

## 5 th Dynasty Kings - PartII

### Neferefre

Neferefre (also called Raneferef) was a Pharaoh of Egypt during the Fifth dynasty. His name means "Beautiful is Re" in Egyptian. A significant cache of administrative papyri—comparable in size to those found in the temple of Neferirkare—was discovered at Abusir by a 1982 University of Prague Egyptological Institute excavation from a storeroom of his mortuary temple.

While Neferefre is given a reign of some twenty years in Manetho's Epitome, this number is a substantial overestimation of his true reign length; the current academic view is that he enjoyed a very short rule based on the completely unfinished state of his intended pyramid. A visual examination of the partly damaged data for Neferefre's reign in the Turin King List shows only a single vertical stroke for this king. (each vertical stroke signifies one year). This would give him a reign of about 1 year which agrees well with the archaeological evidence. The Czech Egyptologist, Miroslav Verner, who has been excavating at Abusir since 1976, states in a 2001 journal article that:

"The shape of the tomb of Neferefra...as well as a number of other archaeological finds clearly indicate that the construction of the king's funerary monument was interrupted, owing to the unexpected early death of the king. The plan of the unfinished building had to be basically changed and a decision was taken to hastily convert the unfinished pyramid, (of which only the incomplete lowest step of the core was built), into a "square-shaped mastaba" or, more precisely, a stylized primeval hill. At the moment of the king's death neither the burial apartment was built, nor was the foundation of the mortuary temple laid."

Verner concludes that based on the position of a mason's inscribed Year 1 date from Neferefre's reign which was found "on a large corner block situated at the end of the tunnel for the [pyramid's] descending corridor...at about two thirds of the height of the extant core of the monument", Neferefre reign lasted "not longer than about two years."

Neferefre was the son of king Neferirkare Kakai by queen Khentkaus II, and the elder brother of pharaoh Nyuserre Ini. The only known date from his reign is the aforementioned mason's inscription from his first Year in the foundation of his pyramid tomb. Little else is known about Neferefre. While the name of Neferefre's undiscovered sun temple is known to be Hetep-Re, no such structure has yet been discovered owing perhaps to the short length of his reign. Because of the premature death of Neferefre, his successor hastily completed work on Neferefre's pyramid at Abusir, which acquired the form of a mastaba. Although it may share the same resemblance to a mastaba tomb, it is not situated north-south, and it is not rectangular in shape, but square on all sides. Known as the "Unfinished Pyramid", it stands just seven meters high, but from the constructed portions, the walls slope at a 64° angle. Similarly to other sites of other Ancient Egyptian pyramids, the burial site of Neferefre contains more than one pyramid, and his lines up the three pyramids, similarly to the Great Pyramids. Artifacts found at the site show that the name of his pyramid was called "Divine is Neferefre's Power." All the other buildings of Neferefre's mortuary complex were erected under the reign of his brother, Nyuserre Ini. While exploring ruins of the mortuary complex, a Czech archaeological expedition discovered papyri of temple accounts, statues of the king, decorated plates and many seal prints. Pieces of mummy wrappings and bones were also found, which were discovered to be the remains of Neferefre. An anthropological analysis of his mummy reveals the king to have died in his early twenties, at between 20 and 23 years old. This evidence accords well for a king who died relatively soon into his reign and left an unfinished tomb.

### Nyuserre Ini

Nyuserre Ini, also spelt as Neuserre Izi or Niuserre Isi and sometimes Nyuserre (in Greek known as Rathoris), was a Pharaoh of Egypt during the Fifth dynasty. He is frequently given a reign of 24 or 25 years and is dated from ca. 2416 BC-2392 BC. His prenomen, Niuserre, means "Possessed of Re's Power." Niuserre was the younger son of pharaoh Neferirkare Kakai by Queen Khentkaus II, and the brother of the short-lived king Neferefre.

In Manetho's Epitome, he is said to have reigned for 44 years but this data is considered suspect. The Turin King List data for his reign is badly damaged although scholars have usually assumed that it was 24 years. The Danish Egyptologist Kim Ryholt who twice analysed the Turin King-list papyrus in the 1990s, however, notes that "Niuserre's reign is damaged. There is a distinct trace of a 10, 20 or 30, followed by a stroke after which the papyrus breaks off. Accordingly, the possibilities are 11-14, 21-24, and 31-34 years [for Nyuserre], and not just 24 years" as is conventionally assumed.[3] However, since a Sed Feast scene is noted for Nyuserre from his solar temple at Abu Gurab, a reign of more than 30 years can be suggested for this Pharaoh.

The Czech Egyptologist Miroslav Verner who has been excavating the Old Kingdom pyramids on behalf of the University of Prague in Egypt since 1976 concurs with the view that Nyuserre had a reign in excess of 30 years. He bases his opinion here on this king's numerous building activities in Abusir which included the

"construction of his own pyramid complex and two small complexes Lepsius no.XXIV and no.XXV for his wives,...the completion of the unfinished funerary monuments of his direct relatives Neferirkara, Khentkaus II and Neferefra" as well as the completion of this king's substantial sun temple building complex at Abu Gurab. "Beautiful reliefs with the scenes of the sed-festival from this sun temple are occasionally considered as indirect evidence of a long reign for this king. Generally, the historical authenticity...of such reliefs is doubted since the sed-festival scenes very probably belonged in the Old Kingdom to the standard 'Bildprogram' of the royal funerary monuments. However, in Nyuserre's case, the sed-festival scenes from Abu Ghurob [most probably reflect] the 30th jubilee of the king's ascension to the throne."

Nyuserre's burial place is a pyramid at Abusir located between those of pharaohs Sahure and Neferirkare Kakai. Its initial height was around 50m, with a base of about 79 square meters and a slope of 52 degrees. His queen, Reput-Nebu, was also buried nearby. His magnificent temple of the solar cult at Abusir is called the Joy of Re. While military campaigns to Libya and Asia are mentioned in documents of this period, we have no specific evidence regarding the military activities of this ruler.

### Djedkare Isesi

Djedkare Isesi in Greek known as Tancheres from Manetho's *Aegyptiaca*, was a Pharaoh of Egypt during the Fifth dynasty. He is assigned a reign of twenty-eight years by the Turin Canon although some Egyptologists believe this is an error for thirty-eight years. Manetho ascribes him a reign of forty-four years while the archaeological evidence suggests that his reign actually exceeded thirty-two years. His prenomen or royal name--Djedkare--means "The Soul of Re Endureth."

He did not, as was customary for his dynasty, build his own sun temple, but did build his pyramid at Saqqara instead of Abusir. This is believed to be a sign that Osiris had now replaced the sun-god Ra as the most popular god. Titles were now thought to hold magical power; their inflation believed to be a sign of a gradual decentralization of power. An entire series of dated administrative papyri from Djedkare's reign, (the Pisse Papyrus at the Louvre, authored by Ptah-hotep), was discovered in Neferirkare's mortuary temple. According to Miroslav Verner, Djedkare's highest Year known date is a Year 22 IV Akhet day 12 papyrus, which would belong anywhere from Year 32 to Year 44 of his reign depending on whether the Cattle Count was Biannual (2 times) or Semi-Biannual (1.5 times).

He is extremely well documented both by the aforementioned Abusir papyri as well as numerous royal seals and contemporary inscriptions; taken together, they indicate a fairly long reign for this king.

His almost complete mummy, along with a badly broken basalt sarcophagus and a niche for the canopic chest, was discovered in his damaged pyramid tomb at Saqqara.

### Unas

Unas (also Wenis, Oenas, Unis, or Ounas) was a Pharaoh of Ancient Egypt, and one of the rulers of the Old Kingdom. His reign has been dated as falling between 2375 BC and 2345 BC. Unas is believed to have had two queens, Khenut and Nebit, based on their burials near his tomb.

With his death, the Fifth dynasty came to an end, according to Manetho; he probably had no sons. Further, the Turin King List inserts a break at this point, which "gives us some food for thought," writes Jaromir Malek, "because the criterion for such divisions in the Turin Canon invariably was the change of location of the capital and royal residence." However, there are several clues of uninterrupted continuity between the Fifth and the sixth dynasties: Kagemni, the vizier of Unas's successor Teti, began his career under Djedkare Isesi and Unas. Teti's queen, Iput, is believed to have been the daughter of Unas, which shows Teti, Nicolas Grimal argues, "made no conscious break with the preceding dynasty." Jimmy Dunn adds that "a pink granite gateway in Unas' mortuary temple bears the inscription of the names and titles of Teti, indicating that part of the temple was completed after Unas's death." The break between the two dynasties may have been more as an official act than in fact.

He built a small pyramid at Saqqara, originally named "Beautiful are the places of Unas", close to the Step Pyramid of Djoser. It has been excavated by Vyse, Barsanti, Gaston Maspero, Firth, Selim Hassan, A. Husein, and Alexandre Piankoff. Its interior is decorated with a number of reliefs detailing events during his reign as well as a number of inscriptions. However, Jaromir Malek considers "the main innovation of Unas' pyramid, and one that was to be characteristic of the remaining pyramids of the Old Kingdom (including some of the queens), was the first appearance of the Pyramid Texts". These texts were inscribed in Sixth Dynasty royal versions, but Unas' texts contains verses and

spells which were not included in the later 6th dynasty copies. The pyramid texts were intended to help the king in overcoming hostile forces and powers in the Underworld and thus join with the Sun God Ra, his divine father in the afterlife. The king would then spend his days in eternity sailing with Ra across the sky in a solar boat.