

# **Pharaohs and Kings: A Biblical Quest**

**David M. Rohl**

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David Rohl is an Egyptologist who has uncovered some startling information for those of us who are interested in biblical history. After studying apparent contradictions in traditional Egyptian chronologies, he began to put together a theory of a new chronology for the Third Intermediate Period. The result was a shift in the dates of the reigns of many of the pharaohs.

To test his theory, Rohl began to investigate nearby cultures for historical records that might coincide with the history of Egypt. While not a student of the Old Testament, he turned to the Hebrew scriptures for potential verification of his new chronology. What he discovered was that the traditional chronology of the Bible had never been a good fit, and that his new chronology not only matched the biblical account on major events, but also shed light on some previously obscure passages.

The book opens with a history of pharaonic Egypt and a review of the history of Israel, both following the traditional timelines. The next section of the book begins to reveal some of the paradoxes of the traditional timeline. Among these are impossible genealogies, pharaohs being buried in the opposite order that they died, and older buildings constructed on top of newer ones.

Rohl then begins to detail the arguments behind forty-two conclusions which he believes can be logically drawn from the evidence. These range from the obscure ("The burial of King Osorkon II at Tanis took place before the burial of King Psusennes I. Given that the former was a king of the 22nd Dynasty and the latter a king of the 21st Dynasty, the archaeological evidence from Tanis tends to confirm that the two dynasties were contemporary...." - Conclusion Three) to the incredible ("The pyramid tomb, discovered by Manfred Bietak and his team... was the original burial place of the patriarch Joseph.... The shattered limestone head and shoulders found in the tomb originally formed the upper part of a cult statue of Joseph...." - Conclusion Forty-Two). The reconstructed statue of Joseph is featured on the front cover of the book. The head is visible in the scan (above) of the jacket that accompanies this review.

Among the conclusions of significance to students of the Bible:

- Ramesses II is not the pharaoh of the Exodus, but rather is the biblical Shishak (a Hebraization of his name) of I Kings 14, who conquered Jerusalem and Rehoboam.
- Biblical King Saul is King Labayu (and David a leader of a group of Habiru mercenaries) as mentioned in the Amarna letters. This makes Saul and David contemporaries of Amenhotep III, Akhenaten, Neferneferuaten (Queen Nefertiti), Smenkhkare, Tutankhamun, Ay and Haremheb.
- Further identified by name in the Amarna letters are the biblical characters Ishbaal, Joab, Baanah, David and Jesse.
- Moses was born during the reign of Khaneferre Sobekhotep IV (1529 - 1510 BC), and the Exodus was under Pharaoh Dudimose (1448 BC).
- Joseph served as vizier in Egypt under Amenemhat III (c. 1662 BC). Extremely high Nile floods occurred for several years during this period, which would have resulted in the "seven years of famine" referred to in the Bible.
- *Both the house and tomb of Joseph have been unearthed by archaeologists, and are located at Tell ed-Daba.*

Needless to say, the book is fascinating reading. If you know nothing of Egyptian history, the book will at times be a tough read. But interspersed with very difficult transliterated names are compelling stories of significant archaeological discoveries. By looking in the right *time periods* for evidence of Israel's presence in Egypt, much is uncovered that matches biblical history.