

# Egyptian history and the biblical record: a perfect match?

Published: 23 January 2007 (GMT+10)

By Daniel Anderson (<https://creation.com/daniel-anderson>)

For years, the popular media has mocked the biblical accounts of Joseph, Moses, the Passover, and the Exodus as being completely incompatible with standard Egyptian chronology. Year after year, we have been told by numerous scholars that events recorded in the books of Genesis and Exodus are nice legends devoid of any historical or archaeological merit.

However, a new wind is blowing. An emerging pool of scholars, representing diverse backgrounds, has been openly calling for a drastic reduction in Egyptian chronology. Such a reduction would serve to line up the historical and archaeological records of Egypt and the Old Testament. Surprisingly, there is a substantial amount of evidence to warrant a significant reduction of Egyptian history. And by doing so, the reliability of Genesis, Exodus, and the entire Old Testament will have to be reconsidered as a viable source of historical truth.

## Advocates of chronological revision

Those who advocate a revision of orthodox Egyptian chronology are admittedly in the minority, but their credentials and scholarship are highly esteemed. David Rohl, author of *Test of Time*, suggests ‘Ramses II should be dated to the tenth century BC—some three hundred and fifty years later than the date which had been assigned him in the orthodox chronology.’<sup>1</sup> Peter James and four other scholars published the book *Centuries of Darkness*.<sup>2</sup> They claim that the dates of Egyptian dynasties need to be reduced by hundreds of years, specifically Dynasties 21–24. Dr Colin Renfrew, professor of archaeology at Cambridge University, wrote a foreword to this book:

This disquieting book draws attention ... to a crucial period in world history, and to the very shaky nature of the dating, the whole chronological framework, upon which our current interpretations rest...the existing chronologies for that crucial phase in human history are in error by several centuries, and that, in consequence, history will have to be rewritten.<sup>3</sup> Sir Alan Gardiner, an authority on Egyptian history, admits to the inherent problems surrounding Egyptian chronology:

Even when full use has been made of the king lists and of such subsidiary sources as have survived, the indispensable dynastic framework of Egyptian history shows lamentable gaps and many a doubtful attribution ... What is proudly advertised as Egyptian history is merely a collection of rags and tatters.<sup>4</sup>

Last year, David Down (who also wrote the very relevant item ‘False History—out with David and Solomon’) and Dr John Ashton wrote *Unwrapping the Pharaohs: How Egyptian Archaeology Confirms the Biblical Timeline*. Down has performed archaeological research in Egypt, Israel,

---

<sup>1</sup> Rohl, David, *A Test of Time: The Bible: from Myth to History*, p. 128, Century Limited, London, UK, 1995; see also review by John Osgood, *Journal of Creation* 11(1):33–35, 1997.

<sup>2</sup> James, Peter, *Centuries of Darkness*, pp. XV–XVI, Pimlico, London, UK, 1992.

<sup>3</sup> James, ref. 2, p. 39.

<sup>4</sup> Gardiner, Allan, *Egypt of the Pharaohs*, p. 53, Oxford University Press, London, UK, 1964.

and the Middle East for nearly half a century. In their book, they propose a revised chronology that harmonizes Egyptian and Old Testament history.

## **Reasons for questioning the traditional Egyptian timeline**

### *Astronomical assumptions*

“An emerging pool of scholars, representing diverse backgrounds, has been openly calling for a drastic reduction in Egyptian chronology.”

Supposedly, lunar and solar eclipses have been discovered to perfectly match the established dates of Egyptian chronology. This is simply untrue. The concept of astronomical fixation is not based on celestial eclipses but on the ‘Sothic Cycle’. However, the Sothic Cycle is mentioned nowhere in Egyptian texts.<sup>5</sup> There are references to ‘the rising of Sothis’ which has been assumed to have been the sighting of the bright star Sirius. The real issue is that many modern scholars theorize that the ancient Egyptians were slightly off in their calendar keeping, and when corrected in light of modern science, the dates line up accordingly. Yet the Egyptians were able to orient their pyramids to within a fraction of a degree to the north, south, east, and west. It is more likely that the Egyptians were meticulous timekeepers. Thus, in *Centuries of Darkness*, James and his four fellow scholars write, ‘...There are good reasons for rejecting the whole concept of Sothic dating as it was applied by the earlier Egyptologists.’ (See also our *Journal of Creation* article, Fall of the Sothic theory: Egyptian chronology revisited: <https://creation.com/fall-of-the-sothic-theory-egyptian-chronology-revisited>)

### **Manetho’s maze**

Another reason for questioning the traditional timeline is Manetho, an Egyptian priest who wrote a history of Egypt in the third century BC. Many consider Manetho’s writings to be indisputable fact. He was skilled at deciphering the hieroglyphs and had access to inscriptions, documents, and other valuable artifacts. However, two problems emerge. First, Manetho was writing hundreds, even thousands of years after many of the actual events. Second, none of Manetho’s writings exist.<sup>6</sup> The only source we have for Manetho’s writings are some of his statements that have been quoted by much later historians such as Josephus, Africanus, Eusebius, and Syncellus.

## **Historical sources for Egyptian chronology**

The Egyptian evidence consists of numerous inscriptions, texts, papyrus documents, and artifacts. Although it is very helpful, this evidence provides an incomplete picture of Egyptian history.

The ancient writings of Herodotus, Manetho, Josephus, Africanus and Eusebius provide added historical insight. Herodotus, the famous Greek historian, traveled to Egypt in the 5th century BC and interviewed priests and other knowledgeable individuals. Manetho, as stated above, composed a history of Egypt for the library at Alexandria in the 3rd century BC. Josephus, the famous Jewish historian, quoted from Manetho when writing his historical anthologies in the first-century AD. Africanus and Bishop Eusebius, renowned historians writing in the third and fourth centuries AD respectively, also quoted Manetho and wrote about Egyptian history.

<sup>5</sup> Ashton, J. and Down, D., *Unwrapping the Pharaohs: How Egyptian Archaeology Confirms The Biblical Timeline*, p. 74, Master Books, Green Forest, AR, 2006.

<sup>6</sup> Ashton and Down, ref. 5, p. 73.

However, all of these highly esteemed historians often disagree with one another in the calculation of Egyptian chronology.

Because of the discordant nature of Egyptian chronology, it is impossible to present a comprehensive list of dates, pharaohs, and dynasties. Sir Alan Gardiner wrote, 'Our materials for the reconstruction of a coherent picture are hopelessly inadequate.' As a result, we must cross reference the Egyptian accounts with other accurate historical sources. Biblical and Assyrian chronology offer highly consistent dates that can be utilized to rectify many of the ambiguities of Egyptian history. In other words, if Old Testament and Assyrian historical records significantly overlap, then a revision of Egyptian chronology would be perfectly logical in order to harmonize with two independent reliable sources.

### **Noah's link to Egypt**

The Hebrew name for one of Noah's grandsons is Mizraim (Genesis 10:6). It is no coincidence that modern Egyptians call themselves Misr, which is a derivative of Mizraim. According to the Book of Genesis, Noah's grandson, Mizraim,<sup>7</sup> is the father of the Egyptians. In a revised chronology, Egypt comes into existence soon after the dispersion from Babel, around 2100 BC. Eusebius, the famous 4th century AD historian, writes:

Egypt is called Mestram by the Hebrews; and Mestram lived not long after the flood. For after the flood, Cham (or Ham), son of Noah, begat Aegyptos or Mestram, who was the first to set out to establish himself in Egypt, at the time when the tribes began to disperse this way and that... Mestram was indeed the founder of the Egyptian race; and from him the first Egyptian Dynasty must be held to spring.<sup>8</sup>

In the traditional chronology, a pre-dynastic period of approximately 2,000 years precedes the first Egyptian dynasty. Genesis establishes a much shorter period of time. In addition, the 1988–1989 annual report of the Oriental Institute of Chicago published a summary of extensive archaeological research by Bruce Williams. Williams re-examined discoveries related to the pre-dynastic period and concluded:

Both articles are part of an expanding body of evidence that links the period once known as 'predynastic' so firmly to the ages of the pyramids and later, that the term should be abandoned.<sup>9</sup> Williams has published several articles in archaeology journals, and his modern research appears to confirm the Genesis account.

### **Abraham visits Egypt**

The biblical date for the Exodus is approximately 1445 BC. Exodus 6:4 and Galatians 3:16–17 tell us that the Lord made a covenant with Abraham 430 years earlier, around 1875 BC. Not long after this date, Abraham traveled to Egypt to escape a severe famine in the land of Canaan (Genesis 12:10). Abraham's visit did not go unnoticed, as Pharaoh's officials reported to their

---

<sup>7</sup> Hebrew מצרים (mitsrayim) John Gill's commentary, available in the Online Bible, states, 'The word is of the dual number, and serves to express Egypt by, which was divided into two parts, lower and upper Egypt.'

<sup>8</sup> Waddell, *History of Egypt and Other Works by Manetho: The Aegyptiaca of Manetho*, pp. 8–9.

<sup>9</sup> Sumner, William 'Scholarship Individual Research,' *The Oriental Institute Annual Report 1988–1989*, p. 62, University of Chicago, Chicago, IL, 1990.

king that Abraham's wife, Sarah, was extremely beautiful. Out of fear, Abraham told Pharaoh that Sarah was his sister. As a result, Pharaoh temporarily inducted Sarah into his harem and paid Abraham many expensive gifts. However, the Lord struck Pharaoh's house with plagues causing him to release her upon discovering that she was actually Abraham's wife.

Abraham came from Ur of the Chaldees (Genesis 11:31). From 1922 to 1934, Sir Leonard Woolley discovered it to be the first civilization<sup>10</sup> with a superior knowledge of astronomy and arithmetic. In addition, the Sumerian civilization invented writing, composed dictionaries, and calculated square and cube roots.<sup>11</sup> Woolley's discoveries appear to corroborate the writings of Josephus concerning Abraham's visit to Egypt. Josephus writes about Abraham:

He communicated to them arithmetic, and delivered to them the science of astronomy; for before Abram came into Egypt they were unacquainted with those parts of learning; for that science came from the Chaldeans into Egypt.<sup>12</sup>

In a revised chronology, Abraham would have visited Egypt when Khufu (aka Cheops) was Pharaoh. Before Khufu, the early Egyptian pyramids were fantastic architectural structures, but they were not perfectly square or exactly oriented to all four points on a compass. However, when Khufu built his masterful pyramid, there appears to have been an explosion of astronomical and mathematical expertise. Khufu's pyramid was perfectly square, level, and orientated to the four points of the compass.

When placed in the proper dynasty, Abraham's visit to Egypt may have been the catalyst that sparked an architectural revolution in Egyptian history.

### **Joseph rises to power in Egypt**

Dynasty 12 was one of the high points in Egyptian history. By a revised chronology, Joseph would have risen to power under Sesostri I during this dynasty. [Editor: the suggested synchronisations of Egyptian and biblical history in this article are controversial; see Resolving alleged conflicts between the Bible and other accounts of Egyptian history.] According to Genesis, Joseph was one of Jacob's twelve sons. Out of jealousy, Joseph's brothers sold him to Midianite traders and these traders sold Joseph to an Egyptian officer named Potiphar. Eventually, through a period of trials and tribulations, the Lord enabled Joseph to rule over Egypt, second only to Pharaoh himself.

Sesostri I is known to have had a vizier, or prime minister, named Mentuhotep who possessed extraordinary power. Egyptologist, Emille Brugsch, writes in his book *Egypt Under the Pharaohs*, 'In a word, our Mentuhotep...appears as the alter ego of the king. When he arrived, the great personages bowed down before him at the outer door of the royal palace.'<sup>13</sup> Brugsch's description appears to corroborate Joseph's status in Genesis 41:43, 'He (Pharaoh) had him ride in the second chariot which he had; and they cried out before him, 'Bow the knee': and he made him ruler over all the land of Egypt.'

---

<sup>10</sup> Obviously, it was not the first civilization, but the first 're-civilization'—after the Flood.

<sup>11</sup> Ashton and Down, ref. 5, p. 201.

<sup>12</sup> Whiston, W., *Josephus, Complete Works, Antiquities of the Jews*, Book I, chapter VIII, para. 2.

<sup>13</sup> Breasted, James, *A History of Egypt*, p. 162, Scribner and Sons, New York, NY, 1954.

Joseph's ultimate claim to fame was his ability to interpret dreams. The Egyptians attached significant importance to dreams. Joseph was able to interpret Pharaoh's perplexing dreams to mean that seven years of plenty would be followed by seven years of the most severe famine. Convinced by Joseph's interpretation, Pharaoh appointed Joseph to supervise the gathering of grain during the seven years of plenty.

Two clues from Egyptian inscriptions appear to confirm the Genesis account. First, a large relief on 'Hungry Rock' states, '...Because Hapy [the river god] had failed to come in time in a period of seven years. Grain was scant, kernels were dried up, scarce was every kind of food...' <sup>14</sup>

Second, a tomb belonging to Ameni, a provincial governor under Sesostris I, says:

No one was unhappy in my days, not even in the years of famine, for I had tilled all the fields of the Nome of Mah...thus I prolonged the life of its inhabitants and preserved the food which it produced. <sup>15</sup>

### **Hebrew slaves in Egypt**

In the traditional chronology, the Egyptian oppression of Hebrew slaves would have occurred in the 18th dynasty. The problem is there is little to no historical evidence of Hebrew slaves in Egypt at this time. However, when placed in the 12th dynasty under a revised chronology, there is substantial evidence for Israelite slave laborers in Egypt.

Dr Rosalie David, in charge of the Egyptian department of the Manchester Museum, writes about Semitic slavery in Kahun during the second half of the 12th dynasty:

It is apparent that the Asiatics were present in the town in some numbers, and this may have reflected the situation elsewhere in Egypt. It can be stated that these people were loosely classed by Egyptians as 'Asiatics', although their exact homeland in Syria or Palestine cannot be determined ... The reason for their presence in Egypt remains unclear. <sup>16</sup>

The Bible makes it quite clear why the Israelite slaves resided in Egypt:

Now there arose a new king over Egypt who did not know Joseph, and he said to his people, 'Look, the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we' ... Therefore they set taskmasters over them to afflict them with their burdens... And they made their lives bitter with hard bondage... (Exodus 1:8-14).

Dr Rosalie David also writes about the slave presence at Gurob, Egypt:

The scattered documentation gives no clear answer as to how or why the Asiatics came to Egypt in the Middle Kingdom... There is nevertheless firm literary evidence that Asiatic slaves, women and children were at Gurob. <sup>17</sup>

---

<sup>14</sup> Ashton and Down, ref. 5, p. 84.

<sup>15</sup> 12. Whiston, W., *Josephus, Complete Works, Antiquities of the Jews*, Book I, chapter VIII, para. 2.

<sup>16</sup> 15. David, R., *The Pyramid Builders of Ancient Egypt: A Modern Investigation of Pharaoh's Workforce*, p. 191, Guild Publishing, London, UK, 1986.

<sup>17</sup> 16. David, ref. 15, p. 192.

Another piece of circumstantial evidence that supports the biblical account is the existence of pyramids built with mud bricks and straw during this dynasty. Amenemhet III, a pharaoh whose statues are sour-faced and cruel-looking in appearance, was likely the Pharaoh who answered the complaining Hebrew supervisors, ‘You shall no longer give the people straw to make brick as before Let them go and gather straw for themselves (Exodus 5:7).’

Another tantalizing piece of circumstantial evidence was the discovery of boxes beneath the floors of houses excavated in Kahun. Sir Flinders Petrie excavated a number of these boxes which contained the skeletons of babies up to three months old, sometimes up to three in a box.<sup>18</sup> It is plausible that these baby skeletons are the bones of Hebrew babies killed by Pharaoh’s direct orders in an attempt to limit their population (Exodus 1:16). However, one particular baby boy would escape Pharaoh’s death sentence and change the course of Hebrew history.

### **Moses is born**

According to the Book of Exodus, the baby Moses was adopted by Pharaoh’s daughter while she was bathing at the river. His parents defied Pharaoh’s order and left his destiny in the Lord’s hands, placing him in a basket to be discovered by Pharaoh’s daughter. Many consider this to be a nice story, but completely unrealistic. After all, what Egyptian princess would adopt a Hebrew slave child and offer to make him the next Pharaoh?

However, if you place Moses in the 12th dynasty, the family history of the Pharaonic court appears to line up.<sup>19</sup> Amenemhet III had two daughters, but no sons have been positively identified. Amenemhet IV has been proposed as the son of Amenemhet III, but he could just as easily have been the son of Sobekneferu, one of the daughters of Amenemhet III. Amenemhet IV is a very mysterious figure in Egyptian history and may have been a co-regent of Amenemhet or Sobekneferu.

Josephus wrote concerning Pharaoh’s daughter, ‘Having no child of her own...she thought to make him her father’s successor.’ In addition, Dr Donovan Courville has proposed Sobekneferu as the foster mother of Moses. It is plausible since there is no historical record of Sobekneferu having a biological son. If Sobekneferu was the foster mother of Moses, then the biblical account of her bathing by the riverside would make sense. The river god Hapy was the fertility god of Egypt, and Sobekneferu would have likely been observing a religious ritual in the river. Perhaps the appearance of a baby floating in the river would have been interpreted as a direct answer to her prayer for a child.

### **Exodus from Egypt**

In a revised chronology, Neferhotep I was likely the Pharaoh of the Exodus in the 13th dynasty. Exodus 7:10 tells us that Moses and Aaron confronted Pharaoh ‘... and Aaron cast down his rod before Pharaoh and before his servants, and it became a serpent.’ Pharaoh was not impressed ‘... so the magicians of Egypt, they also did in like manner with their enchantments. For every man threw down his rod, and they became serpents (Exodus 7:11–12).’ In the Liverpool Museum

---

<sup>18</sup> 17. Ashton and Down, ref. 5, p. 100.

<sup>19</sup> 18. Ashton and Down, ref. 5, p. 93.

there is a magician's rod that hails from this same period in Egyptian history.<sup>20</sup> The rod is in the form of a long cobra. Perhaps the magicians practiced some form of hypnotic power that transformed the cobra rods into the appearance of real snakes, or applied sleight of hand to substitute a real cobra for the rod.

The ten plagues are probably one of the most famous aspects of the Exodus story. If the plagues were historical events as recorded by Moses, then there should be some fragment of evidence describing their catastrophic consequences. In fact, there is a papyrus in the Leiden Museum in Holland which provides a graphic portrayal eerily reminiscent of the biblical account. There is no consensus among archaeologists as to when it was originally penned. An excerpt reads:

... Plague stalks through the land and blood is everywhere ... Nay, but the river is blood. Does a man drink from it? As a human he rejects it. He thirsts for water ... Nay, but gates, columns and walls are consumed with fire...Nay but the son of the high-born man is no longer to be recognized ... The stranger people from outside are come into Egypt ... Nay, but corn has perished everywhere...Everyone says 'there is no more.'<sup>21</sup>  
(See also The ten plagues of Egypt: miracles or 'Mother Nature'?, which also thoroughly refutes the popular 'algal bloom' theory).

The final plague cut Pharaoh to the heart. The Lord struck down all the firstborn in each Egyptian family at midnight. The Hebrews were warned of this horrific disaster and Moses ordered them to kill a lamb and splash its blood on their doorposts. The Destroyer would pass over every home with the blood of the lamb. It is quite significant that Neferhotep's son, Wahneferhotep, did not succeed his father on the throne. Instead, Neferhotep I was succeeded by his brother Sobkhotpe IV 'who occupied the throne which his brother had recently vacated.'<sup>22</sup> To this day, historians are unable to pinpoint the reason why the son of Neferhotep I did not succeed him. Perhaps a closer look at the biblical account is necessary.

Another piece of very interesting circumstantial evidence is the sudden departure of Kahun's inhabitants. Dr Rosalie David writes:

It is evident that the completion of the king's pyramid was not the reason why Kahun's inhabitants eventually deserted the town, abandoning their tools and other possessions in the shops and houses ... The quantity, range, and type of articles of everyday use which were left behind in the houses may suggest that the departure was sudden and unpremeditated.<sup>23</sup>  
The evidence appears to confirm Exodus 12:33 which states, 'And the Egyptians urged the people, that they might send them out of the land in haste...'

But what happened to the mighty Egyptian army? According to the Bible, Pharaoh pursued the fleeing Israelites with his army as they miraculously crossed the Red Sea. However, the Egyptian

---

<sup>20</sup> 19. Ashton and Down, ref. 5, p. 98.

<sup>21</sup> 20. Velikovsky, Immanuel, *Ages in Chaos*, Vol.1, 'From the Exodus to King Akhnaton', pp. 25–28, Abacus, London, UK, 1973.

<sup>22</sup> 21. Edward, C.J. et al., *The Cambridge Ancient History*, Vol. II, Part I, 'History of the Middle East and the Aegean Region c. 1800–1380 B.C.', p. 50, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK, 1980.

<sup>23</sup> 22. David, ref. 15, p. 195 and 199.

army ended up at the bottom of the Red Sea (Exodus 14:28). It is no coincidence that the mummy of Neferhotep I has never been found.

### **The Hyksos mystery solved**

Also, archaeologists and other scholars have long puzzled over the rapid occupation of Egypt by the mysterious Hyksos without a military confrontation. Those scholars advocating a revised chronology have identified the Hyksos with the Amalekites, who attacked the Israelites fleeing from Egypt. It is plausible that the Amalekites flowed into Egypt without resistance because of God's decimation of the Egyptian army under the Red Sea.

"... when placed at the proper time, there is an abundance of historical and archaeological evidence to confirm the books of Genesis and Exodus."

The identification of the Hyksos with the Amalekites would explain the otherwise strange passage 'Amalek was the first of the nations' (Numbers 24:20), and why an Egyptian would be 'servant to an Amalekite' (1 Samuel 30:13). This makes sense in the revised chronology where the Amalekites ruled the mighty Egyptian empire.

Their current obscurity fulfils God's prophecy to Moses, 'I will utterly blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven' (Exodus 17:14). Thus hardly anyone today has even heard of them, let alone their former pre-eminence. The physical extermination (see also Was this a war crime?) was first fulfilled in the time of Saul, but he disobeyed God (1 Samuel 15), so the Amalekites still caused mayhem in David's time so he practically finished the job (1 Samuel 30).

### **Conclusion**

There is a story of an older, well-respected archaeologist digging next to a young archaeologist at Gezer, Israel.<sup>24</sup> The young archaeologist was mocking the historical reliability of the Bible when the older archaeologist quietly responded, 'Well, if I were you, I wouldn't rubbish the Bible.' When the young archaeologist asked 'Why?' he replied, 'Well, it just has a habit of proving to be right after all.'

At this time of year, Christians will be bombarded with shows and magazine articles that portray the biblical accounts of Joseph, Hebrew slavery, Moses, and the Exodus as legend and myth. As we have seen, however, when placed at the proper time, there is an abundance of historical and archaeological evidence to confirm the books of Genesis and Exodus.

Synchronizing the biblical timeline with a revised Egyptian chronology will require more testing, research, hard work, and careful scholarship. Presupposing biblical accuracy and applying professional research standards, a number of scholars are off to a promising start. Dr Clifford Wilson, former Director of the Australian Institute of Archaeology, said it best:

I know of no finding in archaeology that's properly confirmed which is in opposition to the scriptures. The Bible is the most accurate history textbook the world has ever seen.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>24</sup> 23. Wieland, C., Archaeologist confirms creation and the Bible: Interview with archaeologist Clifford Wilson, *Creation* 14(4):46-50, 1992

<sup>25</sup> 24. Wilson, C, Archaeologist Speaks Out, *Creation* 21(1):15, 1998.



<https://creation.com/egyptian-history-and-the-biblical-record-a-perfect-match>

Ned. versie: <https://scheppingofevolucie.nl/egyptische-chronologie/>

(Toegeschreven aan Ryan Jaroncyk, wat niet klopt!)

0 – 0 – 0 – 0

Boek:

Moses In Ancient Egypt & The Hidden Story Of The Bible

<https://books.google.nl/books?isbn=1430300531> - Vertaal deze pagina

Richard Darlow - 2006 - Religion

The name Hyksos derives from the Egyptian “Hekakhasut” which means “Rulers of the Desert Lands”, referring to their rule of the northern and eastern desert areas of Egypt. Crucially, the Biblical episode telling of ABRAHAM's visit to Zoan (Tanis) occurred a short time before the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah and the ...

<http://wjudaism.library.utoronto.ca/index.php/wjudaism/article/view/20896/17059>

## Resolving alleged conflicts between the Bible and other accounts of Egyptian history

Wikimedia commons/Hamish2k 8667-egypt-giza-sphinx

s the subject of synchronizing the history timelines of the Bible and ancient Egypt important?  
Does a revised chronology even matter in the creation–evolution debate?

J.M. wrote in with a very pertinent question after reading a CMI web article on chronology revision: Egyptian history and the biblical record: a perfect match?

Having just read this article, it ends by saying research is being done and building up on the subject but this was 6 years ago. Is there no update on all this aligning/dating?  
Creationist Egyptology expert Patrick Clarke responds:

Dear J.M.,

Thank you for raising the question regarding work taking place on the subject of research into the disparity between ancient Egyptian and Bible chronologies. I can sympathize with your frustrations that no updates appear to be forthcoming. This is in part due to the complete absence of any progress on revising the defective Egyptian chronology by most of the six people (seven if Anderson, the article's author, is included) mentioned in the opening section—Advocates of chronological revision—of the article you have recently read. In fact the article in general is largely a recapitulation of Ashton and Down's book, *Unwrapping the Pharaohs*, and offers no new information to add to the then already established ideas of the psychiatrist Immanuel Velikovsky.

The article you refer to was published in 2007. At that time, I had already spent almost two decades investigating the concept of a revision of ancient Egypt's chronology. The subject matters a great deal, as the contradictions between this and the very straightforward chronology derivable from the Bible are often used to discredit Scripture. However, though sympathetic to the need for revision, I was not convinced by Velikovsky's arguments and felt that any reconstruction of the chronological synchronism between Bible and ancient Egypt should be conducted in a scholarly manner. There were several other scholars who, like myself, agreed that the Egyptian chronology is a shambles and needs revision downwards (and some of them are, like Velikovsky, not Bible-believers) but who had come to similar conclusions about Velikovsky's attempts in this regard.

Around this time some well-meaning creationists, enamoured by Velikovsky's claims, began to publish articles, papers and books. What finally convinced me that a measured response was needed came with the publication of the above-mentioned book by Ashton and Down. I discovered many problems with their attempt at synchronizing the Bible's historical time-line with that of ancient Egypt. I regularly point out in my writings that, in order to produce a credible revised chronology, expertise from an Egyptological perspective, particularly in regard to the language, is an absolute must.<sup>1</sup>

Anderson's article, published a few months later, was little more than an endorsement of Ashton and Down's book and none of these three writers, as far as I am aware, have or even claim to have the requisite expertise in Egyptology. Unfortunately, because of the penetration of a lot of erroneous Velikovskian concepts into some creationist thinking, the process of establishing a biblically and historically credible chronology revision necessarily involves first painstakingly dismantling some of these notions.

In the course of this, it is understandable that some who have pinned hopes onto this have felt as if exposing the errors in the Velikovsky-inspired chronology (VIC) is undermining support for the Bible. I assure you that is not the case, and that it will emerge that following the VIC to its logical conclusion ends up undermining the Bible's credibility. My starting point is the absolute reliability of God's Word in all matters, including chronological, and thus that the conventional Egyptian chronology needs serious downwards revision. It should therefore not be a surprise to hear that I am confident that what will in due course emerge is a chronology that confirms the Bible's credibility without contradicting the historical data revealed by sound Egyptological scholarship.

Since August 2010 I have had a series of papers and letters published in CMI's *Journal of Creation*. I don't know if you are a subscriber to this journal, but this is where you can find much on this issue. I cannot promise any 'instant' answers as it will take the publication of several more papers, thus likely a number of years, to fully develop the chronology. At the end of this reply is the current list of *Journal of Creation* issues containing up-to-date papers on this subject. It would not be appropriate to write a layman's article on this yet (e.g. in *Creation* magazine) until the technical papers have proceeded to the appropriate point. Such progressive publication also permits people to see how the points made can withstand post-publication criticism, which also adds to the overall timeframe till completion.

Several of my earlier papers are now available as pdf's:

Why Pharaoh Hatshepsut is not to be equated to the Queen of Sheba.

Is Hatshepsut the biblical 'Queen of Sheba'? Letter to the Editor by David Down. Reply: Patrick Clarke.

Why Pharaoh Hatshepsut is not to be equated to the Queen of Sheba. Letter to the Editor by Anne Habermehl. Reply: Patrick Clarke.

Was Thutmose III the biblical Shishak?—Claims for the 'Jerusalem' bas-relief at Karnak investigated.

Was Jerusalem the Kadesh of Thutmose III's 1st Asiatic campaign?—topographic and petrographic evidence.

Thutmose III was not the Shishak of 1 Kings 14:25–26. Letter to the Editor from Drew Worthen. Reply: Patrick Clarke.

Wisdom literature and the question of priority—Solomon’s Proverbs or Amenemope’s Instruction.

The following more recent papers and letters can be obtained as back issues from CMI as they are not yet available as PDF:

Volume 26, Issue 3, December 2012—Egyptian coins in the time of Joseph, pp. 85–91.

Volume 27, Issue 1, April 2013—The Stele of Merneptah—assessment of the final ‘Israel’ strophe and its implications for chronology, pp. 57–64.

There are also other papers that will hopefully appear in future issues of Journal of Creation that will further build towards a credible revised chronology. If you don’t already subscribe to the journal, may I encourage you to perhaps consider taking out a subscription and keep abreast not only with developments in chronology, but also in other cutting-edge research across the creation science spectrum. In short, ‘stay tuned’.

Kind regards,

Patrick.

#### References

I realise, by the way, that both authors are known as staunch and effective defenders of biblical truth. And they may well have expertise in other areas, even related ones, for all I can judge; I am referring here to what confronted me in this book relevant to my own area of expertise. Return to text.

#### Related Articles

Egyptian chronology and the Bible—framing the issues

Why Pharaoh Hatshepsut is not to be equated to the Queen of Sheba

Letters to the Editor: Is Hatshepsut the biblical ‘Queen of Sheba’?

Letters to the Editor: Why Pharaoh Hatshepsut is not to be equated to the Queen of Sheba

Was Thutmose III the biblical Shishak?— Claims for the ‘Jerusalem’ bas-relief at Karnak investigated

Joseph’s Zaphenath Paaneah—a chronological key

#### Readers’ comments

Nathanael L., United Kingdom, 11 August 2013

I find that the work of David Rohl is fascinating in this regard. He IS a professional Egyptologist (among other things). I am not such, but like Clarke I have found many of the creationist chronological revisions very unconvincing - some have seemed little more than identifying really significant early Pharaoh's with bible events and then forcing everything to fit. However, Rohl’s work I find convincing, not just because it makes huge sense of great swathes of bible history and archaeology, but also solves huge problems in Greek, Anatolian, Roman, Hittite, Trojan and other ANE and Eastern Mediterranean archaeologies / chronologies, as witnessed by his most recent book ‘The Lords of Avaris’.

Carl Wieland responds

My understanding is that Clarke's coming revision, which will take some years to fully develop/expound in print, will not agree exactly with Rohl, either, but both Rohl and Clarke seem to agree that revisions that follow Velikovsky, which have tended to dominate creationist thinking, have serious problems. It seems that there is a very strong case for shortening the conventional chronology coming from both Christian and non-Christian scholars alike, since there are extra-biblical issues in archaeology that clash with this convention. However, the details remain to be worked out. Clarke is committed to the authority of the biblical chronology, yet is passionate about ensuring that his proposal does not clash with sound Egyptological deductions either. Time will tell – meanwhile stay tuned by subscribing to *Journal of Creation* (<http://creation.mobi/journal-of-creation-formerly-technical-journal-tj>).

Harley W., Canada, 11 August 2013

I thought David Rohl settled a lot of the conflicted dates. "Pharaohs & Kings"

Chris V., United States, 11 August 2013

Hi, Herodotus reports in Egyptians built the pyramids in 7-8th century BC. Later on Manetho writes differently. Modern Egyptologist should trust Herodotus over Manetho for many reasons - 1 of which Herodotus's account fits biblical true history.

A. R., United States, 12 August 2013

Thanks for posting this. I have long regarded the Velikovsky-inspired chronologies as rather haphazard. After a lot of study of likely synchronisms between the Biblical and Egyptian chronologies, my personal conclusion is that the conventional Egyptian chronology is largely sound at least as far back as the time of Moses. Any revisions to the Egyptian chronology should be located earlier than this, perhaps in the form of co-dynastic periods.

Diane C., United States, 12 August 2013

Many years ago, while teaching my children at home, I began the search for a revised Egyptian chronology. I realized that it was essential to harmonizing secular history with a biblical chronology. Since that time I have read many, many attempts at that task, including Down and Ashton, and James, et al. I quickly realized that neither went far enough in their revisions, and continued to search. About ten to fifteen years ago I found the revisions proposed by James Reilly. He has a four-volume set of books, published on the internet (although the first is available in hard-copy form) that meets that criteria. I know that his material is not well-known, as few people I meet have heard of it. The author of the above article is interested in seeing some revision that is scholarly and does not rely exclusively on a single source that is somewhat questionable in its accuracy. Reilly definitely meets that requirement. While I don't think that summarizing his work here is either fair to him or possible because of space, I will challenge this author to investigate Reilly's work thoroughly. His works use the original inscriptions of Egypt, and he is well-qualified to evaluate and discuss the multitude of these original texts. His revision is radical, but a radical revision is necessary! You can find his work at Displaced Dynasties on the internet. I challenge the author of this article, and any others interested to completely and fairly investigate this revision.

Christopher V., United States, 12 August 2013

Hello, Herodotus visited Egypt around 430BC and tells us who built the pyramids and when they were built. He reports: "A hundred thousand men laboured constantly, and were relieved every three months by a fresh lot. It took ten years' oppression of the people to make the causeway, for the conveyance of the stones, a work not much inferior, in my judgement, to the pyramid itself." Extract from Herodotus – 430 BC. ('The Histories', Vol. II) The Great Pyramid is attributed to Khufu (Cheops). The middle-sized pyramid is attributed to Khafra (Chephren). The smallest of the three is attributed to Menkaure (Mycerinus). Herodotus' account fits the true Biblical history nicely and of course he is closer to the time of the pyramids than Manetho who lived over 100 years later. Manetho was a priest and scribe of Heliopolis under Ptolemy Philadelphus (285-247 BC). Modern Egyptologists use him as their primary source for dating instead of Herodotus. Herodotus' account fits many facts better – such as the 'Arch' used in Greece no earlier than the 7th Century – was already being used in the tombs of the pyramid builders of Egypt (9th Century BC) – from whom the Greeks most likely got the skill. Just some thoughts. Love your ministry. Thanks. Chris.

<http://creation.mobi/egyptian-chronologies>

The same <https://creation.com/egyptian-chronologies>

## Which Came First, the Pyramids or the Flood?

by Alden Bass

[EDITOR'S NOTE: On occasion, we publish articles authored by one or more of the interns who work with us during the summer. This month's article is by one of those interns, Alden Bass, who spent his fourth year with us during the summer of 2003. Alden is a junior religious studies major at Yale University in New Haven, Connecticut. I think you will find his article on Egyptian versus biblical chronology absolutely fascinating, and that it will offer you a real insight into the quality of the young men who serve as our interns. I unreservedly commend it, and him, to you.]

Apologists throughout the centuries have recognized the significance of historical details in the biblical record and their impact on biblical claims of ultimate truth and divine origin. It has been famously remarked that "chronology is the backbone of history" (Thiele, 1983, p. 33). If this maxim is true, then the Christian apologist must understand that attacks on biblical chronology undermine both the historicity and the veracity of the Holy Book, and strike at the very heart of the Gospel message. Fortunately, this subject has long occupied defenders of The Faith, who have effectively vindicated the Bible again and again. Theophilus of Antioch, the "father of Christian chronology" (1971, pp. 118ff.), systematically dated the major events of sacred history in the early second century, using only the Scriptures, and, by comparing biblical chronology to secular history, declared the chronology of the Bible to be more ancient and more accurate than that found in any profane work. Similarly, in the third century, Julius Africanus authored five volumes (of which only fragments remain) on the subject, giving special attention to objections regarding the antiquity of Egyptian civilization. Indeed, as long as men have studied biblical chronology, a primary obstacle in the pursuit of defending God's Word has been the antiquity of other civilizations, especially that of the Egyptians.

Egyptian History	Bible History
Predynastic	
3150-2686	
Creation	
4004	
Genesis 5,11	
(per Ussher)	
Old Kingdom—	
Pyramids Built	
2686-2181	
Flood	
2349	
First Intermediate	

2181-2040  
Abrahamic Covenant

1877  
Galatians 3:15-18

Middle Kingdom

2040-1782  
Exodus

1447  
1 Kings 6:1

Second Intermediate

1782-1570  
Dedication of Solomon's Temple

967  
1 Kings 11:42

New Kingdom

1570-1070  
Ascension of Rehoboam

930  
(Thiele)

Third Intermediate\*

1069-  
525  
\*James, et. al., shortened this period by 300 years.

#### Table 1 — Comparison of Egyptian history versus Bible history

The sacred chronology, as given in the Bible and endorsed by scholars, was wholly accepted for centuries, until fairly recent times. James Barr unabashedly remarked: "Though biblical chronology may in modern times seem to be an area for cranks and crackpots, in older times it occupied some of the greatest minds" (1999, p. 379). The "church fathers" accepted it, the Scholastics endorsed it, and Enlightenment scholars were perhaps its staunchest allies. These researchers did not rely on the Bible alone for information, though it was their primary source; they also compared the genealogies and king lists of the Old Testament to other ancient works of historiography. Using the Bible as the framework, all the additional secular history was



successively fleshed onto that skeleton, resulting in the creation of a comprehensive body of world history. This rich heritage of scholarship included Augustine in the fifth century, Isidore of Seville (the great Catholic theologian) in the seventh century, the English scholar Bede in the eighth century, and rabbi Moses Maimonides in the twelfth.

Men who would have burned each other at the stake for their differences on other points, agreed on this: Melancthon and Tostatus, Lightfoot and Jansen, Salmeron and Scaliger, Petavius and Kepler, inquisitors and reformers, Jesuits and Jansenists, priests and rabbis, stood together in the belief that the creation of man was proved by Scripture to have taken place between 3900 and 4004 years before Christ (White, 1896, pp. 197-198).

Though countless words have been devoted to this matter over the centuries, one man's work overshadows them all—James Ussher, Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of Ireland.

Now the subject of much popular ridicule, Ussher (1581-1656) was unrivaled in his scholarship, and was known during his lifetime for much more than his expertise in chronology. A bit of a prodigy, he entered Trinity College at age 13, was ordained a priest at 20, and eventually became head of the Anglo-Irish church in 1625. After decades of careful study in his extensive personal library (one of the largest collections of books in Western Europe), plus 2,000 pages of research (in Latin), Ussher declared that the world was created in 4004 B.C. It was this decisive conclusion, and its canonization in the center-column reference of the King James Bible, that resulted in the bishop's current infamy. Ussher's work was continued by the famed Hebraist of Cambridge, John Lightfoot, who further specified that the Creation week lasted from October 18-23, 4004 B.C., and that Adam was created on October 23 at 9 a.m. forty-fifth meridian time. Concerning this, one scholar sarcastically remarked: "Closer than this, as a cautious scholar, the Vice-Chancellor of Cambridge University did not venture to commit himself" (see Ramm, 1954, p. 121).

Ussher's work, though derided by many, has received some respect: the eminent biologist Stephen Jay Gould deemed him a subject worthy of an essay, wherein he adequately defended the esteemed scholar's work, and cautioned would-be critics not to judge the seventeenth-century theologian by twentieth-century scientific standards (1993, pp. 181ff.). Likewise, Vanderbilt professor James Barr regularly exonerates Ussher, depicting him as an able intellectual in his time (1985; 1999). Despite the archbishop's impeccable credentials and modest return to academic favor, his strict biblical chronology continues to be rejected because "the cardinal premise of that methodology" is a "belief in biblical inerrancy"—a belief that is repugnant and unacceptable to modern academics (Gould, p. 186).

The accepted biblical chronology began to be questioned, even as early as the sixteenth century, when the recovery of a Byzantine summary of the writings of Manetho led to the resurfacing of the problem of Egypt's antiquity. Using that document, French classical scholar Joseph Scaliger (1540-1609) calculated that the first Egyptian dynasty began in 5285 B.C.—some 1,336 years before the date he reckoned for the Creation (3949 B.C.). Scaliger, a devout Protestant, was distressed over this apparent discrepancy between the biblical record and secular sources, and contrived a theory of "proleptic time," which allowed for pre-biblical civilizations (see James 1991, p. 7). While his scholarship was welcome, the paradox between the sacred and the profane chronologies was effectively ignored for two hundred years (White, 1896, p. 198).

Although voices of doubt were occasionally heard in Scaliger's day, chronologies extending beyond 4000 B.C. were not seriously considered until the nineteenth century, and were not popularly accepted until the twentieth. For the average man, dusty manuscripts and dry dissertations failed to provoke a reevaluation of the commonly held belief in a young Earth. Popular opinion changed when scholarship started down a new path: intellectuals left their libraries, donned their pith helmets, and systematically began excavating the ancient sites and artifacts of which they previously had only read. Archaeology began as a treasure hunt, but evolved into a more scientific venture as greater and more magnificent wonders were lifted from the shifting sands. In 1738, Johann Winckelmann and Ennio Visconti unearthed the ash-laden cities of Herculaneum and Pompeii. Napoleon's expedition to Egypt in 1799 revealed the Rosetta stone, which was translated partly by Jean François Champollion in the 1820s and partly by Henry Rawlinson between 1846 and 1855. Rawlinson's decipherment of Old Persian script resulted in the translation of thousands of stone inscriptions and cuneiform tablets throughout the Middle East. Solid evidence from the ancient world continued to mount as interest shifted to a new branch of archaeology—Egyptology. The fascination increased with each new find, and the land of the pyramids was set firmly in the popular mind by the 1920s when Howard Carter and Lord Carverton discovered the incredible treasures of King Tutankhamun.

Modern archaeology employs sophisticated techniques and equipment in its quest for information; the science gradually has filled many gaps in earlier theories, shedding light in the darkness and dispelling much of the mystery surrounding the ancients. Under the guise of these advanced methods, some scientists begin the story of man 250,000 years ago (although the documented history of humanity dates back only to about 3000 B.C.). The "evidence" proffered by archaeologists appears thoroughly scientific, and is used to construct a world where archaic man first used fire about 460,000 B.P. [before the present], first built artificial shelters about 380,000 B.P., began farming in 9000 B.C., developed metallurgy in 6500 B.C., and finally invented writing in 3700 B.C. (see Scarre, 1993, pp. 1ff.). Nomads settled the Mesopotamian city of Uruk, billed as "the world's first metropolis," in 2500 B.C. The Harappan culture formed around 2600 B.C., as cities grew along the banks of the Indus River, approximately the same time as the temple platforms of Peru were erected (see "The History of Mankind," 1997, p. 344). Thus, according to some authorities, the study of antiquity (and especially Egyptology) furnishes "one more convincing proof that, precious as are the moral and religious truths in our sacred books, and the historical indications which they give us, these truths and indications are necessarily inclosed [sic] in a setting of myth and legend" (White, 1896, p. 208).

This conclusion, believed by many to be inevitable, erodes the credibility of the Bible, and must be thoughtfully examined and tested. Most of the milestones discussed above, together with their dates, are speculative, are based on a humanistic philosophy, and are open to debate even among professionals (see Brantley, 1993). No written record exists before about 3000 B.C.; any object dated prior to that must therefore be chronologically situated by tree-ring dating, pottery comparisons, or radiocarbon dating. All of these methods, which are rooted in evolutionary presuppositions of an old Earth, have proven to be highly subjective and inaccurate (see Major, 1993). This is not to dismiss a century of scientific inquiry with a wave of the hand, because each situation must be examined individually, yet few of these ancient findings present a bona fide argument for the great antiquity of humanity.

Though the dating of shards of ancient pottery and stone tools may be subjective and somewhat readily accounted for, gargantuan stone structures are not so easily overlooked. The solemn pyramids of Giza bear silent witness to ages long since past, and to the great antiquity of a civilization. Sir Walter Raleigh suggested this as far back as 1603.

For in Abraham's time all the then-known parts of the world were developed.... Egypt had many magnificent cities...and these not built with sticks, but of hewn stone...which magnificence needed a parent of more antiquity than these other men have supposed (as quoted in White, 1896, p. 198).

These colossal monuments—their images so readily conjured in association with Egypt—were built in the Old Kingdom, which began in 2686 B.C. and lasted for 500 years [all dates taken from Clayton, 1994]. Egyptian history is divided into four Kingdoms—the Old, the Middle, the New and the Late. Between each Kingdom lies an Intermediate Period, which represents an interval characterized by political instability and confusion. These six periods are further subdivided into approximately thirty dynasties—a series of seemingly arbitrary divisions handed down from the third-century Egyptian historian Manetho. It generally is agreed that first pyramid was built by Djoser in 2630 B.C. in Saqqara, and other works soon followed: the Bent pyramid and Red pyramid of Snefru at Dahshur in 2600 B.C., Khufu's Great Pyramid at Giza in 2550 B.C., and the Great Sphinx of Khafre shortly afterward (see Roberts, 1995, p. 2). Each of these monuments, and many more, still stand(s).

Incredibly, Egyptian society predates these ancient monoliths and the Old Kingdom Period in which they were built. The first king of Egypt is thought to be Narmer, an enigmatic fellow whose name meant “catfish.” A well-preserved artifact made of dark green slate, the Narmer Palette, tells the story of the unification of Upper and Lower Egypt by Narmer before the first dynasty—the genesis of the world's first nation-state; Egyptologists calculate this to have occurred about 3150 B.C.

Under “normal” circumstances, there would be nothing in this information to trouble the Christian; it is the result of over 200 years of accumulated evidence and careful research. The evidence of Egypt's antiquity is not circumstantial, but literally is carved in stone (as well as papyrus and clay). Most useful of all, however, is a source with no medium of its own—the king list of Manetho. His work is the very foundation of Egyptian chronology, and although the document no longer is extant, it is possible to piece it together from references scattered throughout the ancient world in the existing works of Josephus, Julius Africanus, Eusebius, and George the Monk. The chronology of Egypt appears to be fixed firmly by evidence from historiography, archaeology, and astronomy, yet the currently accepted chronology of Egypt overshoots the Biblical timetable by nearly one thousand years!

[Table 2 — Dates Egyptologists have offered over the years for the first Egyptian Dynasty (after MacNaughton)]

While a straightforward reading of the Bible reveals a date for the creation of the world of around 4000 B.C. (thus leaving plenty of time for Egyptian civilization to be established in 3100 B.C.), the Flood of Noah is conservatively dated at about 2300 B.C. Were the Flood only a local event, there would be no difficulty, but we know from Genesis 7 that it was not. The waters of the Flood “prevailed exceedingly upon the earth; and all the high mountains that were under the whole

heaven were covered...and all flesh died that moved upon the earth” (7:19,21, emp. added). It is foolish to suppose that the pyramids could have survived the Flood—an event so fierce that “all the fountains of the great deep [were] broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened” (Genesis 7:11)—and that the civilization of Egypt then “picked up where it left off” before the Deluge. That the Flood was an actual event is beyond question; not only does Moses record it in Genesis as a fact, but Peter, the writer of Hebrews, and even our Lord testified to its veracity (cf. Matthew 24:37-39; Hebrews 11:7; 1 Peter 3:7). Gleason Archer concluded:

The problems attending this method of [literal—AB] computation are compounded by the quite conclusive evidence that Egyptian Dynasty I went back to 3100 B.C., with a long period of divided kingdoms in the Nile valley before that. These could hardly have arisen until long after the Flood had occurred and the human race had multiplied considerably (cf. Genesis 10) [1979, 1:361].

Such a blatant discrepancy between the biblical and scientific records can have devastating consequences to the faith of the honest seeker. Because of the sheer volume of material available on the subject, and the obvious lack of respect for the Bible by modern archeologists, even a thorough investigation of these matters may yield nothing but frustration. Though the situation seems hopeless, there are solutions to this greatest of chronological quandaries.

If indeed all the facts are certain, if the Flood occurred just as described, and if the history of Egypt is undisputable, any possible solution must be sought in the dating of the events. Biblical archaeologist David Down agrees: “If the Bible is historically accurate...then there must be a mistake in the usual interpretation of the Egyptian chronology which needs to be reduced by centuries” (2001, 15[1]:57). The archaeologists and the philologists discover artifacts and translate ancient scripts, but it is the chronologist who situates them on a timeline and assigns them their place in history. Secular chronology, much as the biblical chronology previously described, is a difficult and convoluted subject: opinion and speculation abound. As with any other scientific endeavor, chronological conclusions often are based on inherent assumptions such as uniformitarianism and the theory of evolution. This bias applies more to those who are dating ancient “prehistorical” items, but it also influences scientists working within the historical era (3000 B.C.-present).

The backbone of Egyptian chronology is the regnal lists, the most prominent of which was composed by Manetho, who was a “priestly advisor” to Ptolemy I (323-282 B.C.), Manetho authored a comprehensive history of Egypt that contained the names of all the pharaohs and the lengths of their reigns. Although there is no known full-text manuscript of his work, Egyptologists rely heavily on Manetho, a fact that Clayton calls “curious” (1994, p. 9). Petroglyphic inventories, chiseled into various stone monuments throughout the country, supplement Manetho’s list; these include the Palermo stone and the Royal Lists of Karnak, Abydos, and Saqqara. These lists are invaluable to chronographers, though most are damaged and not entirely legible.

The king lists are useful for counting backward in history, by adding the regal years of one king to the next; but because of co-regencies, parallel dynasties, and interregna, this method alone is inexact. One of the lists might record a reign as being four years long, when in actuality it was only three years and three months. This results in a seven-month error. Over a period of 3,000 years and nearly 200 kings, the overlap results in significant discrepancies. Consequently,

Egyptologists use certain astronomical phenomena as “anchor points” for the king lists. Eclipses of the Sun and Moon occasionally are mentioned in the ancient records, and can be retro-dated, though researchers rarely are fortunate enough to discover intelligible hints in the literature. More valuable by far for chronologists of Egypt is Sirius, the “dog star.”

Ancient Egyptians used three calendars: a civil calendar of 365 days, a solar calendar of slightly fewer than 365.25 days, and a Sothic calendar of exactly 365.25 days designed for calculating the Feast of the Rising Sirius. The astronomers responsible for these calculations never realized the slight discrepancy between the Sothic and the solar year (essentially, they did not include a leap year into their calendar). The difference was only of a matter of hours, and only over the course of centuries did this add up—one day every four years. The Feast of Sothis (another name for Sirius), normally celebrated on July 19 in the heat of the summer, gradually shifted because of the slight discrepancy, eventually being celebrated in autumn, in winter, and then in the spring. It took 1,460 years for it to fall on the correct day (July 19) again (the Egyptians always celebrated the holiday on their July 19; however, since their calendar was miscalculated, their July 19 might be our August 5, or December 15, and so on). Using this knowledge, and clues from the historical literature, these Sothic cycles serve as anchor points in Egyptian history, allowing scientists to date 2,000 years of history using only six major astronomical events (Breasted, 1927, 1:29).

Despite the many advances in the field of Egyptian chronology, there remain uncertainties and questions. James H. Breasted, one of Egypt’s greatest chronologists, characterized the chronology as “confused” (1927, 1:25), and Peter Clayton remarked that “it may come as a surprise to realize that it is extremely difficult to fix true or absolute dates in Egyptian chronology” (1994, p. 12, emp. added). Sir Alan Gardiner, the foremost Egyptologist of the twentieth century, spoke of “lamentable gaps” and “many a doubtful attribution,” finally exclaiming: “What is proudly advertised as Egyptian history is merely a collection of rags and tatters” (1961, p. 48, emp. added). Noting that our present knowledge of Egyptian chronology is “far from satisfactory,” Olaf Toffteen, curator of the Hibbard Egyptian Library in Chicago, explained that the deficiency can be attributed “not to the scarcity of material, but rather to its abundance. This material...exhibits so many contradictions that Egyptologists and historians differ radically in their theories on Egyptian chronology” (1907, 1:149). This indefiniteness does not remove all validity from the chronology, but it must be recognized that the ancient chronology of Egypt, though well established, is far from infallible.

The uncertainty to which these scholars refer, results from the shaky foundation upon which Egyptian chronology is built. Manetho, the source of “the basic structure or skeleton of Egyptian chronology that we use today” (Clayton, p. 9), is unreliable and inaccurate. In the introduction to his translation of that historian, W.G. Waddell suggested “there were many errors in Manetho’s work from the very beginning” (1997, p. xxv). Further indicting this ancient source, Breasted confessed: “Wherever he can be controlled, Manetho is generally wrong in his figures, and any chronology based on his data is hopelessly astray” (1927, 1:32). Whatever the reason for Manetho’s untrustworthiness, one immediately sees the unreliability of a system whose “basic structure” is “hopelessly astray.”

Likewise, the astronomical dating that at first seems so authoritative, is riddled with ambiguities. “Absolute dates from ancient Egypt rely on astronomical dating,” states Clayton (p. 12). Jack Finegan confirms this, calling the heliacal rising of Sirius a “fixed point of reference” (1999, p.

20). Therefore, if astronomical dating is proved unreliable, the “absolute dates” of ancient Egypt are called into question. Sothic dating (based on the rising of the star Sirius) is indispensable for Egyptian chronologists, and James names the validity of such dating as “the fundamental axiom of Egyptian chronology” (1991, p. 225). As usual however, a closer look at this dating system reveals several shortcomings.

James criticizes Sothic dating at length, referring to it as “a web of interlocking assumptions” based on “meager grounds” (1991, p. 227). One assumption made by Egyptologists regards the fixedness of the Egyptian calendar; they conjecture that it was not altered, or updated, for over a thousand years. Later documents record corrections made to the imperfect calendar after this period, not only by the Egyptians, but also by the Greeks and Romans. The Ptolemies (c. 305-30 B.C.) made several major changes in the course of only three centuries, making it highly unlikely that no changes whatsoever were enacted between 2781 and 1381 B.C. (the period of one Sothic cycle). Thus, the abrogation of one assumption (and the system actually consists of several) nullifies the entire theory. James concluded that “a single calendrical adjustment” in the period before the Ptolemies would “completely invalidate the Sothic calculation for any prior period” (p. 228, *emp. in orig.*).

In the 1940s, H.H. Rowley warned that “undue weight should not be given to archeologists’ estimates of dates, since they depend in part, at any rate, on subjective factors, as the wide differences between them sufficiently prove” (as quoted in Unger, 1954, p. 152). This “wide difference” is clearly manifested in the dating of Egypt’s first dynasty over the past century and a half. Jean François Champollion, translator of the Rosetta stone, reckoned the first dynasty at 5867 B.C. in 1839; Unger figured it to be 5613 B.C. in 1867; and Breasted at 3400 B.C. in 1906 (see Macnaughton, 1932, p. 6). The dates steadily dropped until around the turn of the nineteenth century, prompting Breasted to remark in the 1930s that it is “highly improbable that future discovery will shift these dates more than a century in either direction” (1927, 1:39). Time has not vindicated professor Breasted, however; the date for the first dynasty has continued to drop, and the current consensus (3100 B.C.) is 300 years lower than he predicted.

Even within a scientist’s own lifetime, the dates show a great variableness. Eduard Meyer, upon whose work much chronology is based today, estimated a date of 3180 B.C. in 1887, and then increased it in 1904 to 3315 B.C. Sir Flinders Petrie, considered the first scientific excavator of Egypt, proposed a date of 4777 B.C. in 1894, lowered the date to 5510 B.C. in 1906, and raised it again in 1929 to 4553 B.C. (Macnaughton, 1932, p. 6). The divergence of dates between individual chronographers may be explained partially by the different methods they have employed, some primarily using Manetho, others turning to clues on the monuments, with the majority today using both sources (as well as others). These early dates are completely speculative, however, and cannot be firmly established. Gardiner said in this regard: “It is obviously best to accept 1872 B.C. as the earliest relatively certain fixed date in Egyptian history” (1961, p. 61). Toffteen observed that these various schools of chronographers differ by about 2,000 years just in their calculation of the first dynasty alone (1907, 1:150).

Although in 2003 a consensus on the date of the first dynasty has been reached, the figures above demonstrate the uncertainty of the Egyptian chronology both between individuals and over time. There is general agreement on 3100 B.C. at the present, but there was also general agreement for 5000 B.C. in the late nineteenth century. Despite this prevailing consensus on the beginnings of

Egyptian civilization, there are those on whom the malleability of dates has not passed unnoticed—those who depart from the status quo. These scholars generally are scorned by the scientific community for their blatant disregard of orthodoxy. The utter contempt these men receive goes well beyond academic disapproval, however; in two of the cases mentioned, books were banned or refused publication. Clayton has characterized such dissidents as “fringe” chronologists who suggest what he referred to as “outlandish and unacceptable” changes to the established chronology (1994, p. 13). These peripheral archaeologists, though rarely agreeing among themselves, tenaciously contend that the mainstream has miscalculated—in fact, overcalculated—the ancient chronology. The arguments and conclusions offered by these men are diverse and disparate, yet often logical. Their reasoning is complex, and their presentations are sophisticated (many of their works occupy multiple volumes). It is impossible in the limited space here even to begin to outline the evidence given for each position; however, I will attempt to state fairly their conclusions and the effect they have on the conflict between the Bible and Egyptian chronology.

One of these ill-treated iconoclasts is the notorious Immanuel Velikovsky. An evolutionary catastrophist, Velikovsky tried to prove to the world that the myths and legends of ancient societies were actually eyewitness accounts of real astronomic phenomena. In the process of “proving” that the planet Venus began as a comet that had brushed past Mars and nearly collided with Earth, Velikovsky explained and dated many Old Testament events. For example, the ten plagues of the Exodus are explained as the effects of the comet (which would become Venus) streaking too close to Earth. Likewise, the events of Sinai, the manna in the wilderness, Joshua’s long day, and a host of other stories—not only from the Old Testament, but also from Greek, Mayan, and Indian traditions—are explained as the aftermath of this astral crisis.

Despite his rather dubious astronomical theories, Velikovsky did offer some compelling arguments regarding ancient chronology. In his seminal work, *Ages in Chaos*, he argued for the removal of 600 years from the Middle Kingdom period of Egyptian history. He claimed that the 600 years were redundant, and as a result, other chronologies that are anchored to, and rely upon, Egyptian chronology (such as Hebrew, Hittite, Assyrian, and Babylonian), contain a 600-year “dark age” when nothing (historically speaking) happened. The foundation for his theory is that the discussion of the ten plagues of Moses is not a fairy tale, but is instead an actual historical event that must be linked to a similar event in Egyptian history. From there, he went on to claim that the Exodus of the Hebrews occurred about the same time as the entrance into Egypt of the Hyksos, a people identified with the Amalekites of the Old Testament. Velikovsky pointed to Exodus 17:8 as proof that the Israelites passed the Amalekites, who were at that moment on their way to sack Egypt. He then argued that Queen Hatshepsut of the New Kingdom was one and the same person as the Queen of Sheba described in 1 Kings 10. Other less important parallels were offered, which will not be discussed here.

There is some truth to Dr. Velikovsky’s research, as there is to almost any endeavor, no matter how outlandish. The Hyksos people were indeed Asiatic, and there are “dark ages” in those histories dated by using Egyptian parallels. Even though he was not a Bible believer, Velikovsky’s strict adherence to the Bible is commendable.

Taking his lead from Velikovsky, Donovan Courville, a minister by profession, also subtracted 600 years from the standard Egyptian chronology. Although he agreed with his predecessor in many respects, Courville removed the 600 years by presenting parallelisms in Manetho’s list of

kings, using the Sothic list as his primary source of information (1971, p. 128). Writings from the second-century scholar Eusebius also lend credence to his theory. Courville named the pharaoh of the Exodus as 18th Dynasty King Koncharis (recorded, not in the Manetho list, but only in the Sothic list), although some of his supporting arguments were rather contrived (he also named Shishak of 2 Chronicles 12:2 as Thutmose III). For the most part, however, Courville argued strongly for the accuracy of the biblical record.

The most recent “new chronology” challenging the traditional chronology of Egyptologists has been proposed by one of their own. Neither Courville (a minister) nor Velikovsky (a medical doctor) was trained in the science of archaeology, but David Rohl, a British Egyptologist, is dedicated to nothing else. His now-famous book, *A Test of Time*, was banned from the British Museum in 1995 because of its “heretical” new chronology. Rohl’s primary purpose was to correlate biblical characters and places with Egyptian history. Most interesting is his identification of Joseph as a 12th Dynasty vizier (a sort of “minister of state”) to Amenemhat III (1995, p. 452), although he made other similar comparisons. A little more worrisome is his claim to have discovered Noah’s landing place at the end of the Flood, as well as the Garden of Eden. On a somewhat more positive note, however, Rohl reduced the Third Intermediate Period by about 140 years, and placed the Flood (which he incorrectly views as a local inundation) at 3100 B.C. Unlike chronologies previously discussed, Rohl’s system extends Bible genealogies and compresses Egyptian dates, compromising between the two.

Rohl has not been the only archaeologist to come forward with the claim that Egyptian chronology has been artificially lengthened. One respected group of scientists—headed by British archaeologist Peter James—also has joined the fray. In his landmark book, *Centuries of Darkness*, Dr. James noted that the chronologies of other civilizations—especially Greek, Hittite, Cyprian, and Nubian—seem to be stretched in order to provide historical anchor points for Egyptian chronology. This, he argued, is unnecessary if the Third Intermediate Period is compressed. While James removed only about 200 years from the established chronology, he provided further testimony to the fluidity of Egyptian chronology.

Numerous other biblical and secular chronologists could be cited, but only repetition would result. Some men, like Velikovsky, Courville, and Crombette (not discussed here), take the Bible literally, and adjust the Egyptian chronology from there. Others begin with secular sources (e.g., Kenneth Kitchen of the University of Liverpool), and then attempt to mold the Bible to fit. While the Bible must be maintained as the strict standard and source of Truth, not a single reputable scholar has been able to abbreviate Egyptian chronology enough to crunch all of the civilization’s activities into a time frame prior to 2300 B.C. Even using the maximum compression (i.e., the 600 years proposed by Courville and Velikovsky), a date of 2500 B.C. for the beginning of Egypt ensues—a date that is still 200 years before the Flood, and thus allows no time between the deluge and the beginning of Egyptian civilization. These alternative secular chronologies may reduce the margin of conflict to a minimum of 250 years. Now we must turn to the biblical chronology.

In any chronology, there must be anchor points. Egyptologists use the Sothic cycle to establish three points from which all other chronology is constructed. Biblical chronologists similarly identify anchor points representing events recorded in the Bible that can be correlated to dated, extra-biblical events. Fortunately, the divided kingdoms of Judah and Israel interacted frequently



with Assyria, their well-documented neighbor to the north. The chronology of this country is confirmed, at least until the tenth century B.C.; using Assyrian dates and references, certain biblical dates can be established with surety. The annals of Shalmaneser III, a ninth-century-B.C. ruler of Assyria, mention King Ahab's presence in the battle of Qarqar, which occurred in 853 B.C. This same king records that tribute was received from King Jehu sometime in 841. Using these two established dates and the regnal lists of the books of Kings and Chronicles, a firm date of 930 B.C. is set for the ascension of Rehoboam and the division of Israel (Thiele, 1983, p. 78).

From that secure date (930 B.C.), the chronologist must calculate backward using genealogical information and other clues located in the text. An obvious hint is given in 1 Kings 6:1, upon the occasion of the dedication of Solomon's temple. There, the writer inserts a precise chronological marker for the reader:

And it came to pass in the four hundred and eightieth year after the children of Israel were come out of the land of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign over Israel, in the month of Ziv [April/May—AB], which is the second month, that he began to build the house of Jehovah (emp. added).

Solomon reigned forty years (1 Kings 11:42), and was succeeded by Rehoboam in 930 B.C.; the fourth year of Solomon's reign, therefore, would have been 967 B.C. Adding the 480 years to this, results in a date of 1447 B.C. for the Exodus. Paul explained that the covenant was given at Sinai (two months after the Exodus), 430 years after the promise was made to Abraham (Galatians 3:15-18; see Bass, et. al., 2001), which would have been 1877 B.C., when Abraham was 75 years old (Genesis 12:1-4). From there, the genealogy of Genesis 11 gives the ancestry of Abraham back to Noah, at which point the Flood date of 2349 B.C. (Ussher) may be ascertained. Those who wish to date the Creation simply add to that figure the numbers in the genealogies of Genesis 5 (Ussher calculated that 1656 years passed between Creation and the Flood).

[Table 3 — Comparison of dates of biblical patriarchs in the Masoretic Text and the Septuagint]

[Table 4 — Comparison of dates from Creation to the birth of Abraham, as presented in the Masoretic Text and the Septuagint]

Ussher used the Masoretic text, upon which our English Bibles are based, to calculate these numbers, yet some arrive at larger figures using the Septuagint. The Septuagint, or LXX as it sometimes is designated, is a Greek translation of the Old Testament, composed around 250 B.C. by a panel of 72 Alexandrian Jews at the behest of Ptolemy Philadelphus, king of Egypt. Their version is virtually identical to the Hebrew, or Masoretic, text, with the notable exception of the genealogical data in the early chapters of Genesis. The Septuagint significantly increases the ages of the patriarchs, adding some 780 years between Terah (Abraham's father) and the Flood. These extra centuries push the date of the Flood back considerably, past 3000 B.C., to a date that fits comfortably with an adjusted Egyptian chronology.

Unfortunately, these inflated dates are thought to be contrived—inserted by the Jewish translators in an attempt to better correlate the history of the Jews to the antiquity of Egypt. Sir Lancelot Brenton, a translator of the Septuagint, warned:

In estimating the general character of the version, it must be remembered that the translators were Jews, full of traditional thoughts of their own as to the meaning of Scripture; and thus nothing

short of a miracle could have prevented them from infusing into their version the thoughts which were current in their own minds (2001, p. iii, emp. added).

More recent scholarship agrees with this conclusion, and suggests that changes in the LXX were “later adaptions [sic]” (Larsson, 1983, p. 409). In a comparison of the Septuagint and the Samaritan Pentateuch (another version of the Pentateuch that reports shorter spans of time in the generations between Adam and Noah), Alfred Edersheim wrote: “The most learned critics are now almost unanimous in concluding, as indeed we might have expected, that the Hebrew text contains the true chronology” (1890, 1:69). The Septuagint presents an easy solution to the chronological quandary, yet in this case it is unwise to accept this highly questionable source.

Others have made similar attempts to inflate the biblical chronology by adding years to the genealogies without using another version of the Bible. Gerald Aardsma, editor of *The Biblical Chronologist*, suggests that 1 Kings 6:1 is corrupted, and should read “in the 1480th year after the children of Israel were come out of the land of Egypt” instead of 480th year. He places this “missing” one thousand years between the books of Judges and 1 Samuel. Aardsma believes that the archaeological evidence demands this shift, asserting that 480 years is insufficient for the wilderness wanderings, the conquest of Canaan, the period of the Judges, and the regencies of Saul and David (1993, pp. 40ff.). Unfortunately, this hypothesis is highly questionable, and is summarily dismissed by other biblical chronologists. Bryant Wood, Director of the Associates for Biblical Research, critically reviewed Aardsma’s book, and concluded that his theory is “misguided, lacks credibility and is without rational basis.” He went on to say that “giving it even passing consideration distracts from the correct understanding of Biblical history and chronology” (1993, 6[4]:111).

Though various theories fall short, there must be a solution to the dating problem in the Bible. The flexibility of the Egyptian chronology has been demonstrated; it reasonably can be pushed back to about 2600 B.C. What was once a thousand-year difference in biblical and secular dates, has shrunk to only about 250 years because of the adjusted chronology. These few years are all that is needed to solve this mystery. But can they be found in the recesses of the biblical chronology? A few examples of “hidden time” might suffice. Genesis 5:32 records that Noah was 500 when his three sons were born, making Shem 101 years old the year after the Flood. Yet Genesis 11:10-11 indicates that Shem was only 99 when the Flood ended. The reasonable explanation is that Noah began having sons in his 500th year, but he did not have all three of them the same year. Because Shem was not the first son, but evidently the third, two years may be added to the chronology. Also, in Genesis 11:11, Arphaxad is listed as Shem’s son, yet it appears that he was not the firstborn son either (Genesis 10:22).

Often in the genealogies, sons are mentioned together, with only one date given for the group, such as in the case of Noah’s offspring. A similar, yet larger, gap is found in Genesis 11:26, in the chronicle of the sons of Terah. According to this passage, Terah begat Abram, Nahor, and Haran in his 70th year. The boys were not triplets however, and other passages reveal that there were quite a few years between them. Abraham was 75 years old when he left his home (Genesis 12:4), but he did not leave until his father, Terah, passed away (Acts 7:4). No problem so far, until Genesis 11:32 is examined: “And the days of Terah were two hundred and five years: and Terah died in Haran.” Terah had Abraham when he was 130 years old, but he began having children when he was 70. A thorough inquisition of this section of the genealogies reveals sixty years that otherwise would have been known only to God. As Whitcomb and Morris observed:

“Thus we have clear evidence for the possible addition of a limited number of years from the lives of some of these patriarchs to the total of years from the Flood to Abraham” (1961, p. 480, emp. added). Only a few such increments are necessary to amass the 250 years needed to stretch biblical time back before the Egyptians. Taken together, there is some flexibility in the biblical record (see Lyons, 2002), just as there is some flexibility in the Egyptian record.

This apocryphal time in no way compromises the integrity of the Genesis record, nor does it indicate the possibility of large gaps. Some have proposed an allegorical or theological meaning for Genesis 5 and 11 in order to accommodate the secular chronologies, but this is unnecessary. The genealogies of Genesis are certainly theological in purpose, but not exclusively so. Information contained within them is sound and accurate, though not always as chronologically precise as we might wish. The sixty-year gap of Terah or the two-year gap of Shem represents an imprecision, not an inaccuracy. The Christian may accept a literal, straightforward interpretation of these passages, while recognizing the possibility that there may be more years than are recorded. God has written all we need to know, not all we want to know.

Figure 1 — Illustration of an example of “hidden time” within the biblical text  
There are no definitive answers to the “Egyptian paradox.” Several possibilities have been presented here, and I encourage the reader to investigate each of them more thoroughly. The biblical and historical evidence points to a young Earth, and a recent history for humanity. Archeologists may speculate, but there is no solid proof for man’s existence beyond about 3000 B.C. It is then that history emerges forcefully, not unlike the so-called “Cambrian explosion” with which evolutionists are so familiar. Whitcomb and Morris noted: “It is remarkable how many different lines of evidence of a historical nature point back to a time around 3000 B.C. as dating the beginning of true civilization” (p. 394). Cities and civilizations appear suddenly in the record, fully developed and modern in almost every way. Henry wrote in agreement:

Although Genesis sets no fixed dates, it begins the history of the human race at a point which, according to Biblical Chronologists, must be set no more recently than 6,000 and no more remotely than 10,000 years ago.... Even the historian Arnold J. Toynbee readily concedes that Ussher’s speculative and much-lampooned date of 4004 B.C. “approximately marks the first appearance of representatives of the species of human society called civilization” (The Atlantic Monthly...June 1942) [as quoted in Jenkins, 1969, p. 25].  
Some chronologists, such as James Jordan, continue to cling to a strict biblical chronology, allowing no flexibility whatsoever. In an article addressing the “Egyptian problem,” Jordan summarized the flaws of Egyptian chronology, and referred to the three centuries removed by Peter James and the six centuries eliminated by Courville and Velikovsky, concluding, “the consensus chronology...is collapsing today” (1994). Jordan wholly ignores the mathematics of the situation; 3100 minus 600 is still 2500—a date that overextends the Flood date by 200 years. He admits that a chronology based on this sort of logic has “everything going against it and nothing going for it,” yet he persists in defending Ussher’s dates (1979). The Bible must not be

supported blindly, at the expense of indisputable evidence such as the great pyramids. Some persuade Christians to ignore the scientific facts, instead of ignoring the interpretation of those facts, and in doing so they only hurt the cause. In the words of William F. Albright: “The Bible... has suffered more in many respects from its well-intentioned friends than from its honest foes” (1965, p. 291).

Truth has nothing to fear, and neither does the Christian. God made the Earth, the sea, and “all that in them is,” and He just as certainly has guided the history of this world, giving us His thoughts on the matter throughout the Bible. The question of biblical chronology can be resolved in several ways, but the point to remember is that it can be resolved. Secular archaeologists always will have presuppositions of an ancient Earth, yet the facts speak for themselves. The evidence allows for a young Earth and a recent Flood, and more important, God says it is so.

## REFERENCES

Aardsma, Gerald (1993), *A New Approach to the Chronology of Biblical History from Abraham to Samuel* (Loda, IL: Aardsma Publishing), second edition.

Albright, William Foxwell (1965), *History, Archaeology and Christian Humanism* (London: Adam & Charles Black).

Archer, Gleason (1979), “Chronology of the Old Testament,” *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, ed. Frank Gæbelein (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan).

Barr, James (1985), “Why the World was Created in 4004 B.C.: Archbishop Ussher and Biblical Chronology,” *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester*, 67[2]:575-608, Spring.

Barr, James (1999), “Pre-scientific Chronology: The Bible and the Origin of the World,” *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, 143[3]:379-387, September.

Bass, Alden, Bert Thompson, Kyle Butt (2001), “The Length of the Egyptian Sojourn,” *Reason & Revelation*, 22:41-43, June.

Brantley, Gary (1993), “Dating in Archaeology: Challenges to Biblical Credibility,” *Reason & Revelation*, 13:81-85, November.

Breasted, James Henry (1927), *Ancient Records of Egypt* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2001 reprint).

Brenton, Lancelot (2001 reprint), “Introduction,” *Septuagint* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson).

Clayton, Peter (1994), *Chronicles of the Pharaohs* (London: Thames and Hudson).

Courville, Donovan (1971), *The Exodus Problem and Its Ramifications* (Loma Linda, CA: Challenge Books).

Down, David (2001), “Searching for Moses,” *Technical Journal*, 15[1]:53-57.

- Edersheim, Alfred (1890), *Bible History* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1972 reprint).
- Finegan, Jack (1999), *Handbook of Biblical Chronology* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson).
- Gardiner, Alan (1961), *The Egyptians* (London: Folio Society).
- Gould, Stephen Jay (1993), "Fall of the House of Ussher," *Eight Little Piggies* (New York: W.W. Norton).
- Herodotus (1996 reprint), *The Histories*, transl. Aubrey Selincourt (London: Penguin).
- "The History of Mankind" (1997), *Encyclopaedia Britannica [Propaedia]* (Chicago, IL: Encyclopaedia Britannica).
- James, Peter (1991), *Centuries of Darkness* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press).
- Jenkins, Ferrell (1969), *The Theme of the Bible* (Orlando, FL: Gogdill Foundation).
- Jordan, James (1979), "The Biblical Chronology Question: An Analysis," *CSSH Quarterly*, 2[2]:9-15, Winter.
- Jordan, James (1994), "The Egyptian Problem," *Biblical Chronology*, 6[1]:1-8, January.
- Julius Africanus (1971 reprint), *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, transl. and ed. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans).
- Larson, Gerhard (1983), "The Chronology of the Pentateuch: A Comparison of the MT and LXX," *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 102[3]:401-409, March.
- Lyons, Eric (2002), "When did Terah Beget Abraham?" *Reason & Revelation Resources*, 1:21-R, June.
- Major, Trevor (1993), "Dating in Archaeology: Radiocarbon & Tree-Ring Dating," *Reason & Revelation*, 13:73-77, October.
- Macnaughton, Duncan (1932), *A Scheme of Egyptian Chronology* (London: Luzac).
- Ramm, Bernard (1954), *The Christian View of Science and Scripture* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans).
- Roberts, David M. (1995), "Age of Pyramids: Egypt's Old Kingdom," *National Geographic*, 187[1]:2-42, January.
- Rohl, David M. (1995), *A Test of Time* (London: Arrow).

Scarre, Chris (1993), *Smithsonian Timelines of the Ancient World* (London: Dorling Kindersley).

Theophilus of Antioch (1971 reprint), *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, transl., Marcus Dods, ed. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans).

Thiele, Edwin (1983), *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan).

Toffteen, Olaf (1907), *Ancient Chronology* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press).

Unger, Merrill (1954), *Archaeology and the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan).

Velikovsky, Immanuel (1952), *Ages in Chaos* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday).

Waddell, W.G. (1997), "Introduction," *Manetho* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press).

Whitcomb, John and Henry Morris (1961), *The Genesis Flood* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker).

White, Andrew Dickson (1896), *A History of the Warfare of Science with Theology in Christendom* (New York: Free Press, 1965 reprint).

Wood, Bryant G. (1993), "One Thousand Years Missing from Bible History?" *Bible and Spade*, 6[4]:97-111, Autumn.

Copyright © 2003 Apologetics Press, Inc.

<http://apologeticspress.org/apcontent.aspx?category=9&article=92>

# Doesn't Egyptian Chronology Prove That the Bible Is Unreliable?

Chapter 24 by Dr. Elizabeth Mitchell on July 22, 2010; last featured April 28, 2015

Egyptology, originally expected to support the history recorded in the Old Testament, has produced a chronology that contradicts the Bible. This so-called traditional Egyptian chronology would have the pyramids predate the flood of Noah's day; such cannot be the case, for pyramids could never withstand a worldwide flood. And when traditional Egyptian chronology is used to evaluate archaeological findings, landmark events such as the mass exodus of Hebrew people from Egypt appear to have left no evidence. Such discrepancies between traditional Egyptian chronology and the Bible are used to attack the Bible's historical accuracy. Instead of simply assuming the accuracy of traditional Egyptian chronology and modifying the Bible, people should carefully examine traditional chronology to see if it is as reliable as some claim it to be.

## Traditional Egyptian Chronology

Though traditional Egyptian chronology dominates modern understanding of ancient history, traditional chronology is inconsistent with the Bible. When there is a discrepancy between traditional chronology and the Bible's chronology, scholars usually ignore the Bible. Though many claim that traditional chronology is indisputable, a close look at this chronology reveals its shaky foundation. Dr. Rene Grogard of the University of Sydney says, "It is important to show the weaknesses or errors in our understanding of a theory in order to leave our minds free to think of a more acceptable alternative."<sup>26</sup> Before exploring an acceptable alternative to traditional Egyptian chronology, this chapter will show some of the errors it is built on.

Traditional Egyptian chronology is built on Manetho's history and the Sothic theory. In the third century B.C., Manetho compiled a list of pharaohs and the lengths of their reigns. The Sothic cycle theory assigns familiar calendar dates to those reigns. However, both Manetho's history and the Sothic theory have flaws that make them an unreliable foundation for chronology.

## Manetho's History

Ptolemy II commissioned a priest named Manetho to compile a history of Egypt. Traditional Egyptian chronology bases its outlines of Egyptian dynasties on Manetho's history (see chart). However, Manetho's writings are unsuitable for establishing a reliable Egyptian chronology because Manetho's history:

- was never intended to be a chronological account of Egyptian history,
- is inconsistent with contemporary Egyptian sources.

### Traditional Egyptian Chronology (simplified overview)<sup>27</sup>

<sup>26</sup> I. D. Mackey, "Sothic Star Dating: The Sothic Star Theory of the Egyptian Calendar," abridged thesis, Sydney, Australia, 1995; available at [www.specialtyinterests.net/](http://www.specialtyinterests.net/).

Old Kingdom	Dynasties 1–6	2920–2770 B.C.
Great Pyramids of Giza	4th Dynasty	2600–2500 B.C.
First Intermediate Period	Dynasties 7–11	2150–1986 B.C.
Middle Kingdom	Dynasties 12–13	1986–1759 B.C.
Second Intermediate Period	Dynasties 14–17	1759–1525 B.C.
New Kingdom	Dynasties 18–20	1525–1069 B.C.
Third Intermediate Period	Dynasties 21–25	1069–664 B.C.
Late Period (Persian)	Dynasties 26–31	664–332 B.C.
Alexander the Great		332–323 B.C.
Ptolemaic Period		323–30 B.C.
Roman Period		began 30 B.C.

[Several Egyptian pharaohs may have ruled at the same time in different regions of the land, as archaeologist David Down suggests in his revised chronology.]

Manetho, whose writings only survive as a partially preserved “garbled abridgement,”<sup>28</sup> did not intend for his history to be a chronological account of Egyptian history. Like everyone else in the ancient world, Manetho measured time in regnal years (“in the fifth year of King So-and-So”). Eusebius, the fourth-century historian who quoted Manetho extensively, did not believe that Manetho intended for his regnal years to be added up consecutively. Eusebius says, “Several Egyptian kings ruled at the same time... It was not a succession of kings occupying the throne one after the other, but several kings reigning at the same time in different regions.”<sup>29</sup> Because Manetho’s history lists the reigns of kings who ruled simultaneously, historians should not add the years of the kings’ reigns together as if the kings ruled one after another.

Manetho’s history is also inconsistent with contemporary Egyptian sources. Professor J. H. Breasted, author of *History of Egypt*, calls Manetho’s history “a late, careless and uncritical compilation, which can be proven wrong from the contemporary monuments in the vast majority of cases, where such documents have survived.”<sup>30</sup> Manetho’s interpretation of each variation in

<sup>27</sup> 2. D. Rohl, *Pharaohs and Kings: A Biblical Quest* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1995), p. 24. Dynasties are grouped in sets called Old Kingdom, Middle Kingdom, and New Kingdom. After each set is an Intermediate Period whose history is less clear. Duration of dynasties comes from Manetho. Dates come from various interpretations of the Sothic cycle. Note: Meyer, Breasted, and many others give even earlier dates.

<sup>28</sup> 3. A. Gardiner, *Egypt of the Pharaohs* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961), p. 46, quoted in D. Mackey’s thesis. Manetho is quoted by Josephus, Eusebius, Africanus, and Syncellus.

<sup>29</sup> J. Ashton and D. Down, *Unwrapping the Pharaohs* (Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 2006), p. 73.

<sup>30</sup> 5. D. Mackey, “Sothic Star Dating.”



spelling as a different king creates numerous nonexistent generations. Because Manetho's history contradicts actual Egyptian records from the time of the pharaohs, historians should not consider Manetho's history authoritative.

## The Sothic Cycle

Eduard Meyer created the Sothic cycle in 1904 to give Egypt a unified calendar<sup>31</sup> that aligns Egyptian regnal years with modern historians' B.C. dates. Historians combine the Sothic cycle dates with Manetho's history to get traditional Egyptian dates. Meyer proposed that the Egyptian calendar, having no leap year, fell steadily behind until it corrected itself during the year of the "rising of Sothis." The theory says the Egyptians knew that 1,460 years were necessary for the calendar to correct itself because the annual sunrise appearance of the star Sirius corresponded to the first day of Egypt's flood season only once every 1,460 years.<sup>32</sup> Sothic theory claims that the Egyptian calendar was correct only once every 1,460 years (like a broken watch that is correct twice a day) and that the Egyptians dated important events from this Great Sothic Year. In reality, there is no evidence for this Sothic cycle in ancient Egypt.

The Sothic cycle is not reliable because it

- is based on contradictory starting points,
- has little historical support.

Meyer had to depend on later non-Egyptian writers to establish a starting point for his calculations, and those sources are contradictory. Censorinus, a third-century Roman writer, and Theon, a fourth-century Alexandrian astronomer, give different starting points. According to Censorinus, the Great Sothic Year occurred in A.D. 140, but according to Theon, it occurred in 26 B.C. Meyer subtracted multiples of 1,460 years from A.D. 140 and proposed 4240 B.C. as a totally certain date for the establishment of Egypt's civil calendar.<sup>33</sup>

The Sothic cycle finds little historical support. History gives no hint that the Egyptians regularly dated important events from the rising of Sothis. The second-century astronomer Claudius Ptolemy never mentions the rising of Sothis.<sup>34</sup> Furthermore, whenever Egyptian writings mention the rising of Sothis in connection with a regnal year, the pharaoh is unnamed,<sup>35</sup> or the reference is ambiguous.<sup>36</sup> For these reasons, many Egyptologists have consistently rejected Sothic-cycle-based chronology.

## Discrepancies

---

<sup>31</sup> 6. D. Mackey, "Fall of the Sothic Theory: Egyptian Chronology Revisited," *TJ* 17 no. 3 (2003): 70–73, available at [www.answersingenesis.org/tj/v17/i3/sothic\\_theory.asp](http://www.answersingenesis.org/tj/v17/i3/sothic_theory.asp).

<sup>32</sup> 7. Rohl, *Pharaohs and Kings: A Biblical Quest*, p. 129–130.

<sup>33</sup> 8. Mackey, "Fall of the Sothic Theory: Egyptian Chronology Revisited."

<sup>34</sup> 9. Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> 10. Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> 11. Rohl, *Pharaohs and Kings: A Biblical Quest*, p. 134–135. The famous Ebers Papyrus allegedly confirms a 1517 B.C. date for the ninth year of Amenhotep I. However, this document refers to a monthly rising of Sothis, an astronomical impossibility.

Whenever two chronologies disagree, at least one must be wrong. Traditional Egyptian chronology disputes the Hebrew chronology recorded in the Bible as well as secular data from neighboring nations. As Damien Mackey summarized in his thesis:

The value of any one nation's absolute chronology must ultimately depend on its ability to *integrate with all known data from other regions as well*. It would be useless to establish a complete system of chronology that can exist only in isolation, but that cannot stand up to scrutiny by comparison with other systems. For the Sothic scheme [of Egyptian chronology] to be valid—just as for Mesopotamian, Palestinian, Greek or Anatolian chronologies to be valid—it is *necessary for each period of Egyptian history to be capable of perfect alignment with any relevant period of history of one or another ancient nation*. This is most especially true in the case of Egyptian history because... the historians of other nations tend to look to Egyptian chronology as the rule according to which they estimate and adjust their own chronologies<sup>37</sup> (emphasis added).

## Biblical Discrepancies

Traditional dates for Egyptian pyramids predate Noah's flood (see chart). Since the pyramids could not have survived a global flood, some people question the reliability of the Bible's chronology. Others use the traditional dates for the pyramids to support the idea that Noah's flood was a local flood that did not affect Egypt.<sup>38</sup> The pyramids do not come with labels declaring their dates, and the traditional dates used for them create an irreconcilable discrepancy with the Bible.

Bible Timeline (B.C.)				
4004	2348	1491	586	4
Creation	Noah's flood	Exodus	Temple destroyed	Christ's birth

  

Traditional Egyptian Dates (B.C.)		
3150 <sup>39</sup> to 2920	2600 to 2500	1290
Zoser's pyramid	Great Pyramid	Exodus

Traditional dates for the Old Testament stories involving Egypt remain unconfirmed by archaeology and actually contradict Scripture. The characters of the Bible stories left no archaeological evidence of their existence in the times traditionally assigned to them. Bible-believing Egyptologists assigned these dates in error. The early Egyptologists, hoping to find the Bible confirmed in Egypt, contributed to the errors in traditional chronology by incorrectly applying the Bible in two instances. They incorrectly:

- assumed that Ramses the Great was the pharaoh of the oppression,
- identified Shoshenq as Shishak of the Bible.

<sup>37</sup> 12. D. Mackey, "Sothic Star Dating: The Sothic Star Theory of the Egyptian Calendar," abridged thesis, Sydney, Australia, 1995. available at [www.specialtyinterests.net/](http://www.specialtyinterests.net/).

<sup>38</sup> 13. The inconsistency of the local flood idea with both science and the rest of the Bible is discussed in chapter 10 of *The New Answers Book* (Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 2006).

<sup>39</sup> 14. Earlier date comes from W. Durant, *Our Oriental Heritage* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1954), p. 147.

The first error assigned an Exodus date inconsistent with the rest of Scripture. The second error provided support for the excessive antiquity of traditional dating. Both errors caused scholars to assign inconsistent, unsupported dates to the Bible accounts.

Scholars routinely disregard the biblical date for the Exodus.<sup>40</sup> As Gleason Archer says, “But notwithstanding ... consistent testimony of Scripture to the 1445 date (or an approximation thereof), the preponderance of scholarly opinion today is in favor of a considerably later date, the most favored one at present being 1290 B.C., or about ten years after Ramses II began to reign.”<sup>41</sup> The traditional date for Ramses II “the Great,” a 19th dynasty king, is nearly two centuries after the Exodus. Because Exodus 1:11 says that the Hebrew slaves built the city Ramses, early Egyptologists assumed that Ramses II was the pharaoh who oppressed the Israelites. On that basis, most scholars assign Ramses’ traditional date to the Exodus and ignore the Bible’s testimony.

The name Ramses should not restrict the oppression to the 19th dynasty because this name is not unique to the 19th dynasty. Ramses, which means “son of Ra—the sun god,” was a name commonly used to honor pharaohs. For instance, Ahmose, the founder of the 18th dynasty, was also called Ramses, as was a later 18th dynasty king, Amenhotep III.<sup>42</sup> Archaeology of the 18th and 19th dynasties shows no evidence of enslaved Israelites because the Hebrews had left Egypt centuries before. Scholars should neither assume that Ramses II was the pharaoh of the oppression nor assign his date to the Exodus.

Jean Champollion,<sup>43</sup> the father of Egyptology, unwittingly gave support to biblically inconsistent chronology when he erroneously identified pharaoh Shoshenq as the Shishak of the Bible. Champollion found an inscription about Shoshenq, founder of the 22nd dynasty, at the temple of Karnak. Because the names sound similar, Champollion assumed that Shoshenq was the Shishak who plundered Jerusalem in the fifth year of King Rehoboam.<sup>44</sup> Using the biblical date for Rehoboam as a starting point, chronologists used Manetho’s list to outline the next three centuries of Egyptian history.

The two problems with Shoshenq’s identification involve military strategy and phonics. According to the inscriptions, Shoshenq attacked the northern part of Israel, not Rehoboam’s Jerusalem or Judah. During Rehoboam’s time, Jeroboam ruled the northern kingdom. Jeroboam was Shishak’s ally.<sup>45</sup> If Shoshenq were Shishak, then Shoshenq attacked his ally and ignored his enemy. Furthermore, the phonetics of these two pharaohs’ names only sound similar in their

---

<sup>40</sup> 15. Conservative Bible scholars calculate the Exodus to have occurred sometime between 1491–1445 B.C. Solomon began to build the temple in the fourth year of his reign, in the 480th year after the Exodus from Egypt, according to I Kings 6:1. Accepted dates for the beginning of Solomon’s reign, as calculated from the lengths of the reigns of Old Testament kings, range from 1015 to 970 B.C. From this data, the Exodus occurred around 1491 to 1445 B.C. The dates are confirmed by additional Scriptures. See Dr. Jones’s *Chronology of the Old Testament* for a full discussion.

<sup>41</sup> 16. G. Archer, *A Survey of Old Testament Introduction* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1994), p. 241.

<sup>42</sup> 17. F.N. Jones, *Chronology of the Old Testament* (Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 2004), p. 50–51.

<sup>43</sup> 18. Jean Champollion translated the famous Rosetta stone, unlocking the secret of Egyptian hieroglyphics.

<sup>44</sup> 19. Rohl, *Pharaohs and Kings: A Biblical Quest*, p. 120–121. See 1 Kings 14:25.

<sup>45</sup> 20. Rohl, *Pharaohs and Kings: A Biblical Quest*, p. 122–127 and 1 Kings 11:40. Jeroboam had fled to Shishak during Solomon’s lifetime.

transliterated forms, not in the original languages.<sup>46</sup> Because of this faulty identification of Shoshenq with Shishak, Egyptologists ignore the rest of the biblical facts relating to the geography and characters involved. Because the dates constructed from this biblical misinterpretation actually coincide with the traditional dating of the third intermediate period, many Bible scholars trust the traditional chronology even when it disputes the Old Testament.

## Secular Discrepancies

Traditional Egyptian chronology disputes not only biblical chronology but also information from non-biblical sources. Egypt's traditional dates clash with secular data in at least two areas:

- The Hittite connection with Assyrian chronology
- Carbon dating

The Hittites built a powerful empire based in Asia Minor, but scholars have to depend on dates from other ancient nations to determine Hittite chronology. Synchronisms are events shared by two cultures, and Egypt shares many synchronisms with the Hittites. Therefore, Egypt's erroneous dates have been assigned to the Hittites. For instance, the traditional date of 1353 B.C. for pharaoh Akhenaten's accession<sup>47</sup> to the throne is assigned to Hittite king Supiluliumas because Supiluliumas sent a letter of congratulations to Akhenaten.<sup>48</sup> The date 1275 B.C. for the battle of Kadesh,<sup>49</sup> at which both Ramses II and Hittite king Muwatalli II claimed victory, comes from the traditional dates for Ramses the Great. (His dates derive from Sothic theory and Manetho's history.) Finally, when Ramses III recorded his traditionally dated 1180 B.C.<sup>50</sup> victory over sea people, he said that the sea people had already annihilated the Hittites. According to these Egyptian dates, the Hittites became extinct about 1200 B.C. (see chart).

Traditional Timeline (B.C.)				
3150 <sup>51</sup>	2600	1290	1275	1200
Zoser's Pyramid	Great Pyramid	Exodus	Kadesh	Hittites extinct

The Egyptian version of Hittite chronology falls apart, however, when compared to more recent Assyrian archaeological discoveries. Assyrian inscriptions record wars with the Hittites during the eighth and ninth centuries B.C., centuries after the Hittites supposedly ceased to exist. These inscriptions describe wars during the reigns of Assyrian kings Shalmaneser III and Sennacherib and even name the same Hittite kings as the Egyptian records<sup>52</sup> (see chart). The Assyrian timeline is consistent with well-established dates such as Nebuchadnezzar's conquest of Jerusalem. Traditional Egyptian dates must be wrong.

<sup>46</sup> 21. Ashton and Down, *Unwrapping the Pharaohs*, p. 185.

<sup>47</sup> 22. Rohl, *Pharaohs and Kings: A Biblical Quest*, p. 20.

<sup>48</sup> 23. Ashton and Down, *Unwrapping the Pharaohs*, p. 75.

<sup>49</sup> 24. *Anatolia: Cauldron of Cultures* (Alexandria, VA: Time-Life Books, 1995), p. 64.

<sup>50</sup> 25. Ibid, p. 69.

<sup>51</sup> 26. W. Durant, *Our Oriental Heritage* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1954), p. 147.

<sup>52</sup> 27. Ashton and Down, *Unwrapping the Pharaohs*, p. 75–76.

Problems Timeline (B.C.)				
2600	2348	1275	1200	800s–700s
(trad.)	(bib.)	(trad.)	(trad.)	(Assyr.)
Great Pyramid	flood	Kadesh	Hittites extinct	Hittite/Assyrian wars

Acceptance of the biblical account of Hittite history could have prevented the incorrect dating of the Hittites even before the discovery of the Assyrian monumental inscriptions. According to 2 Kings 7:6, during Elisha’s lifetime the Hittites were as formidable as Egypt. One explorer, Irish missionary William Wright, correctly evaluated the hieroglyphics he found in Asia Minor because he accepted the Bible’s history. In 1872, despite scholarship that insisted the Hittites and the Bible were unhistorical, Wright believed that the inscriptions he had found “would show that a great people, called Hittites in the Bible, but never referred to in classic history, had once formed a mighty empire in that region.”<sup>53</sup>

Carbon dating<sup>54</sup> also disputes traditional chronology. According to the Cambridge Encyclopedia on Archaeology:

When the radiocarbon method was first tested, good agreement was found between radiocarbon dates and historical dates for samples of known age... As measurements became more precise, however, it gradually became apparent that there were systematic discrepancies between the dates that were being obtained and those that could be expected from historical evidence [i.e., the traditional dates]. These differences were most marked in the period before about the midfirst millennium B.C., *in which radiocarbon dates appear too recent, by up to several hundred years, by comparison with historical dates*. Dates for the earliest comparative material available, reeds used as bonding between mud brick courses of tombs of Egyptians Dynasty I, about 3,100 B.C., *appeared to be as much as 600 years, or about 12% too young*<sup>55</sup> (emphasis added).

Just as carbon dating is more consistent with a young earth than most people realize, carbon dating is consistent with a much younger Egyptian civilization than traditional chronology claims.

## Revised Chronologies

In *Centuries of Darkness*, Peter James calls traditional chronology a “gigantic academic blunder.”<sup>56</sup> David Rohl writes, “The only real solution to the archaeological problems which have been created is to pull down the whole structure and start again, reconstructing from the foundations upward.”<sup>57</sup> Revised chronology reflects the relationships between ancient nations more accurately and reveals “remarkable agreement between the histories of Egypt and Israel.”<sup>58</sup> Revised chronology bolsters the Christian’s trust in the Bible and equips him with answers for a skeptical world.

<sup>53</sup> 28. *Anatolia*, p. 41.

<sup>54</sup> 29. Carbon dating is discussed in chapter 7 of *The New Answers Book* (Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 2006).

<sup>55</sup> 30. D. Downs, “The Chronology of Egypt and Israel,” from *Diggings*, available at [biblicalstudies.qldwide.net.au/chronology\\_of\\_egypt\\_and\\_israel.html](http://biblicalstudies.qldwide.net.au/chronology_of_egypt_and_israel.html).

<sup>56</sup> 31. P. James, *Centuries of Darkness*, 320, quoted in Ashton and Down, *Unwrapping the Pharaohs*, p. 184.

<sup>57</sup> 32. Rohl, *Pharaohs and Kings: A Biblical Quest*, p. 9.

<sup>58</sup> 33. Down, “The Chronology of Egypt and Israel.”

Efforts to assign familiar dates to events of antiquity require a starting point, a known date. Four starting points provide secure anchors for the chronology of the Middle East. By counting both backward and forward from these four dates, the chronologist can assign familiar dates from creation to Christ<sup>59</sup> and combine the annals of the ancient nations to build a consistent chronology. These four anchor points are summarized on the “Starting Points” chart.

Starting Points				
664 B.C.	621 B.C.	605 B.C.	586 B.C.	A.D. 26
Thebes sacked	Lunar eclipse	Battle of Carchemish	Temple destroyed	15th year of Tiberias
Taharka Dies	Nabopolassar’s 5th year	Nebuchadnezzar’s 1st year (sole rex)	Nebuchadnezzar’s 19th year	Christ’s 30th year

Space does not permit analysis of all the revised chronologies. A number of scholars, including Peter James, David Rohl, D.A. Courville, and David Down, have produced fine work in this area. Some begin with the Bible, while others begin with starting points such as the battle of Thebes. The Christian should only accept revised chronology that is consistent with the Bible. New evidence may someday shed new light on the identity of a pharaoh, but nothing should ever rock the Christian’s faith in the trustworthiness of God’s Word.

David Down, in *Unwrapping the Pharaohs*, has synthesized the work of many experts into a cohesive narrative consistent with the Bible. He points out many synchronisms between the histories of Israel and Egypt, providing a highly plausible identification for many of the characters in the Old Testament. Furthermore, his work is consistent with the history of surrounding nations and allows the Hittites to slip into their proper niche in the context of their Assyrian and Egyptian neighbors.

### **The Revision Compared to the Absolute Authority—the Bible**

Synchronisms between Old Testament characters and Egypt include the following:

- Pre-Dynastic and Old Kingdom  
Mizraim, Abram
- Middle Kingdom  
Joseph, Moses
- New Kingdom  
Solomon, Rehoboam, Asa, Ahab
- Third Intermediate and Late Periods  
Hezekiah, Josiah, Jeremiah

<sup>59</sup> 34. Jones, *Chronology of the Old Testament*, p. 23, 123, and 309. Claudius Ptolemy documented a lunar eclipse that occurred on April 15, 621 B.C. (Gregorian calendar), during the fifth year of Nabopolassar, Nebuchadnezzar’s father. Counting forward gives the 605 B.C. and 586 B.C. dates. Ashurbanipal’s sacking of Thebes in 664 B.C. comes from several independent ancient sources. (See Rohl, *Pharaohs and Kings: A Biblical Quest*, p. 119.) Contemporary Roman writers confirm the Tiberius date. (See Jones, *Chronology of the Old Testament*, p. 218.)

## Predynastic Egypt and Old Kingdom—the Post-Flood World

Most histories begin with the unsubstantiated notion that primitive people slowly developed civilization from rudimentary beginnings. Archaeology around the world has instead revealed advanced ancient technology without discernible periods of evolution.<sup>60</sup> This sudden appearance of cultures possessing advanced technology approximately 4,000 years ago is consistent with the Bible's account of the Flood, the proliferation of intelligent people on the plains of Shinar, and their subsequent scattering from the Tower of Babel.<sup>61</sup>

### 1. Mizraim's Family

Each group leaving Babel took with it whatever skills its members possessed.

Mizraim, Noah's grandson, founded Egypt around 2188 B.C., a date consistent with both biblical and secular records.<sup>62</sup> The Egyptians, the Sumerians, and the Mayans all retained the technology to build pyramids. Imhotep designed Egypt's first pyramid for third dynasty pharaoh Zoser. The Great Pyramid of Giza, built for pharaoh Khufu of the fourth dynasty, is "the largest and most accurately constructed building in the world."<sup>63</sup> This pyramid required advanced optical, surveying, mathematical, and construction techniques, an impressive leap beyond the technology demonstrated in earlier pyramids.

### 2. Abram and Khufu's Pyramid

Abram's visit to Egypt may explain Egypt's sudden advance. Abram grew up in the advanced but idolatrous culture of Ur about three centuries after the Flood. Josephus wrote that Abram "communicated to them arithmetic, and delivered to them the science of astronomy; for before Abram came into Egypt they were unacquainted with those parts of learning; for that science came from the Chaldeans into Egypt."<sup>64</sup> Based on Josephus's statement, Abram's visit to Egypt may well have occurred during the fourth dynasty.

## Middle Kingdom—Joseph and Moses

In contrast to the lack of evidence for an Israelite population in Egypt during the New Kingdom of Ramses' time, there is significant evidence of the Israelite presence during the Middle Kingdom. The 12th and 13th dynasties provide the backdrop for the stories of Joseph, the oppression of the Israelites, Moses, and the Exodus. The biblical dates for these events can provide dates for these dynasties (see chart).

---

<sup>60</sup> 35. D. Chittick, *Puzzle of Ancient Man* (Newberg, OR: Creation Compass, 2006), p. 8–15.

<sup>61</sup> 36. Archbishop Ussher calculated the date for the Tower of Babel 2242 B.C. from Genesis and from Manetho's statement that the confusion occurred in the fifth year of Peleg's life. L. Pierce, "In the Days of Peleg," *Creation* 22 no. 1 (1999): p. 46–49, available at [www.answersingenesis.org/creation/v22/i1/peleg.asp](http://www.answersingenesis.org/creation/v22/i1/peleg.asp).

<sup>62</sup> 37. Ibid. The 12th-century historian Constantinus Manasses wrote that Egypt endured for 1,663 years. Egypt lost her independence around 526 B.C. with the Persian conquest. Hence, 2188 B.C. is a reasonable date for Egypt's founding and is consistent with a 2242 B.C. date for the Tower of Babel.

<sup>63</sup> 38. Ibid, p. 106.

<sup>64</sup> 39. Josephus, *The Works of Josephus*: New Updated Edition, book 1, chapter 8, as translated by William Whiston (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1987), p. 39.

## 1. Joseph as Vizier

Sesostris I of the 12th dynasty had a powerful vizier named Mentuhotep. Mentuhotep held the office of chief treasurer and wielded authority “like the declaration of the king’s power.”<sup>65</sup> “Mentuhotep ... appears as the alter ego of the king. When he arrived, the great personages bowed down before him at the outer door of the royal palace.”<sup>66</sup>

Compare Mentuhotep to Joseph in Genesis 41:40, 43. Furthermore, Ameni, a provincial governor under Sesostris I, had the following inscribed on his tomb: “No one was unhappy in my days, not even in the years of famine, for I had tilled all the fields of the Nome of Mah, up to its southern and northern frontiers. Thus I prolonged the life of its inhabitants and preserved the food which it produced.”<sup>67</sup> Ameni sounds like a man with the inside track on the agricultural forecast! Ameni’s employer, vizier Mentuhotep, may have been Jacob’s son Joseph.

## 2. Israelite Slavery

The late 12th dynasty reveals evidence for Israelite slavery. Sesostris III, the fifth king of the 12th dynasty, built cities in the delta including Bubastis, Qantir, and Ramses. The building material of choice in the Middle Kingdom was no longer stones but rather bricks composed of mud and straw.<sup>68</sup> A large Semitic slave population lived in the villages of Kahun and Gurob during the latter half of the 12th dynasty. On one papyrus slave list, 48 of the 77 legible names are typical of a “Semitic group from the northwest,”<sup>69</sup> many listed beside the Egyptian name assigned by the owner.<sup>70</sup> The presence of Semitic slaves in Egypt during this time is consistent with the biblical account of the oppression of the Israelites.

## 3. Moses’ Adoption

Traditional chronology has tried to fit Moses into the 18th or 19th dynasty where there is no evidence of Semitic slavery on a large scale, but Moses’ unusual adoption does fit into the late 12th dynasty. Amenemhet III, the dynasty’s sixth king, had two daughters but no sons. Josephus describes a childless daughter of pharaoh finding a child in the river and telling her father, “As I have received him [Moses] from the bounty of the river, in a wonderful manner, I thought proper to adopt him for my son and the heir of thy kingdom.”<sup>71</sup> Amenemhet III’s daughter Sobekneferu was childless and eventually ruled briefly as pharaoh herself, making Sobekneferu a likely candidate for Moses’ foster mother.<sup>72</sup>

---

<sup>65</sup> 40. Ashton and Down, *Unwrapping the Pharaohs*, p. 83, quoting from James Henry Breasted’s *History of Egypt*.

<sup>66</sup> 41. Ibid, quoting from Emille Brugsch’s *Egypt Under the Pharaohs*.

<sup>67</sup> 42. Ibid, p. 83–84.

<sup>68</sup> 43. Ibid, p. 79.

<sup>69</sup> 44. Ibid, p. 92, quoting from Dr. Rosalie David’s *The Pyramid Builders of Ancient Egypt*.

<sup>70</sup> 45. Rohl, *Pharaohs and Kings: A Biblical Quest*, p. 275–276.

<sup>71</sup> 46. W. Whiston, transl., book 2, chapter 9, section 7, *The Works of Josephus* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1987), p. 68.

<sup>72</sup> 47. Ashton and Down, *Unwrapping the Pharaohs*, p. 92.



#### 4. Testimony of the Dead

Examinations of cemeteries at Tell ed-Daba and Kahun, areas with high Semitic slave populations, have been particularly supportive of the biblical narrative. Graves at ed-Daba reveal that 65 percent of the dead were infants.<sup>73</sup> This extraordinarily high figure is consistent with the slaughter of Israelite infants ordered by Pharaoh. Also consistent with the prescribed slaughter are “wooden boxes ... discovered underneath the floors of many houses at Kahun. They contained babies, sometimes buried two or three to a box, and aged only a few months at death.”<sup>74</sup>

Examination of graves in a more recent section, datable to the late 13th dynasty, reveals shallow mass graves without the customary grave goods. These disorganized, crowded burials suggest the need for rapid burial of large numbers of people.<sup>75</sup> The death of the firstborn in the tenth plague would have created just such a situation.

#### 5. The Exodus

In the 13th dynasty, during the reign of Neferhotep I, the Semitic slaves suddenly departed from Tel ed-Daba<sup>76</sup> and Kahun.

Completion of the king's pyramid was not the reason why Kahun's inhabitants eventually deserted [Kahun], abandoning their tools and other possessions in the shops and houses... The quantity, range, and type of articles of everyday use which were left behind suggest that the departure was sudden and unpremeditated.<sup>77</sup>

Furthermore, Neferhotep I's mummy has never been found, and his son Wahneferhotep did not ever reign, Neferhotep being succeeded by his brother Sobkhotpe IV.<sup>78</sup> The sudden departure of the Semitic slave population fits the biblical account of the Hebrew slaves' sudden exodus from Egypt after the tenth plague. The pharaoh's mummy is missing because he died in the Red Sea with his army when he pursued the slaves, and his son never ruled because he died in the tenth plague.

#### 6. The Hyksos

Just a few years after the Exodus, the 13th dynasty ended, and the Second Intermediate Period, the time of Hyksos rule, began. The Hyksos have puzzled scholars, and everyone has a pet theory as to the Hyksos's identity. Manetho reported:

---

<sup>73</sup> 48. Rohl, *Pharaohs and Kings: A Biblical Quest*, p. 271.

<sup>74</sup> 49. D. Down, “Searching for Moses,” TJ 15 no. 1 (2001): 53-57, available at [www.answersingenesis.org/tj/v15/i1/moses.asp](http://www.answersingenesis.org/tj/v15/i1/moses.asp).

<sup>75</sup> 50. Rohl, *Pharaohs and Kings: A Biblical Quest*, p. 279.

<sup>76</sup> 51. Ibid., reporting findings by Professor Manfred Bietak of Austrian Institute for Egyptology.

<sup>77</sup> 52. Ashton and Down, *Unwrapping the Pharaohs*, p. 100, quoting Dr. Rosalie David's *The Pyramid Builders of Ancient Egypt*.

<sup>78</sup> 53. Ibid., p. 103.

Men of ignoble birth out of the eastern parts ... had boldness enough to make an expedition into our country and with ease subdue it by force, yet *without our hazarding a battle with them*... This whole nation was styled Hyksos<sup>79</sup> (emphasis added).

Manetho places this conquest at the end of the 13th dynasty.<sup>80</sup>

Since no evidence of chariots had been found in pre-Hyksos Egypt, tradition has held that the Hyksos were able to defeat Egypt because they possessed chariots. Therefore, since Exodus 14 describes Pharaoh's pursuit with chariots, many have thought that the Exodus occurred after the Hyksos conquest. However, discoveries in recent years have confirmed the use of horses and chariots in the 12th and the 13th dynasties, prior to the Hyksos invasion. For example, an engraving from the 13th dynasty shows Khonsuemmwaset, a pharaoh's son and army commander, with a pair of gloves, the symbol for charioteer, under his seat.<sup>81</sup>

The drowning of the Egyptian army in the Red Sea explains the conquest of the powerful nation of Egypt without a battle. Some have hypothesized that the Hyksos were Amalekites.<sup>82</sup> Whoever the Hyksos were, they ruled Egypt from Avaris in the delta as the 15th and 16th dynasties, while their puppets in the 17th dynasty ruled from Thebes nearly 500 miles to the south. The 17th dynasty overthrew the Hyksos<sup>83</sup> and began the New Kingdom.

## New Kingdom—Israel's Early Monarchy

### 1. David and Tahpenes's Husband

During David's reign, a young Edomite named Hadad found refuge in Pharaoh's house and married Queen Tahpenes's sister.<sup>84</sup> Hadad and the queen's sister had a son named Genubath. Genubath eventually became king of Edom. Records of the 18th dynasty's founder, Ahmose, refer to a name that resembles Tahpenes.<sup>85</sup> Later in the 18th dynasty, Thutmose III received tribute from the land of Genubathye.<sup>86</sup>

### 2. Solomon and the Egyptian Princess

Thutmose I of the 18th dynasty had two daughters, Hatshepsut and Neferubity. Neferubity dropped

---

<sup>79</sup> 54. Ibid., p. 102, quoting Josephus.

<sup>80</sup> 55. Rohl, *Pharaohs and Kings: A Biblical Quest*, p. 280–281.

<sup>81</sup> 56. Rohl, *Pharaohs and Kings: A Biblical Quest*, p. 285.

<sup>82</sup> 57. Ashton and Down, *Unwrapping the Pharaohs*, p. 103, referencing Courville's *The Exodus Problem and Its Ramifications*.

<sup>83</sup> 58. Ashton and Down, *Unwrapping the Pharaohs*, p. 106. Rebellion arose after the Hyksos king picked a fight with the Theban king Seqenenre by claiming the hippopotamus noise from the new canal in Thebes was keeping him awake at night.

<sup>84</sup> 59. 1 Kings 11:15–20.

<sup>85</sup> 60. Phonetic similarity is certainly no guarantee of identity, as the case of Shishak's misidentification has shown. However, the occurrence of both of these names in the time sequence consistent with the times of David's and Solomon's reigns is at least a strong suggestion of synchronism.

<sup>86</sup> 61. "Contemporary Personalities and Affairs of the Early Israelite and 18th Dynasty Egyptian Kings," from The California Institute for Ancient Studies, [www.specialtyinterests.net/solsen.html](http://www.specialtyinterests.net/solsen.html).

out of the Egyptian records and may have been the Egyptian princess that Solomon married to seal his 1 Kings 3:1 treaty with Egypt.<sup>87</sup>

### **3. Queen of Sheba and Hatshepsut**

Another mysterious Bible character emerges from the 18th dynasty. The female pharaoh Hatshepsut's trip to the land of Punt is famous, but the identity of Punt has remained a mystery despite engravings commemorating the treasures she brought home. First Kings 10 says the queen of Sheba visited Solomon, giving and receiving great gifts. Josephus identified this queen of Sheba as "queen of Egypt and Ethiopia."<sup>88</sup> In Matthew 12:42 the Lord Jesus refers to the queen of Sheba as "the queen of the south." "The south" is a biblical designation for Egypt.<sup>89</sup> Thus, Hatshepsut was probably the queen of Sheba.

### **4. Rehoboam and Shishak**

When Thutmose III became pharaoh, he conquered much of Palestine, ultimately taking away the treasures in Rehoboam's Jerusalem without a battle. He listed these treasures on the wall of the temple at Karnak. His list mirrors the Bible's account from 1 Kings 6:32, 10:17, and 14:25–26, including the 300 gold shields and doors overlaid with gold.<sup>90</sup> Thutmose III was Shishak.

### **5. Asa and Zerah the Ethiopian**

Asa, Rehoboam's grandson, had an encounter with Egypt. Second Chronicles 14 describes God's miraculous defense against an overwhelming attack by Zerah the Ethiopian. Ethiopia (Kush) refers to southern Egypt or Sudan. The 18th dynasty's headquarters was in southern Egypt, so this reference likely refers to another 18th dynasty pharaoh, possibly Amenhotep II.<sup>91</sup>

### **6. Ahab and Akhenaton**

Late in the 18th dynasty, one of Egypt's most famous families set the stage for both biblical and Hittite synchronisms. Clay tablets found in Akhenaton's archives at Tel el-Amarna in 1887 included 60 letters from the king of Sumur, likely the Egyptian name for Samaria. The city of Samaria, according to 1 Kings 22:26, had a governor named Amon (an Egyptian name). The Amarna letters call this governor Aman-appa and describe a severe famine that is consistent with the famine in the days of Ahab and Elijah.<sup>92</sup>

### **7. The Hittites and Tutankhamen**

Akhenaton's son, the famous King Tutankhamen, died young, leaving no heir and a widowed queen called Ankhesenamen. According to the Deeds of Suppiluliuma as told by his son Mursili II in the Hittite archives, Tut's widow wrote to the powerful Hittite king Suppiluliumas, pleading,

---

<sup>87</sup> 62. Ashton and Down, *Unwrapping the Pharaohs*, p. 111. See 1 Kings 3:1.

<sup>88</sup> 63. *Ibid.*, p. 121.

<sup>89</sup> 64. Daniel 11:5 and 8–9.

<sup>90</sup> 65. Ashton and Down, *Unwrapping the Pharaohs*, p. 126–128.

<sup>91</sup> 66. *Ibid.*, p. 134.

<sup>92</sup> 67. *Ibid.*, p. 154.

“Give me one son of yours ... he would become my husband... In Egypt he will be king”.<sup>93</sup> Had Suppililiumas’s son Zannanza survived his trip to Egypt, the balance of power would have shifted against Assyria in favor of a Hittite-Egyptian coalition. Zannanza was assassinated, and Tut’s general, Harmheb, assumed power. Upon Harmheb’s death, his vizier, Ramses I the Great, took the throne as the first pharaoh of the 19th dynasty.

The dates for Ramses the Great’s reign<sup>94</sup> and his battle of Kadesh with the Hittites are uncertain, because historians have no biblical parallels and no way to assess the preceding dynasty’s duration. The rest of the revised chronology shifts the 19th dynasty dates three to five centuries later than the traditional dates. Ramses III, of the 20th dynasty, reported the annihilation of the Hittites during his reign. Revised chronology allows the Hittites to still exist at the time the Assyrians claimed to be at war with them.

## **8. “Israel Is Laid Waste”**

The real 19th dynasty was concerned with the power of Assyria, not the plagues of Moses. Merneptah, the son of Ramses the Great, recorded the change in the region’s power structure by listing many places Assyria had seized. His monument states, “Israel is laid waste, his seed is not.”<sup>95</sup> This inscription not only places the latter part of the 19th dynasty in the 8th century B.C.; it also documents that Israel was an actual nation by the time of the 19th dynasty.

## **Third Intermediate and Late Periods—Judah’s Late Monarchy and Captivity**

The Third Intermediate Period contains dynasties 21–25, but some of these dynasties were concurrent, not sequential as assumed in the traditional chronology. In fact, the Royal Cache at Luxor contained a labeled 21st dynasty mummy wrapped in 22nd dynasty linen!<sup>96</sup> The linen label names Sheshonq, the same pharaoh earlier mistaken for Shishak.

### **1. Hezekiah and Taharka**

The biblical synchronism in this period involves Hezekiah. The imminent arrival of Assyria’s enemy Taharka,<sup>97</sup> the last pharaoh of the 25th dynasty, helped Hezekiah by putting Sennacherib to flight in 709 B.C. Taharka later rebelled against the Assyrian domination of Egypt, dying in 664 B.C. when Ashurbanipal sacked Thebes.<sup>98</sup>

### **2. Josiah and Necho**

After Ninevah’s destruction, Pharaoh Necho II of the 26th dynasty marched to Carchemish,

---

<sup>93</sup> 68. G. Johnson, “Queen Ankhesenamen and the Hittite Prince,” 1999, available at [www.guardians.net/egypt/georgejohnson/queenankhesenamen.htm](http://www.guardians.net/egypt/georgejohnson/queenankhesenamen.htm).

<sup>94</sup> 69. Rohl, *Pharaohs and Kings: A Biblical Quest*, places him in 900s B.C. (p. 175); Down, *Unwrapping the Pharaohs*, in 700s B.C. (p. 209) depending on uncertain 18th dynasty co-regencies.

<sup>95</sup> 70. Ashton and Down, *Unwrapping the Pharaohs*, p. 178.

<sup>96</sup> 71. Rohl, *Pharaohs and Kings: A Biblical Quest*, pp. 75–76.

<sup>97</sup> 72. 2 Kings 19:9, referred to as Tirhakah king of Ethiopia.

<sup>98</sup> 73. Rohl, *Pharaohs and Kings: A Biblical Quest*, p. 22.

where the Assyrian remnant was making its last stand. On the way, according to 2 Chronicles 35, Necho killed Judah's king Josiah at Megiddo. Returning from his 605 B.C. defeat at Carchemish, Necho took Jehohaz as a hostage and placed Jehoiakim on the throne of Judah.

### 3. Jeremiah and Hophra

One final biblical synchronism occurs in connection with the fate of 26th dynasty pharaoh, Hophra. Following a coup, Hophra fled to Babylon. There, he acquired an army and returned to reclaim his throne. Jeremiah predicted his defeat, and the prophecy recorded in Jeremiah 44:30 was fulfilled.

<b>Table of Biblical and Egyptian Synchronisms<sup>99</sup></b>			
Date B.C.	Bible	Egyptians	Dynasty
4004	Adam		
2348	Noah's flood		
post-Babel	Mizraim		
late 1900s	Abraham	Khufu	4
1706	Joseph; Jacob to Egypt	Sesostris I	12
1635	Joseph dies		
after 1635	enslavement	Sesostris III	12
1571	Moses born	Amenemhet III	12
1491	Exodus	Neferhotep I	13
	Judges	Hyksos	15-17
late 1000s	David (1 Kings 11:19)	Ahmosis or Amenhotep I	18
1012	Solomon starts temple	Thutmosis I	18
	Queen of Sheba	Hatshepsut	18
971	Rehoboam; Shishak invades	Thutmosis III	18
late 900s	Asa; Zerah the Ethiopian	Amenhotep II	18
late 900s	Ahab; Elijah	Akhenaton	18
uncertain		Raamses II	19
722	Assyria destroys Israel	Merneptah	19
709	Hezekiah; Assyrian invasion	Taharka	25
644	Manasseh	Taharka dies	25
609	Josiah dies	Necho	26
605		Necho; Carchemish	26
589	Jeremiah	Hophra	26
586	Temple destroyed		
525		Cambyes of Persia	

## Conclusion

<sup>99</sup> 74. Dates for biblical events are from Dr. Floyd-Nolen Jones's *Chronology of the Old Testament*, chosen for its careful analysis and internal consistency with regard to Scripture.

Isaiah warned against going down to Egypt for help (Isaiah 31:1). This phrase has come to symbolize a warning not to go to the world for truth. God determines truth. Historians examine fragmentary clues and fill in the gaps based on their presuppositions. Those presuppositions may be biblical or traditional. Accepting traditional Egyptian chronology necessitates rejection of biblical truth. Accepting biblical chronology allows a reconstruction of ancient chronology on a foundation of truth. Viewing the evidence from a biblical framework makes the histories of Egypt and the Old Testament fit together like two sides of a zipper.

Since the original publication of this chapter, Isaac Newton's work on revised chronologies has become available in English. Newton's *Revised History of Ancient Kingdoms* makes available much additional information and insight about the history of ancient Egypt as well as the history of other ancient kingdoms. For further studies of revised chronologies, because the Bible is the ultimate standard, I suggest consulting Dr. Floyd Jones' book *The Chronology of the Old Testament*.

<https://answersingenesis.org/archaeology/ancient-egypt/doesnt-egyptian-chronology-prove-bible-unreliable/>

# Amenhotep II and the Historicity of the Exodus Pharaoh

Expert - feb 04, 2010 - by Doug Petrovich ThM MA

EXCERPT The present in-depth work examines the trustworthiness of Biblical history by using the Hebrew exodus from Egypt as a test case. More specifically, an examination of the exodus-pharaoh's life will reveal whether Biblical history can be harmonized and synchronized with Egyptian history, and whether Biblical chronology is clear and trustworthy when relevant passages are interpreted literally. The need for evaluating the former premise is that many Egyptologists are leading the charge to deny the veracity of the exodus, attempting to persuade Biblical scholars and the Christian populace at large that the exodus never actually occurred...

## I. INTRODUCTION

Few disciplines related to Biblical inerrancy are scrutinized more intensely than historicity. Accordingly, questioning the Bible's historicity is nothing new to Biblical studies, as evidenced by Ladd's remark, "It is the author's hope that the reader may be helped to understand that the authority of the Word of God is not dependent upon infallible certainty in all matters of history and criticism."<sup>100</sup> A more extreme recent trend, popular in the study of ancient Israel's storied past, is a revisionistic version of Biblical history.<sup>101</sup> A prime example is seen in the words of Finkelstein, who speaks of "the rise of the true national state in Judah [in the eighth century BC]. ... That national state produced a historical saga so powerful that it led Biblical historians and archaeologists alike to recreate its mythical past—from stones and potsherds."<sup>102</sup>

Such attacks on the inerrancy of the Bible's historicity necessitate a reasoned defense of its historical accuracy. As Lindsell writes, "When inerrancy is lost, it is palpably easy to drift into a mood in which the historicity of Scripture along with inerrancy is lost."<sup>103</sup> The danger of compromising the inerrancy of Biblical historicity became vivid to the present writer when he learned that a transfer student who entered the seminary where he teaches was taught in another theological institution that Biblical inerrancy does not even extend into the realm of history. Such a position is unacceptable, and it must be opposed rigorously.

The present work examines the trustworthiness of Biblical history by using the Hebrew exodus from Egypt (hereinafter, simply "exodus") as a test case. More specifically, an examination of the exodus-pharaoh's life will reveal whether Biblical history can be harmonized and synchronized with Egyptian history, and whether Biblical chronology is clear and trustworthy when relevant passages are interpreted literally. The need for evaluating the former premise is that many Egyptologists are leading the charge to deny the veracity of the exodus, attempting to persuade Biblical scholars and the Christian populace at large that the exodus never actually occurred. Renowned Egyptologist Donald Redford concludes, "The almost insurmountable difficulties in

---

<sup>100</sup> 1. George Ladd, *The New Testament and Criticism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1967), 16.

<sup>101</sup> 2. William G. Dever, *What did the Biblical Writers Know and When did They Know It?* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 4.

<sup>102</sup> 3. Israel Finkelstein, "City-States to States," in *Symbiosis, Symbolism, and the Power of the Past*, ed. William G. Dever and Seymour Gitin (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2003), 81.

<sup>103</sup> 4. Harold Lindsell, *The Battle for the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976), 206.

interpreting the exodus-narrative as history have led some to dub it ‘mythology rather than ... a detailed reporting of the historical facts’ and therefore impossible to locate geographically.”<sup>104</sup> Redford then betrays his affinity with this fraternity, stating that “despite the lateness and unreliability of the story in exodus, no one can deny that the tradition of Israel’s coming out of Egypt was one of long standing.”<sup>105</sup>

The need for evaluating the latter premise is that many Biblical scholars who affirm the historicity of the exodus now date it to the 13th century BC, a step that requires a redefinition of concrete numbers in Biblical passages that, if taken literally, would indisputably place the exodus in the 15th century BC. The eminent Egyptologist and Biblical scholar Kenneth Kitchen is foremost among them: “Thus, if all factors are given their due weight, a 13th-century exodus remains—at present—the least objectionable dating, on a combination of all the data (Biblical and otherwise) when those data are rightly evaluated and understood in their context.”<sup>106</sup> While Kitchen is a vital contributor in the field of OT history and chronology, the accuracy of his conclusion here is disputable, along with whether he has evaluated “all of the data” correctly.

Wood rejects the theory of a 13th-century-BC exodus, originally propagated by Albright, appealing to a reevaluation of the archaeological evidence pertinent to key Palestinian cities in question.<sup>107</sup> Young also opposes this trend: “A date for the exodus in the mid-fifteenth century BC has been much maligned because of favorite theories that identified various pharaohs of a later date with the pharaohs of the oppression and exodus. ... It is hoped that the present study has strengthened the case for the accuracy of the chronological numbers as preserved in the Masoretic text, and at the same time has helped to discredit theories which put the exodus anywhere but in the middle of the Fifteenth Century BC.”<sup>108</sup> Just as Young established a 15th-century date for the exodus by chronological means, the present writer seeks to accomplish this goal by historical means, namely by examining the reign of Pharaoh Amenhotep II (ca. 1455–1418 BC),<sup>109</sup> which coincides with that of the exodus-pharaoh if adhering to conventional views of Biblical and ancient Egyptian chronology.

By answering the following questions, it will be seen whether Amenhotep II remains a viable candidate for the exodus-pharaoh, and whether Biblical history can be exonerated under the scrutiny of synchronization with Egyptian history. Does Amenhotep II qualify as the pharaoh who lived through the tenth plague because he was not his father’s eldest son? Could the eldest son of Amenhotep II have died during the tenth plague, which must be true of the exodus-pharaoh’s son? Did Amenhotep II die in the Red Sea, as the Bible allegedly indicates about the exodus-pharaoh?<sup>110</sup> Can any of Amenhotep II’s military campaigns be related to the exodus

---

<sup>104</sup> 5. Donald B. Redford, *Egypt, Canaan, and Israel in Ancient Times* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992), 408–409.

<sup>105</sup> 6. *Ibid.*, 412.

<sup>106</sup> 7. Kenneth A. Kitchen, *On the Reliability of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 310.

<sup>107</sup> 8. Bryant G. Wood, “The Rise and Fall of the 13th-Century Exodus-Conquest Theory,” *JETS* 48:3 (Sep 2005), 476.

<sup>108</sup> 9. Rodger C. Young, “When Did Solomon Die?,” *JETS* 46:4 (Dec 2003), 603.

<sup>109</sup> 10. Both here and throughout the present work, any dating that follows the formula, “ca. xxxx–yyyy BC,” signifies the regnal years of a given monarch, unless otherwise noted. The reason for settling on these dates will be discussed subsequently.

<sup>110</sup> 11. It is probably more accurate to refer to the Red Sea as the “Sea of Reeds,” but the traditional designation will be used here for simplicity. For an excellent study on this topic, see Hoffmeier’s chap. 9, “The Problem of the Re(e)d



events? Can the loss of over two million Hebrew slaves, certainly Egypt's "slave-base" at the time, be accounted for in the records of Amenhotep II's reign? Is there any evidence to confirm that Amenhotep II interacted with the Hebrews after they left Egypt? If Amenhotep II is the exodus-pharaoh, could the obliteration of Hatshepsut's image from many Egyptian monuments and inscriptions be attributed to backlash from the exodus events?

## II. THREE INTRODUCTORY BACKGROUND MATTERS

### 1. The Reason for Moses' Omission of the Exodus-Pharaoh's Throne-Name.

Every time Moses wrote the dynastic title of the exodus-pharaoh, it was devoid of the pharaoh's throne-name (e.g. Sesostris, Amenhotep, etc.), which is known in Egyptology as the praenomen.<sup>111</sup> This, however, was not the practice of later Biblical writers—especially writers of the historical books, who routinely transliterated each pharaoh's praenomen—beginning with the reign of Pharaoh Shishak. For example, Shishak is named in the OT seven times, though never is he referred to merely as "pharaoh."<sup>112</sup> The same is true of Pharaoh Neco, whose name appears nine times.<sup>113</sup> The only exception to this rule—apart from the 21 references in the prophetic books of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, where the Egyptian monarch is referred to only as "pharaoh"—is when the Hebrew authors retrospectively write about the exodus-pharaoh, always leaving him unnamed.<sup>114</sup> The question that arises is why Moses consistently omitted the throne-names of pharaohs, especially in the historical book of Exodus.

#### a. Omission of Pharaoh's Throne-Name not Theologically Motivated.

The absence of pharaoh's praenomen in the biblical history of the second millennium BC is often used either to support the assertion of the legendary nature of the exodus narrative, or to demonstrate that the Hebrew writers were not truly interested in history. These criticisms, however, dissipate under a closer examination of the practice of Moses' day. Hoffmeier nobly suggests that "the absence of pharaoh's name may ultimately be for theological reasons, because the Bible is not trying to answer the question, 'Who is the pharaoh of the exodus?' to satisfy the curiosity of modern historians; rather, it was seeking to clarify for Israel who was the God of the

---

Sea" (James K. Hoffmeier, *Israel in Egypt: The Evidence for the Authenticity of the Exodus Tradition* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1996], 199).

<sup>111</sup> 12. While any given pharaoh of Egypt's New Kingdom received a throne-name (praenomen) upon his accession—either as the sole monarch or as the coregent for a senior pharaoh who wanted a smooth regnal-transition at the time of his imminent death—he merely appended this praenomen to his nomen, the birth name that had always been with him. Each name was enclosed in a cartouche.

<sup>112</sup> 13. See 1 Kgs 11:40, 14:25; and 2 Chr 12:2, 5 (twice), 7, and 9. The fact that this new trend began during the reign of Shishak (Shoshenq I) should be of no surprise to the student of Biblical history, since Shishak's reign signaled both the beginning of a new ruling dynasty, the 22nd Dynasty of Egypt, and the beginning of foreign rule under pharaohs who hailed from Libya.

<sup>113</sup> 14. See 2 Kgs 23:29, 33, 34, 35; 2 Chr 35:20, 21, 22; 36:4; and Jer 46:2. Pharaoh Hophra is named once as well, though his name appears only in a prophetic writing, where God calls him, "Pharaoh Hophra, King of Egypt" (Jer 44:30).

<sup>114</sup> 15. Any temptation to doubt the historicity of the Biblical text on account of the presence of an unnamed pharaoh should be avoided vigorously, since "surely historians would not dismiss the historicity of Thutmose III's Megiddo campaign because the names of the kings of Kadesh and Megiddo are not recorded" in the ancient Egyptian accounts (Hoffmeier, *Israel in Egypt*, 110).

exodus.”<sup>115</sup> To support this idea, Hoffmeier appeals to Exod 5:1, which he uses to suggest that pharaoh not only rejects Moses’ petition to allow the Hebrews to worship Yahweh in the desert, but rebuffs Yahweh by denying knowledge of him, setting the stage for a subsequent series of plagues in which Yahweh manifests his power both to pharaoh and to Israel.<sup>116</sup> Moses thus avenges pharaoh’s reproach of God by leaving him unnamed.

Hoffmeier is certainly correct that Yahweh intended to demonstrate to the Israelites that he is the Lord their God (Exod 6:7), and to show the Egyptians that he is the Lord (Exod 7:5).<sup>117</sup> However, Hoffmeier is not justified in suggesting that the absence of pharaoh’s name is motivated by a desire to exact revenge on pharaoh, since Exod 7:5 clearly states that Yahweh’s “message” was directed not toward pharaoh, but toward the Egyptian people. Moreover, the battle that waged throughout the days of Moses’ audiences with pharaoh was not between Yahweh and pharaoh, but between Yahweh and the gods of Egypt, who—during God’s invoking of the ten plagues—were proven to be powerless. The God of Israel himself said, “And against all the gods of Egypt, I will execute judgments—I am Yahweh” (Exod 12:12b). This conclusion is supported by the statement of Jethro, Moses’ father-in-law, who had just heard a first-hand account of all the events: “Now I know that the Lord is greater than all the gods; because in the very thing in which they were proud, he proved to be above them” (Exod 18:11). Jethro understood the point: Yahweh resoundingly won “the Battle of the Gods,” proving both to Israel, to Egypt, and to the rest of the Ancient Near East (hereinafter, “ANE”) that he alone is divine.

b. Pharaoh’s Throne-Name Omitted in accordance with Contemporary Egyptian Historiography.

If Moses did not omit pharaoh’s personal name for theological reasons, then why did he omit it? The answer is found in the historical development of monarchical terms. The dynastic title, “pharaoh,” derives from the word that literally means, “great house.” During Egypt’s Old Kingdom (ca. 2715–2170 BC), the word was used of the royal palace. Not until sometime during the middle of the 18th Dynasty, slightly before the reign of Thutmose III (ca. 1506–1452 BC), the father of Amenhotep II, was it used as an epithet for the Egyptian monarch. However, the standard practice of Thutmose III’s time was to leave enemy kings unnamed on official records. The campaign of Thutmose III against a rebellious coalition at Megiddo, instigated by the Empire of Mitanni, was fomented by the King of Kadesh (on the Orontes River), who—in The Annals of Thutmose III—merely was called, “that wretched enemy of Kadesh.” Moreover, when Egyptian scribes listed the booty that was confiscated after the Battle of Megiddo, they did not name the opposing king whose possessions the Egyptians plundered, referring to him only as “the prince,” or “the Prince of Megiddo.”<sup>118</sup> The Amada Stele of Amenhotep II, which boasts of the king’s successful battles against seven Syrian tribes of Takhsi, identifies these foreign rulers only as “seven chieftains,” whose names are all left unrecorded.<sup>119</sup>

---

<sup>115</sup> 16. Ibid., 109.

<sup>116</sup> 17. Ibid.

<sup>117</sup> 18. James K. Hoffmeier, “The Memphis and Karnak Stelae of Amenhotep II,” in *The Context of Scripture: Monumental Inscriptions from the Biblical World*, vol. 2, ed. William W. Hallo (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2000), 21.

<sup>118</sup> 19. Hoffmeier, *Israel in Egypt*, 87, 109; Wood, “The Rise and Fall,” 478.

<sup>119</sup> 20. Hoffmeier, *Israel in Egypt*, 109–110. Hoffmeier incorrectly identifies these enemies of Egypt from the first Asiatic campaign of Amenhotep II as “Nubian tribes,” and “Nubian chieftains,” thus attributing them to the nation of Nubia, or Cush, located directly to the south of Egypt. The partly defaced geographical name on the Memphis Stele is certainly not t3 Nhsty, “the Nubian Land,” as some have restored it to read, but Takhsi (Anson F. Rainey,

In the Memphis Stele of Amenhotep II, reference is made to his campaigns in Edom, Canaan, and Syria. All of the foreign kings whom he defeated, deposed, or killed also went unnamed in this victory stele. Mention was even made of the chieftains of Naharin (the land to the east of the Euphrates River), Khatti (the Hittites), and Babylon. Despite the prominence of these kings, they nonetheless remain anonymous as well.<sup>120</sup> During the Ramesside period (ca. 1300–1100 BC), the singular term “pharaoh” was widely used, continuing to be popular until the late period. As Hoffmeier states, “From its inception until the tenth century [BC], the term ‘Pharaoh’ stood alone, without juxtaposed personal name. In subsequent periods, the name of the monarch was generally added on.”<sup>121</sup> Therefore, Moses’ practice of omitting pharaoh’s throne-name next to the dynastic title, “pharaoh,” followed the standard practice of the day in ancient Egypt, not coincidentally the site of his literary training.

Moreover, Moses also refrained from writing the names of other pharaohs who are attested in the Pentateuch, including the “good pharaoh” whom Jacob blessed and Joseph faithfully served (Gen 47:7). What theological reason could there be for omitting the name of this blessed pharaoh? Certainly the answer cannot be, “To keep him humble!”, since Moses wrote centuries after both this pharaoh and his dynasty had disappeared from the earth. Therefore, the exodus-pharaoh’s name was neither omitted for theological reasons, nor to discourage the curiosity of modern historians who desire to identify him. Instead, the exodus-pharaoh’s throne-name is absent for one reason alone: a skilled writer named Moses, born in Egypt and trained as a prince in all of the ways of the royal court of Egypt (Acts 7:22), followed the standard practice of his day by leaving unnamed the foreign monarch who assumed the role of a dreaded enemy of his own nation, in this case Israel.

## 2. Biblical Chronology: Precisely Dating the Exodus.

Before proceeding, the exact date of the exodus must be established. The central text for this crucial historical event, 1 Kgs 6:1, connects the exodus to later Israelite history by noting that Solomon began constructing the Temple in the 480th year after the exodus, signifying an elapsed time of 479+ years.<sup>122</sup> All but the minimalists agree that the counting of the 479+ years should

---

“Amenhotep II’s Campaign to Takhsi” JARCE 10 [1973], 71). Der Manuelian remarks that the location of the district of Takhsi has been settled with little dispute, with the only difference being whether it was situated north or south of Kadesh on the Orontes River (Peter Der Manuelian, *Studies in the Reign of Amenophis II* [Hildesheim: Gerstenberg, 1987], 51–52). Redford adds that the Syrian district of Takhsi “probably lay close to, and perhaps northwest of, Damascus” (Donald B. Redford, “The Coregency of Tuthmosis III and Amenophis II,” JEA 51 [Dec 1965], 119).

<sup>120</sup> 21. Hoffmeier, *Israel in Egypt*, 110.

<sup>121</sup> 22. *Ibid.*, 87.

<sup>122</sup> 23. Young, “When Did Solomon Die?,” 602. A textual variant has arisen in 1 Kgs 6:1, with the original text reading either “480th year” (MT and Vg), or “440year” (LXX). Though the antiquity of the LXX renders its text important for determining the originality of any variant in the Hebrew Bible, the MT possesses greater authority than any ancient translation, including the LXX. “[The MT] has repeatedly been demonstrated to be the best witness to the [OT] text. Any deviation from it therefore requires justification” (Ernst Würthwein, *Text of the Old Testament*, 2nd ed., trans. Erroll Rhodes [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995], 116). Moreover, the LXX has been shown to be inferior to the MT in chronological matters (Edwin R. Thiele, *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings* [Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1994], 90–94). Since no scribal error led to a faulty reading in the MT, “480th year” is taken to be the original reading. See [http://exegesisinternational.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=73&Itemid=85](http://exegesisinternational.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=73&Itemid=85) for a complete resolution of this textual variant in 1 Kgs 6:1.

begin with May of 967 or 966 BC, depending on whether one accepts Young's or Thiele's version of Solomon's regnal dates.<sup>123</sup> Thus the 479+ years began either in 1446 or 1445 BC, either of which can be substantiated by the Biblical text and harmonized with the conclusions drawn from the present work.

a. The Case for Dating the Exodus to 1446 BC.

A compelling argument for choosing 1446 BC is that the Jubilee cycles agree with this date exactly, yet are completely independent of the 479+ years of 1 Kgs 6:1. The Jubilee dates are precise only if the priests began counting years when they entered the land in 1406 BC (cf. Lev 25:2–10). The Talmud ('Arakin 12b) lists 17 cycles from Israel's entry into Canaan until the last Jubilee in 574 BC, which is 14 years after Jerusalem's destruction by using the Tishri calendar, a statement also found in chap. 11 of The Seder 'Olam, which predates the Talmud.<sup>124</sup> Consequently, 1446 BC is preferred over 1445 BC.<sup>125</sup>

b. The Case for Dating the Exodus to 1267 BC.

---

<sup>123</sup> 24. Young, "When Did Solomon Die?," 601–602; Thiele, *Mysterious Numbers*, 80. As does Young and the present writer, Kitchen also prefers 967 BC as the year of the inception of the Temple's construction (Kitchen, *Reliability of the OT*, 203).

<sup>124</sup> 25. Young, "When Did Solomon Die?," 599–603. Advocates of a 13th-century-BC exodus have yet to explain the remarkable coincidence of the Jubilee cycles, which align perfectly with the date of 1446 BC for the exodus.

<sup>125</sup> 26. Moreover, the exact month and day of the exodus can be deduced, as God both established for Israel a lunar calendar that began with the month of Nisan (originally "Abib," per Exod 13:4) and precisely predicted the day of the exodus. The new moon that began the month of Nisan in 1446 BC reportedly occurred at 19:48 UT (Universal Time) on 8 April (as detailed on the webpage <http://sunearth.gsfc.nasa.gov/eclipse/phase/phases-1499.html>), assuming there were no significant variations in the earth's rotation, apart from the roughly 25 seconds per century that NASA allows for the tidal retardation of the earth's rotational velocity. However, two variables must be factored into the equation: (1) The date used to mark the new moon varies slightly according to the point of observation. In the Eastern Nile Delta, where the land of Goshen and the Egyptian royal city of Memphis were located, the time is 2.1 hours ahead of longitude zero at the Greenwich meridian, so the new moon should have been observable in Egypt at 21:42 + 2.1 hours = 23.48 hours, or 11:48 pm. Since 11:48 pm was after sunset on 8 April, and sunset was the standard time for Egypt's priests to declare a new moon upon observing the moon's crescent, they would not have declared a new month that night. Instead, they would have waited until the next night, which for now can be assumed to be 9 April. However, (2) the earth's rotational velocity has varied on two prior occasions, beyond the variable of 25 seconds per century, a factor not acknowledged by NASA. The first occasion was the "long day" of Joshua, in which "the sun stood still and the moon stopped, until the nation took vengeance on their enemies," an event that transpired "for about a full day" (Josh 10:13). Strictly speaking, the earth—and not the sun—stood still, and of necessity the moon's relative proximity to the earth did not vary, so the moon stopped moving as well. The second occasion was during the days of Hezekiah, in ca. 703 BC, when the shadow went back "ten steps" on the dial (2 Kgs 20:10), a terrestrial phenomenon that represents a retrograde motion of the earth. Since the length of these ten steps and the position of the sun at the time are unknown, exactly how much time this represents is unclear, but it probably did not exceed a few hours. Thus these two events together represent a variation of about one full day, meaning that the first day of Nisan in Egypt actually fell on Friday, 10 April. From here, the biblical text can extrapolate the exodus date. The Lord said that on the tenth day of the month (19 April), each Jewish family was to slaughter an unblemished lamb and eat the Passover Feast (Exod 12:3). On the 15th day of the month (before sunset on 25 April), the morning after the Death Angel came at about midnight and struck down all of the firstborn of Egypt (Exod 12:12, 29), the Israelites began their exodus (Exod 12:33, 34, 39; Num 33:3). Since they counted their days from dusk to dusk, the 15th day of the month included both the Friday night in which the Death Angel passed over them, and Saturday's daytime hours, during which they departed. Therefore, the exodus may be dated with relative confidence to 25 April 1446 BC.

Some prefer dating the exodus to 1267 BC, interpreting “480th” figuratively. Actually, “Dating the period of the oppression and exodus to the fifteenth century B.C. has largely been replaced in favor of a thirteenth-century date.”<sup>126</sup> One reason for this surge is an alleged superior correspondence with the historical and archaeological record, since (1) the earliest extra-biblical attestation to Israel’s presence in Canaan is the Merneptah Stele of ca. 1219 BC, and (2) no evidence of the Israelites in Canaan from ca. 1400–1200 BC even exists. However, late-exodus proponents should remember that there is also an “invisibility of the Israelites in the archaeology of Canaan between ca. 1200 and 1000” BC,<sup>127</sup> so the extension of their invisibility by two more centuries should create no additional burden. Moreover, Millard notes by analogy that the Amorites are absent from the archaeology of Babylonia, as only the texts attest to their presence, yet no scholar doubts their impact on Mesopotamia’s history in the early second millennium BC.<sup>128</sup>

A second reason for this surge is that Rameses, the store-city that the Israelites built (Exod 1:11), is usually identified with Pi-Rameses, which flourished from ca. 1270–1100 BC and was comparable to the largest cities of the ANE, but was built only during the reign of Rameses II (ca. 1290–1223 BC).<sup>129</sup> Shea rebuts that “Raamses” was used of the land to which the patriarchs traveled several centuries earlier (Gen 47:11), when no ruler bore the name “Ramesses,” suggesting that both references may be a divinely-overseen updating of an earlier place-name.<sup>130</sup> Whether or not Exod 1:11 is anachronistic, there is no guarantee that Pi-Ramesses is biblical Rameses. Scolnic warns, “The truth is that there are very few sites indeed that yield the kind of evidence required to make the site identifications that we, especially we who are openly interested in religion, yearn to make.”<sup>131</sup> Yet the presumption that Biblical Rameses could not have been inhabited before Rameses II has driven the movement to advance the date of the exodus forward by two centuries, with the view’s proponents interpreting “480th” in 1 Kgs 6:1 as being merely a symbolical number.

Two options exist for allegorizing “the 480th year.” The first option is that the number 480 is the sum of 12 eras consisting of 40-year generations: 20 years for one generation to live to child-bearing age, then 20 years for their children to do likewise. When totaled, these 12 eras of 22–25 actual years supply the 288–300 years needed to support the late-exodus theory.<sup>132</sup> By counting back 300 years from 967 BC, the exodus dates to ca. 1267 BC, which falls within the exceedingly long reign of Rameses II.<sup>133</sup> The second option for the number 480 is what Kitchen calls “the

<sup>126</sup> 27. Hoffmeier, *Israel in Egypt*, 124.

<sup>127</sup> 28. Alan Millard, “Amorites and Israelites: Invisible Invaders—Modern Expectation and Ancient Reality,” in *The Future of Biblical Archaeology: Reassessing Methodologies and Assumptions*, ed. James K. Hoffmeier and Alan Millard (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 152–153.

<sup>128</sup> 29. *Ibid.*, 152.

<sup>129</sup> 30. Hoffmeier, *Israel in Egypt*, 119, 125; Wood, “The Rise and Fall,” 478; Kitchen, *Reliability of the OT*, 255.

<sup>130</sup> 31. William Shea, “Amenhotep II as Pharaoh of the Exodus,” *Bible and Spade* 16:2 (Spr 2003), 43. Shea compares such updating to that which occurred with Moses’ reference to Dan (Gen 14:14), which was called Laish until sometime after Moses died. He likely implies that this divinely-overseen updating was accomplished long before the OT canon closed, though this is not stated. Wood criticizes Kitchen for allowing an editorial updating for Dan in Gen 14:14, and for Rameses in Gen 47:11, but not for Raamses in Exod 1:11 (Wood, “The Rise and Fall,” 479). Kitchen’s inconsistency is both troubling and unexplainable.

<sup>131</sup> 32. Benjamin Edidin Scolnic, “A New Working Hypothesis for the Identification of Migdol,” in *Future of Biblical Archaeology*, 91.

<sup>132</sup> 33. Kitchen, *Reliability of the OT*, 203.

<sup>133</sup> 34. Hoffmeier, *Israel in Egypt*, 125.

nonoppressions aggregate theory.” Here, the 480 years consist of nine periods of 40 years (=360 years), the third of which is actually 80 years (2 x 40), plus five aggregate periods of varying lengths. When totaled, the sum is a neat 480 years.<sup>134</sup>

c. The Inadequacy of Interpreting the 480th Year of 1 Kgs 6:1 Allegorically.

One weakness with any allegorical interpretation is that in 1 Kgs 6:1, the author used an ordinal number, not a cardinal, making a figurative use even more inexplicable. Another weakness is that the exodus-pharaoh followed an exceedingly lengthy reign, not boasted one, as does Ramses II. Moses fled from pharaoh, who sought to execute him for killing an Egyptian (Exod 2:15), departing from Egypt when he “was fulfilling 40 years of age” (Acts 7:23). Only “after 40 years had passed” did the angel speak to him at the burning bush (Acts 7:30), which immediately follows the statement that “in the course of those many days, the king of Egypt died” (Exod 2:23).

Thus the pharaoh who preceded the exodus-pharaoh must have ruled beyond 40 years, a criterion not met by the modest reign of Seti I (ca. 1305–1290 BC), Rameses II’s predecessor. In contrast, Thutmose III, the father and predecessor of Amenhotep II, who ruled just under 54 years, is the only other pharaoh of the 18th or 19th Dynasty to rule over 40 years. This factor, combined with all of the other evidence, causes one writer to declare, “Thutmose III must be the ruler whose death is recorded in Exodus 2:23.”<sup>135</sup>

Finally, if “480th” merely represents a collection of equally or non-equally divisible components, what is to prevent the subjective periodization of other numbers within Scripture? In Exod 12:40–41, Moses notes that “at the end of 430 years—to the very day—all the hosts of the Lord departed from the land of Egypt.” Does 430 also represent a compilation of time periods? If so, are they divided into 10-year spans, since the number is indivisible by 20? Is the inclusion of the qualifier, “to the very day,” simply to be dismissed as a later scribal gloss? Moreover, who is to be trusted to correctly allegorize the number, which otherwise is shrouded in mystery? Opponents of biblical inerrancy even recognize the folly of such allegorization, with one calling it the devising of “ingenious solutions. The most common trick has been to reduce time spans to generations: thus the 480 figure must really represent twelve generations.”<sup>136</sup> Simply put, no such creative ingenuity is necessary.

d. The Preference for Interpreting the 480th Year of 1 Kgs 6:1 Literally.

---

<sup>134</sup> 35. Kitchen, *Reliability of the OT*, 308–309. The nine, 40-year periods include the following: (1) the journey from Egypt to Sinai to Jordan (Num 11:33); (2) Othniel’s rule (Judg 3:11); (3–4) 80 years of peace after Ehud’s victory over Moab (Judg 3:30); (5) peace after the deeds of Deborah (Judg 5:31); (6) peace after the deeds of Gideon (Judg 8:28); (7) Eli’s judgeship (1 Sam 4:18); (8) Samson’s judgeship and Samuel’s floruit (Judg 15:20; 1 Sam 7:2); and (9) David’s reign (1 Kgs 2:11). The five aggregate periods include the following: (1) 48 years for Abimelek, Tola, and Jair; (2) 31 years for Jephthah, Ibzan, Elon, and Abdon; (3) 32 years for Saul’s reign, (4) four years for Solomon’s reign; and (5) five proposed years for the rule of Joshua and the elders of his era.

<sup>135</sup> 36. John Rea, “The Time of the Oppression and Exodus,” *Grace Journal* 2:1 (Win 1961), 11.

<sup>136</sup> 37. Redford, *Egypt, Canaan, and Israel*, 259.

Cassuto studied ascending and descending Hebrew numbers.<sup>137</sup> As Wood notes from this study, a number written in ascending order—as with “eightieth and four-hundredth” in 1 Kgs 6:1, where the smaller number (80th) is followed by the larger number (400th)—is always “intended to be a technically precise figure.”<sup>138</sup> Moreover, no subjectively allegorical use of “480th” justifies the rejection of its natural use. Since the advocates of a late exodus are more driven by arguments from silence about the Israelites’ habitation of Canaan before the 13th century BC than by textual evidence, this number should be taken literally, reinforcing 1446 BC as the exact year of the exodus.

### 3. Egyptian Chronology: Precisely Dating the Pharaonic Reigns of the 15th Century BC.

The final step before determining whether Amenhotep II is a viable candidate for the exodus-pharaoh is to synchronize the date of the exodus with Egyptian history. While inspiration does not extend to extra-Biblical literature or ancient inscriptions, many extant writings do possess a high degree of trustworthiness.

#### a. The Astronomical Date in the Ebers Papyrus.

The Ebers Papyrus, an ancient Egyptian MS that dates the heliacal rising of Sothis to Year 9, Month 3, Season 3, Day 9 (ca. 15 May) of Amenhotep I’s reign (ca. 1550–1529 BC), records this astronomical event that fixes its composition to an identifiable time in the 18th Dynasty.<sup>139</sup> Since astronomers can pinpoint this event by charting the positions of stars in antiquity, the papyrus can be dated to ca. 1541 BC, making his initial regnal year ca. 1550 BC. This dating, accepted by numerous Egyptological scholars, is based on the ancient capital of Memphis as the point of observation, despite the Theban provenance of the papyrus. A Theban point of observation, which is accepted by other Egyptologists, dates the papyrus to ca. 1523 BC.<sup>140</sup> While the Egyptians never stated from where they observed the Sothic rising, Olympiodorus noted in AD 6

<sup>137</sup> 38. Umberto Cassuto, *The Documentary Hypothesis and the Composition of the Pentateuch* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1961), 52.

<sup>138</sup> 39. Wood, “The Rise and Fall,” 482.

<sup>139</sup> 40. The 18th Dynasty of Egypt (ca. 1560–1307 BC) not only saw the reunification of Egypt after an era of foreign rule under the Hyksos, but it initiated a radically new era. The northward thrusts of these Theban dynasts continued until Thutmose I crossed the Euphrates River in ca. 1524 BC. Egypt also expanded into Sudan, building temples on a grand scale at Gebel Barkal, about 1,280 mi south of Memphis. The vast riches that the state accrued through these foreign expeditions changed the fabric of Egyptian society. No longer did the nation function in isolation, but in an age of intense political and diplomatic activity, Egypt interacted with Mitanni, the Hittites, Assyria, Babylonia, and a host of principalities in Syria and Palestine (William W. Hallo and William Kelly Simpson, *The Ancient Near East: A History*, 2nd ed. [Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace College Publishers, 1998], 253).

<sup>140</sup> 41. William A. Ward, “The Present Status of Egyptian Chronology,” *BASOR* 288 (Nov 1992), 58, 59. Not all scholars are convinced that astronomical evidence provides “benchmark dates” for the reigns of given pharaohs. “The absolute chronology of Egypt has been one of the major time-frames for ancient chronology in general, and it is important that scholars in other disciplines understand that absolute dates for Egypt are not as clear and well established as they are often thought to be” (Ibid., 53). Ward suggests that “as long as there is uncertainty as to whether any given coregency of the New Kingdom existed, and if so, how long it lasted, any system of absolute dates must remain inexact” (Ibid., 54). Uncertainty about dates, however, does not characterize all regnal dating, but rather only that of selected rulers. Direct evidence of co-regnal lengths often exists, providing a greater level of certainty about the exact regnal lengths of many rulers. Therefore, if an absolute date that is fixed to a time in the reign of a pharaoh is connected to a series of predecessors or successors whose regnal lengths are certain, benchmark dates can be assigned to their reigns.

that it was celebrated at Alexandria, after having been observed at Memphis.<sup>141</sup> Therefore, Memphis is taken to be the correct point of observation for the rising recorded in the Ebers Papyrus.

b. The Reliability of the Dating of the 18th Dynasty.

Even without depending on astronomical dating, the chronology of Egypt in the mid-1400's BC remains sure. Ward notes that "New Kingdom chronology can be fairly well established on the basis of the monuments and synchronisms, without recourse to the astronomical material."<sup>142</sup> As for the 18th Dynasty, he adds that the 25-year gap separating current theories on its starting date narrows to a scant three or four years by the middle of the dynasty, meaning that most mainstream Egyptologists consider the dating of Egypt's exodus-era history to be fixed and reliable.<sup>143</sup>

c. The Regnal Dates of the 18th-Dynasty Pharaohs from the Time of the Ebers Papyrus to the Exodus.

With firm regnal dates for Amenhotep I, the reigns of the subsequent 18th-Dynasty pharaohs down to Amenhotep II are fixed with relative certainty: Thutmose I (ca. 1529–1516 BC), Thutmose II (ca. 1516–1506 BC), Queen Hatshepsut (ca. 1504–1484 BC), Thutmose III (ca. 1506–1452 BC), and Amenhotep II (ca. 1455–1418 BC).<sup>144</sup> With these reigns chronologically ordered, the evaluation of Amenhotep II's candidacy for the exodus-pharaoh may proceed.

### III. THE SURVIVAL OF AMENHOTEP II DURING THE 10TH PLAGUE

The tenth plague upon Egypt specified that the firstborn of all classes of people, from pharaoh who sat on the throne to the lowest slave girl behind the millstone, along with the firstborn among the livestock, would all die at the hands of the Death Angel (Exod 11:5). Being that the throne was included in this edict, one might expect that pharaoh himself—if he actually was the firstborn son of his father, which was the normal protocol for succession under Egypt's dynastic rule—would have died during this last and most terrible plague (Exod 12:29–30). However, since the exodus-pharaoh obviously lived through the final plague, he could not have been "the king's eldest son," a title the Egyptians liberally used of pharaoh's eldest son, who stood in line behind his father as the heir apparent to the Egyptian throne. Therefore, in order for Amenhotep II to

<sup>141</sup> 42. Ibid., 59.

<sup>142</sup> 43. Ibid., 56. Egypt's New Kingdom (ca. 1560–1069 BC) consists of Dynasties 18–20.

<sup>143</sup> 44. Ibid.

<sup>144</sup> 45. Egyptologists disagree over the year of Thutmose III's accession, with three views predominant: the "high chronology" dates it to ca. 1504 BC; the "middle chronology" dates it to ca. 1490 BC; and the "low chronology" dates it to ca. 1479 BC (Redford, *Egypt, Canaan, and Israel*, 104). The high chronology is preferred here because of its exclusive agreement with the Ebers Papyrus when assuming a Memphite point of observation for the rising of Sothis. Shea also asserts that the high-chronology view is correct (Shea, "Amenhotep II as Pharaoh," 43). The high-chronology date used by the present writer dates back two years from the standard number, due to the need to harmonize it with the second Palestinian campaign of Amenhotep II, which will be discussed subsequently. This alteration is justified both by the uncertain regnal length of Thutmose II, whose reign lasted no less than four years or more than twelve years (Amélie Kuhrt, *The Ancient Near East ca. 3000–330 BC*, vol. 1 [London: Routledge, 1995], 191; Sir Alan Gardiner, *Egypt of the Pharaohs* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1976], 191), and by the existence of a variable of  $\pm 6$  years after calculating the date for the rising of Sothis (W. S. LaSor, "Egypt," in ISBE, vol. 2 [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982], 40).



qualify as a legitimate candidate for the exodus-pharaoh, he could not have been “the king’s eldest son.”

Amenhotep II indeed would have survived the tenth plague, because he was not the firstborn son of Thutmose III. In the words of Redford, the idea that Amenhotep II was the eldest son of Thutmose III “does not seem possible in the light of our present knowledge.”<sup>145</sup> Toward the middle of Thutmose III’s reign, in Year 24, the heir to the throne was not Amenhotep II, but Amenemhet, who was called “the king’s eldest son.” There is little doubt that he was the older half-brother of Amenhotep II who died before he could assume the throne. In an inscription from the Karnak Festival Hall that dates to Year 24, Amenemhet was being appointed to an administrative position in the temple of Amun: “... appointing the king’s eldest son [Amen]emhet as overseer of cattle.”<sup>146</sup> Since Amenemhet probably was no longer a child when the inscription was composed, he would have been born fairly early in the coregency of Thutmose III and Hatshepsut.<sup>147</sup> Therefore, Amenhotep II would not have died during the tenth plague, as the record bears out that he was not the firstborn son of Thutmose III.

#### **IV. THE TENTH PLAGUE AND THE FIRSTBORN SON OF AMENHOTEP II**

##### **1. God Predicts the Death of Pharaoh’s Eldest Son.**

God told Moses that he would harden pharaoh’s heart, and that pharaoh would refuse to free the Israelites from bondage (Exod 4:21). God then instructed Moses to tell pharaoh, “Thus says the Lord, ‘Israel is my son, my firstborn. And I said to you, ‘Let my son go, that he may serve me’. But you have refused to let him go. Behold, I will kill your son, your firstborn’” (Exod 4:22b–23). After the ninth plague had passed, God repeated this prediction, stating that “all the firstborn in the land of Egypt will die, from the firstborn of the pharaoh who sits on his throne” (Exod 11:5). Therefore, the eldest son of the exodus-pharaoh must have died in the plague. Who are the candidates for the eldest son of Amenhotep II?

##### **2. Thutmose IV as a Candidate for the Eldest Son of Amenhotep II.**

For the exodus-pharaoh, the worst part of God’s prediction of judgment was that his own firstborn son would die. If Amenhotep II was the exodus-pharaoh, his firstborn son had to die without the chance to rule, which the historical record should confirm. The son who succeeded Amenhotep II was Thutmose IV (ca. 1418–1408 BC), whose Dream Stele—located between the paws of the Great Sphinx—reveals that he was not the original heir to the throne.<sup>148</sup> Moreover, inscriptional and papyritous evidence confirms that Thutmose IV was not the eldest son of Amenhotep II.

##### **3. Prince Amenhotep as a Candidate for the Eldest Son of Amenhotep II.**

---

<sup>145</sup> 46. Redford, “Coregency of Tuthmosis III,” 109.

<sup>146</sup> 47. Der Manuelian, *Amenophis II*, 19.

<sup>147</sup> 48. Redford, “Coregency of Tuthmosis III,” 108.

<sup>148</sup> 49. Der Manuelian, *Amenophis II*, 40.

The papyrus British Museum 10056 (hereinafter BM 10056) speaks of “Prince Amenhotep.” The only title used of him, apart from “king’s son,” is “sm-priest.”<sup>149</sup> To which Amenhotep is the scribe referring? Although the year is completely lost from the regnal date on this MS, the surviving month (4) and day (1) mark precisely the date of Amenhotep II’s accession, implying that Prince Amenhotep undoubtedly was his son.<sup>150</sup> This prince almost certainly resided in or near Memphis<sup>151</sup>, due to his office being connected to the high priesthood of Ptah.<sup>152</sup>3

The late 18th Dynasty attests to numerous high priests of Ptah, and their order and tenures in no way prohibit counting the Prince Amenhotep of BM 10056 among them. Actually, a significant gap occurs in the sm-priest list between the end of Thutmose III’s reign and the beginning of Thutmose IV’s reign. This gap, which encompasses the reign of Amenhotep II, can be filled partially with the service of Prince Amenhotep. Redford confidently identifies this prince with another royal personage: the king’s son whom Selim Hassan dubbed “Prince B,” who erected the wall-carved stele in the Sphinx temple of Amenhotep II.<sup>153</sup> Three factors support the

<sup>149</sup> 50. Redford, “Coregency of Tuthmosis III,” 111.

<sup>150</sup> 51. Ibid., 110.

<sup>151</sup> 52. Upon Amenhotep I’s death, Thebes was the most prominent city of the native Egyptians, who recently had regained control of their land and embarked on what would become over 150 years of unbroken prosperity. Yet Thutmose I, who did not descend from his predecessor, moved the chief residence of the Egyptian court from Thebes to Memphis, where he constructed a royal palace that was used until the reign of Akhenaten (ca. 1369–1352 BC). Memphis also became the headquarters of the pharaonic braintrust, where the great military campaigns were planned, and Egyptian soldiers were “armed before pharaoh.” In fact, all of the Asiatic military campaigns of Thutmose III and Amenhotep II were launched from Memphis, which had become the residence for pharaonic successors who came into office as coregents (Kuhrt, *Ancient Near East*, vol. 1, 177). Regarding Amenhotep II’s youth, Grimal notes, “That the young prince should have been active at Memphis is no surprise, for it was there that all young heirs to the throne had been brought up since the time of Thutmose I” (Nicolas Grimal, *A History of Ancient Egypt*, trans. Ian Shaw [Oxford, UK: Blackwell, 1992], 220). This makes Thutmose I an excellent candidate for the pharaoh who personally spoke with the chief Hebrew midwives and instructed them to execute the newborn Israelite boys (Exod 1:15). The numerous summonings of these midwives, whose authoritative rank necessitates their having resided among the core of national Israel in Goshen, also implies an extremely close proximity between them and pharaoh. This requirement can be satisfied easily if pharaoh resided in Memphis, but not if he resided in Thebes. “The journey from Memphis to Thebes [alone] would have been a slow one of perhaps two to three weeks” (Joyce Tyldesley, *Hatchepsut: The Female Pharaoh* [London: Viking, 1996], 36). Even if one traveled at a similarly slow pace from Goshen to Memphis, which did not entail the same grade of ascent as did a trip to Thebes, the journey could be made in a mere 1½ to 2½ days. At a more realistic pace, the trip would be even faster. Pharaoh’s messengers probably traveled to Goshen on horseback, which would shorten the travel time even more. Wood identifies Ezbet Helmi, located just over one mile southwest of Pi-Ramesses, as the royal residence of the exodus-pharaoh during the Israelites’ stay in Goshen (Wood, “The Rise and Fall,” 482). Though this site indeed may have possessed two palace structures of the 18th Dynasty (Ibid., 483; Manfred Bietak, *Avaris: The Capital of the Hyksos* [London: British Museum Press, 1996], 68–72), there is no epigraphical evidence confirming that Amenhotep II ever resided there, even periodically. Moreover, the discovery of a scarab there with his royal cartouche no more proves his personal occupation of the city (Wood, “The Rise and Fall,” 484) than the discovery of a scarab with his cartouche at Gibeon proves he resided on the Central Benjamin Plateau (James B. Pritchard, *Gibeon: Where the Sun Stood Still* [Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1962], 156). Memphis, a known royal residence of Amenhotep II and the headquarters for all of the Asiatic military campaigns of the era, is currently a better candidate for the site where the exodus-pharaoh resided, though Ezbet Helmi does remain a legitimate candidate.

<sup>152</sup> 53. Other New-Kingdom princes who were sm-priests also functioned as chief pontiffs at Memphis, such as “the king’s son and sm-priest, Thutmose,” who appears with his father, Amenhotep III, at his burial in the Serapeum. This prince is attested on a canopic box, where he is called “the king’s eldest son, his beloved, high priest of Ptah and sm-priest.” He doubtlessly is to be identified with the king’s son and sm-priest, Thutmose, who appears on a statuette in the Louvre (Redford, “Coregency of Tuthmosis III,” 111).

<sup>153</sup> 54. Ibid., 112, 114.

identification of Prince B with Prince Amenhotep: (1) both were the son of a king; (2) Amenhotep II was the father of both; and (3) they both resided at Memphis, functioning there in the role of sm-priest.

Prince B/Amenhotep undoubtedly was an important figure, as he was called “the one who enters before his father without being announced, providing protection for the King of Upper and Lower Egypt,” and “commander of the horses.”<sup>154</sup> Since his name was enclosed in a cartouche, he was the heir apparent when the stele was carved, meaning that he stood in line for the throne ahead of Thutmose IV, who obviously was his younger brother. Therefore, some conclusions about this prince may be drawn: (1) he was the royal son of Amenhotep II; (2) he was never called “the king’s eldest son”; (3) he served as the sm-priest and lived in the royal palace at Memphis; (4) he was once the heir to the throne; (5) he lived approximately until Year 30 or 35 of his father’s reign; and (6) he never ascended to the throne.<sup>155</sup> If Prince B/Amenhotep was the heir to the throne without being the firstborn son of Amenhotep II, then who was the eldest son of this noted pharaoh?

#### 4. An Unattested “Thutmose” as a Candidate for the Eldest Son of Amenhotep II.

Redford, who considers the exodus account to be mythical, may supply the answer: “The fact that he (Prince B/Amenhotep) was named Amenhotep like his father might be taken to indicate that he was not the firstborn, that an older son named Thutmose had been born to Amenhotep II. It would be necessary to assume, however, that this Thutmose had passed away in childhood without leaving a trace.”<sup>156</sup> Redford suggests that the practice of these pharaohs was not to name their firstborn sons after themselves, but to use an alternative birth-name. If Prince Amenhotep was not the eldest son of Amenhotep II, who by custom may have named his first son “Thutmose,” then the Thutmose sitting on the lap of the royal tutor Hekreshu in a wall painting at Thebes may be “the eldest son” of the king.<sup>157</sup> Therefore, if Amenhotep II was the exodus-

---

<sup>154</sup> 55. Ibid., 114.

<sup>155</sup> 56. Ibid., 110, 114.

<sup>156</sup> 57. Ibid., 114.

<sup>157</sup> 58. In Tomb 64 of the Theban necropolis is an important wall painting that displays two royal tutors: Hekreshu and his son, Hekerneheh, who are in the company of their princely charges: Thutmose and Amenhotep. Hekreshu is seated, facing right, with the young heir apparent, Thutmose, on his lap. Standing before him is Hekerneheh and a small Prince Amenhotep, who is carrying a bouquet. Hekreshu is specifically stated to be a “tutor of the king’s eldest bodily son, Thutmose,” whose nomen is represented in a cartouche. Hekerneheh’s title is “tutor of the king’s son, Amenhotep.” Behind Hekerneheh appear six other princes, originally all named, but the hieroglyphs are now almost completely destroyed. One name alone can be made out, that of a certain Amenemhet. All of the princes, including the seated Thutmose, wear pectorals bearing the nomen and praenomen of Thutmose IV (Ibid., 114, 115). The presence of the birth name and throne-name of Thutmose IV on each of the princes drove Newberry to conclude that the child on Hekreshu’s knee was undoubtedly the later Thutmose IV, and that the other princes, including Amenhotep, were his sons. The prince named Amenhotep, according to Newberry, eventually ruled as Amenhotep III (Percy Edward Newberry, “Akhenaten’s Eldest Son-in-Law ‘Ankhkhe-prure’,” JEA 14 [1928], 83–84). Redford points out that Newberry’s argument is not compelling, as all of the others in the scene could easily be wearing the cartouche of Thutmose IV out of deference to the son who succeeded to the throne. He further suggests that perhaps the six princes in the background are sons of Thutmose IV, while Amenhotep could be a brother, and for that reason was singled out to be depicted in a position of honor (Redford, “Coregency of Tuthmosis III,” 113). The problem, however, with the suggestion that the six princes are the sons of the seated Thutmose is that Thutmose and Amenhotep themselves, whoever they might be in reality, are depicted in the scene as children, and it would be odd to depict in the same scene both a father and his children as children. A possible rebuttal against Redford’s suggestion that Thutmose and Amenhotep are brothers might take the following form: Hekreshu is specifically stated

pharaoh, perhaps his eldest son was Thutmose, who died in the plague without leaving a trace, thus satisfying both the Egyptological and Biblical records (Exod 12:29).

## V. THE THEORY OF THE EXODUS-PHARAOH DYING IN THE RED SEA

Although the Christian community historically has accepted that the exodus-pharaoh died in the Red Sea when his army drowned, there is no such statement to this effect in Exodus, the only first-hand source for the event, or anywhere else in Scripture.<sup>158</sup> One of the most important principles that was taught to the present writer during his seminary studies is this: “Say everything the text says; say no more, and say no less!” Saying more than what is written in the text is known as eisegesis, or reading into the text what the interpreter presupposes it to say. Eisegesis must be avoided here. What does the text actually say about the fate of this pharaoh? Moses only states that the Lord would “be honored through pharaoh” by the destruction of his

---

to be the tutor of the king’s eldest son, Thutmose, while Hekerneheh is the tutor of the king’s son, Amenhotep. Since a father-son relationship existed between the tutors, perhaps a father-son relationship existed between their charges. Redford dismisses this idea by offering a parallel depiction found in graffiti from Konosso. A king’s son, Amenhotep, is mentioned twice at Konosso, once with Hekreshu and a second time with Hekerneheh. The presence of the cartouches of Thutmose IV in the immediate vicinity lends support to the dating of the graffiti to his reign. More importantly, Amenhotep’s name is accompanied by that of another prince, Okheprure, and the parallelism in the graffiti between the two names strongly suggests a fraternal relationship. Okheprure again is shown on the knee of an unidentified scribe in Tomb 226 of the Theban necropolis, along with three of his brothers. If, as his name would indicate, he was a son of Amenhotep II, then most likely Prince Amenhotep was also his son. On the wall painting from Tomb 64, therefore, Prince Amenhotep also should be considered a brother to Thutmose IV, and not a son (Ibid.). If Princes Thutmose and Amenhotep from Tomb 64 are indeed brothers, who are the six princes in the background? Certainly the fact that all of the princes, including the seated Thutmose, are wearing pectorals that bear the nomen and praenomen of Thutmose IV seems to indicate that the princes are all on the same level, and therefore brothers, as was the case with the Konosso graffiti and Tomb 226. The problem that remains, then, is that Thutmose IV is universally accepted as not having been the firstborn child, which is both confirmed by Thutmose IV’s own account on the Great/Sphinx Stele and by the fact that Prince Amenhotep was shown to be the rightful heir to the throne of Amenhotep II before Thutmose IV. Thus one of two options must be true: either (1) the Tomb-64 painting is falsifying the truth by assigning Thutmose IV the status of “the king’s eldest son,” or (2) the Thutmose who sits on the lap of Hekreshu is intended to portray a different Thutmose. The former option hardly seems possible, since the tomb-wall painting is located in a deeply secluded place, not at all prominently displayed where one would expect to see propagandistic depictions of a king’s grandeur. If Redford is correct that Prince Amenhotep, who never is called “the king’s eldest son,” was not the eldest son of Amenhotep II, and that by custom a king named “Amenhotep” would name his first son “Thutmose,” and thus that Amenhotep II did name his first son “Thutmose,” the Thutmose sitting on the lap of the royal tutor indeed may be “the eldest son” of Amenhotep II, who could have died a premature death during the tenth and most gruesome of the plagues on Egypt. The painting may be depicting the entire entourage of Amenhotep II’s sons during the time when his firstborn son was still alive. The presence of Thutmose IV’s praenomen on the pectorals of all of the princes, even on that of the long-deceased plague-son, may indicate that the painting was made during the reign of Thutmose IV. Newberry, for one, was convinced that Tomb 64 was constructed for Hekerneheh during the reign of Thutmose IV (Newberry, “Akhenaten’s Eldest,” 82). The reason for the cartouche of Thutmose IV next to each of the princes, which could be a later addition to the painting if instead it originally was painted during the reign of Amenhotep II, may simply be that the painter wanted to demonstrate the sovereignty of Thutmose IV over all of his brothers, being that he was the only one from among them who rose to the position of pharaoh. Certainly this interpretation would better explain why Amenhotep, who was in line for the throne before his younger brother Thutmose IV, was being depicted as smaller in stature than the Thutmose who sat on his tutor’s lap. This detail is highly problematic for any view that instead purports Thutmose IV to be “the king’s eldest son,” since Prince Amenhotep is known to have been in line for the throne before him.<sup>158</sup> 59. Wood, “The Rise and Fall,” 478. Shea correctly notes that “Ex 14–15 is not directly explicit upon this point,” though he subsequently takes an unjustified logical leap by extrapolating, “but it is the logical inference there [that pharaoh also drowned]” (Shea, “Amenhotep II as Pharaoh,” 46).

army (Exod 14:4), but throughout the entire narrative of Exodus, Moses never explicitly states that pharaoh died along with his army.

### 1. Psalm 106:11 as a Proof-Text for the Death of the Exodus-Pharaoh in the Red Sea.

Supporters of the view that pharaoh died in the Red Sea often appeal to Ps 106:11. The setting is the Red-Sea rebellion that was instigated by “the (Israelite) fathers (who) were in Egypt” (Ps 106:7). God parted the waters “so that he might make known his power” (Ps 106:8). After describing the parting (Ps 106:9), the psalmist adds, “And he saved them from the hand of the hater and redeemed them from the hand of the enemy, and the water covered their adversaries; not one of them remained” (Ps 106:10–11). The adversaries are obviously the Egyptian soldiers, the enemies who were haters of the Jews. The sea covered them, and not one of them remained alive.

Allegedly, pharaoh—the chief adversary—was among the smitten Egyptians. If Amenhotep II actually was the exodus-pharaoh, then his reign would have ended abruptly during the year of the exodus, or ca. 1446 BC. Since he ruled at least 26 years, which will be proven below, his reign must have begun by ca. 1471 BC. The weakness with the death-in-the-Red-Sea theory, though, is that it cannot be synchronized with the reigns of the previous five pharaohs, whose regnal dates are known, being fixed by the Ebers Papyrus. Since regnal dates are known—except for that of Thutmose II, whose rule lasted from four to twelve years—Amenhotep II’s ninth year could not have begun in or before ca. 1471 BC. Even if Thutmose II ruled for the minimum of four years, the reign of Amenhotep II had to begin in ca. 1462 BC or later, leaving nine years too few for the reigns of all of the intervening monarchs. Therefore, due to limitations that represent fixed points in Biblical and Egyptian chronologies, if Amenhotep II was the exodus-pharaoh, he could not have died in the Red-Sea incident.

If the exodus-pharaoh lived through the Red-Sea massacre, Ps 106:11 remains uncompromised. The text never specifically mentions pharaoh, so there is no reason to conclude that he drowned with his army. The hater and enemy of Israel is Egypt as a collective whole, and certainly not every Egyptian drowned in the Red Sea when “the water covered their adversaries,” so God delivered his people from Egypt itself. Only those Egyptian adversaries—as national representatives—who chased the Israelites into the sea were consumed by water, and since they were the taskforce dispatched on this mission, their defeat signals the demise of the entire nation.

Moreover, not one of these representatives, who comprised the bulk of pharaoh’s vast imperial army, survived after the dividing walls of the sea collapsed. This is confirmed by the Mosaic text that probably provided the basis for the psalmist’s words: “The waters returned and covered the chariots and the horsemen, that is, in relation to Pharaoh’s entire army that followed them into the sea; not one of them remained” (Exod 14:28).

### 2. Psalm 136:15 as a Proof-Text for the Death of the Exodus-Pharaoh in the Red Sea.

The text most frequently used to assert that pharaoh died with his army is Ps 136:15. “But he overthrew pharaoh and his army in the Red Sea ... .” A cursory reading of the text leads most to

believe that because God “overthrew” pharaoh and his army, both parties must have died.<sup>159</sup> However, the Hebrew verb *נָעַר* (n‘r, “he shook off”) shows that God actually “shook off” the powerful pharaoh and his army, who were bothersome pests that God—whose might is far greater than theirs—merely brushed away. The same Hebrew verb is used in Ps 109:23, where David laments, “I am gone like a shadow when it lengthens; I am shaken off like the locust.” Here, he describes the sad condition of his suffering, as both lines of this synonymous parallelism indicate his feeling of being cast away, or discarded. The picture painted by the verb is that David has become as a locust that is casually flicked away from a man’s garment. Surely David was not describing his own demise and death! The context of Ps 136, which states that God “brought Israel out from their midst ... with a strong hand and an outstretched arm” (Ps 136:11–12), confirms that the unequalled might of God is the thrust of the passage, thus accentuating the ease with which he shook off Israel’s adversary: the mighty Egyptian army.

Another argument against the view that Ps 136:15 signals the death of pharaoh is that this verse is probably taken from Exod 14:27, which uses the same verb, “to shake off,” but (purposefully?) omits pharaoh from the list of those whom the Lord shook off from the Israelites’ garments. Instead, the text clearly states, “I [God] will be honored through pharaoh and all his army, and the Egyptians will know that I am the Lord” (Exod 14:4; cf. 14:17). God was honored through pharaoh in the mass destruction of his army, but pharaoh did not have to die for this to occur.<sup>160</sup> In Ps 136:15, the psalm writer was not rejoicing over the death of anyone, but that almighty God shook off the Egyptians from Israel’s garments by freeing them from their enemy’s clutches.

### 3. The Death and Regnal Length of Amenhotep II.

Under what circumstances, then, did Amenhotep II die? Fortunately, his mummified corpse has been preserved.<sup>161</sup> Victor Loret, fresh from his discovery of the tomb of Thutmose III in the Valley of the Kings, discovered the royal tomb of Amenhotep II on 9 March 1898. Confirmation that this burial chamber belonged to Amenhotep II came when Loret identified his nomen and praenomen on the painted, quartzite sarcophagus. This magnificent sepulcher represented a first for the excavations in the Valley of the Kings, as the king actually was found in place in his own sarcophagus, albeit lying in a replacement cartonnage coffin.<sup>162</sup>

#### a. An Indisputable Regnal Length of at Least 26 Years.

<sup>159</sup> 60. Wood, “The Rise and Fall,” 478.

<sup>160</sup> 61. Shea disagrees: “Yahweh says that he will get glory over pharaoh. While some of that glory could be maintained by his loss of troops in the Sea of Reeds, if he escaped with his own life, some of that glory could have been diminished” (Shea, “Amenhotep II as Pharaoh,” 46). This statement, though well intended, is not true whatsoever. God displayed his glory by decimating Sennacherib’s army when the Assyrians marched against Judah (2 Kgs 19:35), but his glory was not diminished when Sennacherib returned to Assyria unscathed. A far greater shame for a defeated monarch is to be left in humiliation to rule over a shell of his former empire after being defeated by God, depleted of his army, and—in the case of the exodus-pharaoh—stripped of his servatile workforce.

<sup>161</sup> 62. No doubt exists among Egyptologists that this mummy is the corpse of Amenhotep II. Although he was taller than both his father and his son who succeeded him, his physical features bear a marked resemblance to theirs, especially his son’s, particularly in respect to their crania and teeth (James E. Harris and Kent R. Weeks, *X-Raying the Pharaohs* [New York: Scribners, 1973], 138).

<sup>162</sup> 63. Nicholas Reeves, *Ancient Egypt: The Great Discoveries* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2000), 103.

While Thutmose III is documented to have died in Year 54, no evidence exists to date explicitly the regnal year of Amenhotep II's death. The highest known regnal date among the indisputable evidence, Year 26, is inscribed on a wine juglet from the king's Theban funerary temple.<sup>163</sup> Redford, using questionable logic, asserts that since the juglet was found in the king's funerary temple, Year 26 represents the end of his reign.<sup>164</sup> Wente and Van Siclen dispute this assertion, though, showing evidence for the long-term storage of wine, and the active functioning of Egyptian mortuary temples long before the deaths of the pharaohs for whom they were built.<sup>165</sup>

b. A Possible Regnal Length of at Least 30 or 35 Years.

One source contributing to the argument that Amenhotep II reigned beyond 26 years is BM 10056. At least one scholar dates a fragmentary regnal year in v. 9,8 of this papyrus to "Year 30," though he admits that the number also could be read differently, such as "Year 35."<sup>166</sup> If one of these readings is correct, Amenhotep II's reign lasted at least 30 or 35 years. Many scholars have postulated that he reigned beyond 30 years because he observed a regnal jubilee called a sed festival, a celebration that historically marked the 30th year of a pharaoh's reign. While the sed festival was used for centuries to honor this regnal anniversary,<sup>167</sup> Der Manuelian warns against concluding too much about the regnal length of Amenhotep II just because he celebrated one: "No dates accompany the jubilee monuments [of Amenhotep II], and our understanding of the jubilee institution is too imperfect to allow us to assign an automatic '30th year' at every mention of a hb-sed festival."<sup>168</sup>

c. A Possible Regnal Length of Exactly 37 1/3 Years.

Certainly caution must be exercised before assigning a 30-year reign automatically to every pharaoh who celebrated this event, but the sed festival of Amenhotep II just may signify that his reign exceeded 30 years. More conclusive than the sed-festival evidence is that from Thutmose IV's Lateran Obelisk, which was erected a full 35 years after the death of Thutmose III, to whom it was dedicated. Wente and Van Siclen suggest that the 35 years marks the length of the interceding reign of Amenhotep II minus the coregency with his father, which is known to be 2 1/3 years.<sup>169</sup> If their argumentation is correct, Amenhotep II reigned exactly 37 1/3 years, making him 55 years of age at the time of his death.

<sup>163</sup> 64. The king's praenomen is inscribed on one side of the jar, while the other side is inscribed with "Year 26" and "Panehsy," the name of the king's vintner (Der Manuelian, *Amenophis II*, 42).

<sup>164</sup> 65. Redford asserts that since pottery jars are relatively porous, the wine within them was consumed not long after the bottling process, and since mortuary complexes were fully stocked with wine only after a king's (imminent) death, the Year-26 wine-juglet was produced at the end of Amenhotep II's life, and the mortuary temple probably was under construction until the king's death and the stocking of the wine (Donald B. Redford, "On the Chronology of the Egyptian Eighteenth Dynasty," *JNES* 25:2 [Apr 1966], 119).

<sup>165</sup> E. F. Wente and C. C. Van Siclen III, "A Chronology of the New Kingdom," in *Studies in Honor of George R. Hughes*, in *Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilization* 39 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976), 228.

<sup>166</sup> 67. Redford, "Coregency of Tuthmosis III," 110.

<sup>167</sup> 68. The 12th-Dynasty pharaoh Sesostri I (ca. 1960–1916 BC) erected two obelisks in front of the temple pylon at Heliopolis on the occasion of his first sed festival, commemorating his 30th regnal year (Grimal, *History of Ancient Egypt*, 164). During the 18th Dynasty, Thutmose III seemingly celebrated a sed festival in his 30th year, as well; Redford suggests that the year of rest from Asiatic campaigning between Thutmose III's sixth and seventh campaigns, which corresponds precisely to his Year 30, signifies a "holiday year" used to celebrate this landmark anniversary (Redford, *Egypt, Canaan, and Israel*, 158).

<sup>168</sup> 69. Der Manuelian, *Amenophis II*, 43.

#### d. A Lifespan of 55 Years.

A lifespan of 55 years for Amenhotep II is deduced by adding his 37 1/3-year reign to the 18 years he lived before his coronation, a number taken from the larger of the two Sphinx Stelae of Amenhotep II: “Now his majesty appeared as king as a fine youth ... having completed 18 years in his strength ... ; now after these things, his majesty appeared as king.”<sup>170</sup> An X-ray investigation of the royal mummies may assist in dating his regnal length. After an examination of the mummy of Amenhotep II, he was estimated to have died at 44 years of age,<sup>171</sup> meaning that a 55-year lifespan exceeds the projections of the X-ray evidence, and thus is “an impossibly high

<sup>169</sup> 70. Wentz and Van Siclen III, “Chronology of the New Kingdom,” 227–228. The occurrence of a coregency under Thutmose III and Amenhotep II is essentially undisputed among conservative Egyptologists, as supporting evidence for it is plentiful. See Redford, “Coregency of Tuthmosis III,” 116; Der Manuelian, *Amenophis II*, 24; and Richard A. Parker, “Once Again the Coregency of Thutmose III and Amenhotep II,” in *Studies in Honor of John A. Wilson*, in *Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilization* 35 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969), 228. Nevertheless, Shea firmly disputes the notion of such a coregency, though formerly he advocated one. His current position is built on a foundational presupposition, namely that Amenhotep II died in the Red Sea. The proof Shea presents for his position is that Amenhotep II reportedly launched two “first campaigns.” According to Shea’s theory, a successor (Amenhotep IIB) was secretly and deceitfully placed on the throne after Amenhotep IIA drowned in the Red Sea, but with the caveat that the later pharaoh used the same birth name and throne-name as his deceased predecessor, thus completing the reign of “Amenhotep II” as an imposter (Shea, “Amenhotep II as Pharaoh,” 44–46). This outlandish theory, however, is fraught with difficulties, creating far more problems than it solves, the foremost being that this entire leap of speculation is based on the false—yet completely handicapping—presupposition that the exodus-pharaoh died in the Red Sea. Since this presumption was demonstrated to be inaccurate, only Shea’s arguments stand to be evaluated. If the two “first campaigns” of Amenhotep II were actually one campaign, which will be proven subsequently, then Shea loses all impetus for his fantastic claim. Moreover, he provides no precedent in Egypt’s long history for the practice of two pharaohs ruling under the same name, with the latter using his predecessor’s nomen and praenomen as his own. Surely such an act would incite a court rebellion and turn the royal family against the officials who secretly placed the imposter on the throne. Shea also asserts that the two coronation celebrations for Amenhotep II—one after his father died on ca. 22 March, and the other on ca. 22 November, as recorded on the Memphis Stele—represent a contradiction, implying the reigns of different rulers. However, three inescapable problems plague this assertion: (1) if Amenhotep IIB was coronated on 22 November, the deception of the court officials would have been exposed; (2) the exodus occurred on 15 Nisan (25 April), which would render inconceivable Amenhotep IIB’s coronation as late as 22 November; and (3) the attestation of “two accession dates” actually supports a coregency. In *The Biography of Amenemheb*, it is stated that Thutmose III died on vii, 30 (ca. 22 March) of his 54th year, and that on the very next day Amenhotep II was “established on the throne of his father” (Der Manuelian, *Amenophis II*, 20). However, both the Semna Stela and BM 10056 offer iv, 1 (ca. 22 November) as his accession date, and since on BM 10056 the year-number even changes immediately after the mention of 22 November, a definitive conclusion can be made that Amenhotep II’s regnal years were numbered from ca. 22 November, not from 23 March (Redford, “Coregency of Tuthmosis III,” 121). Shea claims that if indeed Amenhotep II was inaugurated when he became coregent on 22 November of an earlier year, there would be no need for an installation ceremony on the day after Thutmose III died. Actually, the Egyptian texts never refer to an installation ceremony on 23 March; they note only that he was established on his father’s throne. Before Thutmose III died, Amenhotep II ruled as a coregent with his father, with full pharaonic authority; only after his father died, however, did he actually take the throne as the pharaoh with ultimate authority. Yet even if there was a ceremony immediately after his father’s death, such an event at the outset of his sole rule would serve to establish him on the throne and lessen the chance of a usurpation attempt by a potential challenger. In addition to all of these problems with Shea’s argumentation, what pharaoh of the proud and powerful 18th Dynasty would equate himself with a deceased predecessor, especially one who lost his slave-base, lost the firstborn child of every Egyptian citizen, lost the world’s most powerful army, and died shamefully in a mass drowning? Moreover, could such a grand scheme be expected never to be challenged, or to surface at some later time during Egypt’s entire storied history? Thus the notion of two Amenhotep II’s is resolutely rejected.

<sup>170</sup> 71. Redford, “Coregency of Tuthmosis III,” 117.



result according to the medical evidence.”<sup>172</sup> Yet Robins is convinced that when identifying a pharaoh’s age at death, there is good reason to cast doubt on X-ray evidence as a whole.<sup>173</sup> Support for this criticism is found in the discrepancy over Thutmose III’s lifespan.<sup>174</sup> While he lived at least until age 55, his mummy reportedly displays skeletal features of a man of 40–45 years old, meaning that the X-ray evidence makes him appear no less than 10–15 years younger than his actual age at death.<sup>175</sup> Thus the 10-year discrepancy with Amenhotep II’s mummy is not problematic, and a reign of 37 1/3 years remains a fully realistic option.

## VI. THE SECOND ASIATIC CAMPAIGN AS THE RESULT OF THE EXODUS

### 1. The Great Reduction in Campaigning and Expansionism.

The renowned conqueror Thutmose III led 17 military campaigns into the Levant, but his son—in stark contrast—led only two or three. While many scholars have attempted to determine the exact number, there exists a virtual dearth of discussion about this sharp decline. Aharoni attributes it to an underlying diminishment of Egyptian power: “Already in the days of Amenhotep II, the son of Thutmose III, cracks began to appear in the structure of the Egyptian Empire.”<sup>176</sup> Vandersleyen hints at the dissipation of Egypt’s might by the end of Amenhotep II’s reign: “It seems possible to consider this reign as unsuccessful, a time of decline: a few exploits abroad, a few preserved memorials, an almost complete absence of sources after the ninth year of the reign.”<sup>177</sup> Yet the intervening years featured neither Egypt’s engagement/loss in war nor a significant change in the political climate. Der Manuelian writes, “Despite Thutmose III’s military success, Mitanni remained Egypt’s primary adversary in Dynasty 18, and there is no reason to doubt her continued aggressive policy in the reign of the young king Amenhotep II.”<sup>178</sup>

While this may be true, Amenhotep II’s Year-9 campaign was the last to pit Egypt against Mitanni. During the reign of Thutmose IV, Mitanni—under threat from the Hittite King Tudhaliyas II—attempted to forge an alliance with its Egyptian arch-enemy, demonstrating a complete reversal in relations between these formerly incompatible superpowers. EA (Amarna Letter) 109 reveals that by the mid-14th century BC, Egypt held only nominal control of Palestine, as they no longer struck fear into the Canaanite rulers.<sup>179</sup> One author notes that “this

<sup>171</sup> 72. Vandersleyen notes that in spite of the good physical development of Amenhotep II, an examination of his mummy reveals that he was of average height and died at about 44 years of age (Claude Vandersleyen, *L’Égypte et la Vallée du Nil*, vol. 2 [Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1995], 336). Harris and Weeks, adding that his wavy hair was brown with gray at the temple, suggest that he was 45 at death (Harris and Weeks, *X-Raying*, 138).

<sup>172</sup> 73. Der Manuelian, *Amenophis II*, 44.

<sup>173</sup> 74. G. Robins, “The Value of the Estimated Ages of the Royal Mummies at Death as Historical Evidence,” *Göttinger Miszellen* 45 (1981), 63–68.

<sup>174</sup> 75. While Thutmose III’s exact age at his accession is unknown, his reign lasted into his 54th regnal year. According to Brugsch-Bey, he reigned 53 years, 11 months, and 1 day (Heinrich Brugsch-Bey, *Egypt Under the Pharaohs* [London: Bracken Books, 1902], 193), while Tyldesley claims that he reigned 53 years, 10 months, and 26 days (Tyldesley, *Hatchepsut*, 96, 215).

<sup>175</sup> 76. Harris and Weeks, *X-Raying*, 138.

<sup>176</sup> 77. Yohanan Aharoni and Michael Avi-Yonah, *The Macmillan Bible Atlas* (New York: Macmillan, 1977), 34.

<sup>177</sup> 78. Vandersleyen, *L’Égypte*, vol. 2, 341.

<sup>178</sup> 79. Der Manuelian, *Amenophis II*, 59.

<sup>179</sup> 80. “Previously, on seeing a man from Egypt, the kings of Canaan fled bef[ore him, but] now the sons of Abdi-Ashirta make men from Egypt prowl about [like do]gs” (*The Amarna Letters*, ed. and trans. William L. Moran [Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992], 183).

relative military inertness lasted until Horemheb's coming to power" in ca. 1335 BC.<sup>180</sup> How does one explain this great disparity in Egypt's campaigning, the uncharacteristic change in political policy toward their bitter enemy to the north, and Egypt's general loss of power and imperialistic dominance?

## 2. The Motivation for the Recording of Amenhotep II's Asiatic Campaigns.

The relative shortage of military activity during Amenhotep II's reign cannot be attributed to timidity. He recorded his few military excursions into Asia in The Annals of Amenhotep II, which contain not a complete, daily record of each stop on the various routes, but only a selection of the events that accentuate his courage and present him in a positive light.<sup>181</sup> Pritchard adds that "Amenhotep II gloried in his reputation for personal strength and prowess. His records, therefore, contrast with those of his predecessor and father, Thutmose III, in emphasizing individual achievement."<sup>182</sup> Thus Amenhotep II's exploits were motivated by a thirst to attain universal fame and glory.

## 3. The Number of Amenhotep II's Asiatic Campaigns.

Prior to the discovery of the Memphis Stele, most scholars assumed that both Amenhotep II's Asiatic campaign, as recounted on the fragmentary Karnak Stele, and the operations against Takhsi, mentioned in the Amada and Elephantine Stelae, describe one event. With the Memphis Stele's discovery, it is still possible that the Karnak, Amada, and Elephantine Stelae refer to a common campaign, but the notion of only one campaign was proven false, since the Memphis Stele clearly delineates two distinct, separately numbered campaigns.<sup>183</sup> However, its text presents a dilemma: "The translator finds it impossible to reconcile the dates in these several stelae."<sup>184</sup> The available evidence allows for two views: (1) Amenhotep II conducted three Asiatic campaigns; (2) Amenhotep II conducted two Asiatic campaigns. Relevant inscriptional evidence from antiquity solves this dispute, which is critical to this pharaoh's biography.

### a. The Evidence from the Memphis Stele.

Two sources record multiple Asiatic campaigns under Amenhotep II: the Memphis and Karnak Stelae, which are partially duplicates in content. Both stelae are attributable to this pharaoh with confidence, as they begin with his complete titulary. The Memphis Stele, later reused by a 21st-Dynasty prince as part of the ceiling of his burial chamber (ca. 875 BC), offers the more extensive text. It presents both an earlier campaign in central and northern Syria, and a later one in Palestine, dating "his first victorious campaign" to Year 7, Month 1, Season 3, Day 25 (ca. 15 May) and "his second victorious campaign" to Year 9, Month 3, Season 1, Day 25 (ca. 15 November).<sup>185</sup>

<sup>180</sup> 81. Vandersleyen, *L'Egypte*, vol. 2, 333. This and all subsequent quotes by Vandersleyen are translated into English from the original French by Lydia Polyakova and Inna Kumpyak. Horemheb reigned from ca. 1335–1307 BC.

<sup>181</sup> 82. Yohanan Aharoni, "Some Geographical Remarks Concerning the Campaigns of Amenhotep II," *JNES* 19:3 (Jul 1960), 177.

<sup>182</sup> 83. James B. Pritchard, *ANET* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1950), 245.

<sup>183</sup> 84. Redford, "Coregency of Tuthmosis III," 118.

<sup>184</sup> 85. Pritchard, *ANET*, 245.

<sup>185</sup> 86. *Ibid.*, 245, 246; Redford, "Coregency of Tuthmosis III," 119.

b. The Evidence from the Karnak Stele.

Another source that attests to the Asiatic campaigns, lying to the south of the Eighth Pylon at Karnak, is the Karnak Stele, which survives in a more damaged state than the Memphis Stele. The Karnak Stele consists of a two-part relief, with each displaying a pharaoh who is presenting an offering to Amun-Re. Between the two parts is a vertical line of text that records Seti I's restoration of the monument.<sup>186</sup> Whether this stele originally bore the same dates as those on the Memphis Stele is unknown, but that it recounts the same two campaigns described on the Memphis Stele is now clear. Hoffmeier even refers to them as "two nearly identical stelae," though the Karnak Stele devotes much less space to the second campaign than does the Memphis Stele.<sup>187</sup> Both stelae were hacked-up during the Amarna Revolution and restored during the 19th Dynasty, with the Karnak Stele betraying poorer restoration.<sup>188</sup> Its postscript names Thutmose as the erector, assumed to be Thutmose IV, who evidently erected the stele after his accession.<sup>189</sup>

c. The Evidence from the Amada and Elephantine Stelae.

The Amada and Elephantine Stelae also offer evidence regarding the number of campaigns, as both speak of a "first victorious campaign" of Amenhotep II, during which seven Syrian chiefs were captured in the region of Takhsi. Both texts state that they were erected "after his majesty returned from Upper Retenu, having felled all those who had rebelled against him while he was extending the borders of Egypt."<sup>190</sup> His majesty came joyously to his father Amun, having slain with his own bludgeon the seven chiefs who were in the district of Takhsi."<sup>191</sup> Both stelae commence with this date: Year 3, Month 3, Season 3, Day 15 (ca. 4 July), which coincides with a celebration after the Egyptians returned from the first campaign.<sup>192</sup> This date demonstrates that the "first victorious campaign" transpired no later than Year 3 of Amenhotep II. How can this date be resolved with the Year-7 date on the Memphis Stele, when both describe his first campaign? These ancient sources allow for two theories on how many campaigns were launched.

d. The Theory of Three Asiatic Campaigns Launched by Amenhotep II.

Many scholars believe that Amenhotep II campaigned into Asia three times, with two options offered to resolve the conflicting information on the stelae. (1) The numbering of campaigns is particular to individual stelae. Drioton and Vandier suggest that Amenhotep II undertook Asiatic

<sup>186</sup> 87. Henry Breasted, *Ancient Records of Egypt*, vol. 2 (Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2001), 305.

<sup>187</sup> 88. Hoffmeier, "Memphis and Karnak Stelae," in *Context of Scripture*, vol. 2, 19.

<sup>188</sup> 89. Pritchard, *ANET*, 245; Redford, "Coregency of Tuthmosis III," 119.

<sup>189</sup> 90. Breasted, *Ancient Records*, vol. 2, 309.

<sup>190</sup> 91. The word "Retenu," an Egyptian term used of Syro-Palestine, is found in the account of Thutmose III's first Asiatic campaign, during which the Egyptians besieged Megiddo for seven months. When the city fell in December of Year 22, all of the Canaanite leaders—with the exception of the king of Kadesh, who had fled—fell in one stroke. Once these petty kings were in Egyptian hands, they were required to take this vow: "The lands of Retenu will not rebel again on another occasion," and, "We will never again act evilly against Men-kheper-Re (Thutmose III)—who lives forever, our good lord—in our lifetime" (Pritchard, *ANET*, 238; Hoffmeier, "Memphis and Karnak Stelae," in *Context of Scripture*, vol. 2, 16). Since city-states throughout Syro-Palestine were involved in this rebellion, the territory of the kings of Retenu who pledged perpetual loyalty to Thutmose III must have comprised both Syria and Palestine.

<sup>191</sup> 92. Redford, "Coregency of Tuthmosis III," 119.

<sup>192</sup> 93. Pritchard, *ANET*, 245.

campaigns in Years 3, 7, and 9, and that the “first victorious campaign” on the Memphis Stele is the first of two campaigns described on that particular stele.<sup>193</sup> Thus the scribe merely used “first” and “second” to distinguish from one another the two campaigns commemorated on the stele. The problem with this theory is that within Egyptian historiography, this supposed method of dating military campaigns is unparalleled. The practice would be strange indeed among 18th-Dynasty pharaohs, since the expression consistently refers not to successively numbered campaigns in one record, but to chronologically tallied campaigns that occurred over the course of a king’s reign.<sup>194</sup> The 17 campaigns of Thutmose III, for example, are numbered successively throughout his reign.

(2) The numbering of campaigns differs from coregent status to sole-ruler status. This variation dates one victorious campaign to his coregency with Thutmose III, and the other to his sole rule. Like Drioton and Vandier, Badawy, Edel, and Alt also separate the Takhsi campaign from those described on the Memphis Stele, postulating Asiatic campaigns in Years 3, 7, and 9. Alt asserts that the phrase, “first victorious campaign,” is used correctly on the Amada, Elephantine, and Memphis Stelae. The earlier “first victorious campaign” occurred in Year 3, during the coregency, while the latter transpired in Year 7, on his first military excursion as an independent monarch. To accent his own achievement, Amenhotep II simply restarted his numbering once he stepped out of his father’s shadow.<sup>195</sup> Yet once again, no precedent exists for pharaohs dating their military campaigns separately: first as a coregent, then as a sole ruler. This theory would be far more tenable if an inscription were found that dubbed the initial campaign described on the Memphis Stele as “the first victorious campaign of Amenhotep II’s sole rule.” Moreover, a crippling weakness is that Amenhotep II launched his Year-3 campaign as a sole ruler, in response to the Syro-Palestinian revolt waged after his father’s death.

By way of evaluation, insurmountable obstacles plague both versions of the three-campaign theory, thus rendering this option insufficient and unacceptable. The greatest problem is the lack of precedent for any such dual numbering of military campaigns by New-Kingdom pharaohs. Redford rightly notes, “[T]hat two separate systems of year-numbering were employed by Amenophis (II) is without other foundation and is a priori unlikely.”<sup>196</sup> Moreover, a comparison of lines 2–3 on the Memphis Stele with lines 16–19 on the Amada Stele— both of which describe his “first victorious campaign”—reveals some strong similarities, particularly in the choice of words and the parallel actions depicted, so all of the various “first campaigns” of Amenhotep II surely refer to a singular Asiatic campaign.<sup>197</sup>

#### e. The Theory of Two Asiatic Campaigns.

The inadequacies of the three-campaign theory have caused many scholars to propose that Amenhotep II launched only two Asiatic campaigns, despite the victory stelae attributing campaigns to Years 3, 7, and 9. This theory also has two variations. (1) The Year-3 campaign is synonymous with the Year-7 campaign due to differing regnal counting systems. Its proponents assert that the Amada and Elephantine Stelae record the same campaign as the Memphis Stele’s

<sup>193</sup> 94. Etienne Drioton and Jacques Vandier, *L’Egypte* (Paris: Les Presses Universitaires de France, 1938), 406, 663.

<sup>194</sup> 95. Redford, “Coregency of Tuthmosis III,” 120.

<sup>195</sup> 96. Ibid.

<sup>196</sup> 97. Ibid., 121.

<sup>197</sup> 98. Rainey, “Amenhotep II’s Campaign to Takhsi,” 71.

first campaign, but with the stipulation that the latter stele counts regnal years from the beginning of the coregency, while the former stelae count them from the outset of the sole rule. As Pritchard calculates, “A possible reconciliation would be that the 7th year after the coregency began was the 3rd year of the sole reign.”<sup>198</sup> One problem with this variation is the lack of precedent for dating pharaonic regnal years using two different methods: sometimes coregent numbering, and other times sole-regent numbering. Another problem is that the coregency now is known to have lasted exactly 2 1/3 years, making it mathematically impossible to equate the two campaigns, since the coregency would have to have lasted for a minimum of three years and one day for Pritchard to be correct.

(2) The Year-3 campaign is synonymous with the Year-7 campaign due to an inaccurate date displayed on the Memphis Stele. This version also assumes that the first campaign on the Karnak Stele, the campaigns described on the Elephantine and Amada Stelae, and the first campaign on the Memphis Stele, all refer to the same event. However, it purports that the Amada and Elephantine Stelae correctly date the “first victorious campaign” to Year 3, while the Memphis Stele displays a wrongly-reconstructed date etched onto it by a 19th Dynasty stelae-restoration crew that attempted to repair the damage it suffered during the Amarna Age. Vandersleyen observes that “the Memphis date is on the part of the memorial that was seriously damaged in the Amarna Age; the date that we read today is the result of Rameside restoration.”<sup>199</sup> He concludes, “Thus the initial date of Year 7 on the Memphis Stele is a[n inaccurate] restoration made by the Ramesides.”<sup>200</sup>

#### f. Conclusion for the Number of Asiatic Campaigns.

Both variations of the three-campaign theory proved to be weak and indefensible. Vandersleyen perceptively notes, “The simplest and most logical solution is that there was only one ‘first campaign,’ ... more plausibly in Year 3 than in Year 7.”<sup>201</sup> Therefore, based on the strong likelihood of a singular error on the Memphis Stele—due to inaccurate restoration by Rameside craftsmen—as the best explanation to harmonize the conflicting evidence on the stelae, the two-campaign theory is preferred. The Elephantine Stele, whose events are set in Takhsi,<sup>202</sup> even

<sup>198</sup> 99. Pritchard, *ANET*, 245.

<sup>199</sup> 100. Vandersleyen, *L’Egypte*, vol. 2, 324. Rainey affirms the activity of later restoration on the Memphis Stele, remarking that its opening lines are difficult to read due to faulty restoration by a later scribe (Rainey, “Amenhotep II’s Campaign to Takhsi,” 72).

<sup>200</sup> 101. Vandersleyen, *L’Egypte*, vol. 2, 325. Shea correctly asserts that “the identification of the campaign of Year 7 is not a scribal error because the campaign of Year 9 is identified as ‘his second campaign of victory’ in the same text” (Shea, “Amenhotep II as Pharaoh,” 46), but he fails to account for the possibility that while the original scribe etched the year of the pharaoh’s first campaign onto the stele correctly, it was subject to damage by alteration and subsequently faulty repair.

<sup>201</sup> 102. Vandersleyen, *L’Egypte*, vol. 2, 323, 324.

<sup>202</sup> 103. Critics of the two-campaign theory argue that “Takhsi,” a region in Syria already known as such at the time of Thutmose III, does not appear on the Memphis and Karnak Stelae, where another “first campaign” is discussed, thus suggesting a variance in destinations. For one, Shea objects that while the Year-3 campaign identifies Takhsi as the region of the campaigning, this term is never mentioned in the account of the Year-7 campaign, thus implying that these two accounts cannot describe the same campaign (Shea, “Amenhotep II as Pharaoh,” 46), despite both of them documenting a campaign that was waged in Syria. This objection is weak, however, since the purpose of the Amada Stele was not to boast of military exploits, but rather to commemorate the work completed on the Amada temple in Nubia. Its brief allusion to the expedition in Syria is included to note that Amenhotep II captured seven rulers of Takhsi, executed them by his own hand to make an example of them, and had six of them hanged upside

provides a terminus ad quem for the first campaign, as line 26 dates the stele to Year 4. “It is only reasonable to conclude that the events including the Takhsi campaign recounted in the text before this postscript are earlier than Year 4. Thus there is no reason to deny the clear implication of the text that the expedition against Takhsi transpired before [the end of] Year 3.”<sup>203</sup> Also supporting the view that the Memphis Stele’s first campaign was waged in Year 3, and not in Year 7, is the evidence from Amenhotep II’s cupbearer. During Year 4, the cupbearer Minmès remarks that a stele was built for pharaoh in Naharin, located to the east of the Euphrates River, the inscription of which confirms that the first Asiatic campaign occurred before Year 4 ended.<sup>204</sup>

#### 4. The First Asiatic Campaign of Amenhotep II.

For the sake of brevity, Amenhotep II’s first campaign will be referred to as A1, while his second campaign will be called A2. As was proven already, he launched A1 in Year 3, and the events surrounding this campaign can be dated chronologically in the following sequence: (1) Thutmose III died on ca. 22 March 1452 BC; (2) Amenhotep II presided over the funeral and was confirmed as sole ruler; (3) the Syro-Palestinian city-states rebelled after hearing of Thutmose III’s death; (4) Amenhotep II assembled his army from throughout Egypt and the nearby garrisoned cities; and (5) Amenhotep II launched A1, arriving at his first destination on ca. 15 May 1452 BC.

The death of Thutmose III led to a massive revolt in his Syro-Palestinian territories, which propelled the launching of A1.<sup>205</sup> Amenhotep II officiated at his father’s funeral as the “new Horus,” as Thutmose III was buried on the west bank of the Nile River at Waset, in his elevated, cliff-cut “mansion of eternity.”<sup>206</sup> His presence at the funeral, combined with the nearly two-month gap between his father’s death and the army’s arrival at their first destination, dispels the notion that he was already engaged in A1 when his father died. The energetic son of Egypt’s greatest imperialist wasted no time, as he probably left Egypt in April of ca. 1452 BC, just as his father had done on his first Asiatic campaign, exactly 32 years prior. The undisputed epicenter of the rebellion was the coastal cities of Syria, the focal point of the discussion in The Annals of Amenhotep II. Undoubtedly, the coastal cities of Syria—and perhaps Palestine, as well—had rebelled, and hence the young pharaoh was forced to proceed by land in order to quell this revolt.<sup>207</sup>

---

down for public exhibition on the walls at Thebes, while the seventh was to be hanged similarly at Napata, just downstream from the Fourth Cataract in Nubia. This graphic display functioned to remind the Nubians that pharaoh was to be revered and obeyed. The Memphis and Karnak Stelae had only one goal in mind: to boast of pharaoh’s military victories in Asia (Vandersleyen, *L’Egypte*, vol. 2, 323–324; Hallo and Simpson, *Ancient Near East*, 261–262). Since the commissioners of these stelae had no need to mention the capture of the rulers of Takhsi, which was only one of the regions on the campaign’s itinerary, they simply chose not to include the term.

<sup>203</sup> 104. Redford, “Coregency of Tuthmosis III,” 119–120.

<sup>204</sup> 105. Wolfgang Helck, *Urkunden der 18. Dynastie*, no. 18 (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1956), 1448; Vandersleyen, *L’Egypte*, vol. 2, 324.

<sup>205</sup> 106. The view that A1 was launched in response to an Asiatic revolt is held by Breasted and most modern Egyptologists (Breasted, *Ancient Records*, vol. 2, 304; Redford, *Egypt, Canaan, and Israel*, 163; Grimal, *History of Ancient Egypt*, 218).

<sup>206</sup> 107. Dennis Forbes, “Menkheperre Djehutymes: Thutmose III, A Pharaoh’s Pharaoh,” *KMT* 9:4 (Win 1998–1999), 65.

<sup>207</sup> 108. Breasted, *Ancient Records*, vol. 2, 304. Curiously, the universally accepted location of Syria as the site of the rebellion is in stark contrast to the opinion of Vandersleyen, who states that “the first campaign, instead of reaching Ugarit and the middle of the Orontes Valley, hardly crossed the latitudinal equivalent of Lake Hula and the city of Tyre; as a result, it was no more significant than the second campaign” (Vandersleyen, *L’Egypte*, vol. 2, 328). On the

## 5. The Second Asiatic Campaign of Amenhotep II.

Amenhotep II indisputably launched A2 in Year 9. If his reign began in ca. 1455 BC, which harmonizes with the Ebers Papyrus and the regnal lengths of the intervening pharaohs, his ninth year lasted from ca. 22 November 1447 – 22 November 1446 BC. Therefore, the exodus date of ca. 25 April 1446 BC should be placed within this particular regnal year, unless the Year-9 reading on the Memphis Stele is ever proven to be an inaccurate reconstruction also. Ancient sources and modern commentators both expend far less energy writing about A2 than they do about A1. Clearly A1 was launched to squelch a rebellion, but why did Amenhotep II embark on a second trip into Asia six years later? Two principal theories have been proposed to identify the occasion.

### a. The Second Asiatic Campaign Launched to Finish the Task of the First Campaign.

The first theory for the motive of A2 is that it was launched to correct the shortcomings of A1. According to Aharoni, “The failure of the first campaign may be inferred by Amenhotep II’s setting out two years later on a second campaign in order to put down revolts in the Sharon and in the Jezreel Valley.”<sup>208</sup> Aharoni sees in A1 an excursion that never accomplished its primary mission: the conquest of Mitanni. Grimal concurs, noting that “these two campaigns were the last to pit Egypt against Mitanni.”<sup>209</sup>

The first problem with this view is its dependence on the three-campaign theory, since Aharoni assumes that a Year-7 campaign was fought two years prior to the Year-9 campaign. However, there was no Year-7 campaign, as the “first campaign” of the Memphis Stele actually occurred in Year 3. Given the six-year gap between the two campaigns, the theory that A2 was launched to rectify the failures of A1 crumbles from within, due to the longevity of the interval. Of even greater weight, the failure of A1 would have resulted in another campaign directed principally into Syria, if not into Mitannian territory further to the north, not simply a brief raid into southern Palestine that accomplished little more than the acquisition of slaves and booty.

### b. The Second Asiatic Campaign Launched to Replenish Egypt after Their Losses.

---

contrary, A1 was far more significant, especially considering the post-victory celebration, the post-campaign executions at Thebes, and the erecting of the Elephantine Stele in Year 4. Moreover, during A1, the Egyptians passed so far up the Western Levant that they probably reached the border of Mitannian territory, which is known from The Annals of Amenhotep II. Aharoni even infers an unsuccessful Egyptian invasion of Mitanni, relying on the passage, “His majesty, going south, reached Niy (in the Northern Orontes Valley)” (Aharoni and Avi-Yonah, *Macmillan Atlas*, 34). The Egyptians later encountered a Mitannian spy during the concluding phase of A1, making Aharoni’s conclusion quite believable. When Amenhotep II was passing through the Sharon Plain, a messenger of the King of Mitanni, called the “Prince of Naharin” here, was captured by the Egyptians. This messenger was carrying with him a letter in the form of a clay tablet that hung from his neck like a necklace, which undoubtedly dealt with matters that concerned the Mitanni-inspired rebellion (Ibid.). All of this demonstrates the great importance of this vassal-rebellion, both to Egypt and to Mitanni, as Mitanni was seeking to usurp Egypt’s stranglehold on the prestigious position of the ANE’s dominant super-power. In contrast to all of this international intrigue revolving around A1, A2 was far less significant on an international level and far less illustrious, as will be seen momentarily.

<sup>208</sup> 109. Aharoni and Avi-Yonah, *The Macmillan Atlas*, 34.

<sup>209</sup> 110. Grimal, *History of Ancient Egypt*, 219.

The second theory for the motive of A2 is that it was launched to replenish the Egyptian slave base and many of the valuable commodities that were lost when the Israelites plundered and fled Egypt. According to this theory, pharaoh's motive is related to the exodus. If the exodus and Amenhotep II's Year-9 campaign transpired in the same year, which is highly possible given the chronological harmonization demonstrated earlier, a brief campaign into southern Palestine to recover some of his critical losses would be both logical and expected. The feasibility of this theory will be determined by a study of the details related to A2.

## 6. The Unique, Pre-Winter Launching of the Second Asiatic Campaign.

The date of Year 9, Month 3, Season 1, Day 25 (or ca. 16 November 1446 BC) recorded on the Memphis Stele represents either the Egyptian army's launching date from Memphis or the arrival date at their first destination, though more likely the latter. Either way, in antiquity a November date represents an extremely odd time for a military campaign. "The present date would fall in the early part of November, an unusual season for an Egyptian campaign in Asia."<sup>210</sup> The reason for November being an unusual launch-time is that the campaign would be fought throughout the cold, rainy winter, when ancient monarchs typically remained within their borders, dealt with internal affairs, and planned for springtime military campaigns.<sup>211</sup> The Biblical text confirms the normalcy of springtime launchings: "Then it happened in the spring, at the time when kings go out to battle, that Joab led out the army and ravaged the land of the sons of Ammon, and he came and besieged Rabbah" (1 Chr 20:1).

Der Manuelian comments on A1, "Hardly one to break with the blossoming military tradition of the early New Kingdom, Amenophis set out in April of his seventh year, the preferred season for embarking on such ventures."<sup>212</sup> Vandersleyen contrasts this with the unprecedented timing of A2: "The second Asiatic campaign began on the 25th day of the 3rd month (akhet) of the 9th year, during an unusual season for military campaigns. It was probably induced by the necessity of urgent intervention."<sup>213</sup> Amenhotep II's decision to lead an attack force into Palestine in November was extremely unorthodox, so obviously the situation did require urgent Egyptian intervention, which Vandersleyen perceptively notes. But in what did Amenhotep II need to intervene? Unlike A1, which was launched to quell a rebellion, A2 had no obvious occasion.

## 7. The Contrast between the Two Asiatic Campaigns Launched by Amenhotep II.

Marked differences exist between A1 and A2. The names of the geographical sites on A1 are mostly unknown, and those that are considered known are too far apart to belong to one region. In contrast, the sites mentioned on A2 are located only in Central Palestine, between Aphek and

<sup>210</sup> 111. Pritchard, *ANET*, 246.

<sup>211</sup> 112. Examples of campaigns launched in spring are plentiful: (1) Thutmose III's first Asiatic campaign, as he arrived at his first destination (the border fortress of Tjel) on ca. 20 April 1484 BC; (2) Amenhotep II's first Asiatic campaign, as he arrived at his first destination (Shamash-Edom) on ca. 15 May 1452 BC; (3) Raamses II and his battalions of infantry and squads of chariotry, who departed for Kadesh in late April of ca. 1274 BC (Kenneth A. Kitchen, *Pharaoh Triumphant: The Life and Times of Ramesses II* [Warminster, Eng.: Aris & Phillips, 1982], 53); (4) Nabopolassar's expedition against mountain tribes in the month of Sivan, or ca. May/June of 607 BC (D. J. Wiseman, *Chronicles of the Chaldean Kings* [London: Trustees of the British Museum, 1961], 65); and (5) Nebuchadnezzar's expedition to Syria in Sivan of the first full year of his reign, or ca. 604 BC (Ibid., 28, 69).

<sup>212</sup> 113. Der Manuelian, *Amenophis II*, 59. As proven above, "seventh year" should be corrected to "third year."

<sup>213</sup> 114. Vandersleyen, *L'Egypte*, vol. 2, 321.



Anaharath. When comparing the courses of both campaigns, the disproportionate nature of the two routes is striking, as the locations on A1 are distant and scattered, while the sites on A2 are nearby and closely positioned in relation to one another.<sup>214</sup> Moreover, every early campaign of Thutmose III through his illustrious eighth campaign into Mesopotamia, which represents the maximum extent of Egypt's expansionism, pushed further into foreign territory. In contrast, A1 and A2 followed exactly the opposite trend, going from an itinerary further away from to closer to Egypt.

#### 8. The Drastic Change in Foreign-Policy after the Second Asiatic Campaign of Amenhotep II.

Another oddity of A2 is that after its conclusion, the Egyptian army—established by Thutmose III as the 15th century BC's most elite fighting force—went into virtual hibernation. Their previous policy of unwavering aggressiveness toward Mitanni became one of passivity and the signing of peace treaties. The reason for this new policy is missing from the historical record, but Amenhotep II evidently was the pharaoh who first signed a treaty with Mitanni, subsequent to A2.<sup>215</sup> Redford connects this event to “the arrival (after year 10, we may be sure) of a Mitannian embassy sent by [Mitanni's King] Saussatar with proposals of ‘brotherhood’ (i.e., a fraternal alliance and renunciation of hostilities).”<sup>216</sup> Redford adds that “Amenophis II seemed susceptible to negotiations,” and that he “was apparently charmed and disarmed by the embassy from ‘Naharin,’ and perhaps even signed a treaty.”<sup>217</sup> Yet such a treaty is completely out of character for imperial Egypt and this prideful monarch, especially since “the pharaonic state of the Eighteenth Dynasty could, more easily than Mitanni, sustain the expense of periodic military incursions 800 km into Asia.”<sup>218</sup> Support for Amenhotep II being the first to sign a pact with Mitanni is found in the actions of Thutmose IV: “Only by postulating a change of reign can we explain a situation in which the new pharaoh, Thutmose IV, can feel free to attack Mitannian holdings with impunity.”<sup>219</sup> Why would Amenhotep II do the unthinkable, and opt to make a treaty with Mitanni?

This mysterious reversal in foreign policy would remain unexplainable and unthinkable if not for the possibility of a single, cataclysmic event. If the Egyptians lost virtually their entire army in the springtime disaster at the Red Sea in Year 9, a desperate reconnaissance campaign designed to “save face” with the rest of the ancient world and to replenish their Israelite slave-base would be paramount. Certainly the Egyptians would have needed time to rally their remaining forces together, however small and/or in shambles their army may have been, and it would explain a November campaign that was nothing more than a slave-raid into Palestine as a show of force. The Egyptians could not afford to live through the winter without the production that was provided by the Hebrew workforce, and they could not allow Mitanni or any other ancient power to consider using the winter to plan an attack on Egyptian territories, which would seem vulnerable. If this scenario represents what actually transpired in ANE history, however, tangible proof is needed to verify its veracity.

---

<sup>214</sup> 115. Ibid., 324–325.

<sup>215</sup> 116. Redford, *Egypt, Canaan, and Israel*, 163.

<sup>216</sup> 117. Ibid., 164.

<sup>217</sup> 118. Ibid.

<sup>218</sup> 119. Ibid., 165.

<sup>219</sup> 120. Ibid., 164.

## VII. THE LOSS OF THE EGYPTIAN SLAVE-BASE

According to Num 1:45–46, the Israelites' post-exodus, male population over 20 years old totaled 603,550, which does not include the 22,000 Levite males of Num 3:39. When women and children are added, they well would have exceeded 2,000,000 people.<sup>220</sup> A populace of this magnitude must have provided the backbone of the Egyptian slave-force, given both their vast numbers and rigorous labors (Exod 1:11–14). To most Egyptology students, however, the exodus-narrative is considered little more than a fanciful folktale designed to impress Jewish children with grand illusions of a glorious, ethnic past. The virtual absence of historical and archaeological evidence to verify the Israelite occupation and mass exodus from Egypt serves only to bolster this skepticism. One prominent Egyptologist suggests that

to the historian, [the exodus] remains the most elusive of all the salient events of Israelite history. The event is supposed to have taken place in Egypt, yet Egyptian sources know it not... The effect on Egypt must have been cataclysmic—loss of a servile population, pillaging of gold and silver (Exod. 3:21–22, 12:31–36), destruction of an army—yet at no point in the history of the country during the New Kingdom is there the slightest hint of the traumatic impact such an event would have had on economics or society.<sup>221</sup>

But is there truly no hint of a traumatic impact on Egypt?

### 1. The Absence of an Exodus-Account in the Egyptian Records.

Redford alludes to the most popular reason for rejecting the veracity of the exodus, namely that nowhere in Egypt's vast records is there any documentation of it. However, this dearth can be explained by the lack of Egyptian censuses and the tendency to write comparatively little about foreigners, especially slaves.<sup>222</sup> Nonetheless, the Hebrew slaves not only exited Egypt en masse, but they were responsible for the extermination of pharaoh's vast army, the mightiest military force on earth at the time. Yet the proud Egyptians should not be expected to have documented their own humiliating defeat, which would smear their records and tarnish the glorious legacy left behind by Thutmose III. Kitchen articulates this principle with an example from a later pharaoh: "No pharaoh ever celebrates a defeat! So, if Osorkon [I] had ever sent out a Zerah [the Cushite], with resulting defeat, no Egyptian source would ever report on such an incident, particularly publicly. The lack (to date) of external corroboration in such a case is itself worth nothing, in terms of judging history."<sup>223</sup>

---

<sup>220</sup> 121. John MacArthur, *The MacArthur Study Bible* (Nashville: Word, 1997), 198.

<sup>221</sup> 122. Redford, *Egypt, Canaan, and Israel*, 408.

<sup>222</sup> 123. A notable exception to this trend is the Hyksos, the western Asiatics who overtook Egypt and controlled her commerce. The Royal Turin Canon, a papyrus that derives from Ramesside times and reflects a kinglist that was begun during the Middle Kingdom, fixes a 108-year rule (ca. 1668 to 1560 BC) for the Hyksos (Ibid., 107), who were driven out by the native Egyptians of the 17th Dynasty. Yet such documentation about the Hyksos is warranted, as they played a prominent role in Egyptian history, having produced pharaohs who ruled in place of the native Egyptians. Moreover, when Moses wrote that the Egyptians feared the possibility that the Hebrews "will multiply, and in the event of war, they will also join themselves to those who hate us, and fight against us and depart from the land" (Exod 1:10), he probably was referring to the Hyksos, who just beforehand had retreated to southern Canaan after their expulsion.

<sup>223</sup> 124. Kitchen, *Reliability of the OT*, 11. The Biblical text to which Kitchen alludes is 2 Chr 14:9–15.

Such a non-reporting of personal defeat would be standard practice for Amenhotep II. Aharoni observes, “Amenhotep [II]—more than any other pharaoh—set up monuments to glorify his personal valor, passing over, however, some of the major but less complementary events of his campaigns, especially his defeats.”<sup>224</sup> Amenhotep II spared no effort to portray himself as a great warrior who could pierce metal targets with his bow and arrow during shooting practice.<sup>225</sup> He combined strength with a cruelty intended to demoralize his enemies,<sup>226</sup> which the Amada Stele affirms: “His strength is so much greater than (that of) any king who has ever existed, raging like a panther when he courses through the battlefield; there is none fighting before him; ... trampling down those who rebel against him, instantly prevailing against all the barbarians with people and horses.”<sup>227</sup> A king with such enormous pride cannot be expected to have commissioned his scribes to preserve the exodus-tragedy in the annals of Egyptian history for subsequent generations to read and memorialize.

## 2. The Booty Lists from the Asiatic Campaigns of Amenhotep II and Thutmose III.

Redford declares that “at no point in the history of the country during the New Kingdom is there the slightest hint of the traumatic impact [that] such an event” as the “loss of a servile population” must have had upon Egypt.<sup>228</sup> This bold declaration must be strongly contested. At the conclusion of both campaign narratives recorded on the Memphis Stele, the scribe meticulously listed the spoils, with their quantities, that were taken as plunder. By comparing the booty lists recorded after the conquests of Amenhotep II and Thutmose III, it will be seen whether A2 is distinguished among these campaigns, and if it might attest to the exodus or the post-exodus events. The focus of A2 was upon the spoils that Amenhotep II reaped. “A record of the plunder that his majesty carried off: 127 princes of Retenu; 179 brothers of princes; 3,600 Apiru; 15,200 Shasu; 36,300 Kharu; 15,070 Nagasuities/Neges; 30,652 of their family members; total: 89,600 people, and their endless property likewise; all their cattle and endless herds; 60 chariots of silver and gold; 1,032 painted chariots of wood; 13,500 weapons for warfare.”<sup>229</sup> Regarding the “89,600” total prisoners, the sum is actually 101,128 when the numbers are added.<sup>230</sup> The error may be a mere mistake in addition, as the individual numbers are probably more reliable than the recorded sum.<sup>231</sup> Therefore, a final tally of 101,128 is preferred over 89,600 for the total number of prisoners. Before contrasting A2 with other contemporary campaigns, it should be noted that the Egyptians confiscated 1,082 chariots, which, along with the 13,500 weapons, would be critical for replacing the “600 select chariots and all the other chariots of Egypt” that were lost in the Red Sea (Exod 14:7).

<sup>224</sup> 125. Aharoni and Avi-Yonah, *The Macmillan Atlas*, 34.

<sup>225</sup> 126. Hallo and Simpson, *Ancient Near East*, 262.

<sup>226</sup> 127. Grimal, *History of Ancient Egypt*, 218.

<sup>227</sup> 128. Breasted, *Ancient Records*, vol. 2, 310.

<sup>228</sup> 129. Redford, *Egypt, Canaan, and Israel*, 408.

<sup>229</sup> 130. Hoffmeier, “Memphis and Karnak Stelae,” in *Context of Scripture*, vol. 2, 22; Pritchard, *ANET*, 247.

<sup>230</sup> 131. Pritchard laments, “Even though two of the figures give questionable readings, no clear alternatives will supply the total given on the stele” (Pritchard, *ANET*, 247). Although Pritchard does not elaborate, the “questionable readings” most likely are the 36,300 Kharu and the 30,652 family members of the Nagasuities/Neges. But since this part of the stele shows no sign of damage or repair, there is no reason to doubt these numbers.

<sup>231</sup> 132. “The total given, 89,600, is actually wrong, the correct total being 101,128!” (Hoffmeier, “Memphis and Karnak Stelae,” in *Context of Scripture*, vol. 2, 22).

The military campaigns of Thutmose III, which derive from The Annals of Thutmose III, also will be abbreviated: his first Asiatic campaign (T1), sixth (T6), and seventh (T7). The prisoners taken on the various campaigns are compiled as follows: T1 = 5,903 captives; T6 = 217 captives; T7 = 494 captives; A1 = 2,214 captives; and A2 = 101,128 captives.<sup>232</sup> The most glaring detail is obviously the disparity between the number of captives taken during A2 versus the other four campaigns, which together averaged 2,207 prisoners, or 2.2% of the prisoners taken during A2. Put differently, A2 yielded 46-times more prisoners than all of the other campaigns combined! Why is there such a tremendous disparity? Is it merely coincidental that such a vast number of prisoners was taken during the last Asiatic campaign of the 18th Dynasty? If the exodus and A2 occurred in the same year, Amenhotep II would have had just cause to launch a November campaign, as he desperately would need to fill the enormous void left behind by the evacuation of the Hebrew slaves.<sup>233</sup>

### 3. The Goal of Amenhotep II to Impress the Kings of Egypt's Rival Empires.

Other information on the booty lists may attest to the connection between A2 and the events of the exodus.

Now when the Prince of Naharin, the Prince of Hatti, and the Prince of Shanhar heard of the great victories that I had made, each one tried to outdo his competitor in offering gifts, from every foreign land. They thought on account of their grandfathers to beg his majesty for the breath of life to be given to them: 'We will carry our taxes to your palace, son of Re, Amenhotep (II), divine ruler of Heliopolis, ruler of rulers, a panther who rages in every foreign land and in this land forever.'<sup>234</sup>

Amenhotep II makes the fascinating statement that the King of Mitanni, the King of the Hittites, and the King of Babylon all "heard of the victories" that he had accomplished in southern Palestine. This reference to the affect of a military campaign upon kings of distant nations, all of whom ruled empires in their own right, is unique among contemporary Egyptian booty lists and annals.

Why was Amenhotep II so concerned with how these kings viewed his Year-9 conquests? Not many propositions suffice, especially considering the exceedingly limited scope of A2. Yet if he needed to save face after the devastating loss of his army, a victorious campaign could convince his rivals of his continued ability to wage war successfully. Joshua notes that the Lord "dried up the waters" of the Red Sea expressly so that "all the peoples of the earth may know that the hand of the Lord is mighty" (Josh 4:23, 24). This goal was realized even 40 years after the exodus, as Rahab of Jericho testified that "all the inhabitants of the land ... have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea" (Josh 2:9, 10), and as the Hivites of Gibeon told Israel of "the fame of the Lord your God," since they "heard the report of Him and all that He did in Egypt" (Josh

<sup>232</sup> 133. Ibid., 21; Pritchard, *ANET*, 239, 246; Hoffmeier, "The Annals of Thutmose III," in *Context of Scripture*, vol. 2, 12. These are the only campaigns of Thutmose III that list the amount of captives taken.

<sup>233</sup> 134. As Shea notes, "While some have questioned the very high number given here, if one looks at the needs for state labor right after the exodus, the number does not look so high after all" (Shea, "Amenhotep II as Pharaoh," 47).

<sup>234</sup> 135. Ibid.; Hoffmeier, "Memphis and Karnak Stelae," in *Context of Scripture*, vol. 2, 22. The Prince of Shanhar, or Biblical Shinar, is to be equated with the King of Babylon (Pritchard, *ANET*, 247).

9:9). Thus news of the exodus also would have spread to the distant empires that posed a threat to Egypt's expanded domain.

#### 4. A Summary of Egypt's Losses after the Exodus.

Thus Amenhotep II's boasting to his rival kings, the weapons and chariots taken as booty, and the disproportion of slaves taken during A2, when considered together, argue strongly in favor of a connection between A2 and Egypt's losses after the exodus. This circumstantial evidence obviously will not satisfy critics whose presuppositions militate against tying the exodus to A2. For objective onlookers, though, one question is begged by the implication that the booty-list reveals an Israelite connection to A2 and its material acquisitions: is there tangible evidence that links the Israelites to A2?

### VIII. THE APPEARANCE OF 3,600 APIRU ON THE BOOTY LIST

#### 1. The Identification of the Term "Apiru/Habiru" and Its Early Association with the Hebrews.

Among the conquered peoples listed on A2 were 3,600 "Apiru," the Egyptian equivalent of the Akkadian "Habiru," a word that also appears in the Amarna Letters.<sup>235</sup> Who are the Apiru whom Amenhotep II captured during A2? Earlier Biblical scholars unashamedly equated the Apiru/Habiru with the Hebrew word עִבְרִי ('bri, "Hebrew").

#### 2. The Later Trend to Reject the Association of the Apiru with the Hebrews.

Subsequently, many have rejected the equation of the Apiru with the Hebrews, often arguing that "Apiru" has more of a sociological than an ethnic connotation. Beitzel advocates the "impossibility of (the) equation of Habiru and Hebrews in Biblical studies."<sup>236</sup> The fashionable scholarly opinion is that the Amarna Letters portray the Apiru as marauding brigands who seize, loot, burn towns, and generally ravage the landscape. Moreover, since the Habiru are found at different locations and times around the ANE, the term allegedly cannot refer to the Hebrews.<sup>237</sup>

#### 3. The Case for Identifying the 3,600 Apiru of A2 with the Hebrews.

Scholars have not completely abandoned the association of the Habiru with the Hebrews. Many who equate them say that perhaps "Habiru" originally designated groups of outlaws or was a

---

<sup>235</sup> 136. Hoffmeier, "Memphis and Karnak Stelae," in *Context of Scripture*, vol. 2, 22.

<sup>236</sup> 137. Barry J. Beitzel, "Habiru," in *ISBE*, vol. 2, 588, 589.

<sup>237</sup> 138. Hoffmeier, "Memphis and Karnak Stelae," in *Context of Scripture*, vol. 2, 22. SA.GAZ, the Sumerian logographic equivalent of Habiru, and its variants are found in cuneiform texts from ca. 2500 BC to the 11th century BC. In light of this early attestation, many are unwilling to associate the Apiru of the 15th century BC with the Hebrews. However, Abram was known as a Hebrew in the 21st century BC (Gen 14:13), so the solution to the dilemma is that the two non-guttural consonants found in the triconsonantal root of 'bri, the exact consonants that appear in Akkadian and Ugaritic (br, possibly meaning "cross over, go beyond"), are also found in "Eber" (Gen 10:21), the ancestor of Abram from whom the word undoubtedly derives. Thus Abram is one of numerous Eberite peoples, all of whom are known as Habiru due to their retention of Eber's ancient namesake (R. F. Youngblood, "Amarna Tablets," in *ISBE*, vol. 1 [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979], 108; Barry J. Beitzel, "Hebrew (People)," in *ISBE*, vol. 2, 657).

derogatory expression, and only later it was used of the Hebrews as a distinct, ethnic group.<sup>238</sup> But should one concede that the designation of outlaw-marauders, if accurate, actually preceded that of the ethnically distinct Hebrews? While it goes beyond the present work to identify the limitations of the term “Habiru,” it must be addressed whether or not the Apiru of A2 might be Hebrews. Either way, the appearance of the Apiru on a formal list of Asiatic captives is quite unusual.<sup>239</sup>

a. Renewed Support for the General Association of the Apiru with the Hebrews.

Bryant Wood notes that

the [Amarna] Letters are taken up with ... the hostilities of the Habiru in the hill country. The references to the Habiru in the Amarna Letters appear to be allusions to the mopping-up operations of the Israelites at this time, but no individual Habiru is mentioned by name.<sup>240</sup>

At least one Egyptologist also considers that the Apiru

are synonymous with the Hebrews mentioned in the Amarna correspondence; by Amenhotep II's time, they seem to have become integrated into the societies to which they had emigrated, playing marginal roles as mercenaries or servants, as in the events described in The Taking of Joppa. In Egypt, they appear during the reign of Thutmose III as wine-makers in the Theban tombs of the Second Prophet of Amun Puyemre (TT 39) and the herald Intef (TT 155).<sup>241</sup>

While Apiru served in Egypt as winemakers during the days of Thutmose III, there is no record of Egyptians having captured any as slaves before A2, which is consistent with the Biblical record. In his discussion of A2, Aharoni concludes, “Apiru-Habiru = Hebrews.”<sup>242</sup>

b. The Impossibility of the Apiru as Marauding Brigands.

The popular designation of the Habiru as a band of marauding brigands faces a major obstacle in that 3,600 Apiru were captured on A2. Hoffmeier, calling this number “a rather large figure,”<sup>243</sup> elsewhere notes, “If the large numbers are to be believed, Apiru/Habiru were not just small bands of marauders in Amenhotep's day.”<sup>244</sup> This number far exceeds that of a loosely-organized gang of bandits, and without proof from antiquity that bandits congregated in such large numbers, it cannot be accepted that the 3,600 Apiru of A2 were mere brigands or thieves. Besides, would a makeshift army on a slave raid attempt to enslave a mobile outfit of bandits when the acquisition of peaceful townspeople was far simpler? Moreover, why would pharaoh desire to pollute his subservient slave population with rank bandits?

---

<sup>238</sup> 139. Hoffmeier, “Memphis and Karnak Stelae,” in *Context of Scripture*, vol. 2, 22.

<sup>239</sup> 140. Pritchard, *ANET*, 247.

<sup>240</sup> 141. Bryant G. Wood, “One Thousand Years Missing from Biblical History? A Review of a New Theory,” *Bible and Spade* 6:4 (Aut 1993), 98.

<sup>241</sup> 142. Grimal, *History of Ancient Egypt*, 219.

<sup>242</sup> 143. Aharoni and Avi-Yonah, *The Macmillan Atlas*, 34.

<sup>243</sup> 144. Hoffmeier, *Israel in Egypt*, 124.

<sup>244</sup> 145. Hoffmeier, “Memphis and Karnak Stelae,” in *Context of Scripture*, vol. 2, 22.

The Amarna Letters, written as early as the reign of Amenhotep III (from ca. 1395 BC), provide more reason why the Apiru cannot be brigands. Two dispatches of the King of Hazor are among the Letters, and two others mention Hazor and its king. In EA 227, the King of Hazor, writing to the ruling pharaoh, refers to himself as the “king of the city of Hazor,” which throughout the el-Amarna archive is an unparalleled royal title for a Canaanite ruler. Furthermore, in EA 148, the ruler of Tyre refers to him by the same kingly title. In the fragmentary EA 227, the King of Hazor reassures pharaoh that he is safeguarding the cities of pharaoh until the Egyptian monarch’s arrival.<sup>245</sup> As Yadin writes, “This indicates that the King of Hazor’s rule embraced more than the city itself,” which “is further corroborated by the letters of the rulers of Tyre and Ashtaroth.”<sup>246</sup>

In EA 228, the King of Hazor, who names himself ‘Abdi Tirshi, loyally informs pharaoh of hostile acts perpetrated against Hazor and its king: “Let my lord, the king (of Egypt), remember all that was done against Hasura (Hazor), your city, and against your servant.”<sup>247</sup> However, a change in the allegiance of Hazor’s king is seen in EA 148, written by ‘Abi-Milki, King of Tyre, who abruptly blurts, “The King of Hasura has abandoned his house and aligned himself with the Apiru.” ‘Abi-Milki concludes his letter by warning, “Let the king (of Egypt) know that they (the Apiru) are hostile to the palace attendants. These are treacherous fellows. He (the King of Hazor) has taken over the land of the king (of Egypt) for the Apiru. Let the king inquire of his commissioner, who is familiar with Canaan.”<sup>248</sup>

It is unclear why the once-loyal King of Hazor forsook pharaoh, his overlord, and aligned himself with the Apiru, but EA 228 implies that the Apiru wore down and eventually overpowered Hazor and its king, which is confirmed by this act of treason. The King of Hazor was the only so-called “king” in Canaan, overseeing numerous Canaanite cities for pharaoh. This exalted status matches well with the 14th-century-BC account in the book of Judges, as Hazor’s King Jabin is referred to four times as the “King of Canaan,” while only once is he called the “King of Hazor.” He is even called “the King of Canaan, who ruled in Hazor” (Judg 4:2).<sup>249</sup> Why would mighty Hazor align itself with a group of bandits, exchanging allegiance to powerful Egypt, as their longstanding overlords, to allegiance to meddlesome thieves, as their new overlords? Would its king truly fear wandering brigands more than pharaoh’s army? How could a band of social misfits subserviate Hazor, the greatest local dynasty in Canaan? It is absurd to assert that mere nomadic bandits could persuade mighty Hazor and its great king simply to surrender their municipal and regional sovereignty to hoodlums such as they. If the Apiru were national Israel, however, opposing the peoples of Canaan with divine assistance as portrayed in Judges, one can easily envisage the King of Hazor buckling under the enormous pressure that was applied to him by the persistent Hebrews. Wood correctly concludes that “[t]he ‘apiru of the highlands of Canaan described in the Amarna Letters of the mid-14th century BC conform to the biblical Israelites.”<sup>250</sup>

### c. The Apiru of A2 Recognized by the Egyptians as a Distinct Ethnic Group.

<sup>245</sup> 146. Yigael Yadin, *Hazor: The Head of all those Kingdoms, The 1970 Schweich Lectures of the British Academy* (London: Oxford University Press, 1972), 7–8.

<sup>246</sup> 147. *Ibid.*, 8.

<sup>247</sup> 148. *Amarna Letters*, ed. and trans. Moran, 290, with modifications according to Yadin, *Hazor: The Head*, 8.

<sup>248</sup> 149. *Ibid.*, 235, with modifications according to Yadin, *Hazor: The Head*, 8.

<sup>249</sup> 150. For a fuller treatment of the destructions of Hazor described in Joshua 11 and Judges 4, see Douglas Petrovich, “The Dating of Hazor’s Destruction in Joshua 11 by Way of Biblical, Archaeological, and Epigraphical Evidence,” *JETS* 51:3 (Sept 2008), 489–512.

<sup>250</sup> 151. Wood, “The Rise and Fall,” 489.

Beitzel, who zealously opposes the association of the Apiru with the Hebrews, states that “the Amarna Hapiru seems to be composed of diverse ethnic elements from various localities.”<sup>251</sup> While the dispersion of the Apiru throughout Canaan should be expected if they are the 2,000,000+ Israelite settlers (Josh 11:23), nothing in the Amarna Letters implies or requires that the Apiru be characterized as ethnically diverse, leaving Beitzel’s claim curious and unfounded. Hoffmeier even underscores the certainty of the Apiru’s ethnic homogeneity: “It is clear from the occurrence in the [Memphis] stele of Amenhotep II that they were identified as a specific group like the other ethnic groups taken as prisoners by the king.”<sup>252</sup> This claim of homogeneity is correct for two reasons.

(1) The ethnic homogeneity of the Apiru is certain since they were listed among the ethnic groups on the booty list of A2. “Listing the habiru alongside of other ethnic groups from Hurru, Retenu, and the Shasu suggests that the Egyptians may have viewed the habiru as a distinguishable ethnic group.”<sup>253</sup> The Apiru appear third on the list, preceded by princes and brothers of the princes, and followed by three names with geographic connotation: the Shasu, who were Bedouin to the south of Palestine; the Kharu, who were “Horites,” residents of Syro-Palestine; and the Nagasuites/Neges, who dwelled in Upper Retenu, near Aleppo.<sup>254</sup> Grimal compares the ethnic distinctiveness of both the Apiru and the Shasu Bedouin: “Among the prisoners of war were said to be 3,600 Apiru, an ethnic group clearly distinct from the Shosu Bedouin, who are enumerated separately.”<sup>255</sup> The Annals of Thutmose III confirm the Kharu’s ethnicity:

That feeble enemy of Kadesh has entered Megiddo, and he is [there] at this moment, having rallied to himself the chieftains of [every] foreign land [who had been] allies of Egypt, as well as (those) from as far away as Naharin in/being [...], Kharu, and Kedy, their horses, their armies, and [their people].<sup>256</sup>

Since the Kharu are listed among peoples with armies and horses, along with Mitanni (Naharin), their distinct ethnicity—and thus that of the Apiru, as well—cannot be doubted.

(2) The ethnic homogeneity of the Apiru is certain due to their prominent position among the ethnic groups on the booty list of A2. The 3,600 Apiru are notably more numerous than the princes and brothers of the princes who appear before them, and notably fewer than the three people-groups listed after them.<sup>257</sup> The scribe of the Memphis Stele attributes the initial position to royalty, and only afterward does he name distinct ethnic groups, among which the Apiru appear first, despite their number being far fewer than that of the subsequent ethnic groups. This initial, prominent position among non-royal captives is easily explainable if these were Hebrews, and the exodus had occurred half of a year before A2. Amenhotep II obviously would desire to accentuate his enslavement of loathsome Israelites, whom he held responsible for humbling

<sup>251</sup> 152. Beitzel, “Habiru,” in *ISBE*, vol. 2, 588.

<sup>252</sup> 153. Hoffmeier, “Memphis and Karnak Stelae,” in *Context of Scripture*, vol. 2, 22.

<sup>253</sup> 154. Hoffmeier, *Israel in Egypt*, 124.

<sup>254</sup> 155. Pritchard, *ANET*, 247.

<sup>255</sup> 156. Grimal, *History of Ancient Egypt*, 219.

<sup>256</sup> 157. Hoffmeier, “The Annals of Thutmose III,” in *Context of Scripture*, vol. 2, 9.

<sup>257</sup> 158. Pritchard, *ANET*, 247.



Egypt's pantheon and depleting her mighty army, even if their number paled in comparison to the 2,000,000+ whom he had lost.

d. Accounting for the Bible's Silence about the 3,600 Captured Israelites.

How does the Bible account for the Egyptians' capture of 3,600 Hebrews when the main body of Israelites was wandering in the wilderness in the distant Sinai Peninsula under Moses' leadership (Num 14:33)? The date for A2 in November of the exodus-year coincides with a silent period in Biblical history. Exodus concludes with Israel near Mount Sinai, though Moses parenthetically adds a retrospective summary of how the Lord guided them during their subsequent journeys (Exod 40:36–38). Meanwhile, Numbers begins in the 14th month after the exodus (Num 1:1), about five months after A2 concluded. Therefore, A2 fits into this silent period, with no inherent conflict between the capture of the 3,600 Israelites—who probably left the Israelite camp and journeyed toward southern Palestine, near the travel route of A2—and the Biblical events that transpired after the exodus.<sup>258</sup>

## IX. AMENHOTEP II AND THE DESECRATION OF HATSHEPSUT'S IMAGE

Egyptian history itself may confirm that Amenhotep II was the exodus-pharaoh. The Thutmosid succession entered into an extraordinary phase at the death of Thutmose II, as the throne was given first to his son, Thutmose III, and later assumed as well by his widow, Hatshepsut. Her rise to power resulted from her position as the child-king's regent; given his youthfulness, her self-appointment to the rank of coregent probably met little or no opposition within the royal court.<sup>259</sup> Sometime between Year 2 and Year 4 of Thutmose III, Hatshepsut assumed full royal titulary, making herself a female pharaoh of equal rank.<sup>260</sup>

1. Identifying Moses' Adoptive Mother.

Moses evidently was born during the reign of Thutmose I, whose daughter, Hatshepsut, qualifies as a legitimate candidate for the pharaoh's daughter who drew Moses from the Nile River (Exod 2:5).<sup>261</sup> Was she old enough during her father's second regnal year, most likely the time in which Moses was born (ca. 1527 BC), to qualify as his Egyptian stepmother?

a. Hatshepsut's Age Viewed as Being Insufficient.

One scenario may preclude Hatshepsut from being the princess who drew Moses from the Nile. The chief wife of Thutmose I, Queen Ahmose, was called "the King's Sister," but never "the King's Daughter," a title given only to a princess. Egyptians generally were not reserved about recording ranks and titles, so this reticence may indicate that Ahmose was not a pharaoh's

---

<sup>258</sup> 159. Such periods of silence are not unusual. "The book of Numbers concentrates on events that take place in the second and fortieth years after the exodus. All incidents recorded in 1:1–14:45 occur in 1444 B.C., the year after the exodus. Everything referred to after 20:1 is dated ca. 1406/1405 B.C.," while there is a complete "lack of material devoted to this 37-year period" that intervenes between the second and 40th years after the exodus (MacArthur, *Study Bible*, 195).

<sup>259</sup> 160. Hallo and Simpson, *Ancient Near East*, 259.

<sup>260</sup> 161. William Petty, "Redating the Reign of Hatshepsut," *KMT* 13:4 (Win 2002–2003), 51, 53.

<sup>261</sup> 162. Rea, "Oppression and Exodus," 10.

daughter, and thus was neither the daughter nor the sister of Amenhotep I. Instead, she may have been the sister or half-sister of Thutmose I. If this were true, a brother-sister marriage almost certainly would have occurred after Thutmose I was promoted to heir apparent, as incestuous marriages are extremely rare outside of the immediate royal family, and such political matches that consolidated a would-be successor's claim to the throne were standard procedure in ancient Egypt.<sup>262</sup> Perhaps, then, Hatshepsut was born after Thutmose I was coronated (ca. 1529 BC), and thus was barely over twelve years old when she married her (half-)brother (ca. 1516 BC). This means that Hatshepsut would have been less than three years of age at the time of Moses' birth, at which age she hardly could have ventured down to the Nile, let alone draw out an infant-bearing reed basket from the river.

b. Hatshepsut's Age Viewed as Being Sufficient.

Yet there is no proof that Hatshepsut was born after her father's accession, and the current lack of attestation to Queen Ahmose being a "King's Daughter" does not preclude her from being the daughter of Amenhotep I. In addition, the uncertainty about when Thutmose II's reign began means that he may have served as co-regent with his father, Thutmose I, for several years before he ruled alone. Hatshepsut thus would have been of sufficient age to draw Moses out of the Nile during her father's second regnal year, so she remains a legitimate candidate for Moses' Egyptian adoptive-mother, especially since her father was already over 35 years old when he assumed the throne.

c. Hatshepsut's Sister Akhbetneferu as a Candidate.

Is Hatshepsut the only candidate for Moses' royal adoptive-mother? Confusion exists over the number of children actually born to Thutmose I and Queen Ahmose. Only two daughters, Hatshepsut and her sister, Princess Akhbetneferu, are known to have been born to the royal couple. However, Princess Akhbetneferu died in infancy, so she cannot qualify as a candidate for the princess who found Moses, leaving Hatshepsut as the only known daughter of Thutmose I who does qualify.<sup>263</sup>

d. Hatshepsut's Potential Step-Sister as a Candidate.

One other option exists for Moses' adoptive-mother, but not through Queen Ahmose. Thutmose I had a secondary wife named Queen Mutnofret, the mother of Thutmose II. Little is known of her but that she was a person of rank, probably even royal blood, as an inscription at Karnak calls her "the King's Daughter." Mutnofret, and not Ahmose, actually appears in the king's mortuary chapel alongside the royal princes Ramose and Wadjmose, both of whom probably died before their father.<sup>264</sup> Therefore, perhaps even numerous princes were born before their father married Ahmose. No princesses are known to have been mothered by Mutnofret, but the possibility does exist; if Mutnofret did bear a daughter, undoubtedly this princess—given the ages of the princes—would have been old enough to qualify.

e. Hatshepsut's Position as the Most Likely Candidate.

<sup>262</sup> 163. Tyldesley, *Hatchepsut*, 65, 77.

<sup>263</sup> 164. *Ibid.*, 75.

<sup>264</sup> 165. *Ibid.*, 77.

All of the evidence points to Hatshepsut as the most likely candidate for Moses' stepmother, for several reasons: (1) Hatshepsut's blood-sister, Princess Akhbetneferu, was the only other daughter whom Queen Ahmose is known to have borne, but her death in infancy eliminates her candidacy. (2) Lady Mutnofret bore several sons to Thutmose I before she died, but there is no indication that she ever bore him any daughters.<sup>265</sup> (3) The text of Exod 2:10 states that after "the child [Moses] grew, she [his mother] brought him to Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son." Therefore, Moses' Egyptian stepmother obviously lived a considerable length of time after she retrieved him from the Nile, increasing the likelihood that an account of this "Daughter of Pharaoh" (Exod 2:5) would be documented and preserved somewhere in the Egyptians' detailed records, a qualification true of Hatshepsut alone.

## 2. Identifying the Defacer of Hatshepsut's Image.

At some indeterminable time after Hatshepsut's death, a serious attempt was made to obliterate all record of her from history. Many inscribed cartouches of her were erased, while her busts were smashed or broken into pieces, perhaps by gangs of workmen dispatched to various sites throughout Egypt. In some cases, the culprits carefully and completely hacked out the silhouette of her image from carvings, often leaving a distinct, Hatshepsut-shaped lacuna in the middle of a scene, often as a preliminary step to replacing it with a different image or royal cartouche, usually that of Thutmose I or II.<sup>266</sup> At Karnak, her obelisks were walled-up and incorporated into the vestibule in front of Pylon V, while at Djeser-Djeseru her statues and sphinxes were removed, smashed, and cast into trash dumps.<sup>267</sup>

### a. Thutmose III as the Defacer of Hatshepsut's Image.

According to most Egyptologists, this massive effort to destroy all record of Hatshepsut's existence was launched by Thutmose III, with a predictable motive: out of sexist pride, he attempted to eliminate every trace of this dreaded female pharaoh's rule, intending to rewrite Egyptian history to portray a smooth succession of male rulers from Thutmose I to himself.<sup>268</sup> "Wounded male pride may also have played a part in his decision to act; the mighty warrior king may have balked at being recorded for posterity as the man who ruled for 20 years under the thumb of a mere woman."<sup>269</sup> But was Thutmose III actually the perpetrator? Did he seethe with hatred and resentment toward his former coruler before viciously attacking all remnants of her? Are cavalier accusations of sexism justifiable? The theory that Thutmose III was the culprit behind this vicious crime is severely weakened by several factors.

(1) If Thutmose III did deface her image, it would be inconsistent with how he otherwise related to her memory. A scene on the dismantled Chapelle Rouge at Djeser-Djeseru portrays Hatshepsut

<sup>265</sup> 166. Ibid.

<sup>266</sup> 167. Ibid., 79. See the webpage [http://exegesisinternational.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=77&Itemid=89](http://exegesisinternational.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=77&Itemid=89) for photos of the erasure of Hatshepsut's image from various artifacts.

<sup>267</sup> 168. Tyldesley, *Hatchepsut*, 114–115, 216.

<sup>268</sup> 169. Hallo and Simpson, *Ancient Near East*, 259, 261; Redford, *Egypt, Canaan, and Israel*, 156; Tyldesley, *Hatchepsut*, 216.

<sup>269</sup> 170. Tyldesley, *Hatchepsut*, 225.

and identifies her as “The Good God, Lady of the Two Lands, Daughter of Ra, Hatshepsut.”<sup>270</sup> Thutmose III, who is pictured as steering his barque toward Deir el-Bahri, actually completed the Chapelle Rouge, added the topmost register of decorations in his own name, then claimed the shrine as his own. Also, Hatshepsut’s name is still preserved in her Monthu temple at Armant, which Thutmose III enlarged. Such preservation of her handiwork and further construction on her building projects would be extremely unlikely if he truly despised Hatshepsut so greatly. Furthermore, Thutmose III planned the construction of his own temple to Amun, called Djeser-Akhet, which was to be built at Deir el-Bahri, directly south of Djeser-Djeseru. Since Hatshepsut greatly built-up Deir el-Bahri, including massive terraces and her own temple next to the one that Thutmose III subsequently built, this construction site is inexplicable if he felt such overwhelming, sexist hatred toward her.<sup>271</sup>

(2) If Thutmose III was the culprit, he waited at least 20 years after she left office before whimsically desecrating her image. He could not have accomplished the feat before his 42nd regnal year, a full 20 years after Hatshepsut left office. Thutmose III’s construction projects at Karnak—which include the Hall of Annals, whose texts were written no earlier than Year 42—inadvertently concealed a few inscriptions and illustrations related to Hatshepsut. The scenes were in place by Year 42, yet show no signs whatsoever of any desecration. Conversely, those parts of the scenes that were unprotected by his post-Year-42 construction were defaced during the anti-Hatshepsut campaign. It seems impossible that he would wait until over 20 years after she had left office to initiate a campaign of anti-feminism out of personal hatred. “While it is possible to imagine and even empathize with Thutmose III indulging in a sudden whim of hatred against his stepmother immediately after her death, it is far harder to imagine him overcome by such a whim some 20 years later.”<sup>272</sup> Moreover, this whim would have been a schizophrenic one, given Thutmose III’s recent positive disposition toward Hatshepsut, as displayed by his completion of her projects at Djeser-Djeseru and Armant.

(3) If Thutmose III was the culprit, he must have had sufficient motive to attempt to prevent her from living eternally. According to Egyptian religion, removing the name or image of a deceased person was a direct assault on his/her spirit. For him to live forever in the Field of Reeds, his body, image, or name must survive on earth. If all memory of him were lost or destroyed, the spirit too would perish, initiating the much-dreaded “second death,” a total obliteration from which there could be no return. This act against Hatshepsut was an attempt to condemn her to oblivion – a fate worse than death for an Egyptian.<sup>273</sup> Thus the extermination of Hatshepsut’s image from the earth was indeed a drastic step: the removal of her spirit from its perpetual existence in the afterlife.<sup>274</sup> Such reprisal seems far too severe to fit the motive of mere sexism.

(4) If Thutmose III was the culprit, why were there also attacks against the name and monuments of Senenmut, the foreign chief-advisor of Hatshepsut who disappeared from record in or after

---

<sup>270</sup> 171. Ibid., 219.

<sup>271</sup> 172. Ibid., 219–220; Grimal, *History of Ancient Egypt*, 216.

<sup>272</sup> 173. Tyldesley, *Hatchepsut*, 220, 224–225. Bryan asserts that the dishonoring of Hatshepsut began in ca. Year 46 or 47, and that this event may have paved the way for the joint rule with Amenhotep II, but she provides no support for her conclusions (Betsy M. Bryan, “The Eighteenth Dynasty Before the Amarna Period,” in *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt*, ed. Ian Shaw [New York: Oxford University Press, 2000], 248).

<sup>273</sup> 174. Grimal, *History of Ancient Egypt*, 216.

<sup>274</sup> 175. Tyldesley, *Hatchepsut*, 216.

Hatshepsut's 19th regnal year (ca. 1488/7 BC)? Occasionally his name was violated while his image remained intact, but some of his statues were smashed and literally thrown out of temples.<sup>275</sup> This attack upon her male chief-advisor's image can hardly be justified if Thutmose III was motivated purely by anti-feministic hatred toward Hatshepsut. Other options are offered to justify this extreme act committed by Thutmose III. (1) He wanted to atone for the offense of a female pharaoh against maat ("justice, truth"), a word used to describe the continuity in the universe that derived from the approval of the gods.<sup>276</sup> (2) The unorthodox coregency might have cast serious doubt on the legitimacy of his own right to rule, so he wanted to ensure both the legitimacy of his reign and his legacy. Neither of these options, however, addresses why Thutmose III would wait so long before beginning his anti-Hatshepsut campaign. Certainly he did not learn of the compromise that Hatshepsut's reign was to the state of maat only after he was an aged king; likewise, after 20 years of sole rule, his reign was secure, and his successful campaigning already had solidified for him a lasting legacy, so defiling her image would not, in any conceivable way, further legitimize his reign.

#### b. Amenhotep II as the Defacer of Hatshepsut's Image.

No Egyptologist has answered satisfactorily the nagging question of who was responsible for the widespread campaign to obliterate Hatshepsut's image from Egypt's annals, and what possible motive there could be for such a severe act of rage. Since the responsible person carried out the act only after Year 42 of Thutmose III, the desecration occurred no earlier than ca. 1464 BC. It is also difficult to envision that the culprit lived long after both Hatshepsut and her memory disappeared from the earth, since the movement of time and the existence of motive are inversely proportionate. Accordingly, two possible scenarios exist that could incriminate Amenhotep II as culpable for the crime.

(1) Amenhotep II contributed in the campaign to destroy Hatshepsut's image, but he was not the initial perpetrator. Tyldesley observes that "[i]t is perhaps not too fanciful a leap of the imagination to suggest that Thutmose III, having started the persecution relatively late in the reign, may have died before it was concluded. His son and successor, Amenhotep II, with no personal involvement in the campaign, may have been content to allow the vendetta to lapse."<sup>277</sup> Tyldesley does not explain why without personal involvement. Bryan believes that "Amenhotep II himself completed the desecration of the female king's monuments," adding that "when [he] had finished his programme of erasures on the monuments of Hatshepsut at Karnak, he was able to concentrate on preparations for the royal jubilee at this temple."<sup>278</sup>

(2) Amenhotep II was the sole culprit in the campaign to destroy Hatshepsut's image. The responsible individual likely possessed pharaonic authority, and one legitimate motive for Amenhotep II to have committed this act is if Hatshepsut raised Moses as her own son in the royal court (Acts 7:21). After the Red-Sea incident, Amenhotep II would have returned to Egypt seething with anger, both at the loss of his firstborn son and virtually his entire army (Exod 14:28), so he would have had just cause to erase her memory from Egypt and remove her spirit from the afterlife. The Egyptian people would have supported this edict, since their rage

<sup>275</sup> 176. Ibid., 206, 222.

<sup>276</sup> 177. Ibid., 8, 225.

<sup>277</sup> 178. Ibid., 224.

<sup>278</sup> 179. Bryan, "Eighteenth Dynasty," in *Oxford History*, 250, 251.

undoubtedly rivaled pharaoh's, as they also were mourning deceased family members and friends. The nationwide experience of loss also would account for the unified effort throughout Egypt to fulfill this defeated pharaoh's commission vigorously. A precedent even exists for Amenhotep II's destruction of her monuments early in his reign:

At Karnak Hatshepsut left ... the Eighth Pylon, a new southern gateway to the temple precinct. ... Ironically, evidence of Hatshepsut's building effort is today invisible, since the face of the pylon was erased and redecorated in the first years of Amenhotep II.<sup>279</sup>

Perhaps Year 9 was when it all began.

## **X. CONCLUSION**

Now it is possible to answer the questions posed earlier.

Does Amenhotep II qualify as the pharaoh who lived through the tenth plague because he was not his father's eldest son? Yes, records show that Amenemhet was the eldest son of Thutmose III, allowing Amenhotep II to have lived through the tenth plague.

Could the eldest son of Amenhotep II have died during the tenth plague, which must be true of the exodus-pharaoh's son? Yes, the eldest son of Amenhotep II could have died then. In fact, none of Amenhotep II's sons claimed to be his firstborn, and one prominent Egyptologist theorizes that the eldest son died inexplicably during childhood.

Did Amenhotep II die in the Red Sea, as the Bible allegedly indicates about the exodus-pharaoh? No, he died in typical fashion, and his mummified body is still preserved. Yet despite popular belief, this conclusion does not conflict with the Bible, since no Biblical text actually states that the exodus-pharaoh died there with his army.

Can any of Amenhotep II's military campaigns be related to the exodus events? Yes, his second Asiatic campaign coincides extremely well with the exodus events, and many of the details related to it and Egypt's post-exodus future cannot be explained without these connections.

Can the loss of over two million Hebrew slaves, certainly Egypt's "slave-base" at the time, be accounted for in the records of Amenhotep II's reign? Yes, the loss of the Israelite slaves can be accounted for by Amenhotep II's acquisition of 101,128 slaves in Canaan during his second Asiatic campaign, the only such campaign of its era that was launched in late fall and took so many captives.

Is there any evidence to confirm that Amenhotep II interacted with the Hebrews after they left Egypt? Yes, Amenhotep II captured 3,600 "Apiru" (Hebrews) during his second campaign, which was launched just under seven months after the exodus. Despite many futile attempts to disprove the association of the Hebrews with the Apiru of the New Kingdom, far more evidence exists that favors their being one-in-the-same.

---

<sup>279</sup> 180. Ibid., 240.

If Amenhotep II is the exodus-pharaoh, could the obliteration of Hatshepsut's image from many Egyptian monuments and inscriptions be attributed to backlash from the exodus events? Yes, Amenhotep II surfaces as the only logical candidate for the pharaoh who ordered this nationwide campaign of desecration. If Hatshepsut indeed was Moses' Egyptian stepmother—and she is the only legitimate candidate—Amenhotep II and all of Egypt had adequate motive to remove her image from Egypt and her spirit from the afterlife.

These answers prove not only that Amenhotep II is the only legitimate candidate for the exodus-pharaoh, but that the Biblical chronology of that era functions as a canon against which Egyptian history may be synchronized.

It is hoped that the principal purpose of this article has not been lost in the extensive historical detail contained within it. In this analysis of the exodus-pharaoh and ancient Egyptian history, the arguments of those who compromise Biblical historicity proved unable to undermine Biblical inerrancy. Compromising the Bible's inspired historical framework invariably will lead to the demise of its reliability as an accurate source for determining doctrine and enhancing spiritual growth. Conversely, to connect the book more directly with ancient history can only enhance its theological meaning.<sup>280</sup>

Unfortunately, however, even the strongest argumentation cannot remove presuppositions or persuade readers of the Bible's life-impacting truths.

Douglas Petrovich is former academic dean at Novosibirsk Biblical-Theological Seminary in the city of Akademgorodok (Siberia), Russia. He has a BA in Evangelism at Moody Bible Institute, and both an MDiv and a ThM from The Masters Seminary. He also has an MA in Ancient Near Eastern history and archaeology from the University of Toronto, where currently he is enrolled in the PhD program. This article was first published in the Spring 2006 issue of the Master's Seminary Journal. Posted with permission.

## Reacties

Robert Brock - 19-2-2010 12:55:23

Bietag's excavations at Avaris/Pi-Ramses has proven that this city was

- 1) the seat of Royal power at the time of the exodus
- 2) was hit by the Biblical plagues
- 3) was largely inhabited by Semitic peoples not related to the Hyksos
- 4) contained military power the equal to the Egyptian forces that followed the hebrews into the wilderness

The excavations at Akrotiri I have conclusively dated (via pottery samples) the Proxymal event at Thera to 1479 BC and was the origin of SOME of the plagues.

This date exactly fits the death of Tutmosis II and the reign of his widow Hatshepsut...and explains her mysterious message at Speos Artimios....do I have your attention yet?

email me at [ahmosis123@yahoo.com](mailto:ahmosis123@yahoo.com) if you want the proof that the Exous really occurred....in 1479 BC...

---

<sup>280</sup> 181. Shea, "Amenhotep II as Pharaoh," 42.

....and for goodness sake take the chronologys contained in the Hebrew Bible as totally accurate!

Joseph F. Gambino - 19-2-2010 22:42:48

Dear Dr. Petrovich... Enjoyed your article on the Exodus and it true date. I,myself, have been teaching for over 20 years that Amenhotep II did not go into the Sea with his army, but lived another 25 years in shame (returning without his army). I also teach that AkenAton becomes a Henotheist precisely because he learns of Israel's emergence from the desert after 40 years! You see, we are never told what Amenhotep II and his bodyguards told the Egyptian people when they returned without "Our Army". Its a good chance that they spread the myth that the Egyptian Army died WHILE slaughtering the Israelites. I have my chart from 1987 that I will attempt to send to you. Blessings. Joe Gambino

Joseph F. Gambino - 20-2-2010 0:50:35

Dr. Brock...Dr. Petrovich seems to take the chronologies of the Hebrew Bible quite seriously:  $966+480=1446$  (I Kings 6)

Still, for a difference of 30 years we can still 'walk together'. If the co-regency of Hatshepsut & Thutmose III was somewhat longer...or if we have to slide the WHOLE scale of dates up 30 years...this certainly precludes a 13th Century Exodus which is Dr. Petrovich's point all along. Again, for a difference of only 30 years after about 3000 years we can 'walk together', which I find hard to do with the 13th Century People and their RaMesses II Exodus.

Dennis L Oberholtzer - 20-2-2010 6:26:31

What a lengthy yet valuable essay. I have two diagreements in minor.

1) The year 1446 is compelling. But one must remember that the bc dating system is not totally parallel with the lunar calendar system. Six months were lost in 70 C.E. when the Jews returned to a pre-Mosaic calendar system, thereby losing half a year when they restarted their year at the Fall Equinox. Another 5 months were lost when Moses began his lunar Mosaic calendar on the Spring Equinox on what would now be known as 1445 b.c.e. The Bible uses Egyptian years in Exodus prior to the Spring Equinox of 1445, which began its year around the time of our August.

2) At the time of the Exodus, there were two "Pharaohs", just as there were a King and co-regent at the time of Daniel's handwriting on the wall. Pharaoh Hatshepset was reigning from Thebes over the whole kingdom of Egypt. But Thutmose IV was also a co-regent ruling from Zoan. Evidence of this must be added up; first by the black stelle written concerning the only Egyptian war loss ever documented. This stone stands in the area of the Suez Canal, and is presented by the scholarly whold as by Hatshepset. Second, if She was ruling from Thebes, another "Pharaoh" had to be in the Delta during the start of the Exodus. By calculating the overlapping dates, Thutmose IV is the most likely candidate.

God Bless

Douglas Petrovich - 21-2-2010 9:16:38

I am thrilled that some of you ABR enthusiasts already have read my article, which is no small task, to be sure. I would encourage you to read my comments at the end of Dr. Wood's "Recent Research on the Date and Setting of the Exodus" article, which is the one below mine on the Exodus-Conquest page. These comments were added long after most already had finished reading and commenting about his article. I think you'll find these comments worth reading. To Mr. Brock, I first would respond that you are walking on awfully thin ice if you want to hang your hat on dates from Thera. First of all, these dates change almost weekly, every time being the



end-all dating-solidification, and there are established camps that are centuries apart. Picking a precise year out of this melee and calling it the exact year of the exodus is far beyond what I ever would be willing to do. I will say one thing for you, though: you certainly are a man of great faith!

But there are numerous problems here. First, your assumption that Thera is linked with the plagues is a Mr.-Fantastic-like stretch. Thera, as magnificent as it may have been, may have nothing remotely to do with the plagues. Attractive does not necessarily imply connection. We just do not know, and so we have to be careful before making such huge leaps. Moreover, though I do not have the exact information in front of me, I believe that the material cultural remains (pottery, etc.) associated with that point in time do not match with the chronological requirements established by synchronisms between biblical and ancient Egyptian history.

Most importantly, you are using a suggested synchronism (Thera = plagues) as your fixed chronological peg to establish your synchronism. This is immeasurably weaker than the synchronism established for us in the far, far more reliable written sources: the OT chronological references and the precise dating of the Egyptian papyri, which are connected to a known and datable astronomical event. And since we have to fudge on the dating of the exodus (from 1 Kgs 6:1, etc.), from 1446 to 1479, to make everything match your proposed synchronism, I have to repeat your own words to you: "...and for goodness sake take the chronologies contained in the Hebrew Bible as totally accurate!" (misspellings corrected). I'll take my rock over your sand any day.

As for Pi-Ramesses, my view has altered somewhat since I published my article 4 years ago. I now am convinced that this city is the Ramses of the Bible, though it was not known as Ramses in the days of Moses. However, I am NOT convinced that this is where pharaoh resided. His campaigns were launched from Memphis, the capital from Thutmose I's time, and there is no reason to put pharaoh in Pi-Ramesses just to try to simplify the biblical story. This is a mistake that Dr. Wood makes, unfortunately.

That rabbit-trail notwithstanding, either Moses wrote this toponym prophetically, or we have an anachronistic use of Ramses (i.e. the biblical text was modified by later Jewish scribes, once the name of the city of Avaris was changed to Pi-Ramesses by the Ramesside dynasts). The location of the Ramesside construction actually was on a different part of the overall site, making it--in many ways--a new site altogether, though they did rob out a lot of material from Avaris.

I have 10 or 12 pages of an article finished, which is entitled, "The Hermeneutical and Bibliographical Flaws in Hoffmeier's Late-Exodus Apology". In this article, I document the historical elements of the city of Avaris that demonstrate amazing evidence of Israelite occupation (and construction!) of the site during the pre-exodus era (conveniently neglected by the good Dr. Hoffmeier in his publications). You will be interested to know that royal scarabs are attested there for all of the 18th-Dynasty pharaohs from Amenhotep I through Amenhotep II. Yet, they end abruptly with Amenhotep II. Hmmmm, what does that say about your Thutmose-II-as-exodus-pharaoh theory? There is much more, but I will save it for the article.

Anyway, my view is that later scribes, either of the period of the judges or the early monarchy, altered the toponym in their text from Avaris (however it would have been written in Hebrew) to Ramses. It took a while for me to accept this reality, given my ultra-high view of inerrancy. Ultimately, though, I am content with considering it to be a God-allowed alteration designed to make the toponym understandable to "modern" readers who knew nothing of Avaris, but knew a great deal of Ramses. This is NOT an act of anti-inerrant barbarism on the part of otherwise faithful Hebrew scribes; it's a sincere attempt to make the text accessible to its readership. And, it correctly calls the same site by its new and well-known name.

To postulate that Moses prophetically looked into the future, knowing that several centuries later the name would be changed, is far beyond what I am willing to accept. Moses did not write to Iron-Age (1200 BC ff.) readers of later Israel, nor did he write to 15th-century-BC psychics; he wrote to 15th-century-BC Jews who wanted to read and understand exactly what he was writing (or to the literate who would read aloud to them). For my money, this prophetic-anticipation position is "a high view of inerrancy gone hog-wild", in an attempt to ensure that we can't have errors in the Bible.

Folks, those of you who may be hyper-inerrantists, just relax. Take a deep breath. Everything is fine and in order. God's word has NOT come to be errant. It was simply modified, in this isolated instance, to make current a toponym that had gone out of service. Not one scribe ever, to our knowledge, transmitted every word of his text word-for-word according to his exemplar in front of him. But these are transmissional alterations, NOT alterations in the autographa. This is a hugely critical point to understand.

Was this right for the scribes to do? Well, let the arguments ensue. I don't know. But, it was done. That I do know. Yet, in the case of Avaris/Ramses, this DOES NOT open up some sort of Pandora's box. Again, relax. Breathe deeply. This is not something done often, or carelessly. The Hebrew scribes were meticulous, especially in comparison to the NT scribes. I wrote a ThM thesis on a NT textual variant, and I would amaze you by recounting some of the intentional and unintentional alterations that NT scribes made throughout church history. This occurred on virtually every leaf of their mss.

I will stop now, and add more in a subsequent posting or three. Thanks again for reading the article, and I am glad that many of you are reading critically. The good news is that truth and time go hand in hand. It does not matter who is right on this or any issue, only that the truth eventually will rise to the top. Our job is to seek that truth in hot pursuit, always being willing to change our views if the evidence leads us to no other conclusion. But certainly it is hard to teach new tricks to old dogs.

Yours for the King,  
Doug Petrovich

T Robinson - 22-2-2010 1:25:26

Petrovich's work here is truly admirable--no doubt one of the finest contributions in support of Amenhotep II as the pharaoh of the Exodus. But some issues should be addressed:

- 1) Footnote 26 places the Exodus, which occurred on the 15th day of the first month, on a Friday night and Saturday. However, Exodus 16 seems to connect Israel's arrival at Elim on the 15th day of the second month with the people crying out for food and God answering with the giving of quail in the evening and the commencement of the weekly manna cycle the next morning. This would make the 16th day of the second month a Saturday night and Sunday. Counting backwards and giving 30 days for the first month according to the fixed Hebrew calendar, the 15th day of the first month (the date of the Exodus) would fall on a Wednesday night and Thursday. (Allowing a 29-day first month according to possible observation-method of month determination would mean a Thursday night and Friday Exodus--in neither case a Friday night and Saturday Exodus.)
- 2) According to the regnal dates here, Hatshepsut was still in power (living to 1484) when Moses fled Egypt (in 1486, i.e. 1446+40). It seems that other adjustments could be made to allow Hatshepsut's death in or prior to 1486--so that Moses would have been fleeing from a sole-ruling Thutmose III. Perhaps the following regnal dates would work: Amenhotep I (1550-1529); Thutmose I (1529-1518); Thutmose II (1518-1507); Hatshepsut (1507-1487); Thutmose III (1507-1453); Amenhotep II (1453-1427); Thutmose IV (1427-1418); Amenhotep III (1406-

1399). This would place Amenhotep II's ninth year in 1445 instead of 1446--giving at least a little more time for reconstituting Egypt's military.

3) It is still troublesome that Egypt would be able to launch any kind of military campaign soon after the massive devastation of the country in the ten plagues and Red Sea. The nation's food supply was eradicated, both crops and livestock--as was much of it's wealth. I suppose that does make a good argument for the fact that the Egyptians in desperation had to go and take it from elsewhere or else perish. But how they were able to take it from elsewhere still seems problematic. The Red Sea account says that ALL the chariots of Egypt pursued the Israelites. No doubt there were some remaining forces down in Thebes though. Perhaps the biblical Mizraim was limited to the northern land? This would be a helpful discussion.

4) In the same vein, one wonders how just three or four decades after the Exodus, Egypt was able to enter one of the peaks of its civilization under the reign of Amenhotep III the Magnificent. As noted at Wikipedia, "His lengthy reign was a period of unprecedented prosperity and artistic splendour, when Egypt reached the peak of her artistic and international power." This helps the argument of those who make HIM the pharaoh of the Exodus (as it was downhill after his reign and seeing Akenaten's reign in response to it) and those who claim that the Exodus did not happen in the 18th dynasty at all (arguing for a new Egyptian chronology).

5) It is worth noting that Josephus, in mistakenly trying to identify the Israelites with the Hyksos, rejects historians placing the Exodus during the reigns of "Thummosis," "Tethmosis" or "Amenophis," whom he wrongly labels fictitious (Against Apion, Book 1, Sections 14, 15 and 24-35). This lends support to an 18th-dynasty Exodus--but does not narrow it down enough.

6) Petrovich's criticism of Shea's conclusion regarding two Amenhotep II's is certainly valid, as this seems highly unlikely. However, some specifics of his criticism are not justified. First, Petrovich contends that the royal family would be opposed to the imposter, but Shea argues that the imposter would be a brother who was part of the royal family and a legitimate claimant to the throne anyway. Second, Petrovich says that no pharaoh would assume the identity of a defeated and discredited predecessor. This ignores the fact that by assuming the identity, there would be no such defeated and discredited predecessor--it would be as if no humiliation had occurred, and as if this new pharaoh was not a successor but the same person whose death was covered up. Third, a new ruler could have a very good reason for such a cover up, as the legitimacy of pharaonic rule in general was at stake. If the people knew that their divine pharaoh was destroyed by a foreign god, why should they follow a successor in his place? Still, this extraordinary circumstance seems far-fetched--and it is not required to fit what is stated in Scripture, as Petrovich shows.

Douglas Petrovich - 23-2-2010 18:51:18

I have a few more things to say in response to Robert Brock's comments.

First of all, Bietak's excavations do not prove all of the things that you so ambitiously believe, though I will agree that this IS the site that the Israelites built-up for pharaoh at the outset of the 18th Dynasty, the timing of which is clearly implied in Exodus 1:10-11.

The only disagreement I'll mention is where you say that Avaris was THE seat of Egyptian power. This is not something that Bietak says, nor is it something that we know from the ancient sources.

The fact is that we do know something from the ancient sources. In the Karnak Stele, which recounts Amenhotep II's first Asiatic campaign (cf. Amada & Memphis Stelae), in Year 3, we read of this pharaoh's return to Memphis: "... day 27; his majesty went forth from the house of

the Beautiful-of-Face (Ptah) and proceeded to Memphis, bearing the plunder which he had taken in the country of Retenu" (Breasted, vol. II, 309).

In the Memphis Stele, the scribe also recounts the arrival at Memphis at the end of the first (corrected to Year-3) campaign of Amenhotep II: "His majesty arrived at Memphis, he being elated as a strong bull." (Context of Scripture, vol. 2, 21; trans. Hoffmeier).

Later in the Memphis Stele, at the time of Amenhotep II's return from the 2nd Asiatic campaign (Year 9), we read, "His majesty arrived at the city of Memphis, he being satisfied because every foreign country and every land is under his sandals." (Ibid., 22).

And just to take us back a bit before Amenhotep II's time, we read (in the Armant Stele) this of Thutmose III's Year-22 Asiatic campaign to crush the rebellion led by the king of Qadesh, which battle took place at Megiddo: "[Regnal Year 22, 4th month of winter, day 20(?)] from Memphis in order to slay the lands of feeble Retenu on the first occasion of victory." (Ibid., 19).

Now, here we won't worry about going back before Thutmose III. Suffice it to say that at least from the time of Thutmose III's Year 22 (1484 BC) until Amenhotep II's Year 9 (the exodus year, according to my synchronism), some 38 years later, THE seat of royal power was at Memphis. So, we have to be careful before we try to do too much with Avaris/Pi-Ramesses just because this is biblical Ramses. This kind of extrapolation I have seen from a few of you, and even from Dr. Wood at least once.

It actually reminds me of what we've seen the Catholics and the Orthodox do in Israel: every time they find a site where they think there is a biblical connection, they build a church on it and declare it to be a holy site. As evangelicals, we laugh at this, followed by a frown.

However, we are doing the same thing as they are, only by building with grandiose historical reconstruction, in an eisegetical sense (i.e. reading something into), rather than with brick and mortar. This is wrong. We cannot read more into the historical sources than what is there, just because it is a place where some biblical event transpired.

But to the defense of Memphis, this site has yet to be excavated. I think that if we COULD excavate Memphis, you would be amazed at how much more extravagant it was than Avaris. Then you would know why the ancient sources draw attention to Memphis as the true seat of royal power, rather than any one of the numerous "other" important cities of the time.

Next, you seem to have implied that Thutmose II was the exodus-pharaoh, and that Hatshepsut, as his widow, took over for him when he died. I have attempted already to prove in my article that the Bible NEVER says that pharaoh died in the Re(e)d Sea, and I added to that in my comments following Dr. Wood's "Recent Research on the Date and Setting of the Exodus" article (on the ABR site, just below my article).

But as for Thutmose II as the exodus-pharaoh, now you have some major, major problems to solve. Do the work yourself. Take the biography of this pharaoh and critique it against the requirements I have listed for you in my article, which--incidentally--is not an exhaustive list. See for yourself how many of the requirements are fulfilled by this pharaoh.

To give you a jump-start, there is the requirement that the exodus-pharaoh MUST HAVE succeeded a predecessor who reigned on the throne of Egypt for over 40 years. You can't get around this, if biblical inerrancy means anything to you.

Thutmose II was preceded by Thutmose I, his father, whose reign was approximately 13 years. Thutmose I celebrated no sed-festival, which during this dynasty was done by those kings whose reigns had reached 30 years in length. Even if you were to hypothesize that he lived over 40 years anyway, you then disrupt the 18th-Dynasty chronology to such an extent that you cannot make all of the reigns fit into the allowable historical window. You just create far more problems than you solve.

But this just comes back to the point I made several times now. We have to be careful that we consider all of the evidence before coming up with a view. It is not enough to see what would be two neat correlations: 1) Thera is now datable to Thutmose II's reign; and 2) Thutmose II would work neatly as the exodus-pharaoh, since his widow succeeded him.

This is taking a blind eye to the mountain of other factors that must be taken into account. There is a huge grocery list of requirements that must be true of the exodus-pharaoh. If you are going to pick a favorite candidate, you had better make sure first that your candidate meets EVERY SINGLE ONE of those requirements before you go public with your theory.

Otherwise, you are left looking pretty foolish when your candidate is seen to be exposed under scrutiny as an impossible candidate. So, please be VERY careful before making such proclamations. I would not want to see your credibility diminished in anyone's eyes. And I am not saying that they should look down on you for this, just that they will.

And incidentally, since you have chosen 1479 as your year of 1) Thutmose II's death, and 2) the exodus, you have more problems to solve. Thutmose II died in ca. 1506, according to (my rendition of) the higher chronology. The year 1479 would be just into the start of Thutmose III's sole rule. The biggest problem, of course, is that biblical chronology does not allow us to take the exodus back so far into the 15th century BC.

To tell you the most loving thing that I can say, I strongly recommend for you to delete everything on your website (or elsewhere) related to exodus-era chronology, and start from scratch. This may be a painful and radical thing for you to do, but it will help put you back on the track that leads to a true understanding of these events and times. Yes, you have my attention. I hope that I have yours.

I certainly intend to get to everyone else's comments, too, but please be patient with me, as my own time constraints require me to chip-away at this rather than blow-through it, all at once, which I would prefer.

AJ Smith - 23-2-2010 22:12:53

I found this article both enlightening and helpful. Last year I read Redford's *Egypt, Canaan, and Israel in Ancient Times*. His work was rhetorically well crafted to have the desired effect of undermining faith in the factual accuracy of the Bible. It sent me, as a church historian, on a renewed search in the scholarship of OT studies, especially as relates to the Exodus and Conquest of Canaan.

I would like to see professional scholars address the claims by Ron Wyatt that the location of the crossing of the Red Sea and Mount Sinai are misplaced, and that Sinai should be located in Saudi Arabia. I'm especially curious about his photographic evidence of alleged Egyptian chariot wheels and a carved pillar (in Phoenician style) dating to the reign of Solomon commemorating the crossing in the Gulf of Aqaba... Being a church historian I do not feel competent to judge his claims. I would like to hear from qualified OT scholars and archeologists.

ABR - 24-2-2010 20:59:35

Dear AJ Smith,

Thanks for your contacting us and for your interest in the ABR ministry.

Ron Wyatt's claims have been, frankly, shown to be in error and should not be used as support for the Bible. Ron Wyatt, now deceased, was not a credible scholar. He was an anesthetist with no training in archaeology or the ancient Near East. He was merely an adventurer. Wyatt was a Seventh Day Adventist and has been thoroughly refuted by his own denomination (*Holy Relics or Revelation—Recent Astounding Archaeological Claims Evaluated*, by Russell R. and Colin D.

Standish, published by Heartland Publications in 1999. Perhaps the best product out there that deals with Mr. Wyatt's material is this book we have here:

[www.biblearchaeology.org/.../product.aspx?id=108](http://www.biblearchaeology.org/.../product.aspx?id=108)

Also, here is a word from our Director of Research, Dr. Bryant Wood:

ABR has published a research article debunking the claim that Mt. Sinai is located in Saudi Arabia:

[www.biblearchaeology.org/.../...Saudi-Arabia.aspx](http://www.biblearchaeology.org/.../...Saudi-Arabia.aspx).

In short, the Bible records that the sea crossing took place at the beginning of the Exodus journey, closer to Egypt, rather than at the end of the journey, closer to Mt. Sinai, as Wyatt's theory would have it. Even more damaging is the fact that it took the Israelites but 60 days to reach Mt. Sinai (Exod. 19:1). Travelling by foot with all of their animals, they only would be able to make 5–6 miles per day, much too slow to reach Saudi Arabia in 60 days. See:

[www.biblearchaeology.org/.../...f-Mount-Sinai.aspx](http://www.biblearchaeology.org/.../...f-Mount-Sinai.aspx)

According to the requirements of Scripture, the sea crossing took place in the Isthmus of Suez. I believe it was at Lake Ballah, no longer seen today since it was drained when the Suez Canal was cut. See:

[www.biblearchaeology.org/.../...ossing-Part-I.aspx](http://www.biblearchaeology.org/.../...ossing-Part-I.aspx)

[www.biblearchaeology.org/.../...ssing-Part-II.aspx](http://www.biblearchaeology.org/.../...ssing-Part-II.aspx)

Mt. Sinai should be located somewhere in the northeast Sinai. See:

[www.biblearchaeology.org/.../...with-Mt-Sinai.aspx](http://www.biblearchaeology.org/.../...with-Mt-Sinai.aspx)

Note that the so-called “chariot wheels” at the bottom of the Gulf of Aqaba shown in the presentation have four spokes whereas Egyptian chariot wheels have six spokes.

And, also, a brief comment from another staff member, Rick Lanser (this written to another person asking about Mr. Wyatt)

Ron Wyatt did not discover anything that has held up to close examination. For example, the chariot wheel in the YouTube video was found to have been put there for making the video, and is not even an ancient Egyptian wheel. The YouTube videos are designed not to give scientific facts, but to get you to send in money to the Wyatt supporters. There is much evidence the claims are fraudulent at <http://www.tentmaker.org/WAR/> and [www.answersingenesis.org/.../report.asp](http://www.answersingenesis.org/.../report.asp).

ABR wants to promote any discoveries that uphold the historical reliability of the Bible, regardless of who makes them. But we refuse to promote self-serving and apparently fraudulent information. There are many out there who make a living doing just that. I hope this information has helped you be a discerning reader of such information.

In His service---Rick Lanser

We hope that this information is helpful to you. Thanks for trusting us as a source for answers.

Blessings,

ABR

Douglas Petrovich - 25-2-2010 17:37:42

Dear Mr. Gambino,

I am very pleased that you enjoyed the article. I am glad also that for 20 years you have been teaching that the exodus-pharaoh lived through the Red Sea debacle. Well done! It looks as though I took away your opportunity to publish it first, though. Sorry about that.

But again, the key is that we have something extensive in print about the historical aspects of these events, so it does not really matter who publishes, just that it is out there. But for you, I would think it is quite rewarding to know that such extensive and compelling argumentation from

the Bible and Egyptian historical sources can be made in defense of this position, and in defense of Amenhotep II as the only 18th- or 19th-Dynasty pharaoh who can qualify as the exodus-pharaoh.

Now you can have materials to back-up your long-held view. I remember when the article first came out. A guy who took over for me as one of the assistant pastors in the church in California that I served enjoyed the article so much that he used it as complementary material to help him teach (an adult Sunday School class) through Exodus. He was REALLY stoked about how much it helped him. This alone made it worth all of the enormous effort. The other great thrill for me was that my dear grandmother, in her upper 90's, loved reading it. What a soldier she is!

I also share your view about Akenaten, that much of his motivation for turning away from the Egyptian pantheon and turning to the worship of the Sun-god exclusively was the result of the long-term effects of the exodus-era events. These historical events, though (to our knowledge) not recorded in Egyptian historical sources, would have made/left a strong and long-lasting impression on the Egyptians. God Himself predicted that this would happen!

I suppose it is possible that the army tried to cover-up the actual events by spreading the myth that the army's demise was in battle while slaughtering the Israelites. However, two things tell me that this is quite unlikely.

1) The Egyptians all had experienced the miraculous events of the plagues, which were real and devastating. The sting was still VERY fresh. It seems a bit of a stretch to me to think that they would have been so naive after these life-altering events. I also do not take pharaoh as being so foolish as to think that he could pull-off something like this with his subjects when he returned potentially (or, at minimum, "virtually") all by himself.

2) If the Egyptians actually had been victorious in the battle, they would have returned with their army intact, mostly if not entirely (Remember, the Israelites were NOT warriors). To return with no army whatsoever proves inherently that the battle was lost. I believe that the populous understood this principle acutely. Mind you, we are talking about the ANE, which experientially knew warfare and all of its facets. Again, pharaoh would not have been so foolish as to think that he could deceive his people about such success, when in fact he did not bring back any of his army with him.

I would enjoy seeing your chart from 1987. Please send it to me at the following e-mail address:  
Doug Petrovich  
[dp@exegesisinternational.org](mailto:dp@exegesisinternational.org)

AJ Smith - 28-2-2010 21:40:50

Thank you for your detailed, informative, and insightful response to my question.

AJ Smith

Douglas Petrovich - 2-3-2010 1:11:28

Dear Mr. Gambino,

I would like to reply to a couple of the comments you made in your second posting. First, you said, "Dr. Brock...Dr. Petrovich seems to take the chronologies of the Hebrew Bible quite seriously:  $966+480=1446$  (I Kings 6)."

I appreciate this very much. As a former senior pastor of mine said (some years back) to a number of us assistant pastors and other church leaders at a time when he was being accused with bogus accusations, "The best thing would be if YOU men would defend me, because I am not about to defend myself."

He was exactly right, and we did defend him. So based on this principle, I thank you for coming to my side. I would have expected to be accused of various things after my article was read, but never in my wildest thoughts would I have anticipated that a failure to take seriously the biblical chronologies would be one of them. Either my own words in the article are incomprehensible to me, or my article was not read carefully enough.

"Still, for a difference of 30 years we can still 'walk together'. If the co-regency of Hatshepsut & Thutmose III was somewhat longer...or if we have to slide the WHOLE scale of dates up 30 years ... [Etc.] for a difference of only 30 years after about 3000 years we can 'walk together', which I find hard to do with the 13th Century People and their Ramesses II Exodus."

I would want to be both less generous and more generous than you in this matter, at the same time. Allow me to explain. First of all, I can "walk together" with the 13th-century people, because (as far as I know) they love God and attempt to understand and follow His word and His will for their lives. In this sense, late-exodus proponents such as Hoffmeier and Hawkins are as much with me as early-exodus folks such as Dr. Wood (Yet surely their hermeneutics are problematic, as well as their priorities when assigning relative value to biblical vs. archaeological/historical data.).

However, I would not be so willing to concede the 30 years, as if it is something negotiable. In this case, it is not negotiable. The 30-year error leads us to the wrong pharaoh, which destroys the precise synchronism that we have when we stick with the 1446-BC date. And when it comes down to it, what is the difference between a wrong exodus-pharaoh of the right dynasty vs. a wrong exodus-pharaoh of the right dynasty??

That, in turn, leads to historical impossibilities with regard to the biblical text. As I exemplified in a previous comment above, we have major problems when we assert that Thutmose II was the exodus-pharaoh. If Thutmose II was in fact the exodus-pharaoh, either the Bible is in error, or the biographical sketch of Thutmose II provided by the ancient Egyptian historical sources are all in error in recording many specific details related to his biography and chronology.

Frankly, I am not comfortable with either one of those options. Ergo, Thutmose II CANNOT be the exodus-pharaoh, and we CAN trust the historical sources (both biblical and Egyptian) that 1446 BC is the right date for the exodus, and Amenhotep II is the right candidate for the exodus-pharaoh.

So the place where I would prefer to stand is that we cannot just give away those 30 years as if it is such an insignificant compromise that we can just "walk with" Dr. Brock's minor historical alteration as a minor concession.

But there is a definable principle by which we can work, as it related to biblical history and chronology: to the extent to which the Bible is precise, we must be precise; to the extent to which the Bible is ambiguous or general, we can be ambiguous or general.

If God gave specific dates, in precise years, for particular historical events, we can be (at least) as precise as those given years. And in relation to the exodus, we have VERY precise dating, to the year. In fact, the month and day are even given, so we can be as specific as that, which case I attempted to argue in my article (25 April 1446 for the day of the exodus).

In contrast, for example, we have a different situation in Acts 13:20, where it says that these events took "about (Greek hOs) 450 years". Here the Greek word for "about, roughly" is critical to a proper interpretation.

In fact, from my study, I have deduced that the period of which Paul spoke amounts to either 477 years, or 447 years. There is an interpretive choice involved with some of the historical data, so this is why we are left with a discrepancy of either 3 or 27 years, which--either way--represents a variation from the number "450".



Such an imprecision, either way, is fine and perfectly legitimate with the biblical text, since the inspired author was vague in his dating. However, the writer of 1 Kings left nothing to the imagination. He tells us that there is a period of "479 years and change" between these two major events. This is precision to a specific year, removing all opportunity for 30 years of leeway. I hope that this makes perfect sense, and that it can help your understanding.

Douglas Petrovich - 2-3-2010 20:58:02

Now I would like to respond to the two disagreements of Dennis Oberholtzer. Obviously it is fine to disagree, but since the goal is for us to stand behind what is true and accurate, I would ask you to consider these thoughts. Your first disagreement was this:

"The year 1446 is compelling. But one must remember that the bc dating system is not totally parallel with the lunar calendar system. Six months were lost in 70 C.E. when the Jews returned to a pre-Mosaic calendar system, thereby losing half a year when they restarted their year at the Fall Equinox. Another 5 months were lost when Moses began his lunar Mosaic calendar on the Spring Equinox on what would now be known as 1445 b.c.e. The Bible uses Egyptian years in Exodus prior to the Spring Equinox of 1445, which began its year around the time of our August."

For the majority of my answer to what you have expressed here, I received helpful insight from Rodger C. Young, whom I would say is one of, if not the leading of, the top chronologists among evangelicals today. His work is extremely important, and I rarely disagree with him on anything he has attempted to prove or on any position he has taken. So my thanks again go to him, as he helped me with both of the articles that I have published.

The Mishna (a predecessor to the Talmud) and the Babylonian Talmud (tractate Rosh HaShanah) state that there are four New Years. "On the first of Nisan is the New Year for kings and for festivals. On the first of Elul is the New Year for the tithe of cattle ... On the first of Tishri is the New Year for years ... On the first of Shebat is the New Year for trees ..."

The Mishna dates to ca. the 2nd century AD, so it is a comparatively late composition compared to the Hebrew Bible. It is wrong in its statement that Nisan 1 was the New Year for Judahite kings; although this was true for the northern kingdom, it was never true for Judah (southern kingdom). The Mishna, however, does recognize that the civil or agricultural year began on 1 Tishri. In none of this reckoning was any year or month ever "lost."

According to Exodus 12:2, Nisan was to be considered the first month, and whenever in the Hebrew Bible the month is identified by a number, this convention is followed. In Lev. 25, the regulations for the Sabbatical and Jubilee years are all based on a reckoning that starts in the fall, at the time of the fall planting. For Jubilee years, the New Year was to start on the 10th of Tishri, the Day of Atonement (Lev. 25:8). Nine days were not "lost" when this was done; the priests were perfectly capable of keeping track of their calendar for a Jubilee year. Nor did they lose six months every seven years when a Sabbatical year came around just because the Sabbatical year started in the seventh month.

If you have any evidence that the priests were incapable of understanding or following these basic principles, and so somehow lost six months in their reckoning, please let us know.

Suggesting it is one thing, but proving it is something completely different.

It should be added, too, that Rodger Young went to great pains to demonstrate that the Jubilee cycle clearly prefers 1446 BC over 1445 BC as the exact year of the exodus, thus clearing-up the question as to which of these two years is the proper one, given that the lack of congruity between our yearly calendar and that of the ancient Judahites makes both years possible. I cited

Rodger's article in mine above, which can be found with a search for the word "Jubilee" (which corresponds to footnote 25).

Moving on to your second disagreement, you stated this:

"At the time of the Exodus, there were two "Pharaohs", just as there were a King and co-regent at the time of Daniel's handwriting on the wall. Pharaoh Hatshepsut was reigning from Thebes over the whole kingdom of Egypt. But Thutmose IV was also a co-regent ruling from Zoan. Evidence of this must be added up; first by the black stele written concerning the only Egyptian war loss ever documented. This stone stands in the area of the Suez Canal, and is presented by the scholarly world as by Hatshepsut. Second, if She was ruling from Thebes, another "Pharaoh" had to be in the Delta during the start of the Exodus. By calculating the overlapping dates, Thutmose IV is the most likely candidate." [with corrections]

As for your statement that there were two pharaohs ruling at the time of the exodus, I am curious as to what proof you have for this conviction. I have studied the exodus-era inside-out, and I have yet to see a shred of evidence that would support this conclusion. Please provide the proof for it, and we can discuss it further. Until then, I am at a loss, and I cannot agree with your conviction. If you prove it to me, then I will believe.

I do believe that the coregency between Hatshepsut and THUTMOSE III overlapped with the event of Moses slaying the Egyptian, but it is difficult to prove conclusively. The one bit of circumstantial evidence available is that since we can be sure that the exodus-pharaoh's predecessor, who chased Moses out of Egypt, was male, this pharaoh's presence in Memphis (i. e. in close range with Goshen) can best be explained if he is the more active pharaoh in the north, while Hatshepsut is at Thebes, as you have said.

However, you have made one important error. Hatshepsut had no overlap with Thutmose IV. The former ruled long before the exodus, while the latter ruled long after the exodus. In fact, he was the grandson of her stepson. Their lives did not overlap whatsoever. This is common knowledge, and any introductory textbook on ancient Egypt/ANE (Redford, Grimal, Kuhrt, etc.) will make this clear to you.

And if you meant Thutmose III instead of Thutmose IV, you now have a different problem to solve. While it is true that Thutmose III was the true coregent along with Hatshepsut, he is the ONLY pharaoh of the 18th Dynasty who ruled for over 40 years, making him the only possible candidate for the predecessor of the exodus-pharaoh. He cannot be the exodus-pharaoh, but he MUST (in this case) be the predecessor to the exodus-pharaoh, which fits perfectly with Amenhotep II as the right choice for the exodus-pharaoh.

As for your suggestion that there was a coregent ruling from Zoan, I am curious as to what led you to this odd conclusion. There is no evidence from Egyptian history whatsoever that an 18th-Dynasty pharaoh ruled from there, whether a coregent or not.

I wrote something about this in a previous reply to Dr. Wood's article (on the ABR site), and perhaps it is from his writings that you have this notion. I am not sure. But as I went-on to say in my article (footnote 52), the presence of a royal scarab or two at Avaris/Ramses no more proves a pharaoh's personal occupation of the city than the presence of a scarab with that same pharaoh's royal cartouche at Gibeon proves that he resided on the Central Benjamin Plateau (Amenhotep II being the pharaoh of whom I was speaking).

This is simply a logical leap that must be avoided. And as I said earlier in this very thread (of comments to my article and replies by me), we cannot infer the residence of the/a pharaoh in the Delta just because we see interaction between the Hebrew midwives and pharaoh. It sounds neat, but it is a terrible reconstruction of ancient history. Egyptologists would tear this notion to shreds, and rightly so.

Pharaoh was known to rule at Memphis, which is virtually on the border between Lower Egypt and Middle Egypt, but he was NOT known to rule in the Delta, at least not during this dynasty. The biblical text states that Hebrews lived all over Egypt. So either the midwives lived in the city of pharaoh's residence--which is Memphis, from all indications from the ancient sources--or there was travel that led to face-to-face communication between the two parties, such as the pharaoh sending chariots to take these women to his court at Memphis, which is certainly in the realm of possibility.

As to which of these options should be preferred, I probably would call it a coin flip. Yet I do not think whatsoever that pharaoh himself was traveling from Memphis to visit the midwives in Goshen. This simply is not something that a pharaoh would do. If you study Egyptology, you will understand.

Thank you kindly for your wish of blessing. And may the Lord richly bless you, He who generous has shared so much with us, for us to enjoy.

Douglas Petrovich - 3-3-2010 0:58:15

The ABR staff did a wonderful job of responding to the second paragraph in the posting by A. J. Smith. I would like to respond to the first paragraph.

Mr. Smith writes, "I found this article both enlightening and helpful. Last year I read Redford's *Egypt, Canaan, and Israel in Ancient Times*. His work was rhetorically well crafted to have the desired effect of undermining faith in the factual accuracy of the Bible. It sent me, as a church historian, on a renewed search in the scholarship of OT studies, especially as relates to the Exodus and Conquest of Canaan."

I am so glad that you found the article to be enlightening and helpful. This was the goal, so thanks go to the Lord for putting it on my heart to write it. If it can lead to further study and research, as well, my prayer would be that God would use it to inspire others to go far beyond where I have gone. As I used to tell my students, "The sign of a great teacher is the number of his students who surpass him." (obviously the same applies to female teachers), which quote comes from a famous Christian figure who has done amazing things for the kingdom of God.

As for Dr. Redford, there is much that can be said. First of all, he is a top-rate Egyptologist, perhaps even unmatched in our day. He taught for many years here at the University of Toronto, where I am working on a PhD in Syro-Pal Archaeology with a first minor in Egyptian language and a second minor in Egyptian archaeology.

Dr. Redford's work has benefited me enormously. You can detect this if you glance through all of my footnotes. For fun, maybe you can search his name and see how many times it comes up on this webpage alone. Not a few! So to him and his efforts I owe a great debt. Probably my favorite insight of his is that Amenhotep II probably had a firstborn son named Thutmose who died in infancy or youth, and left virtually no trace in the written record. When I first read this, in an article of his, I almost fell back and crashed on the ground. My jaw must have been visibly open, probably enough to stuff an orange inside.

While his work in Egyptology is stellar, his work in Israel's history, oddly enough, is of a completely different nature. Where he shows himself to be a 1st-class scholar when writing in the former discipline, with the latter he shows himself to be a biased and incompetent "rant" with a clear-cut agenda to undermine any notion of historical parallels and consistencies between the Bible and the actual history of the Jewish people.

I remember the impression I had when I first read *"Egypt, Canaan, and Israel in Ancient Times"*. I was so excited to come to the part about Israel because I expected the same precision and convincing argumentation that he showed throughout the book. I was devastated to discover that

he has a vendetta against biblical historicity, and to find his treatment of Israel to be almost totally and completely worthless.

With such scholars, you can only have pity and great sorrow. I heard the same from him some weeks ago when he came here to speak. Out of nowhere, he just blasted-away at biblical historicity, without provocation from anyone in the audience. It was ugly and grossly out of place. Of course, the reality is that due to spiritual warfare, the enemy of God has so blinded his eyes and corrupted his heart that there is no end to the ways that he can use his influence to attempt to undermine the Word of God.

Ultimately, the good news is that God is still on the throne. Moreover, God is not mocked. Such men, without repentance, sit under the judgment of God. Their scoffing will not go unseen, nor will it go unpunished. Therefore, since vengeance is the Lord's, we need not worry whatsoever. God is the Great Equalizer. All will be brought to order, in His time.

Meanwhile, we can praise Him that He patiently allows such men and women the opportunity to repent and come to believe in the gospel of Jesus Christ. Amen? This frees us to be able to use, with great respect and appreciation, the aspects of such scholars' positive and fruitful contributions, without even focusing on their attempt to undermine biblical truth. Since vengeance is not ours, we must not judge, and we must not discount or undervalue any part of their work that is truly beneficial. This is the right way to respond, and it must be our response as those who want to walk according to the way that Christ walked.

On a final note, you also mentioned the Conquest. If you do not know, I published an article in JETS last year, entitled, "The Dating of Hazor's Destruction in Joshua 11 via Biblical, Archaeological, & Epigraphical Evidence". This article deals directly with the Conquest, and most pointedly with the destruction of Hazor, where I dug with Ben-Tor.

I hope that one day this article also will appear on the Exodus-Conquest page of ABR. However, there is no real rush. Meantime, if you would like to read that article presently, you can download a PDF version of it from my website at the following link: [exegesisinternational.org/index.php](http://exegesisinternational.org/index.php) I think that you will enjoy this article greatly. I attempt to be as thorough with the destruction of the Hazor of Joshua's day as I was with the exodus-pharaoh. If you enjoy the Conquest, and you believe in the integrity of God's Word and in grammatical-historical hermeneutics, I do not know how you will not be able to get excited by it.

This leaves me to reply to the posting by T. Robinson, which came before Mr. Smith's reply. However, since this reply was much shorter and less involved, I made it first. So, by the end of the week I hope to complete that reply, which should just about catch-me-up completely on all of the comments. If more come in, I will do my best to reply to them, as well.

Joshua Nielsen - 6-4-2010 12:31:31

Hello Mr. Petrovich,

I was very interested to read your article and its exploration of potential ties of Egyptian history with the Exodus. I currently am taking a New Kingdom Egypt class from Egyptologist Gregory Mumford (PhD. from University of Toronto), a marvelous teacher, at the University of Alabama in Birmingham. He has some first-hand archaeological experience in the Sinai (see his site: [www.deltasinai.com](http://www.deltasinai.com)) and has done at least one dig with Dr. James Hoffmeier, and had Donald Redford as one of his instructors at Toronto. He is very knowledgeable on Egyptian history and I am interested in the topic for its own merits as well as for potential tie-ins between Egyptian history and Biblical history in Canaan and the Transjordan. The course is not oriented toward making such tie-ins but I try to glean any relevant information as I go along.

When we went over Thutmose IV in class some bells went off in my head from some of the things Dr. Mumford said in class while going over his slides on the subject. The behavior of Thutmose IV was extremely peculiar, and it made me wonder if it did not have some connection to the dramatic events of the Exodus which might have occurred prior to that time. I realize that, as you stated earlier, that an "appealing" or convenient tie-in does not necessarily constitute evidence but I would like to cite some of the information which I think is worth stating from what we went over in class. The relevant slides on Thutmose IV which Dr. Mumford created read as follows (in part - using hyphens for original bulleted points):

\*[My note: Thutmose in the slides is shortened to T and Amenhotep to A (e.g. T-IV and A-II)]

-----  
(Slide 1)

Background:

- A-II succeeded by younger son: T-IV
- Heir-apparent died prematurely.
- Like other princes since the time of T-I, Prince T-IV = raised & educated at Memphis (north of capital: Thebes)
- Unlike most earlier Theban princes, T-IV displays unusual piety to deities in Memphite region.
- T-IV Memphite construction projects:
  - A. completing temple by Great Sphinx
  - B. construction in Ptah Temple (foundation deposit names T-IV)

-----  
(Slide 2)

Legitimizing his unexpected rule:

- T-IV's unusual piety to Memphis can be explained through events preceding his unexpected succession to the throne (in conjunction with Memphite assistance).
- Memphite assistance materializes through divine will of Great Sphinx: (= deity Hormachis)
- Great Sphinx promises the throne in exchange for freeing it from encroaching desert sands.
- T-IV dedicated Dream Stela before Great Sphinx (Hormachis)
- This stela relates T-IV's dream, whilst resting in shade of Sphinx after hunting:

[quotes stela]

-----  
Dr. Mumford went on to discuss the possibility of it being a real dream conjured by his subconscious or the more likely scenario of him creating this story to legitimize his unexpected ascension to the throne. It was the unexpectedness, the premature death of the heir-apparent (especially), and his extraordinary piety which led me to think he could be a surviving son of the Pharaoh of the Exodus and that his brother (the first born) had been slain in the tenth plague. His piety could have been induced from the terror of the plagues that occurred previously (quite in contrast to his hard-hearted father), albeit directing his piety toward Egyptian deities.

I am no Egyptologist or professional scholar, but upon a cursory observation these were the things that first struck me. I saw some echoes of this idea about Thutmose IV in your paper. It may be wishful thinking but I thought I would share these observations and possibly hope for some feedback from you. Also if you would like to see Dr. Mumford's slides about Amenhotep II, Thutmose IV, and Amenhotep III you can contact me by e-mail (see below) and I may be able to upload them to my website briefly for you to download them (they are too large for an email attachment I'm afraid).

In summary I thank you for taking up this idea from a fresh and unique perspective and I hope to see further ideas develop around this theory in the future to further test it to see if it holds up to scrutiny.

Best Regards,

Josh Nielsen

[jmnielsen@rocketmail.com](mailto:jmnielsen@rocketmail.com)

Douglas Petrovich - 8-4-2010 9:47:20

Dear Josh,

This is some insightful thinking on your part. Please continue to soak-up all that you can from Dr. Mumford, and continue to study what you can about Thutmose IV. Yes, many unusual events took place during his reign, which will need to be recounted and brought out into the light.

I can only offer a short and preliminary response for now, but more will come when I have a few less pressing responsibilities bearing down on me.

"The behavior of Thutmose IV was extremely peculiar, and it made me wonder if it did not have some connection to the dramatic events of the Exodus which might have occurred prior to that time."

True, but I would go so far as to say that these dramatic events of the exodus unquestionably occurred prior to Thutmose IV, removing any need for doubt or uncertainty. The late-exodus view does exist, but that does not make it a realistic option, necessarily. My research has proven to me that it has no place in the list of legitimate options where biblical disputes have arisen.

Others may disagree, but careful and thorough study bears out the boldness of my statement.

As for the slides, most certainly I would enjoy looking through them. I will work that out with you via e-mail. I do look forward to replying to your post more thoroughly, though.

Doug Petrovich

john stringer - 12-6-2010 6:16:49

Well, I must say, this entire debate has been most interesting. It is rare to find such in-depth analysis and peer review, but in a spirit of evangelical fellowship and respect, while still wrestling with robust - and complex - issues of chronology and interpretation. That is how I want scholarly debate to be, and the circles I'm happy to revolve through (yes, British spelling their friends. Artefacts, not artifacts, I'm afraid).

I find D P's position, and stance, most convincing. It is well researched, logically argued, adequately defended, without recourse to personal attacks and scholarly 'nastiness' (which I detest). As one who has wrestled with Egyptian chronology (during my masters thesis on the origins of the biblical Philistines - to be published by W&S shortly in the US) it is a veritable Red Sea quagmire. We do need to hold claims lightly. I find D P's approach (to humility) and the evolving discovery of truth (or perhaps "gradual revelation of" is a better phrase) commendable.

One point on "Pharaoh" and the drowning of his chariotry. While it is clear he was present, the biblical text does appear to suggest that HE DID NOT GO DOWN into the sea with the army, which makes military and political sense. It has been said previously that the Bible does not say he was drowned, which is correct. But I believe the text is stronger than that.

In the early part of the story, Pharaoh is personally involved.

Ex 14: 5 "When the king of Egypt was told..."

"Pharaoh AND his officials changed their minds..."

"What have WE done?..."

Ex 14:6 "So Pharoah had his chariot made ready AND took his army with him" etc.

However, later in the story, during the final chase and drowning, a clear separation and disparity emerges in the language:

Ex 14: 23 "THE EGYPTIANS pursued them..."

"...Pharoah's...horsemen followed them into the sea."

Ex 14:24 "[God looked down on] THE EGYPTIAN ARMY.."

Every reference at this point is to "The Egyptians" distinct from the earlier references to "Pharoah" personally. And to finalise the point, in the concluding Song of Moses and Miriam, its says...

Ex 15: 4 "Pharoah's chariots AND HIS ARMY he has thrown in to the sea..."

"The BEST OF PHAROAH'S OFFICERS are drowned in the sea.."

Ex 15: 21 "The horse and rider he has hurled into the sea."

Early part of Ex 14 - Pharoah in the first person;

second half of 14 and 15 (the exultant victory song) - Pharoah's servants and minions. If Pharoah himself had been killed, you can be sure this would have been exulted, as it is elsewhere in scripture.

Its obvious absence is strong evidence I think that Pharoah WAS NOT drowned himself in the 'battle' and thus slunk back to Memphis.

It's great to think that it may have been - for once - just like Yule Brunner in the Ten

Commandments, up on some high promontory imperiously watching the slaughter and roundup of mere slaves below (hardly the work of the Son of Ra himself) only to witness the overthrow from above, detached, and witness to the great God of Israel in action. That would also accord with ancient military practice (ala Xerxes and the naval battle of Salamis, sat imperiously atop his hill to watch events from a special throne) and is what I think happened here.

Doug, I look forward to reading more of your material, and contributing myself on other topics.

John Stringer (MA classical studies) (pastor)

Christchurch, New Zealand.

Dennis Oberholtzer - 24-8-2010 9:11:54

Hello again, I would like to address the reply by Doug Petrovich. Since I am no longer working on this topic, it is taking me awhile to locate some references. But first I would like to address the Jewish New Year.

I will quote my "Galactic Calendar" page 178 which I wrote in 2004:

The Seven Calendars of the Cross reveals the one day difference between the Aramaic Lunar and the Essene Lunar Calendars. Sometime after the Destruction of Jerusalem and the Diaspora of Jews from Palestine, the Jewish Community began using the Essene Calendar as the regular timekeeper. There is no proof of this, except for the event of 359 CE. In that year, the Jews added one day to their calendar to be in line with the Aramaic Calendar. If the Jews would still have been using the calendar from the Second Temple Period, it would have put them a day ahead of the Aramaic, because the two were one and the same. This is strong evidence the remnant in Palestine returned to the Essene Calendar, which was one and the same as the ancient Mosaic Calendar used before the Babylonian Captivity.

Since 359 CE, the Jewish Calendar now runs a day ahead of the Mosaic. Also, after the Destruction of Jerusalem, the calendar returned to the First of Tishri as New Year's Day. [ I add now that you can find the present day Jewish calendar, and it calculates from Tishri 1.] Therefore, from the time of the Exodus until the destruction of Herod's Temple the New Year began on the New Moon after the Spring Equinox. Prior to the Exodus, and after Herod's Temple the New

Year began on the First of Tishri. How do I prove that? All you need to do is look at the Biblical texts from the three time zones. Noah got drunk on the 1st day of the 1st month of the year, at the fall equinox [Tishri 1]. The birth of Abraham was on the Fall Equinox [Tishri 1]. Jewish tradition also claims Adam to have been born on the Fall Equinox. The first of Tishri is equal to the Fall Equinox - Tractate Erubin, Jerusalem Talmud.

The Egyptian Calendar is called in Exodus 12:18 "the 13th of Thout. The Hebrews counted the beginning of the day from sunset, the Egyptians reckoned from sunrise." - Worlds in Collision While much of this book is not accurate, this statement matches all calendar systems.

Moses started the New Year on the Spring Equinox, proven in the reaping of Barley, which was always done just after the Spring Equinox, and perpetually used during the First Temple.

I do not have space to show my Seven Calendars of the Cross, but it reveals a harmony of the Scriptures during the Crucifixion and Resurrection. The Apostle John wrote with the Essene Calendar, which was one and the same as the Mosaic. The Synoptic Gospels were written with the Aramaic Calendar, which ran one day ahead of the old Mosaic. Thus the need to add a day to the Jewish Calendar in 359 CE to "catch up" [but actually get one day ahead of the Mosaic].

The idea of having four New Years is only according to the festivals. But the Biblical references reveal a multiple calendar system built into the text. No one has taken the time to figure out which calendar system was being used in the text, until I spent 3 years doing so. It is time consuming, but my Galactic calendar reveals a harmony of the calendars never before seen.

Pi-Tum [Tell Ertabeh] was built with bricks, top layers without straw additive. - Story in Holy Land of Israel, and there are pictures of the archaeological site.

As to who the Pharaoh of the Exodus was, I still hold to Hatshepsut as being in Thebes, and her co-regent being in Zoan. My references are issues from an expensive Egyptian magazine, which I do not have, but have read and agree 100% with; and it too has 1445 as the year of the Exodus. One must remember that the Exodus began right at the start of the Spring Equinox, thus to say 1446 would not be incorrect if you are referring to the first sets of plagues. My other reference would be an article from BAR Magazine on the archaeological layout of Zoan, and Pharaoh's Temple complex built there.

Also, the Scripture states that the Exodus happened "in stages". This is the most ignored statement in the Bible. Also, when you put the Exodus accounts into time sequence, there was less than a week to get the people together in Pi-Tum, go to Succoth & stay the night, and go to the "hills" on the opposite side of present Suez Canal. From my experiences in hiking, and historical studies of the first settlers in Lancaster County [who were my ancestors], it has been proven that families without wagons, cars, wheels, can only travel about 4 mile per day. There simply was not enough time for Jews to have come from Memphis, Thebes, or even Alexander. These people either traveled at a later time, or as I believe at least some did, stayed as subjects of the deflated Egypt.

In God's Grace, Dennis L Oberholtzer

Kevin Johnson - 17-9-2010 3:41:37

Hello, I would like to first thank you Doug Petrovich for your time spent studying this fascinating topic. I came across this fabulous website as I was studying through Exodus recently and wondered if there was any information out there as to who the Pharaoh of the Exodus might be. I was very excited to find your work on this subject read through it several times.

I do however have some questions for you if you don't mind answering then or at least pointing me to the right direction. 1.) you dated the Exodus to 1446, based on the 1 Kings 6:1 passage and the understanding that Solomon's reign was 966. Well how is Solomon's reign dated? How do we



know the 4th year of his reign? As I am not a scholar and really know very little of this subject. I'm just trying to figure it all out as your website says these dates and suggests Amenhotep II, yet My NKJV Chronological Study Bible says Thutmose III was the ruler at this time, then Ussher gives the exodus date as 1491, and Solomons date to be 1012. It is all so very confusing! Which is the right date? Who is correct and why are there so many differences? Please help!

Kevin Johnson

Douglas Petrovich - 20-9-2010 22:04:32

Kevin,

Hello. To begin, you are welcome, and you are right about the time that went into writing my article. You don't want to know how many years and how many man-hours were required. My high-school, English-lit teacher once told us of a poet who never submitted his work for publication until after he edited it at least 75 times. I have never forgotten that story, and I always have sought to use that principle in anything I produce or publish. Time and others will have to be the judges as to how well I have done.

I am quite pleased that you found the article to be helpful. One thing is for certain: if you managed to read through it several times, you qualify for an endurance award or two. You NOW can imagine how much joy and amazement I experienced when I first discovered all of these historical truths, many of which had never been published, if ever uncovered by believers, who have reason to integrate Egyptian and biblical history.

I will give a shot at answering your questions, and you can tell me if this is not enough for you. First, I will address how well Solomon's reign is dated. We can have full confidence that the date for Solomon's reign is correct with a + or - of 1 year. If you look at my footnote #9, there I cite an article by Rodger Young, entitled, "When Did Solomon Die?".

This article will prove to you that Solomon's death dates between 932 and 930 BC. Young argues convincingly that it can be dated specifically to (some unspecified day between Nisan 1 and Tishri 1 of) 931 BC. The article is a bit complex, and you may have to read it more times than you read mine, but it is sound and brilliant work on Young's part. I can send you a PDF if you have no seminary library close, or cannot find it online.

I have been in contact with Rodger for almost 10 years now, and I can say that he is an absolute whiz-chronologist. He is a computers-and-mathematics specialist by profession, but he is a weekend warrior at biblical chronology. You would be wise to read as much of his work as you can consume.

One further note. His work is based on that of biblical chronologists who have gone before us, most notably Edwin Thiele, who is to this field what Darwin was to evolutionary theory (P.S. please just enjoy the humor [and analogy] here; I am NOT an evolutionist by any stretch of the imagination).

Thiele devoted much of his life to synchronizing historical events in the Bible with chronology derived from ANE historical studies, most notably the dates provided by Assyriology, as the Assyrians were the most accurate and detailed recorders of history in the ancient world. If you want to see the connections for yourself, please consult Thiele's work.

Incidentally, Thiele's book is cited in my footnote #23, which brings up a greater point. If you did not yet glance through my footnotes, please do so, as the sources there are a virtual goldmine for answering questions that you might have. Credit goes to all of these wonderful authors, whose work was indispensable to my article, and without whom I never would have had a platform on which to build. To learn more, see which writings might be of help to you, then go to those sources and do your own research.

Now let me move on to your comment about the NKJV telling you that Thutmose III was the ruler at this time. First of all, as you may know, my article spares no expense to prove that this pharaoh CANNOT POSSIBLY be the exodus-pharaoh. To put it bluntly, his biography unequivocally eliminates him from contention. Study my arguments for more on this.

I can add a bit to this, though. In my footnote #45, I delineate the three different views (among Egyptologists) as to the precise chronology of the Egypt of the mid-2nd millennium BC. Like with most fields, "popular consensus" plays a big part in views taken by Egyptological scholars (in said field and, by extrapolation, in other related fields, such as biblical studies). This can be a bad--as well as a sad--reality. In this case, it is.

About 20 or 25 years ago, the high chronology was in vogue. Since then, many Egyptologists have begun to down-date events previously thought to be 25 or less years earlier in time. This "problem" arose mainly from scholars in other fields who already had "fixed dates" for their fields (eg. Hittitologists), who then scolded Egyptologists when synchronisms were shown to prove that one or the other field had an imprecise absolute chronology. Obviously, they implied that Egyptologists were the ones who were wrong and had to move their dates.

This resulted in the popularity of the middle and low chronologies [Note: technically, Egyptologists fudged by suggesting that dates for the rising of Sothis--which astronomical event was recorded in several ancient papyri--could be reinterpreted as having been observed from different places in Egypt than the traditionally held site of Memphis, thus automatically dropping down the dates in their absolute chronology, but I don't know if this is of importance to you or not, so I will leave it at that].

At present, the vogue view in the field is the low chronology. However, not all have succumbed, and others have begun to doubt the current view because they came across data that cannot support a low chronology. Bottom line: the current popularity of the low chronology DOES NOT prove that it is the CORRECT chronology. All it proves is that popularity contests are of value even to scholars, whether they should be or not.

Now back to your question. Most biblical scholars are blind as bats when it comes to Egyptology. Just a fact. As a result, the few sources they do consult probably (if not undoubtedly) use the low chronology. The producers of the NKJV study Bible undoubtedly were suckered into this position, whether or not they even knew that there is a dispute about dating and chronology. Their choice was a bad one: it doomed them to picking the wrong guy for their pharaoh of 1446 BC.

But if you want to prove it for yourself, study the biography of Thutmose III, and show me how in the world he can overcome the biographical incongruities (with the exodus-pharaoh) that I have accentuated in my article. Prove me wrong, and I will be the first one to believe. But until someone proves my argumentation to be wrong, there is no way any pharaoh but Amenhotep II can be identified as the actual exodus-pharaoh.

As for Ussher's dates, the work of Thiele and Young will show you why a date of 1491 is way too early for the exodus. Who is correct? The early-date proponents--such as Thiele, Young, and many others--who hold to 1446 as the date of the exodus are correct.

I have studied this issue ad-infinitum, and with complete confidence I can now state that there is no other realistic possibility. But this took me years of study. Better for you to do your own homework first, so that the facts will have led you to your convictions, rather than a chosen surrogate-voice or scholar. There is a reason why God does not have any grandchildren.

Finally, you asked why there are so many differences about dating. Believe me, I could write for hours about other positions (i.e. suggested dates) and arguments for these views that you probably have never encountered. It's much worse than you think.

But the basic reason for this is that there are so many historical events, and they go so far back into time, and there are so many actual and supposed synchronisms, that every scholar out there has the potential to formulate a slightly (or even "vastly") different view than his comrade. Moreover, we operate on a different calendar than theirs. And even many of them (in antiquity) operated with different systems than did those of other cultures.

Since there were various systems employed, with so little overlapping, and such large gaps between recorded events (from antiquity until today), the margin for error and disagreement is as wide as the Marianas Trench. But once you have become confident in your own view, especially if your % of certainty reaches near 100%, then you will not be bothered nearly as much by the large number of folks who have yet to get it right. Of this I am sure, and in this you can take comfort. It's not a matter of being stubborn about 1 position or of "being right"; it's just the natural outcome of zeroing-in on truth. There is nothing more securing than finding and resting on truth.

Doug Petrovich

ABR - 20-9-2010 22:15:23

Rodger Young's article, "When Did Solomon Die?", can be found on the JETS website at this link:

[www.etsjets.org/.../46-4-pp589-603\\_JETS.pdf](http://www.etsjets.org/.../46-4-pp589-603_JETS.pdf)

Blessings,

ABR

T Robinson - 21-9-2010 0:36:28

To Doug Petrovich:

Thanks for all your work and in answering the people leaving comments here. I've been following the thread with interest. You noted back on March 3 that you were intending to answer the points that I raised on Feb. 22--which I was very much looking forward to--but it appears that you never got around to doing so. Do you still intend to address those? Thanks.

Tom Robinson

Doug Petrovich - 13-12-2010 18:52:15

Tom,

Thanks for your interest in following the thread and posting a number of questions and concerns with issues that you wanted to raise regarding the article. First off, I apologize for not getting to your post much sooner, which I wanted to do in the summer, but unintentionally never ended up doing. Once the semester started, life became a bit too rushed for me to reply, as I knew that my replies to you would not be very short ones, at all. So now that my break has arrived, and I can do some of the things I have been wanting to do, I am ready to address your concerns. I will not treat them at once, but in piecemeal, though not in the order that you listed them.

"2) According to the regnal dates here, Hatshepsut was still in power (living to 1484) when Moses fled Egypt (in 1486, i.e. 1446+40). It seems that other adjustments could be made to allow Hatshepsut's death in or prior to 1486--so that Moses would have been fleeing from a sole-ruling Thutmose III. Perhaps the following regnal dates would work: Amenhotep I (1550-1529); Thutmose I (1529-1518); Thutmose II (1518-1507); Hatshepsut (1507-1487); Thutmose III (1507-1453); Amenhotep II (1453-1427); Thutmose IV (1427-1418); Amenhotep III (1406-1399). This would place Amenhotep II's ninth year in 1445 instead of 1446--giving at least a little more time for reconstituting Egypt's military."

My first comment is that I fail to understand why you want to give Hatshepsut an early death, why you want Thutmose III to be a sole-ruler at the time of Moses' murder and flight out of Egypt, and why you want to push the Year-9 campaign forward a year. Does this all just seem to make it tidier? More logical? Such historical revisionism is a dangerous practice, and I am not sure you would want to start down this path. Our job as historians is to understand what happened, when it happened, and why it happened. Establishing the correct synchronism comes first. Reconciling one ethnic peoples' account with that of another becomes a secondary issue, our own puzzle to solve. We cannot simply modify the record and insert what seems more logical.

There is nothing in the biblical text that requires a sole ruler in Egypt at the time when Moses fled. Moreover, this would not be the first time for it in a biblical narrative. Almost assuredly, when Joseph interpreted the dream of the 12th-Dynasty pharaoh in 1887 BC, there were two pharaohs sitting on the throne: Amenemhet II and his son, Sesostri II. The Bible has no problem with this. Next, when Joseph was made the second ruler over Egypt (Gen 41:46) in 1885 BC, this was one year before Amenemhet II died. At this time (1885 BC), when co-regencies were the absolute norm in Egypt, Sesostri II would have been the active ruler at the capital (Itj-Tawy), while Amenemhet II was in semi-retirement at Dahshur, where his pyramid and mortuary complex were located. This was the regular practice in both the 12th and the 18th Dynasties. I can site many examples of this, but hopefully you would not require a slew of examples to accept it. So, we have no reason at all to require a sole-regent during the moment of Moses' departure. Then comes the matter of Hatshepsut. Why do you want her dead at Moses' departure? What drives this deduction? I see no reason whatsoever for this. Moreover, Egyptologists are quick and careful to point out that her departure from office is not linked to any information we have about her death. In other words, the evidence strongly seems to imply that her exit from office was not due to her death, but due to some reason(s) unknown to the carefully kept records of ancient Egypt. This non-documentation of her departure from office being connected to her death is not the norm for the 18th Dynasty, to be sure. But such a pre-death abdication would make a great deal of sense if it were tied to the murder committed by her adoptive son, Moses. Perhaps she was forced out of office as a repercussion of Moses' heinous crime. Perhaps she herself was so emotionally scarred after this event that she removed herself from office, either out of shame or emotional trauma. In any case, such a chain of events as this actually accords better with the biblical record than an unwarranted proposal that she must have been dead when Moses fled. In relation to your regnal lengths for the pharaohs of the 18th Dynasty, I would suggest that you have 2 years too short for the reign of Thutmose I, 1 year too many for Thutmose II, and a fundamental misunderstanding of the start-dates for the reigns of Thutmose III and Hatshepsut. To solve this third problem, I would suggest that you consult the following article: William Perry, "Redating the Reign of Hatshepsut," KMT 13:4 (Win 2002/03), 51, 53. If you would like to dispute the regnal lengths of Thutmose I or Thutmose II, I would ask you to present your argument first.

My final question from this post of yours is why you want to push the 9th-Year campaign of A2 (Amenhotep II) forward by a year. Again, this is unnecessary revisionism. Moreover, it is actually overthinking. If you try pushing that campaign into 1445 BC, you actually create a far bigger problem (or two!) than you solve. Let's assume that the November-campaign was not launched in the year of the exodus, as you suggest. Yet we both admit that there is an urgency involved, though in your case you want to say that a Nov-campaign in the year of the exodus is too soon for the Egyptians to marshal a makeshift army to invade southern Palestine.

Well, let's say that the Egyptians make it (or "fake it", however you want to put it) through the winter, when campaigns are never launched. Here then is the \$65,000 question for you: why then did the Egyptians not launch their campaign in the spring, when kings did launch campaigns, instead of waiting until November of that same year (according to our calendar, of course), when kings did not launch campaigns? Does the weightiness of this dilemma register with you? This is a huge problem. The urgency dissipates completely if you wait 1½ years to launch the campaign, and the logic of it dissipates as well, moving from a spring-departure to a near-winter-departure. I do not think there is any way that your proposal could be unshackled from this.

But there is another problem, one that is documented in an ancient historical text of the day. The Memphis Stele of Amenhotep II, which I translated during this calendar year, carefully provides a/the goal of the 2nd military campaign of A2: "Now the ruler of Naharin (Mitanni), the ruler of Hatti (Hittites), and the ruler of Shinar (Babylonia) heard of the great victories that he (A2) had accomplished. Each one was giving praise to his counterpart in relation to every diplomatic gift from every foreign land. They were speaking in their hearts to their forefathers in order to beg for peace from his majesty and to beseech the one (i.e. the king) to give to them the breath of life."

Amenhotep had an explicit goal in his rushed campaign: he wanted the rulers of the other superpowers (or "rising superpowers", as the case may be with at least one of them) of the ancient world to know that they should be in fear and awe of him, and Egypt. Now really, how much sense would it make for A2 to launch a campaign 1½ years after the embarrassment of the exodus/Reed Sea-fiasco, if he wanted to save face with these superpowers? If he waits that long, what he does—in all truth!—is to give one or more of them reason to invade and subjugate some or all of his Syro-Palestinian holdings once that next spring (after the exodus) rolls around. This point is a slam dunk. Again, you are faced with a web that is far too tightly spun for your proposal to escape. More replies to come.

Doug Petrovich

Doug Petrovich - 13-12-2010 18:53:37

Tom,

"3) It is still troublesome that Egypt would be able to launch any kind of military campaign soon after the massive devastation of the country in the ten plagues and Red Sea. The nation's food supply was eradicated, both crops and livestock--as was much of it's wealth. I suppose that does make a good argument for the fact that the Egyptians in desperation had to go and take it from elsewhere or else perish. But how they were able to take it from elsewhere still seems problematic. The Red Sea account says that ALL the chariots of Egypt pursued the Israelites. No doubt there were some remaining forces down in Thebes though. Perhaps the biblical Mizraim was limited to the northern land? This would be a helpful discussion."

If you contrast carefully the differences between A2's Year-9 campaign with all of the other campaigns of his and his father's, you will see that this final campaign hardly even deserves to be called a military campaign. It was nothing more than a glorified slave-raid. One of the staunch differences that distinguish this campaign is that it was conducted only in southern Palestine and the Negev, far from the powerful and well-fortified cities further to the north. Thus there were virtually no tactics needed, nor any siege machines, nor massive amounts of weaponry, nor even trained soldiers.

In light of all of this, the Egyptian "army" involved in this raid may have consisted almost entirely of new recruits, comprised of non-firstborns throughout Egypt who can be considered as mere survivors of the holocaust. I do not think I would be comfortable with saying that there were reserve troops in Thebes that did not go to the Sea of Reeds. The implication of the text

seems to be that the entire army of Egypt went with pharaoh. The only possible exception I could see would be distant Egyptian garrisons in Syro-Palestine (or Nubia?), which would have been far too removed from earshot when pharaoh called for his army to assemble in the Delta. I certainly could not agree that the entire food supply (crops and livestock) was eradicated. The text never spells this out. After the 5th plague (pestilence), which struck the livestock, there were still livestock alive for the effects of the 7th plague (hail), which was intended to target and destroy all living creatures exposed in the fields, those that were not under protective shelter. The text never states that no livestock survived (i.e. that there were no sheltered Egyptian animals), and we have no reason to think that the result after the 7th plague was any different than the result after the 5th plague. It is fully reasonable to suggest that some animals survived, and some grain survived. Thus they had the necessary sustenance to hold-out until the November campaign, if not longer. If God wanted to starve-out the Egyptians completely, He would have done so. Plus, the purpose of the Year-9 campaign was to replenish the lost slave base, not to acquire food. "Perhaps the biblical Mizraim was limited to the northern land?" I don't really think you want to assert this kind of revisionism. Mizraim, in Hebrew, is in the dual. The reason for it is that Egypt considered itself "The Two Lands" (Egyptian: Tawy, also in dual!), implying the unification of Upper Egypt and Lower Egypt. Every pharaoh wanted to be Neb Tawy, the Lord of the Two Lands, which signified his sovereignty over a united Egypt. Most importantly for our purposes, ALL of the 18th Dynasty's pharaohs carried this title. So the notion that biblical Mizraim was limited to Lower Egypt alone completely contradicts the historical situation in Egypt during the mid-15th century BC.

"(6) Petrovich's criticism of Shea's conclusion regarding two Amenhotep II's is certainly valid, as this seems highly unlikely. However, some specifics of his criticism are not justified. First, Petrovich contends that the royal family would be opposed to the imposter, but Shea argues that the imposter would be a brother who was part of the royal family and a legitimate claimant to the throne anyway."

What you seem to fail to appreciate here is that even if Amenhotep IIB—would one actually have existed—were a brother with a legitimate claim to the throne (or at least a claim to royalty), he would have to convince the entire royal family to accept the terms of his grand scheme, then hope that none of them would blow the whistle on him or leak the information somehow. The other problem, of course, is that you have an entire class of people, known to us as scribes, who would need to buy-into the whole plan, as well. These scribes, who aimed at precision and the proper keeping of the maat (Egyptian for the rightness of everything, which leads to peace and tranquility), would be much more difficult to persuade to deceive the nation and blot its history, since they would be risking the upsetting of the maat just to fool the world into thinking that Amenhotep II was still alive. So, my actual contention is that the royal family would oppose the imposter under any circumstances (for any of a number of reasons), even if that imposter himself were one of its members, not to mention that the Egyptian scribal order would do likewise, due to their devotion to the keeping of the maat.

"Second, Petrovich says that no pharaoh would assume the identity of a defeated and discredited predecessor. This ignores the fact that by assuming the identity, there would be no such defeated and discredited predecessor--it would be as if no humiliation had occurred, and as if this new pharaoh was not a successor but the same person whose death was covered up."

Hmmm. Now, this logic is approaching borderline bizarre. I went to great lengths to prove that Egyptian monarchs, especially imperialists, were careful not to record their defeats. Perhaps you have taken this point a bit too far. Just because there was no recording of the plagues or the massive defeat at the Sea of Reeds, we cannot assume that 1) there was no defeat; 2) the entire

Egyptian nation was oblivious to the proceedings; and/or 3) word of the defeat did not reverberate around the entire ANE world as a boisterous gong.

I already cited the importance A2 gave to using his Year-9 campaign as ideological propaganda designed to strike fear into the kings of his rival superpowers. Thus even pharaoh was smart enough to know that these major events were international news. What I did not mention was that God Himself brought about all of these monumental acts as part of a greater plan, which was to reveal His glory to the nations through the humiliation of Egypt, the world's #1 superpower at the time (from the days of Thutmose III's expansionary exploits). This goal can be seen in the similar story of the drying-up of the waters of the Sea of Reeds expressly so that all the peoples of the earth would know of God's might (Josh 4:23, 24; cf. Josh 2:9, 10, where Rahab speaks of how this goal was still realized 40 years after the event had transpired). Thus, there WAS a discredited "predecessor", a fact that none of the ancients did or could try to sweep under the rug. To operate from the position that assumes the opposite is to enter a world of non-reality.

"Third, a new ruler could have a very good reason for such a cover up, as the legitimacy of pharaonic rule in general was at stake. If the people knew that their divine pharaoh was destroyed by a foreign god, why should they follow a successor in his place?"

Pharaonic rule was never at stake. The issue was settled in about 3050 BC, according to conventional chronology, and was never challenged. Moreover, as a result of the unquestioned legitimacy of the institution of royal rule, the Egyptian people would have followed pharaoh up to the top of Mt. Fuji, if that is what he told them was decreed for them to do. Nobody would have questioned him. Nobody would have doubted him, even if their lives would be at risk. Their devotion was unequivocal. If you can cite one reputable Egyptologist who would agree with you on your point here, I would be so bold as to say that I myself would climb to the top of Mt. Fuji. "Still, this extraordinary circumstance seems far-fetched--and it is not required to fit what is stated in Scripture, as Petrovich shows.

At least you came out OK in the wash. Wink

Douglas Petrovich - 17-12-2010 17:42:08

Tom,

Here's the last installment of my responses to the questions that you raised. Thanks again for the interaction, which is truly an "iron sharpening iron" type of experience.

"5) It is worth noting that Josephus, in mistakenly trying to identify the Israelites with the Hyksos, rejects historians placing the Exodus during the reigns of 'Thummosis,' 'Tethmosis' or 'Amenophis,' whom he wrongly labels fictitious (Against Apion, Book 1, Sections 14, 15 and 24-35). This lends support to an 18th-dynasty Exodus--but does not narrow it down enough."

I won't go into this one, except to say that Josephus is to be commended for knowing that no Thutmose or Amenhotep should be attributed to either of the Hyksos dynasties (#'s 15 & 16).

"4) In the same vein, one wonders how just three or four decades after the Exodus, Egypt was able to enter one of the peaks of its civilization under the reign of Amenhotep III the Magnificent. As noted at Wikipedia, 'His lengthy reign was a period of unprecedented prosperity and artistic splendor, when Egypt reached the peak of her artistic and international power.' This helps the argument of those who make HIM the pharaoh of the Exodus (as it was downhill after his reign and seeing Akhenaten's reign in response to it) and those who claim that the Exodus did not happen in the 18th dynasty at all (arguing for a new Egyptian chronology)."

If Amenhotep III's alleged international prowess and Egypt's prosperity under his reign is anyone's reasoning for selecting him as the exodus-pharaoh, then I would characterize such scholarship as the equivalent of playing "Pin the Tail on the Donkey" with a blindfold, wildly and

aimlessly wandering around, vainly hoping to find the target without sight, and pinning that sucker on the first thing he bumps into. There is no better way to characterize it.

As for Wikipedia, the rule of thumb is always the following principle: You get what you pay for. I do not want to say that you cannot find valid information on Wikipedia, because you can (at times, at least), but this online source should be consulted “as a teaser”, but not as serious scholarship. Your citation of their entry for Amenhotep III (now A3) is a perfect case in point. So, Wikipedia actually wants us to believe that A3 experienced unprecedented prosperity and under him Egypt reached its height of international power? As a PhD student whose first minor is Egyptology, I can confidently tell you that any Egyptologist who reads this statement will have one of the deepest belly-laughs that he/she has experienced in a long, long time. The only question is whether this picture of A3’s reign is more farcical or more humorous, and I’m not really sure that I can choose between them.

If we are going to talk about true scholarship here, it is worth noting that probably the best single source on A3 is a book entitled, “Amenhotep III: Perspectives on His Reign,” ed. by David O’Connor and Eric Cline (Ann Arbor: U. of Michigan Press, 2001). Let me just make two short footnotes related to this publication, before proceeding with the topic at hand.

First, I have my own copy of this book, which compiles articles by various scholars, making it a comprehensive study of this pharaoh’s reign. But as a diehard Ohio State Buckeye fan, this is perhaps the only time you will see me plugging a book published by UM Press. Otherwise, I wash my hands of anything that wreaks of Maize and Blue. Go Bucks!

Second, I’d like to add a word on Eric Cline, who is a reputed archaeologist, and long has been involved with Finkelstein in the dig at Megiddo. Cline is a rather boisterous archaeologist, and it’s fair to say that he has a chip on his shoulder regarding his repudiation of the notion of biblical historicity. When he blasted away at our view of Jericho’s supporting the destruction under Joshua, I privately challenged him to a debate on Jericho. I told him that he can pick the university campus, and I would be there to give him the chance to humiliate someone who would present and defend the conservative view. He replied by suggesting that we instead have the debate in Israel, where—of course—there would be almost NO interest, NO audience, and NO media attention. When I pointed this out to him, and again pushed for a university in the US, he flat-out refused the debate. Well, what does this say about his confidence in his view?

Now back to A3. On p. 19 of *Perspectives*, Lawrence Berman notes that, yes, according to official ideology, “The pharaoh [A3] was master of the world... so even Amenhotep III claimed sovereignty over Troy and Mycenae [pre-Philistine Sea Peoples], Assyria and Babylon.” Rows of bound captives portray hundreds of exotic conquered foreign peoples, complete with name-rings. What is Berman’s commentary on this propaganda? “The picture thus presented of worldwide Egyptian domination is greatly exaggerated. The Aegean world and the lands of the Tigris and the Euphrates were, and always remained, well outside Egypt’s sphere of influence.”

In short, A3 was a master-deceiver, and while he intended primarily to mislead his own contemporaries, we would be quite the fools if 3400 years later we also were duped into this scheme of deception. If you want to have a true and accurate picture of Egypt’s international involvement and imperialism, focus on the reign of Thutmose III, whose 17 Asiatic campaigns pushed further up the Levant, and eventually led to an excursion in which they sacked and burned towns along the distant Euphrates River. This is well documented, AND supported by archaeological discovery of artifacts (scarabs, etc.) and victory stelae.

Yes, A3’s reign displays a large amount of wealth, but there is no evidence whatsoever that would lead one to conclude that he was richer than Thutmose III or any of the intervening pharaohs. He just flaunted his wealth. But the fact is that A3’s wealth is absolutely connected to



the exploits of his predecessors; he never led military campaigns that filled Egypt's coffers to the hilt. This ended with A2's First Asiatic Campaign! And yes, some of Egypt's wealth was lost to the plundering Israelites during the exodus-era of A2's reign, but there was far too much there in Egypt for the Israelites even to approach a complete ransacking. This would be impossible! There was way, way too much. The Israelites did not turn the Egyptians into paupers; they just took enough to have wealth for themselves. Let's be sure that we do not confuse ourselves with overblown suppositions.

"1) Footnote 26 places the exodus, which occurred on the 15th day of the first month, on a Friday night and Saturday. However, Exodus 16 seems to connect Israel's arrival at Elim on the 15th day of the second month with the people crying out for food and God answering with the giving of quail in the evening and the commencement of the weekly manna cycle the next morning. This would make the 16th day of the second month a Saturday night and Sunday. Counting backwards and giving 30 days for the first month according to the fixed Hebrew calendar, the 15th day of the first month (the date of the Exodus) would fall on a Wednesday night and Thursday. (Allowing a 29-day first month according to possible observation-method of month determination would mean a Thursday night and Friday Exodus--in neither case a Friday night and Saturday Exodus.)" I'm glad that you read through this long and detailed footnote, and the fact that you've thought through it is more than most readers can say, so I salute you. Most lunar calendars of antiquity—including the Hebrew, Chinese, and Hindu versions—are actually lunisolar, meaning that they have a variable number of months in the year, which would have to be "made up for" in time. The reason for this is that a year is not evenly divisible by an exact number of lunations, so intercalary months are added to keep seasons from drifting. The Hebrew and Egyptian calendars were based on the first sighting of the lunar crescent before sunset, not based on a rigidly-held-to cycle of 30-day intervals.

Using the same webpage cited in my article, the following (i.e. 2nd Israelite) month's new moon was observed on (what would be, if it weren't for the two variables I detailed) May 8, at 6:49 UT (Greenwich time). Calculating this to applicable Egyptian time (UT + 2.1 hrs.), the sighting would have occurred at 8:55 am, local time. This means that with this 2nd month—unlike the previous month, whose sighting transpired after dusk—we would not have to "push forward" the official sighting-day by one day when adapting their system to our own calendar's system. Then, we have to factor-in the modifications due to the 1 day of supra-NASA variation that I explained in the footnote. Therefore, for the 2nd Hebrew month of the exodus-year, May 9 would be the proper day for the official observance of the new moon (i.e. new month). Since April has 30 days, then the movement from April 10 (day 1 of month 1) to May 9 (day 1 of month 2) would make the daytime hours (our calendar) of May 9 the 30th day after the beginning of the previous month. The new moon (month) would have been declared at dusk (the start of the new day in their system) of May 9. Here is the 30-day interval that you were so desperately seeking. The following scheme thus develops, with the 1st "Day 1" representing Month 1, and the 2nd "Day 1" representing Month 2:

Day 1 = 10/11 Apr = Fri/Sat

Day 15 = 24/25 Apr = Fri/Sat

Day 1 = 9/10 Apr = Sat/Sun

Day 15 = 23/24 Apr = Sat/Sun

Day 16 = 24/25 Apr = Sun/Mon

The Israelites arrived at Sin (Ex 16:1) on Day 15 of Month 2, as you noted. This means that they arrived either on Saturday (after dusk) or on Sunday (before dusk). The text does not make clear either option, so we cannot rule-out one or the other at this point. After their arrival, the people

complained about a lack of food, as you note. Moses then explains to the people that the regular regimen that God will establish is to give them meat (quail) by evening and bread (manna) by morning (Ex 16:6-8, 12).

It seems FASCINATING and INSTRUCTIVE that what first came to the Israelites was meat, in the evening. Therefore, THAT VERY EVENING on which they arrived, God immediately (i.e. within hours) provided them with quail meat (Ex 16:13a). There was virtually no waiting. In the morning, God provided the manna, which they gathered and ate (Ex 16:13b-17). This scenario can take place if the Israelites arrived after dusk on Saturday (Day 15), a completely legitimate possibility according to the calendar I've proposed.

The manna collecting thus would have commenced on Sunday morning, the beginning of the weekly manna-cycle to which you referred. And finally, on the 6th day of gathering (Fri AM), they would gather double the amount of manna (Ex 16:5), so that they would not have to gather it on Saturday morning (on the Sabbath). Therefore, as a result of all of this, your objection is answered adequately, and the scheme fits precisely with the events in Ex 16.

In fact, what we learned historically actually answers for us the question left open by the biblical text: Did the Israelites arrive at the Wilderness of Sin on Saturday or Sunday (both being possible, since both are part of the Israelites' Day 15). But I have to thank you, Tom, because you have helped to solidify even further the veracity of the scenario that a synchronization of Israelite and Egyptian history has led me to conclude and articulate. To God be the glory for His matchless precision!!

Doug Petrovich

Cathy Cooper - 26-4-2011 23:01:26

I just wanted to comment that I quoted part of your article on a post i did on the Exodus where I argue that the Exodus did not happen according the the bible. I use historical/materialist evidence to show it most likely was composed in the 7th century BCE as an ideological story written to elevate the status of the Jewish kings, and to serve their political, economic, and social interests.

Doug Petrovich - 13-5-2011 15:30:20

Cathy,

Thanks for letting me know that you've interacted with my article, and for posting a link to it on the webpage where you did so (which I found through a Google search). Certainly the view you advocate as a self-proclaimed atheist is one that is popular among scholars who are committed to a position that does not see the Bible as being historically accurate (whether in part or in whole). The one variable is the century chosen for this alleged falsified composition.

What I always have found amazing is how much faith is required to hold such a view that suggests a mass-conspiracy that transpired for almost 1000 years, which had at its roots the conscious, evil decision to falsify the entire historical record for a single ethnic people. Yes, this is truly a "faith-position" of the highest degree, since it requires that 100% of the "evidence" to uphold the view is found in modern conjuring of ancient, recorded events. In other words, there is no evidence whatsoever from antiquity that would verify or support such a radical view, at least among the Israelites themselves, if not across the ANE as a whole: no record of its falsification, nobody speaking to its non-truthfulness, no known dissenters, and nothing whatsoever in the epigraphical or archaeological record.

The other mind-boggling assumption that one has to make to hold your view is that this alleged falsification of historical events, clearly written in the form of factual history (rather than

mythical or legendary), is that the entire nation of ancient Israelite people--and a whole scribal class from the 7th century BC (in the case of your version) through at least the 10th century AD (when the Leningrad Codex was copied)--uniformly supported the perpetuation of this history of lies. More than this, they showed an unparalleled rigor and commitment to its preservation in the form of textual transmission not found with any other nation or by any other people of antiquity. How could so many people over so many centuries commit so much time, energy, financial backing, and commitment to the careful and meticulous preservation of abject lies?

How one is able to hold to such a position as this, quite frankly, is beyond me. All of the evidence, as well as reason alone, grates against the integrity of a view like yours. In summary, a view that reinterprets clearly stated facts in the Bible and assigns a national conspiracy over the period of a millennium to support the propagandistic lying about their national history requires far more faith than I am willing to muster. To use a phrase dear to many of your fellow atheists, this requires "blind faith". Moreover, this practice certainly grates against good scientific principle (which necessitates empirical or circumstantial evidence to back the view), which normally is what atheists are supposed to champion as their rallying cry. But if you have enough faith to hold to your view with honest conviction, more power to you. As for me, I would rather stick with the position supported by well reasoned faith. Both views do require faith, but the basis for this faith in these diametrically opposed views is at opposite ends of the spectrum of reason.

Sincerely,

Douglas Petrovich

Joseph F. Gambino - 18-5-2011 10:31:21

Dear Dr. Petrovich, Sorry for taking so long to contact you again, but the last year has found me involved in New Testament studies. Cathy Cooper's note to you got me back to your article.

I concede nothing to Dr. Brock but the FAR possibility of some calendrical lash after 3000 years. At no time do I assert or concede a Thutmose II Exodus Event; nor do I expect you to do so. T II was a blip on the historical screen 50 years before the Exodus. I've taught, recorded and distributed a Amenhotep Exodus Event since 1987; after over 20 years I still concede little on that view. (BTW,I've finally mailed you a hard copy of my chart from 1987)

I mostly distributed the charts to New York area churches back when they started to use the "Brothers in Egypt" book in their church schools ca. 1999. (Nice way to teach the Kiddos a low-view of the Scriptures)

What I find interesting is that a Amenhotep II Exodus Event (and his survival) has been treated as a 'discovery' in the last couple of years. I worked from Joseph ruling under the Senuseret boys (II & III) forward to A II being the Pharaoh of the Exodus, and didn't think I 'discovered' anything. I only documented it in a chart for a Genesis class I taught back in the Late 80's. My focus was on Joseph in Egypt.

I'm glad to hear you share my view that AkenAton was profoundly affected by the Hebrews coming out into Canaan. This is also on my 1987 chart.

Here are a few other 'discoveries' found on my chart and in my classes that others might make in the coming years: (don't laugh, it happened once before)

1. Senuseret II worked on the Faiyum and Bahr Yusuf systems in response to Joseph's directives.
2. Senuseret III was younger than Joseph, so Joseph was as a father to him. (Joseph's comment to his Brothers was virtually true; not an Egyptianism)
3. Jacob's Sons went into Egypt with 4 Wives. (This is how I read the MT, not LXX)
4. You already know (and per my Chart) Hatshepsut was Moses' step-mother.
5. An Alphabet was invented by Joseph and the Hebrews while in Egypt.

6. Moses retrieves documentation from the Memphis Library, put there by Joseph, BEFORE he leaves for Midian. (Moses knew of a 7 Day Creation before he got to Sinai)  
7. From the Exodus Event of 1446 through out the 18th Dynasty the Egyptians no longer referred to the Egyptian Army with any personal pride.  
To Cathy Cooper: If your argument is that the Exodus Account is an etiological construct made to raise the image of Jewish Kings, then it is the worst etiological piece of work in human history. Everyone in the early part of the Work fails God, and He wants to destroy them!!  
Blessings of Jesus upon you Dr.

Douglas Petrovich - 18-5-2011 14:48:34

Dear Mr. Gambino,

Thanks so much for your response. The time it took you to respond is not a problem, and besides, I myself have taken longer to reply to some of the other respondents to the article. I agree completely with the vast majority of what you have to say, and I appreciate your input and your long-time commitment to the same synchronization. I will reply only to a selected number of points that you made.

“What I find interesting is that an Amenhotep II Exodus Event (and his survival) has been treated as a ‘discovery’ in the last couple of years.”

I’m not sure who’s calling it a discovery, as there are many who have held this view going back far into the 20th century. What my article attempts to do, however, is interact extensively with the Egyptian sources and writings of Egyptologists, which is something that has not been done almost at all by early-exodus proponents such as you and I.

“I worked from Joseph ruling under the Senuseret boys (II & III) forward to A II being the Pharaoh of the Exodus, ... My focus was on Joseph in Egypt.”

What’s interesting here is that over the last few years I have done an enormous amount of research into the time period of Joseph. In fact, at the NEAS national meetings in 2009 and 2010, I presented historical and archaeological evidence for Joseph’s impact on Egypt in a 1-hour slide show each year. I have part of this in written-form for an article I am writing, which I hope to submit for publication over the summer.

You are absolutely correct that Sesostri II is the abundance-pharaoh, and that Sesostri III is the famine-pharaoh. Even though you may have held to this view for a long time, I think you will be amazed to see what kind of evidence is out there that confirms this synchronization.

“Senuseret II worked on the Faiyum and Bahr Yusuf systems in response to Joseph’s directives.”

I agree completely with this, with the exception that I would say Joseph did the work in response to Sesostri II’s directive to accomplish whatever was necessary to prepare Egypt for the events revealed in his dream, since he said to Joseph, “according to your command all my people shall do homage” (Gen 41:40). Pharaoh probably “let him take the ball and run with it”, as we would say. Incidentally, a large portion of my article will focus on both the Fayyum and the Bar Yusef. “You already know (and per my Chart) Hatshepsut was Moses’ step-mother.”

True, but the important qualification here is that this is “as far as we know” about the daughters of Thutmose II. We cannot be 100% conclusive here, as much as I would like to say that we can be. But certainly we are in the upper extremities of the 90’s as far as our percentile of certainty.

“An Alphabet was invented by Joseph and the Hebrews while in Egypt.”

I’m not really sure whether we can say this or not. I never actually have looked for or come across evidence in Genesis or elsewhere that might lead us to believe that the Israelites had a script before Moses’ day. If you have any such evidence, please inform me, whether it be conclusive or not. The other possibility is that Moses—raised in the Egyptian court, and

undoubtedly skilled in numerous languages, including Phoenician—constructed the alphabet based on his knowledge of Phoenician, given that the Hebrew alphabet seems to be a derivative of this language, which scholars almost universally accept as being true.

“Moses retrieves documentation from the Memphis Library, put there by Joseph, BEFORE he leaves for Midian.”

Although this is conceivable, I am not sure how we would go about proving it. I’m also not sure how plausible it would be to assume that late 12th-Dynasty material such as this, written by a foreigner, would have survived the turbulent transitions that occurred between the end of the 19th century (BC) and 1500 (BC), or whenever you would suggest that Moses accessed it for the first time. Time and internal turmoil have a way of losing important documents (cf. the OT Scripture lost until Josiah’s day, per 2 Kgs 22).

“From the Exodus Event of 1446 throughout the 18th Dynasty the Egyptians no longer referred to the Egyptian Army with any personal pride.”

True, and more importantly, they inexplicably go from the world’s foremost elite, imperialistic force to an afterthought soon after the reign of Thutmose III. Egypt went from the premier superpower to a super-ghost without any indication as to how or why. I have yet to read one Egyptologist’s reasoned theory to account for this. Occasionally there is a sentence or two about it, but no reasoned theory or construct of events.

“Blessings of Jesus upon you Dr.”

Thank you kindly, and blessings upon you. But you give me too much credit. I only just completed the coursework for my PhD (at the University of Toronto, from where Dr. Wood graduated). But here is something that may be of interest to you.

I just completed a course in Nubian archaeology. The topic for my research paper was the Nubian forts (immediately to the south of Egypt), a couple of which were built by Sesostri I, but most of which were built by Sesostri III (referred to mainly as the “2nd-Cataract Forts”). These forts were amazing. Not only that, they ALL contained mega-granaries that had the capacity to store enough grain to feed the occupants and the local residents for several years in advance, if filled to capacity.

One of the forts, the one at Askut, had such a super-mega-granary that the area for the silos accounted for virtually half of the space utilized within the fort (vs. space for quarters, armory, etc.). One scholar referred to Askut as a fortified grainstore. This is virtually the same thing we see at the late-12th-Dynasty sites in Egypt: large granaries that could hold a surplus of grain able to feed the residents for up to 10 years or more. I made a PowerPoint presentation for the evidence from the Nubian forts, as well, and maybe sometime I will have an occasion for presenting it somewhere.

Yours for the King,

Doug Petrovich

Joseph F. Gambino - 23-5-2011 14:33:25

Dr. Petrovich,

I got back to you a lot sooner this time, but can now only give some of my reasons for my point #5: An Alphabet was invented by Joseph and the Hebrews while in Egypt. I would make 5 observations.

1. Horizontal writing becomes the rule in the 12th Dynasty, which would show pressure from an outside group that needed to write horizontally. Further, writing from Right to Left seems to predominate after this period.

2. The miners in the Sinai use an Alphabet just around 80 years after Joseph takes charge. This same Alphabet may also be found in Upper Egypt (as you know from your Nubian studies, a place where a lot of economic activity took place). These new letters are showing up too soon and too far away from Phoenician influence.
3. This early Alphabet is made by those who work with the Egyptian system of acrophones.
4. The first words employing this Linear Alphabet are Semitic.
5. Phoenician IS "Paleo"-Hebrew. From the Greek view point the letters are Phoenician, but from the Geo-Political view they are 'spoken' Hebrew in dynamic contact with the Egyptian system of writing.

While this does NOT prove my assertion, there is no proof that the Phoenicians invented the Linear Alphabet. What we DO KNOW is that the Hebrews had motive and opportunity. There is only one group from this period of time that was in intimate economic contact with Egypt and needed a quick and precise way of recording the sale of food to the "whole world"; especially Nubia! While the Phoenicians had the opportunity, they had no motive for adopting/modifying the Egyptian system. A new political construct and crisis is the most likely force behind daring to introduce a new system into a world where writing was sacred. The Phoenicians don't utilize this Alphabet until around 300 years later.

Thank you for the news on Nubia and Askut. This caught my eye some years back, but there was no decisive information on the structures. I'll be looking to find more info. on this subject from your website.

I'll argue point 6 when I get the chance...if I can remember why I argued it in the first place!  
The Blessings of Jesus upon you, Joe.

David Adams - 3-4-2012 9:28:33

In the article, if I remember correctly, you said that the Apiru later captured by Amenhotep II could have been cut off without much notice in the Bible. I don't know enough about the ancient empires, locations, etc. With that in mind, I ran across this quote from Duet. 25:17-19 about how Amalek cut off the tail of Israel, the laggards. Moses called Israel to take down Amalek when they were settled. Could these "cut off" people be those later taken by Amenhotep II, either from Amalek directly or indirectly? If not, the passage is surely evidence that not all who left Egypt remained with the main body for one reason or another.

Bill Zeman - 24-6-2012 20:07:03

Doug,

Thank you for your work on this. I have been teaching World History till 1500 and Western Civilization: Classical Period on and off for six years at Citrus Community College and at the California State Polytechnic University in Pomona's English Language Institute. I have always felt Akhenaton was more likely influenced by the Hebrews rather than vice versa and that Ramses II as the pharaoh of the exodus was too close to Merneptah's Israel Stele to make sense. Plus, Ramses II is way too far from Senuseret II to be about 450 years from Joseph. Now I have the material to present an historical argument for Amenhotep II as the exodus pharaoh and I have with joy altered my lecture notes and power points.

Bill

Douglas Petrovich - 8-7-2012 20:17:45

Dear David,

Yes, you are correct that this passage in Deut. 25 bears out that not all of the Israelites remained with the main body at all times. Evidently, this also implies 1) that the stragglers were far enough away from the main body to be exposed and easy targets, and 2) that the main body either chose to let them fall prey to the Amalekites or were not able to save/rescue them. It is far more likely that they were unable to save them, implying a considerable distance between the main body and the stragglers at the time of their capture.

As for whether this incident might be synonymous with the Egyptians' capture of the 3,600 Israelites on Amenhotep II's (2nd) campaign, I would call the chances "slim to none", and probably far closer to none. The Amalekites lived to the southeast of the Dead Sea, and it is highly unlikely that they would have encountered their Israelite stragglers until the Israelites were near Kadesh Barnea or to the east of it.

Yet with the Egyptian military campaign, they undoubtedly maintained a non-deviating course on/along the Way of Horus (i.e. "the Way of the Philistines", which--by the way--absolutely is an anachronism, which my future publications will make clear) during their trip to/into Palestine. Thus the Egyptians would have remained far to the northwest of the Amalekites as they progressed toward western Palestine.

Most likely the splinter group of Israelites captured by Amenhotep II was much further removed--spatially and temporally--from the main body. Perhaps they even found a convenient place for settlement, regardless how long they intended to be there. Maybe they even had migrated into Palestine already. Wherever they were, they could not have been too far from the aforementioned international highway (a.k.a. The Great Trunk Road). If you trace the route of Amenhotep II, it will make clear where these Israelites could and could not have been during their capture.

I would even suggest strongly that the 3,600 Israelites captured by the Egyptians were intentionally and permanently separated from the main body, whether due to rebellion or some other cause. This seems to fit with the fact that there are no instructions given to the Israelites to go and kill any of the Egyptians. The stragglers of Deut. 25 were innocents, and had no intention of separating themselves from the rest of the Israelites. Thus their capture led to God's burning anger and desire to execute retribution.

Yours for the King,  
Doug Petrovich

Douglas Petrovich - 8-7-2012 20:46:51

Bill,

You are quite welcome, and I am overjoyed that you were able to implement this into your class notes and presentations. The good news is that I now have much more exciting data to publish regarding the exodus era. I have hard-evidence from Egyptian archaeology that is going to equate the very moment the Israelites left Egypt to the reign of Amenhotep II. The evidence includes the remains of the very Passover itself.

And yes, I am absolutely serious, brother. It may take about a year before it all gets to publication, as I first will publish in an Egyptological journal, without biblical connections, then publish in a biblical archaeology journal, with biblical connections. I actually will begin writing the first article tomorrow. I have read over 20 articles that will contribute data, with another 20 or so to read. Some of them are in German.

Anyway, stay tuned, because this is some earth-shattering data, and the archaeological team that recently published the excavations at this site has no idea what to make of their findings (in this way). And of course, the late-exodus proponents were looking for all of this for years, but their

chief hindrance was that they looked in all of the wrong haystacks, thanks to the teensy-weensy little problem of seeking evidence from 2 centuries later.

Yours for the King,  
Doug Petrovich

Bill Zeman - 9-7-2012 11:12:44

Wow, that is awesome Doug. It reminds me of the data collected on Mitochondrial Eve and Y-Chromosome Adam that has the oldest common male ancestor for all men tens of thousands of years younger than the oldest common female ancestor of all women. The geneticists have no idea how to reconcile the data, but the flood story provides the perfect solution. All the men who went on the ark had Noah as their oldest common male ancestor (his three sons), but all the women had someone much older, (Noah's and his son's wives). Of course I can't teach this in history class, because the flood has no other scientific evidence that I know of and plenty of pseudo scientific stuff out there to make applying the genetic data to it unpalatable.

I earnestly await your first article in the Egyptological journal. Please make it available electronically and notify us here.

An eager consumer,  
Bill

Douglas Petrovich - 9-7-2012 17:22:00

Bill,

Hey, that's some fascinating data on the genetics that go through the Flood bottleneck. It sure does make a lot of sense. By the way, have you ever considered that the Neanderthals might be the nephilim/sons of God who lived on the earth up until the Flood? This is my working theory, though I won't go into it too deeply here. If you are interested, I can send you my OT History notes, and you can read about my thoughts there. E-mail: [dp@exegesisinternational.org](mailto:dp@exegesisinternational.org)

I'm glad that I have at least one person eagerly awaiting the publication of my first article. I just started it today. I can send you the title and abstract upon request. Of course, it's the follow-up article that's going to be the one that hits the fan. I decided that I will try publishing the first one in the Journal of Egyptian History, which is a younger journal, but one that will not have much lag-time for getting it from submission to publication. It's an arm of Brill Publishers (the ones with the steep prices), from Netherlands.

And yes, I will be sure to get you a copy if you don't have access to this journal. Most universities that subscribe to it do so only electronically. This is the age in which we now live! Finally, I will be in Orange County in 2 weeks, in case you are interested in having a grape Nehi together (sorry, but I'm an old M.A.S.H. fan). If so, just let me know.

Yours from Toronto,  
Doug Petrovich

Joshua - 25-1-2013 23:13:42

Can someone please explain the deficiencies in Dr. Elizabeth Mitchell's article on the Answer's in Genesis website.

[www.answersingenesis.org/.../doesnt-egyptian-chronology-prove-bible-unreliable](http://www.answersingenesis.org/.../doesnt-egyptian-chronology-prove-bible-unreliable)

She comes to the conclusion that the Exodus occurred in the 13th dynasty, during the reign of Neferhotep I. She also equates Hatshepsut with the Queen of Sheba.

ABR - 31-1-2013 14:05:34



Dear Joshua,  
Greetings to you!

Thanks for writing to ABR and for your question.

Let me preface the answer by saying we are close friends with the folks at AIG, and affirm them in many of their positions on the authority and inerrancy of the Bible.

That being said, we do not believe the Biblical material, nor the historical and archaeological evidence, warrants such reconstructions of Egyptian and other ANE chronologies. We have an incredible number of excellent synchronisms between the Bible and the archaeological and historical records already. Our website has dozens of articles which argue first from the Bible, and then find correlations in the archaeological record. These attempts at radical reconstruction end up destroying the plethora of connections we have from the conventional data that has already been developed. (The exception to this would be the era between the Flood and Abraham, especially before the Tower of Babel incident, where the archaeology is more scant, and many of the secular dates are based solely on C-14 dating.) Further, the level of knowledge and expertise in multiple fields of study that is required to make such sweeping changes is not present in these articles. Such an endeavor would require expertise in Egyptian, Syro-Palestinian, Hittite, Philistine, and other areas of ANE culture.

An article that deals with the implications of these sweeping changes was written by Dr. Bryant Wood a number of years ago, showing how rewriting Egyptian chronology ends up destroying the correlations in Israel.

See: [www.biblearchaeology.org/.../...rom-Palestine.aspx](http://www.biblearchaeology.org/.../...rom-Palestine.aspx)

The extremely precise correlations we have in Egyptian records and the Exodus can be found in the article on which you commented, by Doug Petrovich. Petrovich's article pretty much shows these reconstructions are unwarranted, unnecessary, and based on very limited scholarship and expertise.

Hatshepsut is NOT the Queen of Sheba. Her dates also correlate perfectly with the Bible, early 15th century BC, as mentioned in Petrovich's article and this one by Col. David Hansen:

[www.biblearchaeology.org/.../...nd-Hatshepsut.aspx](http://www.biblearchaeology.org/.../...nd-Hatshepsut.aspx)

We are unable to draft a point by point refutation, due to time constraints. I do hope, however, that this information is helpful to you.

Thanks for your interest in the ABR ministry.

Blessings,  
Henry Smith

Carol Corbin - 24-6-2013 13:44:28

Dear Mr. Petrovich:

I so enjoyed reading your article and believe you to be undoubtedly correct. I look forward to reading your future studies as I believe so much more will come to light in the days ahead.

In His Service,  
Carol Corbin

Douglas Petrovich - 24-6-2013 16:22:00

Dear Carol,

I am so glad that you enjoyed the article and agree with my findings. Bless your heart. You are absolutely correct. There is much more that has come to light, and as soon as I can get it through the process, it will be available to read and see. I am just now (today) in touch with a German publisher that runs a series entitled, "Egypt and the Old Testament" (in German, of course).

I am eagerly awaiting their reply. That series is now my top choice for a publisher. It will be published in English, to be sure, and hopefully distributed in the States. Even if not, you would be able to buy it somehow, either through ABR or directly from the publisher.

In case you live in the Eastern U.S., keep a watch out over the upcoming months for an announcement from ABR. I am in discussions to put on a 10-hour weekend seminar in the Raleigh, NC area, which will be the first public presentation of these findings. This will be taped for a DVD set.

With warm wishes,

Doug

jay altieri - 29-7-2013 22:01:53

Hello Doug,

Excellent job. Even three years after you posted it, this article is still blessing people. For what it is worth, I fully agree with your conclusions and I suppose that most believers that take the text seriously will too.

I have 2 points to consider, neither changes your thesis as they are only tangential to the study, but they do raise their heads in your article.

I would not call these disagreements, just food for thought.

1) You mention an exodus population of about 2,000,000. This is the traditional theory and is based from verses such as Ex 12:37 and Num 1:46. They say that 600 thousand men departed after Passover from Egypt on that fateful night. Plus woman and children and old people, yielding about 2million head in total.

The Hebrew word for thousand is aleph, instead of translating as thousand (which is arguably a later Aramaic gematria) have you considered translating aleph as "clan" or "head of household"? This would yield a much lower population of the exodus and I think conform to the biblical voice better than the traditional numbering.

If 600 clans left, then the exodus would be quite small, maybe 5-10,000 people total. I see several benefits to this interpretation.

a) Realistically what was the total population of ancient Egypt? I would venture a couple million, perhaps 3-5million on the very high side. Doesn't it seem silly having 2 million slaves leave? Your article mentions A2's second Asiatic campaign bringing home about 101,000 captives. This would be a drop in the bucket if 600,000 had just left. It would hardly cover the humiliation. But with a small exodus thoery, it would more than compensate. A2 would even look good, more slaves than ever before. Hooray for Egypt, good riddance Israel.

b) 70 patriarchs entered Egypt. In 400 years how much reproduction can they have? Be reasonable. Jacob had 4 wives, average 3-4boys each. Going from 70 to 2,000,000 is exponentially improbable.

c) Moses did not write in Aramaic script with box characters. He likely used some sort of proto Semitic with glyphic (non-alphabetic) characters. Our current text was redacted during the monarchy. Thus Moses didn't necessarily write "thousand." 600 aleph means 600thousand. 600aluf would mean 600clans. The difference (in modern script) requires the drop of a vaw in redaction. Personally, I don't think redactions were inspired with inerrancy the same way the autograph had been. This early editing stage (pre-LXX) is where the goof could have been made about the size of the company.

d) Even if Moses did write "aleph" as a gematrion in 2nd millennium BC it was probably not base ten math, so probably not 1000, which is 10 to the 3rd exponential power (10x10x10). Babylonia was base 6. Perhaps aleph meant 216? (6x6x6). For non-base10 early Israelite

systems, consider weights and measures. My point is 1000 is probably a Greek anachronism read back into Moses day by LXX.

e) archaeologists have long lamented that there is zero evidence of Israelites camping in the wilderness. A small exodus in lieu of a large exodus would help to explain this lack of impact.

f) Ex 14 says that they all crossed the reed sea in 1 night. Really? I live in rural TX, when hurricane Rita hit Houston a few yrs ago about 1million Houstonian refugees cycled through our area and they had cars. It took over a week to get through the chaos. A small exodus fits the data better, but not the tradition.

g) If Joshua had 600thousand warriors, why were they so scared of the big bad Canaanites? The cites of Jericho and Ai were piddly compared to that type of superpower. Note Deut 9:1 says Canaanite nations were larger and stronger.

h) In Ex23:30, God says that "little by little" until you have increased enough for full possession of the land. Doesn't that imply a small band of Israelites?

Although this note is by no means comprehensive nor scholarly, my favorite reason for a small exodus is

i) Deut 7:7 Israel is the smallest of nations. God specifically wanted it this way to prove that the exodus and salvation of Israel was by His own mighty power not the strength and power of throngs upon throngs of fighting men. A small exodus solves many logical problems and glorifies God for it was by His mighty hand and outstretched arm that this poor, weak miserable group of ragtag runaway slaves survived overwhelming odds. The theory of a small company in the exodus makes spiritual sense as well as logical sense.

Of course this theory has textual problems also. The most convincing textual evidence for a very large exodus is seen in by comparing Numbers 1 and 2. Moses takes a census while at Sinai a few weeks after the exodus. If we only had Numb 1, you could make a case that there were 598 alufim with a total of 5550 fighting men. But Numb 2 repeats all the calculations and subtotals them by NSEW ensign camps. The math adds up perfectly for the traditional theory of 603,550 warriors, but is a total mess for the revised estimate based on clans. Numbers 2 when compared to Numbers 1 seems to be the biggest textual problem for the clan theory of a small exodus.

Doug, how do you feel about a small exodus? I am by no means dogmatic, but I lean into a small version for the magnificent glory that gives to our savior, who surely stretched out His arm to protect them. Instead of leaning heavily on the accounting of Numbers 2, I prefer to lean on Deut 7. They were weak, but He is strong.

Have a great evening and may the wondrous grace of our Lord go with you always,

Jay Altieri

[www.deadsoulsyndrome.com](http://www.deadsoulsyndrome.com)

jay altieri - 29-7-2013 22:07:49

Doug, sorry that was a long post. Here's my 2nd point. You mention the death of the firstborn as not affecting A2 because he had had an elder brother. I don't doubt what you said, but I'm not sure that we are interpreting the parameters of the plague in the same way. It may not even matter, the conclusions are the same.

Ex 13:2 says that the firstborn male of every womb belongs to God, both man and beast. Point being that the subsequent law of consecration/redemption of the firstborn was patterned after the tenth plague that had brought Egypt to her knees. Whatever died in Egypt on Passover night is what the Israelites were supposed to buy back under Torah.

The law of the firstborn, know in Hebrew as Pidyon Haben (ransom the son), is applicable to every WOMB, not every father. This is a function of the mother. Thus your statement that A2

was not killed that night because he was not the eldest son of Tutmose3, is not relevant. The question should be was A2 the womb opener of his mother, Merytre-Hatshepsut? T3 certainly had multiple wives, so T3 could have been father of multiple firstborn sons.

The law of the firstborn (and thus the plague on Egypt) was only applicable to the firstborn son, not the first son born. Another words if a mother's first child is a girl, then any subsequent male children would not have "opened the womb" and thus would not be affected.

As I said I don't think this affects your conclusion about why A2 survived the night, but the reasoning is slightly different. The ransoming back of the firstborn has messianic implications for Jesus...

Jay Altieri

David E. Gregory - 24-2-2014 20:40:23

Dear Mr. Petrovich,

I appreciated your introduction of the Jubilee cycle as an independent line of evidence for the chronology. I have really only recently been introduced to the Jubilee cycle as a consideration in Biblical chronology. Your article here certainly predates the work through which I was introduced to it (Warner, Tim; *The Time of the End*; 2012). The question I have for it regards the Jubilee itself. I think it is certainly correct that 17 Jubilees past from the start of the cycle by the Israelites in the land of Israel until shortly after the destruction of the first Temple, however, a Jubilee cycle should be 50 years, and therefore, the time period from the beginning of the Jubilee cycle in Israel to the end of the 17th cycle would be 850 years, not 833 years.

The premise of the above mentioned book is that the Jubilee cycle was instituted by God at creation and that the cycle continues throughout history. As you may already be aware, the Jewish "Book of Jubilees" seems to espouse such a belief. As such, and if true, this cycle could be a particularly powerful line of evidence verifying various chronologies, as you have recognized above. However, it would seem the Jubilee calendar would throw off some of the outside chronologies.

Thank you again for your interesting work.

David E. Gregory

<http://www.biblearchaeology.org/post/2010/02/04/Amenhotep-II-and-the-Historicity-of-the-Exodus-Pharaoh.aspx#Article>

## The Oldest Yahweh Inscription

Non-Technical - jan 20, 2017 - by Joel Kramer

EXCERPT An inscription in modern day Sudan contains the oldest known reference to the God of Israel, "Yahweh." Soleb, a temple dedicated to the god Amon-Re, was built by the Pharaoh Amenhotep III in ca. 1400 BC. Today it is located in the nation of Sudan, on the left bank of the Nile about 135 miles south of Wadi-Halfa.

ABR Associate and Friend, Joel Kramer, shows how this incredible inscription supports the historicity of the Old Testament. Hear about Joel's trip to the Sudan to take pictures and video of Amenhotep III's Temple at Soleb. In addition, hear Joel's unique and moving proclamation of the one true God, Yahweh, who is Jesus Christ. Yahweh lives forevermore, while all other gods fade into history.

Video (45:15 min.)

<http://www.biblearchaeology.org/post/2017/01/20/The-Oldest-Yahweh-Inscription.aspx#Article>

Gerelateerde berichten

"Yahweh Inscription" Discovered at "Mount Sinai"!

Robert Cornuke, the founder of the BASE Institute claims to have seen, and has photographs of, an an...

<http://www.biblearchaeology.org/post/2009/10/11/Yahweh-Inscription-Discovered-at-Mount-Sinai!.aspx>

The Name Yahweh in Egyptian Hieroglyphic Texts

It is generally accepted that the term Shasu means nomads or Bedouin people, referring primarily to ...

<http://www.biblearchaeology.org/post/2010/03/08/The-Name-Yahweh-in-Egyptian-Hieroglyphic-Texts.aspx>

Amenhotep II as Pharaoh of the Exodus

The Biblical book of Exodus does not name the Pharaoh whom Moses encountered after his return from S...

<http://www.biblearchaeology.org/post/2008/02/22/Amenhotep-II-as-Pharaoh-of-the-Exodus.aspx>

Recent Research on the Date and Setting of the Exodus

Sadly, most contemporary Biblical scholars deny the historicity of God's miraculous deliverance of I...

The Bible According to Karnak

The Bible indicates that many important Biblical characters spent time in Egypt: Abraham (Gn 12:10–1...

# Amenhotep II as Pharaoh of the Exodus

Technical - feb 22, 2008 - by William Shea PhD

EXCERPT The Biblical book of Exodus does not name the Pharaoh whom Moses encountered after his return from Sinai. This absence has provided the occasion for considerable controversy and speculation as to just who this Pharaoh was and when he ruled in Egypt.

## The Exodus Problem

Three main views have been proposed: (1) that he belonged to the 18th Dynasty and ruled in the 15th century, (2) that he belonged to the 19th Dynasty and ruled in the 13th century, and (3) that there was no Exodus and thus no Pharaoh of the Exodus, but it was only a literary creation of later Israelites. The first view may be referred to as the early date for the Exodus, the second is the late date, and the third is the nonexistent Exodus.

## Exodus Literature

Literature on the subject of the Exodus is extensive. In his Schweich Lectures for 1948, From Joseph to Joshua, literature from the 19th century to 1948 was covered by the excellent English bibliographer H. H. Rowley. He provided an exceptionally thorough list of studies in favor of dating the Exodus in the 13th century under the 19th Dynasty and in the 15th century under the 18th Dynasty. T. L. Thompson, in J. H. Hayes and J. M. Miller's work *Israelite and Judean History* has updated this bibliography to 1977 (1977: 149–50, 167–68, 180–81). The bibliographies in these sections are of more value than the discussions in the text, which adopts a very negative view on the historicity of the Exodus. A strong picture has been made for the 19th Dynasty as the background for the Exodus in the work of K.A. Kitchen, *Pharaoh Triumphant* (1982). More recently, a theologically sensitive, but historically minimalist, commentary on Exodus has been contributed to *The New Interpreter's Bible*, by W. Brueggemann (1994: 675–982).

The attitude of Old Testament theologians toward early Israelite history has varied. G. von Rad used the first major section of his *Old Testament Theology* to give a negative evaluation to the historicity of the Biblical account and that left him free to construct his theology unhampered by historical limitations (1962). G. Ernest Wright, on the other hand, held that theology must ultimately be rooted in history in his *God Who Acts*. Coming from the Albright school as he did, Wright firmly anchored his Exodus and Conquest in the 13th century. In his 13th century approach Wright was preceded by W. F. Albright in his *The Archaeology of Palestine* (1961: 108–109) and paralleled by J. Bright's *History of Israel* (1983).

Three more specialized works on the Exodus and its Egyptian background have appeared quite recently. A conference on the subject was held at Brown University in 1992 and its proceedings were published as *Exodus: The Egyptian Evidence* (Frerichs and Lesko 1997). Unfortunately, most of the studies published in this work adopt a negative evaluation of the historicity of Exodus. Two of the contributors to this conference, Dever and Weinstein, attacked the editor of *Bible and Spade* for his date of the destruction of Jericho to the Biblical time of Joshua, even

though they offered no critique of his excellent and detailed studies of the pottery of Jericho (ibid. 69, 93–94). More positive, but more general, is J. D. Currid's *Ancient Egypt and the Old Testament* (1997). This work does not deal in detail with the event of the Exodus, but provides much useful information on the Egyptian cultural, religious, and linguistic background for the event. Along the same line is J. K. Hoffmeier's *Israel in Egypt: The Evidence for the Authenticity of the Exodus Tradition* (1997). This work includes primary archaeological evidence from surface survey work in the region of the northern lakes across the Isthmus of Suez.

A commentary on Exodus published very recently is that of W. H. Propp in the Anchor Bible Series, Exodus 1–18 (1999). Unfortunately, any historicity of the Exodus is buried here beneath a welter of source criticism, anthropology, and mythology. The promise is made that the history involved will be treated in a second volume that will be published later. The most recently published commentary on Exodus available to me at this writing is that of Peter Enns, Exodus, in the NIV Application Commentary (2000). This work is literarily conservative, theologically insightful, but historically inconclusive, as is expressed in the introductory summary statement:

One final matter concerning history is the fact that a good many historical issues remain hopelessly unresolved. In what century the Exodus took place will remain a point of debate for some time, even among evangelicals. We still do not know who the Pharaoh of the Exodus was. Curiously enough, we are not told (see Ex 1:8). To this day we do not know what route the Israelites took, what specific body of water they crossed, or where Mount Sinai is. These events form the very basic contours of Exodus and yet they continue to elude us. Can proper interpretation of the book proceed only after these basic questions are answered? No. In fact, the church has been deriving spiritual benefit from Exodus for a long time without such firm knowledge (25).

Enns is certainly right that one can derive spiritual and theological value from the book without knowing the precise historical setting. Nevertheless, to be able to connect the book more directly with ancient history can only enhance its theological meaning.

Interim reports on the excavations at Tell el-Dab'a, which contains the ruins of ancient Avaris and Ramesse, can be found in the two publications of lectures by the excavator, M. Bietak (1981 and 1996). These works provide archaeological evidence that bears on the setting of the Israelite Sojourn that led to the Exodus.

To summarize, older works on the question of the Exodus have concentrated upon deciding between dating it to the 13th century under the 19th Dynasty or the 15th century under the 18th Dynasty. That was the approach taken in my review of the subject in the revised edition of the *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* (1982). More recent works have gone in either one of two directions. On the negative side, more works are currently being published than previously that question the historicity of the Exodus. On the positive side, other works are coming out which have provided a closer attention to Egyptian archaeology and socio-cultural history, as findings from those fields present a background for the book of Exodus and the events that it describes.

### The 13th Century Exodus

Dating the Exodus on the basis of Biblical evidence has involved either one of two approaches. The theory that dates the Exodus in the time of the 19th Dynasty in the 13th century BC utilizes the name of Ramesses for the store city that the Israelites built for Pharaoh (Ex 1:11). The long-lived Ramesses II was known as a great builder. The location of his delta capital is known and part of his palace there has been excavated.

The use of this evidence to date the Biblical Exodus is complicated, however, by the use of the same name of Ramesses for the land to which the Patriarchs came centuries earlier (Gn 47:11; cf. Gn 15:13; Ex 12:40). Since no ruler is known by the name of Ramesses that early in Egyptian history, both of these references to Ramesses look like an updating of an earlier place name. This phenomenon is also evident in Genesis 14:14 where the later name of Dan has been used for the contemporary name of Laish (Jgs 18:7–29). In some cases, the Bible gives the older name and later name together (Gn 23:2). Thus the mere use of the name of Ramesses is not a secure basis upon which to identify the Pharaoh of the Exodus and, through him, to date the Exodus.

### The 15th Century Exodus

The other approach to dating the Exodus through Biblical evidence is the chronological approach. In this case the datum in 1 Kings 6:1 is utilized to date the Exodus and through this Biblical date the Pharaoh who ruled Egypt at the time can be determined and his person, character, and reign can be explored for potential Biblical connections. That is the approach taken here and it requires a detailed examination of chronology.

### Biblical Chronology

The starting point for such a study of chronology is in the monarchy, for 1 Kings 6:1 dates the Exodus a particular time span back from a regnal year of Solomon. For this starting point we may utilize Edwin R. Thiele's chronology developed in his Ph.D. thesis at the University of Chicago, later published under the title of *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings* (1965).

According to that chronology, Solomon died in 931 BC after a reign of 40 years. That means that he came to the throne in 971 BC. According to Thiele, dates that are given in the text that deal with the building of the Temple show that Solomon used a Tishri calendar to measure those regnal years (Thiele 1965: 29). The reign of Rehoboam who followed Solomon in Judah was calculated according to the accession year system which means that Year 1 started the year after Rehoboam, likewise Solomon, came to the throne. For Solomon this means that 971/970 BC was his accession year and 970/969 BC was his first full regnal year (Thiele 1965: 28–30). That makes 967/966 BC his fourth year. The Exodus occurred in the spring and Solomon's Temple building began in the spring (the month after Passover), and thus the building began in the spring of 966 BC, between the two Tishri new years. This gives us the starting point from which to figure backwards, the spring of 966 BC.

The time period to add to this date is the 480 years that are given in 1 Kings 6:1. This goes back to the time when "the Israelites had come out of Egypt." Adding those 480 years dates the Exodus to the spring of 1446.

There is evidence from 1 Kings 6:1 that a precise numbering was intended. The fourth year of Solomon is not a round year and the precise month when the building began, Ziv, is given



according to the old calendar, not the one adopted during the Babylonian Exile. The same precision is encountered with the completion date for the Temple in the 11th year of Solomon, in the month of Bul. These two dates were compiled according to a very specific system, and there is no indication in the text that those who recorded these data thought any differently about the accuracy of the 480-year figure.

Instead of assuming that the 480 years is a certain number of generations, as some do, one could propose alternately that the successive Passovers were recorded at the central shrine, the tabernacle at Shiloh, throughout this period. When the tabernacle equipment was stored in the newly built Temple in Jerusalem, the records from Shiloh would have been brought there, and could have served as the basis for these calculations. At the very least, this date deserves continued consideration as a working hypothesis. From these data we have developed a date of the spring of 1446 as a working date for the Exodus. The question then is, how well does this date fit with Egyptian chronology and history?

### Egyptian Chronology

Egyptian chronology is constructed from the king lists, from the highest regnal year dates attested for the various kings, from Manetho, and from Egyptian astronomical data. The Egyptian astronomical dates include the dates in the civil calendar for the observation of the heliacal rising of the star Sothis, and new moon dates. Neither of these two astronomical factors is completely secure. We do not know for certain whether the Sothic observations were made in the south or in the north and that makes a significant chronological difference. New moon dates are useful but must be determined with precision. If a new moon date is off by one day, the date for it does not move by one year; it rather moves 11 years in one direction or 13 years in the other. Thus a precise chronology may call for a precision that is not yet available to us from these ancient texts.

These variations have given rise to the proposal of three different chronologies, which are known as the high, middle and low dates or schemes (Åström 1989). These have been calculated for the 12th Dynasty, the 18th Dynasty and the 19th Dynasty. We are concerned here especially with the 18th Dynasty because that was the royal house that ruled Egypt through the 15th century BC. Adopting the high dates for Thutmose III in that century does not necessarily mean that the high dates have to be adopted for the 19th Dynasty. Those dates could just as well be calculated according to the middle or low chronology; it would just mean that there was more time involved in the period of the late 18th Dynasty and the early 19th Dynasty.

For our purposes here the important dates to note are those for the reign of Thutmose III: high, 1504–1450 BC; middle, 1490–1436 BC; low, 1479–1425 BC. The current trend among Egyptologists, especially from Germany, has been in the direction of the low chronology. The middle chronology was that proposed by R. A. Parker (1957: 39–43; 1976: 177–89). The high chronology is the older chronology advocated by L. Borchardt (1935) and J. H. Breasted (1964: 170, 502). There still are modern advocates of the high chronology. In my earlier encyclopedia article on the date of the Exodus I utilized the high chronology both because it seemed to be the most accurate and it also provided the best fit with Biblical data about the Exodus (1982: 234).

### Egyptian History

In my earlier article on the date of the Exodus, I selected Thutmose III as the Pharaoh of the Exodus for several reasons. First, he is the Pharaoh who died closest to the Biblical date of the Exodus and no Pharaoh died for a quarter of a century before him (Hatshepsut) and no Pharaoh died for another quarter of a century after him (Amenhotep II). Thus he appeared to be the Pharaoh whose death came closest to the Biblical date for the Exodus. Then also he died at the right time of the year, in the spring, March 17 to be exact according to correlations for the 13th day of the seventh Egyptian month (Biography of Amenemhab). In addition, the mummy that is labeled as that of Thutmose III does not fit well with his dates according to x-ray. According to his inscriptions, he should not have died until he was well over 60 years of age, but the mummy labeled Thutmose III shows bone features of a man 40–45 years of age (Harris and Weeks 1973: 138). Finally, Thutmose III was the Pharaoh who really set Egypt on the road to an Asiatic empire with his almost annual campaigns from Year 23 to Year 42. The outflow of equipment and the inflow of booty from these campaigns would have created a demand for the store cities that the Israelites are said to have built (Ex 1:11).

There was a weakness in this presentation, however, and it was chronological. The problem is that the Biblical date points to 1446 as the year of the Exodus, while the dates for Thutmose III indicate that he died in 1450. I attempted to compensate for this difference by mentioning the coregency between Thutmose III and his son Amenhotep II at the beginning of the 480-year period and the coregency between David and Solomon at the end of the period. However, these compensations do not successfully close the gap between 1450 and 1446.

During and after the writing of the encyclopedia article on the Exodus, I had a few discussions with Siegfried Horn about the issue. I pointed out to him that Thutmose III was the only Pharaoh of Egypt who died around the right time of the Biblical date. Since he had suggested Amenhotep II as Pharaoh of the Exodus in his dictionary article (Horn 1979: 350), there appeared to be a discrepancy here. His suggestion to resolve this problem was that perhaps Amenhotep II died at the time of the Exodus and a substitute was placed on his throne without making the transition evident to the populace generally. While the theory sounded interesting, there were no inscriptions or archaeological evidence to support the idea.

As it turns out, Siegfried may have been right. While no evidence for the death of one Amenhotep and the succession of another Amenhotep was forthcoming at that time, a reexamination of the Egyptian texts from this period provides that kind of evidence when they are correctly understood. The evidence was right there all the time, but we did not recognize it.

The reason why we did not recognize it at the time was because the Egyptians may have covered up the problem.



Relief of Amenhotep II in his chariot firing arrows at a copper ingot target, Temple of Amun, Thebes, Egypt. The king often boasted of his physical prowess. He recorded, "...he entered into his northern garden and found that there had been set up for him four targets of Asiatic copper of one palm in their thickness, with 20 cubits between one post and its fellow. Then his majesty appeared in a chariot like Montu [the god of war] in his power. He grasped his bow and gripped four arrows at the same time. So he rode northward, shooting at them like Montu in his regalia. His arrows had come out on the back thereof while he was attacking another post. It was really a deed which had never been done nor heard of by report: shooting at a target of copper an arrow which came out and dropped to the ground except for the king..." (ANET 244). [Clifford Wilson]

### No Co-regency Between Thutmose III and Amenhotep II

The interpretation that there was a coregency between these two Pharaohs does not stem from any direct inscriptional evidence for it. Rather, it has been created because of some problem texts. There are no nice double-dated inscriptions for these two rulers like those of the 12th Dynasty. There are some occasional concurrences of their two cartouches together, but this is slender evidence indeed upon which to propose a coregency. Gardiner calls the juxtaposition of these cartouches in three locations "doubtful evidence" for a coregency and notes, "the student must be warned against this kind of evidence" (1964: 200).

What then are the problem texts that this proposed coregency is supposed to solve? The problem here comes from two pairs of texts from the reign of Amenhotep II in which they both referred to his "first victorious campaign," but the campaigns are different and they occurred in different years. The second problem has to do with accession date(s) of Amenhotep II. He appears to have two, one for the time immediately following his father's death and one for another time. The problem texts may be described as follows:

The Amada and Elephantine Stelae of Year 3 (Cumming 1982: pt. 1. 24–28; ANET 247–48)

After a long and self-laudatory introduction, Amenhotep II tells of his inauguration of repairs and expansion of the temples for Khnum of Elephantine and Anukis of Amada in Nubia. This he carried out:

after the return of his Majesty from Upper Retjenu when he had overthrown all his opponents in order to broaden the boundaries of Egypt on the first campaign of victory (*italics mine*; Cumming 1982: 27).

The text goes on to tell how the king slew seven hostage chieftains that he had brought back to Egypt from Takhsi in Syria and then hung their heads or bodies and hands on his royal ship as it sailed south to Thebes. After arriving there he hung six of them on the wall of the city and he sent the seventh on by boat to be hung on the wall of Napata near the fourth cataract of the Nile in Nubia.

The same event, the slaying of the chieftains of Takhsi, is mentioned in the Biography of Amenemhab. There it follows directly after the recital of the death of Thutmose III.

He introduces the coronation of Amenhotep II by dating it, when the morning brightened.” At that time Amenhotep II “was established upon the throne of his father” (Breasted 1906: 319). As a part of that ceremony, Amenhotep then slaughtered the seven princes of Takhsi and suspended their heads from his royal boat as he sailed from Memphis to Thebes. It is clear that Amenemhab knew nothing of a coregency between Thutmose III and Amenhotep II for if there had been such an arrangement, there would not have been a need for this installation ceremony after his father died.

On the other hand, one may question Amenemhab’s dating of the death of the princes of Takhsi at the same time as Amenhotep’s inauguration. Amenhotep’s own inscription dates that event in Year 3 at the end of his military campaign then. Events are commonly telescoped in tomb biographies more than they are in the royal annals. Thus Amenemhab seems to have telescoped two events together that actually occurred three years apart.

Whether the slaying of the princes of Takhsi took place at the time of Amenhotep’s coronation or at the time of his return from a military campaign, it is a remarkably brutal act. Gardiner refers to it as “an act of barbarity which in the crude moral atmosphere of that warlike age could be regarded with special pride” (1964: 199). Amenhotep did have a precedent in this action in that of his great grandfather Thutmose I who, in sailing back from a military campaign in Nubia, hung the head or heads of his enemies on his royal boat. In my previous interpretation of the events surrounding the Exodus I interpreted this action by Amenhotep II as a demonstration of his frustration at having arrived back in Egypt only to find his father, Thutmose III, dead in the course of the events of the Exodus. Since our more closely detailed focus is upon Amenhotep II as the Pharaoh of the Exodus, the execution of the princes of Takhsi may simply be a manifestation of his own brutality apart from any connection with the Exodus. If this Pharaoh then fell victim to the Exodus events instead, it looks as if that judgment was well deserved.



Tomb of Amenhotep II, Thebes, Egypt. The author suggests this was the second Egyptian pharaoh to have the title Amenhotep II. The first was the Pharaoh of the Exodus who died in the Reed Sea and the second, buried here, took his place and used the same name.

#### The Memphis and Karnak Stelae of Years 7 and 9

The only dated inscription from the reign of Amenhotep II which dates between the military campaigns of Years 3 and 7 is an appendix to the campaign of Year 3 on the Elephantine Stela in which he gave instructions in Year 4 for the extension of the festival of Anukis of Nubia from three days to four days and additional provisions were to be made for the celebration of that festival. The day and month of these instructions is not given; they could have occurred quite early in the year. There is also one non-royal inscription from Year 4 and that comes from Minmosi, superintendent of the quarries at Turah, who was commissioned to open up new quarries to produce stone for the construction and repair of the Temples (Cumming 1984: pt. 2, 143–44). No other dated inscriptions from Year 4 are known and no dated inscriptions are known from Year 5 or Year 6.

The campaigns of Years 7 and 9 are recited on a pair of stelae, one from Memphis and the other from Karnak, the northern and southern capitals of the country. The introduction to this text is similar in content to that which introduces the stela from Year 3, but it is shorter. The campaign of Year 7 was aimed at Syria. Almost a dozen sites there are mentioned as having been captured.



They appear to range geographically from northeastern Syria down to the southwest. A summary of the captives taken is recited with the final reference to his return to Memphis.

The serious problem here that this text creates stems from the fact that this campaign is referred to in the text as “his first campaign of victory” (italics mine; Cumming 1982: pt. 1, 30). Thus we have the problem of two first campaigns of victory on our hands for this Pharaoh. In speaking of this contradiction Gardiner observes, “Too much has possibly been made of this discrepancy...” and he goes on to suggest that the first campaign really belonged to Thutmose III, and Amenhotep was acting as leader of the troops for him (Gardiner 1964: 200). Another way to attempt to resolve this problem is to suggest that there was a coregency between Thutmose III and Amenhotep (Redford 1965: 108–22). In fact, these two pairs of stela are probably the main reason why such a coregency has been suggested. The idea here is that the campaign of Year 3 occurred during the short coregency and the campaign of Year 7 occurred after Amenhotep II became sole ruler. But since Pharaohs who were coregents did not start the number of their regnal years over when they became sole ruler, there is no reason why they should start numbering their military campaigns over either. We know that the identification of the campaign of Year 7 is not a scribal error because the campaign of Year 9 is identified as “his second campaign of victory” in the same text (Cumming 1982: pt 1, 31).

This problem is accentuated by the fact that Takhsi from the campaign of Year 3 is never mentioned in the campaign of Year 7, even though the focus of that campaign was also upon Syria. Adding to this problem is that we have two different accession dates for Amenhotep II, one of them implied and the other stated directly. The implied date for Amenhotep’s accession is the day after Thutmose III’s death. Since Thutmose III died on VII/30, Amenhotep should have been inaugurated on VIII/1. The anniversary of the coronation of Amenhotep is given in the account of the campaign of year 9, however, and the date given there falls at the end of the 11th month. (Cumming 1982: pt 1, 32).

### Summary of These Problems

There are two major and direct conflicts between the stela of Year 3 and those of Years 7 and 9. Both of the campaigns of Years 3 and 7 are identified as the king’s first victorious campaign. This problem is not resolved by proposing a coregency here and it is not resolved on the basis of a simple scribal error, since the report from Year 9 refers to that campaign as his second victorious campaign. The other problem is the different accession dates. From the death date of Thutmose III the accession date of Amenhotep II should have been VIII/1, but the report of the campaign of Year 9 indicates instead that his accession date was toward the end of the 11th month. So we have here a Pharaoh who had two first campaigns of victory and two different accession dates. These problems have not yet been resolved satisfactorily.

### Potential Correlations With the Exodus

It is of interest to note that these complications in the texts of Amenhotep II occur right at the time when the Exodus of the Israelites occurred according to the Biblical date for that event (1 Kgs 6:1). Above, the date of 1446 was suggested as the Julian date for that event, using correlations with the chronology of the monarchy. For the dates of Amenhotep we have used the high chronology for the reign of Thutmose III, 1504–1450) as explained above. Now these two

chronologies can be correlated. In order to do so it should also be noted that the Egyptians used the non-accession year method of reckoning, in which the first regnal year of the king began on the day of his accession. They did not wait until the next New Year to start that first year.

Chronologically this means that Year 1 of Amenhotep II fell in 1450 BC. That means that his third year, the year of the first victorious campaign of the Amada and Elephantine stelae, fell in 1448. It also means that the first victorious campaign of Year 7 on the Memphis and Karnak stelae occurred in 1444 BC and the campaign of Year 9, also on the Memphis and Karnak stelae, was conducted in 1442. According to the dates for these three campaigns, the Biblical date for the Exodus fell right between the campaigns of these two stelae, in 1446. These correlations can be diagrammed as shown below.

The chronological correlation here fits very well. The Biblical date for the Exodus falls right between the two first campaigns of victory for the king named Amenhotep II. If the king of the first campaign died at the time of the Exodus, then the king of the new first campaign and the second campaign should be a new king who also took the same nomen and prenomen of Amenhotep II. This could have resulted from an attempt to cover up the disaster that had taken place. Instead of taking a new set of throne names, the king who came to the throne after the first Amenhotep took the same set of throne names. But the attempt to cover up the disaster was not complete or perfect. A hint of it was left behind by the king or the scribes who either forgot or intentionally did not take into account the first victorious campaign of the first king by that name. Hence the conflict arose, both in terms of numbering his campaigns and in terms of identifying his accession date.

This synthesis raises the question of whether the Pharaoh of the Exodus did die at the time of the Exodus. The account of Exodus 14–15 is not directly explicit upon this point, but it is the logical inference there. Yahweh says that He will get glory over Pharaoh. While some of that glory could be maintained by his loss of troops in the Sea of Reeds, if he escaped with his own life some of that glory could have been diminished. Depictions of the wartime Pharaoh show him in his larger-than life chariot heading his troops into battle. In actual battles against armed troops of the enemy this probably was propaganda and Pharaoh probably directed the battle from the rear of his army. But against largely unarmed civilians like the fleeing Israelites, Pharaoh would have had no reason not to lead his troops into the dry bed of the Sea of Reeds and thus he would have been the lead candidate for death by drowning there. Thus the logic of Exodus 14–15 is that Pharaoh did die by drowning at the time of the Exodus. This point is confirmed by Psalm 136:15 which says that Yahweh “overthrew Pharaoh and his host in the Red Sea” (cf. Ex 14:28; Ps 106:9–11).

#### Chronological Correlations with Exodus

<b>Chronological Correlations with Exodus</b>								
	Campaign of Amada and Elephantine Stelae				Campaigns of Memphis and Karnak Stelae			
			<b>First Campaign</b>		<b>First Campaign</b>			<b>Second Campaign</b>
Regnal years of Amenhotep II	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Julian years, BC	1450	1449	1448	1447	1446	1445	1444	1443
					Biblical date for the Exodus, 1 Kings 6:1			

### Events in Egypt After the Proposed Date for the Exodus

If Amenhotep II was the Pharaoh of the Exodus according to the above correlations, and he died at that time, then we should identify him as Amenhotep IIA and connect him with the Elephantine and Amada stelae of Year 3. Then the Pharaoh of Egypt who came to the throne and took his name should be identified as Amenhotep IIB and connected with the Memphis and Karnak stelae. The question then is, is there any additional information from the rest of the reign of Amenhotep II that would tend to confirm his identity as the Pharaoh after the Exodus?

The same points that I utilized in my earlier article on the date of the Exodus can be used here. The only difference is that the identity of the Pharaoh of the Exodus has been shifted from Thutmose III to Amenhotep IIA. That resolves the chronological discrepancy between the Biblical date for the Exodus in 1446 and the date of Thutmose III's death in 1450, and in so doing it puts the Exodus directly in the middle of two sets of problematic texts and thus provides another potential explanation for them.

1. Regardless of the number of Israelites who left Egypt, their departure still would have deprived the Egyptians of a sizeable supply of slave labor. Thus the total of persons brought back to Egypt by Amenhotep IIB as reported at the end of the campaigns of Years 7 and 9 may not be inflated. The total given in the text is 89,600 men, whereas, the individual numbers themselves total 101,128 (ANET 247). While some have questioned the very high number given here, if one looks at the needs for state labor right after the Exodus, the number does not look so high after all.
2. From the end of Amenhotep IIB's reign comes a text so unusual that some Egyptologists think that he may have been drunk while dictating it (Gardiner 1964: 199; Cumming pt. 1, 1928: 45–46). In this text Amenhotep expresses his hatred of the Semites. The inscription is dated 14 years after his last Asiatic campaign, that of Year 9, which shows that he still had Semites (Hebrews?) on his mind, even when he was down south in Nubia. The text conveys his counsel to the governor of Nubia. The Hebrews are not mentioned directly, but Takhsi is the location where Amenhotep IIA campaigned. If Amenhotep IIB held the Hebrews responsible for the death of his predecessor, that could have supplied fuel for his expression of hatred for the Semites. He also gives a warning against magicians. While the Nubians were noted for their practice of magic, there might also be an echo of the encounter with Moses the master magician here.
3. From after the end of the reign of Amenhotep IIB comes another document that could relate to the son of the Pharaoh after the Exodus. The text is the Dream Stela of Thutmose IV in which he



tells about how, when he was out hunting he sat down to rest near the Great Sphinx and fell asleep. In his dream the sphinx told him that he would become Pharaoh even though he had not expected to become the ruler. He was not in line for it since he was not the crown prince at the time. In return for this reward he was to clear the sand away from around the sphinx. The stela with this text is located between the paws of the sphinx (ANET 449).

This text has been related to the Exodus account before (Horn 1979: 350), with Thutmose IV being the lesser son of the Pharaoh of the Exodus. In that case, his older brother died allowing him to come to the throne when he did not expect it. The same relation still holds true under the hypothesis described above, but the relationship is more complex. According to the genealogy worked out above, Thutmose IV would have been the son of Amenhotep IIB. This still means that he probably had an older brother who died in the tenth plague, but his coming to the throne had more to do with the death of his uncle. Assuming that Amenhotep IIA and IIB were either full or half brothers, Amenhotep IIA who died at the time of the Exodus would have been the uncle of the future Thutmose IV. Thus he would have come to the throne both because his uncle died in the Sea of Reeds and because his older brother died in the tenth plague.

These factors continue to support the idea that Amenhotep IIB would fit well as the Pharaoh after the Exodus, while his predecessor Amenhotep IIA would fit better as the Pharaoh at the time of the Exodus. His son and successor, Thutmose IV, also fits well as the son of the Pharaoh after the Exodus.



The Great Sphinx at Giza, Egypt. An inscription between the paws, the “Dream Stela” or “Sphinx Stela,” tells how Thutmose IV was promised kingship by Harmakhis, god of the Sphinx, even though he was not the first-born son of Amehotep IIB. It is possible that Thutmoses IV’s older brother died in the plague of the first born.

## A Mummy for the Pharaoh of the Exodus?

According to the Biblical indications discussed above, a Pharaoh died in the Sea of Reeds at the time of the Exodus event. What would have happened to his body? There are two possibilities here. One is that his body sank into the depths of the water and was never recovered. Another possibility is that his body washed ashore like the bodies of some of his soldiers (Ex 14:30). If his body washed ashore and was recovered by a search party sent out then it undoubtedly would have been taken back to Egypt for burial, but not the kind of burial that was usually accorded dead Pharaohs. In this case the burial would have been more secretive because there was a new Amenhotep on the throne who had taken his place. We might expect, therefore, that little work had been done on his tomb thus far and that his interment was one with minimal preparation. The question is, is there a body among the royal mummies that could fit this specification?

First of all, there is a mummy of Amenhotep II that we would designate here as Amenhotep IIB, the Pharaoh who lived to the end of his 26 regnal years. It is a mummy of the right age and, contrary to many of the mummies of the kings, it was found in the right place in his own sarcophagus in his own tomb, No. 35 in the Valley of the Kings. X-rays of his mummy reveal him to have been about 45 years old when he died (Harris and Weeks 1973: 138). This fits well with the chronology of his reign. If he came to the throne at about age 18-20, and ruled to his 26th year, this mummy fits well with that which we have proposed for Amenhotep IIB.

Is there any evidence for another mummy that might be connected with Amenhotep IIA? There is a free floating royal mummy of the 18th Dynasty that has not yet been identified and this mummy is that of a king who was about the right age at death for what we have proposed for Amenhotep IIA. In his inaugural text, the Sphinx Stela, he indicated that he was 18 years of age when he came to the throne (Cumming, pt. 1, 1982: 20). Since he died about Year 5 of his reign, this would have meant that he was in his early 20s when he died in the Sea of Reeds. There is a mummy of this approximate age that has been misidentified as Thutmose I. There was no label on this mummy's wrappings to identify him as such; it was only assumed that this was Thutmose I because he was found in the Deir el-Bahr mummy cache near a coffin that belonged to a Thutmose. The mummy of Thutmose I was a well-traveled mummy. Originally, he was undoubtedly buried in his own tomb. Then Hatshepsut later had her father moved into her own tomb. Still further, Thutmose III built another tomb for Thutmose I (No. 38). His body, however, was not found there, so when this unidentified body was found near one of the coffins of a Thutmose, Maspero, who made this discovery, assumed that it was Thutmose I.

Thutmose I was not related to the Pharaoh under whom he worked, Amenhotep I. Amenhotep I had no surviving male issue, so Thutmose I, formerly a general in the army, came to the throne. The length of his reign is disputed but he probably ruled for at least a decade. Thus he should have been a man of middle age when he died. The mummy that had previously been identified as that of Thutmose I has now been x-rayed and it shows instead that it belonged to a young man of about 18 years of age (Harris and Weeks 1973: 132). Thus this mummy cannot be that of Thutmose I. The question then is, to whom does this mummy of the 18th Dynasty belong? Could it be Amenhotep IIA?

The age would fit reasonably well with what we know of the early career of Amenhotep IIA. He should have been in his early 20s at the time of his one major military text, that of Year 3, and by the time of the Exodus in Year 5. Also there are some interesting features to this mummy. First, it is not desiccated like the normal mummies that were either soaked in a solution of natron, a sodium salt, or packed in dry natron. This argues for a rapid burial of this body. Second, there was no resinous coating applied to this mummy, as commonly was done, which provides a second argument for a rapid burial. As a result, this has been called “one of the best preserved of all royal mummies” (Harris and Weeks 1973: 34). The irony of this may be that it is the best preserved because it was not preserved in the normal way. His head was shaved and there are abrasions on the tip of his nose and on his right cheek that look like they may be antemortem or intramortem injuries, not postmortem changes.

In discussing this mummy, J. Tyldesley speculates that since it is not Thutmose I it may be one of his sons (1996: 127). Perhaps he was not one of the sons of Thutmose I but rather one of the sons of Thutmose III, Amenhotep IIA, to be more specific. It is probable that we never will know the identity of this mummy but it does raise the tantalizing possibility that this body could be that of the Pharaoh of the Exodus.



Sarcophagus of Amenhotep II, in his tomb at Thebes.

## Summary

The evidence presented above is only circumstantial. No Egyptian inscription exists which tells directly of the Exodus of the Israelites and we may expect that none will ever be found. The reason for this is the propagandistic nature of Egyptian royal inscriptions. The kind of problem was even more acute for the Egyptians than for the Assyrians and Babylonians. In those eastern countries the king was only a servant of the gods; kings were rarely deified. In Egypt all of the Kings were treated as gods, Horus incarnate. For an event like the Biblical Exodus to have

occurred on the watch of the divine Horus would have struck directly at his nature as a god, thus that kind of event could not be admitted, even if it occurred.

That being the case, more indirect channels must be utilized in a search for the Pharaoh of the Exodus. Irregularities that could match with some aspects of the Biblical story must be sought. Discrepancies between Egyptian texts at the appropriate time chronologically may provide this kind of indirect evidence for the Exodus. That is as much as one can hope for from Egyptian texts relating to the Exodus.

Using the Biblical date for the Exodus when applied to the Julian calendar indicates that search should be made first for this kind of indirect evidence around the middle of the 15th century BC. Only one Pharaoh is clearly known to have died at that time and that was Thutmose III. For that reason I selected him as the best candidate for the Pharaoh of the Exodus in my earlier study on this subject.

Closer attention to Biblical chronology has led to discrepancies within Egyptian texts from early in the reign of Amenhotep II. Using the precise Biblical date for the Exodus locates that event early in the reign of that king, not at the end of his predecessor. There is a gap of about three years between his dated inscriptions, between Year 4 and Year 7, which provide a gap into which the events of the Exodus can be placed. That being the case, the available tensions between his texts from Year 3 and Year 7 become more significant. On that basis the proposal has been developed here that Amenhotep II was the Pharaoh of the Exodus. The Biblical evidence requires his death at that time, around Year 5 of his reign. The king that served out the balance of his reign should, therefore, be his successor. In this case, however, the successor took the same nomen and prenomen and other titles that were used by the preceding Pharaoh. For that reason we have identified these two kings as Amenhotep IIA and Amenhotep IIB. Amenhotep IIA is the King whom should have died at the time of the Exodus and Amenhotep IIB was the king who served out the rest of his term as if he were that same king.

There are some features that come from the reign of the king that we have identified as Amenhotep IIB, the Pharaoh after the Exodus, which fit well with his succession at that time. There was his need for a new supply of manpower for state building projects and this need was filled by the 90,000 or more captives that he brought back to Egypt from his campaigns of Years 7 and 9. There was his extraordinary hatred for Semites expressed, strangely, in Nubia toward the end of his reign. As part of that expression to the governor there he warned him against magicians, which could carry an echo of a memory of the function of Moses at the time of the Exodus. His son, Thutmose IV fits well as the son of the Pharaoh after the Exodus because of the irregular nature of his accession expressed in the text of his Dream Stela found between the paws of the Great Sphinx.

There is a possibility that the body of the Pharaoh of the Exodus was recovered from the Sea of Reeds and that body has been found among the royal mummies of the 18th Dynasty. The mummy misidentified as Thutmose I has now been redated by x-rays and found to be that of a young man half the age of Thutmose I. There are some unusual features of this mummy that could suggest a connection with the Exodus but, given the nature of mummy evidence, that link probably cannot be forged even if it is a correct connection.

The evidence is circumstantial but the circumstances point to Amenhotep IIA as the Pharaoh of the Exodus.

## Bibliography

Albright, W.F. 1961 *The Archaeology of Palestine*, rev. paperback ed. Baltimore: Penguin.

ANET = Pritchard, J.B., ed. 1955 *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*. Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press.

Åström. P. , ed. 1989 *High, Middle or Low? Acts of an International Colloquium on Absolute Chronology Held at the University of Gothenburg 20th–22nd August 1987*, Pt. 3. Gothenburg: P. Åström.

Bietak. M. 1981 *Avaris and PiRamesse: Archaeological Explorations in the Eastern Nile Delta, the Wheeler Lecture for 1979*. London: British Academy.

Bietak. M. 1996 *Avaris: Capital of the Hyksos, the Sackler Lecture for 1992*. London: British Museum.

Borchardt. L. 1935 *Die Mittel zur zeitlichen Festlegung von Punkten der ägyptischen Geschichte und ihre Anwendung*. Cairo: Selbstverlag.

Breasted, J.H. 1906 *Ancient Records of Egypt* 3. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.  
Breasted, J.H. 1964 *A History of Egypt*, paperback ed. New York: Bantam.

Bright, J. 1983 *History of Israel*, third ed. Philadelphia: Fortress.

Brueggemann, W. 1994 *Exodus. In The New Interpreter's Bible*, vol. 1. Nashville: Abingdon.

Cumming, B. 1982 *Egyptian Historical Records of the Later Eighteenth Dynasty. Fascicle I*. Warminster: Aris and Phillips.

Cumming, B. 1984 *Egyptian Historical Records of the Later Eighteenth Dynasty. Fascicle II*. Warminster: Aris and Phillips.

Currid, J.D. 1997 *Ancient Egypt and the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids: Baker.

Enns, P. 2000 *Exodus. NIV Application Commentary*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan.

Frerichs, E.S., and Lesko, L.H. , eds. 1997 *Exodus: The Egyptian Evidence*. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns.

Gardiner. A.H. 1964 *Egypt of the Pharaohs*. Paperback ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Harris, J.E., and Weeks, K.R. 1973 *X-Raying the Pharaohs*. New York: Scribners.

Hoffmeier, J.K. 1997 *Israel in Egypt: The Evidence for the Authenticity of the Exodus Tradition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Horn, S.H. 1979 Exodus. In *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Dictionary*, rev. ed. Washington DC: Review and Herald.

Kitchen, K.A. 1982 *Pharaoh Triumphant*. Warminster: Aris and Phillips.

Parker, R.A. 1957 'The Lunar Dates of Thutmose III and Ramesses II'. *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 16: 39–43.

Parker, R.A. 1976 'The Sothic Dating of the Twelfth and Eighteenth Dynasties'. In *Studies in Honor of George R. Hughes. Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilization* 39. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Propp, W.H. 1999 *Exodus 1–18*. Anchor Bible Series. New York: Doubleday.

von Rad, G. 1962 *Old Testament Theology*. New York: Harper and Row.

Redford, D.B. 1965 'The Coregency between Thutmosis III and Amenophis II'. *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*. 51: 108–22.

Rowley, H.H. 1950 *From Joseph to Joshua*. London: British Academy.

Shea, W.H. 1982 Exodus, Date of the. Pp. 230-38 in *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* 2, rev.ed., eds. G.W. Bromiley, et al., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.

Thiele, E.R. 1965 *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings*, rev. ed. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.

Thompson, T.L. 1977 'The Joseph and Moses Narratives'. Pp. 149-212 In *Israelite and Judean History*, eds.J.H. Hayes and J.M. Miller. Philadelphia: Westminster.

Tyldesley, J. 1996 *Hatchepsut: The Female Pharaoh*. London: Viking.

Wente, E.F., and van Siclen, C.C. 1976 'A Chronology of the New Kingdom'. *Studies in Honor of George R. Hughes. Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilization* 39. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Wright, G.E. 1962 *God Who Acts*. London: SCM Press.

## Reacties

Ian McClean - 1-8-2008 10:33:53

In addition to above article, Dr Shea is quoted by Dr Clifford Wilson in "The ABC's Of Biblical Archaeology" [On-line Bible CD, Classic Edition] stating that the Orthodontics Department of Michigan University took an X-ray picture of the alleged mummy of Thutmosis III in Cairo

Museum, which turned out to be a little strange. I find the evidence in favour of Thutmose III as the Pharaoh of the Exodus very persuasive, but the date of the taking of the X-ray does not appear to be documented. It may seem a small detail, but it is important when presenting this type of evidence to an unbelieving sceptic. Is the date readily available?

Thank you. Ian McClean.

hsmith - 1-8-2008 18:40:55

Dear Ian,

Thanks for your question about the x-raying of Thutmose III. Here is a reference from Dr. Bryant Wood:

"The information can be found in X-Raying the Pharaohs, by James E. Harris (1973)."

We hope you find this information helpful! Thanks for your interest in the ABR ministry!

Henry Smith

TRN - 24-9-2008 22:31:16

In the article, Shea cites an inscription of Amenhotep II which expresses hatred toward Semites, as well as a warning against magicians. Could you give the direct quotation or a reference to the direct quotation? The one place I could find the translation of the inscription was "Urkunden des ägyptischen Altertums IV 1343-44" which I do not have access to. Gardiner simply mentions a short summary of the inscription in passing, as do all other references I checked. Thank you.

hsmith - 26-9-2008 17:27:12

Dear TRN,

The text is published in Barbara Cumming, *Egyptian Historical Records of the Later Eighteenth Dynasty I* (Warminster, England: Aris & Phillips, 1982), pp. 45–46.

Hope this helps!

Paul Davies - 3-3-2009 20:57:42

What about the discoveries of the Red Seas Crossing by Ron Wyatt and team, which conclusively put the Exodus in 1446 BC and the Pharaoh Amenhotep 3? The Thutmose TITLE seems to equate to the "Prince of Wales" title in England, and therefore Thutmose 4 is the same person as Amenhotep 3, but now the ruling pharaoh rather than the northern governor.

This explains why Tutenkhamun was not known as Thutmose - he had not yet been invested at that level.

Thutmose 2 was the Biblical Moses (Egyptian Senemnut), adopted son of Hatshepsut (Pharaoh's daughter), and their monuments were defaced to hide the fact that Thutmose 3 was a ring-in when Moses did a runner.

ABR - 9-9-2009 15:55:54

Dear Mr. Davies,

Unfortunately, Mr. Wyatt's discoveries have been thoroughly discredited.

From Dr. Bryant Wood:

"Ron Wyatt, now deceased, was not a credible scholar. He was an anesthetist with no training in archaeology or the ancient Near East. He was merely an adventurer. Wyatt was a Seventh Day Adventist and has been thoroughly refuted by his own denomination (Holy Relics or Revelation—Recent Astounding Archaeological Claims Evaluated, by Russell R. and Colin D. Standish, published by Heartland Publications in 1999 and available from ABR:



[www.biblearchaeology.org/.../product.aspx?id=108](http://www.biblearchaeology.org/.../product.aspx?id=108)

ABR has published research articles debunking the claim that Mt. Sinai is located in Saudi Arabia:

[www.biblearchaeology.org/.../...Saudi-Arabia.aspx](http://www.biblearchaeology.org/.../...Saudi-Arabia.aspx)

and [www.biblearchaeology.org/.../...Saudi-Arabia.aspx](http://www.biblearchaeology.org/.../...Saudi-Arabia.aspx).

In short, the Bible records that the sea crossing took place at the beginning of the Exodus journey, closer to Egypt, rather than at the end of the journey, closer to Mt. Sinai, as Wyatt's theory would have it.

Even more damaging is the fact that it took the Israelites but 60 days to reach Mt. Sinai (Exod. 19:1). Travelling by foot with all of their animals, they only would be able to make 5–6 miles per day, much too slow to reach Saudi Arabia in 60 days.

See [www.biblearchaeology.org/.../...f-Mount-Sinai.aspx](http://www.biblearchaeology.org/.../...f-Mount-Sinai.aspx)

According to the requirements of Scripture, the sea crossing took place in the Isthmus of Suez. I believe it was at Lake Ballah, no longer seen today since it was drained when the Suez Canal was cut.

See [www.biblearchaeology.org/.../...ossing-Part-I.aspx](http://www.biblearchaeology.org/.../...ossing-Part-I.aspx) and

[www.biblearchaeology.org/.../...ssing-Part-II.aspx](http://www.biblearchaeology.org/.../...ssing-Part-II.aspx)

Mt. Sinai should be located somewhere in the northeast Sinai: See [www.biblearchaeology.org/.../...th-Mt-Sinai.aspx](http://www.biblearchaeology.org/.../...th-Mt-Sinai.aspx)).

Note that the so-called "chariot wheels" at the bottom of the Gulf of Aqaba shown in the presentation have four spokes whereas Egyptian chariot wheels have six spokes."

We strongly recommend that Christians should not accept Mr. Wyatt's conclusions about the Exodus or the Sea crossing. They do not hold up to scrutiny.

I hope this helps you in your study of the Word of God.

Sincerely,

Henry B. Smith Jr.

Victor Manuel Gonzalez - 3-11-2009 15:58:29

Thank you my brother for your humility, passion and zeal for God's Word, His truth and His might. My the Lord bless you and keep you, may He shine His face upon you and your blood family and your family at ABR. Luke 6:46

Douglas Petrovich - 22-1-2010 19:42:03

William Shea is correct in attributing Amenhotep II as the exodus-pharaoh. And just as he did, at first I also incorrectly identified the exodus-pharaoh as Thutmose III. This is impossible, namely due to a set of conflicts that arise between the historical data and the requirements of the exodus-pharaoh's biography.

However, Shea incorrectly creates a 2nd (and "mysterious") Amenhotep II, a claim that would raise the eyebrows of any and every Egyptologist. I have addressed and refuted this notion thoroughly in my published article, "Amenhotep II and the Historicity of the Exodus Pharaoh", published in The Master's Seminary Journal (Spr 06).

This article essentially identifies several crucial, historical requirements of the life of the exodus-pharaoh and examines them against the life of Amenhotep II, to determine whether he meets these requirements. The conclusion drawn is that not only does he meet all of the requirements, but he is the ONLY pharaoh of the 18th or 19th Egyptian Dynasties who can meet all of these biographical requirements.



In the article, I also discuss the reasons for the defacing of the images of Hatshepsut, of which Mr. Davies commented in March of 2009. The article can be acquired in PDF format at the following address: [exegesisinternational.org/index.php](http://exegesisinternational.org/index.php)

This article represents the most thorough treatment of the connection between the exodus-pharaoh and Amenhotep II yet in print.

Douglas Petrovich

formerly Academic Dean at Novosibirsk Biblical-Theological Seminary

currently PhD student at the University of Toronto (major: Archaeology of Syro-Palestine; first minor: Egyptology)

Momstootie - 26-2-2010 0:53:25

This is fascinating! I'm convinced Thutmose II A was the Pharaoh of the Exodus. I didn't realize he was so young. And it is tantalizing to think we have his well preserved mummy. Wow.

Paul Davies - 19-8-2010 17:20:27

This is all great, ONLY as long as the source material and their individual interpretations are correct...

The discoveries of the remains of Amenhotep III's chariots at the bottom of the Red Sea off Nuweiba has put the argument to rest. His first-born son (who died in the last plague) was Tutankhamun, and his younger second son became the pharaoh Akenaten (who introduced worship of the God of the Bible to the best of his ability when he took the throne, having witnessed the embarrassment of the traditional gods in the plagues). Ay stepped in to hold the fort and pretend that nothing had changed when Egypt was without an army or nobility until Akenaten was old enough.

Please note, this is based NOT on argument and theory, but on the artifacts, which the Egyptian Dept of Antiquities stated conclusively put the Exodus into the 18th dynasty, as it was the only period where 4-, 6- and 8-spoked wheels were used together.

We know that Pharaoh's daughter was Hatshepsut, who adopted Moses under the name Senemnut. She was a widow with no other children, and her father had no surviving sons, which is why she had to govern a section of the country as pharaoh's representative.

Moses became Tutmosis II, did a runner, and was replaced by a distant look-alike Tutmosis III. He took the title Amenhotep II when he took over as King, and his second son (not first-born) became crown prince Tut IV and then King Amenhotep III.

Tut was not yet a governing crown prince or he too would have taken the Tutmosis title, which was used like the "Prince of Wales" title in England in that dynasty.

Qamar - 20-5-2011 1:26:30

Hi,

Looking at the dates 966+480 gives you 1446. If you use the lunar calendar instead of the Gregorian solar calendar you get  $480 \times 11 / 365$  or 14.5 less years ie  $1446 - 15 = 1431$  as the date of the exodus. This is quite close to when Thutmose III died. Is it logical to use the lunar calendar since the Gregorian calendar as the Hebrew calendar is based on the lunar calendar and not the Gregorian calendar and the Gregorian calendar came only much later

Regards. Qamar

Douglas Petrovich - 20-5-2011 15:16:08

Hello, Qamar.

I cannot tell you how William Shea would reply, but I most certainly can tell you how I would reply. The thing to remember about the lunar calendar of the Hebrews and most other ANE societies that used what we term a “lunar calendar” is that in fact these were “lunisolar calendars”, unlike the Islamic calendar of today.

The reason for this distinction is that the ANE calendars feature intercalary months, which means that they added months to bring the lunar cycles into synchronization with the solar year, given that they well understood that a strictly lunar calendar would put them in conflict with the well-defined timeframe of a year, based on regular seasonal variations.

Most ancient calendars counted 12 lunations (as does the modern Islamic calendar) in a year, giving 354.37 days for the lunar year. To avoid the problem of seasonal drift, they would add an intercalary month every two or three years. This was done in Egypt and Mesopotamia, as well. Therefore, we would be mistaken to subtract the approximately 15 years that you have done in the above equation, which has you arrive at 1431 for the year of the exodus. Stick with 1446, as this reflects the rather sophisticated ANE “lunisolar calendars” that compensated for the drift that otherwise would set them off course with the solar (or “terrestrial”, if you prefer) year. Your comments do deserve more of an answer, however, and I will break this into several critical points that need to be made. The reason this is important is that, without saying it, you are led to the possible position that Thutmose III could be the exodus-pharaoh, and that he thus died in the year of the exodus, which is quite problematic on numerous fronts.

1) The date of 1431 BC as being “quite close” to the time of Thutmose III’s death is not only imprecise (close only counting in horseshoes and hand-grenades), but it reflects one’s view of which theory of NK (New-Kingdom, of Egypt) chronology is correct. If you read footnote #45 of my article entitled “Amenhotep II and the Historicity of the Exodus Pharaoh” (link: [www.biblearchaeology.org/.../...xodus-Pharaoh.aspx](http://www.biblearchaeology.org/.../...xodus-Pharaoh.aspx) which incidentally argues against a few of Dr. Shea’s positions in the above article and others that he wrote, you will see a discussion of the high, low, and middle chronology.

There, I attempt to make the case for the high chronology as being the only one of the three that can be correct. And if you look at section “3. Egyptian Chronology” and “a. The Astronomical Dating of the Ebers Papyrus”, made easy if you search for the word “Olympiodorus” once you are on the webpage with my article, you will see that the crux of the issue is the point of observation for where one theorizes the rising of Sothis (an astronomical event) was observed officially. Some theorize Memphis (high), others prefer Thebes (middle), while a few choose Elephantine/Aswan (low), yielding ca. 1504 BC, 1490 BC, and 1479 BC, respectively, for the traditional options for the date of Thutmose III’s accession. More on that later, but back to “3. a.” in my article, it is important to note that while the ancient Egyptian records never explicitly state where was their point of observation for the Sothic rising, Olympiodorus noted in AD 6 that it was celebrated at Alexandria, after having been observed at Memphis. This is our one-and-only ancient source choosing between the three opinions/options held today. The winner: Memphis (and/or Heliopolis, according to William Ward, whose important article I cite and discuss). Thus the clear choice is the high chronology.

2) Based on the high chronology, the following date-scheme is what we get for the 18th Dynasty:

Ahmosé (ca. 1575–1550 BC)

Amenhotep I (ca. 1550–1529 BC)

Thutmose I (ca. 1529–1516 BC)

Thutmose II (ca. 1516–1506 BC)

Queen Hatshepsut (ca. 1503–1484 BC)

Thutmose III (ca. 1506–1452 BC)

Amenhotep II (ca. 1455–1418 BC)  
 Thutmose IV (ca. 1418–1408 BC)  
 Amenhotep III (ca. 1408–1369 BC)  
 Amenhotep IV = Akhenaten (ca. 1369–1352 BC)  
 Smenkhkare (ca. 1352–1349 BC)  
 Tutankhamun (ca. 1349–1339 BC)  
 Ay (ca. 1339–1335 BC)  
 Horemheb (ca. 1335–1307 BC)

This list may appear “nice and easy”, but it’s the result of 10+ years of constant revision, as well as the comparison of chronologies of many competent Egyptologists. It also includes a pharaoh-by-pharaoh study to determine proper regnal lengths, as far as is known to us. It is important to note that I modify the dates for Thutmose III by 2 years, in order to synchronize biblical history precisely with Egyptian history, based on the events of the exodus, in comparison with those of Amenhotep II’s reign. However, this is justifiable, as eminent scholar W. LaSor notes that a variable of  $\pm 6$  years must be applied after calculating the date for the rising of Sothis (W. S. LaSor, “Egypt,” in *I. S. B. E.*, vol. 2, 40). My 2-year shift fits into this variable.

3) Based on this dynasty-long chronology, the death of Thutmose III is dated to 1452 BC, which is a far cry from the 1431 BC date that you hypothesize for the exodus, although admittedly this is “close” to the date of 1425 BC that is used for the low chronology. Again, the low chronology is highly problematic because one would have to prove the preference of Elephantine for the rising of Sothis, though Elephantine is insignificant in Egypt’s storied history when compared to Memphis and Thebes. But even Thebes pales in comparison to Memphis, the Egyptians’ first capital and most prominent city going back to the time that the nomes united to form a monarchy (whether by choice or by compulsion of a strong-armed leader, a hotly contested point, BTW). Therefore, a date of 1431 BC for the exodus is exceedingly problematic, even if Thutmose III is your exodus-pharaoh.

4) Thutmose III is a terrible choice for the exodus-pharaoh, since his predecessor (technically Thutmose II, his father) reigned only 10 or 11 years at most. You see, as my article meticulously argues (“2. Biblical Chronology” and “c. The Inadequacy”), the pharaoh who preceded the exodus-pharaoh must have ruled beyond 40 years. Yet in the case of Thutmose III, it was his own reign that exceeded 40 years, not his father’s (or his predecessor’s, if you prefer). The biographical requirements in the Bible are quite strict. Please consult my article for this detailed argumentation.

5) Thutmose III is a terrible choice for the exodus-pharaoh, since the duration of his reign and the initial phase of that of his son and successor, Amenhotep II, represent a period of unprecedented expansion and imperialistic success. In his Year-3 campaign, Amenhotep II squelches a rebellion led by the Syro-Palestinian “kings” that thought they would gain their freedom when his father died, which incidentally was this same Year 3 of the son’s reign, given that they had a co-regency of 2 and 1/3 years. If Thutmose III were the right choice for the exodus-pharaoh, though he’s not, then the biographical requirements of the Egyptian records would be confounded, since his successor never would have been able to oppose such a rebellion with ease, as did Amenhotep II. Moreover, after Amenhotep II’s Year-9 campaign, which was the same year as the exodus (and in which he gathered 100,000+ slaves, an eye-popping 46x more prisoners than those listed in the combined campaigns of Thutmose III and Amenhotep II that feature human booty-lists), Egypt never again enjoyed further imperialistic expansion or even attempted to defend its claim to *carte blanche* control over the entirety of Syro-Palestine (all the way to the border of Mittani’s empire). The Egyptian empire, at that very point in time (i.e. after Year 9 of Amenhotep II), turns into a

shell. Foreign policy shifted to the making of treaties and the use of political marriages, in which Thutmose III boasted that Egypt would never engage. If Thutmose III were the exodus-pharaoh, all of the events down to his son's Year 9 would be completely inexplicable.

So if your hidden question here is whether Thutmose III would make a good candidate for the exodus-pharaoh, the truth is that he makes an impossible candidate. Although (sad to say) he was my own choice years ago, before I studied the issues in any detail, now I know that he must be jettisoned from contention without a hint of doubt. However, he is the perfect candidate for the pharaoh who chased Moses out of Egypt and into the land of Midian, which probably resulted in Hatshepsut's abdication of the throne, given that almost certainly she was his adoptive mother and gave up the throne either in shame or utter sorrow. In fact, as I argue in my article, there is no other candidate of the 18th or 19th Dynasty who fits all of the biographical requirements of the predecessor of the exodus-pharaoh. Thutmose III is your man, but only if he's your expulsion-pharaoh, NOT if he's your exodus-pharaoh.

Douglas Petrovich

James Sewell - 18-10-2011 22:18:06

Has any study been done on the connection of Tutankhamun and Akhenaten (or Amenhotep IV) to the Exodus? Akhenaten was the heretic king who rejected the gods of Egypt for the one Sun God. This has created speculation that this somehow related to the Hebrews one God concept. Thutmose's original name was Tutankhaton in keeping with his father's beliefs. After the death of his father he changed his name to Tutankhamun, for one of the old gods of Egypt. Would not such a connection to the Hebrews open new avenues of conjecture regarding the "throne" politics of this period?

matt - 2-4-2012 17:28:24

I have two questions about this subject, one is the timing based on the Bible saying that a king arose that did not know Joseph, and who that was and why we cannot go forward from that event and the fact that the Bible also states that Israel left after 400 years to the very DAY.

The Second is why this author keeps saying the Sea of Reeds?

Thanks, matt

ABR - 3-4-2012 9:46:21

Dear Matt,

Thanks for visiting the ABR website and for your questions.

Concerning the life and chronological setting of the life of Joseph, we would refer you to a six part article series, starting here:

[www.biblearchaeology.org/...-Egypt-Part-I.aspx](http://www.biblearchaeology.org/...-Egypt-Part-I.aspx)

Concerning the dating of the patriarchal era and lining it up with the Exodus, we recommend these two articles:

[www.biblearchaeology.org/...ourn-In-Egypt.aspx](http://www.biblearchaeology.org/...ourn-In-Egypt.aspx)

[www.biblearchaeology.org/...of-the-Exodus.aspx](http://www.biblearchaeology.org/...of-the-Exodus.aspx)

Lastly, the author uses the translation "Sea of Reeds" because in the original Hebrew text it reads, "yam suph". When translated more literally, it means Sea of Reeds. This article talks about the issue:

[www.biblearchaeology.org/...ossing-Part-I.aspx](http://www.biblearchaeology.org/...ossing-Part-I.aspx)

We hope these articles help answer your questions.

Thanks for your interest in the ABR ministry.

Sincerely,  
Henry B. Smith Jr.

Elisha Benajmin Ankri - 3-4-2012 12:51:54

In addition to what you have been told. There is one more scenario: After Joseph saved the Egyptians from famine, the Hebrews multiplied greatly in Goshen. The administrators of Pharaoh's court were concerned, felt threatened, the Jewish people would overrun and overtake their government. Many scholars believe they influenced the same Pharaoh to forget the good works of Joseph and he went along with them to enslave my people. When it states "a new Pharaoh arose, it could mean basically his attitude changed towards the Jewish people and forgot or rather disregarded their good works in saving Egypt from its own famine. We see this sort of behavior in our own time, with the so-called threat of new immigrants taking away American positions. Also, those in power tend to want to keep their positions and downsize workers who aided them in their positions to the top. So, it is highly possible, it was the same Pharaoh but influenced to have a new attitude toward his Hebrew subjects.

Happy Passover (reminds us from the Hebrew year 2448-1312 BCE about the above real story of our exodus),

Elisha Benajmin Ankri

Douglas Petrovich - 3-4-2012 12:52:58

Matt,

I have a few things to add to what Henry has offered you as help. First, regarding the Sea of Reeds, I also would recommend that you read chapter 9 of Hoffmeier's book, *Israel in Egypt: The Evidence for the Authenticity of the Exodus Tradition* (New York: Oxford, 1996), entitled "The Problem of the Re(e)d Sea", which is an excellent study on this topic. I do not agree with the Late-Exodus View to which Hoffmeier subscribes, but he is on track with Yam Suf. But basically, "Sea of Reeds" is the proper translation from Hebrew; the word "Red" is not used here by Moses.

The pharaoh "who knew not Joseph" is Ahmose, the first pharaoh of the 18th Dynasty. He had come from Upper Egypt, and he conclusively defeated the Hyksos and drove them out of Egypt, including their capital city of Avaris, which is the same city as biblical Ramses, the city that the Israelites inhabited since the days of Joseph, then (as slaves) fortified after the native Egyptians captured it from these foreign invaders (Hyksos).

When the text states that pharaoh feared that the Israelites would join themselves "with our enemies", what it means is that Ahmose was afraid of the Israelites' joining themselves to the expelled Hyksos, their fellow Western-Semitic Asiatics. In other words, if Israel was not "controlled", maybe they would unite with the Hyksos, re-take Avaris together, and defeat/eliminate the native Egyptians. Eventually you will see an article or book from me that will document all of this more fully and carefully.

Please explain what you mean by "why we cannot go forward from that event." This is not clear to me. Do you mean, "Why can we not use the conquest of Avaris as the date from which to count the time of the 430 years in Egypt?" First of all, you must have meant 430, not 400 (Exod 12:40-41). But to this question I would say first that this is an event important to the Egyptians, but NOT to the Israelites, per se.

I would answer also by saying that Exodus 12 clearly states that this must include the entire time that Israelites lived in Egypt. This must include the time when Jacob also was in Egypt. Actually, while Exodus 12 does not clearly state to what event this goes back, Galatians 3 DOES state it,

though the "to the very day" stipulation does NOT exist in Gal 3. Please allow me to reproduce my interpretive translation of Galatians 3:15-18.

3.15 Brethren, I am speaking according to man, yet no one nullifies or adds anything to a related-to-man covenant having been confirmed. 3.16 Now the (plural) promises were spoken (by God) to Abraham and to his (singular) seed(, Jacob, as the latest recipient). He (God) does not say (to Abram in Genesis 17:19), 'And to (your) seeds (I will give this land),' as referring to many (seeds to whom God will give this land), but rather to one (seed): 'And to your (one) seed, who is Christ(, I will give this land).' 3.17 And this I(, Paul,) am saying: The law having come 430 years after (the promise was confirmed for the final time, i.e. to Jacob at Beersheba [Gen 46:1-4],) does not revoke the covenant having been confirmed beforehand by God, so as to nullify the promise. 3.18 For if the inheritance derives from law, then it no longer derives from promise; but God graciously gave it to Abraham by means of promise.

The context drives us to conclude the following: 1. the reception of the law in 1446 is the final chronological peg (in the 430-year period); 2. there was a period of 430 before this event that goes back to the first chronological peg, thus occurring in 1876 BC; 3. context shows that the former chronological peg is defined by a promise God gave to a particular seed (descendant) of Abram, who must have been alive in 1876 and have received the promise in that year. Which patriarch qualifies as being able to meet those requirements? The answer clearly is found in Jacob, who lastly received the confirmation (promise) of the original covenant while he was at Beersheeba.

Now, I did not go into all of the details that lead us to these conclusions, but if you ask, I will do so. But where it takes us is to the conclusion that the 430 years of Gal 3 is marked-off by 1) the covenant God reiterated to Jacob in the same year that he arrived in Egypt (1876 BC), and 2) the receiving of the law (1446), which occurred in the same year as the exodus. However, only Exodus 12:40-41 uses the "to the very day" qualification, so this means that the 430-year period "to the exact day" is marked-off by the exodus from Egypt on one (latter) end, and seemingly the entry into Egypt on the other (former), though--again--this is not clearly stated.

Hoping this helps,  
Douglas Petrovich

Douglas Petrovich - 3-4-2012 13:15:32

Elisha,

You make a good stab at explaining the new pharaoh who arose, but you are not doing justice to the entire historical sweep of events in Egypt between the lifetime of Joseph and that of Moses' day. Your speculation is not even necessary, to put it succinctly.

When Joseph ministered, the native Egyptians were in control of "The Two Lands" (Upper and Lower Egypt). However, between the time of Joseph and the time of Moses, Egypt experienced one of their "Intermediate Periods", which signals a lack of control of The Two Lands.

For a 100+-year period, Egypt was invaded and overpowered by non-natives called Hyksos, who were Western-Semitic Asiatics. Native Egyptians were pushed out of the Delta. Eventually they set-up a stronghold centered in Thebes, of Upper Egypt. This led to what we call the 17th Dynasty, which existed only in Upper Egypt and was ruled by native Egyptians.

The north (Lower Egypt) was controlled by the Hyksos, out of Avaris. The Israelites, whose occupation there predated AND postdated that of the Hyksos (which I can and will prove from archaeology), lived and thrived there in Avaris during the Hyksos era. Yet the region was devoid of any native Egyptians with power.

Only in Moses' day had the tide turned, and the 17th-Dynasty's pharaohs asserted control in Lower Egypt. Thus upon their arrival and domination of the Delta area, which began in ca. 1560 BC, NEW native-Egyptian pharaohs began a NEW ruling Dynasty over all of Egypt (The Two Lands). For over 100 years, the Delta (and Goshen!) had not seen native Egyptian rulers. Therefore, we have a perfectly precise scenario in which there are new kings in Egypt who arose, yet had no clue about Joseph. Moreover, they didn't care about him, or the Jews. They only cared about securing and consolidating their control, and eliminating rivals. Egyptian history and biblical history fit together like a glove. You just have to study it thoroughly.

Yours for the King,  
Doug Petrovich

Douglas Petrovich - 3-4-2012 19:00:32

James,

First, I apologize for not responding months ago. However, a glitch in the server's function prevented me from getting automatic notice that your post was made. Otherwise I would have responded long ago.

No, not a whole lot of study has been done on the connection between Tutankhamun, Akhenaten, and the exodus. I do not believe that much of anything can be connected between King Tut and the exodus, but Akhenaten was the great-grandson of the exodus-pharaoh. I long have thought that Akhenaten's monotheism is related to what was experienced by the Egyptians during the time of his great-grandfather, but I have yet to produce an article about this.

However, I recently learned of an astounding command on an inscription of Amenhotep II, the exodus-pharaoh. He issued an order for his courtiers and subordinates to destroy the images of the gods, throughout Egypt. This is absolutely mind-boggling. It is MEGA-IMPORTANT.

Probably during this campaign, his men took the opportunity to blot-out Hatshepsut's name/image from all over Egypt. I will publish on this ASAP. Oh, and it is quite likely that this command is connected to what Akhenaten later accomplished on a larger scale regarding the suppression of the pantheon.

"Would not such a connection to the Hebrews open new avenues of conjecture regarding the 'throne' politics of this period?"

Yes, this is quite possible. However, it probably does much more to open up avenues of conjecture on the relationship between the king (royal ideology) and the pantheon (religious practice).

Hoping you eventually will find my reply,  
Doug Petrovich

James Sewell - 3-4-2012 20:59:49

Would there also be a connection between the inscription on the back of the chair of Tutankhamun? The original inscription was "Tutankaton" and the gold covering was "Tutankhamun."

Douglas Petrovich - 4-4-2012 11:05:48

James,

Tut indeed was established on the throne through his marriage to Ankhesenpaaten, one of the daughters of Akhenaten and Nefertiti. And he did change his name from Tutankhaten to Tutankhamun and leave Amarna for the 17th-Dynasty capital of Thebes, where he was buried (Valley of the Kings). His predecessor, Smenkhkare, also married a daughter of Akhenaten, and

he seems to have been the first king to reject the "Aten heresy", but his reign was brief (3 years), so Tut is considered more of the (re-)transitional pharaoh.

There are several chairs of Tut, including the Golden Throne. The king and queen are depicted on this chair/throne, and she wears a diadem with the twin plumes of the "atef" crown, which is associated with Aten of the "Aten heresy". Between and above the figures, a central sun disc radiates from the top of the frieze, handing them the life-giving rays of the Aten.

On another inlaid chair of Tut, found in the Annex, the majority of the inscriptions (including all of the vertical ones) have the early "Atenistic" name of the king. His later "Amunistic" name occurs as well (in the horizontal inscriptions). Thus seemingly the chair was crafted when the traditional religion and the Aten religion coexisted. There are references to--and depictions of--several gods of the Egyptian pantheon, as well as to the Aten (of Akhenaten's monotheism), and once again the word "gods" appears, which had been eliminated under the strictly Atenistic religion.

Having said all of this, we can connect the early part of Tut's reign to this period of monotheism in Egypt, but strictly speaking, we cannot connect anything of substance (from his reign) to the events of the exodus. If anything, he leads Egypt out of the monotheism that very well could have sprouted from the legacy God's devastating defeat of the Egyptian pantheon during the reign of Amenhotep II.

James Sewell - 4-4-2012 13:46:34

I have always thought, from a spiritual interpretation of the events rather than from an archaeological one, that maybe God preserved the tomb of Tut so as to give us this link from monotheism back to polytheism. If true, it may give us an insight to the spiritual and philosophical view point of Tut and Egypt in light of Romans 1, "when they knew God ... "

Douglas Petrovich - 4-4-2012 14:08:32

James,

Certainly it is quite possible that God preserved the tomb of Tut for such a reason as this. The only problem with connecting this to Romans 1, at least FULLY, is that their form of monotheism was focused on Aten, the life-giving sun disk, rather than the invisible God who exists apart from the cosmos, the physical universe that he created from nothing. So the distinction to make is that Aten is not equal to Yahweh, but certainly they took a big step back in the wrong direction when they reintroduced the Egyptian pantheon.

Yours, Doug Petrovich

Hannah - 20-6-2012 1:28:03

To Mr. Davies.

If King Tut was killed during the 10th plague, then why did he rule for 8 years?

Also, I am convinced that the Pharaoh of the Exodus was Amenhotep 1.

He had ONE child, a son who died very young. And then another relative became pharaoh.....

Douglas Petrovich - 29-6-2012 10:47:18

Hannah,

You are right to call out Mr. Davies for attributing the 10th plague to King Tut. This is a bogus attribution.



As for your conclusion that Amenhotep 1 is the pharaoh of the exodus, you need lots more fulfillment of biographical requirements BEFORE you connect the exodus-pharaoh to a given pharaonic candidate. It's not quite so simple as picking a favorite candidate of finding 1 historical match.

And if you REALLY want to evaluate his candidacy, please compare his biography with the historical requirements I discuss in my article, Amenhotep II and the Historicity of the Exodus Pharaoh, which can be found at this link: [www.biblearchaeology.org/.../...xodus-Pharaoh.aspx](http://www.biblearchaeology.org/.../...xodus-Pharaoh.aspx) In addition, there is the not so small necessity of historical synchronization, as both the Bible AND Egyptian history have their own quite specifically datable chronological references, which can be synchronized when worked with carefully. This cannot be underemphasized.

But the bottom line is that if you do your due diligence, you will find that Amenhotep I DOES NOT fit the historical OR chronological requirements for equating him with the exodus-pharaoh. More than this, I now have hard-evidence from Egyptian archaeology that is going to equate the very moment the Israelites left Egypt to the reign of Amenhotep II.

It may take about a year before it all gets to publication, as I first will publish in an Egyptological journal, without biblical connections, then publish in a biblical archaeology journal, with biblical connection. Obviously scoffers will still scoff, but for the open-minded, this will be an open-and-shut case of monumental proportions. Basically, God has allowed me to stumble across the holy grail of biblical archaeology, and I plan to do the careful, hard work to organize and publish the material in the right way.

And finally, the excavational history at the site where this material is from CLEARLY requires Amenhotep II as the exodus-pharaoh, and CLEARLY eliminates any other 18th-Dynasty pharaoh, including Amenhotep I, from contention.

Hoping that this proves to be helpful to you,

Douglas Petrovich, PhD Candidate (Syro-Pal Arch, Egyptology, ANE Religions)  
University of Toronto

Hannah - 2-7-2012 22:44:05

Ohhhhhh.....OK.

Hannah - 11-7-2012 19:53:35

Thutmose III reigned from 1479–1425 BC, 18th Dynasty

Dan Bruce - 20-7-2012 10:52:49

I agree that Amenhotep II was the pharaoh of the Exodus, my agreement being based on a new chronology that I have developed for the kings of Israel and Judah based solely on the biblical text, one that does not depend on the secular Assyrian kings list to anchor the reign of Ahab and thus all of the reigns of the Hebrew kings.\*

In my new Bible-only chronology, the date for the death of Solomon is 967 BCE, not 931 BCE, which means that his forty-year reign stretched from 1006 BCE to 967 BCE, and it also means that he began construction on the Temple in 1002 BCE,\*\* his fourth regnal year.

Using the new chronology for the Hebrew kings (in particular, the third year of Jehoshaphat as a sabbath year) and the chronology from Daniel's 70 Weeks to locate the beginning year for the ministry of Jesus, which was 28 CE (which was both a sabbath and jubilee year),\*\*\* a definitive table of sabbath and jubilee years can be calculated all the way back to the time of the Exodus. That table shows that the year 1002 BCE, when Solomon started building his Temple, was also both a sabbath and a jubilee year.

Using the 480-year figure from 1 Kings 6:1 to calculate the date gives the year 1482 BCE as the year of the Exodus. However, that year cannot be made to synchronize with the required dates for sabbath and jubilee years, years that synchronize with other key chrono-specific Bible verses in both Old and New Testaments. On the other hand, the 440-year figure for 1 Kings 6:1 from the Septuagint (the reference in LXX is 3 Kings 6:0) yields the date for the Exodus as the year 1442 BCE, and this year synchronizes exactly with the sabbath and jubilee years.

It should be noted that the 1446 BCE date calculated by adding 480 years to the incorrect date 966 BCE as the year Solomon began building the Temple cannot be made to synchronize with the sabbath and jubilee years.

So, assuming that the 1442 BCE year is the correct date for the Exodus, how does that date synchronize with Egyptian history? Quite spectacularly, as it turns out. It places the Exodus in the Spring of the eighth regnal year of the pharaoh Amenhotep II (or sixth year if you accept that Amenhotep had a two-year co-reign with his father Thutmose III), which is notable since Egyptian records show that Amenhotep II campaigned in Canaan in both his seventh and ninth years, and brought back numerous slaves, probably to replace the manpower lost when the Children of Israel departed Egypt so abruptly.

Using 1442 BCE as the date for the Exodus, there are other chronological correlations that fit well for events in both biblical and secular Egypt history in the years before the Exodus.

Here's how I see it chronologically.

1) Thutmose I became pharaoh in the year 1,524 BCE. The new king decreed that all male Hebrew infants be killed. The following year, in 1,523 BCE, his twelve-year-old daughter Hatshepsut rescued the infant Moses from the Nile River with the intention of raising him as a member of her household. When Thutmose I died in 1,518 BCE, his son Thutmose II became pharaoh and his half-sister Hatshepsut became his wife and queen.

2) In the second year of his reign, according to inscriptions on block 287 from the Chapelle Rouge, Thutmose II presided over a festival of Amen during which Hatshepsut was recognized as a pharaoh, circa 1516 BCE. During their coreign, Hatshepsut produced no male heir with Thutmose II, but he did sire a son, Thutmose III, with a secondary wife. When Thutmose II died in 1,504 BCE, Hatshepsut continued as pharaoh, at first sharing her reign with her step-son Thutmose III, who, being less than two years old, was too young to rule.

3) Seven years later, in 1,498 BCE, Hatshepsut assumed a masculine public identity and reigned as king of Egypt for the next seventeen years, with Thutmose III serving in a subordinate role. Sometime after her recognition as pharaoh, Hatshepsut elevated Senenmut to be her chief steward (top official), but Senenmut disappeared from history in 1,483 BCE, about a year before Hatshepsut's death and at precisely the same time that the biblical Moses would have fled to Midian after murdering an Egyptian.

4) Forty years later, Moses returned to confront Amenhotep II and then lead the Children of Israel out of Egypt, and the rest is history!

(\*) Sacred Chronology of the Hebrew Kings (published in 2012 by The Prophecy Society)

(\*\*) The 1002 BCE date is supported by chronologies in the Babylonian Talmud and the Seder Olam.

(\*\*\*) The 28 CE sabbath year is confirmed by Josephus, who recorded that Herod's Temple was destroyed in a sabbath year (it was destroyed in 70 CE).

Rodger C. Young - 21-7-2012 20:48:39

Greetings Dan,

Doug Petrovich asked if I would respond to your note of July 20, in particular to your comments about Israelite dating. Doug hopes to make some comments later on the Egyptian dates. The starting place for your chronological reckoning seems to be the beginning of Christ's ministry, which you place in A.D. 28, with the Crucifixion and Resurrection in A.D. 30. Regarding the A.D. 30 date, which formerly was accepted by a number of scholars, the arguments against this and in favor of A.D. 33 are now very strong. See the discussion in Andrew Steinmann's *From Abraham to Paul*, which as you know I have reviewed on this ABR Web site. The importance of A.D. 28 to your system is because you state that this was both a Jubilee year and a Sabbatical year. I agree that it was a Sabbatical year; one of the evidences for this is that the *Seder Olam* (not Josephus, as you state) says that Jerusalem fell to the Romans in a Sabbatical year. That the burning of the Temple in the summer of A.D. 70 was the latter part of a Sabbatical year is also stated in the *Tosefta*, the *Jerusalem Talmud*, and the *Babylonian Talmud* (three times).

But how do you establish that A.D. 28 was also a Jubilee year? Just citing "the year of the Lord's favor" in Luke 4:19 will not do it. This date seems to be foundational to your entire chronology. Are we supposed to accept it without proof?

Since you refer to the *Seder Olam* in several places as the authority on which you build your chronology, then you should be aware that the *Seder Olam*, as well as the other references in the *Tosefta* and the *Talmuds*, say that the First Temple was also burnt in the latter part of a Sabbatical year. However, the summer of 587 B.C. is not an integral number of 7-year cycles before the summer of A.D. 70. How do you explain this? The *SO* itself gives the answer, in chapter 30, where it is said that in the return from Exile, there was a renewal of all things. This included the counting for the Sabbatical cycles. The calendar of pre-exilic Sabbatical cycles therefore does not match the calendar of Sabbatical years that was re-instituted by those who returned from Exile. Granted if A.D. 28 were a Jubilee year, then 1002 B.C. was also a Jubilee year according to the pre-exilic calendar of Jubilee and Sabbatical cycles. You make this the year when Solomon started building the Temple. That sounds nice, but did you not manipulate a lot of figures to make this come out this way? This reminds me of how Ussher placed the dedication of the Temple in a Jubilee year, but to do this he had to start the counting of the Sabbatical and Jubilee years a few years after the people crossed the Jordan to enter Canaan, in contradiction to Lev. 25 which says that the counting was to start when they entered the land. This kind of reasoning is called special pleading: unreasonable assumptions are made to support a thesis.

Back in 2010 you and I had some private correspondence on these matters. At that time I gave the following examples of what seemed to me your special pleading:

"Concepts that seem to be unique in your systems are 1) You have Rehoboam ruling for five years over a united Israel before the ten tribes break away, 2) You place Jehoram of Judah as ruler of the northern kingdom for three years before he became ruler of the southern kingdom, 3) You put an interregnum of 8 years between the end of Pekah's reign and the start of Hoshea's, even though you recognize that Hoshea killed Pekah, and that there were 2 rival states in the north about this time, and 4) You do not accept the Ahaz/Hezekiah coregency that virtually all conservative chronologists since Thiele have recognized as a necessary correction to Thiele's system—here you would have done well not to have followed Thiele, since this immediately makes your chronology out of sync with the Assyrian data. Please let me know if I have misunderstood any of these things."

You did not respond. And so I conclude that your placing the start of Temple construction in 1002 B.C., in order to get an even number of Jubilee cycles before A.D. 28, is built on several fudge factors, including those just mentioned. That was back in 2010; does your current

chronology still contain these unwarranted assumptions? We have a right to ask that you present solid arguments, preferably in a reputable journal, in support of any one of these contentions, rather than expecting us to accept unsubstantiated statements that seem to be made in order to get the numbers to come out to meet your preconceptions.

This also brings into question your statement that yours is a “Bible-only chronology.” Where in the Bible do you find any justification for these assumptions that you must resort to in order to get the date of Temple construction to start in 1002 B.C.?

A further consideration: does it matter to your chronology that 479 years elapsed from the Exodus to the start of construction of the Temple, rather than the 480 that you mention, and then go on to say that you prefer the 440 years of the LXX? This again shows the importance of understanding the original languages, and modes of expression, of Scripture. Even the LXX correctly gives the sense of the time-phrase used, although I do not agree with its 440 number. The LXX says it was en tO tessarakotstOi etei tEs exodou – in the 440th year of the Exodus — that the people came out. As in the Hebrew (MT), the phrase “of the Exodus” means that the Exodus started an era, in which the year of the “going-out” (Exodus) was year one. This is the method used in the Pentateuch, as in Numbers 1:1 and elsewhere.

I have taken some pains to respond to these issues because I would like to see the various individuals who maintain that theirs is the only chronology built solely on Biblical texts to realize that those of us who question their findings are not doing so because of some blind adherence to extra-Biblical arguments. Some of my comments, as in my review of *From Abraham to Paul*, were also directed at those who still adhere to Ussher’s chronology, or a modified Ussher chronology, as the only one that is true to the Bible. Too often this results in claiming that a chronology derived from the Bible that also happens to agree with well-established Assyrian or Babylonian data is therefore derived from secular sources. This kind of bad reasoning is not helpful. How nice it would be if some of the well-meaning Ussherites and neo-Ussherites would get on board and recognize the progress in Biblical exegesis, as well as in the findings of archaeology, that have transpired since the days when their hero wrote!

I was encouraged recently to learn that this is not an impossible wish. Eight days ago, a person informed me that he used to think that Ussher’s was the only Biblical chronology, and he even wrote to the ABR Website saying that they should use Ussher’s dates. Then he began a more formal study of the Bible. What finally convinced him, he said, was my article in the Spring 2008 issue of *Bible and Spade* regarding the chronology of the kingdom period, and the accuracy of the 124 specific items of data in the Bible for that period. That person is now a positive contributor to the discussion of chronological matters. When we make progress like this, then we can go on to try to aid scholars like Doug Petrovich and Bryant Wood in relating events in Egypt and the Levant to the Bible. We cannot do this if we keep bantering around unsubstantiated chronologies that do not accept the following basic and well-established dates: the division of the kingdom in 931n, the death of Solomon in 932t, the start of Temple construction in the spring of 967 B.C., the start of the Conquest and the numbering of Jubilee and Sabbatical years in Nisan of 1406 B.C., and the Exodus in the spring of 1446 B.C.

Rodger C. Young

<http://www.rcyoung.org/papers.html>

Dan Bruce - 22-7-2012 15:55:02

Rodger, I appreciate your taking the time to respond, and I understand your objections. The things you mention are questions I have wrestled with as well in coming up with an alternative chronology to the one used by most traditional scholars. The Thiele chronology that you use had

to disregard Scripture at times, and my belief will not allow me to do that. The format here does not allow me to answer your objections adequately, but I think I do so quite adequately in my two books, "Sacred Chronology of the Hebrew Kings" (164 pages) and "Lifting the Veil on the Book of Daniel" (224 pages), both of which are available for reading in their entirety (for free) on my website ( [www.prophecysociety.org](http://www.prophecysociety.org) ). I would urge you to read them. They do indeed challenge the traditional dating for the Hebrew kings accepted by scholars, all of which are based on the 763 BCE date for the Bur-Sagale eclipse (I wonder how many Christians realize that their study Bible uses a chronology based on interpretation of a pagan Assyrian records?), the same pagan eclipse interpretation that is the foundation for your Bible chronology. Again, I respect the fine work you have done, and I have read the chronological articles you have placed on your fine website, but I simply think you are wrong in anchoring your chronology in Assyria astronomy, and I've written two books that lay out my case saying there is a better way. I hope I can depend on you to check out my books with an open mind as I have done with your works. We are both after God's truth.

Douglas Petrovich - 24-7-2012 16:56:25

Hannah,

Your statement that "Thutmose III reigned from 1479–1425 BC" is not only a highly debatable supposition, but it is related to a matter that actually is highly debated among Egyptologists. They/we disagree over the date for the accession of Thutmose III: the "high chronology" view dates it to ca. 1504 BC; the "middle chronology" view dates it to ca. 1490 BC; and the "low chronology" view dates it to ca. 1479 BC. Why the disagreement?

Historically, the chronology for the 18th Dynasty has been based on the astronomical dating of the Ebers Papyrus, which records the rising of Sothis on the 9th day of the 3rd month of the 3rd season šmw (the 11th month on the Egyptian calendar) of the 9th year of the reign of Amenhotep I. This rare astronomical event is quite easily datable in absolute years. Yet how one dates this heliacal rising of Sothis is based on where in Egypt one theorizes that the Egyptians officially observed the event. Deciding whether one takes this as Memphis/Heliopolis, Thebes, or Elephantine will determine whether one adheres to the high, middle, or low chronology (for the most part).

A Theban point of observation, which I reject, would yield a date of ca. 1523 BC for the rising of Sothis. A Memphite point of observation would yield a date of 1541 for the rising. Memphis long was held as the proper point of observation, but in subsequent times Thebes was preferred because it lowered the dates of the 18th Dynasty, which was more in keeping with most people's idea of how the 18th and 19th Dynasties fit together chronologically.

Thebes was argued as the point of observation since Thebes is the provenance of the Ebers Papyrus. But this is a weak reason to hold to Thebes as the proper point of observation. Anyway, in even more recent times, it was proposed by Bierbrier that Year 1 of Ramses II was not 1290, but 1279. This threw off the chronology of the entire New Kingdom. It also invalidated both Memphis and Thebes as being possible points of observation, in the eyes of most. Only an observance in Elephantine would work together with this chronological revision.

So, an Elephantine point of observation became the latest and greatest fad, and Thebes and Memphis were rejected as options. However, this decision was a slippery slope. As Kitchen observed, Krauss (main revisionist) did not produce 1 scrap of definitive evidence to prove his assumption of Sothic observations at Elephantine, "only clever speculations which are no substitute for facts."

Plus, Bierbrier's dating of Year 1 of Ramses II to 1279 depends on a whole series of variables and his personal choices between possible solutions within each. As Parker wisely noted, "The date of 1279 BC is possible, but no more possible than the previously-proposed 1290 BC." And my chronology of the 18th and 19th Dynasties has shown that 1290 BC (for Year 1 of Ramses II) can work for the 19th Dynasty, AND 1504 BC can work as a starting point for when the reign of Thutmose III began (which I adjust to 1506, for reasons I explain in my article).

Moreover, I have demonstrated that Memphis is the best option for the observation of the Sothic rising. While the Egyptians never stated from where they observed Sothis, Olympiodorus noted in AD 6 that it was celebrated at Alexandria, AFTER HAVING BEEN OBSERVED AT MEMPHIS. It is highly unlikely that this tradition was altered during Egypt's history, and highly likely that this end-of-the-1st-Millennium-BC tradition followed an unbroken tradition going back to Egypt's earliest times.

Thus a reign for Thutmose III from 1506-1452 is not only plausible, it 1) better fits with Egypt's factual tradition of astronomical observation, and 2) does not determine its dates or point of observation from pressure to get the 18th Dynasty to "synchronize better" with the 19th Dynasty. In fact, the 19th Dynasty has no equivalent to the Ebers Papyrus, and it is better to fit the 19th Dynasty after establishing the 18th than the other way around.

My view of a Memphite point of observation is held by Redford and the Cambridge Ancient History, so I do not stand alone. Therefore, on the grounds argued above, I reject your suggestion that Thutmose III ruled from 1479–1425 BC, and I encourage you to realize that finding these dates in a book or an article somewhere DOES NOT make them accurate, not in the least.

Yours for the King,

Doug Petrovich

Douglas Petrovich - 24-7-2012 22:40:46

Dear Dan,

You wrote, "I agree that Amenhotep II was the pharaoh of the Exodus, my agreement being based on a new chronology that I have developed for the kings of Israel and Judah based solely on the biblical text, one that does not depend on the secular Assyrian kings list to anchor the reign of Ahab and thus all of the reigns of the Hebrew kings."

I'm glad that you arrived at the right pharaoh for the exodus-pharaoh, even though I'm not sure how you got there. Certainly one CANNOT synchronize the chronological events in the Bible with Amenhotep II's reign, however, . . . at least not with the Bible alone. Somehow you MUST rely on Egyptian historical records, since the Bible does not name him as such. Thus what you later say about your aversion to Assyrian records is incomprehensible (or inconsistent).

"Senenmut to be her chief steward (top official), but Senenmut disappeared from history in 1,483 BCE, about a year before Hatshepsut's death and at precisely the same time that the biblical Moses would have fled to Midian after murdering an Egyptian."

When I first learned of Senenmut, I also was excited at the possibility that he just may be Moses. I even read one source saying that he was a foreigner. However, when I read and learned more, I found out that there were some major problems, the most important being that 1) Senenmut was a native Egyptian, NOT a foreigner; 2) Senenmut's parents were native Egyptians and were buried in Egypt (far from the Delta); 3) Senenmut practiced perverse homosexuality, which hardly seems to fit the profile of Moses. So, best for you to jettison the notion of an association, as I have.

"(I wonder how many Christians realize that their study Bible uses a chronology based on interpretation of pagan Assyrian records?), the same pagan eclipse interpretation that is the foundation for your Bible chronology."

Here I have some major concerns. First of all, it absolutely is NOT true that study Bibles or the Bible teachers behind them are using pagan interpretations as the foundation for biblical chronology. This is purely misstatement and false accusation. You need to retract or apologize, honestly.

ALL of those Bible teachers and study Bibles are using texts from the Hebrew Bible as their foundations. They are using 1 Kings 6:1, Exodus 12:40-41, and so forth. They also are using other chronological references to relative-date regnal years and regnal lengths, as well as many other purposes.

However, what the Hebrew Bible does NOT do is to provide absolute dates according to our modern AD-dating system. The fact that there is a Jewish calendar that goes back before Christ does not resolve this problem, as this is extra-biblical evidence, and thus not part of inspiration. No inspired historical record can produce the synchronization between ancient biblical history and the modern calendar.

Second, you are demonstrating an extremely unhealthy view of history, the heart of God, and the value of good sources. In fact, you are showing a heart that is no different than Jonah's, who saw the Assyrians as undeserving of mercy and undeserving of being treated with great love and being valued by God.

Most ancient Israelites missed this message, just as Jonah did. Are we not instructed to love pagans as God does? Are we not instructed to show mercy to unbelieving pagans as God does? Are we not instructed by Jesus to give to whoever asks of us, because God himself is kind to ungrateful and evil men? THIS is the heart of God. THIS is how God views "pagans".

Moreover, Jude cites pseudopigraphical writings: the Assumption of Moses and Enoch 1. He sees value in non-inspired writings, and how do we know that these non-inspired authors were among the true believers in Israel (i.e. "they are not all Israel who are descended from Israel")?

If that is not enough, look at what Paul does in pagan Athens. Paul's evangelistic thrust was couched in a strategy that was utterly ingenious: he appealed to the virtue of the pagan Athenians' pursuit of that which is religious (Acts 17:22), taking into account how he noticed the plethora of idols that stood in places throughout the city. His plan was to take his listeners from the known to the unknown. So, his focus moved to the inscription that was written "to an unknown god" (Acts 17:23). He quoted a pagan inscription to pagan people!!! Here the world's greatest evangelist was not wagging his finger at pagans, . . . but instead, respectfully was using their own pagan writings AND affirming the accuracy and value that is latent in them. Are we any more pious than Paul?

What all of this leads to is that I believe there are issues in your own heart that you need to address, namely as they relate to the intrinsic value of non-believers, and the recognition that the truth that derives from pagans is no less than the truth that derives from believers. Obviously you can deny what I am saying, but if you truly know and love God, and your heart is humble before him, I think that it will be no trouble to acknowledge the truthfulness in my words.

"The Thiele chronology that you use had to disregard Scripture at times,"

This is a startling statement, and one that would need to be proven. There are few people on earth (maybe none) who devoted themselves more to maintaining the accuracy of the Scripture in any and every detail related to biblical history than Thiele. Such unproven accusations are preposterous.

I honestly think that you need to do a lot of reflecting and rethinking.

Hoping that this will help,

Doug Petrovich

Dan Bruce - 24-7-2012 23:48:02

Doug, this ABR forum is not a good format in which to present my response to questions about my chronological research, since all that can be done is to give it out piecemeal answers without context and that approach does not allow me to present the overview that gives context to the various parts. After all, the entire research fills two books.

As for the Thiele chronology for the kings you so admire, here is what Thiele himself said about it in the Conclusion to his book, "Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings":

"The vital question concerning the chronological scheme set forth in these pages is whether or not it is a true arrangement of reigns of Hebrew kings. Certainly, this system has brought harmony out of what was once regarded as hopeless confusion. But is it necessarily the true restoration of the original pattern of reigns? At the least this research shows that such a restoration is possible. However, we must accept the premise of an original reckoning of reigns in Israel according to the nonaccession-year system with a later shift to the accession-year method; of the early use in Judah of accession-year reckoning, a shift to the nonaccession-year system, and then a return to the original accession-year method; of the need to begin the regnal year in Israel with Nisan and with Tishri in Judah; of the existence of a number of coregencies; and of the fact that at some late date—long after the original records of the kings had been set in order and when the true arrangement of the reigns had been forgotten—certain synchronizations in 2 Kings 17 and 18 were introduced by some late hand twelve years out of harmony with the original pattern of reigns ..."

As you can see, Thiele's chronology, by his own admission, can only work if some Scripture is assumed to be in error. I did not have to make that compromise to arrive at the harmonization of the reigns of the kings of Israel and Judah presented in my book "Sacred Chronology of the Hebrew Kings." When the correct anchor dates are used for the divided monarchies, everything fits together exactly as described in the Bible.

I invite you need to read my books before you jump to conclusions as you did above. You can do so for free at [www.prophecysociety.org](http://www.prophecysociety.org)

Rodger C. Young - 25-7-2012 16:10:59

Greetings Doug, Dan, and all:

Regarding Thiele: Dan is right in that Thiele thought the Bible was in error when it came to the synchronisms between Hoshea of Israel and Hezekiah of Judah in 2 Kgs 18. But bringing up Thiele's view in this matter is like beating a dead horse. Thiele's problems with Hezekiah and Hoshea are reconciled if we posit a coregency between the Hezekiah and his father Ahaz, similar to the coregencies that Thiele accepted for Ahaz with his father Jotham, Jotham with his father Uzziah, Uzziah with his father Amaziah, and Hezekiah with his son Manasseh. This is such an obvious solution to Thiele's difficulty that I think it would be difficult to find anyone who today goes along with what Thiele for his chronology of Hezekiah. Leslie McFall wrote, "Thiele's omission of Hezekiah's coregency in the third edition of his book is inexcusable, given the number of reviews that were published following the appearance of his work in 1951 and 1965 challenging his treatment of 2 Kings 17-18. Several reviewers pointed Thiele in the right direction by suggesting a coregency for Hezekiah, which made perfectly good sense of the text as it stood . . . and which conformed to Thiele's own principles of interpreting similar data" (BSac 1991, pp. 33,34).

So let's all agree that Thiele was wrong on Hezekiah, and stop using Thiele's error in this matter to discard the basic principles that he expounded. If he himself had followed these principles consistently he would not have charged the Scripture with error. Those who want to establish



their own chronology need to become more current in their scholarship rather than bringing up this matter again and again, while recognizing the real breakthroughs that Thiele made. To get up-to-date, those who follow Ussher, and others who have their own “Bible-only” chronology, need to attack instead those who have built on Thiele’s work but have refined it, namely myself (I can take it), Kenneth Kitchen and T. C. Mitchell in *New Bible Dictionary*, T. C. Mitchell in *Cambridge Ancient History*, Leslie McFall in his 1991 BSac article, and now Dr. Steinmann in *From Abraham to Paul*. All of these acknowledge freely their debt to Thiele’s scholarship instead of throwing out the baby with the bathwater because he was wrong on Hezekiah.

But Doug’s major point is that everyone needs somewhere to tie his biblical chronology to a BC or AD date, and this can only be done by referring at some point to non-biblical sources. I agree with Doug that Dan needs to apologize for saying that others are following pagan ideas by doing so, while his is a “Bible-only” chronology. If we read Dan’s book, we find that he places great store on a date in the life of Julius Caesar that he uses to start the 70 weeks of Daniel ch. 9, which he takes as 70 years. Dan, where did you find anything about Julius Caesar in the Bible? Where in the Bible does it say anything about a decree by Caesar that you add 70 years to so as to get AD 28 as the beginning of Christ’s ministry? How do you know anything about the years of Caesar’s life, if not from ‘pagan’ sources?

Thiele’s starting place for tying the biblical chronology that he worked out to absolute (i.e. BC) dates is indeed the Bur-Sagale eclipse, which can be established by astronomy to have occurred on June 15, 763 B.C. But any who think this is a slender leg to stand on should read carefully chapter four of *Mysterious Numbers*, where that date is corroborated by other, independent records of great exactness from antiquity. Ussherites in particular should recall that Ussher used as his starting point a reference in Ptolemy’s Canon. That was a good choice; Ptolemy has been shown by modern astronomers to be a very accurate ancient historian and astronomer. But Thiele has more excerpts from the Canon that can also be shown to be in harmony with the Assyrian King List. These other references are not consistent with Ussher’s chronology but are consistent with the biblical chronology that builds on Thiele’s research. Can it possibly be overstated: Thiele’s critics should stop making blanket statements that his chronology is not based on the Bible, while their favorite chronology is, and direct instead their thinking to trying to refute the excellent scholarship of *Mysterious Numbers*, chapter 4.

The editors of the ABR web site have been gracious in allowing Mr. Bruce and the rest of us to express our views. However, as even Mr. Bruce says, this is not the proper forum for someone to announce that he or she has developed a chronology that is “based on the Bible only” and that no one can fully appreciate until we’ve read all of the author’s book (or books). Let’s restrict ourselves to specific items. I have read some of what Mr. Bruce wrote, and although I think he has some good things to say, he has never answered my questions about the specifics in his book, as expressed in my comment of July 21 above. Neither has he answered my challenge to show how the three means of determining the date when construction began on Solomon’s Temple are not independent, (see comments on my review of “From Abraham to Paul” here on the ABR website) even though they all produce the same date in 967 B.C. Those who support Ussher and other alternate chronologies would do well to address this also.

Rodger C. Young

<http://www.rcyoung.org/papers.html>

Douglas Petrovich - 27-7-2012 12:24:28

Dan,

I did not jump to any conclusions, but I am sad that you did not address the main issues in my post (the heart issues), instead focusing on only the least important issue there, which is how one deals with Thiele.

And obviously at that, you misunderstood my point. I never said that Thiele was accurate in every point, pious, or even a model person. I said that there are few people in the area of biblical history (and I meant OT chronology) who have done better at maintaining the accuracy of the biblical text in such detail, which appears self-contradictory at so many turns, at first, second, and third glance.

I do not know how well-read you are in the area of biblical chronology, but if you do a lot of reading, you immediately will see how true this is when you read the plethora of other opinions, most of which authors rip away at historical accuracy as they mount their accusations of internal inconsistency and error-laden assertions made by the biblical authors.

Now, of course, I am talking about far more than evangelical authors here, especially since the percentage of authors writing on biblical chronology leans far, far heavier toward unbelieving liberal scholars than anyone else. I am away on vacation, and cannot pull off of my shelf all of the authors who qualify, but I am speaking of those such as Galil, Barnes, and so forth.

No one of the chronologists of the last 100+ years has come anywhere close to devoting the time, energy, or effort toward doing what Thiele has done. And in so doing, he found a way to separate the dizzying mess of accession and non-accession dating, which was different from Israel to Judah, and even differed at times within the historical tradition of one of those kingdoms. He understood Tishri and Nisan dating within Israel's history like no one before him. And, his work has proven to provide the one solid foundation on which biblical chronology has continued to build.

But as for your assertion that I jumped to conclusions, I would remind you that I responded directly to your statements about pagans and pagan historical record-keeping. This is something that, in this very forum, you yourself revealed about yourself and your heart. This is a reality irrespective of what may or may not be in your more comprehensive written work. For you to ignore this vital matter is quite disappointing, to be honest.

Sincerely, Doug Petrovich

effie maddara - 16-8-2012 16:45:11

mr doug,

praise the LORD God for an article as this one from you plus additional info as the outcome from readers' comments.

i will diligently read your two books from your site.

it was only yesterday when i came upon the sphinx stela and i got a second reading from this site.

you are so blessed to have deciphered the exodus-pharaoh.

incidentally, i'm into writing some modules re the Word of God.

would you kindly allow me to quote from your site (and from you as a Bible scholar) ?

do you also have studies on moses as the Torah writer? Just so many articles are out refuting his authorship, even if the scriptures explicitly convey GOD's order for him to do it. my stand is that moses could have had been trained in diplomacy (letters) and in warship, in preparation for his pharaoh-ship. am i right?

thank you very kindly in anticipation of a favorable response.

GOD bless, effie

effie maddara - 16-8-2012 16:59:44

mr. william,

i beg your apology.

a few seconds ago after having read this article, i wrote in, addressed to mr doug, thinking that he authored the same.....just on the basis of the comments where he seemed to be the one clarifying the comments.

i am so sorry.

but please read the comments just the same and would you kindly send me your reply, at your most convenient time?

thank you very much.

in GOD's name, effie

matt - 3-10-2012 18:32:43

Can someone please explain, simply, but more so than just a "yes it is", the importance of pinning down 18/19th dynasty dates within a small fractional margin of error? I'm just not sure how a few years one way or another has any earth-shattering significance over history that is so far removed.

Douglas Petrovich - 8-10-2012 9:58:50

Matt, the simple answer is that without proper and exact synchronization of events in the ancient world, you lose percentage points in the likelihood that you can pinpoint or tie together those events with any certainty. In 500 years, if someone is studying military history and comes across the name of an Italian general who fought in a "World War," and the researcher wants to know more about this general and how he affected this WW, don't you think it would be critical for him to know whether this general's career dates to 1917 or 1941? It's only a measly 24 years of difference, but it changes EVERYTHING for the researcher's study. The same is true with ancient history. If you screw up by 24 years in ancient times, you may mis-date, mis-attribute, or mis-synchronize events and their proper relationships to one another. So my question to you is this: why is this dynamic any less earth-shattering in a time so far removed than it is in our present day? I'm not so sure that our modern history is inherently any more important than theirs.

Douglas Petrovich - 8-10-2012 10:36:21

Dear Effie,

I wanted to allow some time for Dr. Shea to respond to your request, which he has not done. In light of this, I want to mention that my article entitled, "Amenhotep II and the Historicity of the Exodus Pharaoh," is also posted on ABR's website, and you are welcome to quote from it. This article is the most extensive work ever done on the exodus-pharaoh, and it corrects Dr. Shea's wrongly attributed "Two Amenhotep II's" theory, which is based on the erroneous supposition that the exodus-pharaoh died in the Re(e)d Sea. My article explains why this is a wrong interpretation of Scripture. There is much more to the article than this, but you are welcome to quote from it. The article originally was published in The Master's Seminary Journal, so it would be best to quote from there. The PDF file for the original article is available online.

Moses never was prepared to serve as pharaoh. This is another notion that we have dreamed up, to be frank. Prince of Egypt or no prince of Egypt, he never was in line for the throne, nor would he have been. However, you are absolutely correct that he was trained in diplomacy, and most importantly, he was trained in writing (undoubtedly fluent in both Middle Egyptian and Late

Egyptian), which probably means that he knew Phoenician as well, since the Pentateuch is based more on Phoenician script than Egyptian.

Whether Moses was trained in warfare or not certainly is a debatable issue. He absolutely could have been trained in it, given his position in the royal court. However, he grew up mainly under the leadership of Hatshepsut, who did not engage much in warfare (eg. her Punt expedition).

Soon after Moses fled from Egypt, Thutmose III took over as sole regent, and he initiated Asiatic imperialism that was unparalleled in Egypt's history, as he campaigned as far as the Euphrates.

Moses was in Midian during this time, and he returned to Egypt only after Thutmose III had died. So for me, most likely Moses was not trained in warfare, but not much if he had been.

Hoping this helps,

Doug Petrovich, PhD Candidate

University of Toronto

<http://www.biblearchaeology.org/post/2008/02/22/Amenhotep-II-as-Pharaoh-of-the-Exodus.aspx>