

O. T. TEXTUAL CRITICISM

VARIANT READING RESOLUTION

TEXT: Exodus 12:40

PROBLEM: A discrepancy exists in Exodus 12:40 regarding the geographical extent of the Israelite sojourn described in this verse. This period of time had just come to an end with the Israelites' departure from Egypt under Moses (Exodus 12:31–39). Either the sojourn described in Exodus 12:40 was limited to Egypt, or it was broadened to the land of Egypt *and* the land of Canaan, signaling that the sojourns by Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the land of promise were to be included in this 430 years of expatriate residence.

EXTERNAL EVIDENCE:

VARIANT 1: The Israelite sojourn in Egypt consisted of about 215 years, which was preceded by about 215 years of residence in Canaan, accounting for an overall sojourn of 430 years. There are two related but differently worded alternatives for this variant among the ancient biblical witnesses. The reading of the Hebrew text is either *וּמוֹשֵׁב בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר יָשְׁבוּ בְּאֶרֶץ-מִצְרַיִם וּבְאֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן שְׁלֹשִׁים שָׁנָה וָאַרְבַּע מֵאוֹת שָׁנָה* (LXX: “And the dwelling of the sons of Israel *during* which they dwelled in the land of Egypt and in the land of Canaan *was* 430 [or 435] years.”) or *וּמוֹשֵׁב בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאֲבֹתָם אֲשֶׁר יָשְׁבוּ בְּאֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן וּבְאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם שְׁלֹשִׁים שָׁנָה וָאַרְבַּע מֵאוֹת שָׁנָה* (SP: “Now the residing of the sons of Israel and their fathers *during* which they resided in the land of Canaan and in the land of Egypt *was* 430 years.”).

PRO

1. This reading is supported by the following evidence: Hebrew manuscripts (mss): the SP (Samaritan Pentateuch); Versions: the LXX (Greek Septuagint, a 3rd-century-BC Greek translation of the Pentateuch), Syriac mss; Historians: Josephus.

2. The LXX and the SP form a double tradition that not infrequently preserves the original wording of the Hebrew Bible, including the textual variants in the genealogies of Genesis 11 (Petrovich forthcoming 3).

3. The LXX presumably was translated from an original Hebrew text of the Torah during the 3rd century BC (Rohl 2015: 78). It must be emphasized that the reading of the LXX is quite ancient, with the translation of the Pentateuch extending into the first half of the 3rd century BC. The primary manuscript behind the MT, the Leningrad Codex, dates back only to about AD 1009, so the possibility exists that the LXX preserves the correct reading.

4. The SP is of a very early date and is an important witness to a form of the text that once enjoyed widespread use, as shown by its many agreements with the DSS. The SP was written in a special script that derived from an archaized form of the Old Hebrew script of the Hasmonean Period (Würthwein 1995: 45–46), and the use of this archaic script in the SP—which probably predates the Babylonian captivity—suggests a much greater antiquity for the original text behind the SP (Rohl 2015: 78).

5. Josephus even notes explicitly that the Israelites lived in Egypt “215 years only after Jacob entered Egypt” (*Antiquities of the Jews*: 2.15.2). Thus “215 years” actually appears in an ancient source, and this source must be brought to bear on the resolution of the textual variant in Exodus 12:40.

CON

1. Cf. Variant 1, PRO 2. While the LXX and the SP are known to preserve the original wording of the Hebrew text, their often-matching preservation of both correct and spurious readings suggests that they possess fairly common ancestry, which may or may not be the purest transmissional line.

2. As Carpenter (2016: 474) keenly observed, the LXX and the SP reverse the order of Egypt and Canaan in their texts, which reveals no insignificant difference. The former reads, “in the land of Egypt and in the land of Canaan,” while the latter reads, “in the land of Canaan and in the land of Egypt.” This reversal in order strongly implies the likelihood of the spurious nature of the variant in either form, given the flippancy with which the order was preserved.

3. Cf. Variant 1, PRO 3. While the LXX undoubtedly was translated from *an* original Hebrew text of the Torah, there is no way to demonstrate that its underlying Hebrew text reflects *the* original text of the Torah, or that it is inherently superior qualitatively to the earliest exemplars that underlie the readings in the MT. Plus, the LXX has been shown to be inferior to the MT in chronological matters (Thiele 1994: 90–94), although Thiele was concerned only with the chronological data for the period of the Israelite kingdoms.

4. Cf. Variant 1, PRO 3. The addition of “for them and their fathers” after “*during* which they dwelled in the land of Egypt and in the land of Canaan” in Alexandrinus’s version of the LXX raises a major chronological dilemma (Carpenter 2016: 474). Namely, this unique addition implies that the time the Israelites spent in Egypt included residence in Canaan by the generation of Moses and the generation(s) of those peoples’ fathers, which is best understood to be ancestors or progenitors. More importantly, this clearly-spurious variant in Alexandrinus betrays itself as a later scribal addition designed to justify the reading that the sojourn was in Egypt and in Canaan, adding that the events must be linked to those of Moses’s generation and to the lifetimes of their fathers (i.e. going back to Abraham’s stay in Canaan). This reading brings out the revised chronology more clearly (Lightfoot 1982: 144).

5. Vaticanus’s version of the LXX’s text for Exodus 12:40 uniquely records the sojourn not as consisting of 430 years, but of 435 years (i.e. 430 + ΠΕΝΤΕ [“five”]). While the text of Vaticanus (B) usually is the most reliable of the mostly-complete mss of the early centuries AD (Zuntz 1953: 83; Petrovich 1998: 44), here its text represents yet another spurious addition to the original reading of the verse that describes a summary of Israel’s sojourn before the exodus.

6. Cf. Variant 1, PRO 4. While the SP’s use of a script from the Hasmonean Period may reflect origins dating to the 2nd century BC, which by itself makes the SP an important witness, the fact that this archaized form of script is similar to the Hebrew script predating the Babylonian Captivity has no bearing on whether or not the SP predates the invasion of 587 BC. The Temple-façade coins of the Bar Kochba Revolt (AD 132–135) also use the archaic script, but no numismatist who studies ancient coins would venture to suggest that these coins—or any other coins with archaic script—were minted before 587 BC.

7. The added words in the SP and the LXX are the result of Midrashic exegesis and are not part of the biblical text (Cassuto 1997: 86).

8. Cf. Variant 1, PRO 5. While it can be granted that the “215 years” in Josephus’s text does provide one ancient source that mentions this number, his historical reference is quite different from a direct reference in the biblical text—Hebrew or Greek Bible—to an Egyptian sojourn of 215 years. The lack of any textual support in the Bible for a 215-year Egyptian sojourn severely hinders Variant 1.

9. Cf. Variant 1, PRO 5. Josephus is not a reliable source for anyone desiring to use his work to support the short sojourn view. After all, in *Antiquities of the Jews*: 2.9.1, Josephus expressly stated that the Israelites spent 400 years under the afflictions in Egypt. On account of this, Lightfoot (1982: 144) judged that Josephus is inconsistent with himself on this subject. Certainly no supporters of the short sojourn theory would support the notion that an affliction of 185 years in Canaan preceded the Egyptian affliction. That is, if the Israelites’ affliction lasted 400 years, and they only resided in Egypt for only 215 years, the implication is that their forefathers would have undergone affliction in Canaan for 185 years prior to their relocation to Egypt.

Josephus, certainly no first-hand witness to the events, is incorrect about the timeframe of the Israelite affliction in Egypt, as it lasted only 114 years, not 400 years (Petrovich forthcoming 2; see also Rea’s [1961: 8] 100–200 years of enslavement if the 18th Dynasty is the time that the “new king” arose over Egypt [Exodus 1:8], which is the proper dynasty for the inception of Israel’s affliction). Carpenter (2016: 475) correctly stated that Israel “enjoyed a significant time of prosperity and freedom while Joseph lived (Gen 50) and before Israel became a great multitude.”

VARIANT 2: The Israelite sojourn in Egypt was 430 years. The reading of the Hebrew text is either וּמוֹשָׁב בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר יָשְׁבוּ בְּמִצְרַיִם שְׁלֹשִׁים שָׁנָה וָאַרְבַּע מֵאוֹת שָׁנָה (MT: “Now the residing of the sons of Israel *during* which they resided in Egypt *was* 430 years.”) or וּמוֹשָׁב בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר יָשְׁבוּ בְּאֶרֶץ-מִצְרַיִם שְׁלֹשִׁים שָׁנָה וָאַרְבַּע מֵאוֹת שָׁנָה (DSS: “Now the residing of the sons of Israel *during* which they resided in the land of Egypt *was* 430 years.”).

PRO

1. This reading is supported by the following evidence: Hebrew manuscripts (mss): the Masoretic Hebrew text (MT) and the Leningrad Codex, the Dead Sea Scrolls (DSS), and Targums; Versions: Syriac mss, the Vulgate, and the Peshitta.

2. Cf. Variant 1, PRO 3. While the MT dates back only to about AD 1009, it represents an underlying Hebrew text that goes back much further, since the MT itself derives from the *Sopherim* (specifically the *Tannaim* of the 1st century BC to the 3rd century AD), who faithfully and accurately passed down the text. Moreover, “[The MT] has repeatedly been demonstrated to be the best witness to the text. Any deviation from it therefore requires justification” (Würthwein 1995: 116; see also Riggs 1971: 24).

3. The discovery of Cave 4 at Qumran in August of 1952 produced not only the most voluminous number of DSS among all of Qumran’s caves, but also a witness (4Q14 Exodus) to this textual variant in Exodus 12:40 that dates to the 1st century BC and affirms the reading in the MT. The text of 4Q14 Exodus, however, reads “in the land of Egypt,” rather than “in Egypt.” While the absence of “in the land of Canaan” in the DSS’s text strengthens the reading of Variant 2 significantly, especially given that the DSS date to a time when the LXX was the prevailing text among the Jews of the day, the addition of “in the land” probably represents a compromise. For more, see Variant 2, PRO 5 under INTERNAL EVIDENCE (p. 7).

4. Most modern versions follow the reading of Variant 2, including the King James Version, the American Standard Version, the New King James Version, the New International Version, the

New American Standard Bible (along with the NAS Update version), the New Revised Standard Version, the Complete Jewish Bible, and the Russian Synodal Version.

CON

1. Since the LXX and the SP form a double tradition that not infrequently preserves the original wording of the Hebrew Bible, including the textual variants in the genealogies of Genesis 11, the reading of the double tradition of the MT and the DSS in Exodus 12:40 may not be as reliable as Variant 1.

2. Cf. Variant 2, PRO 4. Modern versions are not too vital in the solving of variants related to the ancient biblical text, whether related to the Hebrew Bible or the Greek Bible. Their only value in this arena is to represent recent decisions made by those who must choose between textual variants.

TENTATIVE CONCLUSION BASED ON EXTERNAL EVIDENCE:

The antiquity of the LXX and the SP renders their texts as important in determining the originality of any variation in the Hebrew Bible. Therefore, there must remain the possibility that they correctly preserve the addition of Canaan as another intended location for the time of the sojourn. However, the MT preserved by the Hebrew scribes carries great authority with it, and its reading should be overturned only with great care. In addition, the reading in the MT is joined by the text in the DSS, which mss were written when the LXX's text was the prevailing authority among scribes and authors of the time. The importance of Variant 1, CON 2 cannot be overstated: the reversing of the order of Egypt and Canaan in the texts of the LXX and the SP weakens Variant 1's support from external evidence significantly. Therefore, while the textual witnesses are split almost evenly, the external evidence clearly favors Variant 2.

INTERNAL EVIDENCE:

VARIANT 1: The Israelite sojourn in Egypt consisted of about 215 years, which was preceded by about 215 years of residence in Canaan, accounting for an overall sojourn of 430 years. There are two related but differently worded alternatives for this variant among the ancient biblical witnesses. The reading of the Hebrew text is either *וּמוֹשֵׁב בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר יָשְׁבוּ בְּאֶרֶץ-מִצְרַיִם וּבְאֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן שְׁלֹשִׁים שָׁנָה וָאַרְבַּע מֵאוֹת שָׁנָה* (LXX: "And the dwelling of the sons of Israel *during* which they dwelled in the land of Egypt and in the land of Canaan *was* 430 [or 435] years.") or *וּמוֹשֵׁב בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאֲבֹתָם אֲשֶׁר יָשְׁבוּ בְּאֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן וּבְאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם שְׁלֹשִׁים שָׁנָה וָאַרְבַּע מֵאוֹת שָׁנָה* (SP: "Now the residing of the sons of Israel and their fathers *during* which they resided in the land of Canaan and in the land of Egypt *was* 430 years.").

PRO

1. The 215-year sojourn is attractive to many scholars because it better accommodates the "fourth generation" of Genesis 15:16 (Merrill 1987: 77). The LXX supports the idea that the 430 years cannot account for the mere four generations that define the time from God's prophetic message to Abram about the Egyptian sojourn (Genesis 15) to the time of the exodus. A 215-year sojourn easily accommodates four generations, but a 430-year sojourn cannot accommodate four generations nearly as efficiently.

2. The reading of the LXX and the SP aids the proponents of the so-called "New Chronology," who need to have a short sojourn in Egypt to fit their chronological scheme. Rohl (2015: 79) concluded that by adding the 215 years to an exodus-date of 1447 BC (his date) one arrives at a date for the start of the Israelite sojourn in *ca.* 1662 BC, a date that he tied to the reign of Amenemhat III of Dynasty 12.

3. The 430 years in Galatians 3:17 points to a shorter sojourn (Anderson and Giles 2012: 81), as Paul wrote of God’s promises to Abraham as having been fulfilled with the writing of the law at Mt. Sinai, some 430 years after the patriarch’s time, not from Jacob’s arrival in Egypt (Rohl 2015: 79).

CON

1. Cf. Variant 1, PRO 1. One argument against Variant 1, PRO 1 can be found below under Variant 2, PRO 3. Another argument against Variant 1, PRO 1 is that four generations can be delineated between the entry into Egypt by Jacob’s house and the exodus under Moses. Levi was about 44 years old when he descended to Egypt with his father, Jacob, and Moses was in the fourth generation down from Levi: (1) Levi, who lived 137 years; (2) Kohath, who lived 133 years; (3) Amram, who lived 137 years; (4) Moses, who left Egypt at about 80 years of age (Merrill 1987: 77).

2. Cf. Variant 1, PRO 2. While Rohl is correct that Dynasty 12 is the time of Joseph’s generation, and that of his sons Ephraim and Manasseh, his date of *ca.* 1662 BC is the result of radical reconstruction of Egyptian chronology. This redating is not merely a 25-year difference, the standard maximum deviation used by virtually all Egyptologists for the differentiating of dates according to the three chronological positions (i.e. high, medium, and low chronology), but a deviation of nearly two centuries.

While Rohl (2015: 79) has dated Amenemhat III’s reign from *ca.* 1680–1633 BC, the correct date for his reign is *ca.* 1859–1813 BC (Petrovich 2016: 234), a difference of a startling 180 years. While this venue is not the proper one for explaining or critiquing the radical revisionism of Rohl’s Egyptian chronological scheme, it must be noted that he stands apart from the entire field of Egyptology on this matter, except for a few of his followers with advanced degrees. In other words, he took his revisionistic scheme to the untrained public, rather than carefully articulating it and submitting it to the field of professional Egyptology and having his scheme (potentially) approved through peer review.

3. Cf. Variant 1, PRO 3. Contrary to Rohl’s thinking, the 430 years in Galatians 3:17 instead measures from the final promise God gave to Jacob before he departed from Canaan, which occurred in the same year that he entered Egypt (1876 BC), to the year of the giving of the law at Mt. Sinai (1446 BC), which occurred in the same year as the exodus from Egypt (Petrovich forthcoming 1). As Merrill (1987: 76) correctly stated, Paul was not speaking of Abraham, *per se*, but of the Abrahamic promise, the last expression of which was to Jacob, exactly 430 years before the exodus. MacArthur (1987: 85) advocated that the repetition of the Abrahamic covenant to Jacob occurred exactly 430 years prior to the giving of the Mosaic covenant at Sinai, while Gromacki (2002: 100) agreed that this probably refers to the reaffirmation of the Abrahamic covenant to Jacob when he descended to Egypt.

VARIANT 2: The Israelite sojourn in Egypt was 430 years. The reading of the Hebrew text is either וּמוֹשֶׁב בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר יָשְׁבוּ בְּמִצְרָיִם שְׁלֹשִׁים שָׁנָה וָאַרְבַּע מֵאוֹת שָׁנָה (MT: “Now the residing of the sons of Israel *during* which they resided in Egypt *was* 430 years.”) or וּמוֹשֶׁב בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר יָשְׁבוּ בְּאֶרֶץ-מִצְרָיִם שְׁלֹשִׁים שָׁנָה וָאַרְבַּע מֵאוֹת שָׁנָה (DSS: “Now the residing of the sons of Israel *during* which they resided in the land of Egypt *was* 430 years.”).

PRO

1. There is no reason to suspect any form of accidental error on the part of a Hebrew scribe as the reason behind the potential omission of וּבְאֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן “and in the land of Canaan” in the texts underlying the reading of the MT and DSS in Exodus 12:40. Propp (1999: 365) noted that Variant 2 is preferable because while one easily can envisage the pristine text undergoing progressive expansion, it is

more difficult to account for the MT's text as having been abbreviated here. The only accidental error that seemingly could qualify is one of omission, such as *parablepsis* ("looking to the side," meaning that a scribe accidentally skipped from one place to another). Firstly, the text of the LXX would have read בארץ־מצרים "in the land of Egypt," thus including ארץ between the ב preposition and מצרים, and the absence of ארץ cannot be accounted for in the MT's reading במצרים "in Egypt."

Secondly, if the eye of the scribe of the underlying text of Variant 1 would have finished copying a set of words by ending with ישבו or ישב (if the omission was pre-850 BC [Petrovich 2016: 199]) "they resided," then returned with his eyes to the last letters of what he had just recorded (i.e. בו or שב), there is no matching letter-combination to which he could have returned on his exemplar by mistake. Or, if—after writing ישבו or ישב on his new copy—his mind would have remembered to look for the letters בא in בארץ־מצרים when he returned to his exemplar, his eyes only could have taken him to בארץ כנען "in the land of Canaan," meaning he mistakenly would have written ומושב בני ישראל אשר ישבו בארץ כנען שלשים שנה וארבע מאות בארץ־מצרים "Now the residing of the sons of Israel *during* which they resided in the land of Canaan was 430 years." Obviously this error did not produce the text of the MT or DSS, making an accidental error of omission due to sight virtually impossible when attempting to account for the shorter reading in these textual traditions.

2. To date, no scholar has ventured to suggest a logical explanation for why a scribe purposefully would have omitted "the land of" (before "Egypt") and "and the land of Canaan" from his text, if Variant 1 is original and the LXX preserves that reading in Greek. Since there is no logical explanation for an accidental error of omission, the burden of proof falls on the shoulders of Variant 1's proponents to offer a compelling reason for an intentional error—actually two errors, if counting them separately—of omission.

3. Within the context surrounding Exodus 12:40, it certainly would be more natural to reckon the time of the departure from Egypt in terms of the entire length of the Israelites' stay in Egypt, rather than adding the previous period in Canaan to the sojourn (Riggs 1971: 24). After all, the entire story from the beginning of the book is focused on the nation's stay in the foreign land of Egypt, not their earlier residence in Canaan under the patriarchs who lived before Jacob. Moreover, Canaan is the land of promise, and thus their home. The outstanding event for the Israelites is the anticipated and promised return to their homeland, thus making the purpose of this counting of their foreign sojourn to distinguish it from life lived in their native habitation. Adding the dwelling of their forefathers in Canaan to this timespan only would demphasize the force of the point being made by the author, an oddity that interferes with the flow of the text.

4. Cf. Variant 1, CON 2 under EXTERNAL EVIDENCE. Probably the Hebrew text underlying the LXX represents the original spurious variant, because the reading in the LXX, which placed Egypt before Canaan, can explain the rise of the reading in the SP, while the reading in the SP, which places Canaan before Egypt, cannot explain the rise of the variant in the LXX. After all, the chronological order of the locations where the Israelites resided was Canaan first, then Egypt. A scribe who saw in his exemplar that his forefathers resided in Canaan (first) and (then) in Egypt would not "fix" the text by altering the wording to state that they resided in Egypt (first) and (then) in Canaan. However, if a scribe saw in his exemplar that they resided in Egypt (first) and (then) in Canaan, which is the opposite of chronological order, he definitely would be prone to fix the chronological "error" in his exemplar. For this reason, Propp (1999: 365) referred to the SP's reading as more logical than the LXX's reading.

Therefore, the Hebrew-version of the reading in the LXX must have led to the reading in the SP. This progression points instructively to the most important canon of lower textual criticism: prefer the reading that best explains the rise of the other readings (Petrovich 1998: 67), as the reading from which the origin of the other readings most easily can be explained is most likely to be original (Nestle 1901: 157). Black (1980: 35) referred to this as the basic principle of internal evidence. Because the reading of the LXX

is the first generation of intentional scribal errors of addition for the variant in Exodus 12:40, the explanation of the rise of this reading from the original reading (Variant 2) now can be offered.

The scribe who first would have altered the Hebrew text behind the LXX obviously would have seen “in Egypt” as the first and only location of the foreign sojourn and felt compelled to retain this location first, out of respect and deference, awkwardly adding “and in the land of Canaan” afterward. He obviously would have been convinced that 430 years simply was too long of a timeframe for the stay in Egypt, probably because he understood there to be too few generations between Jacob and Moses to account for the “four generations” that allegedly defined the time from God’s prophetic message to Abram about the Egyptian sojourn (Genesis 15) to the time when Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt.

Kitchen (2003: 355–356) perceptively referred to the predicted 400 years of the Egyptian sojourn (Genesis 15:16) as a number that was cast as a round figure and looked into the future, and he argued persuasively that the Hebrew word *dor*, which usually is translated “four generations,” actually means “spans,” given that the West Semitic cognate *daru* was used to denote the seven spans that elapsed between the fall of the Akkadian Empire and the accession of Shamshi-Adad I of Assyria (*ca.* 1800 BC), whose scribes would have measured these spans as totaling between 530 and 730 years. The juxtaposition of the 400 years with the four spans of Genesis 15:16 may suggest that the *dor* here is to be understood as a century (Merrill 1987: 75), and thus there would be no need to find four father-to-son generations between Jacob and Moses, which scholars so often attempt to do.

The scribe who first would have altered Exodus 12:40 probably felt compelled to avoid the problem of having to squeeze a mere four generations of people into the enormously-long period of 430 years between Jacob and Moses. Instead, he could have resolved this dilemma by reducing the actual sojourn in Egypt to only 215 years, given that 215 years is the proper timeframe between the call for Abram to leave Haran and the descent of Jacob into Egypt (Merrill 1987: 76). After all, even today the theory of a 215-year sojourn is attractive to many scholars because it accommodates more easily the “fourth generation” of Genesis 15:16 (Merrill 1987: 77), which is difficult to reconcile with a period of 430 years.

5. Cf. Variant 2, PRO 3 under EXTERNAL EVIDENCE (p. 3). The scribe of the DSS who penned 4Q14 Exodus most likely saw “in the land of Egypt and in the land of Canaan” in LXX mss and—although he chose to resist the temptation to add Canaan to the list of places that comprise the 430-year sojourn—figured that his Hebrew exemplar omitted the words “the land of” by mistake. Therefore, he committed an intentional error of addition. In other words, he added the words intentionally but expected that he was correcting an earlier mistake of accidental omission. Intentional errors are less numerous than unintentional errors, primarily deriving from attempts by scribes to improve the text in various ways, no doubt implementing changes in good faith under the impression that an error had crept into the text during an earlier phase of transmission (Greenlee 1964: 66; Black 1980: 17).

6. Regarding ancient history’s voice on whether the Israelite sojourn in Egypt lasted 215 or 430 years, the evidence is completely one-sided. The only legitimate candidate for the exodus pharaoh in Egypt’s Dynasty 13, 18, or 19—the only dynasties representing choices offered by scholars, at present—is Amenhotep II, who alone fits *all* of the measurable requirements of the exodus pharaoh’s biography (Petrovich 2006: 81–110). Hebrew inscriptions in Egypt and Sinai date from 1840–1446 BC (see especially Sinai 377, 376, 375a, and 361) and name three biblical figures: Asenath, Ahisamach, and Moses (Petrovich 2016). Apiru (= Hebrew) slaves are documented as vintners in Egypt during the reign of Thutmose III (= the father of the exodus pharaoh), but not soon after, while “Israelites” appear in a conquest list on an inscription (Berlin Pedestal 21687) that dates to the reign of Amenhotep II (van der Veen et al. 2010: 15; Görg 2012: 60), which almost certainly equals his final Asiatic conquest in November of Year 9 (= 1446 BC). A myriad of other examples can be cited, but this representative list should suffice.

CON

1. Cf. Variant 2, PRO 1. The words “and in the land of Canaan” seemingly dropped out of the MT and the DSS at some stage during the process of textual transmission (Rohl 2015: 78).

2. This view conflicts with the view of some scholars about the 430 years in Galatians 3:17, which seems to measure from the promise given to Abraham to the reception of the law at Mt. Sinai (Hoffmeier 2007: 226; Rohl 2015: 79). Numerous commentators on the book of Galatians have connected the beginning of the 430 years with the promise that was given to Abram and confirmed in Genesis 15 (Bruce 1982: 172; Boice 1976: 463). The crucial issue in these verses is when to begin the 430 years that ended with the giving of the Mosaic law at Mt. Sinai in 1446 BC. If the 430 years began with the promise given to Abraham, then this only allows an Egyptian sojourn of 215 years. Yet if the 430 years started with God’s confirmation of the covenant to Jacob in Genesis 46:1–4 (Gromacki 2002: 100), the sojourn in Egypt would have encompassed 430 years. Proponents of the late exodus view (Hoffmeier, Kitchen, Currid) and the chronological reconstructionists (Rohl, Bimson, and van der Veen) favor a sojourn of 215 years.

EVALUATION OF INTERNAL EVIDENCE:

Variant 1 is supported best by PRO 1 and 3: a short sojourn fits the notion of a “fourth generation” in Genesis 15:13 easiest, and a cursory reading of Galatians 3:17 leads one to conclude that the 430 years measured there document the time from Abraham’s receiving or confirmation of the covenant to the giving of the law at Sinai. One hermeneutical flaw with these two PRO arguments, however, is that neither of them stems directly from Exodus 12. Plus, (1) the “fourth generation” may be understood best as the “fourth span,” but even if not, four generations can be measured from Levi to Moses; and (2) a more careful study of Galatians 3:17’s text reveals that the promise denoting the 430 years refers to a promise given to one of Abraham’s seed, almost certainly the final reaffirmation of the promise described in Canaan, which was given to Jacob at Beersheba (Genesis 46:1–4) in the same year that he departed for Egypt.

Variant 2, PRO 1 is amply supported by PRO 1, 3, and 4. There is virtually no plausible scenario in which an accidental scribal error of omission could have led to the rise of Variant 2, and no advocate of Variant 1 has offered an explanation of how to account for intentional omission. Plus, the greater context of Exodus 1–12 and the local context of Exodus 12:40 are so squarely focused on the plight of Israel in a foreign land that any cryptic addition of the earlier patriarchs’ stay in Canaan, their actual homeland, makes no sense internally or logically. Finally, the only reading that reasonably explains the rise of the other readings, the most important canon for solving textual variants based on internal evidence, is Variant 2. In light of the information gleaned from transcriptional probabilities, intrinsic probabilities, and ancient history, the internal evidence overwhelmingly favors Variant 2.

FINAL CONCLUSION:

Both external and internal evidence convincingly point to Variant 2, the reading of “in Egypt,” as the original text found in Exodus 12:40. The reading in the LXX, the Samaritan Pentateuch, and Josephus—although he offers conflicting positions on the issue—cannot supplant the reading of the MT and the DSS, as the evidence for Variant 1 is forced, leading to a non-contextual interpretation and an indefensible position. The textual and historical data related to the internal evidence clearly makes a reading of “in the land of Egypt and in the land of Canaan” (Variant 1) impossible to sustain with credibility. Variant 2 also suits the context of Exodus 12:40 far more naturally, as the entire story—from the book’s outset—deals solely with the nation’s stay in Egypt, not with the patriarchs’ sojourn in Canaan before Jacob departed for Egypt. Choose Variant 2 with great confidence, giving preference to the reading found in the MT: “in Egypt.”

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Produced by Douglas Petrovich
dp@exegesisinternational