

A proposition that Ramesses-the-sixth (Ramesses VI) is the pharaoh of the exodus (An Overview)

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July 2023

[{This article is just an overview of article #55 in the library site, and this overview was published (with minor modification) in the platinum post in Bart Ehrman blog}].

I did discuss this subject in some comments here in the blog, but I prefer to put it in a formal post. We are going here to argue that the non-metaphysical data related to the exodus can be fit with the history of Egypt between Ramesses-the-Third (III, died 1155BC) and Ramesses-the-Sixth (VI, died 1136BC). Also, we will argue that Israel/Yisrael is unlikely to be the name mentioned in the Stele of Merneptah.

1# We will discuss this subject from a scientific historical perspective in which we will exclude all metaphysical data. So, if we looked at the Quran and the Old Testament (OT) and just extracted the non-metaphysical data (i.e. the viable data that doesn't contradict with science and normality) then the summary of this data can be: The Israelite were a foreign tribe in Egypt, and they were oppressed there, but managed (gradually or swiftly) to immigrate to Arabia under the leadership of a man whose name was Moses.

Now ... Quran 26:52-59 clearly indicate that the Pharaoh of the exodus had control over Palestine and the Egyptian troops left Palestine and didn't return back. This can only happen during the reign of Ramesses VI: he was the last Egyptian ruler of Palestine, and his troops left Palestine (for unknown reasons) at the end of his reign (1136BC) or shortly afterward:

“Ramesses VI is the last attested king at Serabit el-Khadim in the western Sinai and is also the final king of the dynasty recorded anywhere in the Levant, with an undated statue base of his from Megiddo, suggesting that it was during his reign, or shortly afterwards, that the Egyptian imperial possessions in that region began to be lost” (Ref: Cole p.59. See also Weinstein p.23, Wiki-RVI).

It should be noted here that Megiddo is in the north of Palestine just about 30km south of Nazareth.

The above conclusion can also be supported by the OT as the Israelites never encountered the Egyptian army in Palestine until after the reign of Solomon; therefore, the Israelites couldn't have entered Palestine before 1136BC.

If we accepted this conclusion about Ramesses VI, then we can conclude that the pharaoh of the oppression is Ramesses III, and we can provide here a logical explanation for this oppression:

Ramesses III was illegitimate ruler. To legitimize his rule, he needed to create constructions (including the expansion of the city of Rameses) that is equivalent to the constructions of Ramesses II. But his treasury was almost empty due to the “Late Bronze Age catastrophe”. Probably the best solution for Ramesses III was to viciously increase the tax on the non-Egyptian people (including the Israelites). This tax would force these people into becoming “slave labors”.

Let us breakdown the data for the above paragraph:

1.1# Egypt at the time of Ramesses-the-Second (Ramesses II) was at its zenith: the economy was great, and the trade was great.

1.2# Ramesses II died at 1213BC.

1.3# A coup was arranged against the family of Ramesses II about 1189BC (24 years after the death of Ramesses II) by a military leader with the name Setnakhte who ruled for 3 years then his son (Ramesses III) took the throne.

1.4# Egypt at that time was hit hard by the “Late Bronze Age catastrophe”. This catastrophe hit all the middle-east and caused the weather to be very dry and it did hit the trade very hard.

1.5# Also, Ramesses III was so busy fighting the sea-people. This war ended with an Egyptian victory about 1174BC (about 40 years after the death of Ramesses II).

1.6# Given the state of the economy and trade, it won't be surprising that the Egyptians would long for the times of Ramesses II and begin to regard Ramesses III as an illegitimate ruler.

1.7# To establish a sense of legitimacy, Ramesses III started to commence projects equal to the projects of Ramesses II. But as his treasury was empty (due to the wars and to the mentioned catastrophe), then I would expect that the best solution for him was to increase the tax on the non-Egyptians (as he couldn't increase the tax on the Egyptians as this would increase the people resentment toward him).

2# Taking the above conclusions then we can submit here a scientific-historical proposition that can align the non-metaphysical data of the exodus with the history of Egypt:

In about 1174BC, Ramesses III started to oppress the non-Egyptians and used them as slave-labors in order to establish some legitimacy in the eyes of his Egyptian people.

In about 1136BC, a mysterious unknown event forced Ramesses VI to call his army from Palestine, and this army never returned back there.

This unknown event made sufficient chaos that allowed many of the non-Egyptians to immigrate outside Egypt.

One of these non-Egyptians were the Israelites who managed under the leadership of a man with the name Moses to utilize this chaos and to immigrate with his people to Arabia.

3# Now ... We will discuss the name that is mentioned in the Stele of Merneptah:

The following pdf link has two figures related to this subject:

<https://omr-mhmd.yolasite.com/resources/F1-FiguresforExodusArticle.pdf>

Figure-1: The name in question taken from the Inscription (Ref: Wiki- Petrie).

Figure-2: pictographs' sounds of the name in question. Taken from H.Key.

The name in question is represented through the following pictographs: Two reed-flowers, bolt, two slashes, mouth, one reed-flower, eagle, mouth, stick.

The stick here is just a space filler.

Now ... The Egyptian hieroglyphs does have an alphabet which is represented by 26 pictographs were each pictograph represents a single sound. However, the hieroglyphs do have thousands of pictographs that represent two or three sounds together.

Fortunately, the name in question is represented by the alphabet. Therefore, the pictographs in this name can be deciphered to its sounds (see figure-2).

The scripted name is: Y.S/Z.Y.R.E.A.R.

[Note that the bolt pictograph represents the sounds S or Z].

It should be noted here that hieroglyphs don't have vowels, therefore, E & A are not vowels, but they are specific sounds.

This name is very far from anything. However, Egyptologists have concluded that the mouth at the end can represent the sound L (which would be equivalent to the Lion pictograph). Also, we could assume that the two slashes here are just a space fillers.

So, we could have the scripted name as: Y.S.R.E.A.L But this name is still very far from the word "Israel" (which is written without vowels as ISREL).

However, it has been brought to my attention that the original name for the Israelite people was Yisrael (Credit to Dankoh). This name without the vowels would be: YSREL. But still, it is far from the scripted name due to the Eagle pictograph (A).

Many Egyptian Egyptologists have presented another hypothesis: The one reed-flower and the eagle can both represent the 18th letter of the Arabic alphabet (which would be equivalent to the arm pictograph). This letter doesn't have an equivalent in English, and the best equivalent is "hard A" (A').

So, the scripted name could be Y.Z.R.A'.L which is the Canaanite name for the valley of Jezreel, which is pronounced as YEZ-RA'-EL.

The words Yisrael (the original name of Israel) and Yezra'el do seem similar. The meaning of Yisra in the first word is not very clear, but it goes around "winning", so we could say that the first name means: El (God) Win. The second has a clear meaning: El (God) Plant.

So, it is possible that the scripted name is related to valley of Jezreel, assuming that the two slashes are space-fillers, the last mouth is L and the Reed & Eagle are A'. But

it is highly unlikely that the scripted name is Yisrael because of the Eagle pictograph that cannot be explained.

Furthermore, the Israelites couldn't have immigrated from Egypt before 1203BC (the possible date of the Stele) otherwise they would have encountered the Egyptian army in Palestine, which doesn't follow the chronological data in the OT.

4# There might be here a serious metaphysical objection: The Quran and the OT say that the pharaoh of the exodus was drown in the sea. But we already have the mommy of Ramesses VI!!

However, Quran 10:92 does clearly say that the body of the pharaoh of the exodus was saved and preserved.

Now ... I don't think that the mommy of Ramesses VI has been thoroughly examined; probably because of its bad condition: After few decades of the death of this Pharaoh, robbers entered his tomb and smashed his face and body. So, I hope that one day this mommy will be thoroughly examined.

The mommy of Ramesses VI:

<https://www.sciencephoto.com/media/414287/view/ramases-vi-mummy-egypt>

The face of the mommy of Ramesses VI:

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ramses_VI_mummy_head.png

**[The references are available in the original article in the library site:
Article #55 in omr-mhmd.yolasite.com].**