

Egyptian Chronology and the Bible: The Pre-Patriarchal Era

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1. A Question of Dates

In his discussion of the time before Joseph, i.e., the pre-famine period, Courville strikes a note of pessimism about any synchronisms between the Bible and the history of Egypt:

“The inter-relationships between Egypt and the Old Testament characters of the pre-famine era are too few and, for the most part, insufficiently unique to provide a solid basis for synchronizing the two histories.”¹

We are led to agree with Courville about this. While much of our previous discussion of the relationship between the Bible and archaeology could point to very good or at least plausible synchronisms, there is not very much before the time of Joseph that can help us determine the best way of reconstructing the chronology of Egypt in relation to biblical history. We shall at least attempt to relate the Bible to Egyptian history, Egyptian religion, and Egyptian culture but readers should understand that our discussion will be to some extent experimental.

Many Egyptologists and historians of the 19th century were influenced by uniformitarian or Darwinist ideas about the antiquity of civilization. Lyell's theory of immense duration in time began to have its effects upon thinkers from diverse fields of inquiry, and the biblical view of chronology was repudiated by those who followed Lyell down this road. Wallis Budge's discussion of Egypt's dynastic history provides an example of the rejection of biblical chronology:

“[T]he system which will have the best chance of survival, and at the same time be the most correct, seems, judging by the evidence before us, to be that which will take into due consideration the extreme antiquity of civilization of one kind and another in the Valley of the Nile, and which will not be fettered by views based

¹ Donovan Courville, *The Exodus Problem and its Ramifications*, 1:162.

upon opinions of those who would limit the existence of the civilization of Egypt to a period of about 3000 years.”²

As Courville points out, however, Budge’s claims for an extreme antiquity of Egyptian civilization did not pan out. Modern Egyptologists place the beginnings of dynastic Egypt at about 3300-2850 B.C., much later than what Budge thought feasible. Some nineteenth century historians, and even some twentieth-century historians, have thought of the Bible as a “straight-jacket” preventing the development of a true chronology of the ancient world. However, the subsequent need to down-date Egyptian dynastic history proves that this view is not true, and it would seem that the desire to stretch the beginnings of Egypt beyond the biblical dates was in itself a straightjacket.

The following table illustrates the falsity of the claim that the Bible has fettered any system of Egyptian chronology which has the best chance of being correct. It is based for the most part on the table presented by Duncan McNaughton.³ The first through eighteenth dynasties are BC dates, while the AD dates are for Egyptologists:

| <i>Egyptologist</i> (AD) | <i>Dyn. 1</i> | <i>Dyn. 4</i> | <i>Dyn. 12</i> | <i>Dyn. 18</i> |
|--------------------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|----------------|
| Wilkinson (1836) | 2320 | - | - | 1575 |
| Champollion (1839) | 5867 | 4426 | 3703 | 1822 |
| Böckh (1845) | 5702 | 4402 | 3404 | 1655 |
| Lepsius (1858) | 3892 | 2744 | 2380 | 1591 |
| Unger (1867) | 5613 | 4310 | 3315 | 1796 |
| Mariette (1876) | 5004 | 3703 | 3021 | 1703 |
| Brugsch (1877) | 4400 | 3300 | 2466 | 1700 |
| Meyer (1887) | 3180 | 2530 | 2130 | 1530 |
| Petrie (1894) | 4777 | 3503 | 2778 | 1587 |
| Meyer (1904) | 3315 | 2540 | 2000 | 1580 |
| Sethe (1905) | 3360 | 2480 | 2000 | 1580 |
| Breasted (1906) | 3400 | 2625 | 2000 | 1580 |
| Petrie (1906) | 5510 | 4206 | 3459 | 1580 |
| MacNaughton (1929) | 5598 | 4151 | 3398 | 1709 |
| Petrie (1929) | 4553 | 3282 | 2586 | 1587 |
| MacNaughton (1932) | 5667 | 5360 | 3373 | 1709 |
| Gardiner (1961) | 3100 | 2340 | 1991 | 1575 |
| Clayton (1994) | 3050 | 2345 | 1991 | 1570 |

McNaughton marked it out as “strange” that Wilkinson would place Menes “as low as 2320” but explained it as a product of “the hypnotic influence of Usher’s Biblical Chronology.”⁴ Against lowered dates, McNaughton was in line with Budge’s views, and argued that those who offered high dates for the beginning of Menes’ reign “respected the information obtained from Manetho.”⁵ Presumably those who held to a

² Wallace Budge, *Books on Chaldea and Egypt*, Vol. 9, pp. 3; 4; quoted by Courville, 1:163.

³ Duncan McNaughton, *A Scheme of Egyptian Chronology*, 1932, p. 6.

⁴ McNaughton, p. 6.

⁵ McNaughton, p. 8.

shorter chronology did not respect the information obtained from Manetho. But the question might be asked, how much respect should one show toward Manetho's dynastic lists? To be sure, one must not reject him out of hand, but a truly scientific view of chronology requires that Manetho's dynasties be weighed against all the data at hand, not be set up as an independent and unassailable standard of the chronology of Egyptian civilization.

A look at the last rows of the chart will show that current Egyptian scholarship places the beginnings of dynastic Egypt at c. 3050 BC. In terms of this date, Meyer, Breasted, and Sethe came the closest. McNaughton and Petrie are way off by 2,726 years and 1,503 years respectively, while the "hypnotized" Wilkinson was off by only 720 years. Thus we could conclude with greater justification that the "hypnotic influence" of Manetho's dynasties led McNaughton and others (including Budge) into gross error with respect to the beginnings of dynastic Egypt.

We still think the current date for the beginning of Egypt's dynasties is too high on the BC time scale, but it does show that some Egyptologists have had to back-peddle and down-date the beginnings of Egyptian civilization for quite some time now. While the information from Manetho's dynasties should be respected, there is no *a priori* reason to place all the chronological weight on this source, in light of the fact that a more combinatorial approach—taking into account a multitude of sources—might obtain a more rational chronology for Egyptian civilization.

2. *The First Dynasty of Egypt*

Egypt's dynastic history begins with Menes, the first remembered king of Egypt. When the term "Men" was found on an inscription with Hor-Aha's name, the once fabled king—like Gilgamesh—stepped out onto the pages of history. Unfortunately, the names provided by Manetho do not always match the first dynasty kings known from inscriptions or other king lists. It is known that both Den and Qa'a left necropolis seals that gave the order of reigns of their predecessors. Toby Wilkinson says:

"Excavations in the royal cemetery at Abydos have revealed impressions from the necropolis seals of Den and Qaa...The former lists in chronological order the kings of the First Dynasty from Narmer to Den, with the addition of the queen mother (and probable regent during Den's minority), Merneith. Qaa's seal lists all eight kings of the First Dynasty, confirming the order established by scholars from other, more fragmentary, sources."⁶

An inscription at Sakkara also gives the order of the later first dynasty kings. According to W. B. Emery:

"[T]he order of Udimu and his successors in the First Dynasty is confirmed by a stone vase inscription found in the Step Pyramid at Sakkara. On this important fragment are engraved the secondary names of Udimu, Enezib, Semerkhet, and Ka'a—in the accepted order."⁷

⁶ Toby Wilkinson, *Early Dynastic Egypt*, 1999, p. 62.

⁷ W. B. Emery, *Archaic Egypt*, 1961, p. 73.

The following represents the first dynasty of kings who reigned from Thinis, with reign lengths given by Manetho (via Africanus)⁸:

First Dynasty

| <i>Manetho</i> | <i>Reign</i> | <i>Monuments, Lists, etc.</i> |
|------------------------------|--------------|--|
| 1. Menes | 62 | <i>Meni, (Narmer or Hor-Aha)</i> |
| 2. Athothis | 57 | <i>Teti</i> |
| 3. Kenkenes | 31 | <i>Djer, Itet, Iti</i> |
| 4. Uenephes | 23 | <i>Djet, Wadji, (time of Q. Merneith)</i> |
| 5. Usaphais | 20 | <i>Den, Hesepti, Zemti, Khaseti, Udimu</i> |
| 6. Miebhis | 26 | <i>Anedjib, Merbiape</i> |
| 7. Semempses | 18 | <i>Semerkheth, Semsem</i> |
| 8. Bieneches/Ubienthes | 26 | <i>Qa'a, Khebeh, Khebwe, Sen</i> |
| Total | 263 | |

Verbrugge & Wickersham give the total length of the first dynasty as 210 years. On an average reign length basis, if the total number of kings is multiplied by an average reign length of 20 years, the length of the dynasty would be about 160 years. For calculation of reign lengths, Courville relied on the “Sothis” list (or *Book of Sothis*) for what he describes as “data of vital significance to the clarification of chronological problems of early Egyptian history.”⁹ The *Book of Sothis*, however, is rejected by Egyptologists as a fraud:

“*Sothis*’s dedicatory letter to Ptolemy Philadelphos calls him ‘Augustus,’ a title that is plainly anachronistic and marks the piece as a forgery.”¹⁰

While scholars may grant that *Sothis* shows some knowledge of Manetho, it is still of little value. Courville attempted to explain why the *Book of Sothis* is so incomplete by arguing that it does not contain the names of kings of dynasties 2, 3, 6-11, 13. It also supposedly names kings that are unrecognized by Manetho or by inscriptional materials from early Egypt. Courville claimed that the Sothis list does not contain the names of kings who ruled parallel with other kings, or dynasties that were encompassed within other dynasties. In other words, Courville appealed to his own proposed chronology to explain the incompleteness of the Sothis list.¹¹ We do not regard this as a successful defense of the accuracy of the Sothis list, even though we might agree with Courville’s views on the contemporaneity of several kings or dynasties. As Verbrugge & Wickersham point out:

⁸ This table, and the following ones, are based in part on Alan Gardiner’s *Egypt of the Pharaohs*, 1961, p. 430; G. P. Verbrugge & J. M. Wickersham’s *Berosos and Manetho: Native Traditions in Ancient Mesopotamia and Egypt*, 2000, pp. 187ff; Toby Wilkinson’s *Early Dynastic Egypt*, 1999, pp. 66ff.; and Peter Clayton’s *Chronicle of the Pharaohs*, 1994, pp. 16ff.

⁹ Courville, 1:165

¹⁰ Verbrugge & Wickersham, p. 102,

¹¹ Courville, 1:166.

“*Sothis* calls the first human ruler Mestram as well as Menes, and in many other ways as well it is so contaminated by Judaic or Judeo-Christian chronographic material that this element is dominant, while what may be Manethonian is a small part of its thrust.”¹²

It is our position, then, that chronological revisionists should not appeal to the *Book of Sothis* in order to defend any particular theory of the arrangements or lengths of the dynasties of Egypt. Courville relied on it to the detriment, in our opinion, of his revised chronology of Egypt.

3. *The Kings of the First Dynasty*

Menes, according to Manetho and other sources, is known for some sort of an expedition (probably to quell enemies). During his reign he gained fame, taught religion to the Egyptians, founded Memphis, but was finally killed by a hippopotamus. Current scholarship divides between the view that Menes is either Narmer or Hor-Aha. The latter is adopted by Emery, Clayton, and others and we will make this assumption as well.¹³

Djer ruled after Hor-Aha and is known for the ghastly practice of “retainer sacrifice,” where royal servants committed suicide in order to follow their king into the afterlife. Djet was next in line and ruled for about 20 years. Inscriptional evidence indicates that a servant named Amka began his career in the reign of Djet’s predecessor and ended it sometime in the first part of the reign of Den, “when the country was under the regency of Queen Merneith...”¹⁴ Amka appears to have been rather lucky in life since he managed to escape Djer’s bloodthirsty funerary practices. Manetho reports that a great famine occurred during Djet’s reign, and that he “raised the pyramids near Kokome.” It is possible that Manetho has confused Djet with a later king of the fourth dynasty, when pyramids first began to be built, and it is also possible that the great famine occurred in a later dynasty as well.

The wife of Djet, Merneith, ruled as a regent for a while after his death and likely became the first real queen of Egypt. Her tomb contains sealings of King Den which say, “king’s mother Mer(t)neith.”¹⁵ Accordingly, Den was therefore the son of Merneith, and is regarded by scholars as one of the most important kings of the first dynasty, whose reign saw significant cultural achievements and material prosperity. Even royal servants such as chancellor Hemaka could afford lavish furnishings and decorations for their tombs during Den’s reign. The cult of the Apis bull was also founded by this time.¹⁶

Little is known of the next king Anedjib except that the tumulus of his tomb is of a stepped construction, similar to the design of the Step Pyramid. The following king Semerkhet ruled for about 8 years according to one source, but 18 according to Manetho, who reports that during Semempses’ reign (i.e., Semerkhet), “a very great calamity befell

¹² Verbrugge & Wickersham, p. 102.

¹³ Clayton, p. 20.

¹⁴ Wilkinson, *Early Dynastic Egypt*, p. 73.

¹⁵ Wilkinson, p. 74.

¹⁶ Wilkinson, p. 77; Clayton, p. 27.

Egypt.” Manetho, however, does not describe the nature of this calamity. Was it pestilence? War? Asteroid impact?

In an earlier day a relief in the Sinai region had been ascribed to Semempses, but scholars now attribute it to third dynasty king Sekhemkhe.¹⁷ Finally, the last king of the first dynasty was Qa’a, who succeeded Semempses. The succession is established on the basis of inscriptional material but also because an official named Henuka served under both Semempses (Semerkhet) and Qa’a.¹⁸ Qa’a continued the “wasteful practice” (Clayton) of having his servants commit suicide upon his own death. Sealings of Hetepsekhemwy (first king of the second dynasty) were found in the tomb of Qa’a and this is taken as proof that the second dynasty followed the first.¹⁹

4. *The Second Dynasty of Egypt*

It is clear even on a cursory examination of Manetho’s second dynasty of Egypt that the names in his king list do not match up well with the names on the monuments, sealings, or inscriptional material. Wilkinson says: “The inscriptions and monuments from the period record a plethora of royal names, as do the surviving king lists. The names from these two sets of sources bear little relation to each other....[S]cholars today are scarcely more confident about the internal history of the Second Dynasty than were their predecessors a generation ago.”²⁰ The following table provides a list of the second dynasty kings:

Second Dynasty

| <i>Manetho</i> | <i>Reign</i> | <i>Monuments, Lists, etc.</i> |
|-----------------------|--------------|---|
| 1. Boethos..... | 38 | <i>Hetepsekhemwy, Bedjau, Baunetjer</i> |
| 2. Kaiechos | 39 | <i>Raneb (or Nebra), Kakau</i> |
| 3. Binothis | 47 | <i>Ninetjer, Banetjeren</i> |
| 4. Tlas | 17 | <i>Weneg, Wadjnas</i> |
| 5. Sethenes..... | 41 | <i>Sendi, Sened, Sendji</i> |
| 6. Chaires | 17 | <i>Aka, Neterka</i> |
| 7. Nephercheres | 25 | <i>Neferkare</i> |
| 8. Sesochris..... | 48 | <i>Seth-Peribsen, Neferkasekre</i> |
| 9. Cheneres | 30 | <i>Khasekhemwy, Hudjefa, Bebi</i> |
| Total | 302 | |

The order of the first three kings has been confirmed from inscriptions, but the kings from Tlas to Cheneres “are not mentioned on any contemporary monuments.”²¹ Scholars believe that Raneb (or Nebra) succeeded Hetepsekhemwy based on the find of a stone bowl in the Step Pyramid of Djoser which juxtaposes the names of Hetepsekhemwy and Raneb.²² Additionally, the order of the first three kings was recorded on the statue of a

¹⁷ Gardiner, *Egypt of the Pharaohs*, p. 74.

¹⁸ Wilkinson, p. 80.

¹⁹ Wilkinson, p. 82.

²⁰ Wilkinson, p. 82.

²¹ Gardiner, p. 432.

²² Wilkinson, p. 84.

priest by the name of Hetepdief.²³ Also, a flint bowl of Hetepsekhemwy was found in the tomb of Peribsen, and was used as a hand-me-down by Raneb, who reinscribed it with his own name. This bowl was then used by Ninetjer, who inscribed his name over Raneb's.²⁴

These lines of evidence confirm that the first three kings were Hetepsekhemwy, Raneb, and Ninetjer, in that order. Scholars believe the last two kings of the second dynasty were Seth-Peribsen and Khasekemwy.²⁵ Thus, according to current scholarship, the total number of kings for the second dynasty is five. As noted, modern Egyptologists believe that the second dynasty was consecutive with the first dynasty, holding that Hetepsekhemwy buried Qa'a. The following correlations are accepted by current scholarship:

| King | Dynasty | Relation |
|------------------|---------|-------------|
| 1. Qa'a | First | Predecessor |
| 2. Hetepsekhemwy | Second | Successor |

It is not necessary to assume that Seth-Peribsen was Sesochris or that Khasekemwy was Cheneres, as per lines 8 and 9 of the above dynastic table. Peribsen and Khasekemwy are placed in their respective positions only because they were the last two kings of the second dynasty, and Manetho records Sesochris and Cheneres as the last two kings of the second dynasty. There is no independent evidence other than positional correlation to identify these kings with one another. With respect to Tlas, it has been suggested that the name "Tlas" is a shortened form of Wetlas, which is derived from Wadjnas, and finally Weneg. Sethenes appears to be the same as Sendi or Sent, and his name is associated with the name Peribsen in a later fourth dynasty tomb owned by a mortuary priest named Shery.²⁶

Manetho's 302 years for the second dynasty are regarded as too high by modern scholars, who reduce the dynastic total to around 200 years.²⁷ Since Manetho and the archaeological evidence appear to be in conflict, it is difficult to determine how many kings ruled in the second dynasty. If we take the modern view of only five kings in the dynasty, the total elapsed time for the second dynasty based on an average reign length calculation should be approximately 100 years.

According to Clayton: "Manetho inserts three kings between Peribsen and Khasekemwy: Sethenes (Sendji), Chaires (Neterka) and Nephcheres (Neferkara), reigning respectively for 41, 17, and 25 years. The evidence for these kings is slight and archaeological remains are non-existent. Khasekemwy was the last king of the dynasty...."²⁸ In fact, Egyptologists think that the country split into two ruling districts

²³ Ian Shaw, ed., *Oxford History of Ancient Egypt*, p. 85; Wilkinson, p. 83.

²⁴ Wilkinson, p. 84.

²⁵ Shaw, p. 85: "There is much less evidence for the kings of the 2nd Dynasty than those of the 1st Dynasty until the last two reigns (Peribsen and Khasekemwy)."

²⁶ Wilkinson, p. 88.

²⁷ Clayton, p. 26.

²⁸ Clayton, p. 28.

after the time of Ninetjer, with Weneg and Sendi reigning in northern Egypt and Peribsen reigning in southern Egypt.²⁹

At least one writer, Michael Rice, dissents from the usual view of a succession of the second dynasty after the first dynasty, and speculates that the two dynasties may have overlapped to some extent:

“The first Kings of the Second Dynasty are obscure figures and little is known of their reigns. We can only presume that the period of their sovereignty was marked by a continuation of that same unrest that marked the final years of the First Dynastic Kings. It cannot be certain that the Second Dynasty actually followed the First; they may, in part at least, have been contemporary, ruling different parts of the Valley simultaneously.”³⁰

Rice even thinks that the earliest rulers of the second dynasty may have been a “small local dynasty, of which there must have been many in pre-First Dynasty times, which somehow got itself acknowledged as national rulers.”³¹ We will discuss this more fully under Section 8.

5. *The Third Dynasty of Egypt*

The third dynasty of Egypt is famous as a time of monumental building, e.g., the famous Step Pyramid of Djoser. It is also the dynasty of Imhotep, who was later divinized by the Egyptians for his contributions to medicine. Inscriptions of Imhotep have been found in Egypt, giving him a rightful place as an historical figure. Some revisionists are so impressed by the third dynasty of Egypt that they place Abraham in this dynasty, and regard the famine of Djoser’s time as the same famine of Abraham’s time, a view we will examine later as incorrect. Others have claimed that Imhotep was none other than Joseph who saved the world from famine, but we will later provide reasons showing that this equation is misdirected. The following table is based on the sources noted above, the asterisk sign * representing a hypothetical placement or name:

Third Dynasty

| <i>Manetho</i> | <i>Reign</i> | <i>Monuments, Lists, etc.</i> |
|----------------------|--------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. Necherophes | 28 | *Nebka, *Sanakht |
| 2. Tosorthros..... | 29 | Djoser, Netjerikhet, Djesersa |
| 3. Tureis..... | 7 | Sekhemkhet, Teti, Djeserteti |
| 4. Mesochris | 17 | Sedjes, Nebkare, Hudjefa |
| 5. Souphis | 16 | Neferkare |
| 6. Tosertasis..... | 19 | |
| 7. Aches | 42 | |
| 8. Sephuris | 30 | *Sanakht, *Nebka |
| 9. Kerperes..... | 26 | Huni, Qahedjet, Khaba |
| Total | 214 | |

²⁹ Wilkinson, p. 88.

³⁰ Michael Rice, *Egypt’s Making*, 1990, p. 141.

³¹ Rice, pp. 141-42.

It is not easy to identify the names provided by Manetho, for it appears that he may have filled up his third dynasty with kings from other dynasties, or perhaps gotten some of the third dynasty kings out of order. For instance, we can speculate that Souphis may be fourth dynasty king Suphis, Aches may be second dynasty king Aka, Tureis may be first dynasty king Djer (*Djureis), while Sephuris and Kerpheres may be second and third kings of the fifth dynasty (Sephres and Nepherecheres). Tosertasis may simply be Djeserteti, the successor of Djoser. Even if the third dynasty kings were kings in their own right and not merely mistaken designations, it would still be difficult to match them with any kings known from inscriptions. Gardiner says, “Of the kings named above, the monuments know only the first (Djoser, Horus-name Netjrikhe) and the last (Huny, Horus-name unknown).”³²

There is no question that the third dynasty followed the second dynasty since inscriptional evidence indicates that *Djoser* was a son of Khasekhemwy. The following table describes the relationships recognized by modern scholars:

| King | Dynasty | Relation |
|----------------|---------|-------------|
| 1. Peribsen | Second | predecessor |
| 2. Khasekhemwy | Second | father |
| 3. Djoser | Third | son |

After Djoser comes Sekhemket. According to Wilkinson, “The archaeological evidence contradicts the Abydos and Turin lists by indicating that Netjerikhet [Djoser] succeeded Khasekhemwy directly. By contrast, archaeological and historical sources agree concerning Netjerikhet’s successor, now that the *nbtj* name Djeserty has been irrefutably linked with the Horus Sekhemkhet.”³³ Further, the last king of the dynasty was *Huni*. “There is no doubt,” says Wilkinson, “that the king known by his *nswt-bity* name Huni was the last ruler of the Third Dynasty...”³⁴ The main difficulty is in determining the placement of the kings Khaba, Sanakht, Nebka, and Qahedjet, kings known from inscriptional sources and king lists. We have followed Wilkinson’s placement of these kings (with the exception of Nebka).

As noted, Sekhemkhet is associated with Djeserty, the successor of Djoser. Khaba is known from some inscribed stone bowls and some sealings associated with Huni’s step pyramids, though he is placed after Sekhemkhet. The name Sanakht is thought by Wilkinson to be associated with the name Nebka, the latter regarded by some as the *nswt-bity* name of the Horus Sanakht. Different lines of evidence are proffered by Wilkinson to establish his belief that Nebka reigned sometime after Djoser but before Huni.³⁵ On the other hand, since the Turin Canon and the Abydos List have a king Nebka reigning just before king Djoser, other scholars maintain the correlation between this Nebka and Manetho’s Necherophes.³⁶ In place of Nebka, the Saqqara list gives one Bebi, who is often associated with Khasekhemwy. Qahedjet, if not identified with first dynasty king

³² Gardiner, p. 433.

³³ Wilkinson, p. 94.

³⁴ Wilkinson, pp. 94-95.

³⁵ Wilkinson, pp. 102-03.

³⁶ Verbrugge & Wickersham, 189.

Qa'a (as per Clayton), is dated by Wilkinson to the end of the third dynasty on stylistic grounds.³⁷

Modern scholars give 74 years for the third dynasty, while Manetho's figure is much larger at 214 years. The modern view, that there were only five kings in the dynasty, can be combined with an average reign length calculation, which would put the dynasty at about 100 hundred years (5 x 20). This is much closer to the 74 years of modern Egyptologists than it is to Manetho's additional 100 years or so.

6. *Parallel Dynasties*

If we add the total lengths of the first three dynasties using Manetho's totals, the elapsed time would be:

First dynasty: 253 years
Second dynasty: 302 years
Third dynasty: 214 years
Total: 769 years

In terms of modern reckoning, the first dynasty had 8 kings, while the second and third dynasties had 5 kings respectively. Adding these up gives a total of 18 kings for three dynasties, and the elapsed time for the first 3 dynasties per modern scholarship is about 490 years. On an average reign length basis, we can multiply these 18 kings by 20 years each, which would give an elapsed time for the first three dynasties of 360 years—less than half of Manetho's figure, and younger than modern reckoning by 130 years. If Rice is correct that the second dynasty overlapped with the first dynasty, then this elapsed time may need to be reduced even further. Assuming that the five kings of the second dynasty are left out, we then multiply a total of 13 kings times an average reign length of 20 years to equal 260 years for the total elapsed time from dynasty 1 through the end of dynasty 3. Of course, this should not be regarded as an exact amount, but only as a rough estimate of the total elapsed time, assuming a parallel dynasty.

As with Rice, Courville was also of the opinion that there was an overlapping dynasty for the archaic period of Egypt. The difference is that instead of a parallel of the first dynasty with the second, Courville regarded the third dynasty as parallel with the first dynasty. What was the basis for Courville's view?

He offered what are described as "eight lines of evidence" in proof of his theory that dynasty 1 and dynasty 3 were partially contemporaneous.³⁸ They are as follows: (1) The tomb of Khasekhemwy is different from second dynasty tombs, showing that this king did not belong to late dynasty 2. Courville agreed with Petrie that Khasekhemwy was the progenitor of the third dynasty (a view accepted by modern scholars). (2) Khasekhemwy's monuments show highly sophisticated architectural skill, which is found in dynasty 3 but not in dynasty 2. (3) The placement of Khasekhemwy at the end of

³⁷ Wilkinson, p. 105.

³⁸ Courville, 1:170-175.

dynasty 2 is based on the assumption that the dynasties are consecutive. (4) Ceramics of the early third dynasty are like the ceramics of the first dynasty. For instance, scarabs of Nebka have an early form of the *Ka* sign, and are made of material similar to the amulets of the first dynasty (citing Petrie).

In addition, (5) Manetho records that first dynasty king Uenephes built pyramids near Kochoe, which Courville identifies with Saqqarah. This is taken by Courville to mean that the first dynasty is too far away from the Pyramid Age, thus requiring a reduction in the time period and rejection of the sequence arrangement between dynasties 2 and 3. It is concluded that “Zoser was a contemporary of Manetho’s Uenephes.” (6) The famines mentioned in the reign of Uenephes and in the reign of Djoser are regarded as the same event, thus “confirming” their contemporaneity. (7) Annals of the Palermo Stone show that there was a divided rule in Egypt, starting with the reign of Udimu, successor of Usaphaidos. Thus by acknowledging parallel dynasties, the concept of dual monarchy can be retained (citing Emery). (8) the record of a Set-Horus conflict during the time of Khasekhemwy describes a war between northern and southern Egyptians, thus providing more evidence that the country was under divided rule for a time.

The following chart represents Courville’s understanding of the parallel between the first and third dynasties, or as best as I can interpret it:

| <i>Kings of 1st & 2nd dynasties</i> | <i>Kings of 3rd dynasty</i> |
|---|--|
| 1. Aha, Menes, 1 st dyn. | |
| 2. Teti, Athothis | |
| 3. Djer, Kenkenes | Khasekhemwy |
| 4. Djet & Q. Merneith; (Uenephes, Uadji) | Djoser |
| 5. Den; (Udimu, Usaphaidos) | etc. |
| 6. Anedjib, Miebidos | etc. |
| 7. Semerkhet, Semempses | Huni |
| 8. Qa’a, Bieneches | Sneferu |
| 9. 2 nd dynasty begins | 4 th dynasty begins |

As noted, Courville correlated king Djoser (or Zoser) of the third dynasty to the time of Uenephes of the first dynasty. He did this by separating Khasekhemwy from the end of the second dynasty and placing him at the beginning of the third dynasty. The remaining second dynasty kings were regarded by Courville as vassals of the kings of the fourth and fifth dynasties.³⁹ In this view, Dynasty 3 is an “offshoot” of Dynasty 1.

In further support of this theory, evidence from the tomb of Uenephes (or Uadji) was introduced, and reference was made to the frequent appearance of the name “Sekhem Ka” in the tomb. Scholars regard this individual as an important official during the time of Uadji, and even entertain the possibility it was his tomb. Nevertheless, the superiority of the tomb suggests a royal burial of a southern king in a northern tomb at Saqqara. Courville thought this was problematic and in need of a solution, and suggested that Sekhem Ka was really a first dynasty king and is to be identified with the founder of the third dynasty, Khasekhemwy:

³⁹ Courville, 1:168.

“The only conclusion permissible within this concept is that this Sekhem Ka was the predecessor of Uadji in Dynasty I. This was none other than Manetho’s Kenkenes....If we are correct, then Kenkenes, Sekhem Ka, Kha-Sekhem, and Kha-sekhemui were names for one and the same person....”⁴⁰

The putative problem of having a southern king in a northern tomb is thus solved by recognizing the tomb as Khasekhemwy’s, not Uadji’s. Courville admitted that the Egyptian hieroglyphs for *Ka* and *Kha* are not the same and were “undoubtedly pronounced differently” but did not think that modern pronunciations are entirely adequate in rendering ancient Egyptian. He also intimated that hieroglyphic vocalizations were probably not so different that one symbol could not stand in for another.

Further, with respect to the identification of Kenkenes with Khasekhemwy, Courville claimed that “it is not difficult to recognize Manetho’s name Kenkenes as a Greek transliteration of the name Sekhem Ka or Kha-sekhem.” It is also held that the first and third dynasties end at about the same time and that the fourth dynasty began its rule shortly thereafter.

7. Criticisms of Courville’s Model

There is a real problem with Courville’s reconstruction of the relation between the first and third dynasties. He cannot simply bring Khasekhemwy up to the beginning of a parallel third dynasty (as father of Djoser) without also bringing up his predecessors, Hetepsekhemwy, Raneb, and Ninetjer. As discussed above, scholars believe that Raneb succeeded Hetepsekhemwy based on the find of a stone bowl which juxtaposes the *serekhs* of Hetepsekhemwy and Raneb. In addition, the statuette of a mortuary priest Hetepdief contains the names of the first 3 kings of the dynasty in the order of Hetepsekhemwy, Raneb, and Ninetjer. These names were written on the right shoulder of the statuette.⁴¹ Also, a stone bowl belonging to Hetepsekhemwy was reused by Raneb, then by Ninetjer, and found in Peribsen’s tomb. Finally, the Palermo Stone has an incident in the life of Khasekhemwy recorded just after the entry for Ninetjer:

“Year 15
Birth of Khasekhemui (*H’-shmw*).
1 cubit, 6 palms, 2 ½ fingers.”⁴²

Egyptologist Toby Wilkinson says Breasted’s rendering should be corrected from “birth” of Khasekhemwy to:

“[T]he ‘fashioning’ (the same word can also mean ‘birth’) of a statue called ‘High is Khasekhemwy’. The entry is clear that the fashioning of a statue is referred to (the statue determinative is very clear), and the entry falls in the last few regnal years of Khasekhemwy’s reign, which makes sense.”⁴³

⁴⁰ Courville, 1:177.

⁴¹ Clayton, p. 27, for picture.

⁴² James Breasted, *Ancient Records of Egypt*, 1:64.

⁴³ Wilkinson, personal communication, February 2, 2010.

The presence of Khasekhemwy after Ninetjer, combined with the inscriptions noted above makes less plausible an isolated movement of Khasekhemwy from the end of the second dynasty to the beginning of a parallel third dynasty. He must arrive at such a destination with his whole family in tow, so to speak.

Moreover, Peribsen cannot be left dangling at the end of a fading second dynasty, separated from Khasekhemwy and his son Djoser, since Peribsen's sealings have been found in a tomb dated to the time of Djoser (Mastaba K1).⁴⁴ This may not be conclusive evidence, but it is consistent with the closeness of Peribsen to the beginning of the third dynasty. Peribsen is associated with second dynasty king Sened by a mortuary priest named Sheri (who lived in the fourth dynasty). Sened comes after Ninetjer and Weneg so again Peribsen should be close to Khasekhemwy and Djoser in time.

The only real synchronism offered by Courville is that the famines that took place during the reigns of two kings were one and the same famine (point 6). Courville thought that the contemporaneity of Uenephes and Djoser was confirmed by these famine records, and that based on his alternative chronology, they are references to the same famine and "provide a basis for an approximate synchronism between the two dynasties."⁴⁵

Nevertheless, this can hardly qualify as confirmation of Courville's restructuring since the mere existence of a famine in Egypt does not automatically mean that it can be correlated to any other famine in Egypt from different time periods. True, if these famines could be shown to be contemporary on independent grounds, they would as a matter of pure logic provide proof for Courville's theory. However, since they are associated with one another on the basis of Courville's theory, they cannot then be used as confirmation of the theory without falling into circular reasoning.

Courville's point 3—that the placement of Khasekhemwy at the end of the second dynasty is based on the belief that the dynasties are consecutive—is not evidence for Courville's theory, but rather a description of the opposing view. It thus cannot serve as a demonstration of his theory. It should also be noted that most of Courville's arguments for the movement of Khasekhemwy from the end of the second dynasty to a place parallel to first dynasty king Kenkenes are based on art-historical considerations. While such arguments are suggestive, they cannot be conclusive.

The same would apply to arguments from conflicts between southern and northern kings, alleged similarity of the names Kenkenes and Khasekhemwy, and so on. Such arguments may be complementary but not in themselves decisive. There is also no real surprise that Egyptian kings were buried in both northern and southern Egypt since that had been going on for quite some time. It was a way of establishing authority in both Upper Egypt and Lower Egypt, not only in this life, but also in the life to come.⁴⁶ It is therefore not really a problem that needs explanation, nor one that requires contemporaneity between dynasties 1 and 3.

⁴⁴ Wilkinson, p. 90.

⁴⁵ Courville, 1:172.

⁴⁶ Wilkinson, p. 11; Rice, p. 117; cf., Walter B. Emery, *Archaic Egypt*, p. 129.

Another objection to Courville's first-third dynasty overlap theory might be an inscription found in the Step Pyramid of Djoser that records the name of Qa'a and his predecessors.⁴⁷ If this is interpreted as mortuary piety on Djoser's part, it would show that Djoser and the third dynasty must follow Qa'a and the first dynasty. However, Courville's reconstruction will not work in light of this inscription since his parallelism has Djoser at a much earlier point than Qa'a. Of course, such inscriptions are interpreted in the light of previously held views about the relation between the dynasties; hence Courville could interpret it as Qa'a's desire to honor his predecessor Djoser rather than as an heirloom. Still, as far as New Courville goes, we will take the Qa'a inscription as complementary evidence that the third dynasty did not overlap the first dynasty.

A very strong objection to Courville's first-third parallel theory might be based on stratigraphic considerations. According to Emery, tombs of the early third dynasty were built over the remains of tombs of the early first dynasty.⁴⁸ This would rule out any drastic movement of the third dynasty into the early part of the first dynasty. Courville has Khasekhemwy and Djoser parallel to the early first dynasty kings, which is in serious conflict with the tomb evidence.

8. *A New Model of Archaic Egypt*

In our opinion, Courville's model for correlating the Archaic dynasties is flawed, but does it mean that no such correlations are possible? It has been noted that Rice believes the second dynasty overlapped the first dynasty, though he does not venture to construct a model of this relationship. What would the New Courville model of the Archaic period look like, if all the evidence is taken into account?

We first start by agreeing with Rice that there might be an overlap between the first and second dynasties. We theorize that second dynasty Peribsen should be associated with first dynasty Queen Merneith, and we base this on archaeological evidence. This consists of an inscription of Peribsen that was found in the tomb of Merneith (married to Uenephes, i.e., Djet). Wilkinson says:

“Curiously, the name of Peribsen also occurs on a stone vessel fragment found by Petrie in the First Dynasty tomb of Merneith. The only possible explanation [*sic*] is that it represents later contamination of the tomb contents, perhaps from Amelineau's excavations.”⁴⁹

Wilkinson's explanation of how Peribsen's inscription got into the tomb of Merneith is gratuitous, but it does confirm the existence of an anachronism if the first and second dynasties are regarded as consecutive dynasties. The tombs of the early first dynasty were not accessible after their closing, and it was not until the time of Den, fifth king of the first dynasty, that entrance stairways began to be used.⁵⁰ On the face of it then, Peribsen's inscriptions should be taken as evidence that he lived during the time of

⁴⁷ Wilkinson, p. 79.

⁴⁸ Emery, p. 29.

⁴⁹ Wilkinson, p. 90.

⁵⁰ Emery, pp. 131, 134, 139.

Merneith. This would only be possible if the first and second dynasties were partly contemporaneous.

Wallis Budge also has an interesting observation with respect to a medical papyrus that was transferred from one Egyptian king to another:

“[I]n a medical papyrus at Berlin further information is added to the effect that after Hesepti was dead the book was taken to his Majesty Sent; now Sent was the fifth king of the II Dynasty and reigned many years after Senti, and we must therefore understand that Sent came into possession of a medical work which had once belonged to his great predecessor Senti.”⁵¹

Senti (or Zemti) was Hesepti, the fifth king of the first dynasty (who is also known as Den). Sent was Sened, fifth king of the second dynasty (who was also known as Manetho’s Sethenes). Thus, the following dynastic correlation would hold:

| <i>Kings of 1st dynasty</i> | <i>Kings of 2nd dynasty</i> |
|--|--|
| 4. Djet & Q. Merneith | |
| 5. Den, Hesepti, Zemti | Sent, Sened |

If the medical papyrus is taken at face value, then Sent lived during the days of Merneith and Hesepti, but again this could only be true if the second dynasty partly overlapped the first dynasty. Thus, we have both archaeological evidence (Peribsen’s inscription) and literary evidence (the medical papyrus) that taken together appear to provide strong reasons for adopting the theory of partial dynastic contemporaneity between the first and second dynasties.

Therefore, it is tentatively accepted that Rice’s theory that the second dynasty overlapped the first dynasty is correct, though we should point out that these correlations are our own, not Rice’s. Courville did not accept a second dynasty overlap at all but ran the second dynasty parallel to the fourth and fifth dynasties.

An objection to the first-second dynasty overlap theory can be brought forward. As noted, inscriptional material of Hetepsekhemwy has been found in the offering chambers near the entrance to Qa’a’s tomb.⁵² This was taken as evidence of a succession between the first and second dynasties. There is, however, some hesitancy in the language scholars use in their inferences about the Hetepsekhemwy material in Qa’a’s tomb. For instance, Wilkinson says that the discovery of these inscriptions “seems to prove that there was a smooth transition between the First and Second Dynasties.”⁵³ The note of doubt comes through in the “seems to” prove. The same hesitancy is repeated: “We cannot be certain why the death of Qaa marked the end of a dynasty. The first king of the Second Dynasty seems to have legitimised his position by overseeing the burial of his predecessor, or at least honouring his mortuary cult...”⁵⁴ Again, another “seems to”—a hedging rather than a confident choice of words.

⁵¹ Wallis Budge, *History of Egypt*, Vol. 1, pp. 199-200.

⁵² Wilkinson, p. 83.

⁵³ Wilkinson, p. 82.

⁵⁴ Wilkinson, p. 83.

Similarly, Egyptologist Kathryn Bard refrains from bold statement, and cedes responsibility to others: “German archaeologists have interpreted this find as evidence that Hetepsekhemwy completed the tomb of his predecessor and that there was no break in the dynastic succession.”⁵⁵

Perhaps there is good reason for cautious statement. In itself, the Hetepsekhemwy material found in Qa’a’s tomb is not conclusive as to the order of reigns. As we noted earlier, inscriptions of earlier kings are often found in the tombs of later kings. Without knowing the real order of the kings, it would not be easy to tell whether one king preceded another, or vice versa. For instance, inscriptional material of Hetepsekhemwy has been found in a subterranean gallery near the pyramid of Unas.⁵⁶ If we follow the above line of reasoning based on inscriptional material—that Qa’a was followed by Hetepsekhemwy because the latter’s sealings were found in Qa’a’s tomb—we would need to conclude that king Unas was also followed by Hetepsekhemwy since the latter’s material was found near Unas’s tomb.

Such a conclusion, of course, would not be accepted by Egyptologists. Unas is actually a king of the fifth dynasty, and because of this, scholars would interpret the Hetepsekhemwy material as an example of Unas’s reverence for an ancestor. Since Egyptologists generally have the second dynasty following in consecutive order after the first dynasty, they naturally interpret the Hetepsekhemwy material as successor material, i.e., Hetepsekhemwy wanted to honor Qa’a. Nevertheless, unless the relation between the first and second dynasties is established on independent grounds as consecutive, then the material is capable of alternative interpretation.

The dependence of the interpretation of inscriptional material on Manetho’s order of the dynasties is also illustrated in some stone vessel fragments of Hetepsekhemwy that were found in the tombs of Peribsen and Khasekhemwy, and at the Step Pyramid of Djoser. These, however, are not regarded as proof that Hetepsekhemwy followed either Peribsen, Khasekhemwy, or Djoser. Instead, the material is described as “heirlooms,” meaning that Khasekhemwy, et al., were honoring the putative earlier king Hetepsekhemwy.⁵⁷ We suggest that the same situation may have applied in the case of Qa’a, that he was simply honoring the earlier king Hetepsekhemwy rather than the other way around.

Nevertheless, the material found in the tomb of Qa’a could very well prove that the first and second dynasties were consecutive and that the Peribsen material found in Merneith’s tomb, and the literary evidence noted above, have plausible explanations. This is an interesting question and can only be answered conclusively with further archaeological work.

In constructing the New Courville view of overlapping Archaic dynasties, we are guessing as to when Hetepsekhemwy began his reign, placing it in year 39 of Athothis.

⁵⁵ Shaw, ed., *Oxford History of Ancient Egypt*, p. 85.

⁵⁶ Emery, p. 92.

⁵⁷ Wilkinson, p. 84.

As long as Ninetjer is correlated with the early days of Den, our theory is generally compatible with all the evidence so far presented. For an illustration of the New Courville chronology of the first through third dynasties, the following table has been prepared as an approximate model:

| First dynasty | Second dynasty | Description of 2 nd dynasty kings |
|------------------|-------------------|--|
| 1. Menes, 62 | | |
| 2. Athothis, 57 | Hetepsekhemwy, 38 | Hetepsekhemwy begins 38 year local reign, in the last 18 years of the reign of Athothis (approximate). |
| 3. Djer, 31 | | Hetepsekhemwy finishes his reign 20 years into the reign of Djer. |
| | Raneb, 39 | Raneb begins his local rule in the last 11 years of the reign of Djer.. |
| 4. Djet, 23 | | Raneb rules 23 years of local reign during Djet's reign. |
| 5. Den, 20 | | Raneb rules first 5 years of Den's reign. Merneith becomes first queen of Egypt during Den's minority. |
| | Ninetjer, 47 | Ninetjer begins his reign during Den's 5 th year. Peribsen rules in south and later constructs tomb for Merneith. |
| 6. Anedjib, 26 | | Ninetjer continues 26 more years under Anedjib. |
| 7. Semerkhet, 18 | Khasekhemwy, 38 | Ninetjer continues 6 years under Semerkhet. Khasekhemwy begins his 38 year reign, with the first 12 during Semerkhet's reign |
| 8. Qa'a, 26 | | Khasekemwy rules 26 years during Qa'a's reign. |

In the above chart, we are not making the claim that Manetho's reign lengths are accurate. Rather, we are using them for relative correlation between the kings of the two dynasties. This means that any reduction in the total length of the dynasties will result in a proportionate reduction for all the relative correlations. A more plausible reconstruction of the elapsed time might be to recognize that the absolute reign lengths of the first two kings of Dynasty 1 need to be reduced. The reign lengths of Menes (62 years) and Athothis (57 years) can probably be cut in half, giving Menes 31 years and Athothis 28 or so years. The dynastic total would be more like 203 years, 50 years less than Manetho's figures, and only about 7 years less than the modern view of 210 years. However, to be consistent, we are using average reign length calculations as a rough estimate of the elapsed time, and as we have seen, eight kings multiplied by an average reign length of 20 years gives an elapsed time for the first dynasty of 160 years.

If we are right in overlapping the second with the first dynasties some positive results will obtain. First, the Peribsen inscription and the medical papyrus no longer appear anachronistic. It will be remembered that an inscription of Peribsen was found in the tomb of Merneith, who was the wife of Djer, and the regent for Den, her son. This regency meant that she was the first real queen of Egypt: "The regency of Merneith is the first attested occasion in Egyptian history when a woman held the reigns of power."⁵⁸ In

⁵⁸ Wilkinson, p. 75.

our chart we have Ninetjer as reigning during both Djet and Den's time, which would also correspond to the time of Merneith.

It is interesting therefore that Manetho recorded of Ninetjer (i.e., Binothris) that "in his reign it was decided that women might hold the kingly office."⁵⁹ According to Clayton, "Manetho also adds that it was decided that women could occupy the throne, but Merneith had apparently pre-empted this in the previous dynasty."⁶⁰ This is anachronistic on the view that the dynasties are consecutive, but is consistent with an overlap between the first and second dynasties.

In addition to the inscriptional correlation of Merneith and Peribsen, and the medical papyrus correlation of Den and Sened, Manetho also recorded with respect to Raneb (i.e., Kaiechos) that "in his reign the bulls, Apis at Memphis and Mnevis at Heliopolis, and the Mendesian goat, were worshipped as gods."⁶¹ Evidence indicates that the Apis cult began in the first dynasty, at least by the time of Den. Clayton says:

"An interesting point that Manetho adds about Raneb is that he introduced the worship not only of the sacred goat of Mendes but also of the sacred bull of Mnevis at the old sun-worship centre of Heliopolis, and the Apis bull at Memphis. (In fact scholars now believe that an earlier king was responsible for founding the latter cult, which is attested on a stele dating from Den's (Udimu's) reign)."⁶²

On our theory, this would mean that the worship of Apis probably began during the time of Den's grandfather Djer, who correlates to Raneb in the above chart. Thus, the reference to the bull cult for the time of Raneb is consistent with inscriptional material of Den's reign, which refers to it. By overlapping the first and second dynasties, the anachronism disappears.

There is also some disagreement among archaeologists regarding where to place a recently discovered king Qahedget. Clayton places him at the end of the first dynasty but Wilkinson places him in the third dynasty based upon art-historical considerations.⁶³ Now that we have Qa'a near the beginning of the third dynasty, his correlation with Qahedget of the third dynasty would resolve this conflict. Wilkinson says,

"[I]n the late 1960s, an unprovenanced limestone stela was purchased by the Louvre, inscribed for a king with the previously unknown Horus name Qahedjet....The style is very reminiscent of the relief panels from the Step Pyramid of Netjerikhet [Djoser]; on stylistic grounds, therefore, the stela may be placed close in to the reign of Netjerikhet."⁶⁴

Wilkinson thinks the carving is superior enough for it to be classified even to the end of the third dynasty. In any case, if Qahedjet is close to Djoser, and if Qa'a himself is close to Djoser, then an overlap of the first and second dynasties would allow for a plausible artistic association of these two kings.

⁵⁹ Gardiner, p. 431.

⁶⁰ Clayton, p. 27.

⁶¹ Gardiner, p. 431.

⁶² Clayton, p. 27.

⁶³ Clayton, p. 25; Wilkinson, p. 104.

⁶⁴ Wilkinson, p. 104.

In conclusion, we could say that there is some fairly good evidence for an overlap between the first and second dynasties, though obviously, such a model needs more confirmation before we can assert it with certainty. However, we do think Courville's original model of a first dynasty/third dynasty overlap is unworkable, given all the available evidence.

9. *Correlations with the Holy Land*

The period from the Pre-dynastic to the end of the third dynasty in Egypt is part of the Early Bronze Age. The EB1 period begins with the disappearance of the Ghassulian Chalcolithic culture shortly before the time of Narmer in Egypt, and ends at about the time of Djer, third king of Egypt's first dynasty.⁶⁵ The Early Bronze 2 strata begins during the later days of Djer, and is represented in the Holy Land by Abydos-ware—a class of pottery made up of characteristic jugs and storage jars, especially at EB2 “Arad.”⁶⁶ Helen Kantor places the third dynasty in the EB2 horizon.⁶⁷ Ben-Tor, however, believes that Khasekhemwy can be correlated to an early EB3 context:

“An object bearing the name of the last king of the Second Dynasty was found at Byblos in an early Early Bronze Age III context (the object should be attributed to late stratum III or early stratum IV at that site).”⁶⁸

If the Khasekhemwy material has been interpreted correctly, this means EB3 would start near the beginning of the third dynasty, not at the beginning of the fourth dynasty, as Kantor believed. In actuality, the difference is only about 75 years (the time of the third dynasty) so it may be difficult to be more precise.

I think the correlation of Khasekhemwy with the beginnings of the EB3 horizon would make it more difficult for Courville's first-third model since then the EB2 period would have to be correlated to the early first dynasty. However, the first dynasty is correlated to the EB1 period and ends at the time of Djer, while the EB2 period begins during Djer's reign and must at least encompass the latter part of the first dynasty. For Courville's parallel model, the early EB3 Khasekhemwy would have to overlap the EB1 and EB2 pottery phases, which is archaeologically impossible.

The nomenclature for the Early Bronze Age was originally developed for the Holy Land. The following represents a chart of the various archaeological phases for the Early Bronze Age compared with the Egyptian dynasties:⁶⁹

⁶⁵ Amnon Ben-Tor, “The Early Bronze Age,” in ed., A. Ben-Tor, *The Archaeology of Ancient Israel*, 1992, p. 95

⁶⁶ Ben-Tor, p. 107.

⁶⁷ Helen Kantor, “The Relative Chronology of Egypt and Its Foreign Correlations before the Late Bronze Age,” in ed. R. Ehrich, *Chronologies in Old World Archaeology*, 1954, p. 27, Fig. 3.

⁶⁸ Ben-Tor, p. 123.

⁶⁹ The chart is based on Amihai Mazar, *Archaeology of the Land of the Bible*, p. 109, though the chronological correlations are ours.

| Sites | EB1 Post-Dispersion | EB2 pre-Patriarchal phase | EB3 Abraham to Moses |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------------|--|-----------------------------------|
| Egypt | Pre-Dyn / Dyn 1 (Narmer & Aha) | Dyn. 1-2 Djer | Dyn. 3-6 Djoser |
| ‘Ai | 1-2 | 3-4-5 | 6-8 |
| Arad | 4 | 3-2 1 | ----- |
| Beth-Shean | 17 16 15 | 14 13 | 12 11 |
| Beth-Yerah | 16-14 | 13 12 | 11-7 |
| Gezer | 25 | 24-23 | ----- |
| Hazor | ----- | ----- | 21 20 19 |
| Jericho | Q-M | L-G | F-A |
| Tel Etani | 11-5 | 4-2 | 1 |
| Tel Halif | 14 | | 13 12 11 |
| Tell el-Far ‘ah, N | 3 | 4a-f | ----- |
| Tell el-Hesi | 11 | 10 --> | 4 |
| Yarmuth A | | 1-3 | 4-7 |
| Yarmuth B | | 5-4 | 3-2 |

What does the archaeology of the Holy Land look like for the EB1, EB2, and early EB3 phases? Unfortunately, almost no written material pertaining to Canaan has come to us from the Early Bronze Age, but is first found only at the beginning of the Middle Bronze Age.⁷⁰ Therefore, the archaeology of the EB1-early EB3 phases is nearly mute in what it can tell us as compared with what the writings of Egypt and Mesopotamia can tell us. Aharoni says, “Historical texts may one day be discovered in Palestine or its neighbouring lands to transform the Early Bronze Age of these countries into a historical period. Meanwhile, the centuries preceding the second millennium B.C. [*sic*] must, as far as Palestine is concerned, remain in the realm of pre-history.”⁷¹

Most of the names of the cities in the Holy Land originated during the Middle Bronze Age, and have Semitic names.⁷² Aharoni infers from this that these Semitic names go back to the beginnings of urbanization, during the Early Bronze 1 phase. This inference, however, is based on conventional chronology. According to the Bible, the language of the Holy Land during its earliest phases must have been Hamitic, since the Canaanites (descendants of Ham) settled into the land. It would not have been Semitic until the time of the Conquest. We believe that the MB1 phase is the point of the Conquest and start of the Semitic-speaking period in Palestine, whereas the EB3 phases were the time of the Hamitic-speaking Hittites and Canaanites. Aharoni has an interesting comment regarding the transition to the Middle Bronze Age:

“[O]ne must not forget that there is a certain occupation gap between the end of the Early and the beginning of the Middle Bronze Ages. In all the towns that have been excavated signs of destruction are noted for this period. They were left in ruins for some time until a new settlement arose in the twentieth century B.C. [*sic*].”⁷³

⁷⁰ Yohanan Aharoni, *The Land of the Bible*, p. 121.

⁷¹ Aharoni, p. 121.

⁷² Aharoni, p. 96.

⁷³ Aharoni, p. 97.

This would be the Conquest strata in our view. Aharoni's conclusion is that the names of the towns during the Middle Bronze Age were virtually the same as the names of the Early Bronze Age: "Although we really do not have definite information about place names in the fourth and third millennia, it is probable that most of them did not differ appreciably from those we find in the second."⁷⁴

We regard this as incorrect in that no archaeological information confirms it, and secondly an alternative chronological model provides a better explanation. For New Courville, the EB3 period inhabitants of Canaan spoke a Hamitic language, but after the Conquest and destruction of the EB3 urban culture of Canaan, the influence of the Semitic-speaking Hebrews began to be felt, and gave the Holy Land its subsequent linguistic characteristics.

Egypt's influence on the Holy Land can be discerned in the first and second dynasties. These sometimes involved battles described as "smiting the Asiatics." Egyptian tombs from the first dynasty have EB2 pottery, and Egyptian pottery is also found in southern Palestine. However, Egypt's political control of the Holy Land was limited. Donald Redford says,

"Egyptian remains seem to delineate a sphere of influence confined to the coastal route between the western Delta and the region of greater Gaza, the southern Shephelah, and the Negeb around Arad and westward."⁷⁵

The above town of "Arad" was an EB2 town, which is correlated to the first and second dynasties of Egypt. Since no characteristic EB3 pottery was found at "Arad" it is presumed that the town did not last past the EB2 period. The lack of EB3 pottery might simply be due to the fact that EB3 pottery was regional and did not make its way to all towns in the Holy Land.. Now the beginning of the EB3 is marked by the Khirbet Kerak ware, and is thought to have originated in Anatolia and the Caucasus area.⁷⁶ Aharoni believes it represents an invasion, but provides no evidence of destruction layers at the EB3 sites where the Khirbet Kerak people settled.

Kathleen Kenyon says: "[T]here is no clear evidence of disturbance, so it may be deduced that at most there was some infiltration or perhaps trade."⁷⁷ Before the MB1 phase, the only pottery found in the Negev and Kadesh-barnea was from the EB2 phase, and the rest of the archaeology of the Holy Land shows a long gap in occupation at those sites until the MB1 pottery, and then a long gap after the MB1 pottery. The EB2 people settled along rivers and pastureland, and engaged in copper production. Mazar describes the transition between EB2 and EB3 as "gradual."⁷⁸

⁷⁴ Aharoni, p. 97.

⁷⁵ Donald Redford, *Egypt, Canaan, and Israel in Ancient Times*, p. 33.

⁷⁶ Aharoni, p. 123.

⁷⁷ Kathleen Kenyon, *Archaeology in the Holy Land*, p. 127; cf., also Mazar, p. 134.

⁷⁸ Mazar, pp. 132; 114.

As noted, Khirbet Kerak ware is a regional pottery and may not be the best index for the EB3 phase. Perhaps many EB2 cities such as “Arad” really did last until the end of what was elsewhere the EB3 phase. It is only because Khirbet Kerak ware was not found in these cities that they are thought to have vanished from the scene after the Early Bronze 2 period. But if archaeologists could find a better pottery material to index the Early Bronze 3 period, it is possible that many of these cities will have lasted much longer. Cohen says:

“The Early Bronze sites in the Central Negev have been dated on the basis of certain diagnostic pottery sherds (mainly hole-mouth rims) which, in themselves, can be assigned to EBII or EBIII. They are normally assumed to be EBII because they are not found together with other sherds (Khirbet Kerak ware) characteristic of EBIII culture in northern Palestine. But if I am correct in supposing that the Khirbet Kerak pottery simply never penetrated into the south, our sites in the Negev could have existed at the same time as the EBIII sites in the north.”⁷⁹

10. *Developments in Mesopotamia*

After the Dispersion from Babel and the influx of Sumerians into the southern portion of Mesopotamia (as per the New Courville theory), Mesopotamia was divided into several city states during the Early Dynastic period. The king lists present these city states as ruling in consecutive fashion over Mesopotamia, but scholars have long known that these “seats of sovereignty” actually ruled as contemporaneous dynasties.

“[The assumption] of the single rule by various cities but only one at a time, is much more emphasized, and indeed is the principle upon which the list is constructed, but it is so much farther from the truth that it has vitiated the whole document as history....It has been easy to demonstrate that the scheme of successive kingdoms falsifies the perspective by concealing the fact...that many of these kings were reigning in their different cities at the same time....This has the additional evil of greatly exaggerating the length of time over which this history extended...”⁸⁰

In the king lists, the “antediluvian” kings are usually identified by scholars with the Mesopotamian Early Dynastic 1 period, while the Dynastic 2 and early 3 periods reflect several dynasties. These dynasties include the dynasty of Uruk 1, which represents the line leading to Gilgamesh, and the dynasty of Kish 1, which represents the line leading to Agga, contemporary of Gilgamesh. The dynasty of Ur 1 starts in the Early Dynastic 3 period, with Mesannipadda being a contemporary of Gilgamesh as well.

The Semitic-speaking people who remained in Mesopotamia even after the Dispersion shared some of the rule of the country with the newly arrived Sumerians (on our view). According to Gadd: “[T]he basis for the statement that Semites were influential from the beginning is the occurrence of Semitic names in the earliest dynasty which claimed rule over the whole land. These kings are recorded as mingled with others having Sumerian names, and this mixture characterizes the whole relation of the two.”⁸¹

⁷⁹ Rudolph Cohen, “The Mysterious MBI People,” *Biblical Archaeology Review*, 9:04, July/August, 1983.

⁸⁰ C. J. Gadd, *Cambridge Ancient History*, 1:2, pp. 106-107.

⁸¹ Gadd, 1:2, p. 99.

On our theory, the northern portion of Mesopotamia was less affected by the Dispersion and still retained a largely Semitic-speaking population. The Kish dynasty provides a good example of the shared rule among the Sumerians and Semitic-speaking people (i.e., Akkadians).⁸²

| Name | Years | Ethnicity |
|------------------|--------------|------------------|
| 1. Ga[...]ur | 1200 | Sumerian |
| 2. ----- | --- | --- |
| 3. Palakinatim | 900 | Akkadian |
| 4. Nangishlishma | --- | Sumerian |
| 5. Bahina | --- | --- |
| 6. Bu.an.[...] | 840 | Sumerian |
| 7. Kalibum | 960 | Akkadian |
| 8. Kalumum | 840 | --- |
| 9. Zukakip | 900 | --- |
| 10. Atab | 840 | Akkadian |
| 11. Mashda | 720 | Sumerian |
| 12. Arwium | 720 | --- |
| 13. Etana | 1560 | Akkadian |
| 14. Balih | 400 | Akkadian |
| 15. Enmenunna | 600 | Sumerian |
| 16. Melamkishi | 900 | Sumerian |
| 17. Barsalnunna | 1200 | Sumerian |
| 18. Samug | 140 | --- |
| 19. Tizkar | 305 | --- |
| 20. Ilku | 900 | Akkadian |
| 21. Iltasadum | 1200 | --- |
| 22. Enmebaragesi | 900 | Sumerian |
| 23. Agga | 629 | Akkadian |

On the New Courville theory, the mixture of Akkadian and Sumerian names on the king list shows that the situation is post-Dispersion, and it also shows a level of cooperation between the Sumerians and Akkadians that probably reflects intermarriage. The reign lengths of these kings are obviously considerably greater than scholars are willing to countenance, and there is really no way of knowing how many of these kings of the Kish dynasty actually existed, or how many ruled consecutively, or were merely local kings sharing the land with each other.

Our own view is that these kings of the Kish dynasty, all the way down to Agga, roughly correspond to the time between the biblical Dispersion from Babel and the time of Abraham. Obviously, this represents an educated guess, but it will make more sense as we discuss the remainder of the Egyptian Old Kingdom and its correlation with the time of Abraham, Joseph, and Moses.

End

⁸² The chart is based on David Rohl's list in *Legend, the Genesis of Civilisation*, p. 164; and also, L. Woolley, *The Sumerians*, pp. 21ff.: