

THE TWENTIETH DYNASTY OF EGYPT (1200-1085 B.C.)

The years following the reign of Merenptah were times of civil strife. For a time, there were two kings in Egypt, one ruling in the south at Thebes, and the other in the north at the city of Rameses.

Finally, a ruler arose by the name of Sethnakht. His rule only lasted three years, but he made certain that his son was able to take the throne upon his death. Sethnakht is reckoned as the founder of the 20th Dynasty and his son was Rameses 3rd.

1. Rameses 3rd (1198-1166 B.C.).

Rarneses 3rd came to the throne at a time in history when the Dark Ages were beginning to sweep over the ancient world.

Indo-European tribes had begun to migrate down into Greece from the north, destroying the Mycenaean Civilization.

They then poured across the Hellespont and into Anatolia, shattering the Hittite Empire.

As the inhabitants of these lands saw these murdering invaders marching down upon them, they quickly packed up and moved to the south, eventually coming to Egypt. Finding themselves repulsed by the Egyptians, they came to the realization that they were hemmed in by enemies on either side.

Choosing to fight the lesser of two evils, they regrouped and attacked Egypt.

Rameses 3rd refers to these invaders as the "Sea Peoples." Their force was made up of Minoans, Mycenaeans, Hittites, and even Berber tribes from the west who sought to take advantage of this opportunity.

Rameses had two decisive advantages in the Battle of the Sea Peoples which was fought in the Delta.

a. Superior weapons.

The invaders had only swords, spears and, shields. Chariots were of no use in the marshes of the Delta.

The Egyptian army had reorganized into a system much like the later Persian army in that it had a huge archery corps. Thus, they were able to kill many of the enemy before they were even within striking distance.

b. Naval maneuverability.

The ships of the Sea Peoples were powered only by sails, while the Egyptian vessels were powered by both oars and sails. They were able to out-maneuver the invading ships.

Because of these two factors, Rameses 3rd was successful in driving back the invaders from the north. However, he had paid a dear price. Egypt was completely exhausted by the war. Weakened as she was, she was not able to reassert her authority in Palestine. In compromise, she invited the Sea Peoples to settle among the Philistines, thereby making them a buffer-state to the outside world.

2. Decline of the 19th Dynasty.

Every pharaoh of the 19th Dynasty to succeed Rameses 3rd took for himself the great name of Rameses, that being their only claim to fame.

THE THIRD INTERMEDIATE PERIOD (1085-712 B.C.)

The end of the 20th Dynasty saw a new low era for Egypt as the country disintegrated into anarchy with first one and then another outsider rose to power.

1. Treaty with Israel.

Solomon made a treaty with Egypt, sealing it by a diplomatic marriage with a daughter of Siamun, the reigning pharaoh. The city of Gezer was given to Solomon as a dowry.

Normally it was the practice of the pharaohs to receive the daughters of other rulers into their own harem. For Solomon to take the pharaoh's daughter as his wife indicated that Israel was being treated as a political super—power.

2. Pharaoh Shishak and the Invasion of Israel.

Shishak, a chief of the Libyans, was also the founder of the 22nd Dynasty. Rising to power at the death of a previous pharaoh, he managed to bring all of Egypt under his rule by appointing one of his sons as the high priest.

He granted refuge to Jeroboam, a political refugee from Israel, and learned of the divisive attitudes that were growing in Israel.

Shortly after the nation of Israel divided, Shishak invaded the Southern Kingdom under Rehoboam.

Now it came about in the fifth year of King Rehoboam, that Shishak the king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem.

And he took away the treasures of the house of the Lord and the treasures of the king's house, and he took everything, even taking all the shields of gold which Solomon had made. (I Kings 14:25-26).

The south wall at the Temple of Amun in Karnak names many of the towns in Palestine which were plundered in this invasion.

3. Later Dynasties.

The later Dynasties of Egypt were still weaker. For a time, Ethiopia ruled over Egypt and an Ethiopian pharaoh sat upon the throne. During the days of Asa, the armies of the Ethiopians attempted to invade Judah, but were driven back with heavy casualties (2nd Chronicles 14:9-13).

The Third Intermediate Period ended, but instead of bringing a time of strength, it brought further troubles for Egypt. This was the Era of the Empires. A steady succession of empires now arose from Assyria, Babylon, Persia and finally Greece. Armies from each of these empires would march across Egyptian soil until Egypt would become a mere vassal state.

As we close, we are reminded of the words on an inscription which appears on the pedestal of a shattered statue. In an attempt to awe the world with its might, it serves to remind us that all such strength is fleeting.

*My name is Ozymandias, king of kings;
Look upon my works, ye Mighty and despair*