

Ancient Egypt – What Happened When?

Ancient Egypt is one of history's most remarkable civilisations, spanning nearly 3,000 years from around 3100 BC to 30 BC. Its story began when King Narmer united the two regions of Upper and Lower Egypt into a single, powerful state. From this point, Egypt was governed by a long succession of rulers called pharaohs, whose reigns are organised by historians into thirty-one dynasties and three major periods: the Old, Middle and New Kingdoms.

Egyptian society was built around the River Nile. Its annual floods deposited fertile silt across otherwise barren desert land, enabling farmers to cultivate wheat, barley and flax. This agricultural success supported a large and sophisticated population.

Pharaohs were regarded as divine – living representatives of the gods – and their authority was unquestioned. After death, their bodies were carefully mummified and interred in grand tombs to ensure a safe passage to the afterlife. The Great Pyramids at Giza, constructed during the Old Kingdom, remain among the most astonishing architectural achievements in human history.

Egyptian civilisation produced many lasting contributions. They developed hieroglyphics, an intricate writing system of symbols and pictures, and recorded information on papyrus. They advanced medicine, mathematics, engineering and astronomy significantly.

After centuries of gradual decline, Egypt was conquered by Alexander the Great in 332 BC. It later passed to the Ptolemaic dynasty before finally becoming a Roman province in 30 BC, following the death of Queen Cleopatra.



Questions

1. Approximately when did Ancient Egypt begin and end?
2. What did King Narmer achieve?
3. What are the three major periods of Egyptian history called?
4. How did the annual flooding of the Nile benefit Egyptian farmers?
5. Name the three crops mentioned that Egyptians grew.
6. How was the pharaoh viewed in Egyptian society?
7. What was mummification and why was it carried out?
8. During which period of Egyptian history were the Great Pyramids at Giza built?
9. Name three fields of knowledge in which the Egyptians made important advances.
10. Egypt was eventually conquered by outside powers. What does this suggest about why even a powerful civilisation might not last forever?

