

The Place of the Exodus in Egyptian History: Reply #2

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Abstract

There is agreement in holding to the biblical chronology as basic to understanding the history of Egypt. However, my placement of the Exodus at 1446BC has been misunderstood. Even though there was partial parallel rule of the Sixth Dynasty with the Twelfth Dynasty, the Exodus occurred at the fall of the Twelfth Dynasty. Such parallel dynasties are accepted by several scholars and are not limited to just these dynasties. Some other examples are provided, as well as some explanatory comments.

Keywords: Egyptian secular chronology, Sixth Dynasty, Twelfth Dynasty, parallel dynasties, Manetho, Courville

Introduction

Thank you for the opportunity to express some thoughts on the place of the Exodus in Egyptian history, particularly to recent comments by Habermehl (2022) on contributions made by Porter (2022) and Osgood (2022).

Preliminary Comments

Let me point out that Porter, Habermehl, and myself hold that the scriptural chronology is basic to understanding the history of the ancient world. We all hold that the presently accepted secular history/chronology, based on a particular interpretation of Egyptian records in no way represents the real timeline of the ancient world. All of us hold to a sincere attempt to find a satisfactory correlation. But as with all such complex tasks, there will obviously be differences of opinion, which will be open for reasonable criticism.

One factor that has emerged, however, is the fact that quotes are made, I believe in sincerity, without adequately understanding the original author's presentation. And this factor has clearly emerged in the foregoing presentations, both by Habermehl (2022) and Porter (2022). Both Courville (1971) and my own presentations have clearly not been fully grasped, as I will point out.

First, Habermehl (2022) has suggested that my placement of the Exodus on the Egyptian secular timeline dates to 2150BC. That is not so. On that timeline it fits at approximately 1750BC, that is, just after the secular date for the fall of the Twelfth Dynasty. The correct date that I adhere to is the biblical one, reasoned at 1446BC.

Second, while I hold to, at least a partial parallel rule of the Sixth Dynasty with the Twelfth Dynasty, at no stage have I expressed the sentiments that the Exodus occurred at the fall of the Sixth Dynasty, but rather the fall of the Twelfth Dynasty, which was the dominant one of the period.

Parallel Dynasties

Habermehl (2022) appears to show some exasperation with Courville's suggestion of parallel dynasties, but such is misplaced, as even at least one secular Egyptologist accepts that this was the case. I quote Olga Tufnell (1984, 155), re the Turin Canon:

There is one point about the composition of the Turin Canon—indeed all ancient king-lists—which needs emphasizing since it plays a significant role in the present chapter. Dynasties or other groupings of kings are usually listed as if in a single chronological sequence so that exterior controls are required in order to define contemporary, competing or overlapping dynasties. Precisely this situation is evident in the Turin Canon in both the First and Second Intermediate periods.

I have pointed out (Osgood 2020) that Manetho's king-list is arranged sequentially on a geographic basis, so that widespread overlapping is still consistent with that author's arrangement. Parallelisms should not surprise anyone. When Ethiopian Piye invaded Egypt he found at least 20 kings, as did Assurbanipal in 664BC.

Now it is clear that Habermehl (2022) has mistaken Courville's arrangement of the Archaic period, having Courville (1971) claiming a parallel arrangement of Second and Third Dynasties. That is not correct. Courville's arrangement is a parallelism of the Third Dynasty with the end period of the First Dynasty. Moreover, he devotes considerable space to detail that arrangement.

Courville (1971) points to a king of the First Dynasty, that is only in Manetho's king-list, and not the others, with a Greek name "Kenkenes". He makes a considerable case for this person being Sekhem Ka, Kha-Sekhem and later Kha-Sekhemui, who he suggests is the founder of the Third Dynasty during the time just before Uadji (Unephres) of the First Dynasty, after concluding the religious wars and setting up an administration in Memphis parallel

with the First Dynasty. Such would make the famine of Uadji the same famine as that of Djoser, and the same as the famine of Abraham's day.

Moreover, it would bring Kha-Sekhemui into close timeline with Djoser. He therefore places Kha-Sekhemui, not as the last of the Second Dynasty as suggested in the sequential arrangement, but the first of the kings of the Third Dynasty, parallel to the later First Dynasty. In contrast, these were arranged by Manetho sequentially.

Habermehl (2022) rightly points to the idea that we both accept a contemporaneity of the Sixth Dynasty and Twelfth Dynasty but mistakes my arrangement. First, the Sixth Dynasty was not only in the south, as it was centred in Memphis. It almost certainly had a subordinate rule, but not necessarily without a degree of independence. Second, as a result of the findings at the heavily trade-related city of Byblos, it is clear that the reign of the last significant king of the Sixth Dynasty, Piopi II, was over by the time of Amenemhet III of the Twelfth Dynasty, and that the Sixth Dynasty thus almost certainly began slightly before the beginning of the Twelfth Dynasty.

The next and following kings at Memphis were some distantly related kings to the Twelfth Dynasty. They represented the early Thirteenth Dynasty as a sub-administration at Memphis, during the last few years of the Twelfth Dynasty. I have a paper in preparation outlining this early Thirteenth Dynasty in some detail.

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