EGYPT AND ISRAEL DURING THE FIRST MILLENNIUM B.C.

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Introductory

The historical and cultural interrelationships between Egypt and Israel during the Hebrew monachies and later embrace a wide variety of issues of perennial interest to Egyptologists, Orientalists and Old Testament scholars alike. For our purpose, the term "first millennium" must for practical reasons be stretched a little, to begin in fact at c. 1070 B.C., with the start of the Late Period in Egypt, and more than embracing the beginnings of the Hebrew monarchy.

Chronology

From c. 931/930 B.C. down to the respective falls of Samaria and Jerusalem in 722 and 587/586 B.C. respectively, we possess closely-interlocking series of rulers in Israel and Judah for much of that period, being firmly linked into Mesopotamian dates from the mid-9th century B.C. onwards. Before c. 931/930 B.C., no factual objection can be raised to taking the reigns of David and Solomon at some 40 years each, given that the father was succeeded by a younger son; thus we reach back to c. 1010 B.C. Hebrew dates before this point are less readily determined and will not concern us here.

In Egypt, chronology after the well-attested imperial rulers of the New Kingdom (c. 1550-1070 B.C.) was for long a swamp of uncertainties. In more recent years, the position has changed radically, and Egyptian dates for the Twenty-first to Twenty-fifth Dynasties (c. 1070-664 B.C.) can now be set within quite close limits, to the benefit of proper historical study.¹

Thus, for the Twenty-first Dynasty, a span of 125/124 years is still the most likely correct figure, because it rests on a very close correspondence between first-hand data for regnal dates and regnal figures transmitted in Manetho where all but one of the figures now appear to be correct — whereas the supposed summary total of 130 years in his versions is 5/6 years in error. 2 Hence the general correlations of the reigns of David and Solomon with Kings Amenemope to Psusennes II of this Dynasty as set out in 1972 retain their full validity. 3

Closer to the interests of Old Testament scholars, the epoch of the Twenty-second to Twenty-fifth Dynasties (c. 945-664 B.C.) has enjoyed fuller debate, but with few changes that are either plausible or important. Thus, for the Twenty-second Dynasty (Shishak to So), a recent attempt 4 to resurrect the old idea of mention of a lunar eclipse under Takeloth II may be judged to have failed, particularly as its main result was to distort the chronology in two opposite directions on either side of Takeloth II (besides artificially extending his reign); the supposed allusion to an eclipse cannot be sustained at present. 5 Therefore, with one possible exception, the given dates (1972) for the Twenty-second Dynasty are still the likeliest at present. The possible partial exception is Osorkon IV ("So"), who may well have died c. 713 B.C. rather than c. 715 B.C., although such a change is not guaranteed. 6 For the Twenty-third Dynasty, recognition of the greater importance of Iuput II (more than Iuput I) has led to raising the dates of this Dynasty after the death of its founder by 10 years, and extending the reign of Iuput II to 34/39 years. 7 But this change hardly touches Old Testament studies; likewise, a possible one-year adjustment for Bakenranef (Twenty-fourth Dynasty). 8

Of greater interest to Old Testament scholars is the Twenty-fifth Dynasty, given the role of Taharqa in biblical tradition. Here, the reigns

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2 On this particular point, see Kitchen, Third Int. Period 2, pp. 531-3.
5 Cf. Kitchen, Revue d'Égyptologie 34 (1982/83), pp. 61-3; full refutation, Kitchen, Third Ind. Period 2, pp. 546-50; cf. also R. Krauss, Sothis- und Monddaten (Hildesheim, 1985), pp. 174-7; his supposed lunar dates (pp. 165-74) are too inexact and ambiguous to be used for serious chronology.
6 Cf. A. Spalinger, Journal, American Research Center 10 (1973), p. 100, on distinction between "Pir`u of Muṣīrī" (Pharaoh of Egypt) as an Egyptian dynasty (e.g., Osorkon IV) and the Twenty-fifth Dynasty rulers from Kush; cf. also Kitchen, Third Int. Period 2, p. 552.
7 Up-to-date facts on this Dynasty, Third Int. Period 2, pp. 542-4, and Table *3 (with literature, 1973-86).