

Getting to Know Your Bible

Is there any archeological proof of the plagues in Egyptian archeological history?

As with many events described in the Bible, it's natural to ask this question in order to feel more confident about the validity of the Bible. However, does an absence of archeological evidence mean that an event did not happen? The answer is a definite "no," especially when one understands the limits of archeology. Consider the following about the material left for archeological study:

Only a fraction has survived: about 1/10
Only a fraction as been surveyed: 6/10
Only a fraction has been excavated: 1/50
Only a fraction has been examined: 1/10
Only a fraction has been published: 1/2

Using these generous estimates, the amount of material that would be available for study would be:

$$1/10 \times 6/10 \times 1/50 \times 1/10 \times 1/2 = 6/100,000$$

In regard to Egyptian material, consider the following:

Every temple in Egypt had papyri records describing its personnel and their tasks month by month. From a small temple at Abusir we know that it would have taken ten meters of papyri per month or 120 meters per year to list such records. If we were to estimate that there were only one hundred temples in Egypt, and were to multiply this times the 2,000 year period from 2500-500 BC, we could calculate that the Egyptians must have used a total of 24 million meters of papyri for their temple records. Of this grand total the only temple records that have been recovered are thirteen meters from Abusir and a similar length from Ilahun.¹

¹ Edwin Yamauchi, *The Stones and the Scriptures* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1972), 157. All other material is from the same source.

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