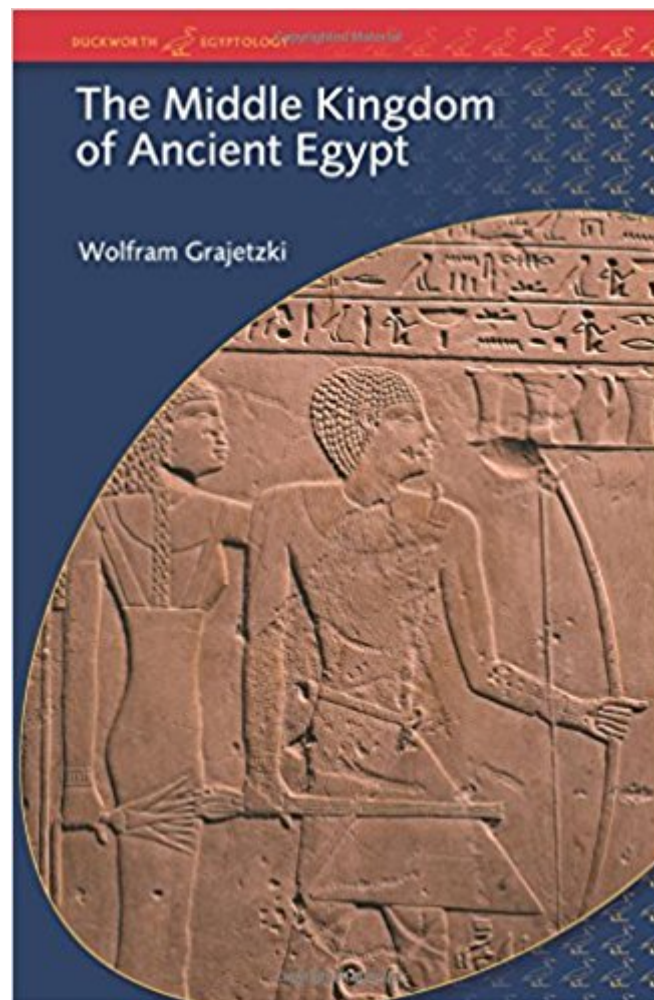




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# The Middle Kingdom Of Ancient Egypt: History, Archaeology And Society (BCP Egyptology)



## Synopsis

For the ancient Egyptians, the Middle Kingdom (c. 2000-1700 BC) was a classical period of art, history and literature. The Twelfth Dynasty was one of the strongest ever to rule on the banks of the Nile: some of its kings were later worshipped as local gods, and were made famous by classical Greek authors. Yet Egyptologists tend not to look beyond the extraordinary royal sculpture and literary masterpieces of the time. Although the picture is fragmentary, as with any archaeological record, the last two hundred years of exploration and excavation have revealed much of the splendour of the period. This book examines the evidence for the culture, history and society of both central and provincial Egypt at the time, revealing the wealth of the entire country. Too often overshadowed by the better-preserved architecture of other periods, "Middle Kingdom Egypt" emerges for the reader as a fascinating age in its own right.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Wolfram Grajetzki is the author of several books including most recently *Burial Customs in Ancient Egypt* (2003, also published by Duckworth) and studies of Tarkhan and Harageh.

While much has been written about the Old and New Kingdoms of Ancient Egypt, there is little on the Middle Kingdom. Grajetzki does a solid job of addressing this lack of attention. As the author points out in the introduction, the dearth of scholarship on the 11th, 12th and 13th dynasties is the result of several factors: in lower Egypt and the delta sites have been built over and throughout

Egypt monuments have been repurposed; Grajetski even supposes that there are a number of sites in upper Egypt that have yet to be excavated. Yet even faced with these challenges, Grajetski provides an overview of this crucial period in Egypt's history. The first third examines the 11th, 12th and 13th dynasties, providing political context for the remainder of the book. The middle third covers geography (basically a list of the 22 upper Egyptian nomes and the 16 lower Egyptian nomes). This was the weakest part of the book, providing little more than a list of the nomes and their capitals and a few details of the principal deity of these sites. Fortunately the last third on Egyptian society was stronger. To his detriment, Grajetski is rather dry - his prose is not very lively and there is little analysis around the political changes and archeological record (making up 2/3 of the book). This is balanced by his detailing of the political changes that took place in the Middle Kingdom, and his careful exposition when writing about society: how the archaeological record informs and leads to differing interpretations of the social hierarchy. It is unfortunate that he does not provide similar criticism to the other elements of the book. Nonetheless, this is a very good examination of Middle Kingdom Egypt and offers a solid foundation for further reading. The bibliography is particularly helpful. For serious students of ancient history, this is a recommended read.

Middle Kingdom Egypt is less well known than the other periods but author Grajetski gives the most thorough account of every aspect of life during this important transitional time, including Pharaohs and Dynasties, important officials, details of the life of the common people, archaeological sites, etc. He leaves no stone unturned and mines the data with great detail. I particularly loved his compendium on the nomes of ancient Egypt and their important Middle Kingdom population centers from Aswan to the Delta with commentary on temples and tombs found in each. This book left me with a much richer appreciation for the whole of Egyptology. A most enjoyable read if you are fascinated with life in Ancient Egypt! I would be sure to take it along on a tour up the Nile.

Many books have been written about Ancient Egypt. However, most of them cover either the Old Kingdom - that is the Pyramid Age, or the New Kingdom - the great Pharaohs like Thutmose III, Hatshepsut, Amenhotep III, Akhnaton and Rameses the Great. This book is a comprehensive history of this underappreciated period in Egyptian history - the 11, 12th & 13th dynasties. The book starts with brief, concise summaries of the reign of each of the Pharaohs of the period, such as Montuhotep, and Amenemhet and Senusret, as well as summaries of the mysterious 13th dynasty, which is usually completely ignored in the history books. Then the book starts in the South of Egypt, and works its way north, region (called Nomes in Egyptian history) by region, summarizing all of the

remains that can be found in this region which date to the Middle Kingdom. Then the book concludes with a section on Egyptian society, including material on the King and his court, and some of the towns like Lahun. This is a comprehensive, welcome addition to an armchair Egyptologists library.

I'D HAVE RATED THIS BOOK A 5 STAR ACCEPT FOR IT'S INADEQUATE MAPS. MANY FINE LINE DRAWINGS OF ARCHITECTURE BUT ONE NEEDS AN ADDITIONAL MAP SOURCE WHILE READING TO KNOW WHERE THINGS WERE HAPPENING.

The Middle Kingdom of Ancient Egypt by Wolfram Grajetzki explores the era of the Middle Kingdom (2000-1700 BC), including its art, history, literature, the political achievements of the powerful Twelfth Dynasty, and the evidence modern archaeology has revealed about the culture, history, and society of provincial Egypt. A detailed and scholarly textual analysis that paints a vivid picture of a noble nation-state's vibrant past.

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