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AMENHOTEP II AND THE HISTORICITY OF THE EXODUS-PHARAOH

Douglas Petrovich*

A belief in biblical inerrancy necessitates an accompanying belief in the Bible's historical accuracy. Biblical history can be harmonized with Egyptian history, claims to the contrary notwithstanding. Israel's exodus from Egypt in 1446 B.C. fits with the chronology of the 18th Dynasty pharaohs in Egyptian records. The tenth biblical plague against Egypt fits with what is known about the death of Amenhotep II's firstborn son. If this Amenhotep was the exodus pharaoh, biblical data about the perishing of his army in the Red Sea should not be understood as an account of his death. His second Asiatic campaign very possibly came as an effort to recoup his reputation as a great warrior and recover Egypt's slave-base after the loss of two million Israelite slaves through the exodus. The record of 3,600 Apiru on the booty list for his second Asiatic campaign appears to be a small number of the escaped Hebrews whom he recaptured and brought back to Egypt. If Hatshepsut is identified with the biblical Moses' adoptive mother, attempts to erase her memory from Egyptian records may have come from efforts of Amenhotep II because of her part in rescuing Moses when he was a baby and becoming his adoptive mother. Such scenarios show the plausibility of harmonizing the biblical account of the exodus with secular history and supporting the position of biblical inerrancy.

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I. Introduction

Historical accuracy has been and is a major issue in attacks on the inerrancy of the Bible. Ladd's words reveal his yielding to such an attack: "[T]he authority of the Word of God is not dependent upon infallible certainty in all matters of history and criticism."[1] A recent revisionistic version of Israel's history has questioned the Bible's account of that history.[2] A prime example is 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

*Douglas Petrovich, a TMS alumnus, serves on the faculty of Novosibirsk Biblical Theological Seminary, Novosibirsk, Russia.

[1]George Ladd, *The New Testament and Criticism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1967) 16.

[2]William G. Dever, *What Did the Biblical Writers Know and When Did They Know It?* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001) 4.

potsherds."[3] Such attacks on biblical inerrancy necessitate a reasoned defense of the Bible's historical accuracy. 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."[4]

The following discussion examines the trustworthiness of biblical history by using the Hebrew exodus from Egypt (hereafter, simply "exodus") as a test case. More specifically, an examination of the exodus-pharaoh's life will show whether biblical history can be harmonized and synchronized with Egyptian history and whether biblical chronology is clear and trustworthy in light of a literal interpretation of relevant passages.

The need for examining the former issue is that many Egyptologists are denying the veracity of the exodus, attempting to show that the exodus never occurred. Renowned Egyptologist Donald Redford concludes, "The almost insurmountable difficulties in 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."[5] Redford then allies himself with this view when he states, "[D]espite 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."[6]

The need for discussing the latter premise is that many biblical scholars who affirm the historicity of the exodus now date it to the thirteenth century B.C., questioning concrete numbers in the Bible that taken literally would place the exodus in the fifteenth century B.C. 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."[7] Though Kitchen is a noted scholar in OT history and chronology, the accuracy of his conclusion is disputed.

Wood rejects the 13th-century-exodus theory by a reevaluation of the archaeological evidence pertinent to key Palestinian cities.[8] 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.[9]

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[3]Israel Finkelstein, "City-States to States," in *Symbiosis, Symbolism, and the Power of the Past*, eds. William G. Dever and Seymour Gitin (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2003) 81.

[4]Harold Lindsell, *The Battle for the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976) 206.

[5]Donald B. Redford, *Egypt, Canaan, and Israel in Ancient Times* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University, 1992) 408-9.

[6]Ibid., 412.

[7]Kenneth A. Kitchen, *On the Reliability of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003) 310.

[8]Bryant G. Wood, "The Rise and Fall of the 13th-Century Exodus-Conquest Theory," *JETS* 48/3 (Sep 2005):476.

[9]Rodger C. Young, "When Did Solomon Die?," *JETS* 46/4 (Dec 2003):603.

Young established a fifteenth-century date for the exodus through chronological evidence, but this article seeks to accomplish it through historical evidence, evidence from the reign of Pharaoh Amenhotep II (*ca.* 1455-1418 B.C.).[10] That reign coincides with the one of the exodus-pharaoh according to conventional views of biblical and Egyptian chronology.

Answers to the following questions will show whether Amenhotep II is a viable candidate for the exodus-pharaoh and whether biblical history synchronizes with Egyptian history. Could the eldest son of Amenhotep II have died during the tenth plague as the exodus-pharaoh's son did? Did Amenhotep II die in the Red Sea as the exodus-pharaoh allegedly did ?[11] Can any of Amenhotep II's military campaigns be related to the exodus events? Can the loss of over two million Hebrew slaves be accounted for in the records of Amenhotep II's reign? Is there 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 a backlash from the exodus?

II. Two Background Matters

Biblical Chronology: Dating the Exodus

The central text for establishing the exact date of the exodus, 1 Kgs 6:1, connects it 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.[12] All but the minimalists agree that the 479 years begin with May of 967 or 966 B.C., depending on whether one accepts Young's or Thiele's version of Solomon's regnal dates.[13] Thus the 479 years began in either 1446 or 1445 B.C., either of which can be substantiated by the biblical text and agree with the conclusions of this article.

Case for dating the exodus in 1446 B.C. A compelling argument for choosing 1446 is that the Jubilee cycles agree exactly with that date, 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 B.C. (cf. Lev 25:2-10). The Talmud (*'Arakin* 12b) lists seventeen cycles from Israel's entry until the last Jubilee in 574 B.C., fourteen years after Jerusalem's destruction, a

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[10]Both here and throughout the present work, any dating that follows the formula, "*ca.* xxxx-yyyy B.C.," signifies the regnal years of a given monarch, unless otherwise noted. The reason for settling on these dates will be discussed subsequently.

[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 an excellent study on this topic, see Hoffmeier's chap. 9, "The Problem of the Re(e)d Sea" (James K. Hoffmeier, *Israel in Egypt: The Evidence for the Authenticity of the Exodus Tradition* [New York: Oxford University, 1996] 199).

[12]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 "440th year" (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 (cf. Ernst Würthwein, *Text of the Old Testament*, 2d ed., trans. Erroll Rhodes [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995] 116; Edwin R. Thiele, *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings* [reprint, Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1994] 90-94). The "480th year" is taken to be original.

[13]Young, "When Did Solomon Die?" 601-2; Thiele, *Mysterious Numbers*, 80. Kitchen also prefers 967 B.C. (Kitchen, *Reliability of the OT* 203).

statement also found in chap. 11 of *The Seder 'Olam*, which predates the Talmud.[14] Consequently, 1446 is preferred over 1445.[15]

Case for dating the exodus to 1267 B.C. Some prefer dating the exodus late, in 1267 B.C., 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."[16] One reason for this change 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 B.C., and (2) no evidence of the Israelites in Canaan from *ca.* 1400-1200 B.C. exists. However, late-exodus proponents should remember the "invisibility of the Israelites in the archaeology of Canaan between ca. 1200 and 1000" B.C., so the extension of their invisibility by two more centuries should create no additional problem.[17] 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 B.C.[18]

A second reason for this change is that Raamses, the store-city that the Israelites built (Exod 1:11), is usually identified with Pi-Ramesses, which flourished from *ca.* 1270-1100 B.C. and was comparable to the largest cities of the Ancient Near East (hereafter, "ANE"), but was built only during the reign of Ramses II (*ca.* 1290-1223 B.C.).[19] Whether or not Exod 1:11 is prophetic, that Pi-Ramesses is biblical Raamses, is not guaranteed. Scolnic warns, "The truth is that there are very few sites indeed that yield the kind of evidence required to make the site identifica-

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[14]Young, "When Did Solomon Die?" 599-603. Advocates of a thirteenth-century-B.C. exodus have yet to explain the remarkable coincidence of the Jubilee cycles, which align perfectly with the date of 1446 B.C. for the exodus.

[15]Moreover, an exact month and day for 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 Nisan of 1446 B.C. reportedly occurred at 19:48 UT (Universal Time) on 8 April (Fred Espenak, "Phases of the Moon: -1499 to -1400," http://sunearth.gsfc.nasa.gov/eclipse/phase/phases-1499.html, accessed on 02/20/06), 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, factoring in variations caused by differences in points of observation and by the "long day" of Josh 10:13 and the reversed shadow of 2 Kgs 20:10, one can estimate that the first day of Nisan in Egypt fell on Friday, 10 April, 1446 B C. 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 fifteenth 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 fifteenth 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 B.C.

[16]Hoffmeier, *Israel in Egypt* 124.

[17]Alan Millard, "Amorites and Israelites: Invisible Invaders—Modern Expectation and Ancient Reality," in *The Future of Biblical Archaeology: Reassessing Methodologies and Assumptions*, eds. James K. Hoffmeier and Alan Millard (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004) 152-53.

[18]Ibid., 152.

[19]Hoffmeier, *Israel in Egypt* 119, 125; Wood, "The Rise and Fall" 478; Kitchen, *Reliability of the OT* 255.

tions that we, especially we who are openly interested in religion, yearn to make."[20] Yet presumptuous external arguments have prompted many to advance the date of the exodus forward by two centuries, and have taken 1 Kgs 6:1 as symbolical.

Scholars have proposed two explanations to explain "the 480th" year allegorically, one based on calculating a generation as being twenty years[21] and another based on equal and non-equal components.[22] One weakness with any allegorical interpretation is that in 1 Kgs 6:1, Moses 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* of 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 approaching the age of forty" (Acts 7:23). Only "after forty 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 forty years, a criterion not met by the modest reign of Seti I (*ca.* 1305-1290 B.C.), Ramses II's predecessor.[23]

Additionally, 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 Exodus 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 can allegorize the number enshrouded in mystery correctly? Even opponents of biblical inerrancy recognize the folly of such allegorization, 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."

The preference must be for understanding 1 Kgs 6:1 literally. Cassuto studied ascending and descending Hebrew numbers.[24] As Wood notes from this study, a number written in ascending order—as with "eightieth and four-hundredth" in 1 Kgs 6:1—is always "intended to be a technically precise figure."[25] Besides, no allegorical use of "480th" adequately replaces its natural use. Since the advocates of

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[20]Benjamin Edidin Scolnic, "A New Working Hypothesis for the Identification of Migdol," in *Future of Biblical Archaeology* 91.

[21]Hoffmeier, *Israel in Egypt* 125.

[22]Kitchen, *Reliability of the OT* 308-9. The nine, 40-year periods include, (1) Egypt to Sinai to Jordan (Num 11:33); (2) Othniel's rule (Judg 3:11), (3-4) Eighty years of peace after Ehud (Judg 3:30); (5) Peace after Deborah (Judg 5:31); (6) Gideon (Judg 8:28); (7) Eli (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, (1) Forty-eight years for Abimelek, Tola, and Jair; (2) Thirty-one years for Jephthah, Ibzan, Elon, and Abdon; (3) Thirty-two years for Saul's reign, (4) four years for Solomon's reign; and (5) five theoretical years for the rule of Joshua and the elders of his era.

[23]In contrast, Thutmose III, the father and predecessor of Amenhotep II who ruled just under fifty-four years, is the *only* other pharaoh of the Eighteenth or Nineteenth Dynasty to rule over forty 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" (John Rea, "The Time of the Oppression and Exodus," *Grace Journal* 2/1 [Winter 1961]:11).

[24]Umberto Cassuto, *The Documentary Hypothesis and the Composition of the Pentateuch* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1961) 52.

[25]Wood, "The Rise and Fall" 482.

a late exodus are more driven by arguments from silence that the Israelites could not have inhabited Canaan before the thirteenth century B.C. than by textual evidence, this number should be taken literally, reinforcing 1446 B.C. as the year of the exodus.

Egyptian Chronology: Dating the Pharaonic Reigns

Before determining whether Amenhotep II is a viable candidate for the exodus-pharaoh, one must synchronize the date of the exodus with Egyptian history. Though inspiration does not extend to extra-biblical literature or ancient inscriptions, some extant writings are trustworthy. Several factors are relevant.

First, the Ebers Papyrus, an ancient Egyptian manuscript that dates the heliacal rising of Sothis in Year 9, Month 3, Season 3, Day 9 (*ca.* 15 May) of Amenhotep I's reign, records this astronomical event that assigns its composition to an identifiable time in the Eighteenth Dynasty.[26] Since astronomers can pinpoint this event by charting the positions of stars in antiquity, the papyrus can be dated to *ca.* 1541 B.C., making the initial regnal year *ca.* 1550 B.C.. This widely accepted dating 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 B.C.[27] Though the Egyptians never stated where they observed the Sothic rising, Olympiodorus noted in A.D. 6 that it was celebrated at Alexandria, after being observed at Memphis.[28] Therefore, Memphis is the probable correct point of observation for the rising.

Second, even without astronomical dating, the chronology of Egypt in the mid-1400s B.C. 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."[29] As for the Eighteenth 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.[30]

Last, regnal dates of Eighteenth-Dynasty pharaohs from the Ebers Papyrus to the exodus are fixed with relative certainty. With firm regnal dates for Amenhotep I, the reigns of the subsequent Eighteenth-Dynasty pharaohs down to Amenhotep II

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[26]The Eighteenth Dynasty of Egypt (*ca.* 1560-1307 B.C.) saw the reunification of Egypt after an era of foreign rule under the Hyksos and initiated a radically new era. The northward thrusts of Theban dynasts continued until Thutmose I crossed the Euphrates River in *ca.* 1524 B.C.. Egypt also expanded into Sudan, building many temples at Gebel Barkal, about 1,280 mi south of Memphis. The state accrued vast riches through foreign expeditions that changed Egyptian society. The nation no longer functioned in isolation, but 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*, 2d ed. [Fort Worth, Tex.: Harcourt Brace College Publishers, 1998] 253).

[27]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 (ibid., 53, 54). Uncertainty about dates, however, does not characterize all regnal dating, but rather only that of selected rulers. Therefore, if direct evidence of 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.

[28]Ibid., 59.

[29]Ibid., 56. Egypt's New Kingdom (*ca.* 1560-1069 B.C.) consists of Dynasties 18-20.

[30]Ibid.

are as follows: Thutmose I (*ca.* 1529-1516 B.C.), Thutmose II (*ca.* 1516-1506 B.C.), Queen Hatshepsut (*ca.* 1504-1484 B.C.), Thutmose III (*ca.* 1506-1452 B.C.), and Amenhotep II (*ca.* 1455-1418 B.C.).[31] With these reigns chronologically ordered, a positive evaluation of Amenhotep II's candidacy for the exodus-pharaoh is possible.

III. The Tenth Plague and the Firstborn Son of Amenhotep II

God told Moses that he would harden pharaoh's heart and that pharaoh would refuse to free the Israelites (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, God repeated this prediction: "[A]ll the firstborn in the land of Egypt will die, from the firstborn of the pharaoh who sits on his throne" (Exod 11:5). The challenge is to identify the eldest son of Amenhotep II. Several candidates are possible.

Was it Thutmose IV? 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 before ruling, which the historical record should confirm. The son who succeeded Amenhotep II was Thutmose IV (*ca.* 1418-1408 B.C.), whose Dream Stele—which is located between the paws of the Great Sphinx—reveals that he was not the original heir to the throne.[32] Moreover, inscriptional and papyritious evidence confirms that Thutmose IV was not the eldest son of Amenhotep II.

Was it Prince Amenhotep? 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."[33] To which Amenhotep is the scribe referring? Although the year is completely lost from the regnal date on this manuscript, the surviving month (4) and day (1) mark precisely the date of Amenhotep II's accession, implying that Prince Amenhotep was his son.[34] This prince almost certainly resided in or near Memphis,[35] due to his office being connected to the high priesthood of Ptah.[36]

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[31]Egyptologists disagree over the year of Thutmose III's accession, with three views predominant *ca* 1504 B C , *ca* 1490 B C , and *ca* 1479 B C (Redford, *Egypt, Canaan, and Israel* 104) The year 1504 is preferred because of its exclusive agreement with the Ebers Papyrus when assuming a Memphite point of observation for the rising of Sothis Shea agrees (William Shea, "Amenhotep II as Pharaoh," *Bible and Spade* 16/2 [2003] 43) The date used here dates back two years from the standard number, in order to harmonize with the second Palestinian campaign of Amenhotep II to be discussed later This alteration is justifiable either 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 B C* , vol 1 [London Routledge, 1995] 1 191), or by the existence of a variable of ±6 years after calculating the date for the rising of Sothis (W S LaSor, "Egypt," in *ISBE*, vol 2 [Grand Rapids Eerdmans, 1982] 40)

[32]Peter Der Manuelian, *Studies in the Reign of Amenophis II* (Hildesheim Gerstenberg, 1987) 40

[33]Donald B Redford, "The Coregency of Tuthmosis III and Amenophis II," *JEA* 51 (Dec 1965) 111

[34]Ibid , 110

[35]Upon Amenhotep I's death, Thebes was the most prominent city of the native Egyptians, but 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 B C) Memphis was also the headquarters of the pharaonic braintrust, where 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, the residence for pharaonic successors who were coregents (Kuhrt, *Ancient Near East* 191, Sir Alan

The late Eighteenth Dynasty attests to numerous high priests of Ptah. 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 partially be filled 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.[37] Three factors support the 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 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."[38] 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.[39] If this prince was the heir to the throne without being firstborn, who was the eldest son?

Another candidate for the eldest son of Amenhotep II is an unattested "Thutmose." Redford, who considers the exodus as mythical, may supply the answer: "The fact that he (Prince B/Amenhotep) was named Amenhotep like his father might

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Gardiner, *Egypt of the Pharaohs* [New York: Oxford University, 1976] 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: Blackwell, 1992] 220). Thus Thutmose I was an excellent candidate for the pharaoh who instructed the chief Hebrew midwives, requesting the execution of the newborn Israelite boys (Exod 1:15). Numerous summonings of these midwives, whose authoritative rank necessitated their proximity to national Israel in Goshen, implies their proximity to pharaoh, a requirement easily satisfied if pharaoh was in Memphis, but not 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). A slow pace from Goshen to Memphis, which did not require the same upward walk as did a trip to Thebes, required a mere 1½ to 2½ days. Pharaoh's messengers probably traveled to Goshen on horseback with even a shorter travel time. 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 may have been the site of two palace structures (ibid., 483), no epigraphical evidence confirms that Amenhotep II ever resided there. The discovery of a scarab with his royal cartouche at Ezbet Helmi no more proves his personal occupation of the city (ibid., 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, is a far better candidate for the Delta site where the exodus-pharaoh interacted with Moses.

[36]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 (Redford, "Coregency of Tuthmosis III" 111).

[37]Ibid., 112, 114.

[38]Ibid., 114.

[39]Ibid., 110, 114.

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."[40] Redford suggests that the practice of these pharaohs was not to name their firstborn sons after themselves, but to use the alternate birth-name. If Prince Amenhotep was not the eldest son of Amenhotep II, who by custom would have named his first son "Thutmose," then the Thutmose sitting on the lap of Hekreshu, the royal tutor, on the wall of Tomb 64 in Thebes may be "the eldest son" of the king.[41] Therefore, if Amenhotep II was the exodus-pharaoh, perhaps his eldest son Thutmose died early in the reign without leaving a trace, thus satisfying both the historical and biblical records (Exod 12:29).

IV. 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, Exodus has no such statement, nor is it stated anywhere else in Scripture.[42] One of the most important principles that seminary studies taught the present writer is, "Say everything the text says; say no more, and say no less!" Saying more than what is written is eisegesis, i.e., reading into the text what the interpreter presupposes it to say. Regarding the fate of this pharaoh, Moses states that the Lord would "be honored through pharaoh" by the destruction of his army (Exod 14:4), but he never speaks of pharaoh's death.

Ps 106:11 as Proof of the Exodus-Pharaoh's Death 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 "that he might make his power known" (Ps 106:8). After describing the parting (Ps 106:9), the psalmist adds, "And he saved them from the hand of the one who hated them and redeemed them from the hand of the enemy; the waters covered their adversaries; not one of them was left" (Ps 106:10-11). The adversaries are obviously the Egyptian soldiers, the enemies who were haters of the Jews.

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

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[40]Ibid., 114.

[41]Ibid., 114-15.

[42]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).

Egyptian chronologies, if he was the exodus-pharaoh, Amenhotep II 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 died by drowning. 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, even in Pharaoh's entire army that had gone into the sea after them; not even one of them remained" (Exod 14:28).

Ps 136:15 as Proof of the Exodus-Pharaoh's Death in the Red Sea

The text most frequently used to prove 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.[43] However, the Hebrew verb נער (*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 and being cast away. The verb indicates that David has become as a locust that is casually flicked away from a garment. David was not describing his own death. The context of Psalm 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, accentuating the ease with which He shook off Israel's adversary, pharaoh and the mighty Egyptian army.

Another argument against the view that Ps 136:15 signals the death of pharaoh is that the verse probably alludes to Exod 14:27, which uses the same verb for "shake off," but omits pharaoh from among those whom the Lord shook off. 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.[44] In Ps 136:15, the psalm writer was not rejoicing over the death of anyone, but that almighty God shook off the Egyptians by freeing Israel from their enemy's clutches.

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[43]Wood, "The Rise and Fall" 478.

[44]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 is not true. God displayed his glory by decimating Sennacherib's army when the Assyrians marched against Judah and Sennacherib escaped (2 Kgs 19:35), but it was not diminished when Sennacherib returned unscathed.

The Death and Regnal Length of Amenhotep II

Under what circumstances did Amenhotep II die? Fortunately, his mummified corpse has been preserved.[45] 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 March 9, 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.[46]

The length of the reign and the date of death of Amenhotep II is open to question. Though 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.[47] 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.[48] Wente and Van Siclen dispute this assertion, though, showing evidence of 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.[49]

Another possible length of his reign is 30 or 35 years. One source contributing to the argument that Amenhotep II reigned *over* 26 years is BM 10056. 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."[50] If one of these readings is correct, Amenhotep II's reign lasted at least thirty years, maybe thirty-five. Many scholars have postulated that he reigned beyond thirty years because he observed a regnal jubilee called a *sed* festival, a celebration that historically marked the thirtieth year of a pharaoh's reign. Though the *sed* festival was used for centuries to honor this regnal anniversary,[51] 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

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[45]No doubt exists among Egyptologists that this mummy is the corpse of Amenhotep II. His physical features bear a marked resemblance to his father and his son (James E. Harris and Kent R. Weeks, *X-Raying the Pharaohs* [New York: Scribners, 1973] 138).

[46]Nicholas Reeves, *Ancient Egypt: The Great Discoveries* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2000) 103.

[47]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).

[48]Redford's assumes that wine had to be consumed not long after the bottling process (Donald B. Redford, "On the Chronology of the Egyptian Eighteenth Dynasty," *JNES* 25 [1966]:119).

[49]E. F. Wente and C. C. Van Siclen III, "A Chronology of the New Kingdom," in *Studies in Honor of George R. Hughes*, Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilization 39 (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1976) 228.

[50]Redford, "Coregency of Tuthmosis III" 110.

[51]The Twelfth-Dynasty pharaoh Sesostris I (*ca.* 1960-1916 B.C.) erected two obelisks in front of the temple pylon at Heliopolis on the occasion of his first *sed* festival, commemorating his thirtieth regnal year (Grimal, *History of Ancient Egypt* 164). During the Eighteenth Dynasty, Thutmose III seemingly celebrated a *sed* festival in his thirtieth 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).

an automatic '30th year' at every mention of a *hb-sed* festival."[52]

Caution must be exercised before automatically assigning a thirty-year reign to every pharaoh who celebrated this event, but the *sed* festival of Amenhotep II may just signify that his reign exceeded thirty years. More conclusive than the *sed*-festival evidence is that on Thutmose IV's Lateran Obelisk, which was erected thirty-five years after the death of Thutmose III, to whom it was dedicated. Wente and Van Siclen suggest that the thirty-five 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.[53] If their argumentation is correct, Amenhotep II reigned 37 1/3 years, and was fifty-five at death.[54]

If this last regnal-year estimate is accurate, a lifespan of fifty-five years for Amenhotep II is deduced by adding his 37 1/3-year reign to the eighteen 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."[55] An X-ray investigation of the royal mummies may assist in dating his regnal length. The mummy of Amenhotep II is estimated to have been forty-five at death,[56] meaning that a fifty-five-year lifespan exceeds the projections of the X-ray evidence, and thus is "an impossibly high result according to the medical evidence."[57] Robins, however, 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.[58] Support

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[52]Der Manuelian, *Amenophis II* 43.

[53]Wente and Van Siclen III, "Chronology of the New Kingdom" 227-28. 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*, Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilization 35 (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1969) 228.

[54]Shea disputes the notion of a coregency under Thutmose III and Amenhotep II, though he formerly advocated one. He builds his position on the presupposition that Amenhotep II died in the Red Sea. The proof Shea presents 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 theory is weak, however, because it is based on the presupposition that the exodus-pharaoh died in the Red Sea, a presumption already shown to be inaccurate. If the two "first campaigns" of Amenhotep II were only one campaign, which will be proven subsequently, Shea loses all impetus for his fantastic claim. Moreover, he provides no precedent for two pharaohs ruling under the same name.

[55]Redford, "Coregency of Tuthmosis III" 117.

[56]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 forty-four years of age (Claude Vandersleyen, *L'Egypte 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 forty-five at death (Harris and Weeks, *X-Raying* 138).

[57]Der Manuelian, *Amenophis II* 44.

[58]G. Robins, "The Value of the Estimated Ages of the Royal Mummies at Death as Historical Evidence," *Göttinger Miszellen* 45 (1981):63-68.

for this criticism is found in the discrepancy related to Thutmose III's lifespan.[59] Though he lived at least until age fifty-five, his mummy reportedly displays skeletal features of a 40-45 year-old man, meaning that with X-ray evidence his mummy appears no less than 10-15 years younger than his actual age at death.[60] Thus the 10-year discrepancy for Amenhotep II is not problematic, and a reign of 37 1/3 years appears realistic.

V. The Second Asiatic Campaign as a Result of the Exodus

Great Reduction in Campaigning and Expansionism

The renowned conqueror, Thutmose III, led seventeen military campaigns into the Levant, but his son—in stark contrast—led only two or three. Though many scholars have attempted to determine the exact number, a virtual dearth of discussion deals with 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."[61] 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."[62] 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."[63]

Although 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-fourteenth century B.C., Egypt held only nominal control of Palestine, as they no longer struck fear into the Canaanite rulers.[64] One author notes that "this relative military inertness lasted until Horemheb's coming to power" in *ca.* 1335 B.C.[65] 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

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[59]Though Thutmose III's exact age at his accession is unknown, his reign lasted into his fifty-fourth 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), and Tyldesley claims that he reigned 53 years, 10 months, and 26 days (Tyldesley, *Hatchepsut* 96, 215)

[60]Harris and Weeks, *X-Raying* 138.

[61]Yohanan Aharoni and Michael Avi-Yonah, *The Macmillan Bible Atlas* (New York: Macmillan, 1977) 34.

[62]Vandersleyen, *L'Egypte* 2:341.

[63]Der Manuelian, *Amenophis II* 59.

[64]"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, 1992] 183).

[65]Vandersleyen, *L'Egypte* 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 B.C.

loss of power and imperialistic dominance?

Shortage of records of Amenhotep II's relative military inertness cannot be accounted for by his modesty. He recorded his military excursions into Asia in *The Annals of Amenhotep II*, which contain not a complete, daily record of each stop on the routes, but only a selection of the events that accentuate his courage and present him in a positive light.[66] Pritchard adds, "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."[67] Amenhotep II's exploits were motivated by a thirst for universal fame and glory.

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 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.[68] However, its text presents a dilemma: "The translator finds it impossible to reconcile the dates in these several stelae."[69] The available evidence allows for two views: (1) Amenhotep II conducted three Asiatic campaigns; (2) Amenhotep II conducted two Asiatic campaigns. Relevant ancient evidence solves this dispute, which is critical to this pharaoh's biography.

Two sources record multiple Asiatic campaigns under Amenhotep II, the Memphis and Karnak Stelae—partial duplicates in content. Both stelae are attributed to him, as they begin with his complete titulary. The Memphis Stele, later reused by a Twenty-First-Dynasty prince as part of the ceiling of his burial chamber (*ca.* 875 B.C.), 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).[70]

Another source, the Karnak Stele, which lies to the south of the Eighth Pylon at Karnak, is more damaged than the Memphis Stele. It consists of a two-part relief, each displaying a pharaoh who is presenting an offering to Amun-Re. Between the two parts is a vertical line of text that records the restoration of the monument by Seti I.[71] Whether this stele originally bore the same dates as the Memphis Stele is unknown, but that the Karnak Stele describes the same two campaigns as the Memphis Stele is clear. In fact, Hoffmeier refers to them as "two nearly identical stelae," though the Karnak Stele devotes much less space to the second campaign

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[66]Yohanan Aharoni, "Some Geographical Remarks Concerning the Campaigns of Amenhotep II," in *JNES* 19/3 (July 1960):177.

[67]James B. Pritchard, *ANET* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University, 1950) 245.

[68]Redford, "Coregency of Tuthmosis III" 118.

[69]Pritchard, *ANET* 245.

[70]Ibid., 245-46; Redford, "Coregency of Tuthmosis III" 119.

[71]Henry Breasted, *Ancient Records of Egypt*, vol. 2 (Champaign, Ill : University of Illinois, 2001) 305.

than does the Memphis Stele.[72] Both stelae were hacked-up during the Amarna Revolution and restored during the Nineteenth Dynasty, with poorer restoration on the Karnak Stele.[73] Its postscript names Thutmose as the erector, assumed to be Thutmose IV, who apparently erected the stele after his accession.[74]

The Amada and Elephantine Stelae also offer evidence regarding the number of campaigns. They 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.[75] His majesty came joyously to his father Amun, having slain with his own bludgeon the seven chiefs who were in the district of Takhsi."[76] 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.[77] This date demonstrates that the "first victorious campaign" transpired no later than Year 3 of Amenhotep II. How can the Year-3 date on these stelae be resolved with the Year-7 date on the Memphis Stele when both describe his first campaign?

Through use of these sources one can evaluate the two theories of how many campaigns. (1) Many scholars believe that Amenhotep II campaigned three times into Asia, with two options offered to resolve the conflicting information on the stelae. Option one: The numbering of campaigns is particular to individual stelae. Drioton and Vandier suggest that Amenhotep II undertook Asiatic 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.[78] Thus the scribe merely used "first" and "second" to distinguish from one another the two campaigns on the stele. The problem with this theory is that within Egyptian historiography, this method of dating military campaigns is unparalleled. The practice would be strange indeed among Eighteenth-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.[79] The 17 campaigns of Thutmose III, for example, are numbered successively throughout his reign.

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[72]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: Brill, 2000) 19.

[73]Pritchard, *ANET* 245; Redford, "Coregency of Tuthmosis III" 119.

[74]Breasted, *Ancient Records* 2:309.

[75]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* 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.

[76]Redford, "Coregency of Tuthmosis III" 119.

[77]Pritchard, *ANET* 245.

[78]Eitienne Drioton and Jacques Vandier, *L'Egypte* (Paris: Les Presses Universitaires de France, 1938) 406, 663.

[79]Redford, "Coregency of Tuthmosis III" 120.

Option two: 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 "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 one 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.[80] Once again, though, 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 sole ruler, in response to the Syro-Palestinian revolt waged after his father's death.

Insurmountable obstacles plague both versions of the three-campaign theory. 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."[81] 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 must refer to a single Asiatic campaign.[82]

(2) 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 options. Option one: 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 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."[83] One problem with this variation is the lack of precedent for dating pharaonic regnal years using two differing methods: sometimes coregent numbering, and other times sole-regent numbering. Another problem is that the coregency lasted a mere 2 1/3 years, making it mathematically impossible to equate the two campaigns, since the coregency would have to last for a minimum of three years and one day for Pritchard to be correct.

Option two: 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

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[80]Ibid.

[81]Ibid., 121.

[82]Anson F. Rainey, "Amenhotep II's Campaign to Takhsi," *JARCE* 10 (1973):71.

[83]Pritchard, *ANET* 245.

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 Nineteenth-Dynasty stelae-restoration crew that attempted to repair the damage the stelel 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."[84] He concludes, "Thus the initial date of Year 7 on the Memphis Stele is a[n inaccurate] restoration made by the Ramesides."[85]

Both variations of the three-campaign theory are 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."[86] Therefore, based on the likelihood of a singular error on the Memphis Stele—due to inaccurate restoration by Ramesside 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,[87] even provides a *terminus ad quem* for the first campaign, as line twenty-six 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."[88] 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, to the east of the Euphrates River, the inscription of which confirms that the first Asiatic campaign occurred before Year 4 ended.[89]

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[84]Vandersleyen, *L'Egypte* 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)

[85]Vandersleyen, *L'Egypte* 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 intentional alteration and potentially faulty reparation

[86]Vandersleyen, *L'Egypte* 2 323-24

[87]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 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 accounts 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 The Memphis and Karnak Stelae had only one goal in mind to boast of pharaoh's military victories in Asia (Vandersleyen, *L'Egypte* 2 323-24, Hallo and Simpson, *Ancient Near East* 261-62) Since the commissioner of these stelae had no need to mention the capture of the rulers of Takhsi, only *one* of the regions on the campaign's itinerary, they simply chose not to use the term

[88]Redford, "Coregency of Tuthmosis III" 119-20

[89]K Sethe and W Helck, eds , *Urk Urkunden des agyptischen Altertums Urkunden der 18 Dynastie*, vol 4 (Berlin Leipzig, 1906-1958) 1448, Vandersleyen, *L'Egypte* 2 324

The First Asiatic Campaign of Amenhotep II

For brevity, the first campaign of Amenhotep II will be referred to as A1, while his second campaign will be called A2. As indicated, he launched A1 in Year 3, and the dating of events related to this campaign is as follows: (1) Thutmose III died on *ca.* 22 March 1452 B.C.; (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 nearby garrisoned cities; and (5) Amenhotep II launched A1, arriving at his first destination on *ca.* 15 May 1452 B.C..

The death of Thutmose III led to a massive revolt in his Syro-Palestinian territories, prompting the launching of A1.[90] 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."[91] Amenhotep II's 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 B.C., just as his father had done on his first Asiatic campaign, exactly thirty-two 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*, though perhaps Palestine also rebelled. The young pharaoh proceeded by land to quell this revolt.[92]

The Second Asiatic Campaign of Amenhotep II

Amenhotep II indisputably launched A2 in Year 9. If his reign began in *ca.* 1455 B.C., 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 B.C. Therefore, the exodus date of *ca.* 25 April 1446 B.C. 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. Both ancient sources and modern commentators are far quieter about A2 than they are 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.

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."[93] Aharoni sees in A1 an excursion that never accomplished its primary mission: the conquest of Mitanni. Grimal concurs: "[T]hese two campaigns were the last to pit Egypt against Mitanni."[94]

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[90]The view that A1 was launched in response to an Asiatic revolt is held by Breasted and most modern Egyptologists (e.g., Breasted, *Ancient Records*, 2:304; Redford, *Egypt, Canaan, and Israel* 163; Grimal, *History of Ancient Egypt* 218).

[91]Dennis Forbes, "Menkheperre Djehutymes: Thutmose III, A Pharaoh's Pharaoh," *KMT* 9/4 (Winter 1998-1999):65.

[92]Breasted, *Ancient Records*, 2:304.

[93]Aharoni and Avi-Yonah, *The Macmillan Atlas* 34.

[94]Grimal, *History of Ancient Egypt* 219.

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 is invalid. Of even greater weight, the failure of A1 would have resulted in another campaign directed principally into Syria, if not into Mitannian territory farther to the north, not a brief raid into southern Palestine to accomplish little more than the acquisition of slaves and booty.

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 relates to the exodus. If the exodus and Amenhotep II's Year-9 campaign transpired in the same year, which is possible given the chronological coincidences, a brief campaign into southern Palestine to recover some of his losses would be both logical and expected. The feasibility of this possibility will be evaluated in light of the details related to A2.

Pre-Winter Launching of the Second Asiatic Campaign

The date of Year 9, Month 3, Season 1, Day 25 (or *ca.* 16 November 1446 B.C.) recorded on the Memphis Stele represents either the Egyptian army's launching date from Memphis or the arrival date at their first destination, more likely the latter. Either way, in antiquity a November date for a military campaign was extremely rare. "The present date would fall in the early part of November, an unusual season for an Egyptian campaign in Asia."[95] It was unusual because 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.[96] 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."[97] 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." Amenhotep II's decision to lead an attack force into Palestine in November was extremely unorthodox, so obviously the situation required urgent Egyptian intervention. But in what did he need to intervene? Unlike A1, which was launched to quell a rebellion, A2 had no obvious occasion.

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[95]Pritchard, *ANET* 246.

[96]Examples of campaigns launched in spring are plentiful. Thutmose III's first Asiatic campaign, as he arrived at his first destination (the border fortress of Tjel) on *ca.* 20 April 1484 B.C.; Amenhotep II's first Asiatic campaign, as he arrived at his first destination; Raamses II departure for Kadesh in late April, ca. 1274 (Shamash-Edom) on *ca.* 15 May 1452 B.C. are examples (Kenneth A. Kitchen, *Pharaoh Triumphant: The Life and Times of Ramesses II* [Warminster, Eng.: Aris & Phillips. 1982] 53).

[97]Der Manuelian, *Amenophis II* 59. As shown above, "seventh" should be corrected to "third."

Contrast between the Two Asiatic Campaigns

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 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.[98] 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 one *closer to* Egypt.

Change in Foreign-Policy after the Second Asiatic Campaign

Another oddity of A2 is that after its conclusion, the Egyptian army—established by Thutmose III as the fifteenth-century-B.C.'s most elite fighting force—went into virtual hibernation. Its previous policy of 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.[99] 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)."[100] 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."[101] 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."[102] 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."[103] Why would Amenhotep II do the unthinkable, and opt to make a treaty with Mitanni?

This mysterious reversal in foreign policy would remain inexplicable 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 the Israelite slave-base would be paramount. Certainly the Egyptians 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

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[98]Vandersleyen, *L'Egypte* 2:324-25.

[99]Redford, *Egypt, Canaan, and Israel* 163.

[100]Ibid., 164.

[101]Ibid.

[102]Ibid., 165.

[103]Ibid., 164.

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 seemed vulnerable. If this scenario represents what actually transpired in ANE history, however, tangible proof is needed to verify its veracity.

VI. 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, not including the 22,000 Levite males of Num 3:39. When women and children are added, they would have well exceeded 2,000,000.[104] That many Israelites probably provided the backbone of the Egyptian slave-force, considering their rigorous labors (Exod 1:11-14). To most Egyptology students, however, the exodus-narrative is 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 bolsters this skepticism. One prominent Egyptologist suggests,

> [T]o 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.[105]

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

Absence of an Exodus-Account in 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.[106] Nonetheless, the Hebrew slaves not only exited Egypt *en masse*, but they were responsible for the extermination of pharaoh's vast army, which—at the time—was the mightiest military force on earth. Yet the proud Egyptians would not be expected to document 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

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[104]John MacArthur, gen. ed., *The MacArthur Study Bible* (Nashville: Word, 1997) 198, note on Num 1:46.

[105]Redford, *Egypt, Canaan, and Israel* 408.

[106]A notable exception to this rule 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 king list that was begun during the Middle Kingdom, fixes a 108-year rule (*ca.* 1668 to 1560 B.C.) for the Hyksos (ibid., 107), who were driven out by the native Egyptians of the Seventeenth Dynasty. Yet such documentation is warranted as they played a prominant role in Egyptian history.

nothing, in terms of judging history."[107]

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."[108] 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.[109] He combined strength with a cruelty intended to demoralize his enemies,[110] 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."[111] 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.

Booty Lists from 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.[112] 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 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 Nagasuites/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."[113] Regarding the "89,600" total prisoners, the sum is actually 101,128 if the individual numbers are added together.[114] The error may be nothing more than a mistake in addition, as the individual numbers are probably more reliable than the recorded sum.[115] Therefore, the number 101,128 is preferred over 89,600. Before contrasting A2 with its

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[107]Kitchen, *Reliability of the OT* 11. The biblical text to which Kitchen alludes is 2 Chron 14:9-15.

[108]Aharoni and Avi-Yonah, *The Macmillan Atlas* 34.

[109]Hallo and Simpson, *Ancient Near East* 262.

[110]Grimal, *History of Ancient Egypt* 218.

[111]Breasted, *Ancient Records* 2:310.

[112]Redford, *Egypt, Canaan, and Israel* 408.

[113]Hoffmeier, "Memphis and Karnak Stelae" 2:22, Pritchard, *ANET* 247.

[114]Pritchard laments, "Even though two of the figures give questionable readings, no clear alternatives will supply the total given on the stele" (*ANET* 247).

[115]"The total given, 89,600, is actually wrong, the correct total being 101,128!" (Hoffmeier, "Memphis and Karnak Stelae" 2:22).

predecessors, attention must be drawn to the confiscation of 1,092 chariots, which, along with the 13,500 weapons, would be critical for replacing the "600 select chariots and all the *other* chariots of Egypt" lost in the Red Sea (Exod 14:7).

The military campaigns of Thutmose III, which are described in *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: A1 = 2,214 captives; A2 = 101,128 captives; T1 = 5,903 captives; T6 = 217 captives; and T7 = 494 captives.[116] 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 forty-six times more prisoners than all of the other campaigns combined! Why this tremendous disparity? Is it merely coincidental that such a vast number of prisoners was taken during the last Asiatic campaign of the Eighteenth 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.[117]

Goal of Impressing the Kings of Egypt's Rival Empires

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

> 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.'[118]

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 effect 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 them 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 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 9:9).

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[116]Ibid., 21; Pritchard, *ANET* 239, 246; Hoffmeier, "The Annals of Thutmose III" 2:12.

[117]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).

[118]Ibid.; Hoffmeier, "Memphis and Karnak Stelae" 2:22. The Prince of Shanhar, or biblical Shinar, is equated with the King of Babylon (Pritchard, *ANET* 247).

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 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 important question is whether the booty-list reveals an Israelite connection to A2 and its material acquisitions: Is there tangible evidence that links the Israelites to A2?

VII. Appearance of 3,600 Apiru on the Booty List

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.[119] 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").

Subsequently, many have rejected equating 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."[120] 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.[121]

Yet 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 derogatory expression, and only later it was used of the Hebrews as a distinct ethnic group.[122] But should one concede that the designation of outlaw-marauders actually preceded that of the ethnically distinct Hebrews? Though the present work cannot identify the limitations of the term "Habiru," whether or not the Apiru of A2 might be Hebrews must be addressed. Either way, the appearance of the Apiru on a formal list of Asiatic captives is quite unusual.[123]

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

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[119]Hoffmeier, "Memphis and Karnak Stelae" 2:22.

[120]Barry J. Beitzel, "Habiru," in *ISBE*, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982) 588-89.

[121]Hoffmeier, "Memphis and Karnak Stelae" 2:22. SA.GAZ, the Sumerian logographic equivalent of Habiru, and its variants are found in cuneiform texts from *ca.* 2,500 B.C. to the eleventh century B.C.. In light of this, many are unwilling to associate the Apiru of the fifteenth century B.C. with the Hebrews. However, Abram was known as a Hebrew in the twenty-first century B.C. (Gen 14:13), so the solution to the dilemma is that the two non-guttural consonants found in the tri-consonantal root of *'bri*, the exact consonants that appear in Akkadian and Ugaritic (*br*, possibly meaning "cross over, go beyond"), are also used 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; Beitzel, "Hebrew (People)," in *ISBE* 2:657).

[122]Ibid.

[123]Pritchard, *ANET* 247.

at this time, but no individual *Habiru* is mentioned by name."[124] 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)."[125] 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."[126]

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,"[127] elsewhere notes, "If the large numbers are to be believed, Apiru/Habiru were not just small bands of marauders in Amenhotep's day."[128] This number far exceeds that of a loosely-organized gang of bandits. Wood correctly concludes that "[t]he *'apiru* of the highlands of Canaan described in the Amarna Letters of the mid-14th century B.C. conform to the biblical Israelites."[129]

Beitzel, who zealously opposes the association of the Apiru with the Hebrews, states, "[T]he Amarna Hapiru seems to be composed of diverse ethnic elements from various localities."[130] Yet the dispersion of the Apiru throughout Canaan is expected if they are the 2,000,000+ Israelite settlers (Josh 11:23). Beitzel's claim is unfounded, because nothing in the Amarna Letters requires that the Apiru be ethnically diverse. Hoffmeier 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."[131] Two items support this homogeneity.

First, 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."[132] 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.[133] *The Annals of Thutmose III* confirm the Kharu's ethnicity. Since the Kharu are listed among peoples with armies and horses, along with Mitanni

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[124]Bryant G Wood, "One Thousand Years Missing from Biblical History? A Review of a New Theory," *Bible and Spade* 6/4 (Autumn 1993) 98

[125]Grimal, *History of Ancient Egypt* 219

[126]Aharoni and Avi-Yonah, *The Macmillan Atlas* 34

[127]Hoffmeier, *Israel in Egypt* 124

[128]Hoffmeier, "Memphis and Karnak Stelae" 2 22

[129]Wood, "The Rise and Fall" 489

[130]Beitzel, "Habiru" 2 588

[131]Hoffmeier, "Memphis and Karnak Stelae" 2 22

[132]Hoffmeier, *Israel in Egypt* 124

[133]Pritchard, *ANET* 247

(Naharin), their distinct ethnicity—and thus that of the Apiru—cannot be doubted.[134]

Second, 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.[135] The scribe of the Memphis Stele attributes the initial position to royalty, and then he names 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 not seven months before A2.

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 fourteenth 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.[136]

VIII. Amenhotep II and the Desecration of Hatshepsut's Image

Egyptian history itself may confirm Amenhotep II as the exodus-pharaoh. At the death of Thutmose II, the throne was given first to his son, Thutmose III, and later also assumed by his widow, Hatshepsut. Her rise to power came from her role 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.[137] Sometime between Year 2 and Year 4 of Thutmose III, Hatshepsut assumed full royal titulary, making herself a female pharaoh of equal rank.[138]

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).[139] Was she old enough during her father's second regnal year, when Moses was probably born (*ca.* 1527 B.C.) to qualify as his Egyptian stepmother?

One scenario may preclude Hatshepsut from being the princess who drew

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[134]Hoffmeier, "The Annals of Thutmose III" 2:9.

[135]Pritchard, *ANET* 247.

[136]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 fortieth years after the exodus (MacArthur, *Study Bible* 195).

[137]Hallo and Simpson, *Ancient Near East* 259.

[138]William Petty, "Redating the Reign of Hatshepsut," *KMT* 13/4 (Winter 2002-2003):51, 53.

[139]Rea, "Oppression and Exodus" 10.

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, meaning that she may have been the sister or half-sister of Thutmose I. If this were true, a brother-sister marriage probably occurred after Thutmose I was promoted to heir apparent, as such political matches that consolidated a would-be successor's claim to the throne were standard procedure in ancient Egypt.[140] Perhaps, then, Hatshepsut was born after Thutmose I was coronated (*ca.* 1529 B.C.), and thus was a little over twelve years old when she married her (half-) brother (*ca.* 1516 B.C.). This would make her under three years old at Moses' birth, at which age she could hardly venture down to the Nile, let alone draw out an infant-bearing reed basket.

There is no proof that Hatshepsut was born after her father's accession, though, and she could have been 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. Hatshepsut thus would have been old enough to draw Moses out of the Nile during her father's second regnal year, so she is a legitimate candidate for Moses' Egyptian adoptive-mother, since her father was already over 35 years old when he assumed the throne.

All the evidence points to Hatshepsut as the most likely candidate for Moses' stepmother, because her blood-sister, Princess Akhbetneferu, died in infancy, because Lady Mutnofret—according to existing records—never bore a daughter to Thutmose I,[141] and because 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 lived long enough *after* she retrieved him from the Nile, increasing the likelihood that an account of this "daughter of Pharaoh" (Exod 2:5) would be documented somewhere in the Egyptians' detailed records, a qualification held by Hatshepsut alone.

The Defacer of Hatshepsut's Image

Some indeterminable time after Hatshepsut's death, someone attempted to obliterate any historical record of her. Many inscribed cartouches of her were erased, while her busts were smashed or broken into pieces, perhaps by 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, such as that of Thutmose I or II.[142] 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.[143]

According to most Egyptologists, this massive effort to destroy all records of Hatshepsut 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

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[140]Tyldesley, *Hatchepsut* 65, 77.

[141]Ibid.

[142]Ibid., 79. For pictures of Hatshepsut's image and cartouches hacked-out of various monuments and statutes, see http://w ww.nbts-ru.org/EN/DPet/HatPic.html, accessed 02/27/06.

[143]Tyldesley, *Hatchepsut* 114-15, 216.

from Thutmose I to himself.[144] "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."[145] But several factors weaken the theory that Thutmose III was the perpetrator.

First, that Thutmose III defaced her image is inconsistent with how he otherwise related to her memory. A scene on the dismantled Chapelle Rouge at Djeser-Djeseru portrays Hatshepsut, and the inscription identifies her: "The Good God, Lady of the Two Lands, Daughter of Ra, Hatshepsut."[146] Thutmose III, who is pictured 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. Furthermore, Thutmose III planned the construction of his own temple to Amun, which was to be built Deir el-Bahri, a site that Hatshepsut built up greatly, including massive terraces and here own temple next to the one that he subsequently built.[147]

Second, if he did it, Thutmose III waited at least 20 years after her death before desecrating her image. That he would wait until over 20 years after she had departed to initiate an anti-feminism campaign out of hatred seems impossible. "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."[148]

Third, if Thutmose III was the culprit, as proven by his construction project at Karnak, 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 and amounted to a total obliteration from which there was no return. This act against Hatshepsut was an attempt to "condemn her to oblivion—a fate worse than death for an Egyptian."[149] 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.[150] Such seems far too severe to fit the motive of mere sexism.

Fourth, 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 the record in or after Hatshepsut's nineteenth regnal year (*ca.* 1488/7 B.C.)? Occasionally his name was violated while his image remained intact, but some of his statues were smashed and physically thrown out of temples.[151] This

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[144]Hallo and Simpson, *Ancient Near East*, 259, 261; Redford, *Egypt, Canaan, and Israel*, 156; Tyldesley, *Hatchepsut*, 216.

[145]Tyldesley, *Hatchepsut*, 225.

[146]Ibid., 219.

[147]Ibid., 219-20; Grimal, *History of Ancient Egypt* 216.

[148]Tyldesley, *Hatchepsut* 220, 224-25. Bryan asserts that the dishonoring of Hatshepsut began *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 History*, ed. Ian Shaw [New York: Oxford University, 2000] 248).

[149]Grimal, *History of Ancient Egypt* 216.

[150]Tyldesley, *Hatchepsut* 216.

[151]Ibid., 206, 222.

attack upon her *male* chief-advisor's image can hardly be justified if Thutmose III was motivated purely by anti-feminist hatred.

Several 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.[152] (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 option, however, addresses why Thutmose III would wait to start his anti-Hatshepsut campaign until at least twenty years after his sole rule began. 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 twenty years of sole rule, his reign was secure, and his successful campaigning already had solidified for him a lasting legacy.

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 was the motive for such a severe act. Whoever was responsible carried out the act only after Year 42 of Thutmose III, meaning that the desecration occurred no earlier than *ca.* 1464 B.C. Also, to envision that the culprit lived long after both Hatshepsut and her memory disappeared from the earth is difficult, since elapsed time would tend to diminish motive. Accordingly, two possible scenarios could incriminate Amenhotep II as culpable.

First, Amenhotep II contributed to the campaign to destroy Hatshepsut's image, but he was not the initial perpetrator. Tyldesley observes, "It 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."[153] Tyldesley does not explain why Amenhotep II would continue this campaign without personal involvement. Bryan agrees 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."[154]

Second, 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 Hatshepsut's rearing of 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), and he would have 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 undoubtedly rivaled pharaoh's because of their mourning over 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 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

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[152]Ibid., 8, 225.

[153]Ibid., 224.

[154]Bryan, "Eighteenth Dynasty" 250-51.

effort is today invisible, since the face of the pylon was erased and redecorated in the first years of Amenhotep II."[155] Perhaps Year 9 was when it all began.

IX. Conclusion

Now it is possible to answer the questions posed earlier. Could the eldest son of Amenhotep II have died during the tenth plague, which must be true of the exodus-pharaoh's son? The answer is yes. In fact, none of Amenhotep II's sons claimed to be his firstborn, and one Egyptologist theorizes that the eldest son died inexplicably during childhood. Did Amenhotep II die in the Red Sea, as the Bible allegedly indicates regarding the exodus-pharaoh? No, he died in usual fashion, and his mummified body is still preserved. Yet this does not conflict with the Bible, since no biblical text explicitly 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 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 attempts to disprove the association of the Hebrews with the Apiru of the New Kingdom, more evidence favors their being the same people.

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 most logical candidate for the pharaoh who ordered this nationwide campaign of desecration. If Hatshepsut indeed was Moses' Egyptian stepmother—and she is the most 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 identify Amenhotep II as the most legitimate candidate for the exodus-pharaoh, but that biblical chronology of that era functions as a canon with which Egyptian history may be synchronized.

Hopefully, the principal purpose of this article has not been lost in the extensive historical detail in 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 will invariably 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."[156] Though the strongest argumentation cannot remove negative presuppositions of those with doubts about biblical inerrancy, such argumentation can strengthen the faith of those with a high view of the Bible's accuracy.

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[155]Ibid., 240.

[156]Shea, "Amenhotep II as Pharaoh" 42.