

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-28427-1 - Ancient Egypt: A Social History

B. G. Trigger, B. J. Kemp, D. O'Connor and A. B. Lloyd

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

ANCIENT EGYPT: A SOCIAL HISTORY

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-28427-1 - Ancient Egypt: A Social History

B. G. Trigger, B. J. Kemp, D. O'Connor and A. B. Lloyd

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

ANCIENT EGYPT

A SOCIAL HISTORY

B. G. TRIGGER, B. J. KEMP,
D. O'CONNOR AND A. B. LLOYD



CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press
 978-0-521-28427-1 - Ancient Egypt: A Social History
 B. G. Trigger, B. J. Kemp, D. O'Connor and A. B. Lloyd
 Frontmatter
[More information](#)

PUBLISHED BY THE PRESS SYNDICATE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE
 The Pitt Building, Trumpington Street, Cambridge, United Kingdom

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS
 The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 2RU, UK
 40 West 20th Street, New York, NY 10011-4211, USA
 10 Stamford Road, Oakleigh, VIC 3166, Australia
 Ruiz de Alarcón 13, 28014 Madrid, Spain
 Dock House, The Waterfront, Cape Town 8001, South Africa

<http://www.cambridge.org>

Chapters 1, 2 and 3 of this work were previously published in *The Cambridge History of Africa*, Volume 1. They are copyright © Cambridge University Press 1982. In addition to these chapters, this work contains a new chapter, a preface and bibliography.

© Cambridge University Press 1983

First published 1983

Reprinted 1984, 1985, 1986, 1987, 1989, 1990, 1992, 1994, 1996, 1998, 1999, 2001

Printed in the United Kingdom at the University Press, Cambridge

Library of Congress catalogue card number: 82-22196

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
 Ancient Egypt.

1. Egypt—History—To 640
 I. Trigger, B. G.
 932 DT83

ISBN 0 521 28427 9 paperback

Cambridge University Press
 978-0-521-28427-1 - Ancient Egypt: A Social History
 B. G. Trigger, B. J. Kemp, D. O'Connor and A. B. Lloyd
 Frontmatter
[More information](#)

CONTENTS

<i>List of figures</i>	<i>page vii</i>
<i>Preface</i>	xi
1 The rise of Egyptian civilization	1
by B. G. TRIGGER, <i>Department of Anthropology, McGill University, Montreal</i>	
Orientation	1
Predynastic Egypt	13
Early Dynastic Egypt	44
Conclusions	68
Appendix: chronology of the Early Dynastic Period	69
2 Old Kingdom, Middle Kingdom and Second Intermediate Period <i>c.</i> 2686–1552 BC	71
by BARRY J. KEMP, <i>Faculty of Oriental Studies, University of Cambridge</i>	
Divine kingship	71
The royal family	76
The central administration	80
Pious foundations	85
The Memphite court cemeteries	86
Provincial Egypt	96
The First Intermediate Period	112
The African hinterland	116
Egypt and the Mediterranean world	137
The Second Intermediate Period in Egypt	149
The Second Intermediate Period in Nubia	160
The Theban defeat of the Hyksos and of Kush	173
Explanations of historical change in the Old and Middle Kingdoms	174

Cambridge University Press
 978-0-521-28427-1 - Ancient Egypt: A Social History
 B. G. Trigger, B. J. Kemp, D. O'Connor and A. B. Lloyd
 Frontmatter
[More information](#)

CONTENTS

3	New Kingdom and Third Intermediate Period, 1552–664 BC	183
	by DAVID O'CONNOR, <i>University Museum, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania</i>	
	Prolegomena	183
	The Egyptian world-view	188
	Internal history	202
	The New Kingdom	203
	The Third Intermediate Period	232
	The onset of the Late Period	249
	Egypt's relations with Africa	252
	Relations with Kush and the eastern desert	255
	Egypt and Punt	270
	Egypt and Libya	271
4	The Late Period, 664–323 BC	279
	by ALAN B. LLOYD, <i>Department of Classics, University College of Swansea</i>	
	Prolegomena	279
	Organization	288
	Economic structure	318
	Government	331
	Foreign policy	337
	Conclusions	346
	<i>Bibliographical Essays</i>	349
	<i>Bibliography</i>	365
	<i>Index</i>	429

FIGURES

1.1	Relative chronology of Egypt and neighbouring regions	<i>page</i> 6
1.2	Maps indicating known distributions of Predynastic sites in Egypt and Lower Nubia at different periods	28
1.3	General map of the Hierakonpolis area	35
1.4	Jebel el-Araq ivory knife-handle	38
1.5	The obverse side of the so-called 'Libyan palette'	45
1.6	The royal tombs and funerary palaces at Abydos	53
1.7	Early remains in the Saqqara necropolis	54
1.8	Reverse side of the slate palette of King Narmer	59
2.1	Volumes of pyramids from the Fourth to the Thirteenth Dynasties	88
2.2	Three examples of the distribution, by nomes, of estates in pious foundations for mortuary cults	91
2.3	The Valley Temple of King Menkaura's pyramid complex in its final phase towards the end of the Old Kingdom	93
2.4	Plan of the Old Kingdom town at Hierakonpolis, as revealed by partial excavation	97
2.5	Plan of the town and temple enclosure remains at Abydos	98
2.6	Plan of the Old Kingdom town at Elephantine	100
2.7	The remains of Tell Edfu	101
2.8	Comparative sizes of Old and Middle Kingdom settlements	102
2.9	The Egyptian frontier at Semna during the Middle Kingdom	133
2.10	Northern Egypt, Sinai and Palestine in Chalcolithic, Early Bronze Age, late Predynastic and Early Dynastic times	140
2.11	Lengths of reign from amongst the first fifty kings in succession to the Twelfth Dynasty	152

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-28427-1 - Ancient Egypt: A Social History

B. G. Trigger, B. J. Kemp, D. O'Connor and A. B. Lloyd

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

FIGURES

2.12	Castle at Kerma (Western Deffufa, KI), contemporary with the Hyksos period in Egypt	164
2.13	Part of the royal cemetery at Kerma, contemporary with the Hyksos period in Egypt	165
2.14	Map of Egypt in the Old and Middle Kingdoms	169
2.15	Map of Nubia in the Old and Middle Kingdoms	172
3.1	Plans of a nobleman's villa at Tell El-Amarna and of an artisan's house at Deir el-Medineh	193
3.2	Sectional view of a typical New Kingdom temple	198
3.3	An oracle is sought from a New Kingdom local god, the deified King Amenhotep I	200
3.4	Schematic outline of the developed structure of government in the new Kingdom	208
3.5	The changing pattern of Egyptian foreign relations in (1) the New Kingdom and (2) the Third Intermediate Period	210
3.6	Political map of Egypt in (1) the New Kingdom and (2) the Third Intermediate Period	212
3.7	Reconstruction of typical New Kingdom provincial settlement pattern	213
3.8	Plans of the towns of Tell el-Amarna and Thebes	216
3.9	Genealogy of the Twentieth Dynasty	225
3.10	The fluctuating values of emmer wheat and barley in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Dynasties	228
3.11	Diagram illustrating the history of the Merybast family and their relations with two other powerful families of the Twentieth Dynasty	230
3.12	Political map of Egypt in the late Third Intermediate Period, and the recent pattern of population density and agricultural yield	233
3.13	Genealogies and interrelationships of the Twenty-first Dynasty	234
3.14	The Twenty-second and Twenty-third Dynasties, and their relationships with the High Priests of Amen of Thebes and the governors of Herakleopolis	236
3.15	Simplification of fig. 3.14 to show basic pattern of relationships	237
3.16	A passage from the Amada stela of Merenptah describing the impalement of Libyans in the vicinity of Memphis	238

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-28427-1 - Ancient Egypt: A Social History
B. G. Trigger, B. J. Kemp, D. O'Connor and A. B. Lloyd

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

FIGURES

3.17	Scenes carved upon the walls of a temple built by Taharqa (Twenty-fifth Dynasty) at Kawa	244
3.18	Schematic version of the modern population pattern of north-east Africa, probably approximating to that of the second and first millennia BC	253
3.19	Maps of Wawat and Kush	256
3.20	Officials of the administration of Nubia under Tutankhamen, bringing gifts to the viceroy Huy	261
3.21	Egyptianized Nubians (?) delivering tribute to the viceroy Huy; and Nubians delivering tribute to Tutankhamen	264
3.22	The three (?) chiefdoms of Lower Nubia (Wawat) in the Eighteenth Dynasty	265
3.23	Genealogies and offices of the 'chieftains' families' of (1) Tekhet and (2) Miam	267
3.24	Merchants from Punt arriving at the Red Sea coast of Egypt and being received by Egyptian officials	271
3.25	The Libyans and Egypt in the New Kingdom	273
3.26	Mashwash Libyans fleeing the army of Ramesses III during the Libyan campaign of his year 11	275
4.1	Egypt, the eastern Mediterranean and the Near East in the first millennium BC	283
4.2	Egypt in the first millennium BC	290
4.3	The genealogy of Petiese III	304
4.4	The site of Memphis	319
4.5	The site of Nebesheh	320
4.6	Plan of the Palace of Apries at Memphis	322
4.7	The Saqqara temple town in the Ptolemaic period	324
4.8	Schematized drawing to illustrate the principles of the basin system of irrigation.	327
4.9	The Levant in the first millennium	339
4.10	Libya and the oases	344

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Fig. 4.4 is reproduced by courtesy of the Department of Egyptology, University College London; Figs. 4.5 and 4.7 by permission of the Egypt Exploration Society; Fig. 4.6 by permission of the author and the editor of *Mitteilungen des deutschen archäologischen Instituts Abteilung Kairo*; and Fig. 4.10 by permission of the American University in Cairo Press.

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-28427-1 - Ancient Egypt: A Social History

B. G. Trigger, B. J. Kemp, D. O'Connor and A. B. Lloyd

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

PREFACE

Ancient Egypt has proved remarkably resistant to the writing of history which is not traditional in character; which is not, in other words, concerned primarily with the ordering of kings and the chronicling of their deeds. Traditional, narrative history is the inescapable key to man's historic past, but alongside this the twentieth century has seen the emergence of a rich and varied range of alternative approaches, opening up for exploration such fields as social and economic change and the structure of political formations. These alternative approaches mirror the many ways in which we analyse our own contemporary societies; and thus they begin to provide continuity between past and present. If the thread of continuity in the institutions of society is followed far enough into the past, it leads us to the early civilizations of which Egypt was one. Although much of the superficial image of ancient Egypt is of a remote and alien world – and herein lies much of its popular appeal – Egypt was one of a small number of centres which first developed on a significant scale the apparatus of exploitation and of bureaucratic government together with an ideology of social coherence, and so created the basis for all modern states. Egypt has a particular interest because, with relatively little disruption, one can trace the course of development from primitive society to a time when the country became just one part of a wider world of Mediterranean culture where the innovations of formative phases had long been taken for granted.

The difficulties of writing 'alternative' histories of Egypt are, however, enormous. For one thing, the very completeness of the chronological listing of kings which several generations of modern scholars have given us creates an image of knowledge in detail which other kinds of evidence cannot match. The abundance of royal art and architecture compounds the problem with an illusion of familiarity. But the truth is that the names and faces of great and lesser kings are masks that conceal a void. Remove them and any kind of significant continuity in written records which might interest the adventurous historian is gone. What survives illuminates only tiny patches spread across a

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-28427-1 - Ancient Egypt: A Social History

B. G. Trigger, B. J. Kemp, D. O'Connor and A. B. Lloyd

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

PREFACE

three-thousand-year tapestry of human striving, inevitably raising the question in each instance: is it typical, can we generalize from it?

Continuity of a different order is, however, provided by the material remains that are open to the archaeologist to explore. But in Egypt archaeology has remained stubbornly the servant of history, having been consistently regarded from the beginning as a means of providing scholars with further texts and royal monuments, and museums with specimens of material culture which illustrate the typical. The idea that archaeology, and especially settlement archaeology, if pursued with sufficient attention to stratigraphy and spatial context, can offer a record of social and economic change that has a validity of its own and is parallel to the images created by written sources has been little pursued until recently, and even now gathers momentum only fitfully. Technical reasons peculiar to the Nile Valley provide some excuse. But at the heart of this failure is the hypnotic power of the images which the monuments and texts of ancient Egypt create. The urge to write something new is rapidly thwarted.

The first three chapters of this book were written for a history in the Cambridge series, namely, volume 1 of the *Cambridge History of Africa*. From a combination of individual preference on the part of the authors and enlightened patience on the part of the volume editor, J. Desmond Clark, the authors followed their own ways in trying to write chapters which addressed themselves more to the broader issues in the study of the past which exist outside Egyptology; and, as well, in view of the series of which the volume was but a single part, which explored Egypt's relationship with African neighbours. If, at the outset, they had written for a book with the present title their contributions might have turned out a little differently in content, though not in tone, and it is this latter aspect that has seemed to us to be the most important.

The first chapter spans the formative age of the Predynastic and Early Dynastic Periods. From the introduction of a south-west Asian-style subsistence economy into the Nile Valley, it follows the development of agricultural communities leading to a few urban centres, the appearance of court art and, through a phase of internal conflict, the emergence of a political state. The second chapter analyses the characteristics of Pharaonic Egypt in the ensuing phase of a mature state still relatively isolated from the outside world. It comprises the periods conventionally termed the Old and Middle Kingdoms and the First and Second Intermediate Periods. One theme of great importance throughout was the resolution of internal tensions between court and provinces,

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-28427-1 - Ancient Egypt: A Social History

B. G. Trigger, B. J. Kemp, D. O'Connor and A. B. Lloyd

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

PREFACE

and, at a personal level, between loyal service and private wealth accumulation. It ended in a short period of foreign domination of northern Egypt and of the Egyptian enclave in Nubia. The reaction to foreign rule led to the rapid creation of an empire in Nubia and Western Asia. The third chapter covers the imperial age (the New Kingdom) and its complicated aftermath (the Third Intermediate Period). From a richer body of source material it becomes possible to write more knowledgeably on the structure of government, which embraced a large court and an increasingly powerful priesthood. The post-imperial period witnessed the reappearance of internal political tensions as a major factor, and a new external group, the Libyans, exerting pressure on the north of the country. The final chapter, specially written for this volume, provides an account of society in the Late Period, the last centuries of native rule and recognizably pharaonic culture when Egypt, no longer a dominant military power, experienced periods of defeat and subjugation by rulers from the Sudan, Assyria and Persia. But parallel to military failures, distinctive developments in ideology and society occurred which represent a significant readjustment of traditional forms to greatly changed circumstances. For the first time, too, we have descriptions of Egypt by outsiders, the Greeks, whose accounts are fully utilized in the chapter. The period ends with the conquest of Egypt by Alexander the Great, and the formal entry of Egypt into the Hellenized world.