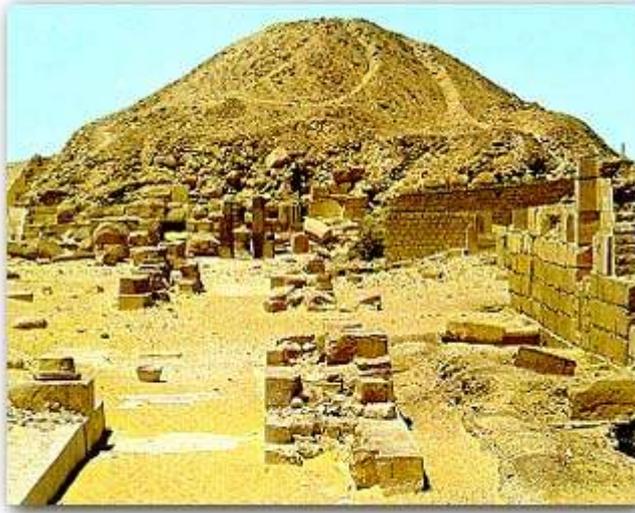


11 : Pyramid of Unas.



Unas (Unis)(c. 2356 - 2323 BC) was the last king of the Fifth Dynasty. The pyramid dedicated to this king lies to the south of the Step Pyramid. The Pyramid of Unas (Unis) is in poor condition however, the burial chambers are worth the visit. In this chamber, you will find the earliest Egyptian funerary texts carved into the walls and filled with a blue pigment. These are referred to as the Pyramid Texts. They are the rituals and hymns that were said during the in the walls of the pyramids. burial. Before this time, nothing was engraved

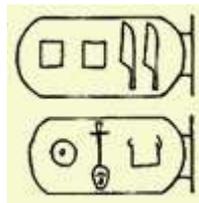
The pyramid, when it was complete stood about 62 ft (18.5 m). The core of the pyramid was loose blocks and rubble and the casing was of limestone. Today it looks like a pile of dirt and rubble, especially from the east side. Although the outside of the pyramid is in ruin, the inside is still sound. You may enter the pyramid from the north side. Trying to block the way, are three huge slabs of granite. Once inside the chamber, you will find the Pyramid Texts that were intended to help the pharaoh's soul in the afterworld. They were to help the soul find Re, the sun god.

12 : Pyramid of Pepi II.

South Saqqara is completely separate from Saqqara. It is located about 1km south of the pyramid of Sekhemkhet, which is the most southern of all the pyramids in Saqqara. South Saqqara was founded in the 6th Dynasty (2345 - 2181 BC) by the pharaohs. A few of the tombs are interesting and are based on the architecture of the Pyramid of Unas. Most of the tombs have been plundered for their stones by stone-masons or their suppliers of stones.

The pyramids of Pepi I and Merenre are in complete ruin. To the east of the pyramid of Merenre is the Pyramid of Pepi II. This pyramid is surrounded by an entire funerary complex. The inner chamber contains inscriptions and stars. There are smaller pyramids in the complex as well that belonged to his queens. They are all designed the same as Pepi's and contain a miniature funerary complex as well. The Pyramid of Queen Neith has some wonderful decorations and inscriptions.

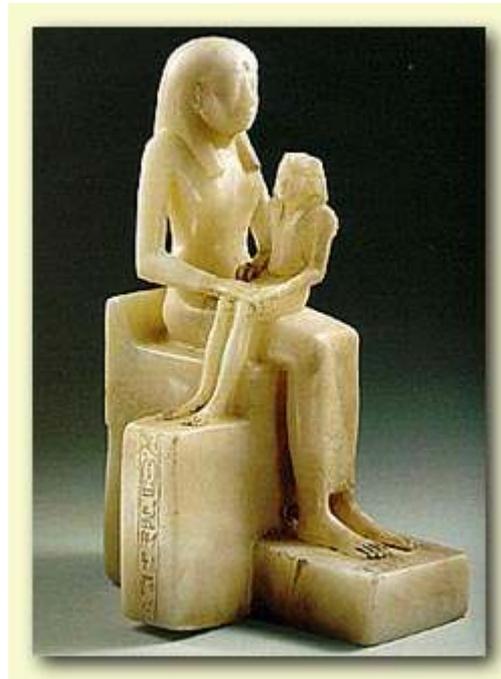
According to tradition, Pepi II was the last ruler of Egypt's 6th Dynasty, and in fact the last significant ruler of the Old Kingdom prior to the onset of what Egyptologists call the First Intermediate Period. that his reign of possibly 94 (some Egyptologist years was the longest in ancient Egyptian history. have come to the throne at about the age of six, and would therefore have lived until the age of one hundred. However, because Period, the latter part of his reign was of the onset of the First Intermediate



We are told
believe 64)
He seems to

probably ineffectual, perhaps at least somewhat due to his advanced age. Both the Oxford History of Ancient Egypt and Peter A. Clayton, have his reign lasting from 2278 until 2184 BC.

pharaoh's birth name was Pepy, (Phiops or Fiops) as father's. His throne name Neferkare, which means the Soul of Re" His mother Ankhnesmerire II (Ankhesenpepi), who was his older brother, Merenre probably acted as Pepi II's regent during his youth. She may probably been assisted by Djau, who was a vizier. well known statue of her



The Pepi, (also was his was "Beautiful is was the sister of and regent have her brother, There is a

holding Pepi II as a young boy. However, after Pepi I's death, she seems to have married Merenre. He had a number of wives. These included Neith, the daughter of Pepi I and Ankenesmerire I and Ipwet (Iput II), the daughter of his brother Merenre. There is some confusion here, because we are told that he also married Ankenesmerire III, who was another daughter of Merenre, possibly by his mother Ankhenesmerire II. A final wife that we know of was Udjebten (or Wedjebten). He probably had at least one son named for his brother, Merenre.

We know that Pepi II continued foreign relations in a very similar manner to both his predecessors of the 5th and 6th Dynasties and even developed new links with southern Africa. He maintained diplomatic and commercial relations with Byblos in ancient Syria/Palestine. However, we also learn of an incident where Pepi had to send Pepynakht (Heqaib) to bring back the body of an official who was killed on a mission in the area of Byblos.

In Nubia, Pepi sought a policy of pacification. We know of several trips and campaigns made south into Nubia both by Harkhuf, and his successor, Pepynakht. In fact, these powerful local governors managed to control Nubia long after the death of Pepi II from their base in Elephantine (near modern Aswan).



.Pepi II as a very young child, but wearing the Uraeus of a king

Pepi II appears to have been fascinated with some of these travels, particularly by his father's old retainer, Harkhuf, governor of Aswan. One interesting account concerns a pygmy secured by Harkhuf on one of his African adventures. When this he wrote Harkhuf a letter that Harkhuf later incorporated into his funerary autobiography:

You have said...that you have brought a pygmy of the god's dances from the land of the horizon-dwellers, like the pygmy whom the god's seal-bearer Bawarded brought from Punt in the time of King Isesi. You have said to my majesty that his like has never been brought by anyone who went to Yam previously...Come north to the residence at once! Hurry and bring with you this pygmy whom you brought from the land of the horizon-dwellers live, hail and healthy, for the dances of the god, to gladden the heart, to delight the heart of King Neferkare who lives forever! When

he goes down with you into the ship, get worthy men to be around him on deck, least he fall into the water! When he lies down at night, get worthy men to lie around him in his tent. Inspect ten times at night! My majesty desires to see this pygmy more than the gifts of the mine-land and of Punt! When you arrive at the residence and this pygmy is with you live, hale and healthy, my majesty will do great s seal-bearer. 'things for you, more than was done for the god Isesi.

Bawarded in the time of King

He also continued long established mining practices. We know from an inscription that turquoise and copper continued to be mined at Wadi Maghara in the Sinai. Alasbaster was quarried at Hatnub and Greywacke and siltsone from Wadi Hammamat.

However, some information we have from some scenes attributable to Pepi II may be ritualistic. For example, one scene depicting the submission of Libyan chiefs during his reign is a close copy of representations in the mortuary temples and Pepi I. Some Egyptologists believe that such scenes are of Sahura, Niuserra more symbolic expressions of the achievements of the ideal king and bore little resemblance to the reality.

.Left: Calcite lid of a vessel



Some would have us believe that the First Intermediate Period, a time of decline in Egyptian power, was bought on by low inundation of the Nile and crop failure.

This is mostly because they believe Pepi II's mortuary complex was built and decorated in a much poorer manner than his predecessors. It is possible that this may have been a contributing factor. However, during Pepi II's reign, we find increasing evidence of the power and wealth of high officials in Egypt, with decentralization of control away from the capital, Memphis. These nobles built huge, elaborate tombs at Thebes, Akhmin, Abydos, Edfu and Elephantine, and it is clear that their wealth enhanced their status to the detriment of the king's. Because the positions of these officials were now hereditary, they now owned considerable land which was passed from father to son. Therefore, their allegiance and loyalty to the throne became very casual as their wealth gave them independence from the king. Administration of the country became difficult and so it was Pepi II who divided the position of vizier so that now there was a vizier of Upper Egypt and another of Lower Egypt. Yet the power of these local rulers continued to flourish as the king grew ever older, and probably less of an able ruler.

Foreign relations, particularly concerning Nubia, were also a drain on Pepi II's treasury. In fact, in the latter part of Pepi II's rule, some foreign relations were actually broken off. Hence, we see that towards the end of his reign, the government of Egypt simply unraveled.



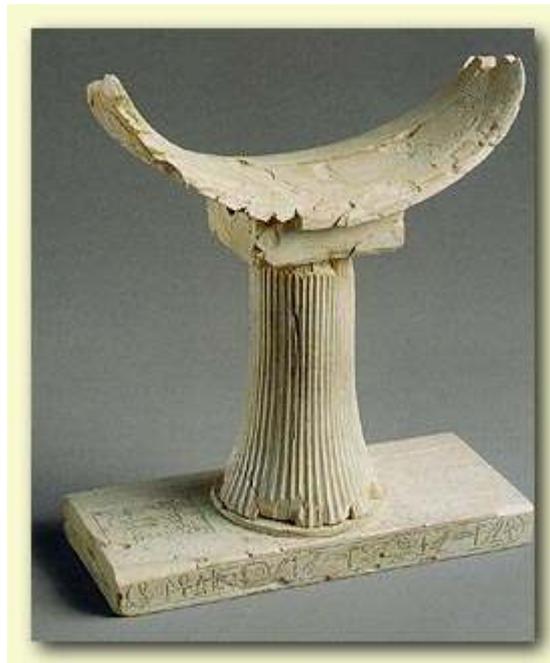
A relief fragment from Koptos

Long reigns have proven to create succession problems. As powerful as Ramesses II was, his successors likewise had problems because of their advanced

age when they themselves ascended to the throne. Hence, we find that Pepi II son, Merenre II, but perhaps for only one year. may have been succeeded by a According to Manetho, he was married to a Queen Nitocris, who succeeded her husband to become the last ruler of the 6th Dynasty. However, very little Merenre II's mother .archaeological evidence of Merenre II or Nitocris exists would have probably been Neith. After Pepi II, the marvelous building projects ceased almost entirely until the reign of Mentuhotep II of the 11th Dynasty.

A temple at Abydos may have been a ka-chapel built by Pepi II. His pyramid and mortuary complex are located in South Saqqara. Most (if not all) of his wife's smaller pyramids have been discovered nearby.

Pepi II is further attested to by a Calcite statuette of the young king and his mother, now in the Brooklyn Museum of Art, a decree of the king found at the temple of Menkawre, a mortuary decree found at Abydos, and three decrees at Koptos (Coptos). One inscription, now in Cairo, records his Sed festival and another his Sed festival. One has been found in Iput's mortuary temple. The inscription is further mentioned in the biography of Djau (now in Cairo) in his tomb in Abydos and is mentioned in the tomb of Ibi at Deir el-Gabrawi.



Smaller items attesting to Pepi II include faience plaque from various places mentioning both his first and second Sed festival, a calcite vessels attributed to his reign, an Ivory headrest inscribed with his full titles and several objects found at Byblos.