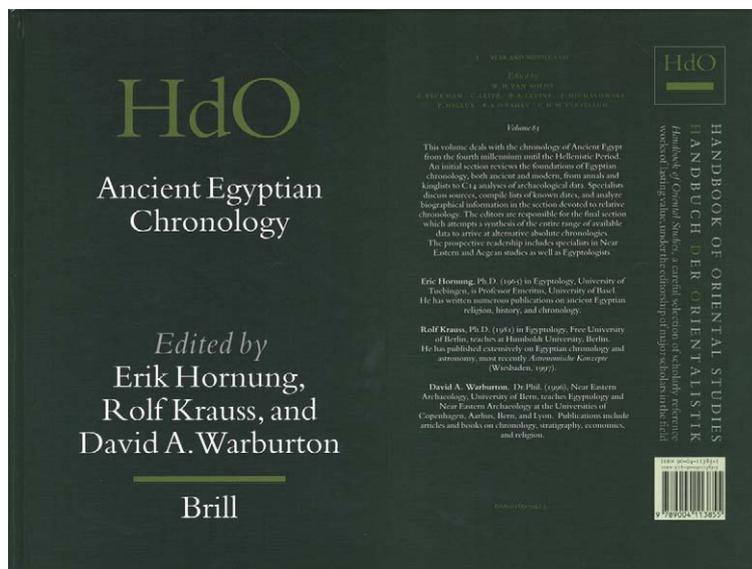


**Hornung, E., R. Krauss, D.A. Warburton. Eds. 2006. Ancient Egyptian chronology. - Brill, Leiden  
(Handbook of Oriental Studies, Section 1, The Near and Middle East, 83)**

Book review by J. Moje



‘Ancient Egyptian chronology’ is part of the Brill series ‘Handbook of Oriental Studies’, now with a new editorial board, and discusses the chronology of Egypt until the conquest of Alexander the Great in 332 BC. Several contributors present the epoques of Egyptian history divided in dynasties, ancient Egyptian ‘historical’ sources as well as different scientific methods for dating.

The first section contains short articles about the foundations of Egyptian chronology, based on annals and king lists, up to Manetho’s compilation, written by the editors and Kim Ryholt (royal canon of Turin). The different sources like the Palermo stone, the Turin king list and the lists at Abydos, Karnak and Saqqara are described in detail. Furthermore, a new reconstruction of the original composition of the Palermo stone is presented and compared to the previous theories. A separate article is reserved for Manetho’s *Aigyptiaka*.

Morris Bierbrier than discusses in a short essay the use of genealogic studies for wider chronological questions. Here much attention is paid on the sources concerning genealogy of private family trees. Important is the author’s focus on problems which limit the use of genealogies, due to the lack of widespread documentation in the ancient records: most known families are elites living in the more important settlements, like for instance Deir el-Medineh or Kahun. Also the missing of proper genealogical terms in Egyptian language is notable: for example, there are no separate words for uncle or nephew, so for simplification *sn* can mean brother, uncle or nephew, but even a good friend can be called *sn*. This means that we are dependent on speculations. The last chapter of the first part, for which the editors are responsible, discusses the ancient Egyptian methods of dating.

The second part of the book deals with relative chronology and is divided in chapters which analyse, in chronological order, the different periods and dynasties of ancient Egypt. Stan Hendrickx deals with the predynastic and early dynastic chronology by presenting the various cultures shortly, informing the reader about the research history, different dating systems, and actual correlations between the various *Zeitstufen*. There is a focus on the Naqada culture of which the different chronological steps are discussed. Significant is the chronology developed by Kaiser, which is still used today, albeit with small modifications. Much attention is given to Petrie’s pottery typology.

Jochem Kahl discusses Dynasties 0 - 2 and focuses on the arrangement of the early kings and provides a list of chronologically significant inscriptions. The relative chronology of Dynasty 3 is dealt with by Stephan Seidlmayer. He compares the known contemporaneous lists and significant sources such as Manetho.

The next two dynasties are discussed by Miroslav Verner, who has compiled a list of every single source mentioning dates of the rulers. Michel Baud discusses the last part of the Old Kingdom, *viz.* Dynasties 6 - 8. He offers the sources for the dates of all kings. Unfortunately many of these dates are unclear and thus the exact length of most of the reigns is obscure. For Dynasty 8 the situation is even worse, as there are scarcely any sources, which means that we are uncertain on number, order and even identity of the kings.

The First Intermediate period is dealt with by Stephan Seidlmayer, focussing on the Heracleopolitan Dynasties 9 and 10. In a long chapter, Thomas Schneider discusses the Middle Kingdom until the Hyksos period, *viz.* Dynasties 12 - 17. At first, he describes the terminology and methodology, followed by a detailed study on

the sequence of the rulers and the chronological problems. He also includes a comparison with the earlier researches on this topic, summarised by synoptic tables with the proposed order of rulers by several scholars. Moreover, the tables show the differences between hypothesised and proven chronology.

The New Kingdom is the theme of Erik Hornung's chapter, discussing every ruler separately. Hornung collected bibliographic notes to single dates and datable historic events. Unfortunately, each is designed as a running text and not as a list, which makes it a bit difficult to find a special date.

Karl Jansen-Winkel discusses the 21<sup>st</sup> Dynasty, followed by a chapter about the Dynasties 22 - 24, here referred to as Third Intermediate Period. The unusual separation of the 21<sup>st</sup> Dynasty from the Third Intermediate period, shows the importance of this period, which follows onto the decline of the New Kingdom. The sequence and existence of kings has been unclear for a long time but Jansen-Winkel states (p. 264) that "the sequence of kings and the highest known dates [...] does not leave significant gaps".

Dynasties 26 - 31 is the last episode of the Egyptian history dealt with in this volume and is presented by Leo Depuydt, who has compiled a table with every single day-exact regnal year of each pharaoh from Taharqa to Darius III.

In an additional chapter, Karola Zibelius-Chen discusses the Nubian Kingdoms from the 25<sup>th</sup> Dynasty to the end of the Meroë Kingdom. This part of the history and especially the empire of Meroë, is often ignored in the view of Egypt's history. Important is also the article of Joerg Klinger who informs the reader about chronological links between the 'cuneiform world' of the ancient Near East and ancient Egypt.

The third part of the volume is dedicated to absolute chronology. Here different methods of measuring age, such as radiocarbon and luminescence dating and dendrochronology, are presented in short articles. But also other tools, such as astronomy (for example calculations based on attestations of lunar dates and the heliacal rising of Sirius/Sothis) are discussed.

The last contribution is written by Leo Depuydt. He presents the foundations of a day-exact chronology for the time between 690 and 332 BC). At the end, he gives a table with a combination of double dates in Aramaic Papyri from Egypt, with an Egyptian and a Babylonian Lunar date.

The last part of the volume is compiled by the editors who give a short synthesis of the studies. 'Ancient Egyptian chronology' presents the latest insights and results of ongoing research on the chronology of ancient Egypt.

Unfortunately, the Ptolemaic and Roman periods are totally ignored. Although Egypt was dominated by foreign civilisations occasionally, these epochs also belong to the Egyptian history. Of course, the chronology of Macedonians and Romans could be investigated through finds from Greece, Italy and the other territories with their cultural influence, but also the Egyptian sources offer valuable information. Many literary and religious sources are only known by Ptolemaic and Roman texts from Egypt.

The in-depth studies are of high scientific standard, providing the reader with much information and specialised knowledge concerning Egyptian chronology. The tables are very useful and informative. This book might be useful for Egyptologists as well as for scholars related to Classics or ancient Near and Middle Eastern studies. To summarise, the volume will get an important role in the further research about chronological problems of ancient Egypt and beyond.

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