

Thutmose III was not the Shishak of 1 Kings 14:25–26

In *Journal of Creation* 25(3), I read the article by Patrick Clarke regarding Thutmose III's Asiatic campaign. His evidence that Thutmose III was not the Shishak of 1 Kings 14:25–26 is compelling. At the close of his article Clarke ends, "the search for the real Shishak continues". My question arises from a book that I'm reading entitled *Invitation to Biblical Interpretation*, by Andreas J. Kostenberger and Richard D. Patterson. Commenting on a timeline they propose in the book in regards to archaeology's support of the historicity of the Word of God, this paragraph is found:

"With regard to the time of the divided monarchy, numerous discoveries aid in the fuller understanding of the biblical record in this period (931–841). In the first part of this era, Pharaoh Sheshonq [*Shoshenk*] I of Egypt's twenty-second dynasty (biblical Shishak) invaded Israel (1Kgs.14:25–26). Sheshonq's own account has been found in the great temple at Karnak. In it he lists more than 150 Palestinian cities that he attacked and despoiled" (p. 112).

A footnote to this paragraph reads, "See Breasted, *Ancient Records of Egypt*, 4,348–55. See also William Petrie, *Egypt and Israel* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1911) and especially, Hoerth, *Archaeology*, 300–302." Clarke, in his article, also relies on Breasted's *Ancient Records of Egypt* for some of his conclusions. My question: is there further evidence that Clarke has not considered as he concludes that the biblical Shishak has not been identified, and are Kostenberger and Patterson correct in their conclusion that Shishak is

none other than Pharaoh *Shoshenk* I of Egypt's twenty-second dynasty? Thank you for your consideration.

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Patrick Clarke replies:

Thank you for your encouraging comment that "[my] evidence was compelling that Thutmose III was not the Shishak of 1 Kings 14:25–26". My statement, "the search for the real Shishak continues" was meant to be understood within the context of my ongoing series of papers in this journal, i.e. having dismissed Thutmose III as a Shishak candidate, the search continues as we (the readers and I) examine other such candidates, *until such time as the real Shishak is revealed*. Thus your statement that "he [Clarke] concludes that biblical Shishak has not been identified" is incorrect—the only conclusion thus far is that Thutmose III was not Shishak.

The two papers preceding this one in *J. Creation* 25(3) 2011 also investigated the problems inherent in the Conventional Egyptian Chronology (CEC) and thus Egypt's historical links to Bible history. As I pointed out from the start of my investigations, the search through this series for the identity of Shishak, and many other individuals relevant to the correct chronology of the Ancient Near East, will be a lengthy step-by-step process taking several years. Not least because one first has to deal with a number of widely held but erroneous claims made by others who realize the problems inherent in the CEC.

As an Egyptologist, I would be failing my discipline and the readers if I did not consider (and work through in this peer-reviewed context) all the available evidence leading up to my own conclusions on the identification of the biblical

Shishak. Thus, since Thutmose III has been widely promoted as a candidate for Shishak, my last two papers¹ used Egyptological, topographical, or petrographical evidence to show this notion to be untenable.

But that does not mean that I do not believe that the biblical Shishak has yet been identified, and in none of my papers to date have I made such a conclusion.

Egyptian chronology needs revision

I contend, and am certainly not alone in this, that the CEC is overextended by centuries and, consequently, the entire CEC edifice needs to be thoroughly re-examined. The problems are manifold: the dynastic periods of Egyptian history devised by Manetho are known to be erroneous constructs (the ancient Egyptians did not, as far as we know, understand 'dynasty' in anything like the way 21st-century Western thought does). The archaeological dating methods employed are inspired by evolution-promoting concepts such as the Three-Age system (Stone, Bronze, Iron), which was devised by secular archaeologists (notably the Danish archaeologist Thomsen) to do what Lyell did for geology; namely to rid the respective disciplines of Moses (specifically Genesis).

To give even a modest answer to whether or not Shoshenk I could be identified as the biblical Shishak would take more space than this letter response allows. The Shoshenk synchronism will be addressed in due course, but it remains only one step in a long investigative process. Once the corrections to the CEC have taken place, Sheshonq will have moved from his present synchronism with Rehoboam to a much later date.

But I will say that when the relevant Shoshenk campaign location names are plotted onto a map of the region (using the same method I employed in 25(3)), it becomes

obvious that Shoshenk seized only one Judean fortification—Aijalon. Apart from that, the Pharaoh's army swept across the central highland, north of Jerusalem, before capturing one *Israelite* location after another. The Bible states that Shishak's objective was *Judah* and its capital city, whereas Shoshenk's objectives were the Transjordan region and the Jezreel Valley—Jerusalem does not feature in his itinerary.

The Bible is inerrant, therefore whatever Shishak's real identity was, he had an interest in Judah, and Judah alone.² Biblical scholars and biblical archaeologists may claim that they believe the Bible to be inerrant, yet they are all too often influenced by secular dating and secular archaeological discoveries; when the secular states one thing and the Bible another, it is the Bible that suffers much emendation.

The book you mention by Köstenberger and Patterson has generally been positively reviewed. However, the section you quote illustrates the common tendency for writers in this field to regurgitate subject material without checking to see if new discoveries have challenged the established position.³

You mention that "In the article by Clarke he also relies on Breasted, *Ancient Records of Egypt* for some of his conclusions." Not so. Egyptologists frequently refer to Breasted—I do it all the time. However, over a century has passed since Breasted first produced his *Ancient Records*. Discoveries since have rendered some of his work as outdated; the linking of Shishak to Shoshenk I being an obvious one. Any competent Egyptologist, or historian for that matter, would take pains to check the validity of work by any of the early pioneers in this field. It's one reason why Budge is treated with much caution nowadays. My conclusions come primarily from the inerrancy of Scripture and secondarily, where relevant, from carefully researched records:

this naturally involves reading and translating textual material (in this case the Egyptian language) for myself to verify its status.

Further, you give the impression that Köstenberger and Patterson regard the thoughts of Hoerth as helpful to the Shoshenk debate. Having read for myself Hoerth's *Bible Archaeology: An Exploration of the History and Culture of Early Civilizations*, he has a high stated regard for biblical inspiration. Yet he is a theistic evolutionist; this is contrary to the plain reading of Scripture. He holds to evolutionary ages of development, such as the Stone, Bronze, and Iron Ages, so he claims man developed the skills of metalworking over a long period of time (pp. 36, 82); this conflicts with the Bible which clearly states that Adam's immediate descendants were competent technologists from the beginning (Genesis 4). Hoerth further claims that "fossils and mastodons date to prehistoric times" (p. 15). He also invokes a naturalistic explanation for the destruction of Sodom (p. 98), casts doubt on the number of Israelites in the wilderness (p. 178), is non-committal about the extent of the Noachian Flood (p. 189), and allows for billions of geological years, something he considers to be a non-issue (p. 199). This last matter is guaranteed to undermine any good emanating from Köstenberger and Patterson's work, neither of whom appear to be competent in the difficult discipline of Egyptology in any case.⁴

Finally, responding to your question, are "Köstenberger and Patterson correct in their conclusion that Shishak is none other than Pharaoh Sheshonq I of Egypt's twenty-second dynasty?" The answer is no, but you will need to wait for a fuller explanation as to why not.

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References

1. Clarke, P., Was Jerusalem the Kadesh of Thutmose III's 1st Asiatic campaign?—topographic and petrographic evidences, *J. Creation* 25(3):48–55, 2011; Clarke, P., Was Thutmose III the biblical Shishak?—claims for the 'Jerusalem' bas-relief at Karnak investigated, *J. Creation* 25(1):48–56, 2011.
2. Note that this is not an argument from silence, but from 'conspicuous absence'.
3. Köstenberger, A.J. and Patterson, R.D., *Invitation to Biblical interpretation: Exploring the Hermeneutical Triad of History, Literature, and Theology*, Kregel Academic & Professional, Grand Rapids, MI, p. 112, 2011.
4. See www.amazon.com/Invitation-Biblical-Interpretation-Hermeneutical-Theological/dp/08254304X for author information

Flood models and biblical realism

I thoroughly appreciated Jonathan Sarfati's recent viewpoint (Flood models and biblical realism, *J. Creation* 24(3):46–53, 2010), concerning Flood models. And I agree wholeheartedly that we ought to hold the Bible strongly, while at the same time holding scientific models loosely.

Nevertheless, I have some concern regarding his section about the rainbow, and specifically with this statement: "There are plenty of examples in Scripture where God took pre-existing objects or actions and bestowed a new covenantal meaning on them. For example, bread and wine obviously pre-dated the Lord's Supper."

While I don't consider this a matter of utmost importance, I do believe we must tread very carefully here.

Bread and wine themselves were not invested with any covenantal meaning outside of a certain context, and to this day have no covenantal meaning *outside* of the act of the celebrating the Lord's Supper, a church ordinance. As a believer, I can eat bread and drink wine at any