



First published 2024 by Walker Books Ltd
87 Vauxhall Walk, London SE11 5HJ

2 4 6 8 10 9 7 5 3 1

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Printed by CPI Group (UK) Ltd, Croydon, CR0 4YY

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British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data: a catalogue record for this
book is available from the British Library

ISBN 978-1-4063-9565-5

www.walker.co.uk



GREG JENNER

with **Dr CAMPBELL PRICE**

illustrated by **RIKIN PAREKH**



To Esmé, for bringing the best kind of chaos!

G.J.

For Benjamin, Maria and Noelle

C.P.



WELCOME TO ANCIENT EGYPT!

I guess you picked up this book because you like the sound of ancient Egypt? Maybe you want to know how to build a pyramid or make a mummy, or you'd like to meet some Egyptian gods and goddesses. Well, you're in luck – that's all in this book! But this isn't going to be a dull account of boring dates and dusty old names. Nope! Because this book is really about ...

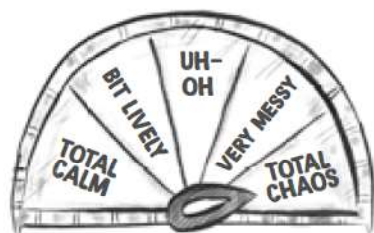
TOTAL CHAOS!!!

(... and also ancient Egypt)



Hello! I'm Greg. I'm a public historian, and my job is to convince you that history is thrilling! To do that, I'm going to take you on a rollicking, roller coaster race through the ENTIRE story of ancient Egypt, from its earliest beginnings to its collapse with Cleopatra. It'll be a wild ride, so maybe bring snacks. (I love snacks!)

As we're zooming along, keep an eye out for my trusty chaos meter. It will tell you whether we're in a period of calm, or if we're heading for TOTAL CHAOS!



Oh, and we won't be on this journey alone. There are lots of myths about ancient Egypt, so we'll need an expert to figure out what is most likely to have happened! Experts who study ancient Egypt are called Egyptologists, and I know the perfect one to

help us. Please meet my super clever co-author, Dr Campbell Price, who is in charge of the Egyptology collections at Manchester Museum.



If Campbell presses his accuracy alarm, it might be because previous "facts" have since been proven dodgy, or a rival theory may have been suggested. In fact, a group of historians is called an argumentation – we love to disagree!



I'll also scribble in the margins when we get to my fave bits!

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?!

So, are you ready to get totally chaotic? Events in ancient Egypt may seem neat and obvious when we look back now, but no one living through them had any idea what was going to happen next! Ancient Egyptians didn't know when armies were about to invade, or powerful pharaohs were about to drop dead, or even if giant robot spiders were about to attack with space lasers. (OK, fine, maybe that last one didn't happen!)

Ancient Egyptians couldn't predict that their amazing civilization would last for 3,000 years, just like I have no idea who the prime minister will be in five years' time, or if my favourite football team will ever win a trophy again (I'm still waiting after sixteen miserable years!). And these Egyptians certainly wouldn't have called themselves ancient – they felt like MODERN Egyptians!

So hold on tight, because in this book we're going to imagine we're among the Egyptians, and experience every twist and turn of the ancient world with them!



This is Seshat, goddess of counting!

SO YOU THINK YOU KNOW ANCIENT EGYPT?

Right, let's start with a question – what do you think of when I say ancient Egypt? Maybe you're imagining this...



Hey, you know what? None of that is wrong! But the story of ancient Egypt is waaaaaaaay messier than just mummies, masks, monuments, pyramids, pharaohs and papyrus. It is the story of millions of people, over 3,000 years.

And even though the stuff in the picture is super famous to us now, did you know that...

- Pyramids were only built in the first half of ancient Egyptian history, then they were totally replaced by underground tombs!
- We have millions of papyrus documents, but most of these were written right at the end of ancient Egyptian history!
- Mummification happened throughout, but HOW it was done changed over time!
- Not all Egyptian pharaohs were from Egypt!

Chaotic, right? Basically we've got loads to smash through, and after we're done, you'll never see ancient Egypt in the same way again. Before we get started, let's take a look at a timeline of some of the ancient Egyptian highlights we'll be exploring, and just a few of the hundreds of pharaohs. You'll see it's divided up into the official time periods Egyptologists like Campbell use, and starts over 6,300 years ago...

There were at least 170, belonging to 30 groups called DYNASTIES!

TIMELINE OF ANCIENT EGYPT

PREDYNASTIC ERA

(c.4300-3000 BCE)

In the Nile valley in north-east Africa, three rival kingdoms scrap for power. The writing system of hieroglyphs is developed.

EARLY DYNASTIC

(c.3000-2686 BCE)

King Narmer becomes the first pharaoh of all Egypt, starting the 1st dynasty. This is the first capital city (it is now lost!), but it's quickly replaced by Narmer's new city called Memphis.

OLD KINGDOM

(c.2686-2161 BCE)

Here come the pyramids! The Step Pyramid is built by Imhotep (possibly) for Pharaoh Djoser (3rd dynasty). The Great Pyramid of Giza is built for Pharaoh Khufu (4th dynasty). The Great Sphinx of Giza is built for Pharaoh Khafre (4th dynasty).

FIRST INTERMEDIATE PERIOD

(c.2161-2055 BCE)

Everything goes wrong! The pharaohs no longer rule over all of Egypt, and people starve because the crops don't grow. We should probably call this THE DISASTER YEARS!

NEW KINGDOM

(c.1550-1069 BCE)

A golden age of famous and powerful pharaohs. They include Hatshepsut (18th dynasty), Akhenaten (18th dynasty), who tries to introduce a new religion with only one god, Tutankhamun (18th dynasty), who is buried in a borrowed tomb, Ramesses the Great (19th dynasty) and Ramesses III (20th dynasty), who gets murdered!

THIRD INTERMEDIATE PERIOD

(c.1069-664 BCE)

EVEN MORE political chaos!!! Assyria violently conquers Egypt, destroying major cities and capturing members of the royal family.

LATE PERIOD

(664-332 BCE)

Egypt faces more invasions. Greek historian Herodotus writes about Egypt - he misunderstands lots of things, but he's still an important source.

MACEDONIAN PERIOD

(332-305 BCE)

A new conqueror arrives: Alexander the Great of Macedon (northern Greece) conquers Egypt.

SECOND INTERMEDIATE PERIOD

(c.1650-1550 BCE)

More chaos with a weirdly boring name! The Hyksos people (from the Middle East) conquer Egypt. But the Hyksos pharaohs later lose power.

MIDDLE KINGDOM

(c.2055-1650 BCE)

Everything calms down a bit. Pyramids are built by workers kept in the town of Hetep-Senwosret. Spells known as the "Book of the Dead" are first written on coffins.

PTOLEMAIC DYNASTY

(305-30 BCE)

Macedonian general Ptolemy becomes the first of the Ptolemaic rulers of Egypt. But this is the final dynasty: when Cleopatra VII dies she is the last of all the pharaohs ever!

ROMAN

(30 BCE-395 CE)

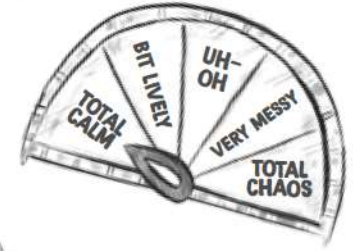
Egypt becomes a part of the Roman Empire.

It all looks pretty straightforward in a neat timeline, right? Unfortunately the reality is a teensy bit more messy! So, if you're ready, let's jump head first into the Nile, and soak up some Egyptian history!

Ancient Egyptians thought of time as both a set of cycles and as one super-long bendy snake stretching eternally into the future!

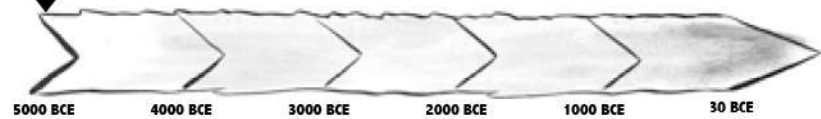


Where it all began: Predynastic Egypt - meaning before the pharaohs.



THE NILE IS THE PLACE TO BE

YOU ARE HERE



Let's start right back at the beginning, 7,000 years ago, in a time before the pharaohs, the pyramids and everything else recognizably Egyptian. We're in a fertile land in North Africa, with heavy summer rains (called monsoons) filling up the lakes and providing fresh water for drinking wells. People here have learned to farm crops, build villages and keep animals for food and milk. At a place called Nabta Playa, they have built the oldest stone circle in the world (much older than Stonehenge!) and they worship and sacrifice sacred bulls. It's all going rather well.

But then **DISASTER STRIKES!**

The rains stop falling, and the land quickly dries out. Imagine a vast, hot, dry desert – its golden sands warm