

CHAPTER I

AN INTRODUCTORY STUDY OF EARLY EGYPTIAN
ANNALS, KING-LISTS, CHRONOLOGY, AND CALEN-
DAR DATES

THE SOURCES OF INFORMATION

I HAVE found myself so widely at variance with accepted Egyptological opinion in regard to the positions of the Pharaohs of the oldest epoch, the lengths of their reigns and duration of their dynasties, their dates, the nature of the calendar they used, and even the reading of many of their names, that it has seemed best to set down, here at the beginning, a general statement of some of the results to which a study of the vexed questions of early Egyptian history and chronology has led me. In this first chapter, therefore, I propose to place before the reader a more or less technical argument which shall serve as a basis for, and explanation of, the assertions and suggestions made in the subsequent pages; and though I shall thus postpone the opening of the actual story of these remote ages until the second chapter, I shall, by so doing, relieve the narrative itself of the burden of many purely Egyptological discussions.

The main sources of information available for the study of the early periods of Egyptian history are as follows:

Firstly, there are the lists of kings quoted by classical writers from the lost History of Egypt written by the High-Priest Manetho, a native of Sebennytus in Lower Egypt, who lived in the third century before Christ. The lists, and a few brief extracts from the history itself, were quoted by Julius Africanus, a Libyan historian of the third century after Christ, and these were again quoted by Eusebius, Bishop of Cæsarea, who died about A.D. 340. In these lists the Pharaohs are divided into Dynasties or Houses, an arbitrary chopping up of the names into groups, which does not seem in every case to be justified by the facts, but which, on the whole, is

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a quite convenient arrangement. Manetho, it should be mentioned, gave a Greek form to the Egyptian names of the Pharaohs by adding a termination in *s*, but it is generally quite easy to identify his renderings exactly with the original hieroglyphs.

Secondly, we have the "Abydos List" and the "Sakkâra List." The former is a list of kings inscribed upon a wall of the Temple of Abydos by Seti I of the Nineteenth Dynasty, and gives all the kings recognized in the archives of the upper country, each Pharaoh being called by the name by which he was known in that locality. The latter is a record of the kings acknowledged by the historians of Memphis and Lower Egypt, and was inscribed in the tomb of a certain learned man named Thunuroy, who was buried at Sakkâra in the reign of Rameses II of the Nineteenth Dynasty.

Thirdly, a considerable body of material has been brought to light by Prof. Petrie, whose careful excavations in the necropolis of the earliest kings, in the desert behind the twin cities of Thinis and Abydos, revealed many objects actually inscribed with the names of these monarchs. Mr. Quibell also made a great haul of objects belonging to these early times at Hieraconpolis; Prof. Garstang found two royal tombs at Bêt Khallâf; and useful material has come to light as a result of various other excavations.

Fourthly, there is the Turin Papyrus, a list of kings written in the Seventeenth Dynasty upon a scroll of papyrus. It was discovered in Egypt somewhere about the time of Bonaparte, and came into the possession of the King of Sardinia. It was then sent to Turin, in a box without packing; and, when it arrived, this most precious and unique document was found to have fallen into scores of dry and brittle little pieces which lay in a heap at the bottom of the box. It was put together, more or less by guess-work, in 1826; and later the fragments were numbered and copied, and various scholars have spent a great deal of time in attempting to fit them into their true places.

Finally, in the museum of Palermo, Sicily, there is a small fragment of a large stone tablet, originally some three yards long, upon both sides of which the brief Annals of the first five dynasties are inscribed. This fragment is

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known as the "Palermo Stone," but where it came from has been forgotten. There is a second fragment of the same tablet, or its duplicate, in the Cairo Museum, and two or three very small pieces are also known; but, even so, there is a far larger area of this great record missing than surviving, and until now the attempt to reconstruct the lost parts by means of the known pieces has baffled those who have set themselves to the task. The Annals are written in long horizontal rows, divided up into little rectangles, each representing one year; and the rectangles, or year-spaces, which comprise any one reign are separated from those of the previous and succeeding reigns by a dividing line, and are headed by the name of the king, written above the middle point of that section. Each year-space contains a reference to some event or events which took place in that year, and the line which forms the right-hand side of the year-space is shaped like the hieroglyph *ronpet*, "year," so that the reading of the inscription is in each case: "The year of such-and-such an event." In a separate space at the bottom of each year-space there is a smaller section in which the height of the highest Nile flood-level of that year is recorded.

In the accompanying diagram (Plate I) I submit a new reconstruction of these Palermo Stone Annals, which, I think, will come to be accepted as a working basis, even in its details, except for a few doubtful minor points. The two chief fragments of the Annals are, as I have said, the original Palermo Stone itself, published and discussed by Schäfer, *Ein Bruchstück Altägyptischer Annalen*, and Meyer, *Aegyptische Chronologie*, p. 197; and the more recently discovered Cairo fragment, published by Gauthier, *Le Musée Egyptien*, 1915, vol. iii, part 2, p. 29, and discussed again by Daressy, *Bulletin de l'Institut français*, vol. xii, p. 161. Both fragments are studied by Borchardt, *Die Annalen und die Zeitliche Festlegung*, 1917, a work which will now, however, have to be discarded.

The problem is simply to deduce from the two sides of these two fragments the whole lay-out of both faces of the original tablet; and I shall show that my reconstruction meets the known facts so exactly that there can be no

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very serious doubt about its general correctness, and thus the lengths of the early dynasties, and of most of the reigns, are now able to be settled satisfactorily. I venture to think that this complete solution of a problem which has previously been considered as one which was unable to be solved, is one of the most fortunate chances of Egyptological research, throwing, as it does, a sudden and clear light upon the dim ages of early Egyptian history, and enabling us to speak in the most precise terms of an epoch previously shrouded in obscurity, without much fear of wide error.

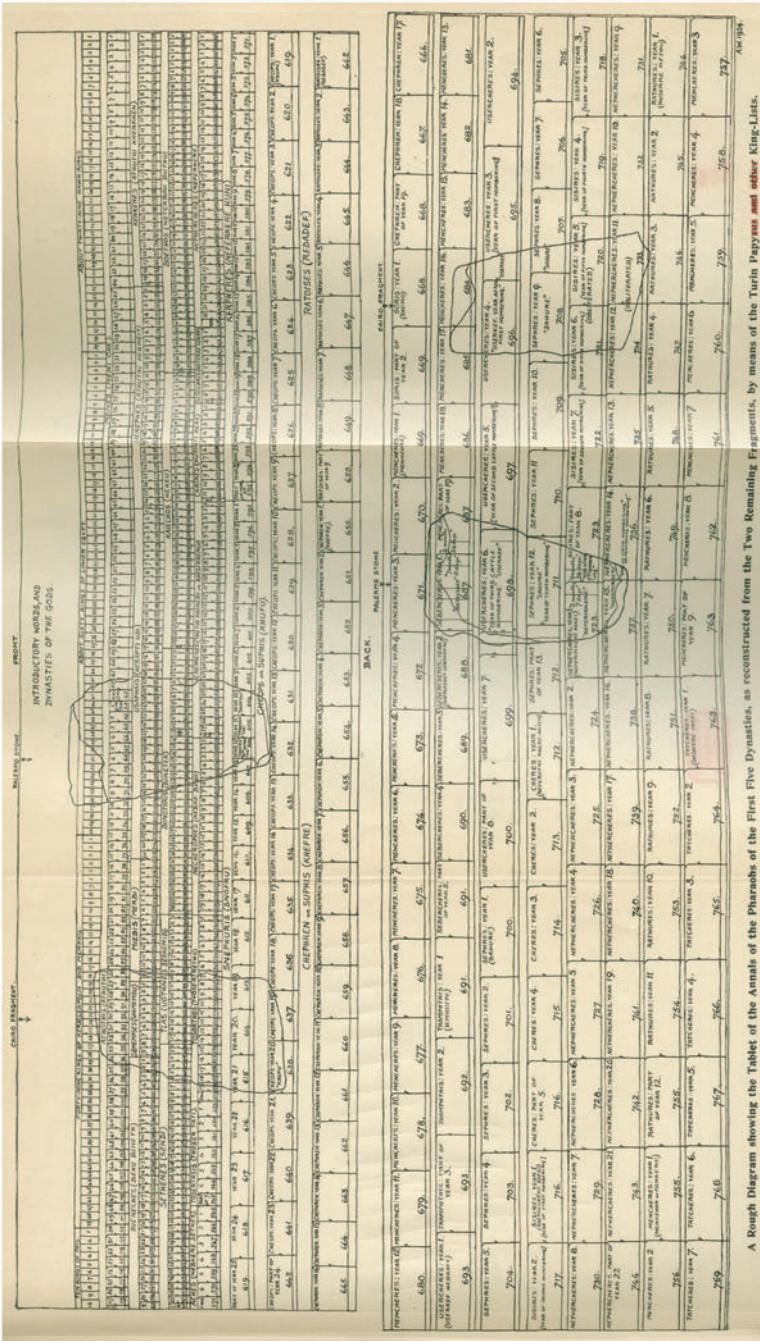
Before explaining my reconstruction of these Annals it will be as well to give the list of Kings of the first five dynasties and the lengths of their reigns so far as they can be read in the shattered Turin Papyrus; for on this list I have based my work. It is as follows:—

No.	Name.	Reign.	No.	Name.	Reign.
1.	Meni	....	20.	Thosertati	6
2.	At.....	...7	21.	.....	6 yrs.
3.	.....	...9			1 mo.
4.	.....i	....	22.	Huni	24
5.	Hesapti	....	23.	Snofru	24
6.	Merbi	....	24.	.....	23
7.	.....	....	25.	.....	8
8.	....bh	....	26.	Khe....	....
9.	....beu	....	27.	.....	....
10.	...ke...	....	28.	.....	18
11.	Bineter	....	29.	.....	4
12.	.....	....	30.	.....	2
13.	Sendi	....	31.	...ke...	7
14.	Neferke..	....	32.	.....	12
15.	Neferkesokar	8 yrs.	33.	.....	....
		3 mo.	34.	.....	7
16.	Huthefi	11 yrs.	35.	.....	21?
		8 mo.	36.	.....	11?
17.	Thethi	27 yrs.	37.	Menkehur	8
		2 mo.	38.	Dadi	28
18.	Nebke	19	39.	Unnos	30
19.	Thoser....	19 yrs.			
		3 mo.			

I approached the problem with this list as my guide, and the principle I adopted was as follows:

THE RECONSTRUCTION OF THE ANNALS

The size of the year-spaces differs in each register of the Annals, and it seemed to me that this could only mean that the scribe wished to fit a definite amount of material into each register, and therefore in one case had to squeeze it



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Arthur Weigall

Excerpt

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together, and in another case had to space it out. Thus it seemed obvious that he wished to begin each register exactly at the beginning of some new reign, and to end it exactly at the close of some reign, and to fit a definite number of reigns into a definite number of registers. He did not wish one reign to run on from one register into the next, and he expanded or contracted his material accordingly. The top register gives only the names of the so-called pre-dynastic kings. The Annals began, therefore, in the second register, and I assumed that this second register began with the accession of Menes.

The only figures we have for the lengths of the reigns of the kings of the First Dynasty are those of Manetho; and it seemed probable that these figures were not merely fanciful. There were evident errors in Manetho's figures, especially in later dynasties, but they would serve, I thought, as a basis for the First Dynasty, since the Turin Papyrus did not here help us, and one might suppose that there would be fewer errors at the beginning of the lists than later on, when the jumble of names and numbers might have confused the scribes and historians. Now Manetho, according to Africanus, gives 62 years for the reign of Menes and 57 for that of his successor. I assumed, therefore, that the second register comprised these two complete reigns, i.e. a total of 119 years. This, of course, was simply a guess; but, having laid out the reconstruction on this assumption, I found, as I shall show in the following pages, that all the essential facts fell into place. On the Palermo Stone the end of a reign is marked in the second register. I, therefore, assumed that this was the end of the 62 years' reign of Menes; and in this way I was able to place the Palermo Stone experimentally in position in my reconstruction. On the Cairo fragment the name of a king appears above the second register; and since a royal name is evidently always written over the exact middle of the reign, and since I was assuming that the reign lasted 57 years, I could also place this Cairo fragment experimentally in position in the reconstruction.

Such, in general, was the principle which I followed in order to obtain the original length of the tablet of the

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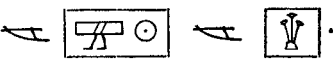
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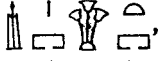
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Annals, and to place in position the two big fragments which have come down to us. Having made this tentative arrangement, however, a most remarkable piece of evidence was forthcoming to prove the absolute correctness of what was at first the merest guess on my part.

In the 8th year-space (counting from the right) of the fourth register on the Palermo Stone, the event of the year is recorded thus: . I

suppose there is little doubt, as Breasted agrees in his *Records*, I, § 125, that this means: "The hacking up, or conquest, of the fortress or fortified camp of the Host of Re; the hacking up, or conquest, of the fortress or fortified camp of Ha." We thus have here the record of a civil war; for the first name pretty certainly refers to On or Heliopolis, the city of Re, the Sun, and the second to an unidentified place called Ha, which was near by. According to my experimental lay-out of the Annals, the year-space in which this event is recorded was the 363rd from the accession of Menes.

Now on a wall of the Ptolemaic temple of Edfu there is a representation of the famous wise-man, Iemhotpe, reading from a scroll the history of a civil war waged between the adherents of Horus and those of Set, which culminates in

the two great defeats of the latter at , these two very places, Heliopolis and Ha or Hat (Naville, *Mythe d'Horus*, Pl. XVIII, 1). This war is there stated to have occurred in the 363rd year of an era, which, as Newberry has pointed out (*Ancient Egypt*, 1922, II, p. 42), must be that dating from the accession of Menes.

This pretty well proved that in my experimental reconstruction of the Annals I had had the surprising good fortune to hit upon exactly the correct number of year-spaces; and I felt that one could now, for the first time since the Palermo Stone has been the subject of study, look into the length of the different reigns with real hope of definite results, which should replace the rather wild guessing of the past. Briefly, I may state my methods and results as follows.

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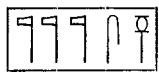
The first reign, that of Menes, as I have said, seemed certainly to begin the second register. Therefore I assigned 62 year-spaces to it, in accordance with Manetho (Africanus), plus the 6 months and 7 days recorded on the Palermo Stone at the end of the reign. Then comes the division between this and the next reign, after which 4 months and 13 days are recorded on the Palermo Stone as the remaining fraction of the same year. I shall explain presently the shortage of 45 days which occurs here.

The remainder of the second register, I assumed, gave the 57 years of Athothis, the successor of Menes, which is the Africanus figure, partly confirmed by the Turin Papyrus in which a damaged numeral ending with7 appears against the name of the king after Menes. The Cairo fragment gives us the name of this king, thus :



. . . . (𓆎), and I took it that the year-space just under the middle of this heading must be the middle point of the reign, since the heading seems always to be written above the exact middle of each reign. This year-space would be the 28th or 29th, since the reign lasted 57 years, and the royal cartouche appears immediately above this point. The accepted reading of the Hawk-name  as *Zer* or *Ther* is probably incorrect. It is more likely to be

a stockade, an old form of  *Khenti*, meaning, "He of the harîm," as I will explain on pages 45 and 110. This Hawk-name on the Cairo fragment is not very legible, but it is confirmed by the following fact. In two of the year-spaces of this reign, as seen on the Cairo fragment, there is a


reference to the palace (?) ; and Borchardt

(*Die Annalen*, p. 31) has published a fragment of a vase in the Berlin Museum, which bears an inscription mentioning this same palace in conjunction with the name of King Khenti (*Zer*). (I shall prove later on that the identification of Menes with Nar-mer, Athothis with Ohe (Aha), and so on, which has lately been adopted, is incorrect, and must be dropped again at once.)

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The second register having given the reigns of Menes and Athothis, I saw that the third register would have to begin with the reign of Manetho's Kenkenes, to whom, according to Africanus, he attributes a reign of 31 years. In the Turin Papyrus, however, there are traces of a figure ending in 9, and therefore in my reconstruction of the Annals I assigned the necessary room for 29 years.

Next comes the reign of Unephes, to which Manetho (Africanus) assigns 23 years; and here, experimentally, I allowed room for 26 year-spaces, ending with a fraction. The fractions of years, it should be noted, are seen on the Palermo Stone sometimes to cover two year-spaces and sometimes only one. From the death of Unephes to the end of the dynasty Manetho gives 90 years, and in my reconstruction there was room for 91 year-spaces and a fraction, from the close of the reign of Unephes to the end of the register, which showed me that my arrangement was pretty well in agreement with Manetho as to its total.

Then comes the reign of Usaphais, whose Hawk-name is , which Petrie used to read as *Den*. Manetho attributes 20 years to his reign, but this, one could see, was an error, for, on the Palermo Stone, there are the last signs of the heading which once gave the name and titles of the new king; and, as such a heading was written above the middle of the section dealing with that particular reign, a simple measurement to right and left of the middle point showed that its duration must have been just about 40 years. I therefore assigned him 40 instead of 20 years. Newberry has shown (*Ancient Egypt*, 1914, p. 148 ff.) that this reign, as recorded on the Palermo Stone, is undoubtedly that of Usaphais.

In the 11th year-space (counting from the right) in this reign the Palermo Stone records the celebration of the feast of Sed, the god of the thirty-years' jubilee, and one might expect this to correspond to the 31st year of the reign, i.e. the new year after the completion of 30 years' reign. According to my reconstruction, this year-space did represent exactly the 31st year of the reign, a fact which again seemed to show that my arrangement was exact.