

Chapter 3

Joseph & Moses

The Patriarch Joseph

The Name Imhotep

The story of Joseph, son of Jacob/Israel, son of Isaac, son of Abraham, occupies the concluding fourteen chapters of the opening book of the Hebrew Bible (Genesis/Bereshith 37-50). Both by position and by length it is a pivotal story. We assume the tale is familiar to all - Joseph's vision of his eleven brothers grovelling at his feet, his forced confinement and sale into slavery in Egypt, the false accusation which led his imprisonment, the interpretation of dreams which led to his freedom and elevation to power, the seven years of plenty followed by seven years of famine during which he, as vizier, second only to the pharaoh, delivered the country from certain catastrophe. What we are not told is what ultimately happened to the foreign national who saved the country. Did he continue to rule over Egypt? Did the country remember his exploits and acknowledge their gratitude to this mystic "interpreter of dreams"?

The bible story is narrowly focussed on a single theme, not only the deliverance of Egypt, but the deliverance of the family of Jacob from the devastating effects of the attempted fratricide. It is a story of family reconciliation as much as, if not more than, a story of national deliverance. Its pinnacle is reached, not with the salvation of millions of Egyptians, but with the renewal of family cohesion when Joseph is reunited with his brothers, and news of the event is transmitted to the patriarch Jacob, who by virtue of the news is able to die in peace.

The point is made clearly in Genesis 43: 23 when for the first time Joseph is reunited with all of his brothers, including Benjamin, the youngest. For the first time in the bible, nay, for the first time in history, we hear the familiar Semitic greeting "Shalom lechem", peace (be) with you. Do not be afraid. All is well. The greeting is followed by Joseph's enquiry about the welfare (shalom) of the brothers and the well being (shalom) of their father (Gen. 43:27), and the brothers are then sent, for the sake of peace

(leshalom), to retrieve the balance of the family of Jacob and reunite them in Egypt. It is the high-water mark of the story.

Shalom is a difficult word to translate. Broadly speaking it means “wholeness” or “well being”. The middle Egyptian equivalent is “hotep”. The Semitic preposition “be” means “in” or “at”, as does the Egyptian preposition “im”. The story of Joseph, which results in the unification or wholeness of the family of Jacob, and the physical deliverance of the population of Egypt, is thus a story of familial and national salvation, its focus is the achievement of peace/well being. Because of Joseph, Israel and Egypt are at peace (beshalom). In Egyptian beshalom becomes imhotep. We wonder if the biblical story echoes the writer’s knowledge of Joseph’s Egyptian name.

Joseph /Imhotep Parallels

The Sehel Inscription. There is no need to provide more than a summary of the evidence which has led many scholars over the years to hypothesize the identity of Joseph and Imhotep, notwithstanding the many centuries which separate the two individuals in the traditional history. The interested reader can easily peruse the search engines to find the details. Needless to say the most compelling similarities are forthcoming from a rock inscription on the island at Sehel in southern Egypt, which associates Imhotep with a famine lasting seven years.

Figure 13: The Sehel Inscription



The Sehel inscription consists of 32 columns of text containing a decree from the 3rd dynasty king Netjerichet Djoser to a governor situated at Elephantine in the extreme south of Egypt. According to the text, the king, concerned about a seven year long famine which has ravaged the country, had petitioned an official from the court of Imhotep regarding the cause of the famine. The famine was extreme

Year 18 of Horns: Neterkhet; the King of Upper and Lower Egypt:
Neterkhet; Two Ladies: Neterkhet; Gold-Horus: Djoser; under the
Count, Prince, Governor of the domains of the South, Chief of the
Nubians in Yebu, Mesir. There was brought to him this royal decree.

To let you know:

I was in mourning on my throne,
Those of the palace were in grief,
My heart was in great affliction,

Because Hapy had failed to come in time
 In a period of seven years.
 Grain was scant,
 Kernels were dried up,
 Scarce was every kind of food.
 Every man robbed his twin,
 Those who entered did not go.
 Children cried, Youngsters fell,
 The hearts of the old were grieving;
 Legs drawn up, they hugged the ground,
 Their arms clasped about them.
 Courtiers were needy, Temples were shut,
 Shrines covered with dust, Everyone was in distress

I directed my heart to turn to the past,
 I consulted one of the staff of the Ibis,
 The chief lector-priest of Imhotep,
 Son of Ptah South-of-his-Wall:
 "In which place is Hapy born?
 Which is the town of the Sinuous one?
 Which god dwells there That he might join with me." ⁹

The priest of Imhotep, after investigating the matter, informed the king that Khnum, the god of Elephantine, was in control of the Nile floods. The following evening, in a dream, Djoser was visited by Khnum, who promised an end to the famine. In gratitude the king responded:

I awoke with speeding heart. Freed of fatigue I made this decree on behalf of my father Khnum. A royal offering to Khnum, lord of the cataract region and chief of Nubia:
 In return for what you have done for me, I offer you Manu as western border, Bakhu as eastern border, from Yebu to Kemsat, being twelve *iter* on the east and the west, consisting of fields and pastures, of the river, and of every place in these miles.
 All tenants who cultivate the fields, and the vivifiers who irrigate the shores and all the new lands that are in these miles, their harvests shall be taken to your granary, in addition to your share which is in Yebu.

⁹ Miriam Lichtheim, Ancient Egyptian Literature, Volume III: The Late Period, pp 95, 96. For a complete online translation of the inscription go to:
<http://www.uwm.edu/Course/egypt/274RH/Texts/The%20Famine%20Stela.htm>

All fishermen, all hunters, who catch fish and trap birds and all kinds of game, and all who trap lions in the desert- I exact from them **one-tenth** of the take of all of these, and all the young animals born of the females in these miles [in their totality].

One shall give the branded animals for all burnt offerings and daily sacrifices; and one shall give one-tenth of gold, ivory, ebony, carob wood, ochre, carnelian, *shrt*, *diw*-plants, *nfw*-plants, all kinds of timber, (being) all the things brought by the Nubians of Khent-hennefer' (to) Egypt, and (by) every man who comes with arrears from them

No officials are to issue orders in these places or take anything from them, for everything is to be protected for your sanctuary.

I grant you this domain with (its) stones and good soil. No person there - - - - - anything from it. But the scribes that belong to you and the overseers of the South shall dwell there as accountants, listing everything that the *kiry*-workers, and the smiths, and the master craftsmen, and the goldsmiths, and the . . . and the Nubians, and the crew of Apiru, and all corvée labor who fashion the stones, shall give of gold, silver, copper, lead, baskets of . . . firewood, the things that every man who works with them shall give as dues, namely one-tenth of all these. And there shall be given one-tenth of the precious stones and quarrying stones that are brought from the mountain side, being the stones of the east.

And there shall be an overseer who measures the quantities of gold, silver, copper, and genuine precious stones, the things which the sculptors shall assign to the gold house, <to> fashion the sacred images and to refit the statues that were damaged, and any implements lacking there. Everything shall be placed in the storehouse until one fashions anew, when one knows everything that is lacking in your temple, so that it shall be as it was in the beginning.¹⁰

Thus the decree awarded to the priests of the Khnum temple, as a temple endowment *en perpetuity*, a tax of one tenth or 10% of the revenues from a large stretch of land running southward from Elephantine into Nubia for twelve iter (approximately 880 miles), a strip of land known to the Greeks in the late period as the *Dodekaschoinos*.

From this single inscription we note the following parallels with the biblical Joseph story:

¹⁰ Ibid, pp 99-100

1) The fact that both famines lasted seven years is certainly the most striking parallel. It is immaterial that famines of seven years duration are known in other countries of the Ancient Near East.¹¹ The memory of the great Egyptian famine persisted down to the Ptolemaic era, when the Sehel inscription was apparently copied from an ancient stele. This memory may well have influenced the development of literary traditions in distant lands which had likewise been traumatized by famine in the remote past. In fact, the seven year long local famine remembered by many nations may well have taken place at the identical time as the Egyptian famine, since the biblical text states clearly that “all the countries came to Egypt to buy grain from Joseph, because the famine was severe in *all the world.*” (Gen 41:57) Certainly the famine extended into southern Palestine, and the fact that Jacob’s family sought help from Egypt rather than neighbouring Syria, suggests that it extended far to the north, into the Levant, and perhaps beyond the Euphrates.¹²

We object to the claim made by many commentators that the Sehel inscription reverses the order of the seven years of plenty followed by seven years of famine, and that the famine described therein was not alleviated by food stuffs stored in anticipation of the event – thus differentiating the two famines. These objections have no validity.

As to the first objection, the Sehel inscription makes no mention whatever of a time of unusual plenty, whether before or after the famine. It is true that Khnum, the god of the Nile, promises Djoser an end to the famine, followed by unprecedented happiness. But this hyperbole should not be construed other than as descriptive of the euphoria resulting from a return to normalcy. Let the reader decide if a time of unusual plenty is being foretold.

I shall make Hapy gush for you,
 No year of lack and want anywhere,
 Plants will grow weighed down by their fruit;
 With Renutet ordering all,

¹¹ Cf. C.H. Gordon, *Orientalia*, n.s. 22 (1953), 79-81. The reference is cited by Miriam Lichtheim, op. cit. note 2, p. 100.

¹² The fact that the famine “was severe in all the world” suggests that it was caused by global factors that affected rains over vast areas of the Near East and Africa. This is suggestive of an area for further research.

All things are supplied in millions!
 I shall let your people fill up,
 They shall grasp together with you!
 Gone will be the hunger years,
 Ended the dearth in their bins.
 Egypt's people will come striding,
 Shores will shine in the excellent flood,
 Hearts will be happier than ever before!"¹³

Elsewhere it is expressly stated that conditions will return to normal, not to unprecedented prosperity.

And there shall be an overseer who measures the quantities of gold, silver, copper, and genuine precious stones, the things which the sculptors shall assign to the gold house, <to> fashion the sacred images and to refit the statues that were damaged, and any implements lacking there. Everything shall be placed in the storehouse until one fashions anew, when one knows everything that is lacking in your temple, *so that it shall be as it was in the beginning.*¹⁴ (emphasis added)

As for the suffering endured during the famine, as described in the opening paragraphs of the inscription, there is nothing which distinguishes the Djoser famine from the biblical event. A perusal of the biblical text informs us clearly that the famine caused extensive and severe suffering. Only in desperation, at times in fear of imminent death, did the Egyptians forfeit first their money, then their livestock, and ultimately their land, to pay for the lifesaving grain hoarded by the Egyptian bureaucracy. The famine was endured, but not in the absence of extreme suffering.

2) Political action based on dreams, so central in the Joseph story, is also a critical component in the Sehal inscription. The dreams of the pharaoh in both instances determine his response to the famine, in the one case anticipated, in the other actualized. In and of itself, the appearance of dreams in times of crisis might be dismissed as coincidence. After all, many Egyptian pharaohs had dreams, the dream stele of Thutmose IV

¹³ Op. cit. p. 99d

¹⁴ Ibid.

discussed in our book two being a case in point. But when the pharaoh in both instances, as argued by our revised chronology and expressly stated in the Sehel inscription, is the identical 3rd dynasty king Djoser, the role played by dreams takes on added significance and argues for the identity of the two famines.

In passing we should note that there is no contradiction in the fact that the Joseph story identifies the god of the patriarchs as the sole, all powerful being in control of events as they transpire in the story, while the Sehel inscription claims for Khnum, at minimum, control of the life giving Nile floods. Djoser in the Sehel inscription is seeking advice from a subordinate priest in the court of Imhotep, not from the vizier Joseph/Imhotep himself.

3) In both the biblical story, and in the Sehel inscription, special provision is made for the temples of Egypt. In the Joseph story they are exempted both from the loss of ownership of land experienced by the general population and from the tax of 20% on general revenues imposed throughout Egypt. In the Sehel inscription the Khnum temple is singled out for special favor. There is no hint that its lands were forfeit. And the tax of 10% on revenues in the *Dodekaschoinos* to provide the temple income and restore it to its former prosperity is arguably a benefit beyond what was prescribed for temples elsewhere, this because the king believed that Khnum was responsible for ending the famine. It is curious, to say the least, that both the biblical and Sehel inscription famines should emphasize the special status afforded temples in the aftermath of the great famine, and that both include mention of the system of taxation that followed the famine.

4) Both the biblical text and the Egyptian inscription link the seven year famine with the sojourn of the Hebrews in Egypt. We have included above a portion of the Sehel inscription concerned with the 10% tax on revenues. The tax, as stated, applied to all revenues in kind received by various working segments of the population employed in the south. Worthy of mention are the “*kiry*-workers, and the smiths, and the master craftsmen, and the goldsmiths, and the . . . and the Nubians, and the crew of *Apiru*, and all corvée labor who fashion the stones”. This is not the place to engage the debate regarding the identity of the peoples identified

as Apiru. We have touched base with the topic elsewhere in our lengthy revision. Needless to say, in the context of this inscription the Apiru can be none other than Semitic Hebrews, almost certainly in control of the country's livestock. The reference brings to mind the conversations that took place between Joseph and his brothers, and between Joseph and the pharaoh, concerning the arrival of the extended family of Jacob. We are informed early in the Joseph story that "Egyptians could not eat with Hebrews, for that is detestable to Egyptians." (Gen. 43:32) The issue became the topic of conversation later when Joseph was about to bring his extended family into the region of Goshen in the Nile Delta.

Then Joseph said to his brothers and to his father's household, "I will go up and speak to Pharaoh and will say to him, 'My brothers and my father's household, who were living in the land of Canaan, have come to me. The men are shepherds; they tend livestock, and they have brought along their flocks and herds and everything they own.' When Pharaoh calls you in and asks, 'What is your occupation?' you should answer, 'Your servants have tended livestock from our boyhood on, just as our fathers did.' Then you will be allowed to settle in the region of Goshen, for all shepherds are detestable to the Egyptians." (Gen. 46:31-34)

It is clear from this conversation that tending livestock in Egypt was a job restricted to Hebrews, and at the time of the famine, this meant Hebrews from the clan of Jacob. Pharaoh specifically invited Joseph to find some of his brethren with special talent as herdsmen, to "put them in charge of my own livestock." (Gen 47:6) It is not necessary to equate the "crew of Apiru" in the Sehel inscription with the clan of Jacob in the Joseph story, but the comparison is inviting. And the mere mention of Hebrews residing permanently in Egypt at this early period, and specifically at the end of a famine likened on other grounds with the biblical famine, is yet one more coincidence in need of explanation.

Apiru, taxation, temple incomes, a seven year famine, a pharaoh who dreams – these are the themes which dominate the Joseph story in the Hebrew Bible and the Sehel inscription in southern Egypt. According to our revised chronology, and as expressly stated on the Sehel inscription, the pharaoh in both instances was Neterkhet Djoser, the first king of the

3rd dynasty. Joseph served the biblical pharaoh as vizier, second in command in all of Egypt. His fame has endured through millenia, exclusively because of the biblical famine story. Imhotep served king Djoser as vizier, second in command in all of Egypt. Outside of Egypt his fame lasted well into the Roman period, and in Egypt itself he was revered as a god. There is only one possible response to this sequence of parallels. If our revised chronology is correct, Joseph and Imhotep are the same person. The matter is beyond debate. It is only because of the subjectivity involved in determining our 2nd millennium chronology that we proceed with this argument.

Joseph the Architect/Physician/Poet

The Genesis famine story portrays Joseph as an ethical and extremely capable young man, blessed with the ability to interpret dreams, but also endowed with organizational skills which immediately impressed the pharaoh he served. The speed with which he constructed grain storage facilities in the chief cities of Egypt, and the efficiency of the system of gathering and distributing food stuffs through fourteen years in order to sustain the population of an entire country, are nothing less than remarkable. By the time the famine ended he had not only managed to save the lives of hundreds of thousands of Egyptians, and countless foreigners who came to Egypt in search of food, he had managed to change forever the political structure of the country. Food was not given to the needy; it was sold in exchange for private wealth and ultimately for property. At famine's end Djoser quite literally owned Egypt. He and his successors became enormously wealthy in consequence, notwithstanding their benevolence toward the temples of Egypt. But not only did pharaoh own all the property of Egypt. He also, quite literally, owned the people.

When that year was over, they came to him [Joseph] the following year and said, "We cannot hide from our lord the fact that since our money is gone and our livestock belongs to you, there is nothing left for our lord except our bodies and our land. Why should we perish before your eyes – we and our land as well? Buy us and our land in exchange for food, and we with our land will be in bondage to Pharaoh. Give us seed so that we may live and not die, and that the

land may not become desolate.” So Joseph bought all the land in Egypt for Pharaoh. The Egyptians, one and all, sold their fields, because the famine was too severe for them. The land became Pharaoh’s, and Joseph reduced the people to servitude, from one end of Egypt to the other.” (Gen 47:18-21)

The pharaohs of Egypt, for the centuries that followed, now possessed the wherewithal to engage in massive construction, not only of colossal funeral complexes, temples and palace facilities, including those of Djoser himself, but of the edifice par excellence, the prototype of which began the day the famine ended – the pyramids of Egypt. Not only did pharaohs for the next century possess the wealth and the manpower for these enormous building enterprises, they had at their disposal the genius of the Hebrew immigrant Joseph, who among his many talents, was an architectural genius.

For several millenia following the time of Djoser, Imhotep was both revered as a man and worshipped as a god. His exploits became the stuff of legends. As an architect he was credited with the beginning of construction with stone. As a physician he was deified as a god of healing and medicine. As a philosopher and poet he is credited with authorship of several literary works, some bearing his name, others falsely claimed by his successors. There is not time to go into detail regarding these alleged accomplishments. Our interest lies exclusively in proving that Joseph and Imhotep were one and the same person. There is very little in the legends of Imhotep that connect him specifically with Joseph. We restrict our comments to the few relevant details of his life.



Figure 14: Statue of Imhotep

Imhotep the physician. Imhotep was venerated well into the Roman period as a healer and physician, identified with and worshipped by many as the demi-god Asclepios. In the divine pantheon he was conceived to be the son of Ptah and Sekhmet, by some equated with their son Nefertem. What he did to deserve this fame is unknown, though many scholars believe he was the author of the medical treatise preserved on the

Edwin Smith papyrus.¹⁵ The maxims preserved on this ancient document are remarkable for their straightforward scientific surgical approach to assorted medical ailments, and warrant for their author credit as the true founder of modern medicine. We have only two comments to make regarding the papyrus.

In the first place, contrary to the claim made by some, none of the prescribed treatments in the Smith papyrus is magical in nature. The confusion comes from the fact that the original text, purely surgical in nature, has been corrupted by some well intentioned physician in the late period, through the addition of glosses, explanations and assorted comments reflecting the degenerate understanding of a later age. A detailed study of the text of this document shows it to be a comprehensive, well organized description of surgical procedures for treating wounds to virtually every part of the human body, in all consisting of over 450 lines of text. If nothing else the work shows the author to be insightful and thorough, well in keeping with the character of Joseph as revealed in the biblical Joseph story. We leave it to the reader to peruse this remarkable document.¹⁶

Secondly, according to a consensus of scholars the document originates from around 1700 B.C., though the existing text was edited, as stated above, a millenia later, perhaps during the 26th dynasty. There exists an older theory, still reflected in the textbooks and originating with Breasted, which dates the composition around 2500 B.C. and the glosses around the 17th century. If the document was composed by Joseph, as we believe it to be, then the first of these dating theories is approximately correct.

Imhotep the philosopher poet. That Joseph was a wise man goes without saying. The pharaoh who elevated him to power left no doubt about his opinion. “Can we find anyone like this man?” he asked, and then he answered his own question – “there is no one so discerning and wise as you.” (Gen 41:37, 39) While there is nothing in the biblical text which credits Joseph with recording his accumulated wisdom in written form,

¹⁵For an introduction and description of this remarkable documents go to <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/EdwinSmithpapyrus>

¹⁶A good beginning can be found at <http://www.levity.com/alchemy/islam22.html>

there is some evidence that he did so, and the matter needs to be mentioned for what it is worth.

One collection of ancient Egyptian philosophical texts bears the title “the Instruction of Ptahhotep”¹⁷ The document has come down to us self-credited to a man who identifies himself as the vizier Ptahhotep, a name born by several dignitaries of the 5th dynasty. On internal grounds it has been variously dated anywhere from the 5th to the 12th dynasty. The document has been analyzed by many scholars, all of whom note the remarkable resemblance between parts of the “instruction” and the biblical “wisdom literature”, particularly the Proverbs. On that ground alone it has been conjectured by some that the “instruction” influenced the development of the Jewish wisdom literature. They may be correct, but not in the manner suggested.

Several conservative scholars have put forward the suggestion that the “instruction of Ptahhotep” was actually written by Joseph/Imhotep, and that portions of the text were preserved and later incorporated into the biblical proverbs by scribes, when that document was pieced together in the early 1st millennium.¹⁸ The argument is based on three strands of reasoning. One is the resemblance of the document to Jewish literature, as stated above. A second is the fact that Imhotep was famed in later times as a poet and philosopher, though no literary document has been preserved bearing his name. And finally, the “Instruction of Ptahhotep” concludes with the author’s lament that he is old and apparently near death, having lived for 110 years, reminiscent of the final words of the biblical Joseph story – “So Joseph died at the age of a hundred and ten. And after they embalmed him, he was placed in a coffin in Egypt.” (Gen 50:26)

How good is one instructed by his father
when he emerged from him out of his body,
and he told him, while he was in the body, entirely,
May what he has done be greater than what he was told.
See, a good son, by the gift of the god,

¹⁷ For an online transcription and translation go to
<http://www.digitalegypt.ucl.ac.uk/literature/ptahhotep.html>

¹⁸ For one publication of this theory see <http://www.askelm.com/doctrine/d040501.htm>

surpassing what he was told before his lord.
 He does what is right.
 His heart has acted according to his set steps.
 As you reach me, your body intact,
 the king content with everything,
 take years of life.
 What I have done on earth is not little.
 I took 110 years of life
 by the grant of the king to me,
 favor ahead of the ancestors,
 from doing what is right for the king until the stage of revered status.
 Instruction of Ptahhotep.

Imhotep the architect. Egyptologists are quick to point out the abrupt change in archaeology, reflective of changes in political and social conditions, which took place between the end of the 2nd and beginning of the 3rd dynasties in Egypt. Thus they begin their Old Kingdom designation with the 3rd dynasty, noting among other things the introduction of building with stone, and the more dominant role played by the pharaoh, that began with the 3rd dynasty pharaoh Djoser. The pre-dynastic period and the first two dynasties are all but ignored in the history books, in large part due to the absence of contemporary inscriptional material. Only in the 3rd dynasty did Egypt emerge from its dark ages. It would be fair to say that the reign of Djoser marks a renaissance in Egyptian culture. Scholars have failed to identify the catalyst in this remarkable development. We have provided the reason in our earlier discussion. During the reign of Djoser, thanks to the genius of the vizier Joseph/Imhotep, the pharaoh was given the resources in money and manpower to utilize the vast resources of the country. It also possessed in Joseph the genius to make innovative use of the newly created wealth. A new era had begun. Gardiner, from whose classic *Egypt of the Pharaohs* we have quoted frequently in earlier discussion, summarizes the change.

A beginning is here, therefore, made with the Third Dynasty, which with the next three dynasties constitutes the Old Kingdom, characterized by the grand line of pyramids running along the western desert from near the level of modern Cairo. The first king of Dyn. III was the monarch whom later generations knew by the name of Djoser, and whose importance as the founder of a new epoch is marked in the

Turin Canon by the exceptional use of red ink. Djoser's outstanding achievement was the Step Pyramid at Sakkara overlooking the great city of Memphis. This is a massive structure rising in six unequal stages to a height of 204 feet. Egypt has no more remarkable spectacle to offer than the comparatively recently excavated and restored complex of buildings of which that earliest of the pyramids forms the centre. The credit for this is, however, probably due less to Djoser himself than to his famous architect Imhotep (Gk. Imouthes), whose later reputation as writer and healer ultimately led to his deification and identification with the Greek demigod Asclepios. It is not without reason that Manetho ascribes to Imouthes the invention of building in stone, since Djoser's great funerary monument was in fact the first to be constructed wholly of that material. The royal tombs of the previous dynasties had been mastabas of brick, with little employment of granite and limestone except for flooring and the like. EP 72-73

Figure 15: Djoser's Step Pyramid & Funeral Complex



Gardiner goes on to describe the pyramid complex at Sakkara:

The Step Pyramid too was originally conceived of as a mastaba, though square and not oblong, but later obtained its present unique appearance by successive changes of plan. Investigation of the maze of underground galleries revealed a few walls lined with blue faience tiles to imitate matting, and elsewhere thousands of splendidly shaped vases and dishes of alabaster, breccia, schist, and other fine stones were found strewn about. Some low reliefs depict the king in ceremonial poses, and their exquisite delicacy shows that the sculptors of the time had mastered this technique no less well than that of the noble seated statue of Djoser that was also among the finds. The vast area outside brought to light edifices of the most unexpected types. Apart from the temple chambers on the north side which were needed for the daily service of offerings and other ceremonials, as well as a row of shrines apparently for the celebration of the Sed-festival or royal Jubilee, various imposing structures were uncovered of which the purpose is unknown or only guessed. ... The entire site is enclosed within the magnificent paneled and bastioned wall of the finest limestone no less than a third of a mile long from north to south and about half that length from east to west. EP 73

Gardiner also points out, in passing, a “mysterious building at the southwest corner of the enclosure the substructure of which looks for all the world like a second tomb of Djoser himself, only on a smaller scale”. (EP 74)

The presence of the inscribed name of Imhotep confirms his role in the construction of this complex of buildings, and elsewhere there is evidence which suggests his role in constructing a pyramid for one of Djoser’s successors.

We have only three comments to make regarding Gardiner’s comments:

- 1) It is our opinion that this complex of buildings was begun during the “time of plenty” early in the reign of Djoser, and that construction of the step pyramid began soon after the end of the famine, financed by revenues from the sale of grain with manpower provided by the indentured population. Thus among the earliest constructions were large featureless bins, made of small blocks of limestone – “imposing” in size,

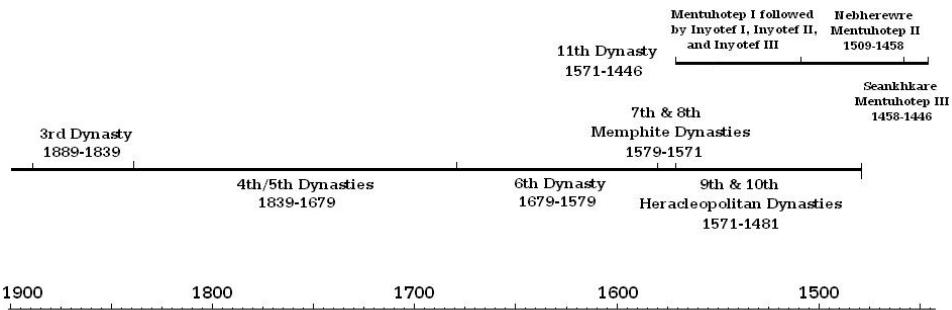
as Gardiner suggests, of which the purpose “is unknown or only guessed.” Many conservative scholars identify them as “storage chambers”, and suggest, probably correctly, that they were typical of the grain storage facilities that Joseph constructed at central locations throughout Egypt.

Joseph collected all the food produced in those seven years of abundance in Egypt and stored it in the cities. In each city he put the food grown in the fields surrounding it. Joseph stored up huge quantities of grain, like the sand of the sea, it was so much that he stopped keeping records because it was beyond measure. (Gen. 41:47-49)

- 2) In spite of extensive efforts on the part of archaeologists the tomb of Imhotep has never been found. It is assumed, with good reason, that Imhotep would be buried at Sakkara, and probably in close proximity to the Djoser complex. It is therefore tempting to identify his tomb with the “mysterious building at the south-west corner of the enclosure the substructure of which looks for all the world like a second tomb of Djoser himself, only on a smaller scale” (see quote above). We recall from the conclusion of the Joseph story that at the age of 110 years the patriarch died and was embalmed and placed in a coffin. It is a reasonable assumption that he was entombed near the complex of buildings he designed, and who else would be deserving of a tomb like that of Djoser than Djoser’s second in command. We recall that Joseph had elicited from the sons of Israel a promise to one day remove his body from Egypt (Gen 50:25), a promise fulfilled by Moses at the time of the Exodus (Exod. 13:19). The replica tomb at Djoser’s complex would afterwards be left empty and perhaps was deliberately torn down. The absence of any inscribed material at the site is anticipated. Wherever Joseph built his tomb, it was not intended “for eternity.”
- 3) When we examined the Sehel inscription at the beginning of this chapter we took it at face value. We do not regard it as a creation of a later age, as do many Egyptologists. It has all the appearance of an original stele inscription, preserved for some considerable time by the Khnum temple priests, and finally copied onto the wall facing where it now stands. The copy maintains all the features of the typical stele shape and structure, with rounded top and dateline intact. If so, then we can

date the inscription, and thus the end of the famine, to the 18th year of king Djoser. According to our chronology, thus far developed, the 3rd Egyptian dynasty began in the year 1900 B.C. (see figure 11 on page 41). The 18th year of Djoser would accordingly be 1883 B.C. Our data for the biblical patriarchs, developed in chapter 1, dates the arrival of Joseph's family in Egypt, at the end of two years of famine, to the year 1876 B.C. If this dating is accurate then the end of the famine five years later must be dated to 1871 B.C., this according to the Hebrew Bible. There is therefore an 11 year discrepancy between the Egyptian and patriarchal chronologies. The dates for the Egyptian 3rd dynasty need to be lowered by that amount, in order to synchronize the two chronologies. That change, in turn, will require a lowering of dates for all subsequent dynasties from dynasty 4 through to the beginning of dynasties 10 and 11 by an identical 11 years. The 11 years reduction of dates need not apply to the terminal years of dynasties 10 and 11. Instead, the assumption is made that the length of those two dynasties may legitimately be decreased the 11 years to maintain their closing dates. These changes are reflected in figure 16 below, our final figures for the dates of the Egyptian Old Kingdom, and its 1st Intermediate Period.

Figure 16: Final Revised Dates for Dynasties 3-11



Having said all this, we return briefly to the life of Joseph/Imhotep. In our first chapter we determined that the life of Jacob, the father of Joseph, spanned the years 2006-1859. Since Djoser's 27 year reign spanned the years 1889-1862 it follows that Jacob died a few years *after* Djoser. It is therefore significant, assuming the Joseph = Imhotep equation, that

Joseph remained in power as vizier of Egypt following the death of his patron. His status is nowhere more apparent than in the burial of his father. Jacob's funeral was a grand event, requiring an extended journey to Jacob's tomb "in the land of Canaan," accompanied by a large entourage of Egyptian dignitaries. We quote but a small portion of the biblical description.

When the days of mourning had passed, Joseph said to Pharaoh's court, "If I have found favor in your eyes, speak to Pharaoh for me. Tell him, 'My father made me swear an oath and said, 'I am about to die; bury me in the tomb I dug for myself in the land of Canaan.' Now let me go up and bury my father; then I will return.'" Pharaoh said, "Go up and bury your father, as he made you swear to do." So Joseph went up to bury his father. All Pharaoh's officials accompanied him – the dignitaries of his court and all the dignitaries of Egypt – besides all the members of Joseph's household and his brothers and those belonging to his father's household. Only their children and their flocks and herds were left in Goshen. Chariots and horsemen also went up with him. It was a very large company. Gen 50: 4-9

The point we make here should be clear to the reader. The political life of Joseph/Imhotep did not end with the death of Djoser. It very likely continued through the balance of the 3rd and into the 4th dynasty, until his death in 1805, at the age of 110 years. He thus lived thirty-four years into the 4th dynasty, through the reigns of Snofru, Khufwey (Cheops), and into the reign of Radjedef. For a few years at least he would have been a contemporary of Khafre (Chefren), before that king became pharaoh, and possibly was alive during the early years of Menkaure (Mycerinus), (see Figure 10, page 34).¹⁹ Since arguably he designed the first few of the Sakkara pyramids it is hard to avoid the assumption that he played a large part in the design and construction of at least the first of the great pyramids of Giza. The unknown methods which allowed for their rapid construction may be attributable to his genius.

¹⁹ This adds significance to the fact that, according to the *Oxyrhynchus Papyri* from the second century A.D. Mycerinus built a temple in honour of Imhotep, son of Ptah. For this reference and further discussion of the life of Imhotep see <http://cotn.heavengames.com/history/imhotep>

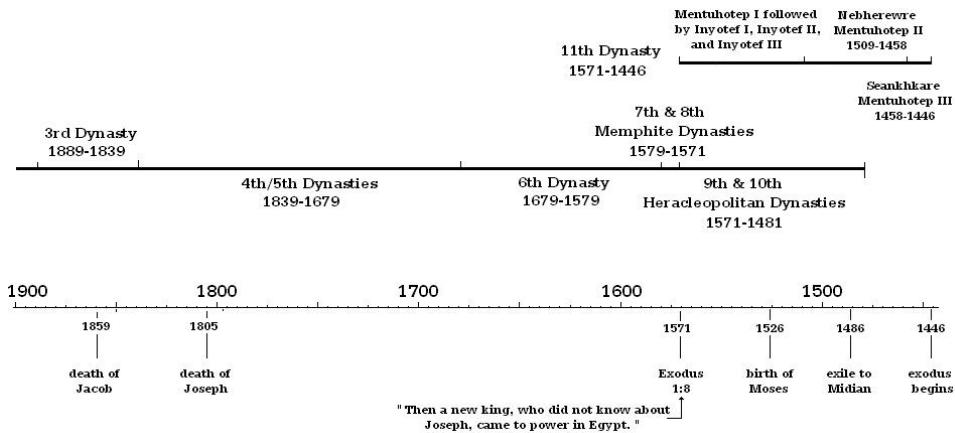
A final word needs to be added regarding Imhotep in his role as priest. We have already mentioned the association of Imhotep with the god Ptah. In the Sehel inscription he is called the “son of Ptah”. Elsewhere he is referred to as a “high priest of Ptah”²⁰ and “high priest of Heliopolis”. Those titles regarding his priesthood, and in particular his association with Heliopolis (Egyptian On) are at least consistent with data preserved in the biblical Joseph story. According to Genesis 41:45 “pharaoh gave Joseph the name Zaphenath Paneah and gave him Asenath daughter of Potiphera, priest of On (Heliopolis), to be his wife.” Assuming that Potiphera was the *high priest* of On/Heliopolis it would be perfectly natural for Joseph to inherit the benefice at the death of his father-in-law. There is no biblical mention of an association of Joseph with Ptah, the god of Memphis, but we should not read anything into that silence. The Joseph story is very narrowly construed. According to the Sehel inscription, by the time the famine ended Imhotep was part of the Ptah cult. If Imhotep is Joseph, it must have been obligatory for the vizier to become a priest of Ptah.

Moses

As stated, Joseph died in Egypt in 1805 B.C., 34 years into the 4th dynasty. But the biblical Joseph story ignores entirely his life’s work in Egypt following the death of his father Jacob over a half century earlier (1859 B.C.). Instead it concludes with a few short lines relating to his death, commenting only on the fact that he “stayed in Egypt” all the while, lived to the age of a hundred and ten, and witnessed the birth of the third generation of the children of his son Ephraim and the children of Makir, son of Manasseh, his first born son. (Gen. 50:22, 23). The biblical omission of Joseph’s accomplishments during this final half century of his life is regrettable but predictable.

²⁰ For a list of references associating Imhotep with Ptah see
<http://www.historel.net/imhotep/imhoeng03.htm>

Figure 17: Moses Life in Context



The book of Exodus opens by reminding the reader that the immigrant family of Jacob which originally arrived in Egypt numbered only seventy individuals. Then, in a single sentence, it passes over several hundred years, leading us into the life and times of Moses, descendent of Levi, one of the twelve sons of Jacob.

Now Joseph and all his brothers and all that generation died, but the Israelites were fruitful and multiplied greatly and became exceeding numerous, so that the land was filled with them. Exodus 1:6,7

The text then proceeds to describe the changed conditions which precipitated the birth of Moses, leading to the storied Exodus.

Then a new king, who did not know about Joseph, came to power in Egypt. “Look,” he said to his people, “the Israelites have become much too numerous for us. Come, we must deal shrewdly with them or they will become even more numerous and, if war breaks out, will join our enemies, fight against us and leave the country. Exodus 1:8-10

In figure 17 above we have placed these developments in context. Recall from our earlier discussion that all dates from our chapter two analysis of Egyptian dynasties 3-11 needed to be reduced by eleven years, this in order to synchronize the 18th year of the 3rd dynasty king Djoser from the

Sehel inscription with the end of the Egyptian famine based on biblical data (1871 B.C.). This ultimately forced us to conclude that the 9th/10th Heracleopolitan dynasties in the north of Egypt and the 11th dynasty in the south began in 1571 B.C., not 1582 B.C. as earlier suggested. And since we are unable to alter the later pivotal dates in these dynasties, the length of each of the dynasties is reduced by eleven years.

Several other features of our Figure 16 timeline are in need of explanation and defense, in particular our placement of the early years of Moses life during the 9th/10th Heracleopolitan dynasties, and our belief that the 11th dynasty king Seankhkare Mentuhotep III was the Egyptian king at the time of the Exodus. We treat these two matters in the order indicated.

Moses Life in Context

We have no choice about where to locate the birth of Moses in our timeline. Details of his life, including his age during several critical phases of his life, are clearly spelled out in the biblical text (see below under point 5). And since our previous argument has determined approximate absolute dates for dynasties 3-11, we have no choice but to argue that Moses was born and raised under kings who ruled in the latter half of the Heracleopolitan era. It remains for us to present additional rationale in defense of this claim. To expedite the process we simply itemize the points of our argument.

- 1) There is only one piece of biblical data enabling us to determine at what point in our timeline the family of Jacob, numbering 70 persons in 1876, had increased sufficiently to have become “exceedingly numerous so that the land was filled with them”, a statement descriptive of a population of perhaps several hundred thousand persons. From a purely statistical point of view this degree of population growth must have consumed, at minimum, several hundred years. Some basic mathematical computations illustrate the situation. Assuming that each Jewish family had, on average, ten children, each generation would be five times as large as the one preceding. If each generation lasted, on average, 40 years (a generous number), then in 200 years a single pair of parents would result in a generation numbering $5 \times 5 \times 5 \times 5 \times 5$ or 3125

persons. In 280 years the 7th generation would have increased by an additional factor of 25 (5×5) to an impressive 78,125 persons. Under these conditions the first generation sons of Jacob, with their wives, would multiply to a generation consisting of between 37,500 (12×3125) and 937,500 ($12 \times 78,125$) individuals in the time frame ending 200-280 years from when the twelve brothers first gathered in Egypt in 1876 B.C. Those numbers would necessarily be inflated to perhaps twice their values allowing for prior generations still living at the time. Clearly this form of analysis is highly speculative, and is complicated by the fact that we have no certain indication of the size of the typical Jewish family during these centuries, nor the survival rate among the children, nor the degree of intermarriage between the Hebrews and the Egyptians. It is, however, supportive of the fact stated previously, that the growth of population suggested by Exodus 1:6,7 requires somewhere in the order of 200 to 300 years, leading to the reasonable conclusion that the events which follow took place during the Heracleopolitan era .

In order to be more specific we must utilize data in the verses that follow, beginning with the reference which follows immediately, to the emergence of "a new king, who did not know about Joseph". In our timeline there is only one possible antecedent for this reference, namely, the beginning of the 9th dynasty Heracleopolitan kingship in the north of Egypt. The date is 1571 B.C. That determination is based on several factors.

2) Certainly the year 1571, slightly over 300 years removed from the time of entrance of Jacob and his extended family, allows a maximum amount of time for the remarkable population growth we have suggested. It also allows for the necessary hundred plus years which must follow till the time of the exodus, not only to account for the subsequent growth in population to well over a million souls that participated in the exodus, but also to encompass the formative years of the life of Moses. The year 1571 is therefore, logically, a good fit. But there is further corroboration.

3) It was the stated concern of the new Egyptian king that the Hebrews constituted a threat to his kingdom should war break out in the country. Specifically he worried that they would join his enemies, fight against

him, and then leave the country. (Exodus 1:10) The war envisaged by the king can only be civil in nature. There is no suggestion in the language that an invasion of Egypt from without is contemplated. The delta, where the majority of the descendants of Jacob lived, appears to belong entirely to the king. The enemy under consideration must therefore occupy the south of the country. The first instance of such north/south civil conflict following the 3rd dynasty took place in the early decades of the 9th dynasty, when the domination of the Heracleopolitan kings was threatened by the growing influence of the 11th dynasty kings in the south. Though the threat was real, it would be many decades later when the antagonism between north and south erupted into a series of armed conflicts which ultimately saw the defeat of the Heracleopolitans by the 11th dynasty king Nebherewre Mentuhotep II, with resulting unification of the country. But here we are getting ahead of ourselves. At minimum the reference to enemies and the possibility of war in this first chapter of the book of Exodus dates the events described to the early years of the 9th dynasty, adding support to our earlier conclusion.

4) The Exodus story goes on to record the enslavement of the Hebrew population and the imposition of oppressive working conditions that lasted, apparently, for several decades, sufficient time at least for the construction, by the enslaved Hebrews, of several storage cities in the eastern delta. All the while, we are told, the Jewish population continued to grow, as did the fear and frustration of the Heracleopolitan kings (Exodus 1: 11-14). Then followed the ultimate attempt at alleviating the threat, the planned murder of all Hebrew males using Hebrew midwives as the means to the desired end, and finally, in desperation, the ordered slaughter of all male children born in Egypt (Exodus 1:22). The details are unimportant. It must be noted, however, that the king who issued these directives for mass annihilation, unprecedented acts of barbarism, was certainly not the first king of the dynasty mentioned in verse 8. The intervening verses imply the passage of some considerable time, perhaps twenty or thirty years, perhaps longer. We ask ourselves the obvious question. Did there exist, sometime time into the 9th dynasty, a king noted for his viciousness, whom we might tentatively identify as the pharaoh mentioned in Exodus 1:15,16 and 1:22. The likelihood of finding monumental evidence confirming the existence of this king is unlikely, since there exist only a few tomb inscriptions attesting the

activities of a few of the Heracleopolitan kings. But one anecdotal memory has been preserved by Manetho which appears to be relevant. According to Manetho, at least in the version preserved by Africanus, the 9th dynasty consisted of

“nineteen kings of Heracleopolis, who reigned for 409 years. Achthoes, the first of these, terrible beyond all before him, wrought evil things for those in all Egypt, but afterwards he fell a victim to madness and was destroyed by a crocodile.” (quoted in EP 437)

We dispute two facts proposed in this statement. No Egyptologist would sanction the number 409 years as the length of the dynasty. In the Eusebius version of Manetho the dynasty consisted rather of four kings and lasted only a hundred years, much more in line with our figure 17 conclusion. Nor do we agree that this king Achthoes was the first of the dynasty. The Turin Canon cites two 9th /10th dynasty kings named Neferkare Akhtoy, the name Egyptologists equate with Manetho’s Achthoes. Neither is listed as the first king of the dynasty. Gardiner also discusses inscriptional evidence proving that at least three kings of the dynasty bore that name (EP 112). There is therefore no good reason to dispute our claim that the birth of Moses, which took place in connection with this attempted mass murder, took place around the year 1526 B.C., 45 years after the dynasty began.

5) The story of the birth of Moses, and of his asylum in Midian as a relatively young man, clearly indicates that both events took place during the same dynasty. The biblical text also suggests that this line of kings came to a violent end shortly after Moses fled from Egypt. All of Moses persecutors apparently died in the battle which led to the change in the ruling dynasty. How else should we explain the statement recorded in Exodus 4:19 :

Now the Lord had said to Moses in Midian, “Go back to Egypt, for all the men who wanted to kill you are dead.

A strong argument in favor of the accuracy of our timeline is its substantial agreement with these dynastic changes. In chapter one we argued that the Exodus took place around the year 1446 B.C. According to Exodus 7:6 Moses was 80 years old at the time of the Exodus and Acts

7:23 preserves a tradition which claims he was 40 years old at the time of his flight to Midian. We are obliged therefore to date his birth in the year 1526 and the beginning of his sojourn in Midian in the year 1486. These dates agree reasonably well with our positioning of the dual 9th/10th Heracleopolitan era. The battle between Mentuhotep II and his dynasty 10 rival, which unified Egypt under the dynasty 11 king, took place five years after Moses fled the country, again in agreement with the biblical data.

Before moving on to discuss the context of the Exodus itself, we should make one clarifying remark regarding the Heracleopolitan kings, lest the issue be raised by the critics. When the biblical text describes the advent of a “king who did not know about Joseph”, we should not construe these remarks as an argument against our earlier claim that Joseph and Imhotep are one and the same person. It might be argued by some that Imhotep was certainly not forgotten by subsequent ages, and in fact over time became larger than life, as stories of his multiple accomplishments were mythologized and he himself was ultimately deified. The critic will surely argue that this did not happen to the biblical Joseph, citing this text as support. But the argument is flawed. In context the statement can be construed instead as supportive of our identification. What was lost to the Heracleopolitan kings, and henceforth to all subsequent generations, was knowledge that Imhotep/Joseph was of Hebrew origin, not knowledge of Imhotep himself. It was that knowledge alone which had apparently secured for the descendants of Jacob favorable treatment through the several hundred years following Joseph’s death. With the advent of the Heracleopolitan kings that knowledge was lost, and there followed immediately the enslavement and persecution of the Jews. The statement must not be taken out of context.

We should also point out one further implication of the statement of Exodus 1:8. At minimum it suggests that Joseph was remembered in Egypt up to the beginning of the 9th dynasty in the year 1571, well over two hundred years following his death, and precisely three hundred years following the end of the biblical famine. Let the reader decide if the actions of a dignitary, whose sole accomplishment in Egypt was the gathering and distribution of food stuffs during a prolonged famine, warranted his being remembered in Egypt for that extensive length of

time. If Joseph was not Imhotep, it is incumbent on the critic to explain the longevity of his memory in Egypt.

The Exodus in Context

Our timeline compels us also to identify the king who lived at the time of the Exodus as the 11th dynasty pharaoh Seankhkare Mentuhotep III. As with the life of Moses earlier, there is need to reconcile this identification, forced on us by the argument in chapter one, with circumstances known to have prevailed in the life of this terminal 11th dynasty king. Again we construct our argument in point form.



Figure 18 Seankhkare Mentuhotep – Pharaoh of the Exodus
(Osiride statue in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston)

1) In chapter one we determined, based on the Berlin stele, that the king named Nebherewre Mentuhotep (II) named on that monument, was served by a priest around the year 1446 B.C. We argued further that this prenomen was used by the king only late in his reign. Allowing for error, the date 1446 end of this reign was arbitrarily moved back in time roughly 15 years, and the reign of Nebherewre, known to have lasted 52 years, was positioned in the time frame 1509-1458. There was estimated to be only a small margin of error in that determination. According to the Turin Canon his son and successor Seankhare Mentuhotep (III) ruled for 12 years. Thus we determined that the rule of this king extended through the years 1458-1446.

Admittedly our computations were guided by our belief, based on data supplied by Jewish historians, that the Exodus of the Israelites from Egypt under the leadership of Moses took place in the year 1446 B.C., precisely at the end of the reign of Seankhare. The critic will therefore discount the coincidence of dates as contrived. There is, nevertheless, some evidentiary value in the fact that the 11th dynasty ended very close to the time of the Exodus, and that within a very small margin of error we were able to synchronize the end of the dynasty with the beginning of the Exodus. As we will argue more strenuously below, it is absolutely imperative that the Exodus marked the end of a dynasty, not simply the death of some intermediate king. It is therefore significant that the end of a dynasty was near at hand, based solely on the data of the Berlin stele.

We should point out in passing that there is no possibility of identifying Nebherewre, rather than his son, as the “pharaoh of the Exodus.” We assume that the reader is familiar with the details of the Exodus story as told in the biblical book by that name, and in particular with the description of the death of that pharaoh in the “parting of the Red Sea” story. The death of this pharaoh followed on the heels of the death of his eldest son in the 10th and concluding plague. Since Seankhare Mentuhotep boasts on one monument that he was the eldest son of Nebherewre, the latter cannot be the king who died in the Red Sea debacle.

2) The pharaoh of the Exodus died in the eastern Delta in pursuit of Moses. It is unknown whether or not the surviving Egyptians were able

to retrieve his body in the aftermath of the Red Sea incident. Regardless, the sudden and unexpected death suggests that many of his funerary preparations may have been left unfinished. And since we will argue momentarily that Egypt, following the death of its king and much of its northern army, erupted immediately into civil war and endured a prolonged period of social chaos and civil war, it is unlikely that the country had time or opportunity to memorialize its dead king. It is therefore significant that the tomb of Seankhkare Mentuhotep has never been found. Some crude graffiti in the mountain passes near the tomb of his father at Deir el-Bahiri are all that exist to memorialize his death. These graffiti are attributable to priests who functioned within the cult of Nebherewre. Since they also mention Seankhkare, scholars conjecture that his tomb must also be nearby, but the search for it has proved fruitless. We are not surprised. It is doubtful that the body of Seankhkare was recovered when the “Red Sea” waters subsided. If it was it would have been buried in an undecorated tomb. Recently (1997) a Hungarian led archaeological expedition found a Middle Kingdom tomb on the west bank across from Thebes, in the vicinity of Deir el-Bahari. It is attributed to this king by some, in spite of the fact that the tomb lacks any formal mention of Seankhkare Mentuhotep. It was almost certainly not constructed with intent to bear the remains of this king.

Further proof of the suddenness of this king's death, and in agreement with our conclusion that the Theban tomb does not belong to him, is the fact that his mortuary temple has been found at Deir el-Bahari, unfinished and lacking any inscription. Little now remains of it. It was constructed, as would be expected, near the temple of his father Nebherewre.

3) Considering that Seankhkare died at the eastern edge of the Delta, and in dramatic fashion, it is certainly significant that in that location, near el-Khatana (identified by some as the site renamed Pi-Ramesses by Rameses II) and only there in the whole of Egypt, was located a cult dedicated to his memory. Scholars are hard pressed to explain why Seankhkare would be worshipped in this remote location. They conjecture that the choice of cult site may have something to do with the fact that in the only inscription preserved from his reign this king notes his need for defensive fortifications in the eastern Delta to protect against invading Bedouin. That rationale seems highly artificial. We argue instead that the site was

built to memorialize a king who died in the generally vicinity. Where else would the populace construct a memorial to a king and his army but near the place where they died.

4) The 11th dynasty ended with the death of Seankhare and his army. In fact the Abydos and Sakkara king lists cite only two kings for the entire 11th dynasty, Seankhare and his father. Only the Turin Canon includes mention of the predecessors of Nebherewre, preserving a few details only for four additional kings, presumably Mentuhotep I and the Antefs I to III. In the existing Canon²¹ there is an additional piece of data which has been interpreted as indication that for at least a seven year period at the end of the dynasty no king ruled in Egypt. Some modern Egyptologists disagree, and have conjectured the existence during this time of a seventh king named Nebtowere Mentuhotep, but details concerning him are sketchy. Evidence for his existence is forthcoming only from scattered inscriptions found in some quarries in the south of Egypt, and none of these identify him as a successor of Seankhare. Based on the fact that one inscription mentions a vizier named Amenemhet for this king, and the fact that the 12th dynasty begins with a king similarly named, scholars have surmised that Nebtowere ruled as successor to Seankhare, probably for the seven year “kingless” period described in the Turin Canon, and was then overthrown by his vizier, who founded a new dynasty. This is, of course, all smoke and mirrors. There is absolutely no evidence supportive of these conclusions.

²¹ The reader needs to read the excellent summary of the Turin Canon and the relevant pages of transcription and translation contained online at the site <http://www.ancientegypt.org/index.html>. We include below a sketch of the canon inscription recording the end of the 11th dynasty. It is not known whether this data was contained on one or several papyrus fragments.

We argue instead that the seven “years” following Seankhkare in the Turin Canon are clear indication that the dynasty ended with this king and were followed by a time of lawlessness and social disruption, during which either no king, or no legitimate king, ruled the country. In chapter one, based on the Berlin stele, we concluded that this chaotic state prevailed for well over a century, until ended by Amenemhet, the founder of Manetho’s 12th dynasty. We will document this disruptive time further in the next chapter, though some comment is deemed appropriate here.

The fact that the Turin Canon suggests a kingless period of time following Seankhkare is entirely consistent with our revised history. The assumption that it lasted for only seven years, rather than over a hundred years as suggested by the Berlin stele, has at least two possible explanations. On the one hand the Canon authors may have been unclear as to the precise length of the dynastic interlude, and arbitrarily chose seven years as a representative gap in the record. Alternatively, and more likely, the text of the Turin Canon has been misrepresented by scholars. It is our belief that the Turin Canon, as originally composed, did not restrict the chaotic period following the death of Seankhkare to seven years, but instead described the emergence of a sequence of kings of unknown extraction, either not deserving of mention, or too numerous and inconsequential to mention, as Egypt became parceled out among petty dynasts. It is noteworthy that the Berlin chronology clearly indicates a six generation gap between Nebherewre and Amenemhet, and provides the name of a single king named Sekeremheb, otherwise unknown, in the generation immediately preceding the 12th dynasty founder Amenemhet. This lack of names suggests that the interlude was filled with multiple petty kings deemed illegitimate by the priest of Ptah, much as the Hyksos period preceding the onset of the 18th dynasty on the Berlin stele was likewise characterized by the lack of pharaonic names. In the next chapter we will argue that Egypt was overrun by opportunistic rebels soon after the demise of Seankhkare and the Exodus of the Israelites. These rebels, of native extraction, must have ruled for upward of a hundred years, through the balance of the dynastic interlude, until the advent of the 12th dynasty. It is entirely possible that the Turin Canon deliberately omitted these kings, or, more likely, in its autograph form did mention this state of affairs, and perhaps even contained a listing of these “nomarchs”. By way of explanation we add the following comment regarding the physical

state of the existing Canon and refer the reader to the excellent website noted in footnote 21 for further details.

Those readers familiar with the history of the Turin Canon understand that this hieratic papyrus, though possibly intact when first discovered and packed for shipment to France by Drovetti in the 19th century, was found in the Turin Museum archives by Champollion in a chaotic jumble of around a hundred and fifty pieces. Many fragments appear to be missing. When painstakingly reassembled by Champollion and others, the guiding assumption was that the 12th dynasty must follow the 11th in an unbroken sequence. It was assumed that no missing pieces separated the fragment(s) which records the reign of Seankhkare from those which document the beginning of the 12th dynasty. We disagree, and wonder what information was originally preserved on some papyrus fragment or fragments now missing between the artificially conjoined pieces. Perhaps the missing kings have been wrongly positioned elsewhere in the incorrectly reconstructed document.

Even if we are mistaken, and concede that no Canon fragments are missing at the end of the 11th dynasty, we disagree entirely with the interpretation of the inscription as it presently stands (see figure 19 below). The lacunae in the text as shown allows for the possibility that the original undamaged document was here describing something much more extensive and sinister than a gap of seven years. Even the number seven may not be complete. And the total of 143 years which concludes the existing fragment, may well apply to this time of chaos following Seankhkare rather than to the 11th dynasty preceding, which appears to already have its own concluding total. The Canon fragments in the Turin Museum need to be re-examined in the context of the revised history to see if some of them have been errantly positioned.

Figure 19: Turin Fragments Recording the End of Dynasty 11



[nsw] 6 ir.n rnp.t /// 7, dmD 143

/// 6 kings, making /// years /// [erased?] 7, total 143

5) If indeed the Turin Canon does mention kingless years following the reign of Seankhkare, whether seven years or longer, that fact serves to introduce, as well as justify, the discussion here and in the next chapter related to the *Ipuwer Papyrus*. This papyrus, 3 ½ meters long and divided into seventeen pages, each consisting of thirteen or fourteen lines, resides in the Leiden Museum, number 344 in their catalogue. Details of its discovery and origin are immaterial. The text under consideration is written on the recto of the papyrus; the verso is covered with an unrelated hymn to a deity, written by a different scribe and probably at a different time. The *Admonition of Ipuwer*, as the composition is otherwise known, is apparently a 19th dynasty scribal copy of an earlier work, the date of which is the subject of ongoing controversy. Needless to say we date the original to the years immediately following the demise of Seankhkare Mentuhotep and the end of the 11th dynasty, not only because it describes social and physical conditions which resemble markedly those described in the biblical account of the 10 plagues which immediately preceded the Exodus, including a Nile River turned bloody red in color, but also because it alludes to the onset of “kingless years”.

Behold, things have been done which have not happened for a long time past; the king has been deposed by the rabble... Behold, it has befallen that the land has been deprived of the kingship by a few lawless men. Behold, men have fallen into rebellion against the Uraeus ... *Admonitions of Ipuwer VII 1,4*²²

²² Translation has been taken from <http://www.nefertiti.iwebland.com/texts/ipuwer.htm>

We reserve till the next chapter a more detailed description of this remarkable document, but it needs to be added here that dozens of Egyptologists over the past several centuries have observed the remarkable parallels between its text and the biblical accounts of the ten plagues, and have suggested a possible connection between the two.²³ Others, more recently, have seen in this document a description of the invasion and occupation of Egypt by foreigners immediately following the Exodus, proposing, as we do here, a lengthy period of occupation following. Most notable among those who argue for an foreign invasion following the exodus is the noted revisionist Immanuel Velikovsky, whose comments on the Ipuwer papyrus, the plagues, and the ensuing occupation in *Ages In Chaos* are well worth the reading. While Velikovsky interpreted the Ipuwer papyrus primarily as descriptive of the plagues themselves²⁴, others have modified his position to one more in line with our reasoning, that the entire document describes conditions which prevailed in the early “kingless” years or immediate aftermath of the plagues.²⁵ What differentiates our interpretation from that of Velikovsky and his interpreters, is that we do not identify the intruders with the so-called Hyksos invaders who preceded the advent of the 18th dynasty. The century long rule by foreigners in the interval between the 11th and 12th dynasties, hinted at if not demanded by the Berlin stele, is unique to this revision.

5) Also unique to the revised history is the related belief that the 12th dynasty must have arisen at the end of a lengthy period of social chaos, presumably the identical civil upheaval mentioned in the Ipuwer papyrus. Corroborative evidence of this fact is forthcoming from yet another papyrus long known to Egyptologists, who are hard pressed to interpret

A complete translation of the document can be found in Miriam Lichtheim, Ancient Egyptian Literature Volume 1: The Old and Middle kingdoms, pp 149-163 Instead of “the king has been deposed by the rabble”, Lichtheim translates “the king has been robbed by beggars”, but she does agree with the second statement, that “the land has been deprived of kingship.” That state of affairs is in fact implied by the whole of the document, which describes widespread lawlessness.

²³ We suggest as possible internet sites worth browsing either

<http://www.mystae.com/restricted/streams/thera/plagues.html> or

<http://www.specialtyinterests.net/ipuwer.html>. There are, of course, many others.

²⁴ See for example <http://www.geocities.com/regkeith/linkipuwer.htm>

²⁵ See in particular http://www.henryzecher.com/papyrus_ipuwer.htm

its content. The “Prophecies of Neferti”²⁶ is preserved on the papyrus P. Leningrad 1116B dating from the 18th dynasty but preserving an account of the rise of the 12th dynasty from the midst of a time of general lawlessness.

Thus we read:

All happiness has vanished,
The land is bowed down in distress,
Owing to those feeders,
Asiatics who roam the land
Foes have risen in the East
Asiatics have come down to Egypt, ...

I show you the land in turmoil
What should not be has come to pass.
Men will seize weapons of warfare,
The land will live in uproar ...

All happiness has vanished;
The land is ruined, its fate decreed,
Deprived of produce, lacking in crops,
What was made has been unmade ...

The land is shrunk – its rulers are many,
It is bare – its taxes are great;
The grain is low – the measure is large,
It is measured to overflowing,
Ri will withdraw from mankind:
Though he will rise at his hour,
One will not know when noon has come.

These are but a few of this documents ominous claims of chaos and foreign rule. Of particular interest are the mention of darkness prevailing in the country, the light of the sun obscured so that its position in the sky is indeterminate. And there is left no doubt that the country is dominated by multiple “illegitimate” rulers. The future tense in many of the

²⁶ For a complete translation see <http://www.nefertiti.iwebland.com/texts/neferti.htm> A complete translation of the document can also be found in Miriam Lichtheim, Ancient Egyptian Literature Volume 1: The Old and Middle kingdoms, pp 139-145

translated portions results from the fact that the description of these chaotic times is presented in the guise of a prophecy made prior to the advent of these conditions. Fortunately, for purposes of our historical revision, the text goes on to describe the end of these lawless times with the advent of 12th dynasty under Amenemhet I (abbreviated Ameny in the papyrus)

Then a king will come from the South,
Ameny, the justified, by name,
Son of a woman of Ta-Seti, child of Upper Egypt.
He will take the white crown,
He will wear the red crown. (I 58,59)

The entire text of the *Prophecies* is totally supportive of our description of the times in question. The 12th dynasty did not follow the 11th in an uninterrupted sequence. It ended a lengthy period of lawlessness and social upheaval. Egyptologists are compelled to discount most of the language of Neferti as hyperbole and exaggeration, though most admit that the Ameny in question was the founder of the 12th dynasty. Let the reader decide for himself whether the document should be taken at face value. We will spend more time discussing the *Admonitions* and the *Prophecies* in the following chapter.