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On the Consistency of the Wandering Year
as Backbone of Egyptian Chronology

LEO DEPUYDT

4. The Wandering Year before 473 B.C.E.

There is, to my knowledge, no incontrovertible evidence for the consistency of the wandering year before 473 B.C.E. But to those familiar with the way in which the chronology of the Saite Period (664–527/5 B.C.E.) has been derived from Serapeum stelae providing dates of birth and death and the length of life of Apis bulls and priests spanning the reign of more than one king, there may seem to be little point in stating lengths of life exactly in years, months, and days, if not all years are 365 days long.

Moreover, the early centuries of the Era of Nabonassar and Ptolemy's Royal Canon are obtained by converting Babylonian dates into Egyptian wandering year dates back to 747 B.C.E., an endeavor in which Hipparchus (second century B.C.E.) may have played a role. The dates from Ptolemy's Canon have been confirmed by the contemporary evidence that has emerged and deciphered in this and the last century. This would seem to indicate that good cuneiform records were kept back to that time. It is reasonable to assume that, if earlier Babylonian history was known that well when the dates were converted, earlier Egyptian history may have been too, and that the conversion would have been inspired by the desire to give historical Egyptian dates rather than equivalents in an artificial calendar if the calendar had been adjusted between 747 and 473 B.C.E.