

## 6 th Dynasty Kings - Part I

### Teti

Teti was the first Pharaoh of the Sixth dynasty of Egypt. He is also known (much less commonly) as Othoes. He reigned from around 2345 to 2333 BC and is buried at Saqqara, however the exact length of his reign has been destroyed on the Turin King List and is arguable. Queen Iput, his wife, was probably the daughter of King Unas, the last king of the Fifth dynasty.

During Teti's reign high officials were beginning to build funerary monuments that rivaled that of the Pharaoh. For example, his chancellor built a large mastaba consisting of 32 rooms, all richly carved. This is considered a sign that wealth was being transferred from the central court to the officials, a slow process that culminate in the end to the Old Kingdom.

He may have been murdered by the usurper Userkare; Manetho states that he was murdered by his palace bodyguards in a harem plot. He was buried in the royal necropolis at Saqqara. His pyramid complex is associated with the mastabas of officials from his reign. According to Anthony Spalinger, Teti's Highest date is his Year of the 6th Count 3rd Month of Summer day lost (Year 11 if biennial) from Hatnub Graffito No.1. This information is confirmed by the South Saqqara Stone Annal document from Pepi II's reign which gives him a reign of 12 Years.

### Userkare

Userkare ("The Soul of Ra is Strong") was the second king of the Sixth Dynasty. He is generally seen as one of the leaders who opposed his predecessor, Teti's royal line and was most likely an usurper to the throne.

Userkare may have been a royal claimant from the Fifth dynasty but he was certainly a rival to Teti for the throne. Since Manetho claims that Teti was killed by his bodyguards, theories of conspiracy have been put forward that Userkare was the leader of this conspiracy who then proceeded to seize the throne. The recently discovered South Saqqara Stone document from Pepi II's reign confirms his existence and assigns him a reign of between 2 to 4 Years. Teti's son, Pepi I, eventually managed to oust Userkare and succeed his murdered father. In the Turin King List, there is a lacuna between Teti and Pepi I Meryre, large enough to have fit an entry for Userkare. Userkare is apparently mentioned in several king-lists.

Userkare started work on some larger building projects, as shown by an inscription mentioning his workforce. However, no pyramid-complex has been identified for him presumably because of the brevity of his reign.

### Pepi I Meryre

Pepi I Meryre (reigned 2332 – 2283 BC) was the third king of the Sixth dynasty of Egypt. His first throne name was Neferdjehor which the king later altered to Meryre meaning "beloved of Re."

Pepi was the son of Teti and Iput. He needed the support of powerful individuals in Upper Egypt in order to put down an usurper named Userkare who had murdered his father and win back his rightful throne. These individuals would remain a strong presence in his court thereafter, and two of his queens were daughters of his Upper Egyptian vizier. Pepi I's reign was marked by aggressive expansion into Nubia, the spread of trade to far-flung areas such as Lebanon and the Somalian coast, but also the growing power of the nobility. One of the king's officials named Weni fought in Asia on his behalf. His mortuary complex, Mennefer Pepy, eventually became the name for the entire city of Memphis after the 18th Dynasty.

An analysis of the damaged Dynasty 6 South Saqqara Stone Annal document gives him a reign of c. 48-49 years but this is not confirmed by the Turin King List which apparently assigns him 44 years, according to the Danish Egyptologist Kim Ryholt's analysis of this document. The latter figure may be closer to the truth since it would imply that Pepi I's cattle count dating system was not always biennial. That this is the case is suggested by a famous Year after the 18th Count, 3rd Month of Shemu day 27 inscription from Wadi Hammamat No. 74-75 which mentions the "first occurrence of the Heb Sed" in that year for Pepi. (This would be Year 36 if the Biennial dating system was used.) This information is significant because the Heb Sed Feast was always celebrated in a king's Year 30. If Pepi I was following a biennial counting system, the inscription should have been dated to the Year after the 15th Count instead. This implies that the cattle count

during the 6th dynasty was not regularly biannual.

Pepi I's highest dated document is the Year of the 25th Count, 1st Month of Akhet day from Hatnub Inscription No.3 The South Saqqara Stone also confirms that Pepi I's last year was his Year of the 25th Count.

Two copper statues of Pepi I and his son Merenre were found at Hierakonpolis; they depict the two royals symbolically "trampling underfoot the Nine Bows," a stylized representation of Egypt's conquered foreign subjects. Pepi I was a prolific builder who ordered extensive construction projects in Upper Egypt at Dendera, Abydos, Elephantine and Hierakonpolis. One of his most important court officials was Weni the Elder who had a great canal built at the First Cataract for the king. Weni was also put in charge of the highly sensitive task of putting on trial a certain Queen Weret-yamtes, a wife of Pepi I, who had conspired to murder the king.

#### Merenre Nemtyemsaf I

Merenre Nemtyemsaf I (reigned 2283-2278 BC) was the fourth king of the Sixth dynasty of Egypt. His nomen, theophorically referring to Nemty, was formerly read as Antyemsaf, a reading now known to be incorrect.

While Merenre Nemtyemsaf I was once believed to have served as a brief co-regent to his father Pepi I Meryre before ruling in his own right, the publication of the South Saqqara Stone annal document in 1995 by Vassil Dobrev and Michel Baud shows that Merenre directly succeeded his father in power with no interregnum or coregency. The badly damaged document preserves the record of Pepi I's final year--his 25th Count and proceeds immediately to the reign of Merenre. Merenre shared his father's fascination with Nubia and continued to explore deep into the region. He also began a process of royal consolidation, appointing Weni as the first governor of all of Upper Egypt and expanding the power of several other governors. While he was once assumed to have died at an early age, recent archaeological discoveries discount this theory. Two contemporary objects show that his reign lasted more than a decade. His Year after the 5th Count (Year 10 if biannual) is attested in a quarry inscription from Hatnub Inscription No.6, according to Anthony Spalinger. The South Saqqara Stone – which was created during Pepi II's reign – credits Merenre with a minimum reign of 11 to 13 Years.