



Standing on the Shoulders of Giants Curriculum

Ancient Kemet/Egypt: Predynastic ~ Early Dynastic Period

Ancient Egypt Timeline Approximate

- Late Paleolithic, from 40th millennium BC
 - Aterian tool-making
 - Semi-permanent dwellings in Wadi Halfa
 - Tools made from animal bones, hematite, and other stones
- Neolithic, from 11th millennium BC
 - c. 10,500 BC: Wild grain harvesting along the Nile, grain-grinding culture creates world's earliest stone sickle blades
 - c. 8000 BC: Migration of peoples to the Nile, developing a more centralized society and settled agricultural economy
 - c. 7500 BC: Importing animals from Asia to Sahara
 - c. 7000 BC: Agriculture—animal and cereal—in East Sahara
 - c. 7000 BC: in Nabta Playa deep year-round water wells dug, and large organized settlements designed in planned arrangements
 - c. 6000 BC: Rudimentary ships (rowed, single-sailed) depicted in Egyptian rock art
 - c. 5500 BC: Stone-roofed subterranean chambers and other subterranean complexes in Nabta Playa containing buried sacrificed cattle
 - c. 5000 BC: Archaeoastronomical stone megalith in Nabta Playa, world's earliest known astronomy
 - c. 5000 BC: Badarian; furniture, tableware, models of rectangular houses, pots, dishes, cups, bowls, vases, figurines, combs
 - c. 4400 BC: finely-woven linen fragment
- Inventing prevalent, from 4th millennium BC
 - By 3400 BC, the world's earliest-known:
 - Cosmetics
 - Donkey domestication
 - (Meteoric) iron works
 - Mortar (masonry)
 - c. 4000 BC:
 - early Naqadan trade
 - 4th millennium BC: Gerzean tomb-building, including underground rooms and burial of furniture and amulets
 - 4th millennium BC: Cedar imported from Lebanon
 - c. 3900 BC: An aridification event in the Sahara leads to human migration to the Nile Valley
 - c. 3500 BC: Lapis lazuli imported from Badakshan and / or Mesopotamia
 - c. 3300 BC: Double reed instruments and lyres (see Music of Egypt)
 - c. 3500 BC: Senet, world's oldest-(confirmed) board game
 - c. 3500 BC: Faience, world's earliest-known glazed ceramic beads
 - c. 3200 King Menes banded Upper and Lower Egypt together

Predynastic Period

The Predynastic Period of Ancient Egypt (prior to 3100 BC) is traditionally the period between the Early Neolithic and the beginning of the Pharaonic monarchy starting with King Menes. The dates of the Predynastic period were first defined before widespread archaeological excavation of Egypt had taken place, and recent finds which show the course of Predynastic development to have been very gradual have caused scholars to argue about when exactly the Predynastic period ended. Thus, the term "Protodynastic period," sometimes called "Dynasty 0," has been used by scholars to name the part of the period which might be characterized as Predynastic by some and dynastic by others.

The Predynastic period is generally divided into cultural periods named after the places where a certain type of Egyptian settlement was first located. However, the same gradual development that characterizes the Protodynastic period is present throughout the entire Predynastic period, and individual "cultures" must not be interpreted as separate entities but as largely subjective divisions used to facilitate easier study of the entire period.

Most archaeological sites in Egypt have been excavated only in Upper Egypt, because the silt of the Nile River was more heavily deposited at the Delta region, and most Delta sites from the Predynastic period have since been buried totally.

This timeline marks the first evidence of human civilization beginning to appear in Egypt. It is the period that preceded the invention of writing and recording, a period that witnessed the first man recording his ideas and achievement and expressing himself using written language on papyrus. Discovered monuments contributed in clearing the vision over the prehistoric man through adding information about his origin, culture, religious beliefs, houses, tools and tombs.

Late Neolithic

Anthropological and archaeological evidence both indicate a grain-grinding Neolithic culture farming along the Nile in the 10th millennium BC using the world's earliest known type of sickle blades (Sources needed). But another culture of hunters, fishers and gathering peoples using stone tools replaced them.

Late Lower Paleolithic

Evidence indicates human habitation in the southwestern corner of Egypt, near the Sudan border, before 8000 BC. Climate changes and/or overgrazing around 8000 BC began to desiccate the pastoral lands of Egypt, eventually forming the Sahara (c. 2500 BC), and early tribes naturally migrated to the Nile river where they developed a settled agricultural economy and more centralized society.

There is evidence of pastoralism and cultivation of cereals in the East Sahara in the 7th millennium BC.

Domesticated animals had already been imported from Asia between 7500 BC and 4000 BC. Interestingly, the domestication of the pig in the Sahara and ancient Egypt has been cited as a likely primary contributor to the desertification of the Sahara.

The earliest known artwork of ships in ancient Egypt dates to 6000 BCE.

6th millennium BC

By 6,000 BC predynastic Egyptians in the southwestern corner of Egypt were herding cattle and constructing large buildings.

Subsistence in organized and permanent settlements in ancient Egypt by the middle of the 6th millennium BC centered predominantly on cereal and animal agriculture: cattle, goats, pigs and sheep.

Metal objects replaced prior ones of stone.

Tanning animal skins, pottery and weaving are commonplace in this era also.

There are indications of seasonal or only temporary occupation of the Al Fayyum in the 6th millennium BC, with food activities centering on fishing, hunting and food-gathering.

Stone arrowheads, knives and scrapers are common.

Burial items in this era include pottery, jewelry, farming and hunting equipment, and assorted foods including dried meat and fruit . The dead are buried facing due west.

Baskets of exceedingly high quality date to circa 5000 BC.

5th millennium BC

Items dating to this era of the Al Fayyum (5200 BC-4000 BC) include: axes of basalt, dolerite and limestone; a diorite mace head; dolerite vase; a wooden sickle and sickle blades; arrowheads; stone palettes and grain rubbers; silos; dishes, cups, bowls and pots; as well as beads of amazonite (feldspar).

The Badarian way of life centered mostly on agriculture, fishing and animal husbandry (see Badarian). Foreign artifacts indicate distant contacts as far away as Syria.

Furniture, tableware, decorated pots and vases, combs and figurines all appear around this time.

Social stratification has been inferred from the burying of more prosperous members of the community in a different part of the cemetery.

Around 4500 BC the Naqada culture begins, with geometric, human- and animal-shaped designs adorning pottery, both carved and painted.

Shapes of vessels become specialized depending on function.

Models of rectangular houses (included in grave goods) also appear in this era.

A finely woven linen fragment in the Al Fayyum dates to 4400 BC.

By 4000 BC we have evidence of pre-dynastic alchemists having invented the use of mortar (masonry) via one of the oldest known of chemical reactions.

4th millennium BC

By 4000 BC human, animal, and other designs on pottery become more realistic [23]. Tomb-building appears in the Gerzean culture, including underground rooms with furniture and amulets.

Gerzean practices would later evolve into the Osiris cult of ancient Egypt.

Symbols on Gerzean pottery resemble traditional hieroglyph writing.

By the beginning of the 4th millennium BC, ancient Egyptians in Maadi were importing numerous items of pottery from south Naqada and Canaan.

The economy of Maadi seems to have centered on metallurgy and foreign trade.

Many vessels made of black basalt also appear at this time.

There is evidence of the use of wooden posts in Maadi, maybe for buildings and/or fences. Also found are fire places and pits.

The earliest known buildings of stone to appear in ancient Egypt date to this era in Maadi, including one subterranean building that was constructed by covering walls of stone with Nile mud, another building that's entrance seems to have been fashioned by carving the local bedrock, and other building designs which also reveal distant southern Canaanite contact.

Lapis lazuli was being traded from its only known source in the ancient world - Badakshan, in what is now northeastern Afghanistan - as far as Mesopotamia and Egypt by the second half of the 4th millennium BC. There is evidence that ancient Egyptian explorers may have originally cleared and protected some branches of the Silk Road.

Between 1979 and 1985, charcoal samples found in the tombs of Nekhen, which were dated to the Naqada I and II periods, were identified as cedar from Lebanon.

Protodynastic Period of Egypt

The Protodynastic Period of Egypt (generally dated 3200 BC to 3000 BC) refers to the period of time at the very end of the Predynastic Period. It is equivalent to the archaeological phase known as Naqada III. It is sometimes known as Late Predynastic Period or Dynasty 0. The Narmer Palette, thought to mark the unification of Upper and Lower Egypt, note the images of Hathor at the top and bottom as well as the lionesses, symbols of Sekhmet, forming the central intertwined image. The Protodynastic Period is characterised as being the time when ancient Egypt was undergoing the process of political unification, leading to a unified state during the Early Dynastic Period.

Furthermore, it is during this time when the Egyptian language was first being recorded in hieroglyphs. There is also strong archaeological evidence of Egyptian settlements in southern Kanaan during the Protodynastic Period, which have been regarded as colonies or trading entrepôts.

State formation began during this era and perhaps even earlier. Various small city-states arose along the Nile. Centuries of conquest reduced Upper Egypt to three major states: Thinis, Naqada, and Nekhen. Being sandwiched by Thinis and Nekhen, Naqada was the first to fall. Thinis then conquered Lower Egypt. Nekhen's relationship with Thinis is uncertain but these two states may have merged peacefully with the Thinite royal family ruling all of Egypt. The Thinite kings are buried at Abydos in the Umm el-Qa'ab cemetery.

Most Egyptologists consider Narmer to be the last king of this period (although some place him in the First Dynasty), as well as the so-called "Scorpion King(s)", whose name may refer to, or be derived from, the goddess, Serket, a special early protector of other deities and the rulers.

Source:

Link: <http://www.crystalinks.com/predynasticegypt.html>

Early Dynastic Period of Egypt

The Archaic or Early Dynastic Period of Egypt immediately follows the unification of Lower and Upper Egypt c. 3100 BC. It is generally taken to include the First and Second Dynasties, lasting from the Protodynastic Period of Egypt until about 2686 BC, or the beginning of the Old Kingdom.

With the First Dynasty, the capital moved from Abydos to Memphis with a unified Egypt ruled by an Egyptian god-king. Abydos remained the major holy land in the south. The hallmarks of ancient Egyptian civilization, such as art, architecture and many aspects of religion, took shape during the Early Dynastic period.

Before the unification of Egypt, the land was settled with autonomous villages. With the early dynasties, and for much of Egypt's history thereafter, the country came to be known as the Two Lands. The rulers established a national administration and appointed royal governors. The buildings of the central government were typically open-air temples constructed of wood or sandstone. The earliest hieroglyphs appear just before this period, though little is known of the spoken language they represent.

Cultural Evolution

By about 3600 BC, neolithic Egyptian societies along the Nile River had based their culture on the raising of crops and the domestication of animals. Shortly after 3600 BC Egyptian society began to grow and advance rapidly toward refined civilization.

A new and distinctive pottery, which was related to the pottery of the Southern Levant, appeared during this time. Extensive use of copper became common during this time. The Mesopotamian process of sun-dried bricks, and architectural building principles - including the use of arch and of recessed walls for decorative effect - became popular during this time.

Concurrent with these cultural advances, a process of unification of the societies and towns of the upper Nile River, or Upper Egypt, occurred. At the same time the societies of the Nile Delta, or Lower Egypt also underwent a unification process. Warfare between Upper and Lower Egypt occurred often.

During his reign in Upper Egypt, King Narmer defeated his enemies on the Delta and merged both the Kingdom of Upper and Lower Egypt under his single rule. Narmer is shown on palettes wearing the double crown, composed of the lotus flower representing Upper Egypt and the papyrus reed representing Lower Egypt - a sign of the unified rule of both parts of Egypt which was followed by all succeeding rulers. In mythology, the unification of Egypt is portrayed as the falcon-god, called Horus and identified with Lower Egypt, as conquering and subduing the god Set, who was identified with Upper Egypt.

Funeral practices for the peasants would have been the same as in predynastic times, but the rich demanded something more. Thus, the Egyptians began construction of the mastabas which became models for the later Old Kingdom constructions such as the Step pyramid. Cereal agriculture and centralization contributed to the success of the state for the next 800 years.

It seems certain that Egypt became unified as a cultural and economic domain long before its first king ascended to the throne in the lower Egyptian city of Memphis where the dynastic period did originate. This would last for many centuries. Political unification proceeded gradually, perhaps over a period of a century or so as local districts established trading networks and the ability of their governments to organize agriculture labor on a larger scale increased, divine kingship may also have gained spiritual momentum as the cults of gods like Horus, Set and Neith associated with living representatives became widespread in the country.

According to Manetho, the first king of the unified Upper and Lower Egypt was Menes who is now identified with Narmer. Indeed, Narmer is the earliest recorded king of the First Dynasty: he appears first on the king lists of Den and Qa'a. This shows that Narmer was recognized by the first dynasty kings as an important founding figure. Narmer is also the earliest king associated to the symbols of power over the two lands (see in particular the Narmer palette, a votive cosmetic palette showing Narmer wearing the crowns of Upper and Lower Egypt) and may therefore be the first king to achieve the unification. Consequently, the current consensus is that "Menes" and "Narmer" refer to the same person. Alternative theories hold that Narmer was the final king of the Protodynastic Period and Hor-Aha is to be identified with "Menes".

Source:

Link: http://www.crystalinks.com/Early_Dynastic_Egypt.html