THE EXODUS

AN EGYPTIAN STORY

Peter Feinman

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by

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Contents

Dedication

Norma Kershaw
Adina Savin
John Foster

People who know Norma Kershaw, Adina Savin, and John Foster may wonder what it is that links these three people together and in relation to a book on the Exodus. There is a story to be told about it and it reflects the theme and methodology of the book as well. The seemingly unrelated may be related after all.

In 1996, I attended the annual conference of the American Research Center in Egypt (ARCE) in St Louis. My paper was 'The Hyksos and the Exodus – Are Manetho, Josephus, and Redford Right?' I asked for the use of a slide projector in the presentation. Times have changed. The abstract for the paper was:

> The Exodus as an event in history is one that is generally avoided by Egyptologists today, but not so in ancient times. The first Egyptian historian of Egypt, Manetho, appears to have written extensively about an historical departure of Semites from Egypt where he links the triple scourges of Egypt in one – the Second Intermediate Period, the Amarna Age, and the Exodus. Josephus, citing Manetho, acknowledges a link between the Shepherds and servants in the sacred book and with the Jews in his present. Redford suggests that in some way the historical departure of a Canaanite people from Egypt at the end of the Second Intermediate Period and the Exodus are related.
>
> This paper will attempt to determine if there is any validity to the idea that the Israelite story of the Exodus and the Hyksos are related, i.e., are the Hyksos the ancestors of the Jews and under what circumstances did they depart from Egypt.
>
> A critical portion of this analysis will involve the Hyksos Hippopotamus story of Apophis from the 13th century BCE. While it may be typical to view such a story as fanciful entertainment good for a laugh about an ancient enemy, it also may be viewed as a political polemic extremely relevant to the present in which it was told. Ignoring the political dimension of the story may be compared to considering Animal Farm as an attempt by Orwell to develop an alternative to Disney by using pigs instead of mice. After all, this Egyptian story from the traditional time of the Exodus involves royal motifs including the clash of Egyptian and Semitic kings and the control of a hippo. Thebes may have regained control over Egypt with the 18th Dynasty but it is becoming increasingly obvious that the Hyksos did not simply disappear. They continued to play an important part in Egyptian history as Egypt adopted the Hyksos military technology and then paid homage to them on their 400 anniversary in the Delta at roughly the same time the Hyksos hippo story was told.
>
> On the Israelite side, there are two stories of the Jacob people leaving Egypt, first, Jacob himself after asserting the peaceful subordination of the king of Egypt to him, and second, by the sons of Jacob, in a not so peaceful encounter where they leave armed for battle.

> The post-Qadesh relationship of Ramses and his armed forces has also been a subject of scrutiny as Ramses had to deal with the reality that he could no longer march to areas 18th Dynasty kings had claimed regardless of how he choose to portray that battle.
>
> In conclusion, there is a strong warrior or maryannu aspect to the multiple confrontations and stories involving Egypt and the Hyksos, Ramses and the Jacob people that would lead one to conclude that there were two significant departures of the Hyksos from Egypt, first *c.*1550 and second, c. 1250.

Much of this material appears in this book a mere 25 years later.

At the end of the conference, one of ARCE board members from St Louis invited some people to a private lunch at her club. I did not make the cut; Norma Kershaw did. She invited me as her guest and I accepted. My connection with Norma spanned three organizations: ARCE, ASOR, then the American Schools of Oriental Research, and the AIA, Archaeological Institute of America. We would see other at these organization conferences, especially ARCE and ASOR.

The connection was through the AIA. Before Norma moved to California she had run the Long Island Society of the AIA. One of its members married someone from Scarsdale, NY, moved there, and established the Westchester County AIA Society. In 1996, I was in the process of becoming the president of that Society. Meantime, Norma was busy developing a California chapter of ARCE. So at these annual conferences we talked shop about the challenges in creating and operating a local archaeology-based society. It was those discussions that provided the link that caused her to invite me as her Plus One to the luncheon.

My TWA flight (remember TWA?) was late in the afternoon. Pre-9/11 there was no rush to get to the airport hours in advance. Following the lunch I shared a cab to the airport with Adina Savin, who was and still is in the entertainment business, and John Foster, who was an Egyptologist and editor of the annual publication of ARCE. I sat in the front, Adina sat behind me, and John was next to her behind the driver.

I do not recall specifically, but I presume Adina was aware of my paper presentation on the Exodus. If not, then it came up in the conversation about the conference. She was in the process of being bat-mitvahed so we had a lot to talk about. I do not recall the details of the conversation but she does remember it too. At some point she suggested I read a book by John Foster, *Echoes of Egyptian Voices: An Anthology of Ancient Poetry*. The book was helpful for her and she thought it might be for me as well.

My interests tend towards history. On my own, the odds are I never would have read this book. Adina was quite insistent that I should read it. I promised to do so. When I returned home I did look it up in the Columbia library but it was checked out. Periodically, I would check (in person, of course, because that is the way it worked then) but to no avail. Finally, I am sure more than a year later, the book was in stock and I checked it out.

I began reading the book with no expectations whatsoever. I was not hunting for clues for the Exodus. It never occurred to me that the book would have any

connection to the Exodus. Suddenly there it was. An OMG! moment. One of the poems was Ramses' *Song of Sea*, his claim of victory. As Pharaoh, Ramses, of course, could never admit defeat so searching for such a stela was absurd. But he could claim victory. That thought had never occurred to me before. It only occurred to me when I read his hymn to his success. In John Foster's book I read Ramses' *Song of Miriam*. I had found a smoking gun and I was the only person in the world who knew it. Now with this book (and some previous writings), I am sharing that realization with others in an historical reconstruction of the Exodus from the Egyptian record. The reconstruction in this book is possible, plausible, and reasonable but not provable beyond a shadow of a doubt, the only true standard for biblically-related topics.

This book is possible thanks to a series of seemingly unrelated happenstances and coincidences that turn out to be connected after all. The same applies to the evidence cited in the historical reconstruction. The evidence is not new but seeing the links is. The result is a story that makes sense even if you choose to interpret the data otherwise. And for being able to see the unity, I wish to thank, Norma Kershaw, Adina Savin, and John Foster for making it possible.

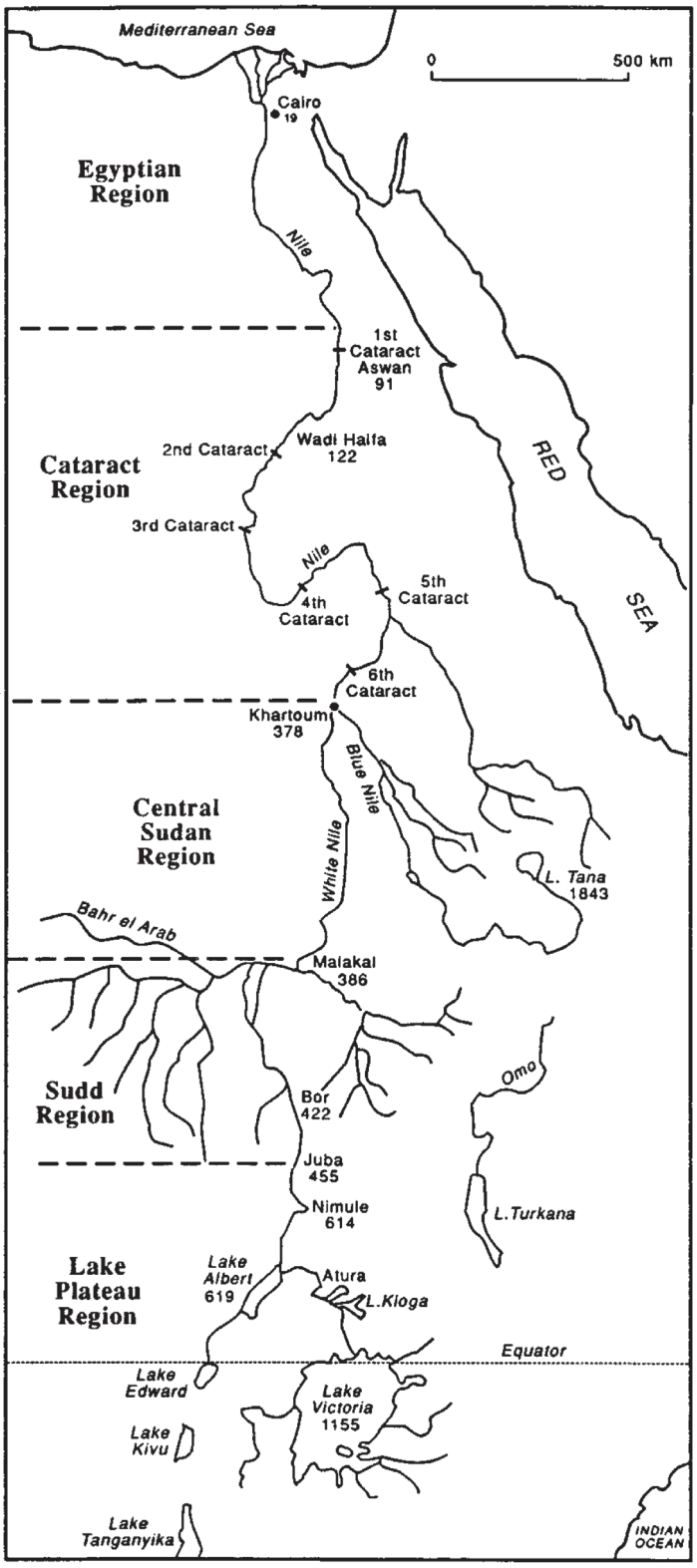
I also would like to acknowledge several people who contributed to this book without being aware of it. In April 2021, the book, *Five Views on the Exodus: historicity, chronology, and theological implications* was published. I was one of the five contributors to the book. As part of the book writing process we all exchanged our individual contributions and comments with each other before it was finalized. In addition I asked one other person to read my article. None of them knew about this book but their comments on my article helped me including in areas of Egyptology that I had not researched before. So I would like to thank Ronald Hendel who also read an earlier draft of this book, James K. Hoffmeier, Mark D. Janzen, Mark Leuchter, Gary A. Rendsburg, and Scott Stripling for their assistance in the earlier publication on the Exodus which carried over to this publication seven months later.

Chronology

NEOLITHIC PERIOD		8800–4700 BCE
PREDYNASTIC PERIOD		5300–3050 BCE
Naqada I		4000–3500 BCE
Naqada II		3500–3200 BCE
Naqada III/Dynasty 0		3200–3050 BCE
EARLY DYNASTIC PERIOD		3050–2686 BCE
1st Dynasty		3050–2890 BCE
2nd Dynasty		2890–2686 BCE
OLD KINGDOM		2686–2125 BCE
3rd Dynasty		2686–2613 BCE
4th Dynasty		2613–2494 BCE
5th Dynasty		2494–2345 BCE
6th Dynasty		2345–2181 BCE
7th and 8th Dynasties		2181–2160 BCE
FIRST INTERMEDIATE PERIOD		2160–2055 BCE
9th and 10th Dynasties		2160–2125 BCE
11th Dynasty (Thebes only)		2125–2055 BCE
	Khety	
	Merikare	
MIDDLE KINGDOM		2055–1650 BCE
11th Dynasty		2055–1985 BCE
12th Dynasty		1985–1773 BCE
	Amenemhat I	1985–1956 BCE
	Senwosret I	1956–1911 BCE
	Amenemhat II	1911–1877 BCE
	Senwosret II	1877–1870 BCE
	Senwosret III	1870–1831 BCE
	Amenemhat III	1831–1786 BCE
	Amenemhat IV	1786–1777 BCE
	Queen Sobeknefru	1777–1773 BCE
13th Dynasty		1773–1650 BCE
14th Dynasty		1773–1650 BCE
SECOND INTERMEDIATE PERIOD		1650–1550 BCE
15th Dynasty		1650–1550 BCE
	Apophis	
16th Dynasty (Thebes)		1650–1580 BCE
17th Dynasty		1580–1550 BCE
	Seqenenre	1560–1555 BCE
	Kamose	1555–1550 BCE

NEW KINGDOM		1550–1069 BCE
18th Dynasty		1550–1295 BCE
	Ahmose I	1550–1525 BCE
	Amenhotep I	1525–1504 BCE
	Thutmose I	1504–1492 BCE
	Thutmose II	1492–1479 BCE
	Thutmose III	1479–1425 BCE
	Queen Hatshepsut	1473–1458 BCE
	Amenhotep II	1427–1400 BCE
	Thutmose IV	1400–1390 BCE
	Amenhotep III	1390–1352 BCE
	Amenhotep IV/Akhnaton	1352–1336 BCE
	Smenkhare	1338–1336 BCE
	Tutankhamun	1336–1327 BCE
	Ay	1327–1323 BCE
	Horemheb	1323–1295 BCE
19th Dynasty		1295–1186 BCE
	Ramses I	1295–1294 BCE
	Seti I	1294–1279 BCE
	Ramses II	1279–1213 BCE
	Merneptah	1213–1203 BCE
20th Dynasty		1186–1069 BCE
THIRD INTERMEDIATE PERIOD		1069–664 BCE
21st Dynasty		1069–945 BCE
22nd Dynasty		945–715 BCE
23rd Dynasty		818–715 BCE
24th Dynasty		727–715 BCE
25th Dynasty		747–656 BCE
LATE PERIOD		664–332 BCE
26th Dynasty		664–525 BCE
	Psammetichus I	664–610 BCE
	Psammetichus II	595–589 BCE
	Ahmose II	570–526 BCE
	Psammetichus III	526–525 BCE
27th Dynasty (Persian Period)		525–404 BCE
28th Dynasty		404–399 BCE
29th Dynasty		399–380 BCE
30th Dynasty		380–343 BCE
31st Dynasty (Persian Period)		343–332 BCE

Names in italics are mentioned in the book. (based on Shaw 2000, 479–482)



'Origin and Evolution of the River Nile' from Said 1994, 18.

Chapter 1

The Egyptological search for the Exodus

Moses led people out of Egypt against the will of Ramses II (1279–1213 BCE) on the seventh hour of New Year's Eve at the end of Ramses's seventh year of ruling. It is an Egyptian story.

Why that time? Why that day? Why that year? Why against Ramses II? ['Ramses' is the spelling of his name to be used in this study except when quoting people who used a different spelling.] The answers to these questions are found not in the Hebrew Bible but in Egypt. To understand what Moses did, it is necessary to place him in the Egyptian context in which he had been raised and against which he acted. The search for this understanding also is the search to understand Egypt. Typically, that is not the way the search for the Exodus is conducted.

With these brief introductory remarks in mind, let us turn to the Egyptological search for the Exodus. Initially, the specific goals were to find archaeological and textual evidence for it and to locate the route from the unknown location of the capital city of Ramses II, the presumed Pharaoh of the Exodus, to the wilderness. This chapter traces the development of Egyptology, the formation of the Egypt Exploration Fund, its initial archaeological efforts, how leading Egyptologists have addressed the Exodus in their histories of Egypt, and the challenges within the discipline itself. The review will set the stage for defining the Egyptian cultural construct and the historical reconstruction of the Exodus.

Napoleon and the birth of Egyptology

'Napoleon in Egypt: The general's search for glory led to the birth of Egyptology' was the title of an article by Bob Brier (1999). What previously had been a remote and inaccessible land of myth and mystery suddenly became part of current events. Napoleon would go in 1798 where Alexander the Great had gone before him over 2000 years earlier. Included in the expedition were people one would not normally expect: 167 scientists or savants representing a range of artistic, scientific, and engineering skills. They traveled the length and breadth of the country gathering data in various formats about both the ancient land and Egypt in their present. Eventually, that information coalesced into the monumental 20-volume *Description de*

l'Égypte in 1828. While in Egypt, Napoleon created the Institute d'Égypte. Napoleon lost at Waterloo to the English, but his expedition put France in the lead for the battle over ancient Egypt.

One savant has been singled out for special notice, the artist Dominque Vivant Denon. At age 55, he was one of the oldest people on Napoleon's expedition. He also was one of the most enthusiastic. For an artist, the experience of seeing ancient Egypt from Upper Egypt to the Delta was an overwhelming experience. The sights were unexpected, extraordinary, and too numerous to count. Imagine seeing ancient Egypt before tourists, pollution, and a rising water table wreaked their havoc. Today we cannot see the Egypt Denon experienced over two centuries ago except through his drawings. Denon returned to France and published *Voyage dans la haute et la basse Egypte/Travels in Upper and Lower Egypt* in 1802. The book was phenomenally successful just as an English travel book would be in 1877 (see below).

Perhaps the foremost archaeological discovery occurred in July 1799 at Rosetta. There the still famous Rosetta Stone was discovered by the French. However, subsequently it was taken by the victorious British as war booty in 1801 and it now resides in the British Museum. As a result of this discovery, the race was on to crack the code of the ancient Egyptian languages from the Greek, hieroglyphic, and demotic scripts inscribed on the single stone with the same message. Once again France emerged triumphant thanks to Jean François Champollion in 1822. This incident reveals the importance of non-archaeological and non-historical concerns in the study of ancient Egypt.

At this point, archaeological excavations in Egypt had not yet started and there was no search for the Exodus. For readings on this topic see Brier (1999); Parkinson (1999); Peters (2009); Robinson (2012); Wilkinson (2020, 19, 22–30, 38–43, 55–75, 102–104).

Austen Layard and the birth of Assyriology

'Hasten, O Bey! Hasten to the diggers, for they have found Nimrod himself!' (Layard 1849, 65). These words to Austen Henry Layard ushered in a new era in understanding the ancient Near East and in biblical studies. True, he did not practice scientific archaeological standards as practiced now, he was more of a treasure seeker. Still Layard's work brought home to England the world of ancient Assyria. The multi-facets of his excavations anticipated many of the issues and conditions that Egyptology would experience decades later when archaeological excavations began in Egypt. They include:

1. The national pride from the accomplishment particularly in regard to the longtime rival France with France still maintaining the cultural upper hand in Egypt.
2. The geopolitics of operating within the crumbling Ottoman Empire with England actually taking over in Egypt in 1882.

3. The connection with the Bible but the route of the Exodus being the goal in Egypt and not Nimrod (Gen. 10).
4. The struggle to find a place in the British Museum for Assyrian and Egyptian objects given the exalted status of Greek art and the arrival of the Elgin Marbles in 1816.
5. Race – Assyriology provided a preview for Egyptology in how the scholars chose to classify the people they studied (Cooper 1983; 1991; Yurco 1986b; 1990; Larsen 2009).

One should keep in mind that museums then were not what museums are today. The British Museum, chartered in 1753, and the Louvre, opening in 1793, were still comparatively new. Issues about what to collect and display were still being debated. So was the question as to who the intended audience was. It was a long time before Tut (Tutankhamun) changed everything and the blockbuster museum exhibition became the norm. In the meantime, the rivalry between the two national museums in England and France was real.

Layard discovered so many 'cherubim' and reliefs, they could not all fit in one museum, not that the British Museum considered Assyrian reliefs to be real art in the first place. Layard realized he needed to reach out to the general public to obtain support for his work. The result was book publications and an exhibition in 1851 at the newly-built Crystal Palace in London. The hook was the Bible. The names of multiple biblical kings were contained in the Assyrian reliefs and monuments including even images of them.

For additional readings on these subjects see Jacobsen (1939); Lloyd (1947); Kildahl (1959); Brackman (1978); Bohrer (1989; 1994; 1998, 2001); M. Larsen (1994); Holloway (2001; 2006); Malley (2008).

George Smith and Heinrich Schliemann: jump-starting Egyptology

These archaeological events did not occur in a vacuum. In the 1880s England was not simply playing catch-up with Napoleon's expedition to Egypt in 1798. Since that time, a lot had happened besides the deciphering of hieroglyphs by Champollion in 1822. A slew of academic and archaeological developments substantially changed the way the human past was understood. These developments included:

1. The principles of geology established by Charles Lyell which extended the age of the earth well beyond anything previously contemplated.
2. The aforementioned Assyrian discoveries such as by Layard which brought to life the existence of the people who had destroyed the northern kingdom of Israel.
3. The new ways of arranging the biblical texts in what would become known as the Documentary Hypothesis thereby undermining the position of Moses as the author of the Five Books of Moses.

4. Charles Darwin – need more be said about a person whose teachings still cannot be taught in many American schools.

Collectively, these changes in the paradigm threatened the place of the Bible. Individually and combined these developments undermined the biblically-based 4004 BC date Bishop Ussher had calculated for the origin of the universe. The response in biblical scholarship in the nineteenth century, especially the later decades and in England, are outside the scope of this study (Rogerson 1985). However, it should be noted that what became Egyptology was not immune to the forces unleashed by these actions.

Two archaeological events thrust Egyptology into this academic maelstrom. The first was the discovery of Troy by Heinrich Schliemann in 1871 (S. Allen 1989; Traill 1995). His discovery was presented in England as an antidote to the assaults on Homer and the Bible during the previous decades (Gange 2013, 40). The second event was the translation in 1872, by George Smith of the British Museum, of a non-biblical flood story with many similarities to the story of Noah. Smith's reaction to his discovery has become part of archaeological lore. It resulted in a public presentation attended by Prime Minister Gladstone. The presence of the political leader of a country at an archaeological lecture was highly unusual. Gladstone also was fixated on Homer (Gange 2013, 141–150). The flood story was part of the Gilgamesh Epic, not yet known by that name. It launched a quest into the twentieth century to equate this Sumerian king of Uruk with the biblical Nimrod (Gen. 10:1–9). Together these events raised the prospect that at any moment an archaeological discovery could be made which would validate the historicity of these two revered ancient texts, the *Iliad* and the Old Testament.

Egyptologists then repeatedly referred to Smith and Schliemann as reminders of the power of the spade (Gange 2013, 156–157). Egyptology arose as a weapon intended to be wielded against the forces attacking the acceptance of the literal historical truth of the Bible. The forces of darkness represented by elitist rationalist criticism would be vanquished by this new tool being deployed on behalf of the people's religion. It was precisely in the waning decades of the nineteenth century when these pro-biblical forces were strongest. They became manifest in the institutional effort of the newly-formed Egypt Exploration Fund to lead that effort through excavations to determine the route of the Exodus. The highbrow *Academy*, the popular science journal *Knowledge* and various other newspapers and publications would be the means through which the results of this Egyptological initiative would be disseminated to the public (see below) (Gange 2013, 3, 5–6).

Histories of Egyptology have tended to minimize the significance of the biblical connection to the origin of the discipline in England:

> it was precisely because Egyptology was felt to have so powerful a role in accommodating the Bible to the needs of contemporary culture that its technical development was pushed forward rapidly in the last quarter of the nineteenth century ...

> ... the biblical enthusiasms of the new Egyptological organizations of the 1880s have been studiously ignored ...
>
> Egyptology's new-found popularity was formed and sustained by this range of efforts to undercut scientific naturalism, rationalism, sceptical criticism of the Bible, and secularism itself. Indeed, the central assertion of this chapter is that after 1880 Egyptology became a powerful component in a broad fight-back of popular religion against perceived 'irreligious' tendencies in British intellectual life. (Gange 2013, 9, 158, 163)

The 1880s may be characterized as the high tide of biblical Egypt as a focus of attention in England. The biblically-inspired public provided the audience for the discoveries of the archaeologists (Gange 2013, 153). The communication between Egyptology and this public was led by two individuals. One was a writer and artist by training and not a professionally trained scholar, Amelia B. Edwards. The other R. S. Poole, was from the British Museum. Together they launched the organization that would begin the archaeological search for the route of the Exodus.

Amelia B. Edwards (1831–1892)

Today Amelia B. Edwards' contributions to Egyptology are not well-known outside the circle of people who are interested in the history of Egyptology. In the beginning, she was the prime mover in the creation of an organization dedicated to Egyptology (see below). She endowed the first chair in the United Kingdom in Egyptology and arranged for it to be held by Flinders Petrie, the foremost Egyptologist of his day. Her interests helped set the tone for what English Egyptologists did in that first decade and for communicating those actions and results to the general public.

A biography is not warranted here but some salient points of her life deserve mention in a study of Egyptology and the Exodus. Her training definitely differed from that of an Egyptologist in the academic context. In her pre-Egyptological life she was an artist in the broadest sense. Poetry, stories, novels, music, opera, painting, sketching, all were part of her childhood, early adulthood, and middle age before she took the plunge into Egyptology at age 51. She was most successful in her travel books. The first was *Unbroken Peaks and Unfrequented Valleys* (1873) about the Dolomites. The one which changed her life was *A Thousand Miles up the Nile* (1877) about her trip to Egypt in 1873. The delay in the publication was due to the meticulous research she conducted on her return to England to ensure the accuracy of the information in the book. She wanted all visitors to Egypt to be knowledgeable in what they experienced there; she wanted all armchair visitors to feel as if they had been there in person.

Before turning to her Exodus-related work, some of her other Egyptological reports deserve attention. In 1881, she was scathing in her book review of *History of Ancient Egypt* by George Rawlinson. The non-scholar took the renowned scholar to task for his shortcomings as an Egyptologist (Edwards 1881). For example, she extolled the achievements of Hatasu (Hatshepsut, 1473–1458 BCE). This female had publicly succeeded in a man's world just as Edwards was doing. The female Pharaoh

built monuments. She was the first explorer in history, the discoverer of an unknown land [meaning Punt which was not unknown to Egypt], who had dispatched 'the first exploring squadron known in the history of the world' (Melman 1995, 266 quoting Amelia Edwards unpublished paper 'The social and political position of women in the Ancient World', Edwards nd, 22). Edwards's Hatasu is a scientist like Napoleon whose sailors and navigators were like ethnographers and naturalists. Edwards's travel and writing and the birth of English Egyptology occurred after British explorers had successfully searched for the source of the Nile.

Her life-long artistic and theatrical skills served her well in a highly successful five-month tour of the United States in 1889. She spoke over 120 times on Egypt to many learned organizations, archaeological societies (the Archaeological Institute of America was founded in 1879 with local societies in multiple cities), and colleges. One should also note that these achievements occurred in a male-dominated world. She was a self-taught, self-made woman acting outside the traditional learned infrastructure until she created an organization based on her interests. William Copley Winslow, head of the American chapter of the Egypt Exploration Fund, titled Edwards' obituary 'The Queen of Egyptology' (1892). He noted her magazine article on 'The Story of Tanis' (*Harper's*, October 1886), believed to have been the city of Zoan where Ramses oppressed Israel. He also wrote about her series on 'Was Rameses II the Pharaoh of the Exodus' (Edwards 1883b; see below). 'The queenly title is hers' exclaimed Winslow (1892, 312). For additional readings on Edwards see Rees (1988); O'Neill (2001); Moon (2006); Wilkinson (2020, 260–263 and 269–270).

Egypt Exploration Fund

Edwards was the right person in the right place at the right time to create the Egypt Exploration Fund (EEF). She was not the first traveler to write about a trip to Egypt. Such books in English or with English translations had been printed before. Frederick Lewis Norden and Richard Picoke travelled in the eighteenth century; John Gardner Wilkinson, Edward Lane, Richard William Howard Vyse, Sophia Lane Poole, and Lucie Duff Gordon in the nineteenth century. There had even been an Egyptian Society in 1741 and then another one founded in London in 1817 by Thomas Young, rival of Champollion. Nothing much had developed from those endeavors. By 1880, the confluence of circumstances was different. The early 1880s have been characterized as 'perhaps the most momentous years in the entire history of Egyptology and the of Egypt's entanglement with the West' (Wilkinson 2020, 245).

Edwards' Egyptian voyage inspired her to seek to save 'the ancient Egyptian biblical monuments from the ravages of both tourism and Egyptian modernization' (Gange 2006, 1086 n.10). Initially she faced the same obstacles as Layard had in getting the British Museum to accept Assyriological objects as worthy. Egyptian art did not fare well matched with classical art. Also, like Layard, she played the biblical card.

As part of that effort, Edwards wrote a letter published in *The Academy* on 24 April 1880. The subject of the letter was the site of Raamses, the city of Pharaoh Ramses built by the Hebrew slaves (Ex. 1:11). She claimed that Tel el-Maskhuta in the Wadi Tumilat was that city. In the letter, she disagreed with the prevailing view that Tanis (Zoan) in the northeast Delta was the city. The biblical text (Num. 13:23) dates that city to a much earlier time than Ramses so it could not be the new city built just prior to the Exodus. Edwards concluded her lengthy letter with the firm assertion that the Hyksos capital of Tanis could not be the city of departure in the Exodus. She presumed reader knowledge of the Hyksos but would elaborate on them in a subsequent article (see below) (Edwards 1880).

Afterwards, she partnered with Poole to create the Egypt Exploration Fund to conduct excavations of Egyptian sites. The ability to do so was enhanced by the British establishment of the Egyptian protectorate, also in 1882. The organization continues to operate to this very day, renamed in 1887 as the Egypt Exploration Society (EES). A notice of its founding was published on 30 March 1882:

> A society has been formed for the purpose of excavating the ancient sites of the Egyptian Delta ... The general plan drawn out has received the approval of the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Bishops of Bath and Wells, Durham and Lincoln, the Chief Rabbi, Archdeacon Arson. (Egyptian Exploration Fund 1882, 8)

These luminaries are not the people one normally associates with an academic undertaking. Layard was included along with Assyriologist Archibald Henry Sayce who would become a prolific writer upholding the truth of the Old Testament through archaeology. One notes the absence of Samuel Birch, Director of Egyptian Antiquities at the British Museum. He opposed 'emotional archaeology' (Drower 1982, 14).

In case there was any doubt, Edwards, the presumed author of the EEF press release, clearly conveyed the biblical import of the Egyptian endeavor.

> Yet here [at Zoan-Tanis] must undoubtedly lie concealed the documents of a lost period of Bible history – documents which we may confidently hope will furnish the key to a whole series of perplexing problems.
>
> The position of the Land of Goshen is now ascertained. The site of its capital, Goshen, is indicated only by a lofty mound; but under this mound, if anywhere, are to be found the missing records of those four centuries of the Hebrew sojourn in Egypt which are passed over in a few verses of the Bible, so that the history of the Israelites during that age is almost blank. (Egyptian Exploration Fund 1882, 8)

Edwards noted in passing the Hyksos cities, especially Avaris, as potential sites of great interest for Hebrew history. As it turns out, she vastly understated the significance of archaeological excavations of Avaris which continue to be important over a century later (see Chapter 3).

In a brief notice a few weeks later on 12 May 1882, in the popular scientific journal *Knowledge*, the editors announced ''an important series of papers by

Miss Amelia M. Edwards, the eminent authoress and Egyptologist, on the question, 'Was Rameses II the oppressor of the Hebrews' (*Knowledge* 1882a). The next issue, on 26 May 26 1882, contained a teaser in the opening 'To Our Readers' section: Edwards would identify the Pharaoh of the oppression 'beyond dispute' (*Knowledge* 1882b).

Sure enough, the 16-article series from 2 June 1882 ending 19 January 1883, was entitled 'Was Rameses the Pharaoh of the Oppression?' The discovery in July 1881 of the mummy of Ramses the Great trigged the publication. [Note – The more important mummy for the Exodus of Seqenenre was also discovered then but its biblical connection was not yet known (see Chapters 4 and 7).] Edwards thought it unlikely that any record of this 'disaster' would appear on an Egyptian monument since the Egyptians only commemorated victories (Edwards 1882c, 3).

Edwards began her analysis through the figure of Joseph. Her reasons were twofold. First, before examining the departure from Egypt, it was necessary to locate the arrival in Egypt. Second, she sought to affix the biblical specification of a 430-year sojourn in Egypt (Ex. 12:40–41) within the Egyptian chronology. In so doing, on 16 June 1882, Edwards noted a challenge in attempting to calculate dates in both the Egyptian and Hebrew contexts.

> It is not possible, indeed, to apply ordinary chronological methods to inquiries concerning early Hebrew or Egyptian history, because neither the Hebrew nor the Egyptians had any fixed era from which to reckon. Neither had they any exact system of reckoning. (Edwards 1882c, 34)

She went on to list some of the complications in ascertaining a precise Egyptian chronology: co-regencies, starting a reign with the date of coronation or the beginning of a New Year, and illegitimate dynasties. The same dating issues confronting Edwards continue to exist today.

Edwards referenced the existing traditions about Joseph. His sojourn in Egypt commenced during the rule of a non-Egyptian people called the Hyksos or Shepherds, these Hyksos being the people most closely associated with the Exodus in the Egyptian record. Edwards' understanding of the Hyksos apparently derived from the depiction of them by the Egyptian writer Manetho from the Ptolemaic era in the third century BCE (see Chapter 3). In her view, the Pharaoh of the historically-real Joseph was a Hyksos (Edwards 1882c, 35). Indeed, Edwards devoted the third in the series of articles, on 30 June 1882, to the subject of the Pharaoh of Joseph, quite possibly named Apophis (see Chapters 4 and 7). She expressed particular interest in what is now called the 400-Year Stela from the time of Ramses recognizing the arrival of the Hyksos in Egypt (see Chapter 7). For Edwards it was a sign that the Hyksos calendar was still used even after four centuries (Edwards 1882c, 65–66).

Edwards operated under a chronology at marked variance with the current chronology used by Egyptologists. Several of her articles, on 14 July, 28 July, and 18 August 1882, address this topic (Edwards 1882c, 108–109, 141–142, 192–193). What is

fascinating to observe is how she made the numbers work so she could successfully develop a synchronous biblical/Egyptian chronology. She did so even with numbers that differ from the dating today by 125–150 years when people still can make the numbers work! Edwards postulated a co-regency that is not accepted now. To some extent the same situation exists today where proposed dates for the Exodus as an historical event can range over centuries, even by people who read the same Bible and who access the same archaeological data.

After dealing with chronology, Edwards turned to geography, a very important subject for her. From September through November, Edwards focused on the locations of Pithom and Raamses, the store-cities the Hebrew slaves built for Pharaoh according to Ex. 1:11 (1882c, 228–229, 244, 260–261, 291–293, 324–325, 387–388). In a letter to the publication on 8 September 1882, Edwards wrote about the British now fighting in this very region where the Hebrews made bricks from straw in lives bitter with hard bondage (1882c, 244–245). The letter served notice that, in addition to any biblical concerns about the Exodus, the land of oppression was part of current British politics. On 15 September 1882, Edwards was quite clear that she was honing in on the exact area where the Exodus occurred.

> We have, at all events, the evidence of the Book of Exodus, and the testimony of several Egyptian documents, to show that, from the time of Ramesses II, when the new 'treasure-city' was built and Goshen city ceased to be the chief town of the province, the old name of the Nome fell into either partial or complete disuse and the 'land' or county of Goshen came to be called after its new capital, 'the land of Ramesses'. (Edwards 1882c, 260)

She considered Tel el-Maskhuta in the Wadi Tumilat to be the mound of Raamses (Edwards 1883b 21, 38). She looked forward to its excavation.

Edwards had devoted one article, on 27 October 1882, to the Wadi Tumilat and its canal built by Seti I (1294–127 BCE) extending to Lake Timsah by the Suez Canal (1882c, 357–358). Tel el-Maskhuta was located in this wadi. Yet she made no reference to the Exodus in this article or to the route the Israelites would have taken to depart from Egypt. On 19 January 1883, Edwards observed that 'the invading Hyksos' likely entered Egypt through this same valley the Hebrews took to depart from it (1883b, 37).

The site of Tel el-Maskhuta acquired an importance at the time that is easy to overlook today. Back then the cities of Pithom and Raamses loomed large in the minds of many in England. They marked the intersection between the pastoral Semitic people and the notorious Ramses II. For Poole and others, they represented the duality of freedom and authoritarianism, heathenism and monotheism, ordered city-dwellers and idyllic wandering communities (Gange 2013, 180). There was a lot at stake in identifying these cities.

As her series drew to a close, Edwards wrote a book review on the *Cities of Egypt* by Poole. She suggested book be renamed *Bible Cities of Egypt* meaning that as a compliment. Edwards had great hopes for what Egyptian archaeology would reveal.

> Remembering the enthusiasm excited by the discovery of the Chaldaean Deluge-tablets [Gilgamesh Epic], one asks with wonder how that enthusiasm is compatible with our indifference to the far more momentous discoveries which await the Egyptian explorer ... Such records are more vitally important than all the Deluge legends recently collected from every corner of the globe. (1882a, 389-390).

Evidently funding for the Egyptian Exploration Fund was not progressing as robustly as Edwards had hoped. She concluded her book review on 2 December 1882, with a clarion call to the sleeping English Protestants.

> [I]t is first of all needful to wake the Bible-loving, church- and chapel-going English people from their long sloth, and to make them see that now, if ever, it is a serious duty, and not a mere archaeological pastime, to contribute funds for the purpose of conducting excavations on a foreign soil. (1882a, 390)

The Egyptian Exploration Fund did raise sufficient funding to commence excavations. It hired M. Edouard Naville, a Swiss Egyptologist, and an excavation began. Even the initial discoveries helped provide a fixed point for ascertaining the Israelite route out of Egypt. First, Poole celebrated the discovery of 'the very walls on which the enslaved Hebrews worked ... It is the first step towards delineating the route of the Exodus' (1883a, 140). Best of all, the Hebrew-slave-built bricks might be for sale to the public until their actual weight and dimensions were realized (Gange 2013, 187). Then Edwards lauded the results (1883a). Poole declared, 'It affords a new proof of the accuracy of the book of Exodus' (1883b, 194). He exuberantly reported that Pithom-Succoth had been discovered, the approximate point where the Hebrews had crossed the sea had been located, and that there could be no doubt that Ramses II was the Pharaoh of oppression and his son Merneptah had been the Pharaoh of the Exodus (1883b, 194). The same assertions were made by the Egypt Exploration Fund and published by the *Times* on 2 June (Poole 1883c). In July 1883, Stanley Lane-Poole, brother of Reginald Poole, published an article in *The British Quarterly Review* about the discovery of Pithom-Succoth following his visit there:

> have thus established definitely the position of the first encampment on the route of the Exodus (Exod. Xii. 37). I have not only walked within the very rooms which the Israelites built, but I have slept a night where Moses led them out of the land of Egypt. (Lane-Poole 1883, 113)

Two years later in 1885, Naville published under the auspices of the Egypt Exploration Fund *The Store City of Pithom and the Route of the Exodus* based on his excavations. Besides his quest to identify the biblical cities, Naville also commented on the landscape in the time of Ramses. He strongly postulated that the Red Sea extended much further north than it did in 1885. In fact, it extended north to the Bitter Lakes and perhaps even to Lake Timsah (1885, 7, 20–21). He accepted per Stabo that Middle Kingdom king Senwosret [without identifying which Senwosret in the twentieth–nineteenth centuries BCE] had initiated canal-building in the

Wadi Tumilat (1885, 11). With this water, canals, and building activities in the time of Ramses II and Merneptah, Naville was able to propose a route of the Exodus by Lake Timsah where the sea was narrow, the water was not deep, and an east wind could open the sea (1885, 26).

Naville followed up this book with an address to the Victoria Institute. In it he claimed that even 'authors of well known rationalistic tendencies' do not deny the historical character of the crowning episode of traversing the Wadi to the Red Sea (1893, 12). He stated,

> I do not intend to follow the Israelites beyond the borders of Egypt, but I should like to describe how the scriptural narrative of the Exodus seems to be explained in the light of the late discoveries of Egypt. (1893, 12–13)

These geographical parameters and Egyptian discoveries are consistent with those of this study with the addition of over a century of discoveries since then. One can still feel the excitement as the EEF closed in on the route of the Exodus in its very first excavation at the very site suggested by Edwards surely with more to follow.

Naville added some interesting observations to his study of the route of the Exodus.

1. The Hyksos are a mixed race of people probably Mesopotamians (1893, 13).
2. As the history of the reign of Ramses, the persecutor of the Hebrews has become better known, his prestige and glory have declined considerably. His goal to dazzle his subjects and future generations by his outward show and his magnificence merely concealed the rapid progress of the decay of his weakened and exhausted kingdom (1893, 17).
3. The foreign race settled at the gate to his kingdom never amalgamated with his subjects and at any time might become a danger to his kingdom (1893, 17).
4. The Red Sea extended as least as far north to the Bitter Lakes if not further north to Lake Timsah (1893, 20–21).
5. Merneptah was the Pharaoh of the Exodus (1893, 24).

Naville's paper at the conference was met with acclaim (1893, 30–33). It provides a reasonable snapshot of the views of people who believed in the historicity of the Exodus consistent with the archaeological discoveries at that time. For additional information see Drower (1982) and Melman (1995, 254–275).

The claims of Naville led to a reaction by those who opposed the methodological combination of Egyptology and Biblical Studies. In 1918, Alan Gardiner authored in the comparatively new *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* which the EEF had created, a three-part series as a result of such scholarship on the route of the Exodus.

> It would have been strange if the early Egyptologists, always on the alert to catch at any straw of evidence bearing upon the problems of the Exodus, had failed to identify this town [Pi-Ra'messe-mi-Amūn] with the store-city of Raamses built for Pharaoh, together with Pithom, by the oppressed and enslaved Israelites (Exod. I, 11). In point of fact the temptation proved too strong; and the consequent fusion into one of the two possibly distinct places

> denoted respectively by the Hebrew and Egyptian names has ever since gravely complicated the topographical and historical questions arising with regard to each. (1918, 127)

What follows is an Egyptological analysis of the relevant archaeological discoveries with a nine-page section at the end on the biblical geographical references. Gardiner refrained from biblical exegesis with one major exception: the location of the Hebrews either by the Delta-capital city of Ramses or in the Wadi Tumilat depending on which biblical passage is read (1918, 265). To draw on a biblical phrase, the handwriting is in the journals on the future separation of Egyptology and biblical studies.

Once the gauntlet had been thrown down, others pursued the same line. In 1922, T. E. Peet argued that:

> The question of the route of the Exodus has proved a happy playing field for the amateur. The reason is, as always in such cases, that it is a field where it is extremely difficult either to prove or disprove anything at all, so the sage and the fool may work in it almost on level terms. Even in the most scholarly discussions on the subject one point of vital importance is almost always overlooked. The whole geography of the sojourn in Egypt is . . . anachronistic, having been imposed on the original tradition long after the events themselves. Thus we are not in any position to discover what routes the Israelites really followed, except in so far as we may conjecture it by the application of common sense to the problem. All that we can hope to recover is the route which the compilers of the ninth century bc and onward thought they had followed, which is a very different thing. (1922b, 125–126)

During that same centennial year of Champollion's discovery, Gardiner used the route of the Exodus to castigate the work of those who claimed to have discovered it. These unnamed authors treated 'Exodus geography just as though they were discussing the details of an indubitable and well-attested historical event' (Gardiner 1922, 204). He took issue with the quest and he 'submit(ted) that the details of the story ought to be regarded as no less mythical than the details of creation as recorded in Genesis' (1922, 205). The remainder of the article detailed, location by location, the error of the claims to have proven the route. Interestingly, he presented an explanation which he did not pursue in his 1961 publication (below).

> But the Hyksos invasion and the subsequent expulsion of the Hyksos afford quite sufficient basis for the origination of the legend ... Would it not, indeed, be strange if the whole episode of the Hyksos had left no trace in the Hebrew legend? (1922, 204)

Even if the Hyksos and the Hebrews were not of the same race, he still thought the Hebrews in Canaan would have inherited the story of their Hyksos predecessors.

In a book review also in 1922, Peet belittled the author who thinks the Exodus route has been discovered.

> In the identifications of the sites of Pithom, Raamses, etc., the author exhibits a strange preference for the guesses of early explorers bent on finding biblical sites at any cost as against Gardiner's irresistible combination of philological reasoning and inquiry into what

> the Egyptians themselves have to say on the matter (a detail only too frequently ignored by Egyptologists). (Peet 1922a, 58)

Two years later Naville presented his own view of the route of the Exodus where he mentions Gardiner and Peet by name. He accused Gardiner of being the one who introduces the religious element, who rejects scientific results which do not comply with the critical school dogma, and of imposing his *a priori* views on the evidence (1924, 18–19). As part of his defense, Naville (1924, 20) drew on the work of Petrie (1906, 28). Naville's article led to a reply by Gardiner in the same issue where the latter claimed 'to have destroyed or at least rendered extremely improbable certain hypotheses hitherto regarded as certainties' (1924, 87). Regardless of the details or merits of any of the participants in the debate on the route of the Exodus, this debate among prominent Egyptologists attests the importance of the subject a century ago.

Times have changed. In 2005, Evangelical Egyptologist Jim Hoffmeier commented on this debate and declared:

> With the work of these early Egyptologists, the search for the biblical cities associated with the exodus was on. But it seems that Gardiner's strong condemnation of those whom we might call biblical Egyptologists, continues to cast a pall over serious investigation of biblical history with the aid of Egyptology. Since the 1930s there have been only a few Egyptologists who have integrated their work with biblical studies, in particular as it relates to the exodus tradition. (2005, 52)

Egyptian archaeological discoveries

There was more to the search for the Exodus then simply locating the route. Edwards wrote prior to discoveries that would enhance Egyptological knowledge both in general and as background for the Exodus. Four years after the commencement of the EEF excavations, the discovery of the Amarna Letters in 1887 offered an unexpected window into the Egyptian-Canaanite relations a mere 40–50 years before Ramses.

> Modern readers could imagine Moses and the Israelite scribes poring over mountains of historical documents, carefully constructing the history of civilization that was validated by the combination of their long memories with archives that were thorough in coverage and international in scope. (Gange 2013, 230)

These letters also would raise the issue of the possible connection between the Habiru mentioned in the texts and the Hebrews (for the Habiru see Gibson 1961; Greenberg 1970; Cazelles 1973; Gottwald 1979, 401–425; Na'aman 1986; Lemche 1992; Rainey 1995; Astour 1999; Fleming 2001; 2016; Hawkins 2013, 68–70). The correspondence was found by an Egyptian peasant woman while farming. Who knew what else might be found by anyone in Egypt!

In 1896, the discovery of the Merneptah Stela where the son and successor of Ramses claims to have destroyed the seed of Israel was the equivalent of front page news. Coverage appeared in:

The Biblical World			
1896	February	139–140	'The Latest from Petrie' by James Henry Breasted
	April	292–295	'The Latest from Petrie'
1897	January	62–68	'The Israel Tablet' by James Henry Breasted
The Expository Times			
1896	June	387–388	Notes of Recent Exposition – announcement
	July	445–447	The New Discovery in Egypt – letters to the editor
	September	548–549	Israel in the newly-discovered Egyptian Inscription
	October	15–18	Merenptah and the Israelites
	November	76	The Merenptah Inscription
		89–90	The Israelites on the Stela of Merneptah – letter from A.H. Sayce

These announcements, articles, and letters attest the impact of the discovery. Petrie, who was defining the sequence of Egyptological pottery at this time, joined in the excitement over the Merneptah Stela in two publications: 'Egypt and Israel,' (1896) and *Six Temples at Thebes* (1897b, 13, 26-28, 30). 'Won't the Reverends be pleased' is the comment attributed to him. The meaning of the reference of Israel has been a source of ongoing investigation which continues to this very day.

The archaeological work which began in the 1960s would fascinate Edwards. So much of the mystery of the route of the Exodus was predicated on the location of the capital city. At the time she was writing, she had no idea that the city of Ramses would be discovered and in such an extensive manner. Manfred Bietak began excavating the Hyksos capital of Avaris in the 1960s and the work on the Hyksos also continues to this very day (see Chapter 3). Although Edwards mentioned Apophis in connection with Joseph, she did not mention the discovery of the *Quarrel Story of Apophis and Seqenenre* text which the British Museum had purchased in 1839 (see Chapter 7) or the mummy of Seqenenre found in 1881 at Deir el-Bahri and unwrapped in 1886 (see Chapter 4).

In the meantime, times were good for the Egyptian Exploration Fund during its first years in the 1880s. The first excavation had produced seemingly wondrous results. Funding was so successful that a second excavation was launched this time with a real Englishman in charge, William Flinders Petrie. He found no Exodus artifacts but he had begun the work that would change Egyptian studies. Through the pottery he discovered on this and future excavations, he developed the seriation that would enable Egyptologists to date the pre-history or pre-dynastic time in Egyptian history.

Here we may observe the process by which Egyptology became an academic discipline in its own right instead of a handmaiden to biblical archaeology.

Petrie was not the only one expanding the timeframe of Egyptian development to centuries before the building of the pyramids. In 1894, James Edward Quibell began excavating the site of Hierakonpolis. The site was home to the first kings of Egypt including the famous Narmer but its history went back centuries earlier. In 1896, Jean-Jacques de Morgan started a similar process at Naqada which also was the home of early kings and with a predynastic history of centuries. Combined with Petrie digging at Abydos, these three people revolutionized Egyptian study although the process took time.

1. Abydos, Hierakonpolis, and Naqada were the three sites that led the way in the creation of first the kingdom of Upper Egypt and then all Egypt itself. The defining family story of Egypt and the characteristics of the king arose from these three settlements (see Chapter 2).
2. The filling in the pre-pyramid past of Egypt, showed Egyptologists that the pyramids simply did not appear out of nowhere. They were part of a long process lasting centuries if not a millennium, a topic outside the scope of this study.

These sites heavily contributed to the definition of kingship in Egypt and to the nationalization of the deities Seth and Horus. Seti was named after the first one and Moses thought he should be the second one (see Chapter 5).

There are two unintended consequences from this discovery of predynastic or pre-pyramid Egypt. First, Petrie introduced the concept that the Egyptians alone could not have suddenly produced a united country that could build the pyramids. He proposed that an outside people or 'Dynastic Race' had jump-started the process (Petrie 1894; 1897a; 1901; Petrie and Quibell 1896). This hypothesis persisted for decades as a topic within Egyptology (see Engelbach 1943; Emery 1952; 1969; Derry 1956; Murray 1956; Fairman 1965; Lyon 1969; Baumgartel 1970; Edwards 1971; Arnett 1982; David 1982). A corollary called the Hamite Hypothesis identified the outside race responsible for the pharaonic civilization as white. The designation derives from the biblical story of the Flood where one of the sons of Noah is named Ham. In the biblical account Ham is the father of Cush, Egypt, Pun(t?) and Canaan (Gen. 10:6). In that story he has no race. In the United States he was/is considered to be black and the 'curse of Ham' legitimated slavery. By contrast, in Egyptology Ham became white and lines were drawn in Africa to demarcate the extent of the Hamitic influence on the continent (see Seligman 1913; 1930; 1934; Junker 1921; Westermann 1930; Batrawi 1945; 1946; Fairman 1965; MacGraffey 1966; Sanders 1969; Strouhal 1971; Arnett 1982; Law 2009). One should note in passing the plethora of British colonial explorations of Africa as an uncredited backdrop to the Egyptian archaeology expeditions. These explorations are outside the scope of this study. However they raised questions about the relation of Africa and Egypt both culturally and racially. Such considerations were

secondary in Egyptology to the ancient Egyptian connections with the Bible and the Greeks (New Testament).

These attitudes carried over in the study of the Hyksos. The Hyksos actually were an outside race who influenced the development of the New Kingdom. Sometimes Egyptologists labelled them as Indo-Europeans or sons of Japheth. They turned out to be Semitic or sons of Shem. These machinations reveal how race factors into the scholarship of Egyptologists often to the detriment of the Hyksos.

Second, these discoveries demonstrated an alternate way to understand the Exodus. The EEF and others afterwards have searched for the smoking gun. They seek a physical object or artifact that would conclusively prove that the Exodus occurred. By and large, this is a fool's errand. If you ask an Egyptologist or biblical scholar what would constitute proof of the Exodus, the odds are the person would identify an object that could not exist within the Egyptian cultural construct. The Exodus was a rejection of that construct. Understanding what Moses rejected is critical to understanding the Exodus but that relationship is overlooked, ignored, or dismissed by scholars. In this study, the Exodus will be grounded in the Egyptian context.

The Exodus in histories of Egypt

At this point it is beneficial to survey the place of the Exodus in the most prominent (English language) histories of Egypt. I begin with the aforementioned Petrie and the leading American Egyptologist James Henry Breasted. It includes the authoritative *Cambridge Ancient History* from different time periods and various other leading Egyptologists sometimes writing individually or sometimes as contributors to a history of Egypt.

1905 *A History of Egypt: From the XIXth to the XXXth Dynasties* by W. M. Flinders Petrie: he appears to take the position that the mention of Israel in the Merneptah Stela complicates rather than elucidates the question of the Exodus.

> The name of the people of Israel here is very surprising in every way: it is the only instance of the name Israel on any monument, and it is four centuries before any mention of the race in cuneiform: it is clearly outside of our literary information, which has led to the belief that there were no Israelites in Palestine between the going into Egypt and the entry at Jericho; whereas here are Israelites mentioned with Ynuamu in North Palestine, at a time which must be while the historic Israel was outside of Palestine. The only likely conclusion is that there were others of the tribe left behind, or immediately returning, at the time of the famine; and that these kept up the family traditions about sites which were known in later times. (114)

According to this view, not all the Israelites sojourned to Egypt or else some returned fairly quickly. Merneptah then attacked these Israelites already in the land of Canaan and not those who left in the Exodus. Petrie recognized that this view created a problem.

He attempted to resolve his dilemma through reconciling biblical chronologies and Egyptian texts on Semitic people (Shasu nomads – see Chapter 5) entering Egypt in the time of Merneptah.

> Some objection may be raised to accepting the periods stated in the early Israelite history; but if their residence in Egypt is granted, we must suppose that they had an educated class which could keep the necessary accounts and records which were an incessant feature of Egyptian life. The known character of the Egyptian and Syrian civilisation of the time must cause a great difficulty to those who would deny all use of writing to the Israelites. The details of the course followed by the Israelites at the Exodus have been much disputed, owing to the insufficiency of data; but the result of Naville's discussion of it is reasonable and generally accepted [N(aville). P(ithom). 27]. (115)

He appears to be citing the aforementioned *The Store City of Pithom and the Route of the Exodus* but I am not sure about the page reference (Naville 1885).

1912 *A History of Egypt, from the Earliest Times to the Persian Conquest* by James Henry Breasted: he had written about the discovery of the Merneptah Stela with its mention of Israel as soon as the discovery had been made (see above). Certainly he was current with the archaeological work that might touch on the Exodus. In his own history of Egypt, Breasted wrote:

> There is probably little question of the correctness of the Hebrew tradition in attributing the oppression of some tribe of their ancestors to the builder of Pithom (Fig. 162) and Ramses; that a tribe of their forefathers should have fled the country to escape such labour is quite in accord with what we know of the time. (1912, 446–447)

Breasted even posited a route for the Israelites to take in their departure.

> Although there was never a continuous fortification of any length across the Isthmus of Suez, there was a line of strongholds, of which Tharu was one and probably Ramses another, stretching well across the zone along which Egypt might be entered from Asia. This zone did not extend to the southern half of the isthmus, but was confined to the territory between Lake Timsah and the Mediterranean, whence the line of fortresses extended southward, passed the lake and bent westward into the Wadi Tumilat. Hence Hebrew tradition depicts the escape of the Israelites across the southern half of the isthmus south of the line of defences, which might have stopped them. (1912, 447; see Chapter 6)

Breasted finally referred to a dilemma caused by the Merneptah Stela. It seemed to verify the Exodus event while simultaneously casting doubt on the biblical account.

> After a reign of at least ten years Merneptah passed away (1215 B.C.) and was buried at Thebes in the valley with his ancestors. His body has recently been found there, quite discomfiting the adherents of the theory that, as the undoubted Pharaoh of the Hebrew exodus, he must have been drowned in the Red Sea! (1912, 472)

1924 *The Cambridge Ancient History* with contributions by James Henry Breasted on 'The Age of Ramses' and S. A. Cook on 'The Rise of Israel': Breasted's chapter repeats what he had written in his own history of Egypt:

> Foreign intercourse, especially with Palestine and Syria, was now more intimate than ever... Although there was never a continuous fortification of any length across the Isthmus of Suez, there was a line of strongholds, of which Tharu was one and Per-Ramses another, stretching well across the zone along which Egypt might be entered from Asia. This zone did not extend to the southern side of the isthmus, but was confined to the territory between Lake Timsah and the Mediterranean, whence the line of fortresses extended southward, passed the lake and bent westward into the Wadi Tumilat. Hence it is that Hebrew tradition depicts the escape of the Israelites across the southern half of the isthmus south of the line of defences, which might have stopped them. (1924, 153)

> The country swarmed with Semitic and other Asiatic slaves. It is quite plausible that Ramses II, probably the builder of Pithom and Raamses, store-cities of the eastern Delta, should have been the Pharaoh who figured in the tradition of the Israelites, and that a group of their ancestors, after a friendly reception, were subjected to slave labour in the building of the two places mentioned. (1924, 154)

> Merneptah passed away (1215 B.C.) after a reign of at least ten years and was buried at Thebes in the valley with his ancestors. His body has been found there — a discovery somewhat disconcerting to those who held that, as the Pharaoh of the Israelite exodus, he must have been drowned in the Red Sea (see p. 356, n. 2). (Breasted 1912, 170)

The implication is that an Exodus did occur.

Cook devotes approximately 25 pages to the topics of the biblical text and the Exodus. His interests are more textual than archaeological. He summarizes the biblical account of the Exodus and Conquest. He refers to the literary process of the creation of the textual record which concluded centuries after the date of Ramses or Merneptah. There is no evidence for either event. He spends a great deal of time examining the biblical text in the land of Canaan (and the wilderness) and less so in Egypt itself. The clearest expression of his views appears in two footnotes:

> 1. While the strongest arguments against the 'critical' position have indicated the weakness of elaborate 'reconstructions' based upon data which prove to be much more complicated than was thought, no alternative position and no other fruitful lines of enquiry have attracted serious attention.
> 2. Four groups of theories have prevailed as to the Exodus. Broadly speaking, they associate themselves with (i) the Hyksos (i.e. before the XVIIIth Dynasty), (2) the age of Thutmose III and Amenhotep III and IV (the 'Amarna Age,' XVIIIth Dynasty); (3) the age of Ramses II and Merneptah (XIXth Dynasty); and (4) a later period (XXth Dynasty). Each of the groups has points in its favour, but deals so drastically with the biblical evidence that should any one of them be justified (through fresh external evidence), the very secondary character of the biblical narratives will only be more unmistakable. Most can be said in favour of (2) and (3); cf. p. 153 sq. [referring to Breasted's contribution above]. (1924, 356)

All in all, Cook does not give much credence to the Exodus account.

1942 *When Egypt Ruled the East* by George Steindorff and Keith C. Seele: no mention of the Exodus. They link the Habiru to the Hebrews (1957, 220).

1951 *The Burden of Egypt* by John A. Wilson: the revised title, *The Culture of Ancient Egypt*, for this edition probably reflects an editorial decision to reduce the judgmental harshness of the original title. However, his antithetical views towards Egypt shine through especially when he was contrasting Egypt with Israel. Wilson included references to Hebrews at scattered moments in his telling of the Egyptian story and delivered a powerful message through them. He concluded his chapter on the First Intermediate Period entitled 'The First Illness' with the observation that the

> disciplined unity of the state became more important than the rights and opportunities of individuals, the concept of equality and social justice was finally swallowed up. This was the story of a people who once caught a clear but distant view of the Promised Land who ended up wandering in the wilderness. (1951, 124)

Here Wilson was disparaging Egypt for having discovered the value of the individual man and then abandoning it. The implication is that Israel succeeded where Egypt failed.

Wilson rejected the notion that Atonism, the religion of Akhnaton was ancestral to Hebrew monotheism (1951, 225–229). He concluded this section with the comment that 'The fuller realization of the meaning of God's cherishing care was to be made by other and later peoples (1951, 229).

Wilson declared that the Merneptah Stela mentioning Israel means the 'Exodus of the Children of Israel from Egypt' had to have occurred earlier (1951, 255). He stated his own thesis that the Hebrews took little from Egypt and expressed his obligation to present his own view of the Exodus. For Wilson, the biblical account

> is a simple and honest attempt to tell the tale of Jahweh's preservation of His people and is given simplicity and directness for the purposes of national cohesion by making the climax the deliverance of the people from the mighty Egyptian nation. (1951, 255)

Wilson provided some details on how this happened. His Israel truly was a mixed multitude. It consisted of people who had had an exodus from Egypt under the Hyksos, were subjects of the Egyptian Empire in Palestine, were captives taken to Egypt, were Habiru, and were a small group who succeeded in making *the* Exodus from Egypt. That Egyptianized group outwitted some Pharaoh and escaped into the Sinai wilderness. This group is the tribe of Levi and they were missionaries of a new cult. That cult 'struck a responsive chord in every heart which had suffered under Egyptian domination' (1951, 256). The Levites brought unity to the diverse peoples of Canaan.

Wilson expressed scant regard for the people these Israelites left. As slave troops on building projects, they were in no position to learn the ways of Egypt nor should they have wanted to.

> Their simple desert souls would see and shrink from some of the abominations of the effete civilization and long to escape dreary enslavement rather than admire the cultural triumphs of the land of bondage ... By the time the Hebrews were intellectually mature enough to seek for models of expression from neighbors, Egypt was a senile and repetitive culture, which had nothing dynamic to give. (1951, 256; see also 251)

Wilson concluded his book with additional denunciations of the Egyptian way of life compared to the Hebrews and the Greeks (1951, 314–318).

1961 *Egypt of the Pharaohs: An Introduction* by Sir Alan Gardiner: Gardiner alluded to the Exodus without taking a stand. He mentioned the Merneptah Stela and various wilderness-related inscriptions proponents of an historical Exodus cite but never definitively offered his own opinion despite his earlier supposition about the Hyksos.

1975 'Egypt: From the Inception of the Nineteenth Dynasty to the Death of Ramesses III,' in *The Cambridge Ancient History* by Raymond Faulkner: Faulkner has little to say except to dismiss the Exodus as an event in history

> The second point that arises is the mention of Israel, the only instance known from any Egyptian text. Until the discovery of this stela in 1896 the general belief was that Merneptah was the pharaoh of the Exodus, yet here in the middle of his reign we find Israel already settled in Palestine. Discussion of this problem has been endless, but the fact remains that there is no positive evidence relating to the date of the Exodus. (1975, 234)

1983 *Ancient Egypt: A Social History* by B. G. Trigger, B. J. Kemp, D. O'Connor, and A. B. Lloyd: there is no mention of the Exodus or anything related to it.

1988 *A History of Ancient Egypt* by Nicolas Grimal (1992 English translation): 'It is considered possible that the Jewish Exodus may have taken place during the reign of Ramesses II' (1988, 258). Grimal then mentioned the 'Apiru' implying they might be a source for the people of the Exodus without stating it. He noted that there is no surviving record of the Exodus in Egyptian sources which he did not think was surprising: 'the Egyptians had no reason to attach any importance to the Hebrews' (1992, 258). Grimal deemed it 'possible to reconstruct the course of events leading up to the Exodus ...' (1992, 258). He did so through the Egyptian education Moses would have received as a member of the court in the time of Horemheb (1323–1295 BCE). He posited that Seti I then would have sent this trained person back to his people to assist in the building of the fortifications in the eastern Delta and the future city of Piramesse. He dated Moses's murder of the Egyptian guard, flight to Midian, marriage, acceptance of the Burning Bush revelation, and return to Egypt to the first years of the reign of Ramses II. Grimal treated Pharaoh's objection to allowing the Hebrews to

depart into the wilderness as understandable given that this territory was a constant threat during years 2–8 of his reign (1988, 258–259).

1989 *Ancient Egypt: Anatomy of a Civilization* by Barry J. Kemp: there is no mention of the Exodus or anything related to it.

2000 *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt*: the Amarna Period and the Later New Kingdom (*c.*1352–1069 BC) by Jacobus van Dijk: there is no mention of the Exodus or anything related to it.

2010 *The Rise and Fall of Ancient Egypt* by Toby Wilkinson: he accepted that the building activities at Per-Ramesses, the capital under Seti and Ramses II, provided a background for the biblical building stories. He characterized the likely Semitic-speaking laborers on the building projects as migrant workers rather than slaves. The sources are silent on any Exodus of the Hebrews. He opined that the biblical story may be a conflation of multiple unrelated historical events. However, he acknowledged that 'Ramses was not one to let the truth stand in the way of his news agenda' (2010, 313).

None of these Egyptologists seems to have considered the possibility that Ramses claimed success.

Egyptology

This study is based on examining the Exodus through Egypt. Therefore it is dependent on the work of Egyptologists and not biblical scholars. The guides on this journey to understand the Exodus are the Egyptologists themselves. They are the ones who have investigated ancient Egypt. They have excavated its ruins, translated its texts, deciphered its art and architecture, and written its histories, as detailed in the previous section. They have a created a huge corpus of material for one to sift through. The Exodus loomed large in the initial forays into ancient Egypt conducted by the British. Over time, that emphasis dissipated until it became a niche topic primarily for Evangelical Protestant Egyptologists. For this study, based on the assumption that Moses was a Hyksos, it is the ongoing work in that topic that has provided new information and an opportunity to re-evaluate old information.

To undertake that journey to understanding ancient Egypt, one must familiarize oneself with the scholarship of the Egyptologist guides. Before turning to the Egyptian culture itself in the next chapter, one needs to examine the Egyptologists themselves. They have identified problems within the discipline. Their comments alert the Exodus-seeker about the pitfalls to avoid and what may be overlooked or missing in Egyptian scholarship.

As one might expect, within that discipline there are strengths and weakness known to the Egyptologists. In the field of Egyptology (term first used in France in 1850 and then in England in 1859) there is a sub-field of the history of the discipline.

These Egyptian histories noted above were not written in a vacuum. To some extent the changing descriptions or lack of descriptions of the Exodus reflect changes within the discipline independent of any new archaeological discoveries. The discipline began within the context of a rivalry between France and England (Napoleon and Wellington, the Louvre and the British Museum), developed within a time of Assyriology, colonialism, and the additions of the United States and the new country of Germany to the excavation mix. It has been called a handmaid of imperialism (for the history of Egyptology see Champion 2003; Gange 2006; 2013; Carruthers 2015; Wilkinson 2020).

The people studying ancient Egypt do not do so as blank slates. They bring values with them. There are differences of opinion on the value of the techniques employed in the study. Willeke Wendrich comments that Egyptology focuses on textual sources which archaeology is limited to support or illuminate (2010, 1). Similarly, Stuart Tyson Smith observes that 'Texts have traditionally been given primacy over archaeology within Egyptology' (2010, 159). He notes that, within the discipline, the function of archaeology tends to be to illustrate the historical, meaning textual, record or to deal with the smaller things apparently of minimal importance (Smith 2010, 159). As a result, Egyptologists naturally gravitate to where texts (and images) are in abundance.

This devotion to texts by Egyptologists has created an anomalous situation. Gun Björkman opined that:

> Among modern Egyptologists there exists, however, no widespread skepticism as to the evidence of literary sources ... It sometimes appears, nevertheless, that no very rigorous critical spirit has formed the historical outlook of many an Egyptologist ... (1964, 11–12)

According to Hoffmeier:

> Egyptologists, it seems, are a bit more inclined to appropriate historical data from Egyptian 'literary' works and are less skeptical of their sources than biblical scholars toward the Hebrew Bible. (2006, 9)

Here Hoffmeier engages in a classic bit of Egyptological scholarship known as 'topsy-turvy.' This is a term used by Egyptologists to refer to a world turned upside down. In this case, Hoffmeier, who believes in an Exodus in the time of Ramses II, is pointing out the Egyptological tendency to accept as gospel the historicity of Egyptian texts, a level of acceptance even biblical scholars do not accept about biblical texts concerning the Exodus.

To illustrate the problem, Smith cites the example of the Hyksos. Traditionally, Egyptologists have relied on textual information for Hyksos identity and history. Based on Egyptian texts discovered archaeologically and written texts from Josephus, a first century CE Jewish historian, citing Manetho, a third century BCE Egyptian, the Hyksos have not fared well in Egyptology. Beginning in the 1950s, Törgny Säve-Söderbergh presented an alternative view based on the archaeology (1951, 55–56). Suddenly the Hyksos were not quite the barbarian horde one might think they were.

As archaeological work persisted from the 1960s to the present, the traditional view was undermined (see Smith 2010, 168). The Hyksos identity is critical to this study since it is my contention that Moses was of a Hyksos descent (see Chapter 3).

These straitjackets self-imposed by Egyptologists match the isolation attributed to the ancient Egyptians.

> Most of the standard histories represent Egypt as self-contained, isolated from its neighbours in the Eastern Mediterranean and the Near East, and rather static. (J.D. Ray quoted in Schneider 2003, 155)

> Egypt appeared to be a civilization devoid of dynamics and innovation, while the particular case of innovation from abroad was believed to be mostly late, marginal, or not decisive for its cultural profile. (Schneider 2003, 155)

> There is, then, a seeming paradox between the massive popular appeal of the subject [Egypt] today, and its relative isolation academically. (Jeffreys 2007, 7)

> Pharaonic Egypt has been represented as an isolated country, a self-sufficient kingdom that looked inwards, was never faced with a complete occupation by foreigners, and therefore had no need to change in reaction to external factors. (Wendrich 2010, 7)

> Egyptology itself remains highly isolated ... [and] Egyptological contributions to historical debates are rare and, quite often, trivial. (Moreno Garcia 2015, 51)

Egyptologists have become ensnared in the cultural trappings of the people they study:

> Yet there is a reticence to dilute the cultural and ethnic purity envisaged for Egypt in the Old Kingdom and earlier periods, lest in doing so we somehow undermine the lasting achievements of these eras. Egyptologists are equally reluctant to ascribe a significant role to foreign *influences* at the beginning of Egyptian history. In both respects—the make-up of Egyptian society and the impact of foreign ideas—Egyptologists are susceptible to the ancient Egyptian world-view. Emphasizing the purely indigenous genius of Egyptian culture runs the risk of falling into a trap set by the ancient Egyptians themselves: the myth of Egyptian uniqueness and cultural superiority was propagated throughout pharaonic history, for ideological reasons. (Wilkinson 2002, 515)

Perhaps people have been lulled by the ever-flowing waters of the Nile into a false sense of equilibrium about the ceaseless rhythms of life in Egypt. For example, there is the idea of the sudden birth of the Egyptian state in the dawn of time as a well-balanced, homogenous society characterized by continuity (Wendrich 2010, 6). Such views have spawned racist theories of Egypt's origins which cannot be pursued here. For the ancient Greeks, Egypt was a timeless land where a journey to Egypt was a journey to the past (Assmann 2003, 12). As suggested by her title 'Ancient Egyptian Exceptionalism: Fragility, Flexibility and the Art of Not Collapsing,' Ellen Morris takes this perception to task by identifying multiple points in time when in the Early Dynastic Period (*c.* 3050–2686 BCE) and Old Kingdom (2686–2125 BCE) the unified state

of Egypt could have collapsed and did not ... until it finally did (2019). Miroslav Bárta applies the term 'punctuated equilibrium', borrowed from the study of evolution, to refer to disruptions during the same time (2015a).

An emerging issue in Egyptology is Egypt's place in the world of scholarship. The following plaint refers to the isolated position of Egyptologists in the academic field.

> the harmful but extended myth of an alleged 'Egyptian exceptionalism,' whereby pharaonic Egypt stands as a unique case of monarchic continuity and immutable governmental structures for millennia, has been frequently invoked by Egyptologists to justify the excessive insularity of their discipline, their lack of interest in African and Near Eastern history, and their reluctance to theorize or, simply, to build interpretative models about the society they study. As a result, it has been difficult for pharaonic Egypt to become fully integrated in comparative research, even with other Near Eastern societies. (Moreno Garcia 2014, 206–207)

An entire issue of the *Journal of Egyptian History* has been dedicated to the place and role of Egyptology in Global History (Miniaci 2020; van De Mieroop 2020) and its existence as a 'too self-centered discipline' (Moreno Garcia 2020, 10).

These Egyptologist comments on Egyptology suggest an ongoing re-evaluation of the discipline. The holy chronological, geographical, and ideological trinity of Narmer to Cleopatra, gift of the river from Aswan to the Mediterranean, and the concept of *maat* (see Chapter 2) may be inadequate to encompass the ancient Egyptian world (see also Wengrow 1999; Lienhardt 2000; Moreno Garcia 2015). These Egyptological perceptions have led to a false picture of Egypt which automatically leads to a false picture of the land Israel left. The Exodus and the myth of 'eternal Egypt' are contradictions in terms.

Egyptologists and the Exodus

Now the separation between Egyptology and biblical archaeology is complete. At the annual conferences of the American Research Center in Egypt (ARCE), there are no sessions devoted to the Exodus and hardly any mention of it at all. The lands of Canaan and Israel are secondary to the plethora of sessions on Egyptian art, architecture, and literature. The Society of Biblical Literature (SBL) does have an Egyptian section but few are the papers devoted to the Exodus. Hoffmeier said:

> While historians of ancient Israel have not seriously considered Egyptian sources, neither have Egyptologists over the past fifty years shown much interest in the Hebraic connection to the Nile Valley. (1997, viii)

He quoted Manfred Bietak (see Chapter 3) confessing at a conference, 'Being an Egyptologist I feel somehow embarrassed to comment on problems surrounding themes of the Exodus' (1997 viii). Sixteen years later at the 'Out of Egypt: Israel's Exodus between Text and Memory, History and Imagination' conference held in 2013, Hoffmeier offered a similar view.

> the reality is that Egyptologists seem to show little interest in integrating their materials with biblical studies in general or with the exodus narratives in particular. (2015, 204)

The primary reason behind such a reluctance is not hard to fathom – the story is in sacred scriptures of Christians and Jews and is not simply a matter of academic discussion. Hoffmeier conducted an informal survey of Egyptologists and based on the results concluded:

> there seems to be the attitude that the exodus is a religious natter, not one for **real** Egyptologists to investigate. (2015, 206) [**bold** original]

As a result, individual Egyptologists tend to avoid the Exodus like the plague. The reluctance to encounter it in an academic context is understandable. No one wants to compromise one's standing as a legitimate scholar by risking becoming entangled within a contentious and emotional subject that easily riles people's passions. Instead, one gently but firmly deflects questions on the topic perhaps with a vague generalization that any such historical event might be connected to the Hyksos in some way and leave it at that. Then one can safely return to legitimate Egyptological concerns having faithfully discharged one's responsibilities towards the questioner.

Some Egyptologists have taken a greater interest in an historical Exodus for various reasons (see Redford 1963; 1967b; 1992a; 2009; 2011; Goedicke, 1994; Assmann 1995; 1997; 2003; 2018; Hoffmeier 1997; 2005; 2007; 2015; Kitchen 1998). Some Egyptologists do not simply defer to a vague Hyksos answer but instead quite actively delve into the place of the Hyksos within Egyptian history and the Exodus. In their work, four specific areas have drawn their attention.

1. Thera volcano also referred to as Santorini – its date is disputed as well as its effects on Egypt. The explosion is critical to the Exodus analysis of Goedicke and the Egyptian rulers Ahmose and Hatshepsut in particular (Chapter 4).
2. Hyksos – the Hyksos as might be expected are a factor in the historical reconstructions. They appear in Chapters 3, 4, 6, and 7.
3. The *Quarrel Story of Apophis and Seqenenre* – this thirteenth century BCE story about the Hyksos king Apophis and his Theban rival Seqenenre in the sixteenth century BCE will be addressed in detail in Chapter 7.
4. Akhnaton – the trauma of the Akhnaton heresy is critical to the analysis of the Exodus proposed by Assmann. It will not be addressed in this study.

The reconciling of Egyptian and biblical texts and archaeology and Biblical exegesis are excluded from this study. Reconstructions proposed by biblical scholars are not included in this study on the Exodus as an Egyptian story.

***

What can we conclude from this introduction into Egyptology and the prominent treatments of the Exodus?

1. People bring their own biases towards the issue of the historicity of the Exodus. For those who tend to accept the historicity, there may be a religious impulse involved based on their own religious values. For those who despise the story (Redford), one would need to examine his own life story to determine the reason.
2. Egyptologists have the option to ignore or minimize the Exodus in their histories of Egypt. If the Exodus is mentioned, it may be only in passing. If the paragraph or page was excised from the text, it would not be missed. In this regard, the Exodus is treated just as Egyptians themselves responded to the legacy of Amarna and Akhnaton. His name was chiseled out, his buildings were demolished, and his name was erased (not included) in dynastic lists. In short he was 'cancelled.' The Exodus is treated similarly. The story is never integrated into the fabric of Egyptian history. In this study, the Egyptian context will be examined for the setting in which the Exodus happened.
3. The Hyksos seem to be connected to the Exodus in some way. In this study the Hyksos are critical to the historicity of the Exodus.
4. The Wadi Tumilat may be connected to the departure route from Egypt. This study will address only the circumstances up to going forth from the land. It will not address the wilderness wanderings which would require extensive analysis of biblical texts themselves.
5. In an historical Exodus, Moses may have been well versed in the Egyptian cultural construct through his education. In this study, this view is taken.

Hyksos Moses led people out of Egypt in defiance of Ramses II but in rejection of Seti I. Therefore it is necessary to understand the world of Seti. To revise Acts 7:22: 'And Moses was learned in all the wisdom and geopolitics of Seti I and was mighty in words and deeds.' It is not simply enough to understand the deities Osiris or Baal in Egyptian culture, one must also inquire as to what Osiris and Baal meant for Seti. The same applies to multiple facets of the Egyptian culture.

Ironically, Edwards missed her calling as one who sought the Exodus. Her background was as a storyteller but she forsook those skills as an archaeologist. She sought the route of the Exodus instead of the story of the Exodus. This is a common mistake among Exodus-seekers and has led to them being called to task. People seek a city, a route, a campground so they can say these are walls the Hebrew slaves built, these are the paths the Israelites trod, and these are the values the people of covenant accepted. Archaeology cannot tell that story.

Consider the example of Troy. The location of the site of the *Iliad* has been discovered. Does that prove the existence of Zeus? Of any of the deities mentioned in the story? Even if archaeological proof at Troy was found for Achilles and/or Hector (a big if!), would that prove that they had fought? Even if weapons were found, would that prove that they had fought or that one had dragged the body of the other around

the walls of the city for all to see? Normally, the king is the one to circumnavigate a city's walls as an expression of power and sovereignty as Menes did at Memphis and Djoser did at Saqqara, representing all Egypt, or biblical Joshua did at Jericho, representing all Canaan. Can archaeology explain why Homer chose to tell the story centuries after the Trojan War occurred?

Typically, some biblical scholars fall back on the Bible to fill in the pieces. Finding a wall does not prove Hebrew slaves built it even if the wall is in the right place at the right time. What happens in these situations is people start to quote the Bible as proof as an act of faith. That is appropriate when preaching to the choir but not in an academic context. Archaeology does not prove dialog. Archaeology does not prove motives. Archaeology does not prove the human element. To make the artifacts live requires a storyteller. Edwards could tell a story and she could find an artifact but she could not put them together in a story. In this study, the story of the Exodus will be told as if the Bible does not exist although, of course, it does.

Donald Redford's observation is relevant to better understanding the Exodus: 'The closer the historian approaches, at this stage, the art of a painter or novelist, the better will be their history' (2003, 7; see also 1979, 18). He might have been describing Edwards. For the Exodus, Cecil B. DeMille is a better scholar than the Egyptologists and biblical scholars. He understood that the core of the story is the face-off between two alpha males who knew each other. Egyptologists and biblical scholars do not know this. As a result, even if they think there is an historical kernel to the Exodus, their versions tend to be devoid of drama and could never be made into a movie or a story anyone would want to tell year after year. They have eliminated Moses from the story. The historical Exodus has become a story of miracles or a minor story too small to notice, perhaps merely one of a series of very small events. One of the methodological shortcomings in these religious and scholarly approaches is the absence of human agency. Individual human beings do make a difference. They do make decisions. They do take leadership roles. As will be seen, even in 'changeless' Egypt, human agency existed, change occurred, and 'eternal, Egypt' is a myth. Ultimately, the Exodus is not simply an Egyptian story, it is a Moses one.

Chapter 2

Egypt, Egyptology, and the Exodus

> 'Do you know how much ritual Moses got from Egypt? It was quite new to me'.
> Margaret Benson, daughter of the Archbishop of Canterbury, in a letter to her mother dated 23 January 1894, Luxor Hotel, Luxor
>
> Benson 1918, 166

To tell the story of the people who left Egypt and created Israel, one should start with the culture rejected. Israel did not originate in a vacuum but in direct relationship to Egypt. This chapter focuses on the Egyptian cultural construct that, according to the biblical version, Israel abandoned as expressed in the name of its deity: 'Yahweh who took thee out of the land of Egypt' (Ex. 20:2). What, then, was this Egyptian world that people chose to leave before constituting themselves as Israel?

The entire story of ancient Egypt cannot be told here nor does it need to be. There are individual components of the ancient Egyptian construct that do need to be addressed. Its values, heritage, culture, and language were what Moses knew in the time of Pharaoh Seti, father of Ramses II, the Pharaoh of the Exodus. By identifying these Egyptian traits, it becomes possible to determine how Moses responded to them in his actions in the Exodus and in the people he created. He expressed a direct rejection of many of those values which had been part and parcel of his life for decades when he was growing up and as an adult.

The remainder of the chapter then will focus on the aspects of Egyptian history and culture I think relevant to creating an historical reconstruction of the Exodus.

Time

Egyptological time

The issue of time serves as an entry into this topic where the question goes beyond using BC or BCE. As part of their study of ancient Egypt, Egyptologists have divided time into more manageable periods. To some extent such a division of time is natural. There are limits to what one mind can grasp. As more and more information accumulates the challenge to any one individual to cope with ancient Egypt increases substantially. Sometimes the problems are self-imposed.

The ancient Egyptians were not a people of historic time. They did not have ages of gold, silver, bronze, and iron. There was the time when gods ruled the land and then the time when they did not. Anniversaries, typically, were not part of the Egyptian culture. It did not celebrate centennials, bicentennials, or sesquicentennials. It did not mark the turn of the centuries or of millennia. The *sed* festival marking the 30 years of rule by an individual was the one recurring passage of time recognized and celebrated. Otherwise, time simply flowed on forever without markers, like the Nile River itself.

The timeframe of Egyptology generally is Pharaonic. It consists of the time when Egypt was ruled by kings from the native-born Narmer or Menes, generally around 3050 BCE, to the Macedonian Cleopatra VII (of Elizabeth Taylor fame), specifically 51–30 BCE. To bracket this period in time from the birth of the pharaonic system to its demise certainly makes conceptual sense. It is a long period of time. Egyptologists frequently refer to longstanding cultural traits in Egypt perhaps dating back to the dawn of Egyptian time and which persisted to its end as an independent country. Therefore, understanding of the birth of the nation significantly contributes to understanding the nation in subsequent times.

The long length of Egypt in ancient times also raised questions. For a geologist, 3000 years is virtually insignificant; for Egyptologists, it covers the entirety of Pharaonic rule. The solution is a division into shorter units.

The story is being pushed back to predynastic times in the fourth millennium BCE and even earlier to prehistoric times from the end of the Ice Age to the Neolithic Age. The traditional divisions are themselves a modern construct beginning in 1845 and have their own history of development (Schneider 2008, 181–186). Precisely when each period began and ended are ongoing challenges. As one reads multiple scholars living at roughly the same time to scholars living more than a century apart, one becomes readily aware that when people use the same terms they do not necessarily mean the same years.

Even the very validity of these time periods has been called into question. The use of 'rather superficial events to mark the beginning or the end of a given period' is challenged by Redford (1979, 16). He then takes aim on these very periods themselves.

Early Dynastic Period	*c.* 3050–2686 BCE
Old Kingdom	2686–2125 BCE
First Intermediate Period	2160–2055 BCE
Middle Kingdom	2055–1650 BCE
Second Intermediate Period	1650–1550 BCE
New Kingdom	1550–1069 BCE
Third Intermediate Period	1069–664 BCE
Late Period	664–332 BCE
Ptolemaic Period	332–30 BCE
	(Shaw 2000, 480-482)

> The second point, it seems to me, is equally deplorable. 'Old,' 'Middle' and 'New' may be hallowed by constant use, but they are not defining words which tell is what the period is or even what it is not ... As if it were not bad enough to have these useless terms bequeathed to us from a bygone century, we have had to embarrass ourselves by creating others. It is the current fad to manufacture 'Intermediate periods,' of which we now have no less than three! (1979, 16)

There are consequences to such terms. The admonitions of Redford deem 'Intermediate' a pejorative term denoting decadence, decline, anarchy, bad taste, and instability in Egyptological parlance (1979, 17). Therefore, to assign the Hyksos to the Second Intermediate Period automatically assigns them to a disreputable position and skews the interpretation of them.

Thomas Schneider expressed similar views at a conference on the First Intermediate Period (2021). He noted the rise of these periodic divisions at a time of nation-state building in Europe. At the same time Europe (Germany) was glorifying the unification of the nation, so Egyptologists glorified the unification of Egypt. The schema 'implicitly perpetuated a narrative of Egyptian state ideology' thereby rendering the intermediate periods 'sub-standard' times of decline (Schneider 2021). He challenged Egyptologists to engage in a continuous discourse on periodization to leave the nineteenth century framework behind. He called for a paradigm shift from the central state model. Think how different Egyptology would be if it were based on 'mizraim,' the Hebrew word in the dual form for Upper and Lower Egypt instead of central-state term 'Egypt,' from the Greek in the singular form and from German unification!

Egyptologists even debate the very veracity of the description of the decline in Egypt during the so-called First Intermediate Period (Bell 1971; Butzer 1997; Hassan 1997; 2007; Arz *et al.* 2006; Enmarch 2008; Gee 2012; 2015; Bárta 2015b; Contardi 2015; Moeller 2005; Moreno Garcia 2015; Müller-Wollermann 2014; Schneider 2017; 2021; Morris 2019, 78–83; 2020). This reference list excludes all the history of Egypt books with the prerequisite chapter on the First Intermediate Period. Are texts like *The Instruction Addressed to King Merikare*, *The Admonitions of Ipuwer*, and *The Prophecies of Neferti* eyewitness accounts to the consequences of the collapse of the Old Kingdom? Are they retrospective legitimations by Middle Kingdom rulers to proclaim their legitimacy and success in restoring cosmic order following the time of chaos? In a study on the very specific and singular event of the Exodus in the time of Ramses II, I confess I derive some enjoyment watching Egyptologists debate whether or not the First Intermediate Period even happened, how reliable texts about it are, when the texts were written, what events in nature may or may not have occurred, and even if it should be called the First Intermediate Period!

Egyptologists have adopted the one-state model with the Hyksos as disruptive foreigners to the detriment of understanding both Egyptian history and the Exodus. The scholars may have carried forward the Middle Kingdom attribution of the chaos in the First Intermediate Period to foreigners to blaming the Hyksos for the Second Intermediate Period chaos which was not chaotic at all. As will be seen in the next

chapter, Egyptologists are conditioned to not accepting the Fifteenth-Dynasty Hyksos as real kings of Egypt but as foreign invaders like Assyrians and Persians who ruled Egypt without becoming Egyptian.

Calendar

Societies are accustomed to measuring time by the movements of the sun and the moon. These celestial objects in ancient times are the same sun and moon we see today, the same sun and moon people the world over have seen since time immemorial. So in one sense, there is nothing special about their presence in Egyptian life. Indeed many peoples have worshipped the sun and/or the moon in one form or another. Their appearances and disappearances were perhaps among the first mysteries in the sky which people strove to understand. We all tend to measure time based on the daily and annual movements of the sun and the monthly movements of the moon.

The Egyptian treatment of time is too extensive to analyze in this study (Meyer 1904; Neugebauer 1939; 1942; Winlock 1940; Sewell 1947; Sloley 1948; Parker 1952; 1970; Stubbings 1970; Long 1974; O'Neill 1978; Ward 1992b; Depuydt 1995; 2000; 2009; Robins 1995; Spalinger 1995; 2001; 2002a; Nolan 2003; 2008; 2012; 2015; Warburton *et al.* 2006; Macklin *et al.* 2015). For purposes here, some critical points need to be mentioned.

1. The Egyptian new year was calibrated based on the rising of the river. At some undetermined point, the Egyptians noticed that the first appearance in the sky over the morning horizon of the star Sothis or Sirius, approximately 42 minutes before sunrise, happened with precise regularity. And it coincided with the rising of the river. However, the date of the flood varies. It lacks the astronomical preciseness and consistency of the appearance of Sirius. People today can calculate exactly when Sirius appeared and at different locations in ancient times. Such exactitude is not possible with the onset of the inundation. True, the heliacal appearance may have coincided with the rising of the river at one time, but it was the consistency of the cosmic event which more likely contributed to it becoming the commencement of the year.

   After over 2 months of not being visible, the star then appeared in the sky no longer blocked by the rising sun. At the capital city of Memphis by modern Cairo and at nearby Heliopolis, home to the priests of Ra, the sun god, that date was between 17 and 19 July in Pharaonic times using our calendar. This rising also signified that the Egyptian day began with the rising and not setting of the sun as in the Mesopotamian and Jewish calendars. Technically, the new day began at dawn before the sun appeared. Egyptians used the same ideogram for 'sun' and 'day.' Every local settlement could determine when the river rose and the agricultural cycle began anew for them.
2. The Egyptians began with a lunar calendar. It was comparable to the calendar used in Mesopotamia and still is used in Judaism. To compensate for the discrepancy with the solar year, a 'leap' month was inserted in seven of every 19 years.

3. At some point Egypt switched to a solar-based calendar. The establishment of a civil solar calendar meant someone developed one and someone in authority implemented it. Egyptologists debate who and when this happened. My guess is Imhotep, the priest of Heliopolis responsible for the building of Egypt's first stone pyramid at Saqqara. He is the ancient Egypt Albert Einstein who organized the Egyptian space-continuum. He is the second individual in Egyptian history after Narmer who transformed the country. Sometimes individuals do make a difference.

This calendar had 365 days. It was divided into three seasons, 12 months or four per season, and 36 weeks of ten days, allocated three per month. The three seasons were *Akhet* from July to October when the river flooded, *Peret* from November to February when the land was farmed and the water level receded, and *Shemu* from March to May when the land was harvested and the river declined to its low point, testifying to the agricultural and Nile River basis of the organization of time. Five feast days called epagomenal days were added to these months to make a 365-day year. They were the 'Birth of the Gods' in order Osiris, Horus, Seth, Isis, Nephthys, the deities of the Egyptian national narrative (see below). These days belonged to no month and the birthday of Osiris marked the start of the new year.

No leap year existed in ancient Egypt. So if it had neither a leap month nor a leap year, what provision was made for the ¼ day shortage? By waiting. By waiting a long time. Egypt had a 'wandering year' since it made no adjustments to its calendar. The Sothic cycle lasted as long as was required for the ¼ shortage to cease. In our terms, it is as if after four years it rose on January 2 instead of on the New Year as it was supposed to. After eight years, it rose on the equivalent of January 3 and so on. The number of our years required to work its way through the calendar back to the original new year is 1460 years, equal to 365 days divided by ¼ shortage or 365 × 4. Every 1460 of our years, the calendar was brought back in synch uniting the rising of the Nile with the heliacal rising of Sirius (excluding our leap years which added another 365 days to the cycle so 1460 of our years equals 1461 of their years!).

There is no archaeological record of the end of one cycle and the beginning of another being celebrated in ancient Egypt. The Sothic cycle had no meaning to the ancient Egyptians. For the Egyptians themselves, they simply had a 365-day civil year that was repeated indefinitely. When the Greeks discovered the 365¼ day year and brought it to Egypt, the Egyptians resisted adopting it as 'an abhorrent foreign innovation' (Winlock 1940, 452). Ptolemy III's efforts in 238 BCE to create a leap year failed. When Augustus imposed the Julian calendar on Egypt effective 1 August 30 BCE, the Egyptians referred to it as the 'Greek Year' separate from the year 'according to the Egyptians' (Winlock 1940, 452). The Egyptians never had any awareness of the 365¼ day year or that they were living through a Sothic cycle. It was outsiders (Greeks) who were the ones to identify and name it.

The Sothic cycle also reveals the Egyptian preference for form over substance. The Egyptians were perfectly content to ignore the missing ¼ day even though at some

point the discrepancy between the official calendar and real world was 6 months. As a Ramesside papyrus describes: 'Winter is come in Summer, the months are reversed, the hours in confusion' (Gardiner 1961, 64–65). Richard Parker observed:

> Now what we think the Egyptians *might* have done or *should* have done about adjusting their calendar carries little weight against the fact that for some eighteen centuries (ca 1540 B.C. to A.D. 238) which includes more than a whole Sothic period, they almost certainly did not tamper with it. (1952, 105)

The Egyptians were content to let 1460 years pass rather than to disrupt the symmetry of the calendar. Obviously in the real world, the farmers knew when it was summer and when it was winter. They could see when Sirius first appeared regardless of any civil or government calendar. Still the idealized version prevailed officially.

This preference for form over substance prevailed throughout the calendar. We have already seen that each month consisted of 30 days. That time period is close to but not exactly the 28.5-day lunar cycle. This pattern extended into the hours of the day. Every day consisted of 12 hours of daylight and 12 hours of darkness, like clockwork with two of them in each period being assigned to dawn and dusk.

That does not mean that Egypt was located on the equator or that some astronomical phenomenon was involved. It reflected a cultural decision. Symmetry in duality would be maintained at all levels. The Egyptians simply deemed daylight each day to be 12 hours long and similarly the night. The real amount of daylight and darkness was irrelevant. By our measurements all our hours are the same 60 minutes. In Egypt, the actual daylight hours at the capital of Memphis ranges from 11 hours and 2 minutes in winter to 16 hours and 45 minutes in summer in our time. Therefore the 12 daylight hours ranged in length from the equivalent 55 to 75 minutes and the 12 night hours from 45 to 64 minutes by our standards. William Ward observes: 'Such an attitude toward time, which served their needs but not our own, must be taken into consideration as we investigate the absolute chronology' (1992b, 55).

What can one learn from this excursion in Egyptology and time? One recurring practice is the ancient Egyptian preference for the ideal over the physically real. The civil calendar did not correspond to any actual movements of the sun, the moon, or the river. Daily hours did not correspond to actual hours of daylight and darkness. Egyptologists know that idealized time in the Egyptian cultural construct needs to be translated into physically real time if times are to make sense.

The same considerations apply across the board. In a general sense the texts and images that Egyptologists focus on represent the ideal and not the physically real. Even disruptions to the ideal are expressed and displayed in idealized form to be used over and over again. When Egyptians are describing all that is wrong with the world, it does so in an idealized manner that can be as disconnected from the physically real as its wandering calendar can be. In this study, critical areas for investigation include foreigners, the Hyksos, Seqenenre, and the Battle of Kadesh. In each instance

the challenge will be to convert the idealized official version into the actual historical version. The Exodus occurred in the real world but ancient Egypt could only address it in the idealized one.

The gift of the river and God's Land

> On quite a few occasions, [Amelia] Edwards uses painterly metaphors, or the metaphor of theatre, to describe landscapes. The metaphor of nature as theatre, or a drama, a spectacle, is very appropriate. The Nile and the desert were habitually perceived as mobile, historically dynamic elements. (Melman 1995, 272 on Edwards's writings in the **nineteenth century**)

> There are ... reasons for emphasizing an ecological perspective. First, the rich corpus of historical information from Egypt has yet to be critically reviewed from such a vantage point. A number of Egyptologists tend to regard their primary source literature as metaphorical; the only 'real' events were politicomilitary. (Butzer **1984**, 103)

> Unfortunately, the Egyptological discourse has been concerned primarily with political succession and dynasties, philology and linguistics, religion, and art history. (Hassan **1997**, 55)

> The most influential historical narratives of most individual countries (including Egypt [no rain] and Norway [abundance of rain] ...) typically have an introductory chapter about the natural or geographical scene of the country concerned, but very seldom is it integrated in analyses of concrete historical developments. (Tvedt and Coopey **2010**, 23 n.12)

> the mysteries of mud and the translation of the palimpsest of the Nile floodplain are not always included in the training of the Egyptologist. We hope that future collaboration on the translation of texts referring to landscape will lead to a clear understanding of both the literature and the landscape. (Bunbury and Jeffreys **2011**, 74)

> (T)he river as an environmental and cultural factor has been less intensively studied by archaeologists and Egyptologists than might be expected ...(T)hese scholars often work on the basis of an inadequate familiarity with the geomorphology of floodplains ... (A)n intensive interaction between numerous disciplines with little tradition of collaboration is needed. (Willems and Dahms **2017**, 7–8)

These recurring comments over the years (in bold) express a continued disappointment with the treatment of the river landscape in Egyptology. Typically, an introductory chapter in an Egyptian history is devoted to a description of the Nile Valley. Geological, meteorological, and landscape information is included in the chapter but that is not enough. Even if no humans existed, there would still be the physical reality of what we call the Nile Valley and river system. But humans did and do exist. To determine the meaning of the Nile, the human element needs to be included in this description. Understanding water, floods, and cosmic events is part of the effort to understand Egyptian history and the Exodus.

Herodotus

Egypt was not the land between the two rivers or the Promised Land or a land from sea to shining sea to note a few other cultural metaphors. Instead, Egypt has been best known for millennia as 'a gift of the river' (Herodotus II, 5).

Both the father of history (Herodotus) and the messenger of the God in History (Moses) knew that the river was the core of the Egyptian way of life. In the first instance, the river was a key to defining the Egyptian culture; in the second, it was the key to rejecting it. Water is critical to all human life and cultures and in Egypt its source was the river. It was this river which made Egypt uniquely 'Egyptian.' Therefore, the story to understand the Egyptian culture must begin with what differentiated that culture from other human cultures.

The typically unasked question is 'What does it mean to be "the gift of the river"?' Normally, the phrase is simply presented without analysis or context. It exists as a simple metaphor, symbol, or meme for ancient Egypt without any effort to ascertain Herodotus's meaning in creating that image. There are three questions which come to mind that underlay the mere reciting of the phrase that also could be asked of Israel:

1. Who is giving the gift? [Yahweh].
2. What makes it a gift? [eternal covenant].
3. Where does the recipient of the gift fit in the world given the existence of this one gift to this one recipient? [only to Israel].

Before turning to the river itself, one should understand its meaning in its human context beyond it being a natural phenomenon existing independent of humanity.

Herodotus portrayed the Egyptians as being truly blessed compared to the other peoples of the world.

> Now, indeed, there are no men, neither in the rest of Egypt, nor in the whole world, who gain from the soil with so little labour they have not the toil of breaking up the land with the plough, nor of hoeing, nor of any other work which other men do to get them a crop; the river rises of itself, waters the fields, and then sinks back again; thereupon each man sows his field and sends swine into it to tread down the seed, and waits for the harvest; then he makes the swine to thresh his grain, and so garners it. (II, 14)

This image is a far cry from:

> cursed is the ground because of you; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life; thorns and thistles it shall bring forth to you. (Gen. 3:17–18)

Wilson suggests Herodotus' perception was wrong. Instead '(i)ncessant toil is the responsibility laid on the Egyptian peasant by the Nile's great gift' (1951, 9).

As to the giver of the gift, one explanation is that it is natural. Herodotus concluded that the Delta was a land created by the river from the annual flood:

> for we have seem that (as the Egyptians themselves say, and as I myself judge) the Delta is alluvial land and but lately (so to say) come into being. (II, 15)

Hecataeus is likely to have first interpreted the 'gift' in the sense of silt left by the river in what was previously marsh or sea (Griffiths 1966, 61). Herodotus then may have redefined the region created to extend it further upstream from the Delta.

Herodotus also recognized that the power of the river potentially could turn the Red Sea to silt as it had done in the Delta which once had been a gulf itself.

> Now if the Nile choose to turn his waters into this Arabian gulf, what hinders that it be not silted up by his stream in twenty thousand years? nay, I think that ten thousand would suffice for it. Is it then to be believed that in the ages before my birth a gulf even much greater than this could not be silted up by a river so great and so busy. (II, 11)

Apparently the Nile was capable of thinking for itself and deciding where to flow! The seemingly tranquil image of the Nile should not obscure or diminish our recognition of its sheer power.

Herodotus had much more to say about the Nile. He sought to situate it within a world that extended far beyond Egypt (II, 33; IV, 42, 45, 198). He sought to situate the Egyptians within a world of peoples the Egyptians did not know, especially the Scythians (Hartog 1988). For Herodotus, Egypt and Scythia were extreme poles reflecting the symmetry of the world. Herodotus privileged the garden world of Egypt over the nomadic people of the wilderness. He privileged the world based on agriculture over the world of the hunt and the world of the herder. He privileged the people of plants who were settled over the people who wandered in the wilderness with their animals or who followed animals. This division of human life into the true humans (*rmt*) or real people who lived a settled agricultural way of life over the 'Other' like the Bedu in Egyptian texts who lived a wandering-animal-based life in the wilderness also was part of the Egyptian cultural construct.

Herodotus extolled the world-class achievements of Senwosret III (1870–1831 BCE) in managing the river and organizing the society (II, 108–109; Malaise 1966; Lloyd 1975, 108; 1982, 37–40; 1988a, 40; 1988b, 16–21, 36–37; Obsomer 1989, 28-43; Ryholt 2010, 43).

Just as there are temporal issues within Egyptology, so there are geographical ones as well.

> The geography of ancient Egypt fostered in the eyes of ancient and modern people a sense of isolation from other ecological areas, increasing the perception of unity within the Nile Valley and difference from other regions....
>
> In the propaganda it produced, Egypt presented itself as more internally coherent and autonomous than other cultures in the Eastern Mediterranean, Near East, and Northeast Africa... This isolation is both the burden and the delight of Egyptology ... This isolation, however, risks dooming the study of ancient Egypt to remain largely self-residential and unreflective. (Miniaci 2020, 411, 412, 414)

One must also avoid the danger of tunnel vision. With Egypt and the Nile Valley, it is easy to become trapped within that world and ignore the larger world that Egypt itself was part of; an awareness that grew over time. Sometimes, it is easier for someone who is not bound by the Nile Valley to stand back and see the world beyond the river. When Herodotus wrote that Egypt was the gift of the river, he was aware of a world that stretched from Persia to Greece and beyond and from Nubia/Ethiopia to the Scythes. Part of challenge in understanding the Egyptian stage is to recognize how that stage had expanded from Egypt's beginnings in Predynastic times through the New Kingdom in Exodus time to Greco-Roman times when Egyptians could look back on the Exodus.

The river

The story of the Nile is too big to tell here.

1. There is a geological story of the Nile not being a single river, of lakes deep in the African interior, of monsoons in the Indian Ocean, of fluctuating sea levels, of canyons like the Grand Canyon.
2. There is the story in modern times of scientists seeking to understand the Nile's story in its larger context.
3. There is the story of human settlement in the Nile Valley, the migration of peoples from the Green Sahara when it dried out who remembered those now oasis-settlements to the people moving downstream from Nubia.
4. There is a story of the change in lifestyle from hunting, gathering, and fishing to agriculture.
5. There is a political story of small separate villages eventually becoming the country of Egypt, the first such country in the world.
6. There is a story of exploration and trade involving Greeks, Romans, Arabs, and the British.

All these stories are fascinating in their own right. Although they contributed to the stage on which the Exodus occurred, to explore those connections goes beyond the limits of what should be presented in a single book on the Exodus. Instead, the effort must be confined to more direct associations to the Exodus.

Maps of Egypt today are very deceiving. They show a vast country often colored brown. Politically and legally such maps may be accurate. Socially and demographically, they are not. The political boundaries delineated on a map do not correspond with human habitation. Egypt is not only a river civilization, it is a river civilization surrounded by barren brown deserts and hills with comparatively limited human habitation. That perception too was part of the Egyptian cultural construct. It was literally possible for ancient Egyptians to draw a line in the sand separating life from death.

The ancient Egyptians did not call their land 'Egypt'. That name, like 'Mesopotamia' and 'Phoenicia', was created by the Greeks. The Egyptians themselves used the term '*kmt*', meaning 'black' from the rich alluvial soil deposited annually by the flooding

river, for the name of the country. The name signifies the importance of that flood to the Egyptian way of life. This designation does not mean that the land of Egypt remained constant from time immemorial nor that people had inhabited it from in the beginning as well. The land changed over time as did human settlement.

However, Egyptians did believe that their land had been created first and was located at the center of the world. So their word for 'land' also meant 'earth' and 'the world' (Goelet 1999, 26). Egypt was the flat land in contrast to the 'hill country' where the foreigners lived (Goelet 1999, 26–27). Egypt had the 'first occasion,' its 'garden of Eden,' its 'in the beginning'. But it was a time Egypt renewed with each new year and each new king, not something that happened once and then vanished forever. Egyptians could see with their own eyes the world of the first occasion renewed in the annual flood. By contrast, according to the biblical account, Moses called on the people to stand still and see the salvation of the Lord at the Sea of Reeds for that flood in history would only occur once. In Egypt, the first occasion occurred annually in the flood; in Israel it occurred once in the Exodus.

The river has its own story to tell. Much of it was not known to ancient Egyptians. Most of the river lies south of Egypt in lands never visited or even claimed by the people who owed their lives to it. For the Egyptians, the river arose in the primeval waters of Nun, part of the unformed cosmos which surrounded the firmament. The location of its first appearance was Aswan, the traditional southern boundary of Egypt. The swirling chaos of waters around the hard rock outcroppings provided another natural 'line in the sand'. Downstream was smooth sailing to the Mediterranean. Aswan became a convenient way for Egyptians to organize space and to designate it as the origin of the river. *Kmt* ended at Aswan, at the First Cataract. This dividing line did not reflect the cultural and economic conditions at the dawn of the Egyptian state. It was a political construct established by the First Dynasty. Remarkably, that boundary still exists 5000 years later dividing Egypt from Nubia, the ancient Near East from Africa, and, at times in scholarship, Caucasians from Negroes.

The Second Cataract marked the division between Egypt and Africa to the British tourists of the nineteenth century. By 1840, Egypt had become a popular destination point within a select circle of English who had the money, time, and sense of adventure to engage in such travel. Since there only was the one river, the itinerary of these travelers tended to be the same. After arriving in Cairo via Alexandria, they tended to rent a boat and head upstream for the Second Cataract. Then they reversed course and sailed downstream from the border of Africa back to Egypt. In so doing they would view the colossus of the four statues of Ramses II at Abu Simbel just as the Nubians sailing downstream had done millennia earlier. The site had been rediscovered in 1813. Champollion visited it in 1828 on his way to the Second Cataract (Wilkinson 2020b, 96–97). These giant figures drew a third line in the sand far beyond what the smaller stelae of previous Pharaohs had erected. There was no mistaking Ramses's presence. It, not the pyramids, became the starting point for the British to see, stop, and inspect the monuments of ancient Egypt (see Barrel 1991). Many travel narratives

were written about this adventure even before Amelia Edwards ventured to Egypt. By contrast, her focus was on the Delta and the route of the Exodus in the time of the very same Pharaoh.

At times the lands up to the Second Cataract became part of Egypt. This expansion had practical implications. In the Egyptian culture, people were supposed to be buried/entombed in Egypt. If someone died outside of Egypt, then it was incumbent on Egyptians to retrieve the body for a proper burial. The *Story of Sinuhe*, set in the Levant, is based on this principle: the obligation to be buried at home (see Gen. 50:1–13 for the embalmed Jacob being brought to the Levant for burial immediately after his death and Gen. 50:25, Ex. 13:19, Num. 24:8, and Josh. 24:32 for the transfer of the bones of Joseph from his coffin in Egypt during the Exodus). If a merchant or government official died in the Nubian lands ruled by Egypt, then an expensive logistical effort was required to comply with the Egyptian custom. However, if the land was deemed part of Egypt itself, then no such effort was required. Thus, the proclamation of extending the realm of the land culturally validated the practice of Egyptian burials in Nubia. What about Egyptian burials in the land of Canaan? When Egypt expanded into Canaan did that land become part of Egypt too? To which deity did the land of Canaan belong at the time of the Exodus?

The Middle Kingdom witnessed a vigorous Egyptian presence upstream. David O'Connor posits that Senwosret I's (1956–1911 BCE) fleet had attacked Upper Nubia in year 18 sailing past the Third Cataract, past the Dongola reach, almost to the Fourth Cataract, but he was not able hold it. Hence the increased fortifications by the Second Cataract at Semna (1986, 49). Senwosret III's (1870–1831 BCE) stela in year 8 marked the first example of such an action outside of Egypt.

> The southern border, made ... to not allow any Nubian to pass it. (quoted in Eyre 1990, 136–137)

It was a simple boundary stone like a field marker (Eyre 1990, 136; Galán 1995, 146). Whether or not anyone read the text was not important. This publicly visible marker physically manifested its policy in stone (Eyre 1990, 137) as did the more grandiose expression by Ramses II at Abu Simbel.

Senwosret III later erected two boundary stelae at Semna-West and Uronarti on an island in year 16. In his boundary stela at Semna amidst three fortresses, Senwosret III proclaimed his greatness by surpassing all who came before him in a work of considerable literary merit by a court composer drawing on standard literary formulations to create a special occasion text at the edge of the world where one would not expect it according to Christopher Eyre (1990, 134, 165):

> I have made my border, going south (beyond) my fathers.
> I have given more than I was endowed with.
> I am a king who says and does.
> What my mind plans is what happens through my action. (quoted in Eyre 1990, 134)

Senwosret III had extended the realm of *maat* (see below) upstream and celebrated his achievement. He meant for this accomplishment to be permanent.

> Now as for any son who shall maintain this border which My Person has made, he is my son, born to My Person; the model of a son, protector of his father, maintainer of the border of his begetter. But as for he who shall let it go, and who shall not fight for it, he is not my son. Not to me was he born! (quoted in Eyre 1990, 135)

The border had already been fixed in year 8, these words were intended as instructions for successors (Galán 1995, 147). Approximately 400 years later Thutmose III (1479–1425 BCE) heard its call and committed himself to it (Flammini 2008, 56). Carola Vogel suggests that these words were read aloud in the presence of the garrison when the fort was built or inaugurated (2011, 334). Eyre wonders if it was composed at the court at Semna or was fictional (1990, 149). One observes here the cultural legacy of great Pharaonic achievements and the obligation of sons to live up to the successes of their predecessors.

Further upstream, the Fourth Cataract led to a low gradient valley floor in the Dongola reach, a large alluvial basin. The river made a S-curve between the Fourth and Third Cataracts even flowing north at times. The region was a marked contrast to the barren and rocky landscape further downstream (Macklin *et al.* 2015, 120). Kerma, a rival kingdom to Egypt but an ally of the Hyksos, was located here. Middle Kingdom Egypt maintained a fortified trading post there called 'The Walls of Amen-em-het, the Justified.' Its counterpart in the Delta was the 'The Walls of the Ruler, made to oppose the Asiatics and to crush the crossers of the Sands' (Wilson 1951, 138–140). The latter wall also was an obstacle for Asiatics seeking to leave Egypt in the Exodus (see Chapter 6).

The Pharaohs never quite made it to the Fifth Cataract yet alone to the Sixth, Khartoum, or the Blue and White Niles. In the fifteenth century BCE, Thutmose I (1504–1492 BCE) boasted

> I made the boundaries of Egypt as far as that which the sun encircles. I made strong those who were in fear; I repelled the evil from them. I made Egypt the superior of every land. (Breasted 1906a, 40)

Thutmose I and Thutmose III reached beyond the Fourth Cataract, the furthest southern extension of the Egyptian empire at Gebel Barkal. The further upstream site of Kurgus in this region temporarily became the southern extent of the Egyptian Empire in New Kingdom times. Thutmose I used an existing landmark, called today Hagr el-Merwa meaning 'rock of quartz' to mark his turf there. It is located approximately 1200 m from the fortress. This massive outcropping would have been conspicuous for miles (Davies 1998, 26–27). Thutmose I carved an Egyptian ideological message in lieu of the existing markings (Vogel 2011, 335). His boundary stelae were bombastic not historical, devoted to the omnipotence of the king (Spalinger 1982, 45–46). He drew on traditional Egyptian values in proclaiming

that he had done something which had never been done by an Egyptian since the dawn of time:

> No king has reached this place since the time of Horus except for my person (quoted in Davies 2017, 72)

His grandson Thutmose III expressed similar views when he reached this boundary point:

> (1) No king has reached this place except for my (grand) father. [Not] has the like [occurred] since the (time of) the primeval ones, (2) in that my person returned to the boundary of the north and (the boundary) of the s[out]h, to Miu, in victory (quoted in Davies 2017, 72)

Thutmose III was referring to the boundary stelae he and his grandfather had placed on the Euphrates making the northern boundary of the Egyptian empire. Davies suggests the initial campaign of conquest would have necessitated a substantial army to be numbered in the thousands, an impressive if not unprecedented logistical achievement (2017, 87, 94). The pre-existing markings on the rocks from the locals indicated that there were people in the area. Presumably Thutmose I and III had some awareness of what lay upstream but chose not to pursue it.

Another inscription signifies that Ramses II or someone acting in his name reached this site as well (Davies 1998, 29; 2017, 74–75). His actions hint at the extent of the larger world known to exist in the Nineteenth Dynasty including to Moses and Israel. There was a world beyond the river, beyond the Libyans, Nubians, and Asiatics adjacent to Egypt, even beyond God's Land, the liminal lands at the edge of universe from Punt to Byblos. Beginning with the Hyksos, Egypt and Egyptologists were challenged with task of redefining Egypt's location at the center of the world when the world grew larger and it became harder for Pharaoh to even pretend that he ruled over it. Adjusting to that reality required a visionary to renegotiate Egypt's position. Seti may have been just such a visionary; his successor was not.

The national narrative

To know the stories of Egypt, one must turn to its gods. The gods and goddesses of ancient Egypt seem as numerous as the sands on the shore or the stars in the sky. By one count there were about 1500 of them making it quite a challenge to differentiate them yet alone remember them (Wilkinson 2003, 6). The ancient Egyptians never abandoned their local gods (Morenz 1973, 139). They compiled no dictionary defining them and they often overlapped. The local gods never attained a national cosmic identity. Full biographies are not possible on all of them anyway. Nonetheless, these innumerable beings endured for centuries and millennia within the Egyptian culture (Hornung 1982, 31).

Although ancient Egypt did not have the abstract language of politics, it did have battles for power. Battles by individuals, battles by priesthoods, battles by cities. The

gods of some cities and regions attained national prominence in the Egyptian state while others did not. Part of the meaning of Egyptian myths is the human power behind the deity of the story even though that awareness has been lost over the centuries. Its stories of sun and river shed light on the historical process by which Egypt did become the gift of the Nile. The great myth of Osiris reflects some of the political events of this early period when Egypt became a unified state (David 1982, 28–39).

The prerequisite for that gift was two specific developments. First, there had to be an Egyptian state. But the state did not develop fully formed in a single moment. Stories changed over time in correlation with the fluidity of the victors in the battle for power. Second, the Egyptian people had to derive their food primarily from agriculture and not hunting, herding, or fishing. The legacy of the hunting, herding, and fishing society remained part of the Egyptian cultural heritage but it was subsumed by the new agricultural society which had developed. Without this transformation from pre-historic and pre-dynastic times, the state in Early Dynastic Time would not have been possible. The very identity of these gods was also transformed as they became part of a national culture and not a local one.

The Osiris family saga stands alone as the ancient Egyptian national narrative even though no text of the narrative from Egypt exists. The story is not simply an etiological tale. Nor is its significance limited to understanding psychological relationships within families. It does not solely represent abstract concepts either. There is a political dimension to it, a dimension that can be obscured in the passage of time as has happened to biblical stories. In the Israelite tradition, the biblical story of the Exodus is the story of the people's origin. That story was told and retold in ancient times to reflect changing circumstances. It continues to be retold in the celebration of Passover today. Similarly, and much earlier, the story of the Osiris family adapted to the varied political realities and changing values over the centuries.

The myth involves Osiris, Isis, Nephthys, Seth, and Horus, the deities of epagomenal days of the Egyptian civil calendar. The narrative version of the story 'Concerning Isis and Osiris/*De Iside et Osiride*' is due to the Greek Plutarch (AD 40–120). However, it is known that the Egyptians performed the story after the death of Senwosret I in the Middle Kingdom (Geisen 2012) and particularly at Edfu in Ptolemaic times (Fairman 1935; 1954; 1958; 1974; Blackman and Fairman 1942; 1943; 1944; Griffiths 1958). That performance has led college professors to bring the story of Osiris back to life with their students (Gillam 2000a; 2005; Peter Piccione, personal communication). The Ramesside variation of the story 'Contendings of Horus and Seth,' was performed at an annual festival of kingship (Quirke 2007, 67).

Previously I noted the shortcomings in the study of the 'gift of the river' phrase of Herodotus. A closer examination of that phrase revealed there was more to it than traditionally realized. Branislav Andelković asks the following question in his study of the political organization of Egypt in the Predynastic Period:

> We have all heard Herodotus' famous remark that Egypt is the gift of the Nile. With the approximately 3,000 kilometer-long stretch of the Nile from Khartoum to the Mediterranean in mind, one cannot help but wonder why the gift was delivered only to a single short segment to the north and south of the Qena Bend, namely from Abydos to Hierakonpolis (some 150 km as the crow flies or approximately 250 km by the river) in the Naqada culture heartland — exactly where the first pharaohs of Dynasty 0 emerged — and nowhere else? (2011, 26)

The issue here is one of human agency. Narmer and his palette did not emerge out of nowhere. There is a story to be told about that process from prehistoric times to Predynastic times to Dynasty 0. That process initiated the myths that defined the culture even when their political origin had been forgotten. It produced the myths still crucial in the time of Seti, Ramses, and Moses.

The characters in the story of the Osiris family did not originate as part a family. The leading male characters had earlier lives. By no coincidence whatsoever, the Egyptian cities most closely associated with Seth, Horus, and Osiris, were the three cities mentioned above by Andelković. These are the cities that jockeyed for power in the formation of individual kingdoms that later coalesced into the kingdom of Upper Egypt and then the national state. These settlements of Naqada (Seth), Hierakonpolis (Horus), and Abydos/Thinis (eventually Osiris) have been the sites of extensive archaeological excavations documenting this development.

The story of the formation of the national narrative also is the story of the birth of the nation and the creation of a national identity. That story exceeds the scope of this study even though the Exodus is dependent on it. For purposes here, critical points relevant to the story will be identified but not analyzed.

1. Horus emerged in the dawn of Egyptian time as the deity of the king. For a human being to be Horus was to be the king.
2. It is quite likely that during the Second Dynasty, people who preferred Seth challenged the people who preferred Horus. Any such challenge should be understood in political terms and as a conflict between alpha males and not a theological confrontation between the forces of cosmos and chaos.
3. In the aftermath of that conflict in the Third Dynasty, cooler heads, like the Heliopolitan priests in the time of Imhotep, realized the need for a national narrative that transcended the rivalry of the settlements that first formed the kingdom of Upper Egypt and then created the kingdom of Upper and Lower Egypt. Having Hierakonpolis Horus be born in the Delta was a wise political decision.
4. There came a time following the exhaustion of the expensive pyramids and the triumph of Ra and the solar temples when the god Osiris came to the fore. He began to appear in the Pyramid Texts, these inscriptions on the interior walls, at the end of the Fifth Dynasty. Eventually his appeal spread to ordinary people who now could envision a physical presence in the next world. The national narrative expanded to include Osiris who probably was of foreign origin based on linguistic classifier for his name always being that of a seated bearded man who is in the

image of the deity. Once again, the Heliopolitan priests likely were the ones with the political savvy and royal connections to incorporate this new and foreign deity into the Egyptian social fabric.

5. Through the Ennead, an assemblage of nine deities, an attempt was made to bring order to the major deities. The likelihood is that the Heliopolitan priests again led the way in fashioning the national identity.

   O'Connor observes that the myth may have combined independent components that cohered early in Egyptian history (2011, 38). The national narrative changed to reflect political and cultural changes. The odds are the Heliopolitan priests were the ones who managed that change.

   One may observe a discrepancy between Egyptian texts and practices. Official Egyptian texts like the aforementioned *The Prophecies of Neferti*, *The Admonitions of Ipuwer*, and *The Instruction Addressed to King Merikare* describing the breakdown of the Old Kingdom in the First Intermediate Period. Regardless of when and why these texts were written, they became part of the golden age of Egyptian literature, the classics which scribes studied in New Kingdom times and later. Their message in one regard is quite clear. In the official royal ideology, foreigners were representatives of chaos and deserved to be expelled from the land of Egypt where *maat*, the cosmic order prevailed over *isfet*, chaos (see below).

   Yet somehow in the midst of the vilification of the foreigner consistent with the royal ideology of the Middle Kingdom, the foreign deity Osiris, king of the world of the dead, found a welcome. Indeed, underneath, the official government propaganda texts, the people embraced this foreign deity of the dead. The royal rituals of the dead with their extravagant tombs provided no solace for the bulk of the population who were not members of the elite, who could not emulate the ways of the king, who had as little in death as they did in life. Now, over 2000 years before Jesus, the people's prayers had been answered. They had Osiris, they had an eternal life of the body.

   The acceptance by the people of the foreign god of the dead teaches us not to believe the world was as the official texts proclaimed. The idealized image of the chaos of the vile wretched foreigner did not match the physical reality of how the foreigner was received in Egypt. The people who brought Osiris into the land were not demonized. Truly Osiris 'was very great in the land of Egypt, in the sight of Pharaoh's servants and in the sight of the people' (Ex. 11:3) long before the claim was made of Moses. With Osiris, we can glimpse the popular religion, the religion of the people, a truth the aforementioned texts do not contain. A similar bifurcation between the attitude of the people and the official texts of the rulers played out centuries later with the Hyksos.

6. In the time after Seti I, the story of Horus and Seth became a battleground for political power as an expression of determining the legitimate king. Subsequently in the first millennium, Seth became a figure of chaos and evil.

For the Osiris myth see Blackman (1933); Plutarch (1936); Säve-Söderbergh (1953); Anthes (1959); Griffiths (1960; 1980; 2001); Te Velde (1967); Oden (1979); Wente (1979); Allam (1992); Lorton (1985); Hoffman *et al.* (1986); L. Lesko (1986); Bard (1989); Kemp (1989, 34–35); Hart (1990); Allam (1992); Hassan (1992; 1997) Eyre (1994); Roberts (1997); T. A. H. Wilkinson (1999; 2000); R. Wilkinson (2003); Garfinkel (2001); Savage (2001); Adams (2002); Campagno (2002); Richards (2002); Shalomi-Hen (2006; 2012; 2015); Nyord (2007); Cruz-Uribe (2009); Friedman (2009; 2011); Hollis (2009); Kanawāti (2009); Hartung (2010); Dreyer (2011); O'Connor (2011); Perry (2011); de Miroschedji (2012); Hendrickx (2014, 269); De Wit (2015); Hassan *et al.* (2017); Bestock (2018).

The cosmic order

The ancient Egyptians had their own way of organizing and understanding the universe. Over the centuries and millennia the Egyptian view changed. It began in a time before the country of Egypt even existed. It developed as Egypt became aware of an ever-enlarged world beyond the limits of being the gift of the Nile from the First Cataract to the Mediterranean Sea. To tell that story far exceeds the parameters of this study of the Hyksos-led Exodus in the time of Ramses II. This section will address the salient items related to that event on the topic of the cosmic order that was violated – the definition of the cosmic order (*maat*), the threat of chaos disrupting the cosmic order (Apophis), and the defenders of the cosmic order (the uraeus and Sekhmet).

Maat

Ra, the sun god, was believed to once have ruled Egypt directly as king. His reign became a form of golden age in the Egyptian culture. It was an ideal time, an *illo tempore*, against which the present could be measured. It was the happiest time in human history. Law was established. Food was abundant. Stomachs were full. All was right with the world in the time of the primeval gods (Kákosy 1964, 205, 206).

Ra came from the primeval mound at creation and replaced chaos with *maat*. It was the order established at creation (see Morenz 1973, 113–126; Lichtheim 1992; Teeter 1997). The word is an abstract feminine noun derived from an adjectival root meaning 'true,' 'just, 'right,' 'correct' (Smith 1994, 68). Mythologically, she became the daughter of Ra. In that capacity she steered the sun's barque on its nightly journey through the underworld (Smith 1994, 68).

The concept of *maat* did not spring forth fully formed from the brow of some ancient Egyptian priest, philosopher, or scientist. There is a story that can be told of the development of ancient Egyptian religion from its local totems, shrines, and animals to the national concept of *maat*. That story will not be told here. The focus will be on the final product, the Egyptian $e=mc^2$ represented by a mere feather yet with explosive power. *Maat* was the order of the cosmos which had existed since the creation, an order to be renewed and preserved (Wilkinson 2003, 150). *Maat*, like the civil calendar, represented an idealized version of reality.

This Egyptian word, *maat*, expresses a fundamental concept in the Egyptian culture. John Wilson defined it as:

> the cosmic force or harmony, order, stability, and security coming down from the first creation as the organizing quality of created phenomena and reaffirmed at the succession of each god-king. (1951, 48)

Emily Teeter echoed these thoughts:

> With Maat's emphasis upon tradition and unchanging values, she provided the sense of continuity that ensured the permanence of many features of ancient Egyptian culture. (1997, 1)

Teeter specifically noted *maat* commemorating the royal commitment to preserve the basic principles of world order that had been established at the beginning of time as an expression of the king's legitimacy (1997, 1).

> The presentation of Maat is a potent visible symbol that the king is capable of literally upholding the tenets of Maat by which the state is governed. (Teeter 1997, 82–83)

A chronological survey of representations of the presentations of *maat* suggests a ritual limited to the members of the royal court (Teeter 1997, 14).

> The presentation of Maat is rarely encountered as a decorative theme in the non-monumental context. It is almost unknown as a vignette on papyrus ... There are no examples of the presentation of Maat or of the royal name from the 'domestic' context, i.e., from wall or floor paintings from houses. (Teeter 1997, 39)

The concept of *maat* was so important that the legitimation of the king and the efficacy of his rule was based on the perception that he had upheld *maat* (Wilkinson 2003, 150).

Egypt did not have a creation of humanity story. But it did tell of the deity creating a king who was placed in the gift of the river to rule over it and judge humankind. The king acting in lieu of the deity distinguished right from wrong and ensured *maat* prevailed. Deviations required action by the king to restore *maat*, to restore the cosmos to what it had been in the beginning. So while Ra personally was not involved in the actions of the king, he created a standard that obligated the kings to act to maintain it.

> Ra has placed the king on the earth of the living for ever and eternity,
> in order to judge humankind, to satisfy the gods,
> to make Right happen and to annihilate Wrong
> (quoted from 'the King as Priest of the Sun' in Quirke 2001, 20)

Since the divine order had been established at the beginning of time, that way was fixed for eternity. The attempt to maintain or to restore *maat* was the goal, not to create it. There were ideal forms of behavior for ruler and ruled, father and son, husband and wife. These social relationships were known with Confucian precision.

Every individual was responsible for the preservation of *maat*. The king in particular was obligated to fulfill his royal responsibilities in the maintenance of *maat* or in its restoration. Obviously care was needed if a son was claiming to restore *maat*. It implied that his own father had been the cause for the disruption to *maat* and the creation of chaos in the first place. If an individual failed as king it was due to the individual and not to any shortcomings in the role of the king itself. Eventually that role would be so well-defined that Semites, Libyans, Nubians, Persians, and Greeks could fulfill it and all be included in the list of Egyptian dynastic kings (except the Ptolemaic Dynasty who ruled when Manetho created his dynastic list).

Frequently *maat* is equated with the western concept of justice. This comparison is incomplete. *Maat* refers not solely to the sense of justice/injustice whereby an individual or group of people seek redress for an alleged wrong. *Maat*'s scope far exceeds a single person or even a wronged group. It refers to 'the divine order of society, [and] it is also the divine order of nature as established at the time of creation' (Frankfort 1948a, 54).

Maat, then, was more than an abstraction. It was 'something which can be performed in word and deed, through righteous speech and just decisions, through charitable acts and filial piety, thus promoting social solidarity' (Smith 1994, 68). In death, one could claim to have performed in accordance with the principles of *maat*.

Indeed, it was at death when the true measure of a person's life would be taken (Morenz 1973, 126–130; Assmann 2003, 160–163). *Maat* in the form of a feather would be weighed against the deceased's heart in the judgement of the dead. *The Book of the Dead*, Chapter 125, detailed the possible sins one could commit. The deceased was called upon to recite 'I did not ...' for each one. Anubis serving Osiris handled the scale. Thoth inscribed the measurement/verdict. Forty-two judges watched intently. If the deceased had a heavy heart from a life in violation of *maat*, then the scale would be tipped against him. Instead of eternal life in the realm of Osiris, the 'devourer' fulfilled its name and devoured the heart of the aberrant. It had the head and jaws of a crocodile because bodies lost in the river to crocodiles never could be retrieved for a proper burial. The consequences of a life not in accordance with *maat* had irreversible disastrous consequences. There was no original sin that plagued all humanity requiring a savior. Instead there were misdeeds. These misdeeds violated the sense of *maat*. The disturbance of the harmonious order required correction not repentance.

This perception of cosmic order correlates with the Egyptian understanding of time previously described. Cyclical time not linear time characterized the Egyptian culture. The development of history (science fiction, prophets of doom) would await the genesis of other societies with defined start and end dates. There was no unfolding of an individual or social destiny towards some distant and attainable end. It was not a world of sequential ages. A world based on progress or evolution would have been incomprehensible to them. Their world was one of harmonious changeless

cycles, perpetually repeated moments which nothing could be allowed to disrupt. The western hero who changes the course of human history would have been the supreme disrupter of harmony or *maat* in the Egyptian value system. The hero-king was the one who maintained *maat* or who restored it from the disruptions caused by the forces of chaos.

Uraeus

Closely connected with the royal effort to maintain *maat* is the uraeus. The cobra goddess is a symbol of life, order, and the legitimate kingship. She normally appears in the upright position as a rearing serpent. The symbol appears throughout Egyptian history from Predynastic to Roman times. In the Atum creation myth, she protects the gods from the formless abyss. Ra drove off Apophis (see below) with the uraeus on his forehead marking him as a war ruler who triumphed over chaos (Te Velde 1967, 105). The uraeus consistently is associated with Horus. She stands poised, powerful, and protective, deadly to her enemies if provoked (Johnson 1990, 3, 6, 10, 17). The fire-spitting serpents served as perimeter guardians. The 'cobra frieze' was an architectural feature of repeating uraei around a wall or shrine (Ritner 1990, 35). An upright cobra in the strike position means death to the foe of *maat*, the image alone was sufficient to deliver the message.

The menacing uraeus was deployed as a weapon by the rulers of Egypt in their battles against rebels, the human figures of chaos who disrupted *maat*. There are too many examples to list here (Zandee 1960, 133–134). Pharaoh attained supernatural prowess as the possessor of the fiery uraeus. The mere sight of the upright cobra struck intense fear in those who would stand against the king. The uraeus signaled that the rebel's defeat was only moments away (Shaw 2009, 175). Only someone without knowledge would dare to defy such an opponent ... or one armed with an even stronger weapon, a more powerful deity if such a thing were possible.

Even non-royals could unleash the power of the uraeus. In the Decree of Amenophis, son of Hapu, he invokes the uraeus in combination with Apophis and New Year:

> His uraeus shall spit fire on their heads, annihilating their bodies and devouring their flesh, they becoming like Apophis on the morning of the New Year. (quoted in Assmann 1992a, 156; 2003, 314–315)

Apparently the morning of the New Year was the time of the greatest triumph of the sun god over the forces of chaos and darkness.

Woe to any rebel confronted with the fiery power of the uraeus. The uraeus continued to be used in the Nineteenth Dynasty. The tomb of Seti I contains a text of 12 uraei spitting forth fire to light the path of the sun-god in the underworld and strike down his enemies. Ramses II claimed that the serpent on his brow felled his foes with the fiery breath in his Poem on Kadesh (Lichtheim 1976, 70). The uraeus had become the most distinctive symbol of kingship in Egypt. It suggests the obligation of the state to kill to preserve peace, order, and security. The state is 'sustained by a

form of rule that disposed of the deadly powers of fire and sword. This punitive force (*baw*) is symbolized by the uraeus flashing with wrath' (Assmann 2003, 147).

Apophis

Ra had his own struggles to maintain order against the greatest disrupter of *maat*, Apophis. In the limited creation story of the Egyptians the sun emerges triumphant daily, a far more frequent occurrence than the annual inundation. Its victory is not over passive chaos that awaited a creator's initiative. Instead the sun struggled through the dark night daily to regain its place in the sky. This nightly journey through the heavens and the Netherworld covered 'millions of miles,' a cosmic scale far in excess of the world the Egyptians knew (Hornung 1990, 74). Various rituals tracked this daily journey of the sun through the netherworld of Duat. In that daily journey the primary adversary of the sun-god was Apophis.

Mythically, Apophis existed from the dawn of time even in the primeval waters of chaos before creation. He embodied dissolution, darkness, and non-being (Wilkinson 2003, 221–223; Morenz 2004, 202–203). Apophis was associated with what today are considered natural events but in ancient times were connected to the divine. For Apophis that meant the unexpected in nature: the darkness of an eclipse, the sudden storm, and the unexpected shaking of the earth (Wilkinson 2003, 221). One glimpses here the tinge of uncertainty and fear in the minds of the Egyptians to such occurrences.

Apophis was depicted as a serpent since the New Kingdom (Bickel 2007, 1). The snake sign functioned as a determinative for his name rendering it an attractive target for mutilation in the rituals and spells (Morenz 2004, 202). However, the description of Apophis suggests it was more of a giant monstrous creature than a real species of snake (Bickel 2007, 1). The images of Apophis typically show him 'restrained, dismembered, or in the process of being destroyed, often by multiple knives' (Wilkinson 2003, 221). Apophis even becomes known as the 'destroyed one,' the one who is 'destroyed' (Hornung 1982, 159).

The meaning of his name may be debated. Ludwig Morenz suggests the name is a composite word. It combines two elements: great and roar or blabber, or babble. Together they make Apophis a 'great babbler' (Morenz 2004, 203). Noise and Apophis are connected in his myths: 'Apophis, the fallen one, the Roarer,' (Morenz 2004, 204–205). This characteristic is included in his definition in the myths of the nocturnal journey of the sun.

> *Amduat Seventh Hour*
> It is his (Apophis's) voice that leads the gods to him. (quoted in Morenz 2004, 204)

The daily nocturnal attack on the solar barque was announced by this terrible roar.

> *Book of the Gates Sixth Hour*
> One without its eyes is this snake,

> Without its nose and without its ears:
> it breathes its screaming
> it lives on its own shouting. (P. Bremner-Rhind 32, 17 quoted in Morenz 2004, 205)

In some ways, Apophis is reminiscent of Tiamat, the chaos figure of the Mesopotamian tale of *Enuma Elish*. But the Egyptians did not have a creation story like the Mesopotamians where the world originated in a primeval confrontation with a watery monster of chaos. Tiamat was killed once. In Egypt, the apocalyptic defeat of the formless chaos monster occurred daily and was not a fervently hoped for result in the distant future. The cosmic drama of Ra's triumph over Apophis was told nightly by the priests who followed a prescribed path during the 12 hours of every night.

Textually, Apophis is not known from the Old Kingdom. His name is found more frequently in the Coffin Texts from the Middle Kingdom and not the Pyramid Texts from the Old Kingdom. One suggestion is that the figure arose from the people as part of the popular religion and not from the elite culture that left written records from the Old Kingdom. Possibly the uncertain and fearful times of the First Intermediate Period factored into his development. Hornung deems it significant that this formless creature of chaos first emerged after the collapse of the Old Kingdom. Suddenly a time of stability and certainty that apparently had existed for all eternity and when giant pyramids that touched the sky were built was now replaced by a time when all was uncertain and chaos had triumphed.

> This must have awakened the speculation that Re, the god of creation, had a hidden enemy constantly threatening him and his creation. The intellectual discussion of the collapse of order stimulated a literary awakening during the First Intermediate Period (ca. 2100–2050 B.C.) ... This collapse was neither the work of foreign foes nor a violent revolution, and thus it defied explanation ... The figure of Apophis is thus part of the human reaction to the challenge brought about by the First Intermediate Period. (Hornung 1990, 103)

The 'literary awakening' refers to a slew of stories about coping with chaos. The Middle Kingdom became a golden age of literary composition in the aftermath of the First Intermediate Period, a process which did not occur after the Second Intermediate Period. During this first time of uncertainty, Egyptians wrote admonitions and instructions to help guide future kings on what to do. Chaos figured prominently in these writings with the most frequent figure of chaos being the Asiatics. These two figures of chaos would become linked mythically and politically, Apophis and Asiatics. In a sense, the defeat of one matched the defeat of the other. Ra defeats cosmic chaos and the king defeated human chaos. The best depictions come from the Valley of the Kings from the tombs of New Kingdom Pharaohs (Hornung 1990, 104).

In the Egyptian culture, there was no escaping this ceaseless struggle between Ra and Apophis. The Egyptians knew the sun disappeared daily. Theologically, at least, it meant Egypt could never rest on its laurels. Ra had to win the battle against Apophis each and every day or else the result would be darkness and death for eternity.

The details of the nocturnal battle will be presented in the reconstruction of the Exodus (see Chapter 6).

Sekhmet

The final aspect of Ra to be discussed concerns Sekhmet, the 'Powerful One' (Morenz 1973, 17). In *The Book of the Cow of Heaven*, there is an episode about *The Destruction of Mankind*. It was found in five royal tombs from the Eighteenth, Nineteenth, and Twentieth Dynasties including Seti I and Ramses II. The origin has been dated to both the Middle Kingdom and the Eighteenth Dynasty. Even though it was found in funerary contexts, the story itself has no funerary nature. The myth is unusual for Egypt since the gods act like humans. Unfortunately, the reader is left wanting as to an explanation for the actions of these human-like deities (Lichtheim 1976, 197; Spalinger 2000, 258–262).

The story tells of the old and weary sun-god Ra seeking to destroy the human race because of suspected rebellions plotted by people against him. Once upon a time, as all good stories begin, the world was perfect. Gods still walked the earth. They had not yet removed themselves from it and separated the heavens and the earth. The created cosmos from the *illo tempore* was supposed to remain perfect forever. Then the Egyptian myth tell not of sin in the Christian sense but rebellion. Little is known about precisely what the human rebellious actions were in perhaps the 363rd year of reign of Ra (Kákosy 1964, 209).

At Ra's request, the goddess Hathor then commences slaughtering the people in the desert in the form of the goddess Sekhmet, a ferocious leonine deity, the 'Powerful One'. Sekhmet provided a counterpart to the nurturing female goddess. This goddess was the bringer of plague and disease who breathed fire against her enemies. In the Egyptian tradition, the annual inundation and the corresponding annual mortal epidemic from pathogenic agents were attributed to the destructive force of the goddess Sekhmet. Consequently, the Egyptians developed rituals to protect themselves from this death (Contardi 2015, 20–23). She was an excellent destroyer.

At this point, Ra apparently reconsidered what he has wrought, also for reasons unknown. He then initiated a ruse against Sekhmet before she could kill any more. His servants collected red ochre from Aswan and intermixed it with the barley that had been mashed to create a beer. The result was a liquid that resembled blood. Ra had 7000 jars of this blood-looking liquid spread around where Sekhmet was sleeping. When she awoke to begin her day of murder, she saw the pool of blood surrounding her and was tricked into thinking she already had accomplished her task and became drunk. Hence humanity was saved (Lichtheim 1976, 197–199; Spalinger 2000, 262–265, 271).

This day is commemorated as the final day of the twelfth month of the year when the goddess Sekhmet was supposed to annihilate mankind but instead was deceived by the red-blood looking liquid. Now the New Year can begin (Spalinger 1995, 33). At this time of the festival of the birth of Ra, the uraeus in its 'fiery eye' of the sun god

persona protects the living image (statue) of the god from demons and harm (Ritner 1990, 35). The dangerous time of transition had been overcome. The pending chaos had been thwarted. Life could go on. One may observe here the conjunction of the Egyptian calendar and mythical actions with cultural implications.

It was incumbent on the Egyptians that the appropriate rituals be enacted to ensure the smooth shift to the New Year. During an annual festival held at the beginning of the year, a festival of intoxication, the Egyptians danced and played music to soothe the wildness of the goddess and drank great quantities of wine ritually to imitate the extreme drunkenness that stopped the wrath of the goddess – when she almost destroyed humanity. This action may relate to averting excessive flooding during the inundation at the beginning of each year as well, when the Nile ran blood-red with the silt from up-stream. Oestigaard argues that the red waters of the flood mythologically were the blood of the slain Osiris (2010, 74).

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Before wrapping up this survey of the Egyptian cultural construct related to the Exodus, one final concept and action requires mention: Pharaoh smites the enemy. This action refers to the king slaying the rebels, foreigners, and Asiatics who violate *maat*. It will be discussed in more detail in conjunction with the slayings that are part of the Exodus story. They include Hyksos Apophis executing Seqenenre (Chapter 4), Passover (Chapter 6), and the post-Exodus story involving Apophis and Seqenenre (Chapter 7).

Speculations

What does this foray into the Egyptian cultural construct mean for the Exodus? Typically when biblical scholars engage in the exegesis of Exodus-related texts or attempt an historical reconstruction, it is done through the lens of Mesopotamian, Canaanite or Bedouin cultures. They seek to find counterparts to the biblical vocabulary, motifs, or events. Some scholars do examine the Egyptian culture. The effort may involve the examination of place names or terms to determine the verisimilitude of the biblical text. The mere archaeologically verifiable existence of a place or presence of term becomes a building block to support the biblical Exodus edifice.

This study and this chapter in particular take a different approach. The chapter presents key attributes of the Egyptian culture while always keeping the historical Exodus in mind. The attributes reviewed are the major ones presented in any general study of Egypt: (i) the land itself always defined as the Gift of the Nile; (ii) the national narrative of the culture revolving around Horus, Osiris, Seth, and Isis; and finally, (iii) the critical concept of *maat,* the Egyptian sense of cosmic harmony and order. The selection of these characteristics should not be surprising. They are the exact ones Egyptologists use when explaining the ancient Egypt culture. Therefore a people

defined through a rejection of the Egyptian cultural construct naturally would address these characteristics as well.

Along these lines, the importance of Passover in an Egyptian context normally is minimized. For Passover the concept of *maat* looms large. *Maat* was not merely an abstract concept. The disruptions of *maat* were not philosophical musings on the state of the cosmos. Violations of *maat*, disturbances in the orderly existence of society, had real world consequences. People, meaning the king, acted against people in a direct and often brutal way before dispatching them. Passover is a story of death, of death to Egyptians, of death to the sons of Egyptians meaning the adult males who served the king. An historical reconstruction of the Exodus needs to address the threat of death in the real world of ancient Egypt.

What follows then is a series of speculations or working hypotheses about this attempt to reconstruct the Exodus as an actual event. These speculations draw on the material presented in this chapter. The intention is to develop a story that is consistent with the Egyptian cultural construct. The story should be possible, plausible, and reasonable although not provable beyond a shadow of a doubt. It should show what the people Israel were rejecting as they were becoming a new people.

Gift of the river

I speculate when Moses told his story of going forth from Egypt, the one-river garden of plenty he meant was the Nile-based Egyptian world. I speculate that Moses defined his deity not only as the deliverer of his people from this garden but as its creator: Yahweh caused the Egyptian world to exist, Egypt was the Gift of Yahweh.

National narrative

I speculate that gods have a political meaning in addition to any religious or theological ones. Deities need to be understood in their geo-political context as well.

Horus

Moses: I speculate that Moses saw himself as a Horus, the rightful future king of Egypt. He was not a son of Seti and no biological criteria qualified him for that position. Then again, biology was not destiny at that time. After the Amarna Era, Pharaohs tended not to be the son of their predecessor. Ay (1325–1321 BCE), Horemheb (1321–1293 BCE), and Ramses I (1293–1291 BCE which probably means 2-years' duration over 3 calendrical years) all became kings as adults based on their military positions and achievements beforehand. The adult Seti was the son of Ramses I, his predecessor as king, but the odds are the elderly father was picked in part by Horemheb because he had a vigorous son ready to follow him. For roughly 40 years since the death of Akhnaton, the traditional father-son sequence had not been observed. Ramses II marked a change back to 'normalcy' of a child growing up for the most part in the palace of his royal father king even if he had been born before his father became king. I speculate that Moses was older than Ramses II, not of royal birth, had military

experience, was close to Seti, thought of himself as being of worthy of succeeding Seti, and therefore was the true Horus (Chapter 6).

Ramses: I speculate that Ramses was aware of this would-be Horus and rival to the throne whom he considered to be a false Horus. We know, of course, that Seti chose the young unproven candidate to be his successor and not someone with military experience. That does not mean Ramses's insecurities on being chosen disappeared. He knew he had to prove himself or, in the American vernacular, have the right stuff to go into the arena. He attempted to do so at the Battle of Kadesh which exposed his shortcomings and presented an opportunity for the Exodus (Chapter 6).

Biblical Writer: I speculate that there came a time when an Israelite writer chose to portray Moses, Prince of Egypt, as a Horus. He portrayed Moses not as a biological son of Pharaoh (Seti) but as a political son of Seti. His Moses had a legitimate claim to the throne as the heir to Seti. The point of the revision to the Exodus story is that for this Hyksos-descendant Israelite, Moses deserved to be understood within the Egyptian political context. An Israelite audience was unlikely to understand the nuance of this assertion as it would have been unfamiliar with Egyptian myths and political history. Instead, the Israelite writer made this claim to an Egyptian audience of one who would have been familiar with both Horus and dynastic change in Egypt: Pharaoh's daughter, wife of Solomon, queen of Israel, whose father Smendes at Tanis had come to power replacing a dynasty of Ramessids (number XI was the last one).

Osiris

Moses: I speculate that Moses rejected the popular Osiris cult and eternal life of the body through its mummification. Although Moses did not author:

> I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse; therefore choose life, that you and your descendants may live. (Deut. 30:19)

that sentiment reflected his values that he imprinted on the people Israel. Eternal life for the Israelite would not be as an individual but as a people expressed through the covenant. As long as individuals committed themselves to the covenant, the people Israel lived. Immortality was not of the individual body but of the body of the people. I suspect this development was part of Plan B when the initial goal of going directly to Canaan was thwarted and the wandering in the wilderness commenced instead. Eventually, there came a time when Moses realized he needed to define the identity of the people in a way that would survive his own death and that of the generation of people who had chosen to leave Egypt with him.

I speculate that official Egyptian texts should not be treated as gospel. There is a disconnect between the facts on the ground and the words of the king. The attitudes expressed in the royal documents are not necessarily reflective of the attitudes and

values of the people particularly when it came to the Delta and the foreigner. This trait persisted throughout pharaonic history and has skewed the way Egyptologists have understood the Hyksos presence in the land. The conflict between the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Dynasties in the Upper Egypt and the Fifteenth Dynasty in Lower Egypt should be understood in the context of other such conflicts beginning with Narmer. The Thebans at the end of the First Intermediate Period were just as capable of attacking a native-Egyptian dynasty in the north as it was in attacking the Hyksos at the end of the Second Intermediate Period.

I speculate that, like the Egyptian national narrative (and the American national narrative of Thanksgiving and the American Revolution), the Israelite national narrative of the Exodus similarly grew over time to encompass a larger audience of multiple peoples and changed political circumstances.

Cosmic order

1. I speculate that Ramses correctly regarded Moses as an Apophis, a disrupter of *maat*. Therefore he decided to treat the hot-headed rebel in accordance with Egyptian customs (see Chapter 6).
2. I speculate that Ramses intended to act on New Year when Sekhmet, the goddess of plagues and disease, acted as the destroyer of humanity.
3. I speculate that Moses was aware that Ramses intended to act like Sekhmet on New Year and therefore decided to turn the Egyptian New Year day cosmos topsy-turvy by being the destroyer instead.
4. I speculate that Moses acted on the seventh hour of the night the eve of the New Year to be a deliverer of chaos and a destroyer of *maat* before the morning when Ramses was planning to restore cosmos in accordance with Egyptian cultural values.
5. I speculate that the Egyptian traditions of plagues, diseases, flowing red water/blood, and magic became part of the Israelite cultural memory of its departure from Egypt.
6. I speculate that the original biblical plague tradition contained seven plagues in memory of the seventh hour of the night for the original Passover.
7. I speculate that acculturated Hyksos had become part of the Heliopolitan priesthood in biblical On and that some of them chose to be part of the Exodus. They brought their knowledge of Egyptian culture with them and later became known as Levites.

Chapter 3

The Hyksos: the people of the 400-year sojourn

> The Hyksos have gotten lousy press.
>
> Jeremy Rutter quoted in Balter 2006, 508

> The Hyksos were consistently given a bad press by the Ancient Egyptians, who present them as barbarians with no sympathy whatsoever for Egyptian culture. This image is demonstrably wide of the mark on both counts. Indeed, the Hyksos Period is probably one of the most influential in Egyptian history: in the first place, it seems to have badly shaken Egyptian feelings of self-sufficiency and security; secondly, Egypt acquired many cultural and technological benefits; and, thirdly the country was given the military capability and the motivation to create an Asiatic Empire, the most important new departure of the New Kingdom. Be that as it may, the Theban rulers associated with Manetho's Seventeenth Dynasty had no intention of tolerating a Hyksos presence in Egypt any longer than they had to and slowly built up sufficient strength against the foreigners that eventually confined them to their old base in the Eastern Delta.
>
> Lloyd 2014, 13–14

The Hyksos are the one and only people in the Egyptian archaeological record who have been connected to the Exodus. That connection has been known since ancient times due to Manetho, the same person who provided the dynastic framework for Egyptian kings that continues to be used to this very day. In this chapter, I wish to explore how Egyptologists have dealt with the topics of

1. Manetho's presentation of the Hyksos and the rise of anti-Semitism;
2. the treatment of the Hyksos by Egyptological scholars;
3. the revised view of the Hyksos based on the archaeological work since the late 1960s.

Following this introduction to the Hyksos at the beginning of their 400-year sojourn in Egypt, the next chapters will address the response to them by the kings of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Dynasties, the early Nineteenth Dynasty, the Exodus when the 400-year sojourn ended, and the late Nineteenth Dynasty when Egypt coped with the aftermath of the Exodus.

Manetho

Manetho was a third century BCE Egyptian priest who wrote a history of Egypt in Greek. It is quite possible he did so during the reign of Ptolemy II Philadelphus (285–246 BCE). This dating means that at around the same time he was writing his Egyptian history in Greek, Jews in Egypt were translating the Hebrew Bible into Greek in what became known as the Septuagint. The odds on these two ethnicities competing for the favor of the Ptolemaic king not being aware of each other are non-existent. One should recognize that Manetho was not an Egyptologist in the current sense of term, but a player in the political arena with an agenda to impress upon the foreign ruler involving the Jews in Egypt.

No copy of Manetho's history exists. All that survives are excerpts quoted by other writers. The critical one for the Exodus is by Josephus, the first century CE Jewish historian (among other things). Besides the more familiar writings about himself, the Jewish war against Rome (the Masada incident), and a Jewish history, he authored *Contra Apionem.* This publication, as the title suggests, was in response to the writings of another individual, Apion, who had written derogatively about the Jews. Josephus in Roman times sought to counter those anti-Semitic slurs with his own publication. In so doing, he included references to various other anti-Semitic writers such as Manetho. Once again, one should remain cognizant of the political objectives of the writings even though they contain historical information about both the time of the writer and the time in which the writings are set.

Here are the critical Manetho writings on the Hyksos as set down by Josephus, in italics with bold added and my comments.

Apn 1:74 *Now, this Manetho, in the second book of his Egyptian History, writes concerning us in the following manner: I will set down his very words, as if I were to bring the very man himself into a court for a witness.*

By these words, Josephus asserts that Manetho's account about the Hyksos is about 'us'. He approaches Manetho as if he were the participant in a court proceeding. Evidently he believes this court-room testimony tactic will lend credulity to his own words *contra* to this witness.

Apn 1:75 *There was a king of ours, whose name was Timaus. Under him it came to pass, I know not how, that* ***God was averse to us****, and there came, after a surprising manner,* ***men of ignoble birth*** *out of the eastern parts, and had boldness enough to make an expedition into our country, and with* ***ease subdued it by force, yet without our hazarding a battle with them****.*

Here Manetho claims what happened was not due to the prowess of the men of ignoble birth, but the responsibility of the Egyptian deity who sought to punish Egypt for

some reason. The Hyksos conquest was minimized by mocking it as having occurred without a battle being fought. John Dillery faults Manetho as a Greek historian for not specifying where these eastern parts were or describing how the Hyksos were easily able to conquer Egypt without a fight. He raises the possibility that perhaps there once had been additional information which Josephus or some intermediary had removed (1999, 99,105). There were peoples who conquered Egypt by force, such as the Assyrians and the Persians. However, there was no Hyksos expedition or campaign to conquer Egypt. Based on the archaeological record the country was not subdued by force then (see below).

Apn 1:76 *So when they had gotten those who governed us under their power, they afterward* ***burnt down our cities, and demolished the temples of the gods, and used all the inhabitants after a most barbarous manner: nay, some they slew, and led their children and their wives into slavery****.*

Again, based on the archaeological record, the actual Hyksos did none of this. The claims made by the Pharaohs of the Eighteenth Dynasty against the Hyksos will be examined in the next chapter.

Apn 1:77 *At length they made one of themselves king, whose name was Salatis; he also lived at Memphis, and made both the upper and lower regions* ***pay tribute, and left garrisons*** *in places that were the most proper for them. He chiefly aimed to secure the eastern parts, as foreseeing that the* ***Assyrians, who had then the greatest power****, would be desirous of that kingdom, and invade them.*

The Hyksos did not establish garrisons. The reference to the Assyrians who did invade Egypt in the seventh century BCE indicates the actual time period with which Manetho was more familiar. They were destructive. Their actions shocked Egypt. It was inconceivable to the Egyptians that these ignoble eastern foreigners could violate their land as they had. Manetho has retrojected the Assyrian cause of that trauma to Egyptians onto the Hyksos.

Apn 1:78 *and as he found in the Saite Nomos* [Sethroite] *a city very proper for his purpose, and which lay upon the Bubastic channel, but with regard to a certain theological notion was called Avaris, this he rebuilt, and made very strong by the walls he built about it, and by a most numerous garrison of two hundred and forty thousand armed men whom he put into it to keep it.*

The Hyksos did rule from Avaris as did the Nineteenth Dynasty Pharaohs including Seti I, Ramses II, and Merneptah. The next three verses are devoted to the listing of Hyksos kings. The key name mentioned is that of Apophis. He will appear in the Egyptian writings of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Dynasties and is a crucial figure for understanding the Exodus. It should be noted the mythical Apophis, who opposed

Ra nightly and was the figure of chaos (see Chapter 2), is not the same as the human Apophis, who opposed Pharaoh, despite the identical spellings in English.

Josephus then provides his own explanation for the Hyksos name.

Apn 1:82 *This whole nation was styled Hycsos – that is, Shepherd Kings; for the first syllable, Hyc, according to the sacred dialect, denotes a king, as is Sos a shepherd; but this according to the ordinary dialect; and of these is compounded Hycsos: but some say that these people were Arabians.* [83] *Now in another copy it is said that this word does not denote Kings, but, on the contrary, denotes Captive Shepherds, and this on account of the particle Hyc; for that Hyc, with the aspiration, in the Egyptian tongue, again denotes Shepherds , and that expressly also; and this to me seems the more probable opinion, and more agreeable to ancient history.*

This misunderstanding of the word Hyksos would distort the understanding of them for millennia. Instead, the term refers to rulers of foreign lands. It was a term that the Egyptians used extensively both before and subsequent to the Fifteenth Dynasty Hyksos (Candelora 2017; 2018). It refers to other peoples as well. However, those scattered references have been overwhelmed by the concentrated use for this one dynasty. The Hyksos themselves used this Egyptian term to refer to themselves. In scholarship now the use of the term Hyksos normally refers to this Fifteenth Dynasty. The implication of this designation is that the Hyksos who ruled Egypt as the Fifteenth Dynasty already ruled some other area prior to entering Egypt.

Apn 1:84 *[But Manetho goes on]: – 'These people, whom we have before named kings, and called shepherds also, and their descendants', as he says, 'kept possession of Egypt five hundred and eleven years'.* [85] *After these, he says, 'That the kings of Thebais and of the other parts of Egypt made an insurrection against the shepherds, and that there a terrible and long war was made between them'.* [86] *He says further, 'That under a king, whose name was Alisphragmuthosis, the shepherds were subdued by him, and were indeed driven out of other parts of Egypt, but were shut up in a place that contained ten thousand acres: this place was named Avaris'.*

In general terms, and ignoring the names and number of years, Manetho seems to be referring to the Thebans of the late Seventeenth and early Eighteenth Dynasties who did displace the Hyksos from rule in the sixteenth century BCE. Pharaohs Seqenenre (1550s? BCE), Kamose (1555–1550) and Ahmose (1550–1525 BCE) did do battle with the Hyksos against Apophis and at times the capital city of Avaris. This information is critical to understanding the legacy of the Hyksos. As will be seen in the next chapter, the Eighteenth Dynasty rulers based in Thebes expressed strong antipathy to the Hyksos. Their harsh views were in contrast to the subsequent Nineteenth Dynasty based in the Hyksos capital of Avaris. Manetho appears to have been more familiar with and accepting of the Theban view. That view was perpetuated in Egyptology as well until archaeology exposed its falsity. The recognition that the Hyksos were not the hated enemy at the time of the Exodus contributes to the historical reconstruction of the event (see Chapter 7).

Apn 1:87 *Manetho says, 'That the shepherds built a wall all round this place, which was a large and a strong wall, and this in order to keep all their possessions and their prey within a place of strength,* [88] *but that Thummosis, the son of Alisphragmuthosis, made an attempt to take them by force and by siege, with four hundred and eighty thousand men to lie around them; but that upon his despair of taking the place by that siege, they came to* ***a composition with them****, that* ***they should leave Egypt, and go, without any harm to be done to them****, wherever they would;* [89] *and that, after this composition was made, they went away with their whole families and effects, not fewer in number than two hundred and forty thousand, and took their journey from Egypt, through the wilderness, for Syria:* [90] *but that as they were in* ***fear of the Assyrians****, who had then the dominion over Asia, they built a city in that country which is* ***now called Judea****, and that large enough to contain this great number of men, and called it* ***Jerusalem****'.*

In this concluding passage, Manetho links the departure of Hyksos due to the Thebans to a wilderness journey to what became the country of Judea, including the city of Jerusalem.

Josephus reports Manetho as claiming the Hyksos departure was due to an agreement between the competing sides. The Egyptians sought to capture the Hyksos capital by force but were unable to do so. As a result of his despair, the Egyptian leader then entered into a composition whereby the Hyksos including their families were given safe passage to depart both Avaris and Egypt. There was no smiting the enemy here. However, one should keep this arrangement in mind when analyzing Ahmose's victory over the Hyksos based on the records from that time (see Chapter 4).

At this point, Josephus changes subject. He does not return to Manetho until after a gap from I:92 to I:228. Now, Josephus's perspective has switched entirely. In the first quotations, Josephus relied on Manetho to corroborate the antiquity of the Jews. Manetho's sources were sacred chronicles. Josephus used them. When the topic becomes the Exodus itself, Manetho's sources are untrustworthy accounts including legends and rumors from popular oral accounts rather than carefully transcribed archival records (Dillery 1999, 96).

Further on, Manetho provides an extensive description of the Exodus departure itself which is too long to repeat here (Apn 1:228–320). One snippet illustrates Manetho's perspective:

Apn 1:233 *how this namesake of his told him that he might see the gods, if he would clear the whole country of the lepers and of the other impure people;* [234] *that the king was pleased with this injunction, and got together all that had any defect in their bodies out of Egypt.*

Not only did Manetho castigate the arrival of the Hyksos into Egypt, he denigrated the departure of the Judeans as well. The Egyptians deserved to be punished for some unknown reason at their arrival. By contrast, the Hyksos departure was a moral cleansing of the land under the heralded actions of the Egyptian Pharaohs

who removed the lepers from the land. Their departure was an expulsion and not an Exodus. One does not need a degree in Egyptology to realize that Manetho is calling upon the present Greek king to cleanse the land of Jews as the Egyptian kings had done before of the Judeans. Manetho is using a story set in the past to deliver a message about his present. And the message is anti-Semitic.

Manetho's anti-Semitism

The existence of Manetho's anti-Semitism is not a debated subject. But it does raise two issues:

1. His historical basis for making the Hyksos the villain.
2. His reasoning for thinking his audience knew who the Hyksos were.

Even if one assumes Manetho's information was completely accurate, one is still left with the dilemma of how people in the third century BCE knew about people from the seventeenth–sixteenth centuries BCE or even the thirteenth century BCE when Seti praised them.

To begin with, the thesis of this study is that Manetho's characterization of the Hyksos is undeserved and better fits the conquests of Egypt by the Assyrians and the Persians. As stated, Manetho retrojected the troubles from the north due to their invasions to the Hyksos. He did so due to the political context in the third century BCE when he wrote. That still does not explain how he knew about the Hyksos or thought a link to Jews in his present would be credible.

A brief historical review is necessary to demonstrate both the absence of antipathy towards the Judeans in Egyptian history and the trauma inflicted on Egypt by the Assyrians. To begin with, there is nothing in the archaeological record to suggest, from the time Merneptah claimed to have destroyed the seed of Israel (*c.* 1212 BCE campaign) until even after the Babylonian destruction of the Jerusalem temple (586 BCE), of any overt Egyptian hostility towards either Israel or Judah. Putting aside the biblical account of Pharaoh's daughter marrying Solomon, the relationship between Egypt and Israel/Judah appears to have been politically based. In other words, Egypt invaded and allied with Israel/Judah during the Iron Age (1200–586 BCE) based on standard operating political considerations devoid of any religious animosity or legacy of the Hyksos or the Exodus.

The most prominent example of an Egypt–Israel alliance occurred in 853 BCE at the Battle of Qarqar against the Assyrian ruler Shalmaneser III, as recorded in his Kurkh Monument. According to the Assyrian records, Egypt participated in a coalition against Assyria led by Ahab of Israel and Hadad-ezer of Damascus (Luckenbill 1926, §611). Besides this being the first mention of the Arabs in history and its demonstration of Israel's military prowess under Ahab, this ancient coalition of the willing included an Egyptian contingent. Egypt could read the handwriting on the wall. It understood that Assyria was an expansionist power. Its initial target was in northern Syria where

Thutmose I (1504–1492 BCE) and Thutmose III (1479–1425 BCE) once had ventured centuries earlier. Logically, one would expect Assyria then to turn south into Canaan where Seti, Ramses, and Merneptah had campaigned. Finally, one could anticipate that eventually Assyria would broach the Egyptian frontier as well.

In the immediate aftermath of Shalmaneser III, all was quiet on Egypt's eastern front. The situation changed in the eighth century BCE. Tiglath Pileser III marched to the Brook of Egypt in 734 BCE. Sargon II after the destruction of the northern kingdom of Israel defeated Egypt and captured Gaza, the traditional border between Egypt and Canaan (720 and 716 BCE). Sennacherib, Sargon's son and successor, defeated Egypt, which had come to the aid of Judah at Eltekeh in 701 BCE. Esarhaddon (681–669 BCE), Sennacherib's son and successor, returned to the Brook of Egypt in 679 BCE. Six years later, Taharqa, the Nubian Twenty-fifth Dynasty Pharaoh, sought to exploit what he saw as an opportunity to expand into the Levant. He initiated an action there against the Assyrians. The result may have been one of the worst defeats in Assyrian history.

That victory over Assyria soon led to Egypt being traumatized. In 671 BCE, it was Assyrian payback time. Esarhaddon invaded Egypt and sacked Memphis:

> *from Ishupri to Memphis, his royal city, – 15 days' march, (was) the ground (covered daily –, without cessation I slew multitudes of his* [Tirhakah's] *men, and I smote him five times with the point of my javelin, with wounds (from which there was no recovery. Memphis, his royal city, in half a day, with mines, tunnels, assaults, I besieged, I captured, I destroyed, I devastated, I burned with fire.* (Luckenbill 1926, §580)

Ashurbanipal (668–627 BCE), Esarhaddon's son and successor, invaded Egypt in 667/666 BCE. He returned in 663 BCE and sacked Thebes:

> *This city, the whole of it, I conquered it with the help of Ashur and Ishtar. Silver, gold, precious stones, all the wealth of the palace, rich cloth, precious linen, great horses, supervising men and women, two obelisks of splendid electrum, weighing 2500 talents, the doors of temples I tore from their bases and carried them off to Assyria. With this weighty booty I left Thebes. Against Egypt and Kush I have lifted my spear and shown my power. With full hands I have returned to Nineveh, in good health.* (Rassam cylinder, in Pritchard 1950, 294–295)

Egypt was invaded. Egypt was invaded on multiple occasions. Memphis was sacked. Thebes was sacked. Never before had such events occurred.

Egyptologists have noted the trauma caused by the Assyrian actions. On the impact of the sacking of Thebes, Nicolas Grimal writes:

> What then took place was an event that had been totally inconceivable for over 1500 years [meaning in the twenty-second century BCE long before the Hyksos] – Thebes was sacked by invaders, burnt, ravaged and all its temple treasures pillaged ...
>
> Time was also running out for the whole of Egyptian civilization now that the myth of the inviolability of pharaoh's sanctuaries had been destroyed by the barbarous forces of the East, who from then on struck terror into all the peoples, from Asia Minor to the banks of the Nile. (1992, 352)

On a similar line, Jan Assmann writes:

> For the first time in its long history, Thebes was conquered, plundered, and reduced to ashes. The shock must have been all the greater as the Kushite ruler Tantamani had set himself up even more decidedly than his predecessors as the envoy of Amun. (2003, 337)

Kim Ryholt echoes these words:

> (T)he looting of temples and the removal of deities during the periods of foreign invasion and occupations caused a severe trauma to the Egyptians, and the retrieval of exiled divine images is a well-attested topos in literature and propaganda during the Greco-Roman period. (2004a, 500–501)

So far it was Assyria who was the villain and not the Hyksos or Iron Age Judeans.

There still was no sign of the anti-Semitism that characterizes Manetho's writings. During the seventh century and beyond, these very Judeans whom Manetho identified as lepers whom Pharaoh should expel from the land were in fact welcomed in Egypt. Anti-Assyrian Judeans, quite possibly from the land of Benjamin, became part of the Egyptian military under the Psammettichus I (664–610 BCE). These Judeans participated in a campaign into Nubia in 592 BCE under the leadership of Psammettichus II (595–589 BCE). That campaign took them to Elephantine where they settled as a garrison force of the king. They even built a temple to Yahweh there.

Then the situation took a turn for the worse, first for Egypt, then for Judeans in Egypt, and finally for the Jews in Ptolemaic times when Manetho wrote. The abrupt ending of Egyptian independence with the conquest by the Persian Cambyses in 525 BCE went beyond even the Assyrian depredations. The Assyrian presence had been comparatively brief and had been countered with constant actions by the Nubian Twenty-fifth Dynasty. The Persian presence lasted for approximately two centuries. During that time, the Persians did establish garrisons in the land. Judeans who had served in the garrisons of Pharaoh now served in those of Persia at Elephantine. The Persia of Esther, Ezra, and Nehemiah was not the enemy of the Jews; Persia was the enemy to Egypt and that made the situation in Egypt precarious for the Judeans.

> Between 495 and 399 BCE there is evidence for a Jewish garrison with a full-size Temple [to Yahweh] right next to a shrine of [the Egyptian god] Khnum. (Porten 1996, 18)

In 410 BCE, the Egyptians destroyed that temple.

> [T]he colony disappeared from sight shortly thereafter as suddenly as it had disappeared. If left no traces in any transmitted historical texts. (Porten 1996, 18)

That action could be considered the opening salvo in the anti-Semitism in which Manetho was an eager and willing participant.

> We do not have any evidence of a religious conflict prior to the Persian conquest of Egypt ... Whatever term one chooses to designate the events in Elephantine, there can not be any doubt that the first time in history that an anti-Jewish outburst becomes evident is about 410 B.C.E. in the colony of Elephantine. (Schäfer 1997, 133, 135)

In the new world order, Egypt was no longer at the center of the universe. It was now located at the periphery. The world stretched from Elam to Ethiopia as the prophet Isaiah said (Isa 11:11).

> Egypt's unshakeable confidence in its own traditions was both its genius and its undoing. What had been the country's greatest strength in happier, more settled times became its fatal weakness in the face of unfamiliar forces ... Egypt had lost its preeminence and was now just another country ... (f)rightened and bewildered by the rapidly changing situation. (Wilkinson 2010, 439)

Cultures remember traumatic events in their history. Some memories are fleeting and do not outlast the generations that directly experienced them. Some are remembered for centuries and millennia like the destructions of the Jerusalem temples by Babylonia and Rome.

For ancient Egypt, first Assyria and then Persia were the villains. One question then is how did the Egyptians respond to this event?

> The Assyrian invasion and subsequent occupation of Egypt in the seventh century BC was a traumatic experience which gave rise to a rich literary tradition in Egypt. (Ryholt 2004a, 483)

We are a storytelling species. One of the ways we cope with trauma is at some point being able to talk about ... and write about it or create other works of art. The ancient Egyptians were no different. Some of the stories they told in the wake of the Assyrian and then Persian invasions were:

- Djoser and Imhotep versus an Assyrian sorceress.
- Inaros-Petuabastis Cycle – multiple stories about Inaros, the most popular hero in Egyptian literature during the Greco-Roman period and his battle against the Assyrians (Ryholt 2004a, 491–497).
- The Tale of Egyptians and Amazons.
- Ahiqar.

These stories are examples of what Egyptologist Thomas Schneider calls fuzzy history (2015). They include mainly royal historical figures from the time of the Assyrian and Persian invasions and earlier from the Old Kingdom, Middle Kingdom, and New Kingdom, non-historical figures, historical events, and mythical ones in a landscape far beyond that of the Nile Valley. According to Ryholt it was the destruction of Memphis and the large-scale plundering of the temples by the Assyrians that caused this time period to dominate the historical narratives in Greco-Roman Egypt (2009, 236). In particular, the invasions of Esarhaddon created a lasting impression

that endured for more than seven centuries (Ryholt 2004a, 499). Ryholt goes on to note the three distinctly traumatic periods in Egyptian history that underlay these stories: the Hyksos, the Amarna Age, and the Assyrians (2009, 237–238). Later, the Persians could be added to this list of traumas generating Egyptian writing. The *Demotic Chronicle*, in the guise of an historic chronicle of the fourth century BCE, was written in the Ptolemaic Period. It promised a savior to deliver Egypt from its Persian foreign conqueror and rule in accordance with traditional Egyptian values of *maat* (Johnson 1974, 5; 1983; 1984; Lloyd 1975, 105).

To be fair, one should note that Egyptians allied with Assyria as Psammetichus I did and could use stories to reflect well on his benefactor. Psammetichus I actually did reside in Assyria before being installed by the Assyrians as Pharaoh. Probably no future Pharaoh had ever traveled so far from Egypt has he had. He appreciated the Assyrian assistance in liberating the land form Kushite rule in the Twenty-fifth Dynasty and enabling him to start the Twenty-sixth (Dalley 2001, 157, 159–160).

The point in this study is not to detail or summarize these stories. Instead it is to note their existence and the presence of Assyria in them, the same Assyria Manetho mentioned in his account of the Hyksos and the Exodus. The change item was the addition of the Jews to the narrative by linking them to the Hyksos. In Assyrian times when the stories originated, the Judeans were allies of Egypt; in Persian times they became enemies; in Greek times, they became rivals. It should be noted that Herodotus, whom Manetho read, displays no knowledge of the Assyrians in Egypt. Lloyd comments that the 'glaring omission of the Assyrians from the narrative can only be explained as the product of Eg. nationalist propaganda' (1988b, 118). The Egyptian priests hid their traumas from Herodotus because that suited their agenda. Manetho's agenda was different.

Manetho's depiction of the Hyksos and the Jews needs to be put into its historical context. In the Middle Kingdom, *The Prophecy of Neferti* predicted that the current king, Amenemhet I, would be the savior who restored *maat* after the chaos of the First Intermediate Period caused by Asiatic foreigners. Manetho's story is in that tradition (Sørensen 1992, 167). Now he was calling for Ptolemy II, current king, to do the same. To be the savior of Egypt. Manetho did not originate the concept of the expulsion of the impure Jew; it was part of the anti-Semitic Greek culture in Alexandria under the Ptolemies (Yoyette 1963, 134–135). Panagiotis Kousoulis observes that the attributes of demons, foreigners, and animals overlap (2012, 132).

These impurities at the origin of the Jews were the same traits typically attributed by the Egyptians to foreigners in the Late Period when Persians ruled the land (Yoyette 1963, 141). These unclean foreigners were associated with a range of illnesses (Kousoulis 2012, 134). Seth and Apophis in the first millennium BCE were archetypal villains who represented rebels against the king and the Egyptian way of life. Little effort was required to interpret the Exodus through the lens of an anti-Egyptian action since it actually was one. The annual celebration of Passover undoubtedly served as a constant reminder of the anti-Egyptian event.

To compound the Jewish dilemma, the antipathy towards the Persians was easily transferred to the allies of the Persians. The multiple rebellions against the Persians by the Egyptians, usually repressed but sometimes successful, signifies a more than two-century antipathy towards them by the time Manetho wrote. In particular, the contrast in treatment at Elephantine of Jews and Egyptians by the Persians was a tinderbox that inevitably would explode. Yoyette concluded his article on the origin of anti-Semitism with the ironical observation that it began not with the stereotypical insidious merchants but because of their loyalty as soldiers to the Persians, an Aryan people (1963, 143).

Manetho's diatribe against the Hyksos expresses the concerns of his present and not the research of an historian. He lived in a time when Jews, Greeks, and Egyptians jostled for power within the confines of a single city, Alexandria. Those relationships are not part of the historical Exodus but they are part of the legacy of the historical Exodus, in how the event is remembered. Manetho, like Josephus centuries later and people millennia later, had an agenda in how he presented the story. He wrote to deliver a message and not to obtain a doctorate although he was influenced by the Greek historians such as Herodotus.

- He battled the Jews (in Alexandria) for power in the Ptolemaic present.
- He adopted the Eighteenth Dynasty antipathy to the Hyksos and not the Nineteenth Dynasty welcome of them.
- He falsely retrojected the Assyrian and Persian destructions on to the Hyksos.
- He falsely blamed the Hyksos who became the Jews for Egypt's decline.
- He falsely denigrated the Hyksos who became the Jews as an ignoble leprous people.
- He inverted the Exodus by making it a forced departure to cleanse the land of leprous people.
- He championed the cleansing of the land in his present as had been done in the past.
- He called for a renewal of Egypt's glory by purifying the land.
- He sought to ingratiate himself with the Greeks who similarly despised the Persians and the customs of the Jews.
- He defined the Hyksos for over two millennia. Until the age of archaeology.

Egyptological Hyksos

One implicit theme in many of the analyses of the Hyksos is the subject of race. As will be seen in the next chapter, Egyptians like Kamose and Hatshepsut, Eighteenth Dynasty rulers based in Thebes, referred to the Fifteenth Dynasty rulers based in the Delta as invading barbarians from beyond *maat* or Ra. Egyptologists have tended to identify with the civilized Egyptians of art, literature, and architecture as their cultural ancestors. Therefore, it is no surprise that they tended to adopt the Eighteenth Dynasty and Manethian view of the Hyksos rather than the Nineteenth Dynasty view.

This adoption was even more likely during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century times of European imperialism and rule over the Oriental other.

In the late twentieth century, the scholarship on the Hyksos changed. Already in the nineteenth century, archaeological discoveries of inscriptions from the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Dynasty period began to supplement the information available from Manetho. In addition, doubt was cast over whether Tanis, sought by Amelia Edwards, really had been the location of the Hyksos capital. She described the Hyksos as a race of foreign invaders of unknown nationality. '[T]hey were predatory tribes of Asiatic origin ... [T]hey descended on the land in vast hordes, slaying, ravaging, and confiscating all before them' (Edwards 1882c, 34). Textbooks on Egyptian history provide a window into the thinking of scholars at different intervals during the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. The authors of textbooks and histories of Egypt were leading figures in the field and had attained authoritative status. At least for an interval in time, they show what Egyptologists were thinking.

This survey of Egyptological portrayal of the Hyksos includes the same people in the review of the Egyptological treatment of the Exodus at the beginning of this book. If an author was part of collaborative book, then the individual from that collaboration who wrote about the Hyksos is used instead.

1905 *A History of Egypt: From the Earliest Kings to the XVIth Dynasty* by W. M. Flinders Petrie: he devotes a chapter to the Hyksos (233–247). He identifies them as foreign invaders (121). Prior to the Hyksos chapter, Petrie's frequent references to them concern chronology and artifact identification. He suggests a Syrian origin (231). When Petrie focuses on the Hyksos, he begins his chapter with a thank you to Josephus:

> Apion has conferred a great benefit on history, by stinging Josephus into framing a splendidly mistaken theory of the glory of the Jewish race in Egypt, which he elaborated with nationalist fervour, calling in the Hyksos to figure as Hebrews domineering over Egyptians. It is through this valuable error that what was known of these invaders, by the later Egyptians, has been preserved. The account is so important that it should be read in full, so far as the Hyksos period is concerned (233).

Petrie then quotes the Josephus passages on the Hyksos.

When Petrie offers his own historical narrative interpretation, it is difficult to determine where Manetho ends and Petrie begins.

> The country was disorganised, and incapable of resisting any active foe, when from the East there poured in a barbaric people, who settled, and seized on the government of the country, harrying and plundering, while the native rulers were at their mercy. After a century of this confusion they became more civilised, probably by the culture inherited from the Egyptian mothers of the second and third generation.
>
> Then they established a monarchy of their own in the Egyptian fashion, adopting the usages of the country, and keeping native administrators in their power to claim the allegiance of the people (235–236).

Putting the derogatory depiction aside, Petrie has presented some important concepts in understanding the Hyksos presence in Egypt. First, they acculturated, they lived as Egyptians. Second, they intermarried with Egyptians. Third, they ruled as Egyptians. If Petrie is correct, then how exactly, in the time of Ramses II, would you identify an assimilated Hyksos of mixed ancestry?

The rest of the chapter reviews the chronology, kings, and artifacts of the Hyksos as best they were understood in 1905. Petrie adds an intriguing reference to an item subsequent to the Hyksos rule – the 400-Year Stela (see Chapter 7).

> As this is the only monument dated with a fixed era in Egypt, it has naturally received much attention. The most reasonable view seems to be that this was a reckoning established by a Hyksos king, and used at Tanis continuously to the time of Ramessu II. (1905, 244)

The implication of Petrie's observation is that there was a continuous Hyksos presence or legacy through the reign of Ramses II. As to why this unique action in Egyptian history occurred, Petrie offers no thoughts. His main concern was determining an accurate chronology.

1912 *A History of Egypt, from the Earliest Times to the Persian Conquest* by James Henry Breasted: he devotes two chapters to the Hyksos: 'The fall of the Middle Kingdom. The Hyksos' (211–222) and 'The expulsion of the Hyksos and the triumph of Thebes' (223–229). In his introduction he labels them foreign usurpers and later calls them hated conquerors (17, 218). Then he credits them for teaching Egypt about aggressive war and for the military system which made the New Kingdom possible (17). As Breasted describes the arrival of the Hyksos:

> Without centralized resources or organization the hapless nation was an easy prey to foreign aggression. About 1675 B.C., before the end of the Thirteenth Dynasty, there poured into the Delta from Asia a possibly Semitic invasion such as that, which in prehistoric times, had stamped the language with its unmistakable form; and again in our own era, under the influence of Islam, overwhelmed the land. These invaders, now generally called the Hyksos, after the designation applied to them by Josephus (quoting Manetho), themselves left so few monuments in Egypt that even their nationality is still the subject of much difference of opinion. (214)

Breasted places great stock in the descriptions of the Hyksos by the Eighteenth Dynasty rulers, the *Quarrel Story of Apophis and Seqenenre*, and Manetho:

> If we eliminate the absurd reference to the Assyrians and the preposterous number of the garrison at Avaris, the tale may be credited as in general a probable narrative. The further account of the Hyksos in the same essay shows clearly that the late tradition was at a loss to identify the Hyksos as to nationality and origin. (217)

He accepts that Hyksos barbarities did occur and that temples were destroyed (222). Nonetheless, he avers that 'Whatever they may have suffered, the Egyptians owed an incalculable debt to their conquerors' (222).

Based on the locations of various scarabs and monuments attributed to the Hyksos, Breasted posits a Hyksos empire from the First Cataract to the Euphrates (218) which would have been larger than any Egyptian empire so far. He expects that there would have to be some trace of the Hyksos Empire in the archaeological record:

> It would therefore be strange if we could not discern in the records of the subsequent Egyptian wars in Asia some evidence of the surviving wreck of the once great Hyksos empire which the Pharaohs demolished. (219)

He designates Thutmose III as the final victor over the Hyksos in his great victory at Megiddo against a coalition led by the ruler of Kadesh, a Hyksos remnant (220).

Breasted adds an Exodus twist to his narrative. Given the existence of Hyksos scarabs with a Jacob-based name, perhaps it is not impossible that some chief of the Jacob-tribes of Israel for a time gained the leadership in this obscure age (220). Therefore, the naïve assumption of Josephus, who identifies the Hyksos with the Hebrews, may thus contain a kernel of truth, however accidental (220).

1923 *The Cambridge Ancient History* with contributions by Stanley A. Cook on the Semites with a brief mention of the Hyksos (233) and H. R. Hall on The Middle Kingdom and the Hyksos conquest with a section on the Hyksos (310–315): in an earlier section, Cook refers to the Hyksos invasion (150, 170). Cook locates the Hyksos origin in Syria. He attributes the Egyptian campaigns into Syria after the Hyksos had been expelled as a sign that the mysterious invaders were from there (232). He makes a backhanded reference to Manetho and others as well:

> the statement (Num. xiii, 22), that Hebron was built seven years before Zoan (Tanis) in Egypt testifies to some synchronism – not necessarily trustworthy – of Egyptian and Palestinian affairs. This association recalls the zeal of the rival historiographers of the Ptolemaic and subsequent periods who vehemently and rather maliciously expatiated upon early relations between Jews and Egyptians at the time of the Hyksos kings and the Exodus. (157)

Cook anticipates Redford on the Hyksos and the Exodus by positing:

> [it] is then possible that the descent of Jacob or Israel into Egypt, 215 years later, represents the biblical writers' idea of the Hyksos invasion; in any case, the Hyksos period made a great impression upon late Alexandrian writers, and Jewish historians may not unnaturally have striven to co-ordinate Jewish and Egyptian tradition. All this, however, is entirely conjectural. (163–164)

So the idea of the Jacob story containing an explanation for the Hyksos appearance in Egypt and without an invasion was known nearly a century ago. The thinking was that perhaps the Jacob people accompanied the Hyksos in and/or out of Egypt, not that the Jacob people were part of the Hyksos themselves. As Cook notes, any such historical reconstruction would be speculative.

Hall's opening salvo against the Hyksos is quite blunt:

> The Hyksos conquest was the greatest national disaster that ever befell the Egyptians until the Assyrian conquest a thousand years later. Its memory was never forgotten, and it left on the minds of the Egyptians an enduring hatred of the Asiatics, which transformed them, under the kings of the XVIIIth Dynasty, into the vengeful conquerors of Asia. Never before had Egyptian territory been held for centuries by foreigners. And although the rulers of these foreigners dressed themselves in the titles and authority of native pharaohs, they were never accepted as rightful kings. (310–311)

He also locates them as from north Syria (311). Hall ignores the fact the Hyksos were accepted as rightful kings by the Nineteenth Dynasty. Later in the Iron Age, Egypt at times had peaceful relationships with the Israelite and Judahite Asiatics. Instead, he adheres to the Eighteenth Dynasty and Manetho hostility towards them.

1942 *When Egypt Ruled the East* by George Steindorff and Keith C. Seele: their chapter on 'the Hyksos' (24–29) is followed by the chapter 'The war of liberation' (30–33). They identify the Hyksos as Semitic and not Hurrian or Aryan (24). They suggest that the recently discovered execration texts may relate to the period of instability and movement that led to the Hyksos infiltration or armed invasion (25). Regardless of their mode of entry, these Hyksos acculturated themselves but left no literary evidence for their occupation and practically no monuments as all (25). After some nondescript paragraphs, they reveal their values in writing about the Seventeenth Dynasty kings: these rulers grew increasingly restive under their ignominious status as tributaries to the hated Asiatic usurpers (27). Nothing is said of how Egyptians in the Delta felt. The final two pages of this brief chapter are devoted to Seqenenre: first to the story about him from the time of Merneptah and then to the discovery of the king's body in 1881 (28–29).

1951 *The Burden of Egypt* by John A. Wilson: the revised title of *The Culture of Ancient Egypt* (1951): his chapter on the Second Intermediate Period is entitled 'The great humiliation' (154–165). Wilson contrasts the Asiatics of the First Intermediate Period with the Second Intermediate Period. The Asiatics of the First Intermediate Period consisted of a trickle of Bedouins and poorly-equipped easterners. These people were grateful for the opportunity to settle on fertile soil and were quickly assimilated into Egyptian culture (160).

The Hyksos were conquerors and dominators and thereby broke down the old Egyptian feeling of security, isolation, and special election (111). He defines them as the incoming of a mongrel horde of restless peoples of northern and eastern affinities and invaders (135). They invaded in force with goal of rule. They were not respectful of Egyptian culture. The Hyksos showed no tendency to reach out hungrily for Egyptian civilization (161). They were arrogant. Wilson does not know exactly where the Hyksos originated but he pictures them as covering a wide swath of land in the ancient Near East before the invasion of Egypt.

Wilson asks an intriguing question about the Hyksos. He is baffled about the absence of contemporary written records about them. He ponders:

> If this conquest were as critical to the course of Egyptian culture as we claim, how could Egyptian writings have blanketed it with silence? (158)

His answer draws on another discipline for an answer:

> In that psychology, there was no impulse for writing down the record of a great national humiliation; that record would come when and as the Hyksos were successfully expelled. (159)

That explanation is inadequate. We have already seen that the Egyptians were quite capable of writing Demotic stories about traumatic times even before the trauma ended. Certainly the Judeans were quite capable of writing during the Babylonian captivity.

Wilson realizes there is a problem with his explanation. He observes that the Nineteenth Dynasty made the Hyksos capital their capital. They had then to choose between ignoring that fact or in making a virtue of it. They chose the latter by reconciling themselves to the Hyksos past. They did so by celebrating the anniversary of the rule of Seth who also was recognized as a god of the Asiatics. By this bland device, the later Egyptians recognized the founding of Tanis as an important city by the Hyksos, without giving the Hyksos themselves any credit for the act (159). Then Wilson presents a shortened version of the Josephus account and concludes there is still a good tradition of conquering easterners of unknown races, building walled camps from which to rule Egypt, settling themselves in opposition to Egyptian religion, and ultimately being forced to retire to Asia (159–160). He ends this section with a war of liberation ending this great humiliation:

> At last Egypt was free of the arrogant invader. Might she not resume the old easygoing life? (165)

Wilson has accepted the view of the Eighteenth Dynasty and Manetho and is dismissive of the alternate view of the Nineteenth Dynasty.

Wilson has inadvertently raised an important question about trauma. The issue is how a people respond to a traumatic experience in history. As Wilson describes it, for the first time Egypt was ruled by foreigners. He uses terms like dominated, impious, and unsympathetic barbarians (162).

> That happy sense of security from attack which had been the cornerstone of the Egyptian system had been fractured; Egypt was not so isolated that she could afford to be tolerant and carefree ... The present distresses struck a vital blow into the native self-confidence, the faith that the gods had given Egypt – and Egypt alone – the good life unto eternity. (162)

These exact same thoughts would be expressed by various Egyptologists about the Assyrian invasion of Egypt (see above). Eventually, the Hyksos and Assyrians would

be conflated in the Egyptian cultural memory and contribute to the development of anti-Semitism and the writing of Manetho.

1961 *Egypt of the Pharaohs: An Introduction* by Sir Alan Gardiner: the Hyksos appear in the chapter entitled 'From collapse to recovery' (147–176). In this chapter, Gardiner quotes Josephus quoting Manetho (155–156). He then raises the question of how much of the story told by Josephus can be accepted as historical? (157). Much of the analysis concerns names and artifacts with very little commentary on the purported rule of the Hyksos themselves. Gardiner rejects the notion of the Hyksos as a race and as invaders. He sees the Hyksos movement into Egypt from Palestine as one of refuge and infiltration by people seeking a more peaceful and fertile environment (156–157).

Gardiner is somewhat dismissive of Manetho's account. It contains truth and falsity in almost equal measure. One should expect to find such distortion in the established conventions of Egyptian historical writing. Its goal is the glorification of the king responsible for the salvation of the country. Hence the painting in exaggeratedly lurid colors of the disruption to *maat* which the hero kings will restore (170). The very fact that multiple rulers repeatedly castigate the Hyksos whom they then defeat casts suspicion and suggests a process of falsification:

> It is not to be believed that a mighty host of Asiatic invaders descended upon the Delta like a whirlwind and, occupying Memphis, inflicted upon the natives every kind of cruelty. (170)

Amazingly, Gardiner goes so far as to hold the Egyptian king responsible for the devastation which occurred. The archaeological evidence:

> even suggests that the damage done by the strong man who arose in Thebes [Kamose] was greater than had ever been inflicted by the Hyksos immigrants. (171)

Gardiner has turned the traditional image of the Hyksos topsy-turvy. He even calls them immigrants and not invaders.

1973 Egypt: from the death of Ammenemes III to Seqenenre II, in *The Cambridge Ancient History* by William C. Hayes: the invasion model has been dropped. The Hyksos still dominate but their entrance into the land is not violent. The sections are entitled 'The Hyksos infiltration and the founding of the Fifteenth Dynasty' (54–60) and 'The Hyksos Khyan and his successors' (60–64).

> If, as seems likely, similar groups of these outlanders were to be found in [other] well-to-to households throughout the whole of Egypt, the Asiatic inhabitants of the country at this period must have been many times more numerous than has generally been supposed. Whether or not this largely slave population could have played a part in hastening, or in paving the way for, the impending Hyksos domination is difficult to say; but through intermarriage and the like it presumably would have had the effect of lessening appreciably the resistance of Egypt's population as a whole to Asiatic overlordship. (49)

> It is now generally recognized that the Hyksos domination of Egypt was not the outcome of a sudden invasion of the country by the armies of a single Asiatic nation. It would seem, rather, to have resulted from the infiltration into the Delta during the declining years of the Middle Kingdom of groups of several different western Asiatic peoples, chiefly Semites, forced southward, perhaps, by widespread disturbances in the lands to the north and east of Egypt. (54)

The Manetho description has not been totally abandoned.

> That the Hyksos rise to power met with some resistance on the part of the Egyptians goes without saying and in the course of the resulting conflict it was inevitable that towns should be burned, temples damaged, and segments of the native population subjected to hardships and cruelties. (55)

It actually does not go without saying. While it is a reasonable conjecture, it is not proof. Hayes then adds an important twist on the traditional interpretation.

> Once the foreigners were in control they undoubtedly ruled the country with a firm hand, imposing heavy taxes upon the people of the occupied areas and collecting tribute from the vassal kingdoms to the south. Their administration, in which Egyptian officials apparently participated, seems, however, not to have been unduly harsh or oppressive and was probably accepted with complacency and even actively supported by many of their subjects. (55)

Egypt was land of human sacrifice, ritual executions, and capital punishment (see Chapter 6). Before condemning the Hyksos for their purportedly violent ways, one should keep in mind the violence perpetrated by the Egyptian state against Egyptians.

Hayes finds positive actions undertaken by the Hyksos.

> However we may evaluate them, they were evidently not the ruthless barbarians conjured up by the Theban propagandists of the early New Kingdom [Eighteenth Dynasty] and the Egyptian writers of later periods [like Manetho]. The Hyksos kings of the Fifteenth Dynasty sponsored the construction of temple buildings and the production of statues, reliefs, scarabs, and other works of art and craftsmanship; and, curiously enough, some of our best surviving copies of famous Egyptian literary and technical works date from the time of these kings. (55)

Here he, too, has turned the image of the Hyksos upside down. Instead of being a destroyer of Egyptian temples, they are builders of them. Instead of being barbarians, they embrace the Egyptian culture and seemingly become well-versed in Egyptian literature and stories.

Hayes's Hyksos are a catalyst for an improved Egypt.

> For the Egyptians, in return, the Hyksos did two things. They rid them once and for all of the old feeling of self-sufficiency and false security, born of a misplaced confidence in Egypt's unassailable superiority over, and aloofness from, the other nations of the world; and, because they themselves were Asiatics with a kingdom which appears to have embraced northern Sinai and much of Palestine, they brought Egypt into more intimate

> and continuous contact with the peoples and cultures of western Asia than ever before in her history. (56)

That intimate and continuous contact is a polite way of referring to the Egyptian imperialism which was to follow the expulsion of the Hyksos making Canaan occupied territory at the time of the Exodus.

> [Although it was] presented as an unmitigated disaster by native historians of later times, the Hyksos domination appears actually to have provided the Egyptians with both the incentive and the means towards 'world' expansion and so laid the foundations and, to a great extent, determined the character of the New Kingdom, or, as it is often called, 'the Empire'. (57)

From this point forward, Hayes recounts the activities of the Hyksos kings as he would the Egyptian kings in a traditional political/military sequence. He does mention that:

> It is possible that this daughter of a Hyksos king [Apophis] was actually married to a contemporary prince of Thebes and was thus an ancestress of the Theban pharaohs of the early New Kingdom. (61)

According to Hayes, this marriage indicates that the Thebans and Apophis had good relations regardless of what later New Kingdom sources would have one believe (61–62).

1983 Old Kingdom, Middle Kingdom and Second Intermediate Period *c*. 2286–1552 BC by Barry J. Kemp in *Ancient Egypt: A Social History* by B. G. Trigger, B. J. Kemp, D. O'Connor, and A. B. Lloyd: Kemp discounts the efforts of the Hyksos to portray themselves as Egyptians: For the foreignness of the Hyksos was evidently something which left a deep impression on some Egyptians (156).

1988 *A History of Ancient Egypt* by Nicolas Grimal (1992 English translation): Grimal notes that, in the century and a half prior to the appearance of the Hyksos rulers, he has detected no sign of an Egyptian collapse. The implication is that one should not confuse a dynastic crisis with a societal crisis (171). Nonetheless, Grimal titles the chapter covering Hyksos rule in Egypt as 'The invasion' (182–195). The chapter details the Hyksos seizure of Avaris (185) and the Hyksos rule in Egypt. Grimal also is aware that the traditional image of the Hyksos invasion may need change.

> The final stage of the Hyksos rise to power may have been violent, but their gradual infiltration seems to have been much more widely accepted by the Egyptian population at the time than the later nationalistic texts of the New Kingdom [Eighteenth Dynasty] suggest ... The Hyksos presence in Egypt evidently was less damaging than later Egyptian sources [like Manetho!] tend to suggest. (186)

Perhaps surprisingly, Hyksos and Egyptians lived together peacefully. Grimal cites example of the Rhind Mathematical Papyrus from the reign of Apophis to illustrate

evidence of the Hyksos respect for Egyptian culture. [The Rhind Mathematical Papyrus is dated year 33 of the reign of Apophis and was copied from an earlier version dated to the Twelfth Dynasty (see Robins and Shute 1987, 11).] The Hyksos acculturated and, in return, made Egypt less insular. The Hyksos rulers created a legacy from which New Kingdom Pharaohs would eventually draw inspiration (186). He also raises the possibility of a marriage tie between the Hyksos ruler Apophis and the Thebans through his daughter, making her an ancestor of the Eighteenth Dynasty kings. Again, he notes, 'This is clearly a long way from the mutual hatred described in later texts' (189).

1989 *Ancient Egypt: Anatomy of a Civilization* by Barry J. Kemp: the reporting here is very low key almost to the point of being non-existent. Kempt reports that the Hyksos kings were included in the Turin Canon list of kings. He identifies them as being Palestinian and illegitimate kings who were included for completeness purposes. Yes, they were an aberration, foreigners who disrupted the ideal image of the past. But they were real so they had to be named in the king list shorn of the royal titulary (23, 25–26). Kemp's other mention of the Hyksos was a brief note of the archaeological work which had occurred since 1966 at their capital at Tell el-Dab'a (166). It should be noted the book is not a history book.

2000 *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt*: The Second Intermediate Period (*c*. 1650–1550 BC) by Janine Bourriau (185–217): the chapter encompasses the entire period and is not limited to the Hyksos. Ten pages are devoted to the site of Avaris and the archaeological excavations of the Hyksos capital. She makes a point of noting that the word Hyksos is not in and of itself a pejorative term. The Hyksos were not Hurrian or Hittite (188). The Asiatic presence at Tell el-Dab'a goes back to the Thirteenth Dynasty while the settlement itself originated even earlier in First Intermediate times (188). The settlement expanded in the late Twelfth and early Thirteenth Dynasties including with many Asiatics. The material remains clearly separate into Egyptian and non-Egyptian items but change occurred. This leads to the question of how and why the cultural mixing happened. One way was through marriages between elite males and local females (189). She ventures that the Seth cult at Avaris evolved from a blending of a pre-existing cult at Heliopolis with a cult of the North Syrian weather god Baal Zephon, which was introduced by the Asiatics (190).

Based on the archaeological discoveries, one can conclude that the longer the Hyksos ruled Egypt from Avaris, the more Egyptian they became. They created a very impressive fortified settlement in part based on the Canaanite Middle Bronze II material culture. But there also were signs of a conscious revival of Egyptian scribal traditions (194). The copying of Egyptian documents such as in the Rhind Mathematical Papyrus from year 33 in the reign of Apophis was a task that could have been undertaken only by a scribe trained to the highest level of his craft and with access to a specialized archive of mathematical texts such as could hardly have

existed outside the Temple of Ptah in Memphis (194). As for evidence of destruction and looting by the Hyksos it is rare (195). We are far removed from the description of the Hyksos by Manetho.

2010 *The Rise and Fall of Ancient Egypt* by Toby Wilkinson: by the time of this history, this author has had the opportunity to absorb even more of the new information revealed about the Hyksos through the archaeological excavations to be addressed in the next section. He uses the Egyptian name Hutwaret and not Avaris or the modern Tell el-Dab'a to identify the capital. He describes its use as a base for an internal Egyptian revolt against the Thirteenth Dynasty from the northeast Delta stronghold. The weakened central government was in no position to reassert its authority. A few decades later famine and plague wreaked havoc on the upstart settlement. That created a power vacuum which means someone was going to fill it. Wilkinson describes that moment.

> Weakened by disease, the whole of Lower Egypt became easy prey to an outside aggressor. From over the border, a force of well-equipped invaders, armed with the latest military technology – horse-drawn chariots – stormed Egypt, taking beleaguered Hutwaret and sweeping on southward to conquer the ancient capital of Memphis. The Hyksos had arrived. (167)

It is interesting to observe how the Hyksos were able to effect this military march. Presumably the well-equipped invaders marched along the Way of Horus, the main thoroughfare connecting Egypt to Syria. They did so centuries before the vaunted reverse trip by Thutmose III when he conquered Megiddo. Egyptologists are impressed with the infrastructure the New Kingdom Pharaohs established for their campaigns in Canaan and Syria leaving from Egypt but express no appreciation or awareness of how the Hyksos managed this supposed invasion of Egypt prior to the development of that infrastructure.

Wilkinson identifies the Hyksos as part of a coastal elite from Lebanon (167). That location implies the Hyksos were well familiar with the Egyptians forays into Lebanon for the prized cedar wood for their coffins. One would think these two peoples were very familiar with each other prior to the invasion. Interestingly, Wilkinson comments that the northeast Delta prospered as never before during the century of Hyksos rule and that the kingdom was flourishing, unlike what was left of the Egyptian kingdom (168, 170). So successful were they that there came a time *c.* 1610 BCE, when the Hyksos king Khyan sought to abandon the name Hyksos, meaning rulers of foreign land, for an Egyptian pedigree. He would rule as a king of Egypt with full Egyptian royal titulary (171). A successor, Apophis, went so far as to take the Horus-based name pacifier of the Two Lands, beloved of Seth, Lord of Sumenu located near Thebes (172). But Wilkinson's loyalty is with the Egyptians and he never quite accepts the Hyksos as Egyptians just as the Thebans did not either. When the initial Theban quest for national power fails, Wilkinson bewails

that 'Never before in the fourteen hundred years since the foundation of the state had Egypt's fortunes sunk to such a low ebb' (177). For Egypt to survive and prosper it would require further toil, sacrifice, and bloodshed – and an unshakeable resolve to prevail (178). This Englishman echoes Winston Churchill against Nazi Germany in what it would take Egypt to prevail over the Hyksos. He entitles the next chapter 'Order reimposed' (183–201).

***

Two additional Egyptologists deserve to be mentioned, despite their not writing a history of Egypt in the sense of the writers quoted above: Donald B. Redford and Jan Assmann. Redford has written extensively about the Exodus (and the Hyksos) from the beginning of his academic career, generally in a derogatory manner belittling the event's historicity (1963; 1967a; 1967b; 1970b; 1986; 1992a). Space does not permit a review of Redford's animus towards the Exodus, a marked contrast to the view of Amelia Edwards at the beginning of this study. His view may be summarized in these two citations 19 years apart about the Hyksos and the Exodus:

> There is only one chain of historical events that can accommodate this late tradition [of the Exodus story], and that is the Hyksos descent and occupation of Egypt. The memory of this major event in the history of the Levant survived not only in Egyptian sources. It would be strange indeed if the West Semitic speaking population of Palestine, whence the invaders had come in M[iddle]B[ronze] IIB [around 1650 BCE], had not also preserved in their folk memory this great moment of (for them) glory. And in fact it is in the Exodus account that we ae confronted with the 'Canaanite' version of the event. (1992a, 412)

> In summary, the movement of the West Semitic-speaking peoples from the Levantine coast into Egypt in the Middle Bronze Age and their subsequent expulsions, events that scholars have long dubbed the hyksos phenomenon, lived on in the collective consciousness of Canaanite communities. (2011, 333)

So, the Exodus is a garbled version of the history of these vile Hyksos Asiatics.

Unlike Redford, Assmann is quite open about his interest in the Exodus.

> It is in a rather personal attempt to come to terms with, similar to Freud's, that I embark on the writing of this study about Moses the Egyptian. The present text reflects my situation as a German Egyptologist writing fifty years after the catastrophe which Freud saw approaching, knowing the full extent of the genocide which was still unthinkable in Freud's time, and having turned to ancient Egypt thirty-five years ago with questions that are all too easily forgotten as soon as one enters an academic discipline ... In this respect, I hope to contribute to a historical analysis of anti-Semitism. (1997, 6)

> It probably goes without saying that a German of my generation would take special interest in the problem of anti-Semitism, and as an Egyptologist, I have long been interested in investigating the extent to which the memory of ancient Egypt seeped into the foundations of the self-image of the West and its cultural memory. (2010, 117)

One may reasonably conclude that Assmann is a post-Holocaust German seeking to understand the origins of anti-Semitism in history in an educated and civilized culture: it cannot be denied that a significant number of the elements in western anti-Semitism can only be explained as the survival of an Egyptian semiology that dates back to the age of the Persians and the Ptolemies (2003, 403).

Assmann suggests that the Amarna trauma was the motive for recasting memories of the Hyksos period in the form of a story of religious conflict (2003, 228; 2010, 63). 'My thesis is that the Hyksos tradition received its semantic coloring and its character as a predominantly religious conflict only after the Amarna age' (1997, 41). He perceives the Amarna period as one which disrupted *maat* (2010, 64). Assmann writes, the Amarna reminiscences were projected onto the Hyksos and conflated with their tradition in historiography and romance (1995, 373 and see 1997, 28). That process apparently began with the *Quarrel Story* (1995, 373; see Chapter 7).

Assmann states, 'By far the most explicit and apparently most bluntly anti-Jewish version of the story is to be found in Manetho' (1995, 367). While he is exactly right as to how Egypt perceived the Hyksos and the Amarna Age a millennia after they had occurred and subsequent to the invasions by Assyria, Persia, and Macedonia, it does not follow that the same attitudes were held at the time the *Quarrel Story* was composed and the Sea Peoples were the primary enemy of Egypt.

Assmann himself was fully aware that the perception of the Hyksos at the time of the writing of the *Quarrel Story* was a positive one.

> But there was certainly no religious conflict between Hyksos and the Egyptians. The ... remaining monuments show them [the Hyksos] in conformity with the religious obligations of traditional Egyptian pharaoh, whose role they assumed in the same way as did later foreign rulers of Egypt such as Persians, the Macedonians, and the Romans. (1997, 24)

Assmann speculates that '[p]erhaps they [the Nineteenth Dynasty kings] were partly Semitic themselves, descendants of the Hyksos tribes' (2008, 40). But despite all these observations, he writes that the Ramesside Apophis story with the one Hyksos god set the stage for the memory of the Hyksos to take on the character of a religious conflict without it being one at the time of the origin of the story (1997, 28; 2010, 63). After all, political welfare rested/rests on the myth of the triumph over Apophis (Assmann 1992, 149; 1997, 179). If this observation is correct, then perhaps the point of the *Quarrel Story of Apophis and Seqenenre* is to extol the king in the present of its composition as the hero who defeats chaos and restores *maat* by triumphing over a monolatric wilderness-deity-worshiping latter-day Hyksos leader in the thirteenth century.

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This overview of leading Egyptian histories reveals a gradual shift in the portrayal of the Hyksos in Egyptian histories. The more the facts on the ground are allowed

to speak for themselves, the weaker the Manetho/Eighteenth Dynasty image of the Hyksos becomes and the more the Nineteenth Dynasty image can be seen. Here is one case where archaeology is changing the understanding of the Hyksos. Also, there is a need to understand historical Seqenenre (Chapter 4) so one can understand the story about him after the Exodus (Chapter 7).

Archaeological Hyksos

The excavations at Tell el-Dab'a (Avaris) led by Manfred Bietak beginning in the 1960s continue to this very day. They provide a new view of the Hyksos at variance with the one promulgated by Manetho. As the information accumulates, a plethora of conferences have been held and books were published covering all aspects of the Hyksos life (Van Seters 1966; Redford 1970; 1992b; Bietak 1996; 2011; 2015; 2018; Oren 1997; Ryholt 1997; Marée 2010; Bader 2013; Mourad 2015; Candelora 2017; 2018; 2019; Geobey 2017). As a result of these excavations and publications, it is possible to integrate the Hyksos people into Egyptian culture and history. Previously, Egyptologists had tended to embrace the Eighteenth Dynasty and Manetho view of the Hyksos as alien invaders from whom the Egyptians were heroically liberated in a battle for their freedom. However, there already was a suspicion that the Hyksos were not the cruel barbarians depicted by Manetho. Rather they were welcomed in the Lower Egypt and became the victims of a bad press in Thebes (Posener 1957, 162–163) as they often are in Egyptology to this very day.

As a result of the facts on the ground from archaeology, several issues that had been debated or were unknown have now been resolved as indicated by some of the standard Egyptian histories just reviewed.

1. The site of Tell el-Dab'a is the site of Avaris, the capital city of both the Hyksos and the Nineteenth Dynasty. The possible location at Tanis has been rendered moot.
2. The material culture at the site reflects a Canaanite Middle Bronze Age II settlement. The origin of these residents should be traced to the Levant and not to Hurrian Indo-Europeans.
3. The settlement itself was initiated by Egyptians in the Twelfth Dynasty and not by the later Semitic and Hyksos residents. It was a planned community part of a colonization effort in the eastern Delta. Something similar was happening in Lower Nubia as well (Flammini 2008, 59–60). Could that approach ever be extended into Canaan?
4. The Hyksos were literate.

These discoveries led to a re-evaluation of both the Semites and Hyksos in Egyptian history. The process of digesting the information from the archaeological investigations is ongoing. Some preliminary conclusions regarding the Hyksos and Semitic presence are:

1. The city was established as a trading depot between Egypt and the Levant following the Asiatic assistance in securing the establishment of the Twelfth Dynasty. The Semitic residents arrived from multiple locations over time as the settlement grew.
2. The city became a melting pot of Egyptians, Semites, Nubians, Cypriots, Minoans and people of mixed background with a commercial and military focus.
3. Semite warriors participated in an internal political conflict during the early part of the Thirteenth Dynasty. Gradually, the Memphite-based Thirteenth-Dynasty Pharaohs lost control of the city to its Semitic elite during a time of political fragmentation and economic crisis.
4. Eventually that elite became the Fifteenth Dynasty of the Hyksos, the name by which these people called themselves in Egypt adopting a well-established Egyptian term for foreign rulers in Nubia and Asia while the Egyptians called these rulers 'Asiatics'.
5. One likely location of origin for these rulers of foreign lands was Retenu, possibly in eastern Lebanon. The term appears in the *Story of Sinuhe* and the Hyksos ruler Apophis is identified as being from there in the Second Stela of Kamose. A Gaza origin also has its champions.
6. The Egyptian military in particular became a hybrid entity of multiple ethnicities under strong Hyksos influence even after the Hyksos no longer ruled Egypt. Its focal point was the chariot and the related infrastructure necessary to support the horse and charioteer. Egypt's institution of greatest mixed multitude was the military.
7. There is no indication that the people in Avaris or Lower Egypt sought to be liberated from the supposedly oppressive Hyksos rule. On the hybrid Egyptian-Middle Bronze Age Canaanite rift with the Upper Egyptian culture, Stephen Harvey postulates,

> [I]t is questionable how wide this rift would have appeared to the inhabitants of Lower Egypt, where the Asiatic influx gradually developed over the course of centuries. It is difficult to reconcile the archaeological evidence for gradual change and synthesis with the tradition from later Eighteenth Dynasty sources and Manetho of a sudden assault on Egypt by an unfamiliar foreign power. (1998, 54–55)

Some issues remain open including:

1. The exact extent of Hyksos rule in Egypt and at all points in time – it may be that the Hyksos directly ruled Lower Egypt while Upper Egypt functioned more like a vassal with its own government.
2. The exact time of the Hyksos rule including a possible overlap with the Thirteenth Dynasty – the records are not quite as precise as one might like and many names appear and vanish in an instant.
3. The exact arrival of the Semites who became the Hyksos – it is possible that the longstanding emigration of Canaanites into Egypt was supplemented by a new

wave of Semites that migrated east and west from Syria called the Amorites. Their appearance might have been the catalyst for Egyptian defensive actions to build a wall just as it did in Mesopotamia (see Chapter 6).

For a history of Egypt, the resolution of these issues is important. These preliminary conclusions and possibly more to come permit a more extensive analysis of the Hyksos-Exodus connection. More is known now about who the Hyksos were and the extensive presence of Semites throughout the land of Egypt beyond even the lands the Hyksos ruled.

Part of the challenge in understanding the Hyksos in Egyptian history is the need to abandon erroneous paradigms. Manetho, the Eighteenth Dynasty (see next chapter), and Egyptologists have drawn sharp lines in the sand separating Hyksos and the Egyptians. Centuries of Semites in the Delta led to an intermixing of cultures. Each learned the ways of the other especially through intermarriage. Just as distinguishing an Egyptian from a Nubian became difficult in the south, so too did identifying a Semite from an Egyptian in the Delta. The marriage between Joseph and the priestess of Heliopolis in the biblical story is suggestive of that mixing. Both sides of the Exodus in the Nineteenth Dynasty lived in a hybrid world of merged peoples.

To summarize the status of Hyksos scholarship today, here is the abstract of Danielle Candelora, whom I invited to speak to New York Chapter of the American Research Center in Egypt on 18 February 2021.

> The Hyksos are often set up as the boogeymen of ancient Egypt – after a violent invasion, these foreign despots ruled the North of Egypt with an iron first, while a native Egyptian family in the South fought for Egypt's liberation. However, archaeological investigation and the reanalysis of ancient texts shows that this narrative is simply political rhetoric created by the Egyptian kings to legitimize their own rule. In reality, the Hyksos were creatively strategic about the display of various aspects of their identities. To become fully Egyptian was never the goal; instead they actively maintained and advertised elements of their origins in order to support their ties to kinship and trade networks in West Asia. These kings were cosmopolitan diplomats who corresponded with much of the Near East and Eastern Mediterranean, and whose capital city was a titan of trade. They adopted and adapted elements of traditional Egyptian kingship, but negotiated these traditions with a West Asian spin, creating a rule uniquely suited to the eastern Delta. Further investigation of the social memory of these kings has even demonstrated that they were considered legitimate kings and the major power in Second Intermediate Period Egypt. In fact, the Hyksos and the West Asian immigrants of the period had a massive impact on Egyptian society, culture, and conceptions of kingship. The archetype of New Kingdom Egypt, considered the apex of ancient Egyptian society, would not have been possible without the influence of these West Asian immigrants or the rule of the Hyksos. (2021)

Manetho would scarcely recognize these people. Nor would biblical scholars recognize that Israel's origins were not as a tiny obscure people with limited awareness of the entire ancient Near East.

Chapter 4

The Hyksos: the triumph and defeat of Apophis

The Hyksos-Moses led departure from Egypt in the time of Ramses II was part of a series of Hyksos-Pharaoh encounters beginning in the sixteenth century BCE. Initially as rulers of Egypt, the Hyksos were pharaohs themselves in what became the Fifteenth Dynasty. The Egyptians who opposed them tended to be from Thebes in the Seventeenth and early Eighteenth Dynasties. Their portrayal of the Hyksos has been the one that has dominated Egyptology. Typically Egyptologists do not accept the Hyksos kings as kings of Egypt even though they are part of dynastic king lists. Typically, Egyptologists regard the Lower Kingdom as occupied territory requiring liberation from the invader Hyksos. Typically too, Egyptologists accept the Eighteenth Dynasty propaganda as reflecting the views of the Egyptian people and not just that of the Theban rulers.

The negative view of the Hyksos in the royal records changed in the Nineteenth Dynasty when a non-Hyksos dynasty ruled from the former Hyksos capital at Avaris in the Delta. In some ways, the conflict between Ramses and Moses was a battle between two claimants to the Hyksos legacy. In this chapter, the Seventeenth-and-Eighteenth-Dynasty Hyksos encounters will be covered in chronological order before turning to the Nineteenth Dynasty and Ramses II, pharaoh of the Exodus.

Seqenenre (1550s BCE)

Seqenenre was the Seventeenth Dynasty Theban king who took the first initiative to end Hyksos rule during the mid-sixteenth century. He will figure prominently in a story told after the Exodus (see Chapter 7). That story draws on what happened to him in history and how he was remembered as part of the Egyptian cultural heritage. Therefore, it is critical to understand the history before turning to the story.

There are no monuments or texts from Seqenenre's time documenting his actions against the Hyksos. However, there is no doubt that his exploits were unsuccessful. The proof appeared when his mummy, discovered at Deir el-Bahrî in 1881, was finally exposed. The unrolling occurred 5 years later on 9 June 1886 after a suitable repository had been located for all the mummies.

The stark reality of the physical skull of the deceased Pharaoh, with its multiple holes and signs of head trauma, was a shock. According to the report of this event, the anguish of the dying man was visible on his fiercely contracted facial features.

Gaston Maspero's immediate reaction from seeing the wounds was that Seqenenre had been hit on the jaw, fell dizzyingly, and was struck again on the ground. Now Maspero knew that not only had Seqenenre fought the Hyksos but that he had died on the battlefield (1886, 332). Obviously Seqenenre's life was not one of his being the Pharaoh who smites the enemy.

Egyptologists were then obligated to devise a suitable explanation for the demise of this king (Ten Berge and Van de Goot 2002; Shaw 2009; Feinman 2015a, 96–98). Maspero had led the effort to uncover the mummy. His version of the discovery of the cache of mummies was more in the style of Indiana Jones than a scientific excavation one thinks of today. He told the story of discovery, the public announcement, and the photography of the excavation covering 1871–1881 followed by the examination (Maspero 1889, 511–528). The body also was examined by Daniel Fouquet as reported in the same publication (1889, 776–778).

Maspero thought Seqenenre had died in battle surrounded by Hyksos. He claimed that the Egyptians had recovered and then hastily embalmed the partially decomposed body before bringing it to the family tomb in Thebes (1906, 241–242). Maspero was aware of a previously discovered truncated story traditionally entitled the *Quarrel Story of Apophis and Seqenenre* (see Chapter 7) so his effort to explain the skull was done with the story in mind.

In his review of royal mummies in 1912, G. Elliot Smith identified two conflicting positions on Seqenenre's death and embalming. Either both occurred at the field of battle (Maspero) or death occurred at the field of battle with embalming following the transport to Thebes for mummification (Fouquet). After reviewing the five wounds to the skull, Smith rendered his verdict:

> It is clear that Saqnourî met his death in an attack by at least two and probably more persons armed with at least two (probably three or more) implements ... I think the balance of evidence is in favour of the view that he was attacked while lying down (possibly asleep) either on the ground or on a low bed ... [Possibly] he may have been felled by one blow ... and then received the other four blows when lying prone upon the ground in an unconscious state. (2000, 6)

These gruesome details undercut the traditional image of the ever-victorious mighty Pharaoh.

H. E. Winlock continued this discussion between the competing positions of Maspero and Smith versus Fouquet and by Petrie who also commented on the battlefield death (1899, 8).

> The preparation of the corpse for burial was hasty, the process of embalming most summary, and no attempt was made to lay the body out in orthodox position. It was left contorted as it lay in its death agony. (Winlock 1924, 249)

He then suggested a third possibility: assassination (Winlock 1924, 250). The presumed assassination of Amenemhet I (1985–1956 BCE) as recounted from the *Instruction of King*

Amenemhet I for his Son Sesostris I is perhaps the most famous literary example of an assassination in Egyptian history. The assassination of Ramses III (1184–1153 BCE) occurred subsequent to the writing of the *Quarrel Story*. Winlock stated the manner in which Seqenenre died made him 'one of the romantic figures of Egyptian history', perhaps alluding to the *Quarrel Story* that perpetuated his memory (1924, 249). More recently Aurélie Paulet starkly asked: 'Le souverain est-il mort au combat, suite à une embuscade ou a-t-il été assassiné pendant son sommeil?' (2005–2007, 120). Contrary to Winlock's protestations, Seqenenre was not a romantic figure in the cultural memory of Egypt. Seqenenre was the loser who had been defeated by the Hyksos Apophis. Texts should be interpreted based on that basis. Egyptologists have been led astray on the death of Seqenenre just as they have been led astray on the Hyksos by Manetho.

In the twenty-first century, the light began to shine on the truth of Seqenenre's death. It was attributed to a ceremonial battlefield execution by Gary Shaw (2009). For him, what was noteworthy regarding the mummy was the failure to comply with standard operating procedures of the mummification process. Shaw specifically noted that the brain had not been removed and the body had not been treated with natron as required by the custom. He then proceeded to provide alternative explanations for this lapse in procedure:

1. The mummification occurred hastily on the battlefield and the body was then brought to Thebes for burial, or
2. The corpse decayed on the journey from the battlefield to Thebes where it was then mummified (2009, 161–162).

Shaw rejected the battlefield death theory. Based on the admittedly limited archaeological evidence on Egyptian warriors' deaths, he dismissed the reality of a battlefield death when the injuries were strictly limited to the skull. X-rays taken in the 1960s confirmed that the only injuries to Seqenenre were the five blows to various parts of the skull. Battlefield death in ancient Egypt was more likely to occur due to arrows which would pierce the torso rather than by the blows to the skull evidenced in Seqenenre. Rocks rather than axes or javelins were more likely to be the battlefield cause of head wounds. Given the absence of body armor at this time and the importance of defending the king, who more likely was at the rear of the battleground rather than leading the charge on the frontlines, Shaw concluded that such 'precisely focused attacks on the king's head from a variety of assailants would seem like a bizarre effort amid the surrounding chaos of the battlefield' (2009, 162–163, 169).

Similarly Shaw rejected the assassination theory. There were no wounds at all to the body. Drawing on the analysis of Manfred Bietak and Eugen Strouhal in 1974 *(Die Todesumstände des Pharaos Seqenenre 17. Dynastie*), Shaw agreed that the holes to the skull matched the weapons known to have been in use at the time. This comparison revealed that a combination of Hyksos and Egyptian weapons caused the damage to the head. The poor-quality mummification treatment seemed less likely if death was

at the palace versus a battlefield death removed from the traditional implements and materials necessary for a quality job. Shaw concluded that 'Clearly those that performed the embalming did not have access to the proper materials necessary' (2009, 174). Therefore, Seqenenre must have died away from the palace and while campaigning against the Hyksos. The slain body, which shows no sign of carrion bird activity, was then recovered from the battlefield and hastily brought home for a makeshift burial (2009, 175–176).

The interpretation Shaw offers is that the defeated Egyptian warrior was ceremonially executed on the battlefield by the victorious Hyksos in the presence of the Egyptian army. If correct, it would have been a truly ignominious and culturally abhorrent demise in a Pharaoh-smites-the-enemy, especially the subhuman Asiatic enemy, society (see Chapter 6). In this regard, Shaw has proposed a potential topsy-turvy event: the enemy smites Pharaoh. He suggests 'that Egyptian kings personally executed kings after a military victory' either on the battlefield, after the battle, or in a temple (2009, 173–174). He overlooks the fact that the Hyksos Apophis enemy was a king of Egypt himself.

Twelve years after Shaw's journal article, the results of CT scans of Seqenenre's mummy substantiate his hypothesis. According to a study by Sahar Saleem and Zahi Hawass, Seqenenre died in his 40s with his hands tied behind his back as a prisoner. In addition to the known wounds, others to the skull were found. In the mummification process the embalmers used layers of material to conceal them. This suggests the mummification occurred not on the battlefield but in a mummification facility, possibly Deir el-Ballas, the military settlement north of Thebes that Seqenenre had constructed as the base for his campaign against the Hyksos. Presumably the battle occurred somewhere in-between Hyksos Avaris and Deir el-Ballas. The embalmers had to work with a damaged body that had experienced some decomposition. The quite detailed examination covered every wound, suggested weaponry, suggested the positions of the wielders of the weapons, and the number of people involved in the ceremonial execution (Saleem and Hawass 2021; *Note:* In their article Saleem and Hawass refer to the Hyksos 'occupation' of Egypt).

The subject of the royal execution of rebels, of enemies, will be addressed as part of the analysis of Passover (see Chapter 6). Seqenenre's skull lends credence to the view that Pharaoh really did ceremonially execute those who challenged his rule. In this case, though, it is the Hyksos Apophis who is acting as the true Pharaoh. Besides any images or texts, there is now skeletal evidence of what 'Pharaoh smites the enemy' actually entailed. To realize that one has to do what Egyptologists in general have not done so far: recognize that Apophis was king of Egypt.

Apophis treated Seqenenre as the rebel who deserved to be executed on the battlefield where he was captured fighting against the true Pharaoh. More than the Egyptian titulary or literacy, the Apophis execution of Seqenenre is the most dramatic example of Hyksos acculturation. Apophis killed like a Pharaoh because he was one. Seqenenre is the one and only Egyptian king to have died on the field of battle. He

did not die from assassination. He did not die in combat. He died in an execution ceremony after being captured unharmed. Truly his legacy in the cultural memory of Egypt was that of a humiliated loser against the Hyksos.

There are some cross-cultural examples for battlefield death by royalty. Ur-Nammu, the Third Dynasty of Ur, may have died in battle against the Gutians *c*. 2030 BCE, but the account is more about the netherworld, in which he now found himself, than the battle (Kramer 1963, 68, 130–131). In 705 BCE, Sargon II died in battle and suffered the humiliating fate of not having his body recovered. Sennacherib had to determine the hidden reasons of his father's death to know what his sins were (Tadmor 1958, 97). Such an unusual occurrence had repercussions. 'The circumstances of Sargon's death haunted the son. It was most unusual for an Assyrian king to die in battle and it was inevitably interpreted by the Assyrians as a bad omen, particularly because the royal corpse could not be buried at home' (Grayson 1991, 118). The Assyrians were capable of holding the deceased king responsible for his own demise for violating the cosmic order thereby obligating the successor to right the wrong (Tadmor *et al.* 1989). On the other hand, the unexpected death of this ruler of the world led Isaiah of Judah to taunt his fate (Gallagher 1999, 86–90; Younger 2002, 319). The passage Isa. 14:4b–21 depicts the fall from power to the depths of Sheol of the world ruler who previously had sought to ascend to the heavens.

The Bible weighs in on this issue with other examples as well. King Josiah of Judah dies at Megiddo after meeting Pharaoh Neco in circumstances that remain unclear. His body is brought back by chariot to the capital Jerusalem where he is buried (II Kings 23:29–30). That event is thought to have led to considerable narrative writing (Finkelstein and Silberman 2002). Joshua hanged the kings of five cities after triumphing in battle against them (Josh. 10:22–27), a very public display which might qualify as a ritual execution. In perhaps the closest parallel to the proposed ritual execution of Seqenenre, the Philistines nailed the body of the already-dead Saul to the wall at Beth-Shan, the former Egyptian military post in Canaan. According to the narrative, Saul had died at his own hand when the battle turned against Israel. The next day, the men of Jabesh-Gilead rescued his body and gave the dead king a proper burial (I Sam. 31:8–13). Saul's death became an issue for David and part of his story of legitimacy as a successor (II Sam. 2). The death of king in battle or following a battle was of considerable importance to Assyria and Israel.

Undoubtedly the most famous example of slain royalty in battle was Achilles' dispatch of Hector (*Iliad*, Book 24; Goliath was not royal). The treatment of Hector before the walls was the ultimate degradation of him much as Seqenenre's public execution on the battlefield would have been in Egypt. Even if Saul and Hector did not die exactly as portrayed, their stories demonstrate that storytellers knew how to grab the attention of the audience. Sargon's battlefield death was more devastating since his body was never recovered. Still, Seqenenre's battlefield execution would have been traumatic for Thebes. It was a humiliating legacy that the Thebans had to endure. In the 'Pharaoh smites the enemy' society, Hyksos Apophis had triumphed

as the true Horus and Seqenenre had been treated as the rebel representative of chaos. That was the pivotal memory with which Theban Egypt had to live. Seqenenre would never be the hero of an ancient Egyptian story. His legacy endured because of the contrast between his humiliating execution by the Hyksos and the heroics of his successors, Kamose and Ahmose. If there was a story to be told of the triumph over the Hyksos, then Ahmose would be the hero.

Kamose (1555–1550 BCE)

Kamose fared better than Seqenenre but he did not succeed in removing Apophis from rule (for Kamose see Maspero 1909; Weill, 1913, 536–544; Habachi 1972; James 1973, 289–293; Smith and Smith 1976; Ritner and Tobin 2003; Simpson 2003; Spalinger 2010; and any history of Egypt). So far there is nothing in the archaeological record to suggest the people ruled by the Hyksos needed or sought liberation. One is under no obligation to accept the propaganda of the Eighteenth Dynasty or Manetho as reflecting the true facts on the ground. One observes here how the language deployed by the Egyptologist presupposes a conclusion. Kamose, like Narmer, may not been attempting to liberate anyone in the Delta. Instead they sought to unify the country under their own rule.

Unlike either his predecessor Seqenenre or his successor Ahmose, Kamose left his own extant inscriptions of his Hyksos encounters. These efforts marked the beginning of development of various literary forms to be used to record the battles of the king. The scribes experimented with different genres and techniques until a definite mold had been established. Once that had been accomplished, it became a standard and difficult to deviate from. Still, one should consider the intention to present a factual report on a specific military venture despite the verbiage (Spalinger 1982, ix, 5).

Three Kamose inscriptions have been found. The Carnarvon Tablet, No. 1 was discovered in 1908 by Howard Carter and published in 1912. Already in 1909, Maspero had deemed it a semi-historical tale and did not seem to place much credence in it (1909, 146). The account needed to be defended as being an historical document written shortly after the event it describes and not being a tale. It appeared to be a conventional triumphal proclamation where the king restored a ruined country adrift in disorder until the evil foreigners were driven out (Weill 1913, 540). In fact, due to its similarity to the *Tale of Apepy and Seqenenre*, as the *Quarrel Story* was then called, one should reconsider the old view that that story itself was a copy of an earlier historical document and simply a popular romance, as discussed by Percy Newberry (1913, 117). Another possibility was that an earlier inscription had been revised. This is in reference to the literary introduction of the first ten lines perhaps being pasted into the first person war narrative (Spalinger 2010, 117, 120). The debate frequently involves the *Quarrel Story of Apophis and Seqenenre* as well. The two accounts of confrontations seem connected in some way even if Egyptologists cannot agree how.

In 1916 when Alan Gardiner commented on it he began his article with a bold proclamation:

> No single inscription has been discovered in the course of the past ten years more important than the writing-board recording a defeat of the Hyksos by the Theban king Kamōse ... (1916, 95)

Over a century later, Wilkinson echoed those words by declaring it still to be 'our most important single source for this crucial turning point in ancient Egyptian history' (2020, 399). Roland Enmarch exclaimed that all the Kamose texts are among the most historically important to have survived (2013, 253). Since this inscription is on a writing-board, it is a copy perhaps of something that was inscribed on a stela or the base of a statue. The first critical point is the recognition that the tablet dates to within 50 years of the purported events.

The Tablet opens in Year 3 of the reign of Kamose. The king held a council of war prior to the initiation of the campaign against Apophis. He also obtained the blessing of Amun, a New Kingdom prerequisite for launching an attack. Kamose justified his actions due to the predicament Egypt was in.

> His Majesty spoke in his palace to the council of officials which was in his following: To what effect do I perceive it, my might, while a ruler is in Avaris [Apophis] and another in Kush, I sitting joined with an Asiatic and a Nubian [Negro or Ethiopian, varies by translation], each man having his (own) portion of this Egypt, sharing the land with me. (Ritner and Tobin 2003, 346)

Gardiner added a note on the effort to determine exactly where the Hyksos capital of Avaris was located. In so doing, he refers to the *Story of Seqeneré and Apophis*, the inscription of Hatshepsut at *Speos Artemidos*, and Manetho (1916, 99). Over a century later, these are still the primary textual sources of information about the location of Avaris.

The reply of his councilors paints a different picture than had the Kamose text. Here in the first surviving *Königsnovelle* or royal commemorative narrative, the advice from the royal councilors is weak: Kamose is pugnacious and pugilistic whereas they are pusillanimous (Enmarch 2013, 256, 263).

> We are content with our (part of) Egypt (Black Land). Elephantine is firmly in our control, and the middle section is with us as far as Cusae. The finest of the fields are ploughed for us, and our cattle graze in the Delta (papyrus marshes). Emmer is sent for our swine. Our cattle are not taken away, and [...] are not pillaged from the (encampments?). He possesses the land of the Asiatics, (but) we possess Egypt (Black Land). Should one who acts against us come, then we shall act against him. (Ritner and Tobin 2003, 346)

Gardiner translated the name of the country as 'Black Land' since obviously Eighteenth Dynasty Egyptians did not use the Greek-based term 'Egypt'. The same applies to 'papyrus marshes' versus 'Delta'. His translations are truer to the meaning of the

original and are reflective of the physical aspect of the language in contrast to the proper noun usage today.

The councilors' description here of an almost idyllic life is a far cry from the carnage of Manetho. Little would seem to be in a state of deteriorated disrepair requiring restoration to maintain *maat*. The land where the Hyksos live is even called the land of the Asiatics separate from Egypt. The councilors seem to accept that the Hyksos really are the rulers of a foreign land. It is as if Upper Egypt is the real Egypt and that Delta land of mixed multitude is not. It is somewhat similar to way the way southern Senators in the United States do not consider New York to be real America either.

Kamose rejects such thinking. He is the king of all Egypt and the text is about his heroics. He attacks when the day dawns. He overthrows Apophis. He destroys his wall. He kills his people. He seizes his belongings. He is victorious. Apophis is not a Pharaoh. It is a good day.

The Carnarvon Tablet heralds a double first. It represents a new form of writing about military ventures beyond the routine upriver proclamations of the Middle Kingdom kings. It also represented the beginning in Egyptology, during the early decades of the twentieth century, of an understanding of what the kings were doing. The introduction to this campaign does not deal with the military and is not in the first person of the king. Instead, the author, although officially a scribe, has placed his cast of characters in a story-like setting. The author contrasts the passivity of the dialog of the officials with the sharp and warlike replies of the decisive king. The author has created a unique artificial quarrel for the purpose of explaining the king's war policy and to vindicate his position. If this opening scene was an addition, it may be considered as the result of a royal command to exalt the first successful attack against the Hyksos who is, of course, a vile Asiatic (Spalinger 1982, 35–36, 38, 124–125). The opening parallels *The Prophecy of Neferti* about a savior king from the South (Spalinger 2010, 127). This setting and message can be contrasted with the opening of the exchange between Apophis and Seqenenre written after the Exodus (see Chapter 7).

Weill links these two 'historical novels'. He posits that the Kamose story derives from a time of peace after the victory he has won against the Hyksos. Weill situates the Kamose story as subsequent to Ahmose's triumph just as the story of Apophis and Seqenenre was. Weill suggests that the memory of that triumph remained alive in Thebes and in Theban literature. He is open to the idea that a story included the expulsion of the Hyksos from Avaris. He deems the two stories of Avaris and Apophis with Kamose and Seqenenre as of comparable historicity which should be judged the same way (Weill 1913, 543–544). Weill's approach has not been followed by Egyptologists in general. However it raises the possibility that the story of Apophis's defeat of Seqenenre contrasted with Ahmose's triumph over Apophis. That possibility is exactly what happened when Merneptah commissioned the story for his triumphal proclamation of the restoration of order when Kamose became chapter 2

to Seqenenre's chapter 1 – start with the disaster and end the heroic restoration of order in Ahmose, chapter 3.

Another view is that the Kamose text actually originated in the time of Kamose. It is conceivable that the powerful and flowing narrative in the first person is the result of the king himself being the author. Exact times and places are omitted. The account is personal, fresh, and lively. Official speech had been liberated and invigorated (Smith and Smith 1976, 75). The account expresses the emotions of the king, his understanding of his role as king, and his responsibility to defeat the hated enemy. It bears witness to a skilled writer capable of using multiple literary techniques to deliver his message. The verbal tense system is not that of Classical Middle Egyptian. It is possible Kamose's treasurer Neshi composed the original account under the king's instructions (Spalinger 1982, 88, 194–195, 198–199; 2010, 129–130). The account represents something new in Egyptian royal writings.

One wonders if this literary form was borrowed from the Hyksos. The Egyptians were quite willing to incorporate Hyksos weaponry into its own forces. The Pharaoh in the chariot would become a defining symbol of the king in the New Kingdom. The Hyksos glyptic tradition was full of graphic scenes carved on cylinder seals in the Syro-Mesopotamian tradition. They provide a potential context for the transfer of this approach to the large-scale narrative images and texts of the Egyptian warrior kings (Candelora 2017, 213). There is nothing particularly unusual about the concept of the Egyptians learning and absorbing both the Hyksos weapons and expressions of military victory. The attention on the issue of Hyksos acculturation minimizes the extent of Egyptian Canaanization.

The Second Stela is a more recent discovery from 1954, at Karnak. It was carved from a reused block of Senwosret I (1956–1911 BCE) and had been used as a foundation for a statue of Ramses II, perhaps a sign that it was important to him. This shows the stela probably had remained visible and legible in the roughly three centuries since Kamose. Since it commences in mid-speech, presumably there is a completely missing stela with which this one was paired. The Second Stela was separate from the First Stela (Enmarch 2013, 254–255). Egyptologists debate the connection between the inscriptions.

Here Kamose taunts Apophis. He belittles Apophis by calling him a 'chieftain' and not a king. He dares him. He threatens him. He mocks him. He challenges the besieged Apophis to leave the city and fight him in the open *mano-a-mano* (Enmarch 2013, 259–260). War can be portrayed as a duel, a personal conflict between the respective leaders (Spalinger 2005, 3; Zangani 2019, 412). Kamose knew that Seqenenre had been ritually executed on the battlefield so the taunt contains added poignancy. According to this text, Kamose had backed Apophis into his walled city of Avaris. The situation there for Apophis was dire. The women were in panic. Kamose's fleet was hemming Apophis in. Soon the allies of the Hyksos king in Retenu would have their palaces burned, a possible indicator of where the Egyptians thought the Hyksos originated (Zangani 2019, 412). Kamose's actions against the Hyksos more resemble the actions Manetho ascribes to the Hyksos against the Egyptians than vice versa.

One intriguing claim with Exodus connotations occurs in a no-birth assertion. Kamose claims that the woman of Avaris did not conceive under the threat of this advancing army. The same motif of barrenness is used in the Middle Kingdom *Admonitions of Ipuwer*:

> Lo, Hapy inundates and none plow for him,
> All say, 'We don't know what has happened in the land.'
> Lo, women are barren, none conceive,
> Khnum does not fashion because of the land.
> (Lichtheim 1975, 151)

The flood occurs but nothing is produced. The god who creates fashions nothing. In between, the women do not conceive. Kamose may be alluding to the chaos and breakdown in society now applied to the city of Avaris. In Ex. 1:15–22, the Egyptian woman are not barren but are not 'vigorous' like the Hebrew (Hyksos) women and have difficulty delivering. One should not take any of these examples as physically true but recognize that texts are delivering messages symbolically through pregnancy.

Another revealing claim by Kamose is to have cut down the orchards. This action is far more significant than it might appear at first glance. Orchards are a long-term capital investment. Burned crops can return the next year, chopped down trees take years to be restored. The rules of war restricted such actions.

> And what man is there that has planted a vineyard and has not enjoyed its fruit? Let him go back to his house, lest he die in the battle and another man enjoy its fruit. (Deut. 20:6)

> When you besiege a city for a long time, making war against it in order to take it, you shall not destroy its trees by wielding an axe against them; for you may eat of them, but you shall not cut them down. Are the trees in the field men that they should be besieged by you? Only the trees which you know are not trees for food you may destroy and cut down that you may build siegeworks against the city that makes war with you, until it falls. (Deut. 20:19–20)

> and you shall conquer every fortified city, and every choice city, and shall fell every good tree, and stop up all springs of water, and ruin every good piece of land with stones. (II Kings 3:19)

Perhaps the most revelatory text of Egyptian–Levantine relations in the Old Kingdom comes from Weni, a government official under four kings of the Sixth Dynasty (Eyre 1994; Richards 2002; Kanawāti 2009; de Miroschedji 2012). The text was first published in 1869 and has been a source for Old Kingdom Egyptologists since then. Weni describes six campaigns he undertook on behalf of the king into what became Canaan, with the exact battle locations still a mystery. He makes a point of noting the destruction of its strongholds, figs, and vines (Lichtheim 1975, 20). Kamose like Weni operated under non-biblical rules: destroying orchards is a way of 'decivilizing' the enemy and forcing him to forage and gather like an animal.

One revealing geopolitical fact is revealed. Apparently Apophis was in contact with Kush. That means he was sending messages south and receiving replies not along the river but through desert routes. Kamose captures one of the messengers. The intent was to synchronize a two-front attack on Egypt with Kush advancing north and Apophis pushing south. Kush had done so shortly earlier, around 1575–1550 BCE, to Elkab. The Egyptians counter-attacked and the invading force from Punt, Wawat (Lower Nubia), and the Medjay (Nubia) had been defeated and burnt by fire by the vulture-goddess Nekhbet (Davies 2003a; 2003b).

The third Kamose source consists of two fragments from a stela at Karnak discovered in 1932 and 1935. One possibility is that the Carnarvon Tablet is the beginning of that now fragmented first stela (Enmarch 2013, 255). In the stela, Kamose identifies himself as the 'king within Thebes' and not as the 'Lord of the Two Lands' (Enmarch 2013, 258). Evidently, the land is not yet unified.

These Kamose texts represent a change in royal inscriptions for Egypt. The language is more colloquial. They contain the most detailed account and highly painted picture of a Pharaoh's return from war. The actual letter captured from the Hyksos messenger to Nubia may have been incorporated into the text. Possibly it was in the form of a standard diplomatic letter (Zangani 2019, 413) a rare survival from the dawn of the Late Bronze Age. Perhaps since Kamose is writing at the onset of the Eighteenth Dynasty, traditional norms have not been developed. One should note that while the texts express nationalistic values, there is no religious component to the conflict with the Hyksos as one will find in subsequent Hyksos-related texts. No Thebes versus Avaris rivalry is present either. Kamose is portrayed as the virile warrior who vanquishes the Asiatic foe. His nameless-titleless councilors are mere background for his decisiveness and prowess. Yet despite all this vim and vigor, Kamose ruled only for a few years, probably died in battle and was buried in a makeshift coffin (Schneider 2010a, 409). Only then did Upper Egypt's savior appear on the throne.

Ahmose (1550–1525 BCE)

> The Pharaoh Ahmose (ca. 1550–1525 B.C.) holds a special place in Egyptian history as the ruler who decisively defeated the Hyksos. (Harvey 2001, 52)

Harvey begins his article on Ahmose at Abydos, where he excavated, with this line. He is exactly right. Ahmose was the hero who defeated the Hyksos. He is not simply known that way to modern Egyptologists but to ancient Egyptians as well. He is the hero. He is the opposite of Seqenenre. He goes beyond Kamose. He is the one about whom stories should be told. In fact, there was a story told about him: the *Triumph Story of Ahmose over Apophis* is misnamed in scholarship as the *Quarrel Story of Apophis and Seqenenre* (see Chapter 7).

Harvey's excavations, beginning in the 1990s, have added to our understanding of the last Pharaoh to build a pyramid (1998). The complex remained a functioning

cultic site for over 250 years, at least until the time of Merneptah. A miracle was said to have occurred there in the time of Ramses II (Legrain 1916). He had a festival there to the deified Ahmose (O'Connor 2011, 108). The complex is located at Abydos south of the main cultic cemetery. It was a testament to the enduring appeal of Osiris. The new cult which had developed during the First Intermediate Period (see Chapter 2) had found a home in Abydos where the first kings had been buried. The Middle Kingdom rulers fostered the popular cult. Processions and festivals occurred at Abydos for Osiris that drew national attention (O'Connor 2011, 33–34, 43). One of the old royal tombs (Djer, thirtieth century BCE) became repurposed as the tomb of Osiris for reasons unknown (Leahy 1975, 54–57).

Senwosret I had built a temple there and the Osiris story was performed after his death (Chapter 2). Senwosret III had taken a personal interest in the cult. He built a major complex near the tomb of Osiris (O'Connor 2011, 29, 96–100). It had a huge subterranean tomb worthy of a pyramid superstructure but without one (Wegner 1995, 62, 70–71). He began the tradition of separate royal and mortuary temples (Leahy 1975, 59). This Twelfth Dynasty involvement carried forth into the Thirteenth (Leahy 1975). With Ahmose, a new chapter was added to the Egyptian worship of Osiris. His complex revealed his innovation by drawing on Memphite, Theban, and Abydene motifs and elements from the Old Kingdom and the Middle Kingdom. Harvey postulates Ahmose initiated construction following his triumph over the Hyksos (1998, 10). Amenhotep I (1525–1504 BCE) completed his venerated father's cult shrine.

What Harvey discovered was not the big object that wows the public but the little things that excite the scholars (1994a; 1994b; 1998, 223–372; 2001, 53; 2004, 4). He found fragments, flakes from a larger narrative. They had vivid colors that portrayed Ahmose in battle against the Asiatics, against the Hyksos. Such scenes of horses and chariots are the earliest known depiction from Egypt and push back by centuries the evidence for this style of fighting by Pharaoh. Even the name Apophis has been found on these fragments although without the royal cartouche. The development of complex battle scenes portraying action over time represents a change from single-scene displays. Everything adds to the luster of the heroic warrior victor. In the cultural memory of Egypt Ahmose was the winner who had defeated the Hyksos Apophis. Texts should be interpreted based on that historical reality.

The details of his Hyksos confrontation are best known from the non-royal Ahmose. For purposes here, those details of the successful military campaign against Apophis are less important than a seemingly unrelated text known as *The Tempest Stela* (Foster 1996; Foster and Ritner 1996; Weiner and Allen 1998; Schnieder 2010; Ritner and Moeller 2014a; 2014b; Feinman 2015b; Moeller 2018). This list of references is not an exhaustive one. It reflects on ongoing interest in the stela. The significance of it crosses academic boundaries.

1. If the Stela refers to the Thera volcano, then its date has definite implications for Egyptian chronology … provided the volcanic explosion can be dated.

2. If the Stela refers to the Thera volcano, then its date has possible implications for the Exodus as expressed by Goedicke (see below).
3. If the Stela has nothing to do with the Thera volcano, then it still is important for the actions the new king Ahmose claimed to have undertaken at the onset of his reign, a reign that is defined by his victory over the Hyksos.
4. Whether the Stela refers to the Thera volcano or a local phenomenon, it may have implications for the presence of Baal, the Canaanite storm god, in the Egyptian culture.
5. If there was no storm or rain at all, then the credibility of the Stela is suspect and one wonders if it was simply a metaphorical expression of a new king restoring *maat* without any historical or natural event underlying it.

Given that Ahmose finished the job initiated by Seqenenre and carried forward by Kamose, it is difficult to believe that the Stela is simply a propaganda puff piece with no specific contextual significance.

French archaeologists discovered fragments of the Tempest Stela at the Third Pylon of the Karnak Temple at Thebes between 1947 and 1951. The reconstructed text was published in 1967 by Claude Vandersleyen, who was given access to the photos and records of Pierre Lacau from that excavation. The translation was subsequently revised after the discovery of two more fragments (Vandersleyen 1967; 1968; Davis 1990, 232). Ellen Davis raised the issue of the connection between the Tempest Stela and the Thera explosion. Karen Foster learned of this query and posed the question to her colleague, Egyptologist Robert Ritner. He thought such a connection was possible and that the translation deserved a second look.

Ritner provided his own translation in an article co-authored with Foster.

> (8) Then the gods [caused] the sky to come in a tempest of r[ain], with darkness in the western region and the sky being (9) unleashed without [cessation, louder than] the cries of the masses, more powerful than..., [while the rain raged (?)] on the mountains louder than the noise of the (10) cataract which is at Elephantine. Every house, every quarter that they reached [...] (11) floating on the water like skiffs of papyrus opposite the royal residence for a period of [...] days, (12) while a torch could not be lit in the Two Lands. (Foster and Ritner 1996, 11)

They wrote:

> It follows that a volcanic event of Thera's magnitude should figure in Egyptian and Mesopotamian records. Study of the Tambura [1815], Krakatoa [1883], and later Thera observations shows that we should not expect to find texts describing the actual eruption, but rather mention of one or more of the most spectacular volcanic aftereffects: daytime darkness, thunderous noise, atmospheric disturbances, and vividly colored skies, especially at sunset over a period of several years. (Foster and Ritner 1996, 4)

To them, the text described a far-reaching cataclysm not confined to Thebes, where the stela was found. For Ritner, the Tempest Stela is without parallel within Egyptian

inscriptions because the destructive effects expressed extend to the entirety of the country (Ritner and Moeller 2014b, 1).

According to the Tempest Stela, Ahmose actions to restore the cosmic order included replacing sacred items, re-enclosing sanctuaries, and re-erecting fallen statues and offering tables. These actions were physically reflective of a repair and restoration mission following an earthquake (Foster and Ritner 1996, 5–7). These scholars were aware that the Thera explosion was normally dated to roughly the 1620s BCE decades prior to the reign of Ahmose. They chose to interpret the imagery literally as an eyewitness account of contemporaneous phenomena that could only be explained by Thera. Indeed, Foster ventured that the Tempest Stela 'may very well stand as a unique eyewitness account of the Thera eruption' (1996, 9–10).

In reaction, Malcolm Weiner and James Allen vigorously opposed this interpretation. In their opening paragraph, they wrote: '[w]e believe that the purported connection is not supported by the evidence' (1998, 1). They wrote the description of the storm is 'consisted with the nature of monsoon-generated Nile floods, and characteristic of a genre of texts describing the restoration of order by rulers' (1998, 1). The ancient Egyptians never knew about the Indian Ocean monsoons that powered the inundation in far off distant lands. In cosmic terms, two events in nature were battling to explain events in history: Ahmose's actions due to a volcanic explosion and stronger monsoons due to higher temperatures at the equatorial Intertropical Convergence Zone (ITCZ).

According to their interpretation, the Tempest Stela suggests that Ahmose had not initially been crowned at Thebes. Therefore, one of his official first tasks in Year 1 as king was to visit Karnak, where his coronation would be confirmed by Amun-Re (Weiner and Allen 1998, 7, 17). A textual lacuna in the stela possibly referred to a procession involving the image of Amun-Re, which would have been part of this confirmation process (Weiner and Allen 1998, 7–8). Additional deities may also have been involved, which certainly would have been appropriate given that they were witnessing the self-conscious birth of a new dynasty, a rare event in Egyptian history. Certainly, one of the primary duties of the new king would have been to restore to their rightful state the temples of Amun, which had decayed during the Hyksos era. In the mind of the Egyptians, the catastrophe of the tempest evidently was seen as a manifestation of Amun's desire that Ahmose return to Thebes and of the gods' demands that he turn his attention to the state of their temples (Weiner and Allen 1998, 18).

There is a political component to the text. After all, Ahmose was in the midst of a tempest of his own in his war against Apophis. Allen recognized that this visible expression of divine activity did not impute powerlessness to the Egyptian deity, but was a tangible expression of displeasure with the historical situation (Weiner and Allen 1998, 24). Allen offered the following reason or interpretation of the theological underpinnings governing the political actions of the king:

> an attempt by the gods [meaning, one supposes, their human representatives (author comment)] to draw the king's attention to their needs, which might otherwise have been

> overlooked in the midst of the political crisis facing the new pharaoh. (Weiner and Allen 1998, 21)

One must never forget the importance of *maat* particularly for a new king following a time of chaos against Apophis. Allen notes:

> The restoration of order out of chaos is a prominent theme in the initial inscriptions of every new reign, and this stela obviously belongs to that genre – erected to commemorate not the catastrophe, but the king's response to it. (Weiner and Allen 1998, 21)

Allen may have taken the Tempest Stela too literally. His final sentence indicates a possible alternative interpretation. The king's attention is directed not only to the recent destruction wrought by nature but also to the more longstanding ruin caused by human agency and neglect – all of which are seen as legitimate and necessary objects of his duty 'to put the land like its original situation' (Weiner and Allen 1998, 21). Thus, according to Allen, the possible coincidence of a storm shortly after Ahmose's accession would have highlighted the need to restore both physical and cosmic order.

After an admitted 17-year interval, Ritner decided to respond to the article by Allen and Weiner. He was critical of what he considers to be Allen's unsubstantiated addition to the text which provides much of the basis for the Allen interpretation (Ritner and Moeller 2014b, 3; 2014a expresses the same thoughts). The consequence of this interpretation is to sever the storm both from occurring at the coronation of Ahmose and from placing the text in parallel with any Kamose texts. Instead the text is addressing a unique occurrence and not a routine restoration by a new king. There was a real rain, it lasted for an extended period of time, and it was a national not local event, not some monsoon rain.

One overlooked consideration was the probable need for restoration work even if there had been no storm. Temples do decay. It is standard operating procedure for the new king to engage in religious infrastructure repair without their being a supernatural or cosmic element. It is easy to imagine that the maintenance of the Karnak complex was not a high priority for the Hyksos. If the Theban priesthood experienced a reduction in revenue during the period of Hyksos rule, their ability to maintain the complex would have been similarly impaired. It would be perfectly natural for the new king of a new dynasty who had liberated the land from the rule of foreigners to dedicate his reign to restoring the neglected temples of the previous century and restoring royal funding of the priesthood to its Middle Kingdom levels. His charge was to restore *maat* and that included fixing physical things like temples. Ahmose's restoration actions would have been appropriate whether the destruction and decay was due to normal wear and tear, the Hyksos, or the Thera explosion.

Weiner and Allen offered differing interpretations on this point. Allen referred to human agency and neglect 'also' being a factor in the destruction. Weiner wrote, 'Rather, he [Allen] believes the terminology of the Stela suggests willful human agency as the cause of the destruction of the tombs and mortuary monuments'

(Weiner and Allen 1998, 21). There is no reference to the storm as a causal agent here. Weiner provides examples of such repair and restoration after Ahmose: Tutankhamon's Restoration Inscription and Hatshepsut's *Speos Artemidos* Inscription (Weiner and Allen 1998, 24; see below). While Wiener overstated Allen's actual position, his general approach seems sound.

At this point, we need to remember that the Thebes of Ahmose was not the Thebes we know today. The tombs, temples, and pylons that have made the area, even in its ruined state, a tourist attraction to this very day scarcely existed at the onset of the Eighteenth Dynasty. While the city had attained prominence during the Middle Kingdom, as a physical presence, it was dwarfed by the constructions of the Old Kingdom pharaohs at Giza. Centuries would pass before Thutmose III, Amenhotep III, Ramses II, and others transformed Karnak into the vibrant cosmic center of a vast empire. When Ahmose restored and repaired the temples and produced a stela to commemorate these actions, he was marking his turf and boldly designating the city as the cosmic center of the new world order he was creating. He was a new Djoser at Saqqara or a David installing the Ark of Yahweh in what became the City of David. The search for the storm obscures the powerful statement being made by a king who consciously perceived himself as initiating something new in Egyptian history. Never before had foreigners ruled the land; now that day was over. The darkness had ended; the sun had triumphed once again. It was morning in Egypt.

The key to unlocking the mysteries of the Tempest Stela of Ahmose is in the responsibility of the king to maintain *maat* as expressed in a specific political context: the struggle of what would become the Eighteenth Dynasty to establish its rule in opposition to the Hyksos in the north. The Ahmose and Hatshepsut storms (see below) should be considered in a metaphorical sense as coded reference to the Hyksos. '(S)ince the stela was set up shortly after the expulsion of the Fifteenth Dynasty, it seems more obvious to regard it as a metaphor, which was perhaps inspired by an actual storm' (Ryholt 1997, 144–145). For Ryholt the extensive scope of the textual storm is a sign that it is metaphorical.

The metaphorical explanation does not work for Ritner. He reads the exact same text as an expression of a unique event: 'That, of course is the whole point of the text, this is not a typical storm but a far more cataclysmic event' (Ritner and Moeller 2014b, 11). Ritner rejects the implied Hyksos metaphor. The Hyksos are not named in the stela. By contrast, the Egyptians were quite capable of naming the Hyksos when they wanted to. He specifically calls attention to the *Quarrel Story* as an example.

We need to rein in the Egyptological literalism that seeks factual natural phenomena to explain human events. Instead, we should recognize that we are a story-telling species that paints pictures with words and uses nature to reflect social and political conditions. In his examination of the Narmer Palette, Whitney Davis noted the Egyptian leader's need to demonstrate mastery of the natural and social worlds (1993, 23). We should remain cognizant of that advice in the analysis of the Tempest Stela composed some 1500 years later. Ahmose needed to triumph

both worlds. A single event can be both actual and metaphorical. To simply liberate the land from Hyksos rule was a necessary but insufficient step to legitimize his rule. The king also needed to demonstrate divine sanction, meaning that the cosmic order of both the natural and political worlds had been restored and were being maintained. Egypt was a culture of cycles, the daily cycle of sun as in the Amduat, the annual cycle of the river in the inundation, the Sothic cycle of 1460 years and its multiple calendars. The unique was a disruption of *maat*, there was no place for it in the Egyptian cultural construct; even the creation was routinely renewed. Now it had experienced two unique events and both about the same time: the foreign Hyksos taking power in Egypt, and Thera. It is certainly reasonable that the Egyptians would come to see these two events as linked in some way.

The actual date of the Thera eruption is of no significance to the occurrence of the Exodus in the reign of Ramses II. What is important is a comment Moeller made at the conclusion of her contribution to the article: the Thera eruption would have remained in people's memories for a long time. But she also is puzzled writing that 'it is remarkable that we have no concrete records of accounts from anywhere in this region by people who had witnessed the Thera eruption more closely' (Ritner and Moeller 2014b, 19). The Ahmose Stela, and the *Speos Artemidos*, and the Astarte Papyrus (see below) count as three records but they are not 'concrete'.

Her observation begs the question of what kind of record one should expect to find. If it is so difficult to find textual records of something as cataclysmic as the Thera eruption at a time when writing existed, what kind of 'concrete' record should one expect to find for the Exodus? Do not the Israelites have a record of a cataclysmic events prior to the departure in the Exodus? If the arrival of the Hyksos was concurrent or nearly so with the Thera eruption and the Egyptians Ahmose and Hatshepsut linked the two events, it also is perfectly reasonable to expect that, when Hyksos left Egypt in the time of Ramses, the going forth would draw on these memories as well. They all used cosmic metaphors to explain unique historical events and sometimes real events in nature do occur. Thera became part of the cultural heritage of both the Hyksos and the Egyptians.

For the moment one should put aside all these mythical expressions and search for the Exodus triumph at the sea to address a more realistic historical issue. Ahmose is the hero at least from the Theban perspective. As a direct result of his actions, the Hyksos king Apophis no longer ruled in Egypt. Ahmose himself may have told his own version of what happened against the Hyksos but only fragments remain as per Harvey's discoveries, discussed above. Some information is provided by a soldier in the king's army, coincidently named Ahmose son of Abana. His father had fought under Seqenenre and he fought multiple campaigns in multiple locations for Ahmose, Amenhotep I, and Thutmose I, on land and on water in Egypt and in Nubia. Ahmose mentions several battles against the Hyksos where he takes captives and is awarded spoil. Ahmose claims Avaris is despoiled. Much of what he writes seems more like a shopping list of places, people, and booty. Occasionally, a general comment intrudes.

In Nubia, Ahmose refers to the quest to enlarge the borders of Egypt. Later he crushes the rebellions and repels the intruders. His king Thutmose I fights like a leopard. The foes of Thutmose I flee before his uraeus and Ahmose accompanies him all the way to the Euphrates (Lichtheim 1975, 12–14).

Ahmose son of Abana's account still leaves open what Ahmose the king did to Apophis. We know what Apophis had done to Seqenenre. Ahmose certainly would have been aware of how Apophis had treated the vanquished foe. One might anticipate a reciprocal smiting the enemy action by the victorious Ahmose but there is no such account extant. Ahmose son of Abana mentions several skirmishes around Avaris and despoiling it but never actually conquering it. Bietak reports that the excavations at Avaris detected neither an invasion when the Hyksos arrived nor a conflagration when they left. Instead there was an abandonment consistent with the Josephus account of a negotiated safe passage (1996, 67; 2010, 139). If so, then this treaty between equals may be the first of its kind for Egypt (Wilkinson and Doyle 2017, 87). Perhaps Manetho got it right.

The safe passage for Apophis and his entourage makes sense. Successfully besieging a well-fortified city is difficult. A few decades later it would take Thutmose III weeks before Megiddo fell to him in one of the best documented battles in Egyptian and ancient Near Eastern history. An arrangement to allow Apophis safe passage had certain advantages. One wonders what happened to these Hyksos, if they maintained their identity, if they welcomed Israel three centuries later. One wonders about the other Hyksos families. The archaeological evidence for the departure of the Hyksos is lacking yet scholars routinely accept that it occurred (Kitchen 1998, 113). Despite his success, Ahmose still needed to be concerned about the very real threat to his northern border. Hence the application of the harsh treatment reserved for Egypt's most recalcitrant foes wreaked upon the charred depopulated city of Sharuhen (Morris 2018, 119–120).

The image of the Hyksos then abandoning Egypt lock-stock-and-barrel, leaving the land Hyksos-free, is a false one. Contrary to the image of an expulsion from Egypt, Hyksos, people connected with the Fifteenth Dynasty, remained in the land for centuries to come. Bietak takes Egyptologists to task for ignoring the impact of the Hyksos, of tens of thousands of West Semites in Egypt for centuries.

> The end of Hyksos rule in Egypt from the historical point of view is a subject rarely addressed in Egyptology ... In Egyptology, the impact of Hyksos rule on Egypt has been largely neglected in research if not ignored ... [I]t is only logical to postulate that the presence of several ten thousands people of Western Asiatic people in north-eastern Egypt over a period of over 300 years (c. 1830-1530 BCE) must have had an impact on successive New Kingdom culture. It is highly unlikely that such a long time span of intense interaction between Egypt and a foreign population did not leave any traces. (Bietak 2011, 20–21; see also Bietak 2010, 164).

They had to have left traces. If those several tens of thousands had left Egypt after 300 years, then truly it would have been an Exodus. There is no archaeological record

of any such departure. The infrastructure for a concentrated massive departure did not exist yet and when it did Israel obviously chose not to use it during the Exodus (Chapter 6).

The Hyksos presence in Egypt did not cease after 1530 BCE. Just because the leaders of a military aristocracy had been displaced does not mean all the warriors were killed.

> The Western Asiatic population in the eastern Delta was not driven out of Egypt into the southern Levant as one can read until recently in any textbook. Avaris seems to have been largely abandoned and the tombs in the houses looted. (Bietak 2018, 80 and 85 in a duplication)

Hyksos continued on in Egypt, especially in the military. Bietak observes that the information from Manetho via Josephus contributed to the firm conviction among Egyptologists that the Hyksos had been driven out and returned to their own homeland across the River Nile (2011, 20). The actual situation was not that stark. While some did leave, others remained. They became part of internal politics in Egypt, Delta-based warriors in a Theban-ruled country flexing their military muscle.

What does this extended discourse mean for the Exodus?

1. The Thera explosion and the Hyksos rule of Egypt were both unique events in Egyptian history. The symbolic linking of these two events seems entirely reasonable.
2. Apophis ceremonially executed Seqenenre on the field of battle, perhaps the single most humiliating act perpetrated against a king of Egypt until the Exodus, when Ramses had to live for decades with his humiliation.
3. Kamose died most likely in battle after ruling only a few years.
4. Apophis left Avaris under safe passage but other Hyksos and the hybrid military force remained.
5. Ahmose needed to assert Amun's position in the heavens just as he had over Hyksos Apophis on earth.

When Thebes took control of Avaris there were still Semites in Avaris, the northeast Delta, and Lower Egypt including descendants of people who had been in power during the Fifteenth Dynasty. Hatshepsut was right to worry about their loyalties just as Ramses would be.

Hatshepsut (1473–1458 BCE)

Hatshepsut commissioned one significant inscription concerning the Hyksos. It is known as the *Speos Artemidos* from the rock-cut at the temple to the goddess Pakhet. The original inscription was amended by Seti so its comments on the Hyksos presumably were known to him. Gardiner claims the ancient writer intended the inscription to be an example of fine writing (1946, 45). He notes that the inscription owes its celebrity status 'to the passage describing the sacrilegious behaviour of the

Hyksos invaders' and its similarity to what Manetho wrote over a thousand years later (Gardiner 1946, 45). Exactly what Seti restored, repaired, or usurped of this inscription can be debated (Fairman and Grdseloff 1947, 13). The inscription attests the ongoing presence of the Hyksos in the cultural memory of the Egyptian rulers as part of royal ideology (Zangani 2019, 414–416).

The relevant lines from the text following Gardiner's translation include:

> (11–15 summary) Egypt is united, foreign lands are subdued, the military is prosperous and there is freedom of travel (Allen 2002, 15);
> (11) ...the Black land and the Red
> (12) land being subject to the dread of me, and my might causing the foreign countries to bow down, for the uraeus that is upon my brow tranquilizes for me all lands.
> (13) Rashawet [Sinai?] and Iuu [location uncertain] have not remained hidden from my august person, and Pwēnet [Punt] over-
> (14) flows for me on the fields, its trees bearing fresh myrrh. The roads that were blocked in both
> (15) sides are (now) trodden. My army, which were unequipped, has become possessed of riches since I arose as king.
> (16) The temple of the Lady of Cusae, which was fallen into dissolution, the earth had swallowed [*note* – the same location used by the councilors of Kamose in the Carnarvon Tablet above for the dividing line between Hyksos rule and Thebes]
> (17) up its noble sanctuary, and the children danced upon its roof.
> (37) I have raised up what was dismembered, (even) from the first time when the Asiatics
> (38) were in Avaris of the North Land, (with) roving hordes in the midst of them overthrowing what had been made; they ruled without Re ...
> (39) (And now) I am as the Sole one of Horus darting fire
> (40) against my enemies. I have banished the abomination of the gods, and the earth has removed their foot(-prints). (1946, 46–48)

Allen provides a different translation than Gardiner in lines 22–24 with political implications for the priesthood:

> In an interesting parenthesis, Hatshepsut states that the god [Thoth] turned to her because the tradition of priestly learning had disappeared, and implies that the prime responsibility for this lay with the priesthood of Heliopolis, which was the prime center of Egyptian theology. (2002, 16)

In this declaration, one people in particular are singled out: the Hyksos. By the time of her reign, the Hyksos no longer ruled in Egypt. Nonetheless, Hatshepsut felt compelled to call attention to them. She identified them as a people who did not worship Ra. By so doing she introduced a religious dimension to the conflict. She announced that she commenced restoration work to fix what had been toppled, to banish from the earth all trace of them. To do so, she called upon the power of the uraeus.

Hatshepsut exclaims her position as ruler through her triumph over the Hyksos. She opens by asserting her rule. She uses the Egyptian equivalent of 'from sea to shining sea' in the American tradition, of 'from the river of Egypt (El Arish) to the

Great River (Euphrates)' in the biblical, and 'from the Lower Sea to the Upper Sea' in Mesopotamia. The uraeus on her crown 'pacifies' all who would rebel or disrupt *maat*. The mention of Punt is significant. Hatshepsut famously sent a trading expedition to Punt at the farthest reaches of the universe known to Egypt. By mentioning it, she is effectively declaring herself ruler of the world.

Goedicke observes that Hatshepsut's actions are centered on Middle Egypt so he postulates that there may have been a division in the country. The majority of the military establishment at this point were foreigners or of foreign descent (Goedicke 2004, 14–22). One implication is that her assertion of power as ruling Queen may not have been favorably received by the military including a Hyksos component. In effect, her path to power included an internal replay of Ahmose's actions. She has restored the devastation in Middle Egypt at least at the temple of Cusae rendered by the Hyksos a century earlier (Allen 2002, 17).

Goedicke introduces an Exodus interpretation. A front-page article in *The New York Times* on 4 May 1981, is entitled 'Ideas and trends: waves, fire and the story of the Exodus – as Pharaoh told it' (Wilford 1981). Although *The New York Times* is not an academic journal, one should recognize that a front-page article is quite an achievement and would be read by far more people than would any academic publication. According to the article, Goedicke intended to elaborate on his hypothesis in a forthcoming book, *Egypt and the Early History of Israel*. Both *The New York Times* article and the book appear in his obituary (Rasmussen 2015). I have been unable to locate the book.

In the 1981 article, Goedicke claimed, after a 20-year study, that he had discovered proof of the Exodus in an inscription dated to 1477 BCE during the reign of Hatshepsut which said: '"And when I allowed the abominations of the gods to depart, the earth swallowed their footsteps! This was the directive of the Primeval Father (Nun, the primeval water), who came one day unexpectedly."' He was referring to the *Speos Artemidos*. The inscription was not mentioned by name in the article. Here at last was Egyptian confirmation of the flooding waters that enabled the Israelites to go forth from Egypt.

The New York Times published two follow-up articles on Goedicke's hypothesis. On 18 January 1982, 'Scholar's peers criticize his theories on Exodus' and on 7 March 1982, 'Egyptologist says he did not mislead' (Wilford 1982a; 1982b). These articles summarized a series of articles and letters which had appeared in *Biblical Archaeological Review* in the September/October 1981, November/December 1981, January/February 1982, and March/April 1982 issues. They are too many to list individually. Suffice it say the scholars were not in agreement with Goedicke but not always for the same reasons. Perhaps that response contributed to the Johns Hopkins University Press pulling the plug on the forthcoming book by the Johns Hopkins University Chair of the Department of Near Eastern Studies professor.

Goedicke understood that such a claim would generate a derisive response. He defensively asserted:

> Although I have been labeled a 'fundamentalist', let me make clear I also assign the notion of Moses, either on a white horse or walking in front of a nation, to the realms of imagination. But this means objecting to the interpreters of the Bible and not to the historical indications. (1994, 2–3)

He referred to:

1. His 20-year study as an adult to find an explanation for the Exodus.
2. That as part of his explanation he dated the Thera volcano to 1477 BCE during the reign of Hatshepsut.
3. That he did so by taking an Egyptian text literally [ignoring any translation issues].

The events in nature that appeared to him in the text were not metaphorical or symbolic but of actual meteorological phenomena that led to historical events. Subsequently, he accepted 1520 BCE instead of 1477 BCE as the date for the Thera explosion based on the work of 'seismologists' (1984, 99) – still short of the 1620s from radiocarbon dating or 1550 BCE of Ahmose and the Tempest Stela.

Goedicke changed the date due to the *Medical Papyrus Hearst*. It indicated that the god Seth had 'halted a floodwave caused by a natural catastrophe', the 'first such disaster in historical times' and 'much smaller than the final explosion that occurred during the reign of Hatshepsut' (1984, 99–100). A medical catastrophe ensued from these explosions. Goedicke designated this in the title of his journal article as the 'Canaanite illness', possibly bubonic plague. He linked its occurrence following that first explosion with the opening line of the *Quarrel Story*: 'It once happened that the land of Egypt was in misery, for there was no Lord ...' (quoted from Simpson 1971, 78). For Goedicke the *Medical Papyrus Hearst* from the time of Amenhotep I and the *Quarrel Story* both referred to real events in nature with historical implications just as *Speos Artemidos* did.

In another article, apparently written about the same time regardless of the actual publication date, Goedicke pinpointed the Thera volcano to the summer of ±1540 BCE, now back in the time of Ahmose. Goedicke averred 'that the reverberations of the natural disasters in the Mediterranean basin were interpreted as signs of divine displeasure, persuading the last Hyksos overlord to abandon Avaris and to retreat to Palestine' (1986b, 41). Goedicke again referred to the *Medical Papyrus Hearst* when the memory of the volcanic impact was still fresh and the invoking of Seth's assistance against the 'Canaanite illness' occurred (1986b, 41). In 1992, he postulated a natural disaster in year 3 of Kamose/year 1 of Ahmose: the death of Kamose following his unsuccessful attack on Avaris required a divine explanation (Goedicke 1992, 61). He then firmly declared that May, 1552 BCE, year 1 of Ahmose, was the time of the natural disaster which enabled Ahmose to prevail and forced the Hyksos to leave (Goedicke 1994, 15; 1995, 173–174). In retrospect his dating of the Exodus linked to the explosion at Thera is somewhat fluid. Apparently no matter what the actual date of the Thera explosion turns out to be, Goedicke could fit the historical context to make it the time of the Exodus. The unasked question for Goedicke is what caused the Exodus

in the first place that led the Israelites to be perfectly positioned by chance to avoid the tidal wave that overwhelmed the Egyptian chariots. What were they doing there?

In this regard, the Thera volcano is an academic red herring that draws scholars like a bee to honey. Although Goedicke originally focused on the time of Hatshepsut and not Ahmose as Foster and Allen had, he reached startlingly similar conclusions (Goedicke 1992, 57–62). His examination of the *Speos Artemidos* inscription followed the same path as the Foster and Ritner Tempest Stela investigation. He provided the same detailed analysis of the text's imagery with the same results. Once again there was darkness and a challenge to create light, which he attributed to 'a fiery cause outside of Egypt across the Mediterranean with darkness in Egypt as its results' (Goedicke 2004, 7). The only rational explanation for the imagery of the text was a corresponding phenomenon in nature: the Thera eruption ash blocking out the sun (Goedicke 2004, 7). Goedicke's analysis is worthy of a pre-millennialist seeking to find signs of the end days as prophesied in specific biblical texts. He had his own endgame in biblical exegesis. It was in the Thera eruption that he found the natural explanation for the Exodus, which he then dated to 1473/1472 (2004, 99–104). Thus Goedicke stands as one of the few Egyptologists willing to take both Hatshepsut and the Bible literally.

These literalist analyses of Egyptian texts produced a conundrum. Did the Thera eruption take place in the time of Hatshepsut based on the imagery of the *Speos Artemidos* inscription or did the Thera eruption take place in the time of Ahmose based on the imagery of the Tempest Stela or in the 1620s, from the radiocarbon dating? Perhaps we should be seeking more than one volcanic eruption of apocalyptic fury to explain these two texts employing similar imagery decades apart. Or maybe there was only a single explosion whose reverberations lasted for an extraordinarily long period of time. It seems unlikely that both texts refer to events in the present.

Egyptologists not commenting on Thera or seeking an Exodus connection have addressed this issue. Back in 1946, Gardiner wrote about Hatshepsut's cosmic restoration from a political perspective similar to Allen's analysis of the function of the Tempest Stela. According to Gardiner, Hatshepsut suffered from legitimacy issues that needed to be resolved in a theologically valid manner consistent with the values of the Egyptian cultural construct based on *maat*: '... the whole purpose of the text was evidently to display her as the predestined savior of the country, the restorer of law and order' (1946, 48).

Peter Brand took a similar approach using the technologically modern Egyptologists' Electronic Forum list to elaborate on this very point without specifically referring to it. Instead, he broadened the scope to encompass the texts of multiple Egyptian rulers. He characterized the texts of Hatshepsut, Tutankhamun, Horemheb, Merneptah, and Merikare as being 'typical of a broad genre of royal texts that might be described as "chaos turned into order"' (2004). He might have added Ramses II. Brand's view is consistent with that of Ed Bleiberg who characterizes what appears to be historical texts from the New Kingdom as political propaganda (1985/86).

Brand further opined that such texts were 'highly rhetorical' and 'decidedly unhistorical' (2004). He stated that '[i]t is naïve to take such a text at face value as reporting history' (2004). The Egyptians never meant such a text to be taken as 'historical'. But he recognized that there was a 'genuine historical context' contained in such texts. The challenge then is to determine what that genuine historical context is. One should note that the same considerations apply before and after the Exodus.

This interpretation of cosmological imagery in the Egyptian texts correlates with comparable Assyrian imagery. In the third millennium BCE, the Lamentations over the Destruction of Sumer and Ur assigns responsibility for the destruction of the city to a storm (lines 137–138), a metaphorical reference to an attack by a foreign enemy (Tsumura 2005, 184). Far from being a one-time occurrence, storm and flood imagery were standard motifs in Mesopotamian literature, particularly in relation to assertions of victory by the king. Tukulti-Ninurta I, Shalmaneser III, Sargon II, Sennacherib, Esarhaddon, and Ashurbanipal all partook of this approach when asserting complete and total victory (Tsumura 2005, 183–189). For these self-proclaimed rulers of the universe, the significance of the deluge was clear: the walled cities of the world had been washed away except for those of the conquering hero. Now, out of this resulting chaos, the king at the cosmic center of the world would create a new world order with new temples, new walls, and new cities. The reliefs and inscriptions surrounding him in his palace extolled this new creation by the deity's counterpart on earth. Flooding waters deliver political messages that should not be ignored in historical reconstructions.

We should not impose our own values on the past ... or level of knowledge. Human beings choose to employ the language of natural disasters, cosmic catastrophes, and even positive heavenly events in historical contexts regardless of whether or not such events in nature had occurred. In other words, it is possible to claim that it is 'morning in America' even in a speech given at night. With such an utterance, we should not seek an explanation for how the sun could have risen at such an ungodly hour. We also should not dismiss the metaphor or declare it historically inaccurate simply because it is not literally true. We would be better served to recognize the reality of human modes of communication when addressing social, cultural, and religious concerns. After all the sun was out in every American presidential administration reflecting the general optimistic outlook even during the Depression. Furthermore Benjamin Franklin's famous optimistic analysis at the American Constitutional Convention that he had the pleasure to know it was rising and not setting referred to the sun image on George Washington's chair and not to an astronomical observation. This consistent imagery, centuries apart, is an expression of an American cultural value. Similarly, something else is going on in these Egyptian texts and in their use of storm imagery other than a meteorological report.

Amenhotep II (1427–1400 BCE)

The Astarte Papyrus adds a new dimension to possible Egyptian acculturation of Hyksos and Asiatic motifs. Samuel Birch, who would resist the formation of the

Egyptian Exploration Fund (Chapter 1), identified it in 1871 a most interesting papyrus in Mr Tyssen Amhurst's Collection obtained by ways unknown.

> The papyrus was originally about 16 feet long and had about 11 lines in each page written in a remarkably clear and neat hieratic hand. Notwithstanding a considerable search made amongst the others fragments very little of the missing portion could be found. Its subject related to the legend of the goddess Astarte and could it have been completed would have been an important contribution to the Phoenician legend of that Goddess. (Birch 1871, 119)

One of the frustrations in archaeology is the discovery of only part of an inscription or papyrus text. Here one glimpses how long a single story can be and this relatively unknown text is one of the longest literary papyrus in the New Kingdom (Penhal 2014, 31).

Shades of the Thera debate: there is an Egyptian story about a threat from the sea. Initially the Astarte Papyrus was presumed to be mainly about Astarte. She now had to protect Egyptians travelling the seas as she had Semites (Spiegelberg 1902, 50). Gardiner refers to it as a unique work of fiction in which all the personages are divine ... and it includes a romantic interest (1932, 74). Astarte is a Canaanite goddess but in the story she is a daughter of the Egyptian Ptah. She also is a goddess of wrath and vengeance (Gardiner 1932a, 79). Gardiner connects the predatory sea in the Egyptian tale of the Two Brothers with the role of the sea in this story (1932a, 78). Although Astarte's coming to Egypt is a critical element in the story, Gardiner suggests its central theme was the conflict between the sea and the Egyptian gods (1932a, 82). Specifically he translates it as showing Seth contending with the Sea and the Asiatic (1933, 98). In a follow-up article, A. H. Sayce reiterates the cosmogonic character of the Astarte Papyrus and locates a Hittite parallel (1933).

In their analysis of the Astarte Papyrus, Philippe Collombert and Laurent Coulon favor an Amenhotep II date for its origin (2000). For them, the key link of the story is the ancient Near Eastern one between royal ideology and combat with the sea. As they examine combat with sea myths from nearby cultures, they see a royal connection. Specifically, they mention the Amorite and Canaanite cultures. The consequence of this observation is the Egyptians adopted (accepted) the legend of the battle of the gods against the sea because of its implications for royal ideology. They see Amenhotep II as the receptive king ruling over the new empire in Asia as the king who embraced this Memphis-based Ptah version of the sea storm story (Collombert and Coulon 2000, 221–222).

The next issue for them is to ascertain the genre and date when the king introduced the text to the Egyptian public. It should be as part of a commemoration or restoration. Unfortunately they could not determine an historical date for either the origination of the text or the event celebrated in an anniversary. Consequently they postulate the Astarte Papyrus as an etiological narrative for the installation of the cult of Seth-Baal at Memphis, perhaps connected the construction of a place of worship for the warrior god. By so doing, Amenhotep II establishes a mythical past for Baal/Seth

which liberates him from the Heliopolitan priests as Baal saves the Ennead from the chaos of the sea. Based on this analysis, Collombert and Coulon propose year 4 as the date of the foundation in conjunction with other Amenhotep II texts (2000, 222–223). Schneider dates the Papyrus to the inauguration of the Astarte sanctuary at Perunefer, a naval base linked to Tell el-Dab'a, in year 5 (2003, 161).

Through the Astarte Papyrus we witness a greater comingling of Egyptian and Canaanite traditions than from mere archaeology alone. Schneider goes so far as to say that the embedding of the text proves a cultural appropriation into the very heart of the Egyptian civilization traditionally thought to be immune from innovation from abroad (2003, 161). Spalinger asks, 'Should we not conclude that the 18th Dynasty had its own interests in myth and folktale, and that the rapidly increased Asiatic interests and influences effected Egyptian intellectual currents at that time?' (2007, 153–154). Being linked to the Hyksos may have had advantages for a Pharaoh now ruling over Canaan (and bringing captives to Egypt in huge numbers). Perhaps the examples of Osiris (Chapter 2), the Hyksos, and the Astarte Papyrus prove Egypt was less resistant to outside influences than previously presumed, especially in Lower Egypt. Manetho and Eighteenth Dynasty propaganda texts need not be treated as gospel accounts.

The Astarte Papyrus provides a window into the thinking of the king. He is establishing the legitimacy of his rule beyond the gift of the river. He is doing so not based on Amun in Thebes or Ra in Heliopolis but with Seth/Baal long before Seti I does. In human terms, one may observe a jockeying for political power among competing priesthoods for the favor of the king. Schneider tracks Baal's trajectory in becoming the patron of Egyptian kingship back to the Amarna Age (1340s BCE) (2010, 409). One may conjecture an even earlier date all the way back to when the Hyksos were kings. Hyksos were still present in the land. Their warrior background was compatible with the warrior Pharaohs of the New Kingdom and hybrid military forces. Hatshepsut had reason to be concerned about the Hyksos long after Apophis had left the land.

The story is unique in the Egyptian culture for the involvement of the sea as a force of chaos. Previously there was no sea deity in the river-based culture (Penhal 2014, 27). Times had changed. The restoration of *maat* now requires the vanquishing of the sea, a never-before requirement of the king. One may say that, given the rule over Asiatics who had this myth with Baal triumphing over Yam, the sea, it behooved the Egyptian ruler over the Canaanite people similarly to assert such a triumph in his Baal capacity. It could also be said that the Thera impact may be seen as the historic kernel of these coastal Mediterranean people stories of triumph over the sea. The Ahmose Tempest Stela, the Hatshepsut *Speos Artemidos* Inscription and the Amenhotep II Astarte Papyrus Inscription are all variations on the same theme. The net result is henceforth Pharaoh's triumph over the sea, the forces of chaos, and the Hyksos were now intertwined. The Astarte Papyrus shows that when Moses rejected the Egyptian cultural construct he also was rejecting Baal, who had become part of it.

Aper-el

To speculate for a moment, it is possible that there was in fact a direct link between a Hyksos and Akhnaton. The reference here is to Aper-el, vizier to Amenhotep III (1390–1352 BCE), vizier and instructor to Amenhotep IV (1352–1336), first servant to Aten, father of Huy, general of the chariotry, and scribe of the recruits (Zivie 1989; 1990; 1993a; 1993b). As a Child of the Nursery (*kop*), it is also possible that he was the son of a Canaanite king (Hoffmeier 1997, 94–95, 143, 224). It seems unlikely that a career military officer like Horemheb would not have been aware of and known Aper-el. Zivie's contention that Aper-el was Semitic is not something that can be proven, but given his position, if he was Semitic, he is more likely to have been Hyksos. How exactly one would differentiate between an assimilated Hyksos in the land after two centuries and an ethnic Egyptian is problematical given the intermingling and hybridization of cultures. There was a town of Aper-el in the time of Ramses II (Morris 2005, 464) so whoever he was, his legacy continued through the Exodus.

To trace the careers of Asiatics is difficult enough when they change their names as part of their assimilation (Posener 1957, 155). It is also a challenge if they maintain an ethnic heritage in their name. Aper-el is likely to have been an example of the hybridization that occurred in the Delta. The population there consisted of Semitic people who had been there for centuries, captives from the campaigns of New Kingdom including elite chariot warriors called *maryannu*, assorted 'hostages' from Canaanite ruling families, and Hyksos. The military by far would have been most integrated institution of all in Egypt. Undoubtedly Hatshepsut in Thebes was well-aware that the military forces based in Avaris had developed an identity of their own not necessarily always in synch with the royal one. While the competition with priesthoods garners most of the attention, one should not overlook the military and the issue of its loyalty.

Speculations

The treatment of the Hyksos by both the Eighteenth Dynasty and Egyptologists has implications for the study of the Hyksos-led Exodus in the time of Ramses II.

- The mischaracterization of the Hyksos as foreign invaders is at odds with the actual Hyksos rule.
- The mischaracterization of the people of Lower Egypt, many of whom were Semitic, as wanting to be liberated from Hyksos rule is at odds with the actual Hyksos rule.
- The mischaracterization of the land being freed of all Hyksos is at odds with continued presence of both Semites in general and warrior-royal-based Hyksos in particular.

1. I speculate that, after the Battle of Kadesh, Ramses II was more likely to have been viewed as a new Seqenenre, who barely escaped with his life, and not as the great hero he portrayed himself as being and as how he has been remembered.

2. I speculate that after Ramses II almost became the new Seqenenre, it was quite reasonable for Moses to be seen as very great in the land of Egypt (the capital), in the sight of Ramses's servants (the military) who knew better than to believe the propaganda, and in the sight of the people who wanted a winner for a leader and not a Seqenenre (see Ex. 11:3).
3. I speculate that Merneptah drew on Seqenenre's legacy as a loser and Ahmose's legacy as a winner in his three-part *Quarrel Story of Apophis and Seqenenre*.
4. I speculate the confrontation at the Sea of Reeds should be understood within the context of Baal versus the Sea and the culture of the 19th Dynasty.

Chapter 5

Ramses, the Pharaoh of the Exodus

With the arrival of the Hyksos in Egypt, the 400-year clock to the Exodus began ticking. For the first century of that period, the Hyksos ruled in Avaris as the Fifteenth Dynasty. For the next approximately 75 years, the Hyksos and the Thebans fought militarily, culturally, and cosmically.

- Apophis ceremonially executed the defeated Seqenenre where Apophis acted as the true Horus, who smote the enemy.
- Apophis successfully resisted the more vigorous, but still failed, efforts of Kamose to dislodge him from Avaris.
- Apophis fled from Avaris when given free passage by Ahmose.
- The Egyptian military became a demographically hybrid organization.
- Baal became part of the Egyptian social fabric as the foreign Osiris had before.
- The division between Upper and Lower Egypt persisted.
- Hatshepsut claimed to have defeated the people who ruled without Ra.
- Amenhotep II identified with the warrior god Baal who ruled Canaan.

Seqenenre became the quintessential loser in the Theban cultural legacy and Ahmose became the winner. When the Hyksos-led Exodus occurred in the time of Ramses II, it was thought of as another round in this series of confrontations between the Hyksos and the Egyptian king over who was the true Horus, the true king. The change element was the wilderness decision by Moses that he did not want the position of king anymore and rejected the Egyptian cultural construct, including Baal, instead.

The Nineteenth Dynasty

Before turning to the individuals of the Nineteenth Dynasty and the Exodus, there is some background information which needs to be presented. One characteristic trait of the Nineteenth Dynasty was its awareness of the long history of Egypt (Faulkner 1975, 223). Pharaohs were cognizant that they were part of an extended temporal chain, as evidenced by the king lists originating with Menes in the beginning and concluding with Seti in the present. The impetus for the Nineteenth Dynasty effort to connect with the Egyptian past may be the non-royal origin of this Delta-based

family. Seti's ceremonial act of linear commemoration was one of major political significance (Assmann 2003, 22).

Appearances can be deceiving. 'The bold confidence of the monumental record left by Seti I and Ramsesses II belied the difficulties they faced ... Egypt on the threshold of the Ramesside age was far from stable by any measure, least of all politically' (Brand 2005, 23–24). This instability was expressed in the state of Egyptian imperialism in the land of Canaan.

> [T]he situation that begs explanation is why the number and variety of Egyptian-style artifacts and architectural remains excavated in Canaan should skyrocket with the advent of the Nineteenth Dynasty. Prior to the period, Egyptian-style architecture is unattested north of the Gaza Strip, and Egyptian-style artifacts are by and large restricted to portable or prestige goods. In the Nineteenth Dynasty, however, enclaves of Egyptian-style architecture and material culture suddenly proliferate in the wadi systems of the Negev, at the major coastal harbors, and along the two most important north-south transit routes in Canaan. (Morris 2005, 8)

Morris later returns to this 'fundamental puzzle'. There is no textual evidence to explain the archaeologically-verifiable drastic increase in the Egyptian presence in the land (Morris 2005, 272). At least, no Egyptian textual evidence. Morris attributes the shift to a 'clear-cut policy decision' by Horemheb (1323–1295 BCE) (2005, 395). The response of the Canaanites is quite clear although it took time for the Canaanite Spring to manifest itself. Merneptah's inaugural precipitated the 'turbulent decades' from 1213 to 1190 BCE when Egyptian bases in Canaan were burned (Morris 2018, 210). The situation was even worse a few decades later.

> Archaeological evidence suggests that the final end of Egyptian rule in the north was a short and bloody affair. Not only does evidence for Egyptian occupation cease abruptly in the reign of Ramses VI [1143-1136 BCE], but nearly every Egyptian base in Canaan seems to have been torched, whether by enemy attackers, by garrison uprisings, or by the Egyptians themselves as they retreated homeward. (Morris 2005, 709)

How could Israel sing to Yahweh as king in the land of Canaan at his abode at Shiloh if Egypt still ruled the land? Part of the Exodus story requires understanding the geopolitical context in the Promised Land during the Nineteenth Dynasty.

Shasu

One people who factor into the Exodus without getting much attention is the Shosu/Shasu. They are a people of the New Kingdom times known only from Egyptian inscriptions (for the Shasu see Giveon 1969/1970; 1971; Lorton 1971/1972; Ward 1972; 1992a; Redford 1992a, 269–280; Rainey 2001; 2003, 178–184; Levy *et al.* 2004; Hoffmeier 2005, 240–243; Hawkins 2013, 70–75). Oftentimes, those inscriptions do not provide much information as they simply are part of a list of peoples. Sometimes more is provided.

The meaning of 'Shasu' derives from the Egyptian verb 'to wander', or the Semitic verb 'to plunder', not that they are mutually exclusive. Whether or not they called themselves Shasu or, as with the Hyksos and the Sea Peoples, the name comes from the Egyptian culture is unknown. At least the Israelites appear to have been called by their own name by the Egyptians.

The Shasu first appear in the Egyptian record in the reign of Thutmose II (1492–1479 BCE) in a private record – a soldier takes prisoners from 'Shasu land'. Thutmose III (1479–1425 BCE) launches the first known campaign against them. The Egyptian concern seems to have been that the Shasu threatened Egyptian lines of communication particularly from the Delta to southern Canaan. The consequence of this ever-present menace once they appeared was ever constant punitive raids in an ongoing, never definitive, manner. Over time, they spread to northern Canaan in the time of Thutmose IV (1400–1390 BCE) and Amenhotep III (1390–1352 BCE) including into Edom also connected with Esau. Some of the Shasu taken prisoner were incorporated into the Egyptian army. Based on Papyrus Anastasi I, they would make a frightening appearance:

> The face of the pass [in Shasu country] is dangerous with Shasu, hidden under the bushes. Some of them are 4 or 5 cubits, nose to foot, with wild faces. Their thoughts are not pretty, they do not listen to cajoling. (quoted in Hawkins 2013, 70)

Who would not want an army of these giants! Since the text is non-biblical, one is under no obligation to take the dimensions seriously. However, one notes the standard way in which the civilized people depict the barbarian 'other' as ferocious savages.

In his first year as king (1294 BCE), Seti campaigned against the Shasu and by 'the strong arm of Pharaoh' (exterior north wall of the Hypostyle Hall in the temple at Karnak quoted in Gardiner (1920, 100); see University of Chicago Oriental Institute Epigraphic Survey (UCOIES) (1986, 3–26)). The reliefs of this campaign have figured prominently in the effort to define the landscape and the values based on that landscape in the Nineteenth Dynasty. Seti also wrote:

> The Shosu Bedouin-foe are plotting rebellion. The tribal chiefs are united as one standing their ground on the hills of Khurru. They have instigated confusion and tumult (there), each killing his fellow – they ignore the laws of the palace.
>
> His Majesty was pleased at it. Now, as for this goodly god (the King), he exults at beginning the battle, he delights to enter into it; his heart is gratified at the sight of blood. He lops off the heads of the dissidents. More than the day of rejoicing he loves the moment of crushing (the foe). His Majesty slays them at one stroke – and leaves them no heirs, and who(ever) escapes his hand is brought prisoner to Egypt. (Year 1 inscription quoted in Kitchen 1982, 20–21)

The relief of this campaign shows Crown Prince Ramses walking behind his father's chariot although someone else had been carved there originally (Dodson 2019, 61) (see below).

Seti then decided to hire them to be desert scouts for the Egyptian army (Morris 2017, 145). They became Egyptian Hobabs.

> And Moses said to Hobab the son of Reuel the Midianite, Moses' father-in-law, 'We are setting out for the place of which Yahweh said, "I will give it to you"; come with us, and we will do you good; for Yahweh has promised good to Israel'. But he said to him, 'I will not go; I will depart to my own land and to my kindred'. And he said, 'Do not leave us, I pray you, for you know how we are to encamp in the wilderness, and you will serve as eyes for us. And if you go with us, whatever good Yahweh will do to us, the same will we do to you'. (Num. 10:29–32).

To control these people, Ramses II stablished garrisons in their villages (meaning after the Exodus). He claimed to have destroyed the land of the Shasu and to have plundered their mountain in Seir. Ramses made a 'great massacre in the land of the Shasu followed by additional plundering' (Morris 2005, 367; see also Kitchen 1994a, 304, 409). During the time of Merneptah (1213–1203 BCE), the Shasu of Edom are recorded in Papyrus Anastasi VI as entering the land at the Fortress of Mernephtah-hotep-her-Maat in the Wadi Tumilat (possibly the spot where the Israelites went forth from Egypt a generation earlier, see below). A final reference occurs with Ramses III (1184–1153 BCE) in the Papyrus Harris I:

> I destroyed the Seirites in the tribes of the Shasu: I looted their tents of people and property, their cattle likewise, without limit (they being) pinioned and brought in captivity as tribute (to) Egypt, (where) I presented them to the Ennead as slaves for their estates. (quoted in Morris 2005, 706)

They then seem to disappear after his reign.

The location of the Shasu land of *yhwe* has raised the question of the connection between the Yahweh-people of these lands and the Israelites (Redford 1992a, 273, 275–280; Rainey 2001; 2003, 178–185; Hoffmeier 2005, 240–243). The *yhwe* reference comes from the Amara West temple of Ramses II copied from the nearby temple at Soleb of Amenhotep III in Nubia: 'The land of the Shasu, Yahw'. However their location in Seir places them in the land of Edom and Esau and not Israel.

> And Jacob sent messengers before him to Esau his brother in the land of Seir, the country of Edom. (Gen. 32:3)
>
> So Esau dwelt in the hill country of Seir; Esau is Edom. These are the descendants of Esau the father of the Edomites in the hill country of Seir. (Gen. 36:8–9)
>
> Yahweh, when thou didst go forth from Seir, when thou didst march from the region of Edom, the earth trembled, and the heavens dropped, yea, the clouds dropped water. (Judg. 5:4)

These locations converge in the wilderness where Israel is said to have wandered and the Shasu are said to have lived.

Still the Shasu have an appeal as being the people who became Israel. It is not so much that they went forth from Egypt in the Exodus as it is that they wandered in the wilderness, worshipped a deity named Yaw, and ended up in Canaan around the time of Ramses II. For Redford, this identification only magnifies the bankruptcy of the Israelite Exodus tradition derived from the unrelated Hyksos (see Chapter 3). These most vigorous champions of this foundational story of origins are not even from the land of Canaan or connected to those people. Shasu from the desert fringe became Israel and adopted 'traits, cultic acts, myths, folklore, and foundation legends of the autochthonous [Canaanite] inhabitants' (Redford 2011, 333). Through the Shasu, Redford expertly skewers the Hyksos, the Exodus, and Israel in just a few sentences. The debate over their identity extends to the portrayals on the Cour de la Cachette at Karnak which illustrate the Merneptah Stela, the text where the Pharaoh claims to have destroyed the seed of Israel (see Chapter 7). The debate then is over which images on the wall are the Israelites.

Another option is the existence of three groups who merged. There was a small Exodus group from Egypt who met a Yahweh Shasu group in the wilderness. Both had anti-Egyptian sentiments. *Merger #1*. Then this group settled in Canaan with an Exodus and Yahweh tradition and encountered an existing anti-Egypt group already in the land called Israel. *Merger #2*. Now this combination included an exodus, Yahweh, and Israel. There is a simpler story to tell once one recognizes the Hyksos-led people of the Exodus covenanted as the people Israel in the wilderness among the Shasu.

Seti 1294–1279 BCE

Seti marked the dawn of a new era in Egyptian history. He was quite conscious of having started a new dynasty. He bore the title 'Repeater of Births' marking the beginning of a new era (Chapter 1; Clayton 1994, 141–142). He explicitly characterized himself in the same terms as Middle Kingdom commoner Amenemhet I did to launch the Twelfth Dynasty approximately 600 years earlier (Clayton 1994, 79). Seti's actions suggest a conceptual awareness of at least three periods in Egyptian history: the Old Kingdom had collapsed, thus necessitating the birth of the Middle Kingdom which then had collapsed (with Amarna), thus necessitating the birth of a New Kingdom with the Nineteenth Dynasty. His vigorous restoration of monuments mutilated by Akhnaton throughout the land and at Thebes may also have contributed to extolling his legitimacy (Dodson 2019, 25–27). His humble birth should not blind one to the breadth and depth of his vision.

Seti was from a Delta-family of charioteer background. He emerged from what may be deemed a hybrid military community based on the chariot and its supporting infrastructure. The ways of the Hyksos were no stranger to him. Seti made the Hyksos capital his capital (Faulkner 1975, 221). His grandfather also named Seti was a 'Troop Commander' under Horemheb (Cruz-Uribe 1978). He may have been an envoy who had traveled as far as Mesopotamia (Dodson 2019, 9). His father probably felt a greater allegiance to the Asiatic military nobility (*maryannu* charioteers) than to Egyptian

priesthood or officialdom (Assmann 2003, 254). Seti married into a charioteer family as well (Dodson 2019, 12). Whether there had been any intermarriage between the Hyksos and his family is suspected but not proven and perhaps not provable.

As Seti launched his new era in Egyptian history, he elevated the status of *maat*. The presentation of the royal name was now equated with *maat* for the first time. Seti's reign witnessed a conscious effort to equate the presentation of *maat* and the royal name through shared iconography, an effort which continued afterwards. It became a common element in the royal iconography of the Ramesside period. The reliefs that adorn the Ramesside temples contain the greatest number of scenes of the presentation of *maat*. These associations may be considered as unprecedented. They may be construed as giving the impression of new vigor and confidence through the king's affiliation with *maat*. Such public displays ensured that not just the priests but that all worshippers were exposed to the *maat* iconography and rituals (Teeter 1997, 10, 15, 28, 34, 39, 40, 81, 85).

Osiris was a venerated figure in the time of Seti who had the name of his murderer. Seti built many temples but according to O'Connor, his temple to Osiris at Abydos was his favorite. It is perhaps the best-preserved Bronze Age temple in Egypt (O'Connor 2011, 43–61). It was located:

> in the province which he loved, his heart's desire ever since he had been on earth, the sacred soil on Wennefer [Osiris]. (quoted in O'Connor 2011, 43)

Seti died before the temple was completed leaving it to Ramses to finish the work (and to build his own). In the dedicatory text in the chapel at Abydos built by Seti to his own father, he linked Ramses I conceptually with Osiris, while he was connected to Horus, the living king (Harvey 1998, 443).

Seti's tomb in the Valley of the Kings expresses the calendrical ideas of the Egyptian cultural construct (Chapter 2). The crypt in chamber J of the tomb depicts calendrical, astronomical, and religious ideas. Specifically, the astronomical ceiling includes the decans or constellations used in the determination of the onset of the 10-day weeks and for the epagomenal days. Other constellations, such as Orion and Sirius, are shown as well (Dodson 2019, 100). This ceiling decoration of his cenotaph has been called the most fully representation of the Egyptian view of the universe (Allen 2016, 25). Collectively these images demonstrate that the calendrical calculations were a well-known part of the Egyptian cultural construct in the time of Seti.

Of course, Seth was not forgotten either, especially in his Baal form. During the Eighteenth Dynasty, Baal did not appear in the official texts, with the possible exception of the Astarte Papyrus. Given his connection to the Hyksos, the sworn enemy of this Theban dynasty of Amun, the absence is understandable. In the Nineteenth Dynasty the situation changed. Both the Hyksos and Baal were now welcomed (Te Velde 1967, 66, 120–130; Goldwasser 2006, 131–132). One should not overlook the political ramifications of Baal's presence. Typically Egyptologists note the shared characteristics of these two male warrior storm gods, but Baal also as the deity of the

cities in the land of Canaan which Seti ruled. El was still around but not politically dominant. The geopolitics of the Egyptian Baal-Seth versus the Israelite Yahweh-El combination is part of the Exodus story in the people Moses created.

Linear time was also part of Seti's legacy. One of the outstanding features of his temple at Abydos is the Abydos King List. Manetho may have drawn on the same sources Seti used for his dynastic list (Faulkner 1975, 223). The list begins with Menes, ends with Seti, and contains 76 names with various omissions. It elevated the common-born Seti to a long tradition. For purposes here, the issue is not the accuracy of the list. Its very existence demonstrates that there were sources Seti could draw on in the composition of the list. One presumes that some information existed about the kings in addition to their names and sequential order. One may also conclude that Seti had some interest in his place in history given the creation of a list from in the beginning to himself.

Seti's commemoration of the 400-year presence of the Hyksos in Egypt also deserves notice. Typically, Ramses dedicating a stela to honor his father's actions gets the attention (see Chapter 7). Even before the Exodus, Moses knew of a 400-year tradition in Egypt. Seti integrated the Hyksos timeline into the Egyptian one. Instead of the Hyksos ruling during an 'intermediate period' as in Egyptology, Seti created his own periodization which is not the one Egyptologists use (see Chapter 1). The Hyksos were the beginning of a cycle which concluded with the post-Amarna restoration. What had been separate now became one. Baal began both periods in history, or the time from Jacob to Moses in biblical terms. From this point forward, the two peoples were chronologically merged into a single timeline in Egyptian history. It was morning in Egypt. Here comes the sun on a new day in Egyptian history. Seti had vision. Would his successor?

Mehy

There is a little-known figure in the reliefs and records of Seti who merits scrutiny. When he was first discovered, there was much speculation about his relationship with Seti. Decades later, he garnered Egyptological attention as a figure in love poetry. This potential combination of warrior to the king and appeal to the people was unusual (David?). His existence raises the questions of who exactly Mehy was, what was his relationship to Seti, and how did Ramses respond to that relationship. A larger question is what happened to him when the Egyptian record cancelled him (for Mehy see Wiedemann 1890; Breasted 1899, 134–139; 1906b; 1909, 417–418; 1924, 139; Gardiner 1931; Suys 1932; P. Gilbert 1942; Smither 1948; Murnane 1977; 1985, 163–175; 1990, 107–114; 1995; Spalinger 1979; Davis 1980; Fox 1980; 1985; B. Lesko 1986; Vernus 1992; Gillam 1995; 1998; 2000a; 2000b; E. Gilbert 2021).

In 1890, A. Wiedemann observed that the discussion about the relationship between Ramses II and his father generally overlooked that Ramses was not the oldest son of Seti. In support of that claim, Wiedemann pointed to three figures in the description of Seti's war in the north. In one image this figure has the titles associated with a prince but the name has been erased. Possibly this mysterious figure died

before his father. Certainly Ramses had no interest in commemorating him. In fact, Ramses made believe he had reigned from his earliest childhood even before being born. The existence of an older brother who would have been king had he lived would have been very disagreeable to Ramses. Hence the effort to erase and not perpetuate that name (Wiedemann 1890).

In 1899, Breasted also identified a figure in the Karnak reliefs as the older brother of Ramses and the first-born son of Seti (1899). This figure appears to have been chiseled out of the Libyan battle scene by Ramses II who then inserted himself into the relief (Breasted 1899, 134–135). Breasted designated this nameless older brother of Ramses as 'X' (1899, 135). At that time he concluded that the battle relief consisted of three layers:

1. the original scene and text with no princes;
2. the insertion by Seti's oldest son of himself;
3. the erasure of the oldest son by Ramses II and his insertion of his own name (Breasted 1899, 135–136).

Breasted even thought that he had found signs of a third son of Seti in the reliefs who he called 'Y' (1899, 136–137). That discovery would have complicated even more the number of times the relief had been altered (Breasted 1899, 137). So, it seemed clear to him that Ramses II had engaged in some retrojected legitimation of his position. As to whether the elder brother ever had ruled, Breasted offered as a possible trace of that ephemeral rule the tale of Aigyptos and Danaos, the rival twin brothers who had 50 sons and 50 daughters respectively (1899, 139).

Writing in *A History of Egypt* in 1905, Breasted elaborated on the events behind this sequence of alterations. He claimed that as the 30th anniversary of Seti's nomination as crown prince approached, the eldest son, whose name still was unknown to Breasted, was appointed heir (Breasted 1909, 418). Immediately following this designation, the new heir then rewrote the reliefs of his father to reflect his new status, as previously stated.

As Breasted described it, again in 1906 (1906b, 59–68) and then in 1924 (139), Ramses was already plotting to supplant his older brother as the heir apparent when the time was right. Then, as soon as his father was buried, Ramses implemented his plan. Breasted asserted that Ramses brushed his brother aside without a moment's hesitation and seized the throne:

> Whether his elder brother gained the throne long enough to have his figure inserted in his father's reliefs or whether his influence as crown prince had accomplished this, we cannot tell. In any case Ramses brushed him aside without a moment's hesitation and seized the throne. The only public evidence of his brother's claims, his figure inserted by that of Seti in the battle with the Libyans ... was immediately erased with the inscriptions which shared his name and titles; while in their stead the artists of Ramses inserted the figure of their new lord with the title 'crown prince', (1909, 418–419)

which he had never borne.

Breasted's interpretation of an older brother was contested (Seele 1940, 25–26; UCOIES 1986, xviii–xix). A detailed examination of the reliefs demonstrates they were altered to obliterate Mehy (UCOIES 1986, 31–32, 81–83, 87, 91–94). Spalinger suggests that there may have been a separate cycle relating to Mehy's heroic deeds on the battlefield: 'it would not be speculative to conclude that the relief of Seti I with Mehy is based upon an anecdote of personal bravery and trustworthiness that must have endured among the heroic narratives of the day' (2002b, 349; 2003, 223). It is easy to understand how this mysterious figure might have considered himself to be Horus, the legitimate heir to the throne. It also is easy to understand the desire by Ramses who did succeed Seti to proclaim all that Seti supposedly had done for him when he was but a child and to erase the false Horus. Ramses sought to 'correct' the past to legitimate his reign in the present.

Beginning in the 1930s, a then separate track of academic development occurred. In this path of research the focus was not on the battle reliefs of the pharaohs but the love poetry. In 1931, Gardiner published love songs from Papyrus Chester Beatty (1931, 27–38) including one Ramesside love song mentioning Mehy. He is not one of the star-crossed lovers of the love poetry, rather he is a figure encountered by the unnamed young male. Mehy appears in one of the seven stanzas of the poetry.

> STANZA THE THIRD
> I was simply off to see Nefrusy my friend,
> And while I was staying there
> My heart purposed to see its beauty,
> Sitting within it.
> I found Mehy a-riding on the road,
> Together with his lusty youths.
> I knew not how to remove myself from before him. Should I pass by him boldly?
> Lo, the river is the road,
> I know not a place for my feet.
> Witless art thou, O my brave heart, exceedingly, Why wilt thou brave Mehy?
> Behold, if I pass before him,
> I shall tell him of my turnings;
> Behold, I am thine, I shall say to him,
> And he will boast of my name. (Gardiner 1931, 31; Foster 1974, 50–51)

In a footnote, Gardiner wrote about this individual:

> He is perhaps a royal prince, for he is riding in a chariot accompanied by a band of companions. She [meaning the speaker] is covered with confusion and knows not whether to advance or retreat. She fears to betray her feelings, for in that case Mehy will perhaps hold her cheap and boastingly hand her over to one of his followers. (1931. 32 n.1)

At this point, there was no attempt by him to identify this possibly royal figure in the love poetry with any historical figure.

The following year, 1932, these love songs were translated into French. The translator, E. Suys, suggested that this genre represented a rudimentary drama similar to the biblical *Song of Songs* (1932, 219). In 1942, it was retranslated into French by Pierre Gilbert. He noted that the composer had been overwhelmed by the emotional depth of the poem at the moment of encounter between the man the woman (1942, 196). He dated these poems before the artificially numbered Leiden Hymns (P. Gilbert 1942, 187) from the time of Ramses II.

In 1948, Paul Smither advanced the process of identification one step further (116). He noted the apparent absence of all personal allusion as a characteristic of love songs in ancient Egypt. Smither then cited the very footnote of Gardiner's just noted above but added some additional information. Ostraca 1078 and 1079 from Deir el-Medina contain the name Mehy inside cartouches, thus signifying his royal identity. Smither wrote:

> It is thus possible to establish the identity of at least one person who was the inspiration of these songs, though it would be useless to speculate as to who he really was and the age in which he lived ... (1948, 116)

Smither proceeded to characterize Mehy as something of a Don Juan, from the time when political leaders boasted of their sexual adventures instead of denying them and was cited by Barbara Lesko (Smither 1948, 116; B. Lesko 1986, 96).

In 1985, Michael Fox wrote *The Song of Songs and the Ancient Egyptian Love Songs.* He noted the two fragments found at Deir Medina as part of the corpus under investigation:

> DM 1079
> (Boy?)
> Beer is sweet,
> when I sit at his side
> [and my] hands have not been far away.
> The wind blows as I say in my heart,
> '_____... with sweet wine.
> I am given of [love (?)].' ...
>
> My voice is hoarse from saying,
> '(King) Mehi! Life, prosperity, health!'
> He is in his fortress.
>
> DM 1078 verso
> (Boy)
> The lady sails north while [drinking] beer
> An island is before him...
> ... sail.
> Cool ...
> ... pure gold.

> We will cast the heel ...
> ...
> We will place (gifts) before
> (King) Mehi,
> saying:
> ... love.
> Spend the day.
> (Fox 1985, 80)

He sought to relate the biblical love poetry to the Egyptian genre. Previously, Fox had suggested that these love songs were accompanied by mimetic dancing and that the speakers addressed an undefined audience (1980, 104). In a response to this article, Virginia Lee Davis wrote that she had concluded that Egyptian love poetry had been cast 'in the traditional mold of their ancient mythological compositions' (1980, 112). In a paper presented at the 1998 American Research Center in Egypt Conference on Mehy, Robyn Gillam concluded that '[T]he Hathoric theme permeates these poems'. This was consistent with her earlier article (1995) on the musical activities of these priestesses (1995), somewhat reminiscent of Miriam singing at the Song of the Sea in the Exodus (Ex. 15) or the daughters of Israel at Shiloh (Judges 21).

Fox's interpretation on the love poetry differed from Gardiner. Whereas Gardiner envisaged an unnamed woman who is confused by Mehy's appearance, Fox identified the figure as an unnamed male, equally indecisive and confused about striding past the figure in the chariot. Gardiner described the band of males accompanying Mehy as 'lusty youths' (1931, 31), Fox saw them in a more passive position, men who are ensnared in love like a bird trapped in a net (1985, 58).

> It seems, however, that the youth decided to go to the house of the girl he saw passing by, but on the way he met a mysterious figure called Mehi passing by on chariot followed by a group of 'lovers.' The youth became confused and was seized by doubts. He was afraid that if he were to stride boldly by Mehi he would turn himself over to him and be put into the group called the *kpwy*, the ensnared ones. (Fox 1985, 61)

Fox noted that Mehy appears only in this song and the two ostraca and did not appear to be related to a specific historical figure. He suggested that Mehy was a

> Cupid-figure who embodies the power of love. He wanders about the earth and holds young people in the bonds of love. Whoever turns himself over to love becomes one of Mehi's followers, one of the *kpwy* ('trapped one'?), who are apparently none other than the group of males called the 'lovers'. (Fox 1985, 66)

Fox also noted the existence of a chariot rider in the biblical Song of Songs 6:12 (1985, 166). One might add the chariot rides with runners taken by Absalom and then Adonijah (II Sam.15:1–2 and I Kings 1:5) marked them as heirs to David. Therefore, it would be wise not to ignore the visual image that might be immediately conveyed to an Egyptian through the poetry: that the male in the chariot was the heir to the

throne at the designation of the current king, the same conclusion Breasted had arrived at regarding the mysterious figure 'X' and French Egyptologist Pascal Vernus had concluded in 1992 once that mysterious figure had been identified as Mehy (1992, 174 n. 10). Vernus's Mehy was a dashing figure who crossed over from historically real to folk memory (1992, 174 n. 12).

Gillam focuses on the presence of Hathor which permeates the love poetry. Hathor appears in five of the seven stanzas. Nefrusy, where the man is headed, is a Hathor cult center (and a thrice-mentioned goal of Kamose in his war against Apophis). The unnamed woman of the poetry is like Sirius rising at New Year and Hathor coming forth from her temple (Gillam 2000b, 214). Mythic connections elevate the stature of the love poetry. In this context, Mehy assumes a larger than life persona that may cross into the supernatural.

It was with William Murnane that eldest son of Seti 'X' and the love poetry figure of Mehy began to come into clearer focus. Thanks to the renewed excavations by the Oriental Institute, Breasted's X now could be identified as Mehy (Murnane 1977, 61). He was considered to be a commoner, still of unknown origins (Murnane 1985, 163–175). Even presuming a full name for Mehy of (DN)emheb, such as Horemheb, 'Horus is in Jubilation', Murnane states: 'no convincing candidate has yet been found among the known contemporaries of Seti I or his son' for this person (Murnane 1995, 200). It remains unclear to scholars whether Seti had designated Mehy as heir to throne or whether Mehy had simply sought the same position that previous military leaders (such as Ay, Horemheb, and Ramses I) had held before they each had become king (Murnane 1985, 164; 1995, 201).

The full extent of Mehy's warrior exploits are not now known due to vanished registers and inaccessible walls. Spalinger suggested that perhaps the still hidden scenes at Karnak, on the east side of the outer northern wall of the Great Hypostyle Court describing the northern wars of Seti, contain additional information about his experiences ... or the lost registers once did (1979). Nonetheless, some information has been gleaned from the Egyptian records and reliefs. Murnane says of him: 'his exclusive attendance on the king (not to mention the extraordinary honor of his insertion into the finished war reliefs) suggest a loftier standing than his titles otherwise imply' (1995, 200–201).

As the fan-bearer to the king, Mehy may be said to have actively participated in the planning and organization of the early military campaigns of Seti (Murnane 1990, 108). Indeed, his duties may be said to have included 'designating the routes the army would use, coordinating its activities while under way, and perhaps organizing its tactics in battle' (Murnane 1990, 108). Thus, Mehy was skilled in the logistics of large-scale troop movements over long distances through friendly and hostile territory. He certainly would have been familiar with the military camp structure that Ramses used in the Battle of Kadesh.

So Mehy was close to the king ... and was despised by Ramses. As Murnane describes it, there is scarcely any ambiguity in the response this elusive figure elicited

from Ramses II (1995, 201–202). The titles which Ramses inserted into the reliefs were designed to stress his rights as the heir presumptive. 'The meticulous fashion with which these points were made is surely relevant to the nature of the threat which Mehy was perceived to be by Ramses' (Murnane 1995, 201–202). Evidently, and the evidence is there, Mehy's obscurity in the Egyptian historical record does not match the impact he had in history.

As king, Ramses now changed how he had been represented or omitted in the Egyptian historical record as a result of the threat of Mehy, just as Breasted had surmised. Ramses began to portray himself in the war reliefs with his father at age 10, a striking innovation since young princes were not so depicted in Eighteenth Dynasty war reliefs (Murnane 1995, 204; Gilbert 2021). Murnane notes:

> The extraordinary honor Mehy received from Seti I is undeniable proof of his influence, even if we cannot know its precise nature and extent ... The existence of so powerful a 'right-handed man' as Mehy might well be alarming to a young crown prince who lacked ... maturity...The true mystery in this affair – the reason why Seti I permitted Mehy to rise so far above his station –eludes us now, but the implicit menace of such a situation ... is not mysterious at all. (1995, 206–207)

One may reasonably speculate that Mehy's shadow loomed large as Ramses sought to prove himself the more worthy warrior and leader in his confrontations with the Hittites after becoming king given Mehy's own reputation and prowess.

Murnane concluded his review of Mehy by calling the linking of the Mehy of the love poetry and of the Seti battle scenes an 'attractive idea, while unprovable, [it] is also not easy to dismiss' (1985, 174). He described this image of Mehy as the embodiment of an Egyptian hero figure who, despite all that Ramses had done to obliterate his physical record, continued to live on in Egyptian memory (Murnane 1985, 174). In sum, Mehy was a charismatic figure of military leadership, skill and popular renown of undetermined ethnic origin, close to Seti and feared by Ramses.

The question of the identity of Mehy was raised by Wilkinson in his history of Egypt.

> In the king's battle reliefs at Ipetsut, an enigmatic figure labeled only as 'the group marshaler and fan bearer Mehy' is depicted with unusual prominence, as if playing a key role in the battles and in Seti's wider offensive strategy.
>
> To be given such a high status on a royal monument, Mehy ... must have been one of the most influential figures at court – perhaps occupying a position akin to that of Horemheb during the reign of Tutankhamun or of Raramessu [who became Ramses I] during the reign of Horemheb. It has even been suggested that the mysterious Mehy was Seti's designated heir, and that the martial king had decided to follow recent precedent by leaving his throne to a fellow army officer. (2010, 299–300)

Wilkinson does not identify who made the suggestion of mysterious Mehy as heir but it probably was Murnane who titled one section 'The mysterious Mehy' (1985, 163–175) and in the second edition 'The still mysterious Mehy' (1990, 107–114).

Spalinger notes the 'murky data about the high ranking warrior Mehi, who was a key figure in Seti's Karnak reliefs' (2020, 37). Overall, as an experienced adult warrior, Mehy could reasonably think of himself as Horus who would become king one day as other warriors had before him.

However, another possibility was to revert to the traditional mode of father–son succession even when the son was not an experienced adult. As Wilkinson writes:

> Seti's son the adolescent Prince Ramesses, had other ideas. Within a few years of Mehy's figure being carved, every instance was systematically erased from the Ipetsut reliefs to be replaced by Ramesses's own image. The next generation of the Ramesside Dynasty had no intention of allowing a mere commoner to exercise such influence over the kingdom's affairs. Ramesses, and he alone, would be recognized by posterity as his father's true heir and most steadfast supporter. (2010, 300)

Mehy was not the first person to be erased in Egyptian history. The two prominent examples are Hatshepsut and Akhnaton. Both were erased after they died of natural causes. She appears to have been cancelled not when Thutmose III took office but years later when he sought to foreclose any prospect of a collateral line claiming to be the legitimate heir. Akhnaton's demise derived from the aberrant religion he sought to impose on the people. In this instance, the cause of the erasure appears to have been strictly personal. Ramses attempted to execute the false Horus as an Apophis who disturbed *maat*.

The Mehy situation imposed certain obligations on the unproved young king. As Wilkinson continues:

> Ramesses, and he alone, would continue Seti's aggressive foreign policy and fulfill Egypt's destiny as a great imperial power. Ramesses, and he alone, would confront the Hittites directly in a final struggle for international supremacy. (2010, 300)

In an email on the Egyptologists' Electronic Forum list in 2000, Yurco wrote:

> To all who posted questions about Mehy depicted on the wall of the outer western side of the Hypostyle Hall in Sety I's reliefs, I was with the Epigraphic Survey when we discovered this figure and his identity, and I would agree that he was a high military official under Sety I prior to Ramesses II being announced as crown prince, whose name was later suppressed by Ramesses. Whether he is the same Mehy mentioned in the Ramesside Love poetry is an interesting teaser of a question. It is possible that he is. One of the mysteries of the Ramsesside era!

Imagine Mehy as a charismatic warrior with popular appeal and recognition who rates highly with the king.

Apparently Ramses sought to ensure that a similar situation on succession never occurred again. He strove to rectify the opportunity a non-son had to become king by clarifying the position of his own children. In the abstract of her presentation at the Current Research in Egyptology 2020–2021 conference, Emily Gilbert analyzed

the change behind Ramses's depiction of his own royal children in contrast to their lack of display in the Eighteenth Dynasty.

> One of the major periods of this change comes from the reign of Ramesses II, where his children are very much put on display for the public to see. The most overt examples of this are in his various Processions of Princes and Princesses. Linked to the reasoning behind these alterations is an enigmatic figure named Mehy, who was usurped from Seti I's Karnak war reliefs. This presentation aims to explore the background and role of Mehy given the evidence that remains. By investigating Mehy, the presentation will provide insight into the potential link that this figure had to how Ramesses adjusted the way his children were depicted to the public. This shift in public visibility is further investigated via comparisons between Mehy's depiction and those of Ramesses' children. (Gilbert 2021)

She describes him as a threat to the crown prince. He bore the same titles as previous military (charioteer) officers Ay, Horemheb, Ramses I, who had leveraged them to 'adoptive' kingship, kings who were not blood relatives of their predecessor. Henceforth only true offspring of Ramses would carry those titles (Gilbert 2021). Evidently, Ramses had learned his lesson from when this false Horus almost had become the real Horus, king of Egypt.

So here we have two alpha males and one father figure where only one can inherit the throne. The younger and unproven one is selected and he immediately faces the need to demonstrate that he has the right stuff for the job, just as his older rival had. M. L. Bierbrier delicately acknowledges that personal animosity may have been involved in Ramses's actions (1993, 10). This scenario seems more appropriate for a Cecil B. DeMille treatment than an academic one. Assmann astutely observes that Pharaonic Egypt was unable to conceive of any form of legitimate political order other than the pharaonic monarchy. There was no alternative option which even could be presented (Assmann 2003, 16; see also Frankfort 1948b, 19). An individual king could be replaced but the monarchical system could not be changed. If you expected to become king and did not, you had not future. What did Mehy do when he was passed over? The Egyptian record is silent. What an opportunity to speculate.

Ramses: Pharaoh of the Exodus

Ramses assumed office in a fluid situation. According to Brand,

> The early Ramsessides do not seem to have wholly established their legitimacy by the end of Seti's reign … Moreover, Ramses may have felt threatened by the influence of a military officer called Mehy. This man seems to have had influence with Seti, and some would see him as the original heir apparent. It is not clear whether Mehy outlived his king, but no later than the accession of Ramesses to the throne, representations of him following after Seti in the Karnak war reliefs were suppressed and replaced by those of prince Ramesses. Thus the new king's accession must be the *terminus post quem* for Mehy's disgrace. (1998, 372–373)

This assertion equates the royal erasure of Mehy with his actual disappearance from history. Ramses knew better.

Egyptologist Amr Gaber raised similar concerns in an article about the deification of Seti I. Based on his examination of documents on the deification, Gaber comments that Ramses used it to consolidate his own accession to the throne. In particular from two documents, PM II. P. 410(17 and 101/102), Gaber concluded 'It seems that King Ramsesses II in order to consolidate his accession to the throne and the idea of his own deification later on, he aimed to confirm not only the deification process of his father but of his grandfather as well. The deification of the father should not be interpreted independently of the deification of the son. After all Ramses was the one who masterminded the deification of Seti after he died' (2013, 369, 382). Left unanswered is the reason why Ramses felt obligated to consolidate his accession and eventual deification. Who contested it?

The young and inexperienced king sought to legitimate himself as the successor to Ramses I and Seti I. He honored the cult of the deceased fathers, his father and grandfather (Brand 2005, 27). As previously noted, Ramses dutifully completed the Abydos projects started by his father. Deciphering Ramses II's true motives involves some guesswork. While praising the achievements of his father, Ramses added '(no other) son has repeated monuments for his father' (Ling 1992, 61). Ling notes this claim as unusual especially since Seti had completed works of his own father Ramses I (1992, 61)! One may speculate on how much of this show of filial piety was sincere and how much was good politics. In any event, the Nineteenth Dynasty was definitely a time when kings sought to link themselves to Egypt's glorious past.

The Turin King list joins the Abydos King List of Seti and Ramses II in indicating an 'explosion' of interest in the Pharaohs of Egypt during the Nineteenth Dynasty. The tentative date of origin is the reign of Ramses II although, as always, such specificity is subject to debate. The exact circumstances of its discovery are lost to history as is its archaeological context. The once intact document has fragmented into over 300 pieces since that discovery. It is unusual in that it includes people who did not make the cut in other lists. Of note here is the inclusion of the six Hyksos in the Fifteenth Dynasty, ruling for 108 years as foreigners. The Hyksos are included but formatted differently, without the royal title, cartouche, or divine determinative. Issues like the sources and the skill of the copyist are part of the Egyptological discipline (Ryholt 2004b; Allen 2010). One unanswered question is the reason for this king list as could be asked about the Abydos lists. Why this interest in the past Pharaohs?

Battle of Kadesh: Exodus catalyst

> Perhaps the best example of what we would consider a falsification of history is the account of the Battle of Qadesh between Egypt and the Hittites during the reign of Ramesses II ... (Wendrich 2010, 8)

The Battle of Kadesh in year 5 ranks as one of the greatest battles in ancient Near East history. The battle was not one where one side sought to capture the city of another, as so many battles were. Instead, it was a clash between titans, between two major powers at a contested site far removed from the homeland of both. Thanks to the multiple versions of the battle by Ramses at locations throughout the country, there may be more information about this fight than any other one until Sennacherib's invasion of Judah in 701 BCE. And like that struggle, there are versions from both sides, in this case the Egyptians and the Hittites (for the Battle of Kadesh, see Breasted 1903; Faulkner 1958; Gardiner 1960; Goedicke 1966a; 1985; Lichtheim 1976, 57–72; Kitchen 1982, 53–64; 1994a; Spalinger 1982, 153–173; 1985a; 1985b; 2002b, 2003; 2020; Morschauser 1985; de Bruyn 1989; Coureyer 1990; Broadhurst, 1992, 77–81; Shirun-Grumach 1998; Assmann 2003, 247–271; Morris 2005, 362–366; Berman 2016, 93–112; 2017, 17–60; Obsomer 2016).

Ramses made sure everyone knew about the battle. In images and texts, accounts of the battle were distributed throughout the land. The inscriptions are at the temples at Abu Simbel, Abydos, Karnak, Luxor, and the Ramesseum. These scenes on the temple walls surrounding the sacred space representing Egypt demonstrated that king successfully warded off the forces of chaos attempting to violate *maat*. Two hieratic papyri fragments of the Poem have been discovered so the distribution of the accounts may be more widespread than the fixed building sites. Temples in Memphis and Avaris probably had the accounts but they have not survived (Assmann 2003, 266). More than a century ago, Breasted expressed the awe in seeing these displays.

> No incident in Egyptian history is so impressed upon the mind of the traveler in Egypt as this battle between the forces of Ramses II and those of the Hittites at Kadesh on the Orontes, in the fourteenth century before Christ [now dated to the thirteenth century]. The young king's supreme effort to save himself and his army from destruction is so often depicted and in such graph pictures upon the walls of the great temples, that no visitor, not even the most blasé 'globe-trotter' can ever forget it. (1903, 4)

Imagine the displays if Ramses had won!

There are three separate accounts of the battle. The Poem survives in eight versions of around 350 lines roughly 80% in verse. It celebrates Amun and the king. The shorter Bulletin exists in seven copies of around 110 lines, about 25% poetry. Amun is not a factor – but decoy Shasu spies (B 7–28), captured Hittite spies (B 33–51), and Ramses heroics are. The reliefs with captions are a third source. Amun is not a factor; Ramses still fights alone but the heroic *n'rn* are shown. The presumption is that one person, Ramses, commissioned all of them. He did so at one time. Whether he did so immediately after the Battle, later in his reign, or over time making changes is debated by Egyptologists. The audience viewing these different compositions often at the same site has the option of cheering Amun, Ramses, or the *n'rn* on to victory.

The identity of these *n'rn* has attracted attention among Egyptologists (see Schulman 1962; 1981; Goedicke 1966a, 71–80; Zudhi 1977–1978; Kitchen 1982, 60; 1994a, 26–27;

Spalinger 1985a, 3; 2005, 7; Manassa 2003, 53; Morris 2005, 362–366; Obsomer 2016, 81–168). The term is Semitic. Perhaps Seti (or Ramses) had created an elite division in the Egyptian army of Semitic warriors from the captives from Canaan including *maryannu*; perhaps he had drawn on soldiers from the other Egyptian divisions. The exact identity of these warriors is elusive. Merneptah's Karnak Inscription clearly differentiates the *n'rn* from the victorious Egyptian troops as they are contrasted with each other. One might even inquire why Merneptah chose to compare his Egyptian troops to the *n'rn* in the first place. Evidently their fighting reputation was well-known. The most significant action involving these Semitic warriors fighting on behalf of Egypt was this rescue effort at the Battle of Kadesh. Naturally, Ramses who was very meek, more than all men that were on the face of the earth, was eager to give credit where credit was due. He praised the *n'rn* for saving him. At least he did in reliefs when he was not otherwise taking credit for having won the battle all by himself. To put the event in perspective, Ramses was on the brink of becoming a Seqenenre on the battlefield against the Hittites before he was rescued.

In this study of the Exodus, it is not necessary to attempt to document everything that happened at Kadesh even from the Egyptian side. In the beginning of the Poem was the triumph and victory of Ramses against the world organized against him (P 1–6). It is all about him, the warrior hero victor (P 7–24). He proclaims his triumph throughout the land and to all the inhabitants thereof. One cannot forget the Poem's prince of Aleppo swallowing so much of the waters of the Orontes River he had to be turned upside-down to empty him. Or the drowning Hittites either (P 138–142).

Scholars have sought to compare the biblical tabernacle with the tent of Ramses clearly shown in the Egyptian reliefs (Homan 1998; 2000). Another area of comparison is the biblical narrative of the sea account with the Kadesh inscriptions (Berman 2016; 2017, 17–60). Biblical exegesis is outside the scope of this study. Nonetheless, Berman makes several salient observations on the Kadesh inscriptions that demonstrate the ongoing contact between Egypt and the Hyksos-led Israelite people. Berman states the Song of the Sea 'deliberately appropriates royal Egyptian propaganda in what it trumpets as YHWH's victory over Pharaoh himself'(2016, 94; 2017, 35). Clearly one can find glimpses of parallels between the two great accounts of defining showdowns: at Kadesh on the Orontes River for Ramses and Egypt and at the Sea of Reeds for Moses and Israel.

The Battle of Kadesh inscriptions are distinct within Egyptian history. Gardiner claims,

> There is nothing in Egyptian literature really comparable to this narrative of Ramesses II. I maintain, therefore, that Ramesses II's account of this Hittite is a unique phenomenon in Egyptian literature. (1960, 53)

Lichtheim supplements this observation by deeming it a genre hitherto not found in Egypt, the epic poem (1976, 59). Assmann deems it 'probably ancient Egypt's most singular and impressive historiographic enterprise' (2003, 256). He considers it

surprising that Ramses chose it as the subject for an unequaled display of monumental and literary representation in Egyptian historiography given the touch-and-go outcome of the battle. He imagines Ramses as eager to represent the Battle of Kadesh as a concrete event that changed the course of history (Assmann 2003, 265, 267) just like the Battle at the Sea of Reeds. But the odds are Ramses's actions had nothing to do with history as the term in used today. He had other objectives. The uniqueness of the representation was due to 'a new and deeply unsettling experience' (Assmann 2003, 267). Perhaps necessity was the mother of invention. It is a singular event because it recounts the trap into which Pharaoh fallen (Spalinger 2020, 24).

> The minions of Ramesses II were not permitted to vent opinion concerning the trap into which their pharaoh had led them. (Spalinger 2020, 26) [until they voted with their feet in the Exodus!]

The idea of a commander in chief taking responsibility because the buck stops here is not one all leaders can accept. Certainly Ramses could not.

When Ramses commissioned the representations of the Battle of Kadesh, he was not operating in a vacuum. Looming over him were the reliefs and the examples of heroic predecessors. Ahmose had triumphed over the Hyksos. Thutmose III perhaps had as well. He fought a major battle at Megiddo against the chief of Kadesh who had organized a coalition of Semitic peoples against Egypt. For purposes here, one should keep in mind:

- that Thutmose III was a great decisive warrior hero who practically won the battle singlehandedly;
- that Thutmose III was undermined in his efforts by his army that preferred the spoils of war to the taking of the city leading to a siege.

Ramses in the portrayal of the Battle of Kadesh was competing not just against the Hittites but Ahmose and Thutmose III as well (and the Exodus).

In this study, Ramses's accounts of the Battle of Kadesh, the Poem, and the Bulletin are considered 'spin control' (Brand 2005, 28). They are not newspaper accounts nor are they historical compositions. They are royally-commissioned accounts that express the preferences of Ramses. There definitely is historical information contained in the various displays and inscriptions of the battle. But beyond such basic information such as location, the divisions of troops involved, the enemy, and some physical illustrations of military materials, one should be reticent to accept as gospel the words from the Book of Ramses. Ramses engaged in damage control to cover up why he did not win and nearly lost his life.

There are some motifs directly relevant to this study which need to be mentioned.

1. Seth/Baal is an ally of Ramses. In fact, according to Ramses, the Hittite king compares him to Baal and Seth. The dread of him is throughout the land just as the dread of Israel was in Egypt (Ex. 1:12) and the dread of Yahweh because of the greatness of his arm was upon the Canaanites in the Song of the Sea (Ex. 15:16).

2. Ramses is like a flame consuming his enemies, continuing the fire imagery.
3. Ramses goes forth into battle as Israel goes forth from Egypt and into battle. There are 13 examples of going forth to war in Num. 1 alone plus in the Song of Deborah (Judg. 5:4).
4. Ramses is confronting a Hittite coalition of 16 allies including foreign lands at the far end of the sea just as Thutmose III had faced a coalition at Megiddo around two centuries earlier.

What are of special interest are the events that did not occur at Kadesh which Ramses included in his inscriptions.

The first suspect incident involves the Shasu. According to the Bulletin, the Egyptian forces captured two Shasu very near the Syrian battleground. They were captured far north of the area in which they were usually found. They told Ramses not to worry, the Hittite king was far far away (130 miles!) and no immediate threat to the powerful Egyptian forces. However, these Shasu were decoys on behalf of the Hittites. Breasted deems it the 'earliest military ruse known in history' (1903, 7). The Shasu deliberately provided false intelligence with the intention of luring Ramses into a trap. Mission accomplished. The Hittites knew Ramses. Upon hearing the good news, Ramses charged full speed ahead right into the waiting forces of the Hittites. He apparently was clueless that 2500 chariots were up ahead because all the men and horses were sworn to silence and stillness. Detailing the maneuvers of the various divisions and chariot forces of the dueling kings is not the concern here.

What was the rush? Ramses 'pushed rapidly and boldly on' (Breasted 1903, 27). Why? The goal of the campaign was to regain Kadesh. Ramses sought to restore the glory days of Egypt when Kadesh was subservient to Egypt and not to the Hittites. He methodically went about achieving this objective in his march to Syria (P 25–40). According to the Shasu decoys he was on the verge of victory. The Hittites were so far away that if Ramses had continued his organized march to Kadesh, he would have arrived there first and been able to secure the settlement from the distant Hittites. As Kitchen likes to point out, Egypt had 250 years of experience in invading and travelling the Levant (1994a, 27, 39). They knew how to organize and operate a campaign. Instead he now proceeded pell-mell as if the Hittites were close at hand and the race was on. The key item in this episode is the command decision by the commander in-chief to seize the moment by shifting from slow and steady to full speed ahead.

In the real world what probably happened? The headstrong and untested military leader with something to prove walked right into a trap due to his own shortcomings as a leader. Apparently, the Hittites knew the exact right words to have the Shasu decoys deliver to trigger the Egyptian king into abandoning the tried and true methods and, instead, rush into a trap. Another way to look at it was he was like a fish caught in a net (Spalinger 2020, 168, 175–179), assuming the incident even occurred. The person responsible for the Egyptians being trapped and Ramses

nearly losing his life was Ramses himself. That explanation would not work back home. It would not bolster his legitimacy. It would not cause people to respect him as a leader, as the rightful king. Instead, it would make him seem like someone in over his head. Perhaps Seti had made the wrong choice, perhaps someone else was better qualified to be king.

It is important to understand the context in which Ramses nearly becoming a Seqenenre occurred. After the Battle of Kadesh, no one knew that Ramses would rule for another 60 years. No one knew that he would build all that he built. No one knew that he would become Ramses the Great, a colossus who bestrode Egyptian and ancient Near Eastern history. After Kadesh, the Almost-Seqenenre was far from being the ultimate Pharaoh. Instead, he was just a failure who barely escaped with his life and blamed the forces of chaos (aligned with Moses at the time of this telling) who had led him astray with their deviousness and dishonesty. This long episode of the deception provided a literary foil for his heroism while casting the Shasu in the role of villain. 'Don't blame me, blame the Shasu!'

His escape from this plight is equally suspect.

> His majesty spoke:
> What is this, father Amun?
>
> Is it right for a father to ignore his son ...
> What are these Asiatics to you, O Amun.
> The wretches ignorant of god? ...
> I call to you, my father Amun,
> I am among a host of strangers;
> All countries are arrayed against me,
> I am alone, there's none with me!
> My numerous troops have deserted me,
> Not one of my chariotry look for me.
> (quoted in Lichtheim 1976, 65)

Poor Ramses. The whole world is against him. Even his own army. All because of those Asiatics who are ignorant of God. It makes one wonder how extensive Hyksos Moses's contacts with the wider world were when he confronted Ramses as well as his with the Egyptian army.

No Egyptologists accept Ramses's lament to Amun as literally true (Spalinger 2020, 165). The second verbal exchange is historically suspect. Active divine aid in military battle is rare in Egyptian history with this one exception (Spalinger 2020, 32). Certainly, in the midst of battle surrounded by hostile forces when things are looking bad, it is easy to imagine someone crying 'Jesus Christ' or some other desperate invocation of one's Lord. But such exclamations in the heat of battle are a far cry from the carefully composed prayer (P 92–127) by the dutiful king to his divine father which he painted, plastered, and wrote up and down the Nile Valley. One should not confuse the posturing for posterity with the unrehearsed emotionally charged battlefront cry by someone who feared he was on the brink of death.

Was Ramses influenced by the Exodus in the creation of this Amun scene? For Egyptologists and biblical scholars the question is absurd. Given a Hyksos-led Exodus following the battle and before these inscriptions were composed, the question is quite reasonable. Israelite history should be integrated into Egyptian history in the Nineteenth Dynasty. Ramses knew that Israel sang to Yahweh's defeat of Egypt and that Yahweh was a deity who acted in history. He could not let that affront go unchallenged even if he drew on Hittite precedents for the format of the prayer. Obviously a connection cannot be proven, but given the historical reality of the Exodus, it is quite understandable why Ramses after defeats at both the Orontes River and the Sea of Reeds would want to praise his god for being on his side in history at Kadesh.

> Be firm. Fortify your hearts, O my army!
> See my strength while I am alone —
> Amun my protector and his hand is with me!
> (P 169–170)

In the biblical account:

> And Moses said to the people, 'Fear not, stand firm, and see the salvation of Yahweh, which he will work for you today; for the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall never see again. Yahweh will fight for you, and you have only to be still'. (Ex. 14:13–14)

The contrast between the two texts tells the story. Part of the rejection of the Egyptian cultural construct meant never taking credit the way Ramses had for his singular personal victory at Kadesh.

In this moment of truth, Ramses prevailed against fearsome odds. His army marched in prose, Ramses fought in poetry. He alone triumphed. His foes feared him. Their arms slackened. They could not shoot. They lost the courage to grasp their spears. All seemed lost and only a prayer to Amun could save him. His prayers were heard. Ramses won and the losers met a watery death.

> I made them plunge into the water as crocodiles plunge,
> They fell on their faces one on the other.
> I slaughtered among them at my will,
> Not one looked behind him,
> Not one turned around,
> Whoever fell down did not rise.
> (Lichtheim 1976, 66)

Ramses had achieved a victory of epic proportions, almost biblical in scale!

To make matters even worse, it was not a display by Amun that saved him. Instead, it was the arrival in the nick of time of the division of *n'rn*. One should not be surprised by their absence in the texts displayed across the land. They are not given written credit for the victory. Even when they are shown in the reliefs it was skillfully done to minimize their actions so as not to undermine Pharaoh's

role. The artist's reluctance to show them in battle relegates them to a low profile (Broadhurst 1992, 78).

The hero of the literary narratives was Ramses who stands alone against an immense Hittite chariot foe.

> Hence at the crucial juncture when the Hittite chariots came into the Egyptian camp these two versions [the Bulletin and the Poem] ignore the Na'rn. Ramesses is the heavyweight par excellence, the luminary, and the one who resisted the chariot onslaught. (Spalinger 2020, 163)

Ramses really did smite the enemy. He did. He did. Look. Look. It's right there on the pylon. The spin might work in the Egyptian countryside, but the people in the land of Canaan and in the capital knew better.

A subtext to this story is the effectiveness of Ramses's control over his own military forces. The military was the leading example of a hybrid institution combining Hyksos, Canaanite, Egyptian, and Nubian people and technologies. As noted, the situation with the military was in flux at the onset of his reign (see above). Goedicke questions the loyalty of the military establishment as a factor in Ramses's career (1985, 109–110). He states: 'there must have been unrest in the military (and possibly some civilian) establishment and doubts about the total loyalty of its members toward the Pharaoh' (1985, 114). The Poem stresses the cowardice of the army. The portrayal of the failed troops is integral to the plot structure. That force included many Semitic warriors.

The truth of the Battle of Kadesh could not remain hidden.

> Yet, there must have been numerous individuals – soldiers, officials, etc. – who knew the truth of the situation, namely that the campaign was unsuccessful in terms of conquering territory, and word of this must have spread. (Janzen 2013, 34)

One suspects there were some disgruntled soldiers back home after the battle.

One wonders about the supposed 'great crime' they had committed on the field of battle at Kadesh. Assmann equates the great crime of the military officers not standing by their man as tantamount to participating in the conspiracy of Asiatic allies and garrison commanders (Assmann 2003, 269–270). It is hard to believe that, following a well-organized march to Kadesh by a professional army of over 20,000 people with over 250 years of invasion experience, suddenly they abandoned their king when the going got tough. Perhaps the time when the military truly did abandon Ramses was not in his battle against the Hittites but in a conspiracy initiated by the Hyksos when they left Egypt against the will of Ramses.

Was Israel affected by the Ramses account of the Battle of Kadesh? Perhaps Ramses's boasting extended not only throughout Egypt but into Canaan as well where Israel could keep up-to-date on Pharaoh's claims (Berman 2016, 111–112; 2017, 48). As an epic poem of an historical encounter, its existence also may be seen as a precursor

to the Songs of the Sea and of Deborah in the biblical tradition. Some elements carried over into the Israelite tradition as well. For example, Ramses claims:

> (P 281) My Uraeus serpent overthrowing my enemies for me.
> (P 282) She spat her fiery flame in the face(s) of my foes.
> (P 283) I was like Re, in his appearing at the dawn,
> (P 284) my rays, they burned up the bodies of the rebels.
> (P 287) See, Sekhmet the Mighty is she who is with him!
> (Kitchen 2002b, 37)

These motifs of Sekhmet, the Uraeus, fire, and death are part of the Egyptian cultural construct that left an indelible impression on Hyksos-led Israel. When Israel left the one-river garden of plenty, it did so in defiance of the upright Uraeus (Ramses) poised to kill. Assmann writes:

> True, the report of the Exodus stems from an authentic account of a sojourn in and a departure from Egypt, but those events were experienced not by the Hebrews but by the Hyksos, whose traditions the Hebrews inherited. (2003, 283)

Assmann ignores the possibility that the biblical Hebrews and the Egyptian Hyksos refer to the same people in two different languages. The Hebrew departure in the Exodus was the Hyksos departure in the Exodus. Not all the Hyksos and not only the Hyksos but led by the Hyksos. Meanwhile, all was not quiet on the home front. As Thomas Thompson astutely comments on the significance of the battle of Kadesh beyond the battle itself.

> After this defeat, Ramses II's army was racked with revolts. It had borne the brunt of the cost of his expensive misadventure ... Civil unrest and religious opposition at home was doubly encouraged ... A series of plots and intrigues by court factions bitter over the military failure at Kadesh effectively paralyzed royal authority and its control of import groups within the army. (2000, 153)

One might take issue as to the extent to which unrest and intrigue occurred, but the basic thrust of the observation appears valid. Kadesh exposed the shortcomings of the leader of the country and people responded to that weakness. Thompson has honed in on the precise time when the potential for disruption of *maat* in the political arena had occurred. Instead of a battle between the Hyksos in the north and the Thebans in the south, the battle had shifted to one within the capital city the Hyksos and the Nineteenth Dynasty shared.

Speculations

- I speculate after Seti passed over Moses as his successor, Moses knew what Ramses would do to him once he became king.

- I speculate Moses fled like Sinuhe but he knew where he was going.
- I speculate Moses entered into an alliance with Shasu and became a member of the Kenite tribe through a covenant ceremony and marriage.
- I speculate Moses returned to Egypt from the wilderness following the debacle at Kadesh. He no longer sought the crown of Egypt. He had changed.

Chapter 6

The Exodus: death on the Nile

Moses led people out of Egypt against the will of Ramses II (1279–1213 BCE) on the seventh hour of New Year's Eve at the end of Ramses's seventh year of ruling. It is an Egyptian story. Why that time? Why that day? Why that year? Why against Ramses II? The answers to these questions are found not in the Hebrew Bible but in Egypt.

With these words, I began the exploration of the Exodus in this study. The preceding chapter brought the story up to the Battle of Kadesh in year 5 of Ramses. The Exodus was moments away. The story now turns to Passover and the departure from Egypt at the Sea of Reeds. Most of the chapter will be devoted to death on the Nile, the royal ritual execution of the rebel 'other' in Egypt. We already have seen Apophis ceremonially smite Seqenenre on the field of battle. In the next chapter, we will see how post-Exodus Egypt used that historical event in the opening sequence of a story dealing with the Exodus. In this chapter we will examine how routine and extensive death on the Nile was to put the incident of Passover into its Egyptian context.

When was the Exodus?

In the chapter on the Egyptian cultural construct, the theme of time and how Egypt measured and organized it was introduced. Ancient Egypt stressed cyclical time, not linear time. To some extent the kings lists commencing with Menes and moving sequentially through time represents an alternate way of perceiving time. It opens the door to history instead of timeless 'Eternal Egypt' of endless cycles. Egyptology, using our dating system, needs linear dates to chronicle the history of Egypt and to connect it to the history of other areas such as Mesopotamia. The synchronization of chronologies obligates the Egyptologist to look beyond the gift of the river to do so.

The effort is a challenging one. For example, Ramses routinely has been dated ascending to the throne in 1304 BCE, 1290 BCE, and 1279 BCE: a significant difference. The first two dates are based on proposed synchronizations with Babylonian chronology which itself has been subject to change (Ward 1992b 55–56). The third date reflects changes within Egyptology. The heliacal rising of Sirius was important

for the calculation of the New Year. But from where was the observation made? As one shifts latitude along the Nile, the day of first appearance shifts as well. Traditionally, Egyptologists have assumed that the observations were made at the capital of Memphis (or the nearby religious center at Heliopolis) or the religious center at Thebes (Karnak). The 1290 BCE date for the accession of Ramses II is based on the Theban vantage point (Ward 1992b, 59).

Another possibility is Elephantine. This location is at the southern border of Egypt where the appearance of the rising Nile would first be observed. Nilometers were built there to measure the height of the inundation. Since the rising of Sirius and the Nile are linked in Egyptian mythology, a legitimate case can be made for the observations to have been done at Elephantine. If Egyptian astronomical calculations were based on this location instead of Thebes, then the timeline shifts 11 years. It goes from 1290 to 1279 BCE, the date now used most commonly for Ramses. However, that 'date 1279 B.C.E. is possible, but no more possible than the previously-proposed 1290 B.C.E. date' (Ward 1992b, 59). In this study, 1279 BCE will be used as the date of accession for Ramses II. Year 7 for the Exodus would in 1272 BCE.

The next question then is when in 1272 BCE did the Egyptian New Year occur given the Sothic cycle and lack of leap year? One such date of completion of a cycle occurred on 20 or 21 July AD 139 (Julian calendar) as recorded by the Roman author Censorinus around 25 June AD 238 (Julian calendar), a century later (O'Neill 1978, 68; Depuydt 1995, 46). Censorinus dated his composition to the second year of the 254th Olympiad or 1014 years after 776 BC, a linear method of dating lacking in Egyptian civilization. Rome actually had a millennium! If Egyptologists agreed that a cycle was completed in 1314 BCE, it would be necessary to calculate how many 4-year periods had occurred between 1314 BCE and the 7th year of Ramses. For every 4-year period, the New Year shifts 1 day as previously noted due to the lack of adjustment (Chapter 2). So, if 44 years had passed, for example, there would be an 11 day gap between the civil calendar start of the New Year and the appearance of Sothis and the beginning of the flood: the New Year then would have been 8 July. That means Egyptologists have to agree on when the Sothic cycle was completed and when Ramses reigned. That agreement does not exist. For purposes here, 8 July 1272 BCE is close enough as a working date for the Exodus.

Why New Year's Eve?

Even given this calculation, what was so special about New Year anyway? To answer that one must investigate the cosmic significance of that day in Egyptian terms related to the concept of *maat* (Chapter 2). The Egyptians recognized that disruptions to *maat*, the cosmic order, could occur. When chaos or *isfet* occurred, it was the responsibility of the king to restore cosmos. The stakes were enormous. The disruption of *maat* in the cosmic world meant low floods, bad harvests, and storms. If the king did not properly perform in rituals and at the temples, this chaos could ensue. It was incumbent upon

the king to ensure the maintenance of *maat*. The sign of its significance and setting may be seen in its calendric acclimation:

> Ma'et is in the presence of Re' on the festival of the first day of the year: the sky is at peace, the earth is in joy; for they have heard that the King will set Ma'et in the place of Isfet; the king is vindicated in his tribunal on the account of the true words which come forth from his mouth. (Pyramid Texts 1774–6 quoted in Smith 1994, 69)

It stands to reason that New Year would be the time for the king to ritually declare that chaos has been defeated and cosmos has been restored to the state as it had been in at the creation, the first time. By so doing, the king also raises the question of who or what has disrupted *maat* causing the need to restore it.

One possible disruptive cause was the foreigner. We have seen that in multiple canonical texts from the Middle Kingdom, the Egyptians blamed the foreigner for the First Intermediate Period chaos. Similarly, the Eighteenth Dynasty Thebans blamed the Hyksos based in Lower Egypt. Another possible source of disruption was internal. The cause could be due to the actions of an Egyptian. Two of the chief obstacles to the maintenance of *maat* by an individual Egyptian were ignorance and passion. Ignorance threatened to lead one astray. This disruption of the divine order would be particularly upsetting if the disruptive individual was the king himself. The Egyptian wisdom tradition including instructions from a king to his son were intended to provide the necessary guidelines whereby one would learn the proper behavior to fulfill one's role in life.

A passionate person posed an equally grave threat to Egyptian life. The Egyptian wisdom tradition provided instructions of the necessity of avoiding the dismal fate of one hot with anger.

> *Instruction of Ptahhotep* (Old Kingdom)
> If you are a man who leads,
> who controls the affairs of many,
> seek out every beneficent deed,
> that you conduct may be blameless.
> Great is Maat, lasting in effect,
> unchallenged since the time of Osiris.
> (Lichtheim 1996, 246; she uses 'justice' instead of 'Maat' in 1975, 64).

Here Osiris is selected to refer to the dawn of the time and the creation of the Egyptian cultural order.

> *Instruction to Merikare* (Middle Kingdom)
> The hothead is an inciter of citizens,
> He creates factions among the young;
> If you find that citizens adhere to him,
> ...
> Denounce him before the councilors,
> Suppress [him], he is a rebel,

> The talker is a troublemaker for the city,
> Curb the multitude, suppress its heat,
> ...
> (Lichtheim 1975, 99)

These instructions to a king warn of the danger of the hotheaded rebel who can rouse the multitude. One presumes the warning to the king was offered because such situations had arisen in Egypt. Those occurrences are not likely to have been part of the official records of the king.

A similar example survives from the Ramesside age in the *Instruction of Amenemope*. Both biblical scholars and Egyptologists have noted similarities between the Book of Proverbs and these instructions although not necessarily the specific verses here.

> *Chapter 2 Humanity, and various advice*
> 12 He who does evil, the shore rejects him,
> 13 Its floodwaters carry him away.
> *17 You heated man, how are you now?*
> *Chapter 3 Prudence in argument*
> 10 Don't start a quarrel with a hot-mouthed man
> 11 Nor needle him with words
> *Chapter 4 The passionate man and the tranquil man*
> 1 As for the heated man in the temple,
> 2 he is like a tree growing in the indoors (or 'forest')
> 3 In a moment comes its loss of foliage,
> 4 Its end is reached in the dock-yards (or 'woodshed')
> 5 It is floated far from its place,
> 6 The flame is its burial-shroud.
> 7 The truly silent man holds himself apart,
> 8 He is like a tree growing in a garden.
> 9 It flourishes and doubles its yield,
> 10 It (stands) before its lord.
> 11 Its fruit is sweet, its shade is pleasant,
> 12 And its end is reached in the garden
> (Griffith 1926, 199, 201–202; Frankfort 1948a, 66; Wilson 1951, 304; Lichtheim 1976, 150–151)

There was probably no greater disruption of *maat* possible for an individual in Egypt than to be a passionate hothead rebel who directly challenged the authority and legitimacy of the king as the exemplar of the Egyptian way of life. Such behavior would have been inexcusable and even inexplicable had such a frontal assault ever actually occurred. The hothead is not a welcomed person within the Egyptian culture. Through metaphors of trees, gardens, floodwaters, and fruit, the Egyptian culture contrasted the way of the good man with the heated one.

The Egyptian tradition stressed the quiet person, the person who makes no waves. 'One has great respect for the silent men' in the *Instruction of Ptahhotep* (Lichtheim 1976, 66). 'The new ideal man is content with a humble position and a minimal amount of material possessions' (Lichtheim 1976, 146). 'The silent man is pre-eminently the

successful man ... and silence is not a sign of humility, but superiority' (Frankfort 1948a, 66). An alternative view criticizes this trait of 'silence'. According to Wilson it means 'patience, humility, submissiveness and even resignation', all perfect traits for the New Kingdom populace to follow (1951, 301). In commenting on Wilson's assessment, Lichtheim observes:

> John Wilson has made two point: First, that the New kingdom spirit of 'empire' had created a society which suppressed the expression of individuality. Second, that the strongly articulated 'personal piety' of the New Kingdom added to the submissiveness of the individual. (1996, 259)

As Egyptologists debate what it meant to be a 'silent' person in the New Kingdom, suffice it to say being a disruptive hothead was not welcome and would be dealt with harshly.

One did not want to be the nail that sticks up, the person who marches to the beat of a different drummer, the person who waxes hot with anger before the king (Ex. 11:8). Such people jeopardized the harmonious integration of Egyptian society. The passionate person could be a violent person and that would not end well for anyone. Instead, one should keep everything running smoothly without friction as much as was humanly possible ... until one joined an eternal recurring cosmic cycle with the sun or the 'Imperishable Ones', the immortal northern circumpolar stars. As will be seen, New Year represented the ideal time for the king to make a show of restoring *maat* to as it was in the beginning by executing the hothead disrupter.

Why the seventh hour of the Night?

Egypt witnessed the showdown between cosmos and chaos not only annually with inundation by the Nile but in the daily disappearance of the sun. The story of the netherworld showdown between Ra and Apophis is told in multiple forms. One is the Eighteenth Dynasty Book of Caverns. It portrays a 12-hour system where each gate is a danger and challenge for the sun god. Ra encounters Apophis at the Fifth Gate. While he is being manhandled he roars. Apophis endures additional indignities at the Ninth, Tenth, and Eleventh Gates (Hornung 1982, 208; 1990, 72; Hart 1990, 58–60). One is reminded that all days in ancient Egypt consisted of 12 hours of night and 12 of day (Chapter 2).

The Book of Gates stands apart from other books of underworld journeys in its intensity on reward and punishment. Ra's journey entails the vivid execution of his enemies. On the other hand, the four races of humanity: the Egyptians, the Asiatics, the Libyans, and the Nubians, are represented in the netherworld as the cattle of Ra (Horning 1982, 167). Ra's foes are totally annihilated. The Egyptians foreclosed any afterlife existence for people who deserved punishment in this world. Two techniques served to ensure this result: decapitation and being overturned (drowning too – no body was recovered). In the Book of Caverns the deceased king proclaims this fate

on the beheaded one and the overturned ones. The tomb of Ramses VI precisely illustrates these conditions (Hart 1990, 56–57; Ritner 1993, 168).

The more prominent underworld journey is the *Amduat* originally called *The Book of the Hidden Chambers*. It tells a daily nocturnal story of sun's journey through the netherworld (Hornung 1990, 71–94). As a subterranean experience it unites the figures of Ra and Osiris in a single event. It exists not in a written narrative form but in a series of images for the 12 hours of the night when the sun vanishes. These scenes first appear on the New Kingdom burial chamber walls of Thutmose I and then on other kings like Thutmose III and Amenhotep II. The very layout of the king's tomb represented a synthesis of decoration and architecture in the telling of this journey (Richter 2008). One may observe here the political significance of a daily ritual that brings the solar and the subterranean deities together. Hornung refers to it as requiring 'extraordinary efforts of imagination and design' to conceive and complete (1990, 71). The *Amduat* brought unity to disorder and created cosmos out of chaos.

For purposes here, the sixth hour, named 'the watery depths, lady of the Underworld-dwellers', and the seventh hour, named 'she who repels the forces of chaos, and decapitates the savaged-faced', of the night are the critical ones. The Egyptian showdown at high noon occurred nightly in the seventh hour of the night. The sixth hour brings the sun and the solar barque to the deepest point in the realm of the dead. They are on the edge of the primeval waters of Nun (Hornung 1990, 73). Apophis blocks the barque. He threatens the progression of the sun god by drinking the waters on which he sails (Bickel 2007, 2). The barque's ability to move forward through the cycle of time is jeopardized. The sun faces the possibility of being stuck in the netherworld forever due to the obstruction by Apophis.

In this place of primordial darkness, Ra confronts Apophis. At this moment, all is at stake. The very existence of creation is threatened. Chaos and non-being could result if Ra and his entourage cannot overcome Apophis. For those who believe in the story, the moment of truth has arrived and the stakes are enormous and frightening. The scene would have struck terror in the hearts of the ancient Egyptians for, to them, a standstill in the sun's course would have threatened to put an end to the order of the cosmos (Schweizer 2010, 134).

At that time Apophis has support in this battle. His confederates are theriomorphic. This is consistent with the view that wild animals are to be equated with foreign enemies which Pharaoh hunts and tramples (Ritner 1993, 160). Deities decapitate these enemies of Ra who assist Apophis. In the final hour of the night, 12 goddesses with uraei unleash that fiery breath at the eastern gate just as the sun is about to rise (Hornung 1990, 107). It is a nocturnal cycle of violence.

Magic is part of this climactic confrontation between Ra and Apophis. Heka, the god of magic, assists Ra. He is present on the solar barque. Ra's triumph via the magic of Isis and the 'Elder Magician' aka Heka attests his importance. Magic is 'the most powerful weapon known to god and man' (Hornung 1990, 105).

Isis deploys her magic against the formless serpent of chaos. She received her magic from Heka. He is the first-born son of Ra-Atum from primordial times. Since each sunrise is another act of creation, Heka must act daily as well. Here he defends the very existence of the created order from chaos. Through his magic, Heka defends humanity and destroys enemies (Ritner 1993, 17–20). In this world, the human priest served in this role as a practitioner of spells and magic. The word for magician can be phonetically rendered, transcribed as *ḫarṭumîm*, and was adopted in Hebrew to designate the magicians of Pharaoh (Ritner 1993, 221). Ritner notes that magic in Egypt has tended to be viewed through the prism of Greek, Roman, Christian, and Western values rather than on its own terms in the Egyptian cultural context (1993, 236–249).

At times, more than magic is involved. Sometimes even deities have to take matters into their own hands. During the eleventh hour of the Amduat, Horus has the foes of Re and Osiris ritually slaughtered:

> The majesty of this god issues commands to cut up ... the corpse of the enemies and the bodies of the dead, he upside down ones who are hindered from moving.
>
> Your heads are cut off. You cannot come into being, for you are upside down. (quoted in Ritner 1993, 169)

This action may be viewed as part of the violence that was part of the Egyptian culture, an aspect that often is minimized. The tomb of Seti displays both the Amudat and the Book of Gates (Dodson 2019, 79–100). They would have been known to Moses and Ramses.

Why Passover?

Murder in the garden is an avoided truth. Egypt was a land of sanctioned deaths. The issue here is not only the people who die on the battlefield. There is nothing particularly unusual in human history about deaths from military confrontations. The subject here is about publicly sanctioned murder in Egypt after the battle and in non-military contexts. In Egyptian society people were deliberately killed in what may be considered cultural or social or religious settings ... taking into account that these divisions and vocabulary would have made no sense to ancient Egyptians. Sanctioned killing in public occurred for a variety of reasons, in different circumstances, and in a ritual setting. To understand the land Moses left on Passover, one needs to understand the place of sanctioned murder within the Egyptian culture and that he was supposed to have been murdered by Pharaoh instead.

The very question of the existence of sanctioned murder in ancient Egyptian is a contentious one. Egyptologists who have studied this aspect of Egyptian life have expressed obstacles against this recognition that Egyptians ceremonially killed other Egyptians in public. The very idea touches a raw nerve – the sacrifice of humans is abhorrent so how could the civilized ancient Egyptians have done it?

> the more a topic touches on the scholars' religious and political viewpoints, the less they are able or willing to evaluate the evidence as objectively as possible. The same is true of topics that touch on subjects to which we have strong emotional reactions. (Muhlestein 2011, 5)

Kerry Muhlestein is referring here not to the Exodus but to the perception among scholars that they, the cultured educated intellectuals of Western Civilization, view themselves as the 'cultural inheritors of Egypt'. They therefore put on 'intellectual blinders' so as not to see their cultural ancestors engaged in such repellent behavior (Muhlestein 2011, 5). Even Herodotus knew that Egyptians did not sacrifice humans:

> for how should they sacrifice men, who are forbidden to sacrifice even the lower animals, save only swine and bulls and bull-calves, if they be unblemished, and geese? (II 45)!

The challenge then, according to Muhlestein, is to confront the historical reality that ancient Egypt engaged in public human sacrifice and to understand it in the Egyptian context. Laurel Bestock cautions that one should resist the temptation to interpret Egyptian imagery of violence as a direct report of actual events. The imagery is part of a larger ideologically driven narrative and not true to history (Bestock 2018, 4).

However, even as Bestock cautions us she lays the groundwork for royal violence. The king is the figure of power. She declares that everyone else is, at least potentially, violently subject to him. The Egyptian values of kingship require a king to be violently physically dominant. The very right to smash heads was an exclusive power of the king. She wonders if smiting scenes were part of a royal ceremony, a drama that included named characters with set roles (Bestock 2018, 11, 144). Still, this definition of kingship certainly is suggestive that such violence occurred in the physical world and not just metaphorically or theatrically.

The debate itself is an ancient one. Already in Greco-Roman times, the issue of human sacrifice in Egypt had been raised. In his text of Osiris and Isis, Plutarch adds:

> The fact is that in the city of Eileithyia they used to burn men alive, as Manetho has recorded; they called them Typhonians, and by means of winnowing fans they dissipated and scattered their ashes. But this was performed publicly and at a special time in the dog-days. (Chapter 73 in Plutarch 1936, 171)

In addition to Manetho, Diodorus Siculus in the first century BCE wrote about human sacrifice in Egypt.

> They say that it was agreed to sacrifice red oxen because it seemed that this was the colour of Typhon [Seth] who plotted against Osiris and upon whom vengeance was wreaked by Isis because of the murder of her husband. They say that men also of the same colour as Typhon were of old sacrificed by the kings near the grave of Osiris. Now of Egyptians few were found to be red, but of foreigners the majority. (I, 88, quoted in Griffiths 1948, 417)

Perhaps, once in the past there had been human sacrifice, but now in civilized Greco-Roman times such practices had ceased. Nubians, maybe, engaged in it but not Egyptians. Griffiths categorically states that these accounts of Herodotus, Diodorus,

and Plutarch are insufficient to warrant the belief that human sacrifice was a common part of the Egyptian ceremonial system (1948, 418). While not 'common', Griffiths acknowledges it did occur in dynastic times and became more common in later times among certain cults. He rejects the idea that human sacrifice was a Semitic practice possibly introduced by the Hyksos because they were not Semitic (1948, 423).

The net conclusion by scholars is that nothing in the classical record demonstrates that Egyptian priests actually practiced human sacrifice in Greco-Roman times (Yoyette 1980–1981, 31–35). However, one may grudgingly accept from some isolated examples that there might be some truth to Manetho's claim that there had been a time when Egyptians engaged in human sacrifice. It was a practice at Heliopolis ended by Ahmose. At that point wax figures replaced people. Jean Yoyette posits that Manetho was referring to the sixth century BCE Ahmose and not the same-named sixteenth century king (1980–1981, 39–40).

Passover did not occur in an Egyptian vacuum. Quite the contrary, it drew on longstanding cultural practices within the Egyptian society intended to maintain *maat* and turned them topsy-turvy. In this section, the ways in which ancient Egypt maintained *maat* through capital punishment will be reviewed. Egypt established protocols for how to handle disruptions to *maat*. The execution was ritually performed as part of a ceremony. Violence was not foreign to the Egyptian society. Those who violated *maat* paid the price. They were hotheads. They were rebels. They were 'Apophis'. They were chaos. The king was right to slay those who disrupted *maat*. To understand what Moses did, it is necessary to understand what Ramses was going to do to him.

Cannibalism

The Cannibal Hymn by its very name is a conceptually troubling text for Egyptologists. For them, the Cannibal Hymn has proved to be both distasteful and challenging.

> Moreover, the negative, primitive associations of cannibalism do not fit well with the romanticized version of Egypt as a civilized 'High Culture'. Such assessment, however reflects more of the preconceptions of traditional Western scholarship than the reality of ancient ideals or behavior ... Egyptology has tended to idealise pharaonic Egypt as honorary 'us' rather than negative 'them' ... Scholarship that sees Egypt as High Culture has no room for the wild and primitive, so that the theme of cannibalism is shocking to its cultural assumptions. (Eyre 2002, 153–154)

It is a little like conducting personal genealogical research and discovering that your ancestors were not the people you would like for them to have been.

The Cannibal Hymn is found in the Pyramid Texts from the Old Kingdom and in a seamless transition to the Coffin Texts in the Middle Kingdom (Eyre 2002, 15). How much farther back it originated remains debated. Christopher Eyre regards the Pyramid Texts as originating at the beginning of Egyptian literature when continuous writing was a novelty:

> The assumption that Pyramid Texts simply represent a stable and ancient oral tradition, first written down in the later Old Kingdom, belongs to a romantic intellectual climate of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and is rooted in universalist preconceptions of cultural evolution. (Eyre 2002, 17)

Eyre posits that the Cannibal Hymn origin could not be significantly earlier than its first written appearance in the Pyramid of Unas (2375–2345 BCE) (2002, 18–19, 139). Muhlestein postulates that the royal labels from the Early Dynastic period depicting ritual slaying may be a pictorial representation of the rite later textually expressed in the Cannibal Hymn: an annual rite at the commencement of the harvest season (Muhlestein 2011, 10–11, 24).

These speculations are a controversial subject within Egyptology (Faulkner 1924; Wilson 1951, 147; Breasted 1970, 129; Hornung 1995; Eyre 2002; Muhlestein 2011). The open question is what actually was done in the ritual. As one might expect, Egyptologists debate whether ancient Egyptians did exactly what the text describes them as doing: eating human beings. It should be noted that the act occurs in a very specific context. It is a royal act, not something for commoners. It is an expression power. The cooking and eating of a person denies that person an afterlife. That person has ceased to exist. For a victorious king to engage in this ritual is to signify the complete destruction of the eaten. If that person is an inferior subhuman 'other' who has been defeated in battle, then the victory meal represents their annihilation and the power of the king. Or if it was a criminal who was annihilated then it was a person who brought this end of his fate on himself. A shared meal after a human sacrifice where Pharaoh is the devourer was part of the Egyptian cultural tradition.

Royal retainers

A clearer example of human sacrifice occurred with the people ritually killed to accompany the king in the afterlife. Their bodies have been found with the king's body. The initial archaeology discovery was by New York University, Yale University, and the University of Pennsylvania. In an interview, excavation director David O'Connor said:

> This was a critical period of transition, when what had been a relatively small-scale civilization before took a gigantic leap under the ruler Aha. The idea that a king had become so important that you could dispatch people to go with him into the afterlife reflected changes in royal power and in religious practice and thinking. (Wilford 2004, 3)

Emily Teeter who was not part of the excavation noted a double problem in the past and the present:

> Yet we are talking about real people and we find it very difficult to understand how their devotion to the king could be so absolute ...
> [The discoveries] are embarrassing for Egyptologists who like to stress how relatively humane the ancient Egyptians were. (Wilford 2004, 3)

It is now possible to create a list of such occurrences over a 200-year period from the kings buried at Abydos, Saqqara, and Giza. Retainer sacrifice appears to have been a systematic and common practice. The maximum number of human sacrifices was attained by Djer (twenty-ninth century BCE) with 599 (Morris 2014, 85). These numbers suggest retainer sacrifice was not a chance or isolated occurrence. As Morris puts it:

> The taking of innocent human lives requires a massive investment in an ideology that could convince these people that the sacrifice of their lives for the afterlife of another, vastly more vaunted human being would occasion a greater good. Further, this ideology would also have to convince the families and other loved ones of these victims that the intense emotional and undoubtedly economic loss that they would suffer was also for a greater good. (2007, 17–18)

Such large-scale retainer sacrifice is a demonstration of weakness not power. Yes, the ruler has the power to require such sacrifice, but it reveals the weakness in that there is a need to do so.

Smiting the enemy

One of the most successful images in the Egyptian royal repertoire was 'Pharaoh smites the enemy'. It remained a defining image of Pharaonic Egypt for three millennia. One may find examples of this story from even before there was an Egyptian state until Egypt was ruled by Romans. There are at least 90 archaeologically-attested examples of it (Hall 1986; Luiselli 2011, 17). The image originated in predynastic times. It can be seen in *c.* 3600 BCE pottery and from 3300 BCE in tomb no. 100 at Hierakonpolis over 200 years before Narmer (Luiselli 2011, 13; Muhlestein 2011, 85). The scene appears on maceheads and then palettes with the kings Scorpion and Narmer. These large-size items may be perceived as gifts to the gods (Morris 2013, 38). There was no coherent development of violent imagery until late in the predynastic period with Narmer. Subsequently kingship and the visual means of expressing and supporting its ideology experienced accelerated growth and change (Bestock 2018, 6).

The smiting of the enemy typically is associated with the slaying of humans. The key idea of 'Pharaoh smites the enemy' is that, in the real world, the king did defeat the enemy. This action is his victory arch of triumph. As a general rule, one should expect that it commemorates a real event in human history even if it is difficult to determine exactly what it was. There would come a time when the kings of Egypt used the chariot to deliver these messages of victory. The images of the king smiting the enemy now would be large sized. Very colorful paintings visible to the public loomed large, like the billboards of movie action heroes smiting the enemy today. Despite the change in military technology, the mace continued to be part of the smiting tradition for millennia even when it was not actually used.

A famous example in Egyptology of a smiting Pharaoh is by Amenhotep II (1427–1400 BCE) on the Amada stela. He lashed seven captive princes upside down to the prow of his ship, sailed up the Nile for all to witness this display of his power,

ritually slayed them, and hanged them from the walls at Thebes and Napata in Nubia. The upside-down position is consistent with the actions in the execration texts and the underworld funerary literature (Ritner 1993, 171). The execration texts are quite specific towards the intended victims. The text uses a bound prisoner determinative identifying them (Ritner 1993, 137). Through the magic of smashing these generally red figurines inscribed with the name of the foe(s), Pharaoh symbolically smote the enemy.

There is some controversy over the idea that not only did a ritual execution occur but that the king himself was the executioner. Alan Schulman suggests that these princes had not been slain in Syria and then brought to Egypt (1988, 46). Exactly what would one see and smell of these corpses after the voyage? Mark Janzen asks 'Why would Amenhotep II go to the trouble of transporting the corpses of this last enemy some 1500 miles from Thebes?' (2013, 131). Did he bring decomposing corpses from northern Syria to Egypt or leave living people hanging from the side of his ship? (Janzen 2013, 248–249). '(O)ne might wonder just what would have left to display after such a journey' (Ritner 1993, 171).

For Schulman, the better explanation is that the Egyptians witnessed a ceremonial execution in a temple setting (1988, 46). Robert Ritner suggests that it was the king himself who performed the executions. He contrasts two English interpretations of what transpired:

> Joyfully, His majesty came to his father Amon after he had slain the 7 chieftains with his own mace.
> Joyfully, His majesty came to his father Amon. With his own mace he slew the 7 chieftains.

In the second version, Amenhotep slays the captives before the deity in what should be considered a ritual or ceremony. In the first one, the chieftains have been slain somewhere at some time prior to Amenhotep II's appearance before Amun. Egyptologists prefer this version. Ritner takes issue with that view noting the transportation problems just cited (1993, 171). For a renowned warrior and hunter of elephants in Syria, Amenhotep II's ritual execution of the chieftains seems quite believable.

Related to these scenes of sanctioned murder are the scenes of brutality and pain preceding the act. Janzen refers to these scenes as the 'iconography of humiliation'. The king communicated his dominance over foreign captives often through degrading imagery. The victims are shown in tortuous poses of humiliating helplessness (2013, 1–9, 64, 116). Janzen has collected examples of these bound foreigners (2013, 46–219). We know that horror movies still draw today. The famous smiting scene from *Psycho* has become part of American mythology. But the ancient Egyptian such images of cruel pain and horrible death were sanctioned ... and by the king!

Again, the subject of debate among Egyptologists is how much these images represent actual events in history versus symbolic expressions (Frankfort 1948a, 48; Wilson 1956, 439; Yoyette 1980–1981; Schulman 1988; Bochi 1999; Muhlestein

2011; Janzen 2013; Bestok 2018, 266). Egyptologists grapple with the monstrous practice of human sacrifice by the good and civilized ancient Egyptians. One may grudgingly acknowledge the possibility of some truth to Manetho's testimony that the Heliopolis executions were ended by sixth-century BCE Ahmose (Yoyette 1980–1981, 39–40, 102). Other Egyptologists have fewer problems accepting that ritual smitings were likely a feature throughout Egyptian history. Perhaps if the skeleton of someone smited by the Pharaoh were discovered it would resolve the issue of whether or not the Egyptian kings really did kill the enemy leader on the field of battle. And that is exactly what happened with the skull of Seqenenre.

Pharaoh smites the rebel

The focus of 'Pharaoh smites the enemy' normally is on foreigners. Typically, one thinks of this image in terms of the leader of the country successfully defending it from those would threaten it. The term has an international flavor. It can be, and was, used to depict victory abroad. Kings killed enemies beyond the river or upstream for the glory of the kingdom. Frequently overlooked in this process is the smiting of Egyptians, the killing of people at home. Egypt was quite capable of not only killing people who existed beyond *maat*, they, meaning the king, could slay people in Egypt who were deemed to have violated *maat* in Egypt:

> The rebel and the criminal who acted against Pharaoh, be it openly or by faithlessness in Pharaoh's service, headed inevitably for destruction because they moved against the order upon which society ... was forever founded. (Frankfort 1948a, 55–56)

The world had been perfectly created. The gods had created the perfect pristine state. It was an ideal world of cosmic and social order. Everything was as it should be. It was paradise. *Maat* ruled. A Fall did not occur but rebellion did. Rebellion meant that chaos or *isfet* disrupted the perfect paradise that had been created. Something needed to be done to restore order, to return the world to the way of *maat* as it had been created on the First Occasion. The 'something' was to destroy those who had violated *maat* and the someone charged by Ra with the responsibility to do so was the king (Muhlestein 2011, 2; Janzen 2013, 17). In practical terms, this meant the person in power had the religious duty to kill the person and/or persons who threatened the social order.

Ritual slaying was regularly associated with rebellion (Muhlestein 2015, 250). While this is not the place to examine all alleged incidents of potential ritual slayings that have been documented, there are some examples worthy of noting. For example, the 'Rebellion Formula' certainly suggests the practice of ritual slayings. The earliest prototype of one dates to Pepi II (2278–2184 BCE). It became standardized in the Middle Kingdom (Ritner 1993, 139).

> All people, all officials, all subjects, all men, all eunuchs, all women, all rulers, all from the region of Horus and Wawat, and Upper and Lower Egypt, all soldiers, all messengers, who will rebel, who will conspire, who will talk of rebelling, who will fight, who will talk of

> fighting, every rebel who speaks of his rebellion [will be destroyed for all time]. (quoted in Muhlestein 2011, 19)

This Rebellion Formula is rather sweeping in scope. One may even presume from its existence that it reflected a real problem encountered by the court. It is hardly likely that it was created in the abstract divorced from any such occurrences in the real world.

The application of these instructions may be observed in a prominent Middle Kingdom example from Senwosret I (1956–1911 BCE) at Tod (Redford 1987). According to the inscription, the Egyptian infrastructure was in disrepair. It had deteriorated. It was overrun. The reference to 'ruin mound' (line 28) is reminiscent of the application of 'ruin cities' to some of the neighborhoods in late twentieth–early twenty-first centuries' America. The cause of the utter destruction is attributed to Asiatics, Nubians, and Medjay (lines 32, 34, 38). Presumably, therefore, these people should pay the price for this violation of *maat* and according to the Tod Inscription they do. The inscription also expresses a motif to be used by such future rulers as Ahmose and Hatshepsut when they similarly claim to have restored the temples which foreign elements willfully had destroyed.

The inscription at the desecrated and burned temple reads:

> [(As for) those who had cast] fire and fla[-me] against the temple and them that had trespassed in th[is] house, [My Majesty] made [a great(?) slaughter among them (?)], (both) men and women, the valleys being (filled) with the flayed and the hills with the transfixed. (Redford 1987, 42)

The text goes on to mention death by burning and decapitation. The uraeus appears to consume the Asiatics.

According to Muhlestein, this 'inscription preserves one of the most dramatic examples of the virulent destruction of *Isfet*. Senusret I furiously razed opposition to Ma'at, adamantly insuring that Isfet would not gain the upper hand under his watch' (2011, 37; italics as in original). The full text reveals that these people were knifed, burned, decapitated, and impaled in a ritual setting for crimes against the temple. Senwosret I deliberately expressed these deaths in cultic terms to indicate a sacrificial basis for these executions (Muhlestein 2008, 190). Yoyette prefers to explain the altars as places where through magic the subversive elements of the kingdom were defeated and not for real human sacrifices.

The goddess Mut figures prominently in this discussion of death to rebels. Her origin appears to be in Heliopolis (Yoyette 1980–1981, 69, 71). In New Kingdom times, she became the wife of Amun. The Memphis/Heliopolis deity appears to have brought to Karnak by the Seventeenth Dynasty (Luiselli 2015, 115–117, 123). There are inscriptions to her in Ramesside times there and elsewhere. Her name was written with the vulture hieroglyphic sign (Hays 2010, 218–219). At Luxor, Ramses II offered incense to the uraeus of Mut the Great (Ritner 1990, 39). Originally,

she appears to have been a woman and her name does not mean 'vulture' (Te Velde 2008, 242). There is an overlap (or takeover) of the vulture goddess Sekhmet by Mut (Luiselli 2015, 113–115). The reasons for these actions by the Seventeenth Dynasty are political. This Theban-based dynasty in effect co-opted the little-known northern goddess and elevated her. She now combined the characteristics of the vulture Nekhbet and cobra Wadjjt, became a consort of Amun, and became a royal-connected goddess (Luiselli 2015, 126–127). As previously seen with Horus, Seth, Osiris, and Ra, these actions should be understood as political in nature and not theological or religious. They occurred at a time when the Hyksos ruled Lower Egypt. It is reasonable to conclude that her divine prowess should be viewed through the lens of the Theban–Hyksos conflict.

Her powers were indeed fierce. Mut is simultaneously 'the terrifying one' and 'the protecting one'; she is the carrion eater on the battlefield as a scavenger and a protective being hovering above the king. In these capacities, she resembles the uraeus which was part of her identity right from the start in the Eighteenth Dynasty (Te Velde 2008, 242–243). The linking of Mut, Sekhmet, and the cobra may be traced back at least to her beginning (Te Velde 1989, 398; Luiselli 2015, 118). As a feline deity, she was considered to be a representation of the Eye of Re (Te Velde 2001, 454). The first known example of that appellation is during the reign of Ramses II (Te Velde 1989, 398). By that time she also was known as the 'Lady of Terror' (Te Velde 1989, 401). Her role as mother might seem strange to American audiences where the vulture is not a noble bird. The issue here, is the Egyptian values, particularly in the violent expression of her protective aspect.

In the 'Ritual to Repulse the Aggressor', Mut is a destroyer of rebels. To challenge royal authority is to be consumed by fire (Hays 2010, 221). In later times, there was a ceremony during which humans were burned at the altar of the goddess Mut at Heliopolis. The conflict between *maat* and *isfet*, order and disorder, is expressed as a legal dispute between Ra and the Evil One in the form of human beings. In Formula 2 of the Ritual, the children of the Evil One are damned by the children of Ra at Heliopolis. They are cursed and burned in the blaze of Mut. The annihilation and cremation occur in Formula 6. At various intervals, the priests say four times, 'Re is justified against Apophis'. Different locations vied for the honor of being the site of the first confrontation between Ra and Apophis, the Serpent-Destroyer in the beginning at the First Occasion (Yoyette 1980–1981, 79–82, 85–86; Willems 1990, 50).

This Egyptian 'showdown at high noon' was defining for them. Again and again the battle would be engaged. Again and again Ra would triumph. Again and again Apophis would return to the fray in an eternal series of sequels. The Heliopolitan claim at the site of first victory meant the priests were responsible for ensuring the continued order in this world. At a temple of Seti I, even kings were called upon not to destroy what had been arranged at the dawn of time. Those who destroyed that order would be judged and themselves destroyed by execution. Then they would be tortured in Duat, the underworld (Yoyette 1980–1981, 89).

Real people are involved in these killings. Apophis and his accomplices are defined as the enemies of the king. They are condemned as enemies of the state. The enemies from the primordial conflict are linked with the political enemies of the present (Yoyette 1980–1981, 84). 'Stripped of its mythologizing disguise, the text appears to describe a public execution of certain people on the altar of Mut's temple in Heliopolis' (Willems 1990, 50). Yoyette recognizes that Egyptologists who reject the idea that the Egyptians sacrificed people will prefer the wax images of Manetho. However, the ritual makes clear the blaze of Mut was to burn meat offerings and those offerings were human (Yoyette 1980–1981, 95).

To be a rebel, *sbi*, to be in a rebellion was to be a child of the Evil One, Apophis, and warrant execution like cattle (Willems 1990, 50). Rebellion against the king is not merely a political act, it is a rebellion against Horus. Mut is not part of the Osiris myth but she is a protector of the king and an avenger of attacks on him. When in the narrative of prince Osorkon he calls upon the 'flame' (*nbi*) of Mut, he is drawing on this Egyptian mythological tradition. A challenge to the king is met with fire and the destruction of the violator's body forever. There is no afterlife. This action extends back to earlier religious and Ramesside texts of Ramses at Kadesh and Merneptah (Leahy 1984, 201–202, 206 n39). To challenge the king was to risk death by fire as a hothead, a rebel, an Apophis, and an Evil One.

There was a cosmic element to this punishment. As part of the New Year's Day celebration, a social outcast in the village was beaten with sticks. That action may be said to parallel the triumph over Apophis as a pre-condition for the commencement of the New Year. A royal decree of Amenhotep III (1390–1352 BCE) found in the tomb of Amenhotep son of Hapu, calls for the punishment of a criminal by burning 'like Apophis on the morning of the New Year's Day' (Willems 1990, 48). This person was a 'hot one' meaning a person of bad character who deserved to be sacrificed in a public execution ceremony (Willems 1990, 53). Fire alone became a frequently used metaphor for the king's annihilation of his foes (Janzen 2013, 253). Seti is a 'fiery flame'. Ramses is a 'flame at its time of devouring'.

The Egyptian story of the ritual slaying of human forces on chaos on the New Year by the upright cobra spitting fiery death brings together in one dramatic royal ritual the seemingly separate elements that have been described so far in this study. It redefines an historical act in mythological terms. Muhlestein asks: 'Should we not understand the many texts which speak of the Uraeus spitting fire to really reflect a punishment by the king?' (2007, 122). The image provides a template for death of all deaths to be inflicted on such perpetrators.

The Egyptian records contain examples of kings who succeeded in restoring *maat*. As a result of their actions all is as it should be and once had been in the beginning. The king's function on earth as defined by Ra is to judge humanity, destroy *isfet*, and to bring about *maat*. It was a task the kings took seriously. Examples may be provided from the Old Kingdom through to the New Kingdom of kings asserting their compliance.

Pyr 1774–6: 'Ma'at is in the presence of Re, on the festival of the first day of the year. The sky is content, the earth is in joy, because they have heard that the King put Ma'at in the place of Isfet'. (quoted in Muhlestein 2011, 96)

Pyr 265: The king is with Re because he has 'put Ma'at in the place of Isfet'. (Muhlestein 2011, 2)

The Instructions to King Merikare: Previously, *The Instructions* had been examined for its definition of the 'hothead' as a troublemaker. Now the punishment of violators is stated. The focused has shifted to an apparently real world context where the punishment of disrupters of *maat*. After the text specifies what the king must do maintain *maat*, the *Instructions* states:

> Thus will the land be well-ordered;
> Except for the rebel whose plans are found out,
> For god knows the treason plotters,
> God smites the rebels in blood.
>
> He who is silent toward violence diminishes the offerings.
> God will attack the rebel for the sake of the temple,
> He will be overcome for what he has done.
> (Lichtheim 1975, 100, 105)

One hardly needs to be an Egyptologist to recognize that, in this world, it is the king who is called upon in these *Instructions* to the king to be the one to implement the punishment against the rebels. To rebel against the king is to pay for it with your life ... provided you are caught.

The Prophecies of Neferti: They also addresses a complete breakdown in the Egyptian order. When foreigners were no longer beyond *maat* but had entered the land, the Egyptians were in need of a savior to restore *maat*. As noted, according to *The Prophecies of Neferti*, that is exactly what Egypt had.

> Then a king will come from the South,
> Ameny, the justified, by name [meaning Amenemhet I, 1911–1877 BCE].

This new king will unify the country wearing the white and red crowns of Upper and Lower Egypt and will join the vulture goddess Nekhbet and the cobra goddess Wadjet. In addition to this unification, there would be a purification as well to the great joy of the people.

> Rejoice, O people of this time,
> The son of man will make his name for all eternity!
> The evil-minded, the treason-plotters, [=plan rebellion]
> They suppress their speech in fear of him;

> Asiatics will fall to his sword,
> Libyans will fall to his flame,
> Rebels to his wrath; traitors to his might,
> As the serpent on his brow [uraeus, cobra] subdues the rebels for him.
> One will build the Walls-of-Ruler,
> To bar Asiatics from entering Egypt;
> They shall beg water as supplicants,
> So as to let their cattle drink.
> Then Order will return to its seat,
> While Chaos is driven away.
> (Lichtheim 1975, 143–144)

Since Pharaoh rules the world, people outside of Egypt proper also may be considered rebels. The keys are the obligation of the king to end the topsy turvy world delineated in the *Prophecies* and the role of the uraeus in the king's triumph over the rebels.

Khnumhotep on Amenemhet I (1985–1956 BCE):

> As his majesty came the expelled wrongdoing/drive out Isfet
> Risen like Atum himself,
> He restored what he found in ruins/setting in order that which he found decaying ... because he so greatly loved Maat/since he loves Ma'at so much.
> (Urk 7, 27 as quoted in Lichtheim 1996, 249 and Muhlestein 2015, 95)

Thutmose III (1479–1425 BCE): He 'transforms Egypt into the condition of the past, as when Ra was king' (Urk 4, 1246; quoted in Muhlestein 2015, 95).

Amenhotep III (1390–1352 BCE) strove 'to make the country flourish as in primeval times by means of the design of Maat' (Frankfort 1948a, 55; 1948b, 51).

Tutankhamun (1336–1327 BCE): He has 'driven Isfet out of both lands, and Ma'at is fixed in its place; he has made it so falsehood is abhorred and the land is as it was in its first time' (Urk 4, 2026, quoted in Muhlestein 2015, 96).

Horemheb (1323–1295 BCE) 'set this land in order and ordained it as it was in the time of Re' (Urk 4, 2119, quoted in Muhlestein 2015, 95).

One is tempted to add the example of Ramses II to this list of *maat* restorations except his effort failed and it was up to his son to claim to have fixed the failure of his father in the Exodus.

Speculations 1

What do all these royal ceremonial ritual executions mean for understanding the Exodus and creating an historical reconstruction?

1. I speculated that within the Egyptian context, Moses was the heated man. He was the hothead. He was the rebel. He was an inciter of citizens. He created factions. He violated *maat*. Therefore, one should expect Pharaoh to seek to respond to this heated man in accordance with Egyptian rules.
2. I speculated that Ramses correctly regarded Moses as an Apophis, a disrupter of *maat*. Therefore he decided to treat the hotheaded rebel in accordance with Egyptian customs.
3. I speculated that Ramses intended to act at dawn of New Year against Moses and his followers when Sekhmet/Mut, the goddess of plagues and disease, acted as the destroyer of humanity.
4. I speculate that Moses anticipated his arrest and therefore decided to turn the Egyptian New Year day cosmos topsy-turvy by being the destroyer instead. He and his followers would act first against those who were charged with executing them. These 'sons of Pharaoh', meaning people loyal to Ramses II, would die instead.
5. I speculated that Moses acted on the seventh hour of the night the eve of the New Year to be a deliverer of chaos and a destroyer of *maat* before the morning.
6. I speculate this action wreaked havoc in the capital. In the dark of night no one knew how many people had been killed. No one knew if there would be an assassination attempt on the king as had happened before in Egyptian history and would happen again. In the tumult and disarray of the nocturnal chaos, it took time for Ramses to learn what had happened and to organize his response. Ramses did not know who he could trust. He learned that while his military forces did not aid and abet the departure of the Hyksos-led Israelites, they did not prevent it either. They left Ramses abandoned to fend for himself. Ramses did not forget this great crime but there came a time when he knew he had to mend fences with those who had remained behind if he was to remain in power (Chapter 7).

Going forth to the Sea of Reeds

Biblical scholarship frequently involves the attempt to locate and/or explain the flooding at the Sea of Reeds. That search is done primarily through geography and miracle-explanations. The connection of the symbolism and metaphors of the event is linked to Egyptian culture and history only secondarily. One tends to get the impression that Moses and the people were surprised to face the physical truth that there was a body of water at the point of exit from Egypt. For Moses after Passover, there only was one way out of Egypt. With the Wadi Tumilat, the search for the physical Exodus comes full circle. The EEF search for the Exodus route back in 1882 began here (Chapter 1). It sent Naville to Tell el-Maskhuta, approximately 15 km west of Ismailia. Since then much ink has been spilled by biblical scholars and Egyptologists over the location of the biblical sites of Pithom and Raamses from Ex. 1:11 and the date and locations of the Eastern Canal, Walls of the Ruler, and Wadi Tumilat canals (Lane-Poole 1883; Naville 1885; 1924; Gardiner 1922;

1924; Shafei 1943; Redford 1963; 2009; 2011, 301–307; Uphill 1968; 1969; Shea 1977; Goedicke 1987; Redmount 1989; 1995; Hoffmeier 1997, 65–67, 119–121, 179–181; 2005, 43–44, 53–71, 105–108; Kitchen 1998, 67–84; 2003, 254–263; Collins 2008; Bietak 2015, 21–30; Hoffmeier and Moshier 2015, 105–108; Schipper 2015). Since this study is an examination of the Exodus from the Egyptian record, the search for the route stops here. To locate these sites involves biblical exegesis which is outside the self-defined parameters of this study.

There are observations which may be made based on the Egyptian record of the route of the Exodus. Given this going forth from Egypt led by Hyksos Moses, where exactly did they go? The most prominent route is the Way of Horus, biblically known as the Way of the land of the Philistines (Ex. 13:17). That route gets all the attention (Holladay 1999). It was the main road the Egyptians used in their campaigns into Canaan and Syria. It was the route well-traveled, well-watered, well stationed, and well protected. It is the one Thutmose III took on his Canaan campaign to Megiddo that launched the era of Egyptian imperialism in the land. It is the one Seti took on his Canaan campaign nearly two centuries later and which is displayed on reliefs on the outside of the north wall at the Karnak Temple. It is the one Ramses had just taken in the Battle at Kadesh. The reasons biblical Israel, or anyone leaving Egypt against the will of the king, would avoid this route are obvious. It remained the main road to Asia for centuries. All so-called northern routes can be ignored in this Exodus analysis. Moses knew better than to leave smack into the heart of the Egyptian defense. He chose another path.

The area south of this road provided the next opportunity. A wall and/or canal stretched south of the Way of Horus to the Wadi Tumilat. Both the Walls of the Ruler and the Frontier Canal have been debated topics in Egyptology since the nineteenth century. There does seem to have been a wall constructed in the Middle Kingdom as a defensive barrier to keep Asiatics out. It is mentioned in the *Story of Sinuhe* and *The Prophecies of Neferti*. In the story it is a barrier Amenemhet I 'made to repel the Asiatics and to crush the Sand-farers' (Lichtheim 1975, 224) as just noted above in *The Prophecies of Neferti*. The king is specifically charged with defending the realm against 'Chaos' in the form of Asiatics. One notes the routine inclusion of rebels, fire, and the uraeus.

Building a wall to keep out undesirable aliens is a standard defense tactic. A similar undertaking occurred slightly earlier by kings of the Ur III Dynasty in the twenty-first century BCE. They constructed the 'Repeller of the Amorites', a 110-mile wall to protect the land from Amorites/Martu who are described in very similar terms as used by the Egyptians against Asiatics and bedu. The Mesopotamian effort failed and soon after Amorites ruled the land. The most prominent is Hammurabi who becomes an exemplar of Mesopotamian life to this very day. The acceptance of the once despised outsider did not lead to the collapse of Mesopotamian civilization.

Egypt chose a different path. Most likely ethnic Amorites did enter Egypt and some became the political Hyksos rulers of the Fifteenth Dynasty. The Hyksos exposed the gift of the river to a much larger world even beyond God's Lands. Potentially,

the Amorite Apophis paralleled Hammurabi a century earlier, here as an exemplar of Egyptian life. However, the Thebans and Egyptologists never accepted the Hyksos as Egyptians. Instead, Apophis remains vilified. Now a reverse journey was made in the Exodus.

There seems to have been a canal as well (Hoffmeier 1997, 164–172). In a section on travel in a book on life in the time of Ramses II, Pierre Montet writes:

> As early as the Old Kingdom they [the Egyptians] had succeeded in organizing a service of boats connecting Byblos on the Syrian coast with the coast of Punt, the terraces of Fir [cedar] with the Terraces of Incense [two prized commodities]. From Byblos the vessels would sail to the Egyptian Delta, go up the Tanitic arm of the Nile to Bubastis and proceed thence by canal to the Wadi Toumilat, which can be regarded as the most easterly arm of the Nile. (1981, 184)

In this brief passage, Montet joins the route of the Exodus to the northern and southern limits of what Egyptian's had called God's Land, a range somewhat comparable to from Outer Mongolia to Timbuktu in American parlance. A full analysis of God's Land is outside the scope of this study. It is a reminder of the limitations of effort to ascertain the precise place of the departure of the Israelites while ignoring the larger cultural context of the events.

Montet goes on to state:

> It was with the object of opening direct communications between his residence in the Delta and the Red Sea that Ramesses II spent much money in restoring the 'canal of the two seas', traces of which were discovered during the digging of the modern Sweet Water Canal. (1981, 184)

That effort included passing the town of Pithom and erecting granite stelae which 'declared to the awestruck navigators the glory of the king and the boldness of his conception' (Montet 1981, 184). Presumably any such efforts occurred subsequent to the Exodus when Ramses was busy asserting his dominion over the route the Israelites had taken.

Egyptologists debate whether *The Instructions to Merikare* refer to a canal there (see Hoffmeier 1997, 56–57, 168–169). Based on his reading of the text, William Ward writes:

> Merikare is to build a canal, presumably from the fortress at Ways-of-Horus southward to Lake Timsah (lines 99ff). The line of defense, once completed, would be the logical one since it would guard the whole area from the southeastern shore of Lake Manzeleh to Lake Timsah. Its northern terminus would be at the land-route that entered Egypt through Ways-of-Horus and its southern terminus at the entrance to the Wadi Tumilat at Ismailiyah. Precisely this region was the main point of entry for nomads wishing to move out of the desert into the Delta. A fortified canal, half-filled with water, would be an ideal defense position, easily manned by troops and mobile unit rafts or small boats patrolling the length of the canal. (1971, 34)

Lo and behold, a scant few years later the very canal Ward had postulated to have existed based on the texts was discovered. The remains of a 70 m-wide (230 ft) canal

were found by the Geological Survey of Israel (Sneh *et al.* 1975). It ran north from Lake Timsah to the el-Ballah Lakes near the Mediterranean Sea. Combined with the natural barrier of the Bitter Lakes to the south, the Eastern Frontier Canal created a sharp border between Egypt and Sinai.

The canal appears most dramatically in the reliefs of Seti as a dividing line of water, *ta-denit*, between cosmos and chaos when the king returned from his campaign against the Shasu. It swarmed with crocodiles, the devourers of human bodies. When Sinuhe returned to Egypt and reached the Horus-ways, he was greeted by loaded ships from the king bearing gifts for the Asiatics (Lichtheim 1975, 231). Presumably those ships had travelled by water to arrive there. There is no doubt of the military benefits of such a canal with a southern terminus at the Sea of Reeds.

The Wadi Tumilat is the second route of ingress and egress from the Delta into Sinai (Holladay 1999). Redmount calls it a 'thin ribbon of fertile land linking the central eastern Delta region with the heart of the Isthmus' (1989, 2). It is a narrow valley approximately 52 km (31 miles) in length and only 2–9 km (*c.* 1.2–5.6 miles) wide. Once it had been a branch of the Nile. The Wadi begins or ends (depending on your direction of movement) at Ismailia on the shores of Lake Timsah or Crocodile Lake. The western part (24 km/14.9 miles) in antiquity was a basin of a large natural overflow lake 18 km long and 1.8 km wide (*c.* 11 × 1 miles). It was fed by a side branch from the Nile. In Ramesside times, based on Papyrus Anastasi VI: 4:11–6:5, it had become a series of lakes or pools (Redmount 1989, 31; Bietak 2015, 21). The area required canals to be drained (Redmount 1989, 39).

Egyptologists also debate whether there was a canal in the Wadi Tumilat itself, possibly originating at the same time as the wall (see Hoffmeier 2005, 71). There appear to have two of them. One ran along the northern perimeter, not to the end of the Wadi but to Tell el-Retabah. The larger, and more impressive, canal on the southern perimeter extended the length of the Wadi (Redmount 1995, 130–131). Little remains of these canal banks, even less than in the nineteenth century when they were first observed, due to sand dunes and agricultural development. The requirements for such undertakings to construct and maintain canals were a strong and dynamic central government and high Nile floods. The two most prominent candidates for initiating the effort are Senwosret III and Ramses II (Redmount 1995, 133–134).

The tantalizing questions are how far north did the Gulf of Suez extend and was it accessible by water via any of these canals? The precise location of the Gulf of Suez in the time of Ramses is another debated topic. Regardless of the specific location of the wall/canal and its state of repair after the Battle of Kadesh, it/they would have served as a deterrent to going forth from Egypt in the Exodus. On the other hand, the canal potentially provided a source of water which could be manipulated in an act in history.

Ramses did undertake monumental building in the Wadi after no building there since the Hyksos. However, no ancient canal would have been operational year

round due to the dependence on high Nile floods for water (Montet 1981, 184; Redmount 1989, 207–208; 1995, 134). The Nile was its only source of water for Lake Timsah and the flood did not always reach it. The Lake formed a great southern boundary for the northeast defenses from the Mediterranean southward (Morris 2017, 136–137).

To go from Avaris to the Wadi Tumilat required crossing the Bahr el-Barqar swamps to the east and south of the capital. Another option was to head upstream on the Pelusiac from Avaris to Bubastis and then enter the Wadi Tumilat from the west (Hoffmeier and Moshier 2015, 106). The eastern end was militarized (Hoffmeier 1997, 180–181). The western portion was more arable, the central area (13 km/8 miles) was more marshy, and mostly it was uninhabited except during the Hyksos period and then again later. If one continued eastward one would cross Sinai via the Way of Shur before arriving at Beersheva and Hebron (Hoffmeier 2006, 1).

The Way of Shur is known from the Bible, regardless of how these passages became part of the Bible.

> The angel of Yahweh found her [Hagar, the Egyptian maid of Abraham] by a spring of water in the wilderness, the spring on the way to Shur (Gen. 16:7).
> They [the sons of Ishmael] dwelt from Havilah to Shur, which is opposite Egypt in the direction of Assyria; he settled over against all his people Gen. 25:18).
> And Saul defeated the Amalekites, from Havilah as far as Shur, which is east of Egypt (I Sam. 15:7).
> Now David and his men went up, and made raids upon the Geshurites, the Girzites, and the Amalekites; for these were the inhabitants of the land from of old, as far as Shur, to the land of Egypt (I Sam. 27:8).

The Way of Shur was the logical route out of Egypt for the Israelites if they could get to it.

This area was designated as Tjeku within the eighth nome of Egypt. Despite this designation it was not regarded as being entirely Egypt. Redford characterizes the eastern Delta as the frontier of Egypt, a hostile border region (2011, 299). The name 'Tjeku' was spelled with a foreign determinative. Perhaps that was a legacy of the Hyksos settlements there. The identification of fortifications in the Tjeku military zone is difficult. The one major fort is the 'Fortress of Merneptah-Content-with-Truth' (Tell el-Ratabah at the end of the northern canal in the wadi?) mentioned in Papyrus Anastasi VI. In his book, Naville quoted the relevant passage from Papyrus Anastasi VI:

> We have allowed the tribes of the Shasu of the land of Atuma to pass through the stronghold of King Merneptah of the land of Succoth, towards the lakes of Pithom of King Merneptah of the land of Succoth; in order to feed themselves and to feed their cattle in the great state of Pharaoh. (1885, 24)

This passage is the standard one always cited to document that people could enter and leave Egypt as the biblical accounts portray the Patriarchs entering and the

Israelites leaving. It is the passage that has contributed to the archaeological search for Pithom and Succoth as well as how the biblical writer knew these names. A second incident from Papyrus Anastasi V. 19.2–20.6 recounts the efforts of a troop commander in pursuit if two runaways in the same area. In Ramesside times there would be a chain of forts throughout the Wadi and then both north and south from its terminus along the canal and to the Gulf of Suez (Hoffmeier 2005, 67).

The questions not asked are why did Merneptah choose to build (or repair) the fort there to control movements in and out of Egypt and why was the chain expanded? One answer is that he built the fort there after the Exodus because that was the opening in the Egyptian defenses where the Wadi reached the canal which the Israelites exploited in leaving the land. Once one accepts the historicity of the Exodus in the real world, one can approach the story very differently than the traditional biblical-based ways. And why were the scribes writing about such marginal events in the first place?

Speculations 2

What does all this information about the Wadi Tumilat mean for the Exodus?

I speculate that Moses knew what he was doing and Ramses did not. Moses relied on Ramses repeating his error at Kadesh – charging full speed ahead into a trap. Moses was just as prepared as the Hittite king to spring it. This time the *n'rn* were not available to rescue Ramses, they were on the side of Moses. If the arrival of the *n'rn* at Kadesh could be interpreted as divine intervention by Egypt (Assmann 2003, 265), so could their arrival at the Sea of Reeds by Israel.

> And Miriam sang to them: 'Sing to Yahweh, for he has triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider he has thrown into the sea'. (Ex. 15:21)

This time it was not Hittites who were drowned in the waters. To determine exactly what happened requires a detailed reconstruction of the Wadi Tumilat landscape in year 7 of Ramses including of the canals, the waterways, and the northern extension of the Red Sea. Such an effort can be considered a work in progress.

If we saw the physical reality of what occurred at the Sea of Reeds, we would say 'what's the big deal' and dismiss it.

If we experienced the psychological reality of what occurred at the Sea of Reeds, we would say 'OMG! IT'S A MIRACLE' and recognize that Cecil B. DeMille got it exactly right.

People who expected to die did not. People who expected to kill them died instead. It happened suddenly and quickly. Ramses now had a second humiliation. He lived with it for the rest of his life.

Chapter 7

Post-Exodus Stress Disorder

This journey to discover the Exodus as an Egyptian story is drawing to a close. It began with Amelia Edwards in the 1880s and the search for the physical proof of the Exodus. The journey has revealed strengths and weaknesses in both the ancient society studied and those who study it. The story of the individual person who changed the course of human history has not been a good fit with the routines and rhythms of the land of *maat*. Perhaps not coincidentally there has been no place for Moses either in ancient Egypt or Egyptology; perhaps that will change as the century from Champollion to Tutankhamun ends and a new path is created.

Ramses

Ramses had to deal with the secular reality of the Exodus. He had to deal with the secular reality that he had fallen short in two confrontations, the first against the Hittites in the Battle of Kadesh and the second against Moses in the Battle of the Sea of Reeds. Little did he know that he would rule almost for another 60 years. Quite the contrary, he could not even be sure about the next 6 years or even 6 months. Coups, revolts, and rebellions all were possibilities.

Year 8 campaign

There were immediate consequences following Ramses failure and narrow escape at Kadesh.

> Headmen of Canaanite towns, vassals of Egypt, were impressed by what they divined as inherent weaknesses in Pharaoh's forces: poor intelligence and a tendency to panic. Rebellion was possible; Egypt could be beaten... In the wake of the retreating Egyptians, all Canaan flared into open revolt ... It was Ramesses's darkest hour. (Redford 1992a, 185)

Redford limits this observation to Canaanites in the land of Canaan. He is correct about Canaanites revolting in the land of Canaan following Ramses's poor performance as commander in chief. Hazor is simply the most prominent example of the 'Canaanite spring' (see Bienkowski 1987; Ben-Tor 1998; 2000; 2006; Kitchen 2002a; Finkelstein 2005; Ben-Tor and Zuckerman 2008). However, the real Canaanite spring did not happen for decades until the reign of Merneptah when the Egyptian fortresses in the land were torched.

In his book on Ramses, Kitchen entitled his section 'Recuperation and rebellion' (1982, 67). He did so without any reference to the Exodus. In the immediate aftermath of the spring 1274 BCE battle, Ramses concentrated on rebuilding his battered army. Kitchen assessed the post-Kadesh situation as one where Canaanites perceiving the Egyptian retreat of Ramses as a sign of weakness. Tribute collections suffered. New kingdoms were emerging across the Jordan in Moab and Edom with the Shasu also raiding Canaan. Not since the onset of the reign of Seti had the Egyptians experienced such troubles (Kitchen 1982, 67). It is easy to understand why Moses could decide that the time was ripe for a Yahweh–El people coalition to rid the land of Canaan from its Seth-Baal rule.

There was nothing inherently unusual in a Pharaoh campaigning in the land of Canaan. Especially since the time of Thutmose III and his victory at Megiddo such actions had become standard operating procedure. However, the focus had shifted from conquering new lands to maintaining the ones already conquered and taxed. Seti had campaigned in Canaan. He erected a stela at Beth Shan in recognition of the rebellion against him which he had suppressed. So, on one level Ramses may be said merely to be repeating what his father had done before him when he erected one there in year 18. His campaign in year 8 well may have been in the works to assert control in Cisjordan and Transjordan even prior to the Exodus.

The Exodus adds a new dimension to the campaign. Word of what had happened would have pre-dated the actual arrival of Israel in the land decades later. The words of Rahab at Jericho are suggestive of how the people in the land would have responded, in contrast to the ruling Baal elite subservient to Pharaoh, to the news of almost-Seqenenre's humiliation.

> [Rahab] said to the men [the two spies of Joshua], 'I know that Yahweh has given you the land, and that the fear of you has fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land melt away before you. For we have heard how Yahweh dried up the water of the Sea of Reeds before you when you came out of Egypt ...'. (Josh. 2:9–10)

Given the double two-spy biblical stories of Joshua and Caleb in Canaan and the two here at Jericho, one wonders if the two-spy Kadesh episode was part of an ancient Near East motif or if Egypt and Israel were borrowing from each other.

400 Year Stela: mending fences

For the moment the threat posed by the Exodus seemed contained. Israel was wandering around in the wilderness with nowhere to go. It was neither in a position to lead a revolt against Egypt nor to enter the land of Canaan. Ramses's concern now was the threat at home. His own military forces had committed a great crime of not standing by their leader during the Exodus. Ramses gave credit where credit was due in the representations of the Battle of Kadesh ... not too much, but at least to recognize the contribution the *n'rn* had made. To simply castigate and denigrate his military was counter-productive. Instead, it should have the supplies it needed. The warriors who remained could even be honored. Ramses did so not as a visionary, like his father, but as an act of political expediency. He needed their support.

The 400 Year Stela is a unique historical object in ancient Egyptian history (see Montet 1933; Yoyette 1949; Goedicke 1966b; 1981; Habachi 1975). Ostensibly, the purpose of the monument was for Ramses II to honor the action of his father in recognizing the 400-year presence of the Hyksos in the land. The stela commemorates the action of his father Seti I in fusing the Baal-Seth identity in the new Egyptian capital at Avaris in the Nineteenth Dynasty. In a sense, the action officially demarcates the cessation of the Amarna Era (chaos) and the primacy of the Baal-Seth deity at Avaris over the Amun-Re deity at Thebes in the Eighteenth Dynasty. All these machinations automatically have political overtones.

Assmann notes the obvious connection between this stela and the biblical tradition of a 400-year sojourn in Egypt before the Exodus. First, he calls attention to the often-overlooked uniqueness of the Egyptian stela.

> It represents the first – and for a long time remained the only – instance of a historical anniversary recorded in the annals of [Egyptian] history. (2018, 36)

Next, he asks the question if the two 400-year traditions in Egypt and Israel are coincidental. He calls this non-coincidence a 'resonance phenomenon'. He suggests that Ramses's celebration of the establishment of the Baal-related cult of Seth at Avaris and when the Hyksos took power are part of a single action. He considers it improbable that this anniversary celebration did not extend into the Egyptian-ruled land of Canaan where Baal was also prevalent. Assmann overlooks one other possible development. Israel, being aware of the celebrated connection among Baal, Seth, and 400, rejected the message Ramses was delivering. For Israel, the 400 years from Jacob to Moses became a time of oppression and not celebration. The people who became Israel would base their religious identity on a deity other than Baal-Seth, one who was in opposition to Egypt, one who surpassed Baal.

The use of the number 400 also draws attention. Ramses also uses day 4 and the month 4. Hoffmeier characterizes this as 'odd, raising the possibility of some sort of symbolism' (2007, 238 n74). The use of four and its various multiples 40, 400, 4000, 40,000 in biblical texts and most prominently in the Mesha Stela certainly suggests a symbolic message (Feinman 2019). Although Egypt had no temporal unit of four (months in a season), it certainly was aware of the four directional points. One way to interpret these usages is to see four as representing a unit of completion or perfection (Feinman 2019). Seti is drawing on a Semitic motif to express the completion of one temporal cycle in history and the start of a new one with him. What is striking about Seti's action is his historical consciousness, his awareness of periods in history.

But it is the action of Ramses and not Seti that is the key to understanding the erection of the stela. For Ramses the use of 400 years served a double purpose. If Ramses had wanted to use a more precise number to mark the period of the Hyksos in Egypt, he could have done so. Seti's temple at Abydos contains a 'Hall of Records' or 'Gallery of Lists' with a series of cartouches of the kings of Egypt from the dawn of time until Seti's present (excluding Amarna) (Clayton 1994, 143). These cartouches create a form of timeline or chronology for the kings. The Turin King List from the Ramses's reign

similarly would have enabled him to calculate a more precise number had he wanted to (Redford 1986, 2–18). The issue here is not the validity of those Egyptian chronological reconstructions but the opportunity for Ramses to draw on the data had he so desired. He did not avail himself of that opportunity. Ramses was not an Egyptologist seeking to document a chronology, he was a political leader attempting to deliver a relevant political message.

Ramses drew on the actions of his father but his message was not visionary. Whereas Seti envisioned a new world order for Egypt, officially fusing the hybrid communities which had developed in the Delta, Ramses engaged in damage control. He needed to mend fences with the military forces who had abandoned him during the Exodus. They had stood by silent when Moses led people out of Egypt against the will of Ramses. They had not gone forth with him but they had not shown loyalty to Ramses either. Ramses needed to act to secure that loyalty. The 400 Year Stela reflected not the vision of the original action of that Seti had. Instead, it reflected his desperation and need to ensure all was quiet on the home front.

Year 18 campaign

Lawrence Geraty postulated at the 'Out of Egypt: Israel's Exodus between Text and Memory, History and Imagination' conference held in 2013, that Ramses's campaign in year 18 to the Sinai, Negev, and Transjordan may be interpreted as a 'search and destroy' mission against the Israelites (2015, 59).

I speculate that such a campaign provided the ideal time for some people who participated in the Exodus to decide that wandering in the desert for a decade with more to come was not what they had signed up for.

> (T)he whole congregation said to them (Moses and Aaron), 'Would that we had died in the land of Egypt! Or would that we had died in this wilderness! Why does Yahweh bring us into this land, to fall by the sword? Our wives and our little ones will become a prey; would it not be better for us to go back to Egypt?' And they said to one another, 'Let us choose a captain, and go back to Egypt. (Num. 14:2–4)

When the Canaanite Spring did not materialize and Israel was stuck in the wilderness, it was only natural for some of the participants to reappraise their situation. How Moses responded in successfully defeating this rebellion and what story he told are outside the scope of this study. One suspects that the death of his comrade-in-arms blood brothers was an anguish he could not bear, but did.

Year 21 Hittite–Egypt treaty

At the same conference, Geraty also wondered about the clause in the treaty requiring the Hittite king come to the aid of Ramses if his 'own subjects' committed 'another crime' against him as a veiled reference to the Exodus (2015, 59). Geraty neglected to mention that the obligation was not reciprocal. Despite succession issues among the Hittites, Ramses was not obligated to come to the assistance of the Hittite king. In the Egyptian record the great crime was at Kadesh where Ramses claimed he

was abandoned by his own troops. In the previous chapter, I suggested that no such action occurred at Kadesh; it instead refers to the troops who abandoned Ramses at Passover and the Exodus and who supported Moses. Based on this interpretation, the inclusion of this clause in the treaty highlights that the Exodus was not a minor event but was part of international diplomacy.

Leiden Hymn 30

Not until year 52, could Ramses sing of his cosmic triumph over the forces of chaos and Apophis in Leiden Hymn 30. Ramses had ridden the waves unscathed and the rebels were no more. At last, Ramses could proclaim the victory over the rebels he had intended to sing when he planned the execution of Moses and his confederates at the dawn of New Year over 40 years earlier in accordance with Egyptian custom on disruptions to *maat*. Moses was dead. Israel still wandered in the wilderness with nowhere to go. They were no threat to him anymore. The sun king no longer was in the shadow of the man Moses. *Maat* had been restored. All was right with the world.

> The harpoon is deep in Apophis, the Evil,
> he falls by the sword;
> and those who chose war are huddled for slaughter –
> Death cuts the hearts of God's demon enemies,
> who groan as outlaws,
> apostate forever ...
> He has ordered the remnant sacrificed
> to cripple the power of the dark Adversary
> that God's own self be secure.
>
> Unharmed is he in his midship chapel!
> the holy Light shines still!
> He has ridden the waves unscathed
> and rebels are no more!
> The sunship of infinite journeys
> still sails on course through the sky,
> Her godly crew cheering,
> their hears sweet with victory
> Down is the great Antagonist,
> bane of the Lord of Creation;
> no partisan of his is found
> either in heaven or earth!
>
> Sky, Thebes, Heliopolis, Underworld –
> Their peoples are proud of their conquering God,
> For they see him strong in his sunrise epiphany
> Robed in beauty and victory and power.
> It is day!
> You have won, Amun-Re!
> Gone the dark children of Enmity,
> Dead by the sword.
> (Foster 1992, 67)

In this hymn, Ramses is triumphant at the waters over the rebels. Victory was his at last. Perhaps one of Egypt's loyal vassals in the land of Canaan (Jerusalem?) reported the good news to the sun king. If so, it was a harbinger of the challenge Israel would face when it finally did enter the land.

Merneptah

Merneptah had to deal with the real world as it existed when he ascended to the throne. In the years since Moses had died and Ramses had sung his song of victory (1220s BCE). Israel had entered the land of Canaan. The very existence of Israel was a constant reminder that Egypt could be beaten. Israel was the only people in the land of Canaan who had not been dominated in the land of Canaan for the past nearly 300 years. They lived and symbolized an alternative to Egyptian hegemony.

Merneptah Stela

In 1896, Egyptologists discovered the Merneptah Stela with its mention of Israel (see Chapter 1). During excavations in 1976–77, Frank Yurco realized that the reliefs at the Cour de la Cachette at Karnak did not belong to Ramses as previously thought. Instead, Merneptah had commissioned them (Yurco 1978). The reliefs portrayed the battles in the land of Canaan mentioned in the Merneptah Stela which was more about Libya than Canaan. The consequences of this realization were that Egypt not only had provided the oldest textual reference to Israel but images of Israelites in battle as well. Both the Stela and the reliefs have been the source of much scholarship by both Egyptologists and biblical scholars (Yurco 1978; 1986b; 1990; 1997; Rainey 1991; 2001; Hasel 1994; 2003; Kitchen 1994b; 2004; Whitelam 2000; Hjelm and Thompson 2002; Brand 2009; 2011; Kahn 2012; Nestor 2015). In all the campaigns in the land of Canaan by Thutmose III and Amenhotep II and all the captives they listed, there was no mention of Israel (Jacob-el and Joseph-el, yes; Israel, no). In all the diplomatic correspondence during the Amarna Era, there was no mention of Israel (Jerusalem and Shechem, yes; Israel, no). Similarly, neither Seti nor Ramses mention Israel. Now in the time of Merneptah after the Exodus, Israel had become part of the geopolitical landscape in the land of Canaan.

The Quarrel Story of Apophis and Seqenenre

Merneptah still needed to explain the Exodus in terms consistent with the Egyptian cultural construct. One should keep in mind that when Ramses proclaimed his song of triumph, Merneptah was an adult who knew better. By the time Ramses died at age 91, Merneptah had witnessed decades of decline of the once-great builder. On a personal level, the person Merneptah saw die was not the colossus at Abu Simbel. He saw a person who would have been in a nursing home today. The awe factor may have dissipated. Now Merneptah had to deal with the real-world situation bequeathed to him by his father and due to forces outside Egyptian control.

The *Quarrel Story of Apophis and Seqenenre* is a perplexing story from ancient Egypt (see Maspero 1906, 236–242; Gunn and Gardiner 1918, 40–45; Gardiner 1932b; Säve-Söderbergh 1953, 43–45; Paulet 2005–2007; 2007; Biase-Dyson 2008; 2013, 382–390; Manassa 2010; Spalinger 2010; Candelora 2017, 207–208). On the one hand, it seems to be a form a popular social entertainment with its amusing images of bellowing hippopotami disturbing the sleep of a distant Hyksos leader hundreds of miles away. On the other hand, it appears to be a deadly serious political tale as the two protagonists are archaeologically verifiable people who were leaders of their respective peoples at war with each other where one ritually executed the other. Part of the dilemma is due to the absence of the ending of the story: after a few exchanges via messengers between the Hyksos Apophis and the Theban Seqenenre, the extant copy ends. The conundrum is magnified by the absence of even knowing how many additional episodes occurred in the original story. As a result, instead of simply analyzing a story that is perhaps missing only words, phrases, a few verses, or even a significant section, one is left without knowing if the original story was a one-episode story or as long as the *Story of Sinuhe*, the Contendings of Horus and Seth, or the Astarte Papyrus.

Champollion observed the manuscript containing the *Quarrel Story* in 1828 and 1830 at the home of Francois Sallier who had acquired it. The British Museum subsequently purchased it in 1839 and it became known as Papyrus Sallier I and later more formally BM 10185. A facsimile was published in 1841. It was written by Pentaweret, part of the Scribe for the Treasury during the reign of Merneptah. He also wrote Papyrus Sallier III which includes a copy of the Battle of Kadesh. The circumstances of the story's origin and purpose were unknown.

Nature abhors a vacuum. Egyptologists have been quick to fill the lacuna from the missing ending by deploying the standard Egyptian paradigm. The standard template postulates that 'Pharaoh smites the enemy'. As Assmann describes it, 'If there is one iconic image, an emblematic expression of Egyptian political self-identification, it is the image of Pharaoh smiting his enemies' (2008, 28). That image is ubiquitous in Egyptian culture stretching from the dawn of the dynasties through the triumphs of various alien rulers who mimicked/adopted the standard Egyptian iconography. What Egyptologists do not realize was the smiting Pharaoh was Apophis and the rebellious person ceremonially executed was Seqenenre (see Chapter 4).

Egyptologists from the onset to the present have applied the smiting Pharaoh template to the *Quarrel Story* as if Seqenenre has been the victor. Over the years, their position has been remarkably consistent. Even though Maspero did not consider the story to be an historical document, it still had to have the right ending (1906, 236).

Maspero: 'I have already indicated the probable ending: King Saqnûnrîya, after long hesitation, succeeded in extricating himself from the embarrassing dilemma in which his powerful rival had attempted to involve him' (1906, 242; 1967, 274).

Gardiner: 'The sequel is lost, but we can be *certain* [italics added] that the conflict ended in a victory for Sekenenrēᶜ, though not one of a military kind' (1961, 163–164).

Gunn and Gardiner: 'The exact way in which Seknenrēᶜ was extracted from his difficulties may well never be learnt, yet it cannot be doubted that Amen-rēᶜ came to his aid and that the story ended with the discomfiture of Apophis and his god' (1918, 42, see also 43 and 47).

Säve-Söderbergh: Following the preposterous accusation, the ending 'probably related some victory of Seknenrēᶜ, the hero of the tale' (1951, 67).

Wilson: 'Unfortunately the story breaks off in the middle of a sentence, so we do not know how the Theban king extricated himself from this embarrassment (of the arrogant and insulting message from Apophis 400 miles away)' (1951, 160).

Habachi: He cites Maspero's observation that kings posed problems (riddles) to each other which led to fines or tribute upon failure to solve them. He then suggests that 'Most probably Sekenenre found at the end a solution to his problem, though Apophis was unhappy with it' (1972, 50).

When in doubt, the safest recourse is to apply the conventional template.

Perhaps the person who most closely linked the *Quarrel Story* to the Exodus is Hans Goedicke. As previously covered, he sought to connect the Thera explosion with the Exodus initially in the time of Hatshepsut. He also thought the *Quarrel Story* was part of the Exodus even though he labels it 'capricious fairy tale' (1986a, 32). He perceived the story to be a *Königsnovelle* (Loprieno 1996), a story about the heroic king who triumphs over chaos. Theban Seqenenre was the decisive leader surrounded by speechless councilors in direct contrast to Hyksos Apophis. Previously Apophis had assumed the position of *nswt*, king, like an Egyptian Pharaoh 'as a result of a deal between him and other potentates, including Seqenenreᶜ' (Goedicke 1986b, 7). Now 'it would seem practically certain that Seqenenreᶜ eventually issued the order to move against Apophis' (1986b, 33). The revolt to free Egypt from Hyksos rule was underway.

Goedicke's Apophis is an 'evil character' who 'so blatantly has trespassed the binding agreement with Seqenenreᶜ' that the orderly straightforward Egyptian leader was now duty-bound to defend himself (1986b, 10, 19, 31). Seqenenre had not rebelled against his rightful king but had decisively acted to right a wrong in what is a 'coherent account of how the Thebans saw the events leading to their war with Apophis' (1986b, 34). Spalinger counters that, contrary to the evil and maniacal Apophis of Goedicke and Redford, the true goal of literary Apophis cannot be determined (2010, 125).

Goedicke used these various Egyptian texts to reconstruct a quite detailed political history of the Hyksos and Asiatic relation with Egypt at the end of the Second Intermediate Period and the beginning of the Eighteenth Dynasty. His analysis led to a comment from Ryholt who published a chronology of the Hyksos kings: 'The text has recently been reedited by Goedicke (*Apophis and Seqenenreᶜ*

Seqenenre) who states that his new rendering "*elevates the text from an apparently capricious fairy tale to a major historical source*" … but most of his interpretations are speculative in the extreme and not generally accepted' (1997, 3 n4). One can find a more reliable translation elsewhere. Goedicke was not having any more success here than he had with his Thera-Exodus explanation.

Goedicke seemed to change tact in a subsequent publication which posits a Nineteenth Dynasty political dimension to the story. Here he recognized that *Quarrel Story* text and setting were roughly 350 years apart. Therefore he suggested that the literary tractate contains propagandistic aspects reflecting the tension between Thebes where the story was composed and Avaris where the Nineteenth Dynasty kings ruled: 'It is not the historic friction between the Theban and the Hyksos lord residing at Avaris that the text is concerned with, but the historic event it uses to illustrate the going-on' (1995, 179). For Goedicke the story is political propaganda and not historiography so the Theban audience must have been able to recognize the anti-Northern ruler sentiments 'cast into a historical disguise'. He reiterated that the story expresses no nationalist uprising, a theme throughout the publication. He further averred that the cause precipitating the confrontation between Seqenenre and Apophis remains unknown, a significant contrast from the certainty previously expressed (1995, 177–182).

These conclusions offer a strikingly different interpretation than the one Ryholt previously had criticized Goedicke for. Goedicke's portrayal of the Hyksos/Theban relationship has taken a 180° turn. Historical Seqenenre and Kamose were vassals of Apophis, the rightful sovereign of the Nile. They led local, not national, uprisings against the Hyksos. Seqenenre failed. Kamose failed. The natural disaster [Thera] was divine judgment against these Theban efforts (1995, 182–188). Goedicke's Apophis has changed from an 'evil character' who 'so blatantly has trespassed the binding agreement with Seqenenre[c]' that the orderly straightforward Egyptian leader was now duty-bound to defend himself to being a decent ruler who had become part of the fabric of Egyptian society. It is the Thebans who are parochial, not the Hyksos.

The changed interpretation portrayed the Hyksos in a new light. Goedicke did not mention the Exodus here but he did state that the Hyksos left Avaris and Egypt on the basis of a treaty arrangement in the aftermath of the natural disaster of flooding and darkened skies. The implication is that Thera and the Hyksos departure are the basis for the Exodus story and that some sort of formal negotiations or dialog occurred between the Hyksos and Egyptian leaders. Now in addition to the historical value of the story for the sixteenth century BCE, the *Quarrel Story of Apophis and Seqenenre* had acquired a political meaning for the thirteenth century BCE. The Nineteenth-Dynasty rulers are cast as Hyksos trying to keep Egypt on track contrary to the parochial Theban priests. Goedicke seems unable to have grasped the possibility that the written story originated in the Nineteenth Dynasty and always was about the Nineteenth Dynasty, although set in the past.

Are the book and the movie *Spartacus* about ancient Rome since real historical figures are used?

Wente cautioned scholars that 'This Ramesside story of the origins of the conflict between Thebes in the south and the Hyksos King Apophis must be evaluated critically against documents contemporaneous with the war of the expulsion of the Hyksos' (1973, 77). Both Spalinger and Paulet did precisely that. The analysis of the vocabulary of the story, particularly in relation to the titles of the protagonists, provides clues to the time of origin of the story the scribe was copying or writing from dictation. Paulet's investigation shows that in the story, Seqenenre initially is referred to as *nswt* 'king' but then in the remainder of the story is called 'the prince of the Southern City' meaning Thebes. By contrast, Apophis is introduced as *wr* 'prince' and then is designated *nswt* 'king' throughout the narrative (Paulet 2005–2007, 76; 2007, 121). This literary titulary is at variance with the archaeological record of the Second Intermediate Period. The title 'the prince of the Southern City' is never used for Seqenenre who is a king, and neither is Apophis a prince (Paulet 2005–2007, 77; 2007, 121). Apophis used traditional Egyptian royal titles based on the archaeological record (Ryholt 1997, 124, 397–398). In fact, the record reveals that Apophis used three of the five names in the standard Egyptian royal appellation (Paulet 2005–2007, 77; 2007, 121). Paulet's hypothesis is that the titles carried by the protagonists in the introduction of the story reflect the manner in which the Egyptians of the Nineteenth Dynasty considered Apophis and Seqenenre: the Egyptian was a king, the Hyksos was not, contrary to the archaeological record (2005–2007, 75, 77–79; 2007, 12–122).

Spalinger similarly investigated the titulary of the historical and literary protagonists. He also reported the contrast between *nsw* 'king' and *wr* 'prince' as applied to Apophis and Seqenenre but provided a different explanation. In the story it is Apophis who initiates the action by sending the messenger to Seqenenre. Therefore, the Hyksos is the king in the narrative. By contrast, Seqenenre is deliberately diminished in rank by the author to distance him from his own nation and to contrast him with Apophis. This literary expression reversed the earlier designation of Seqenenre as 'prince' by Kamose in the Kamose Stela. For Spalinger the varied use of these titles reflected the differences in power among the characters in the story. It spoke to the Egyptian need for a story where a prince becomes king and the hero. This scenario happened historically since Kamose was a hero against the Hyksos, whereas Seqenenre was not (2010, 124, 130–131). It also raises the question of with whom the audience of the thirteenth century BCE composition would have identified this Hyksos figure who initiates the action. One should keep in mind that in the Delta unlike in Thebes, the Hyksos were considered to be legitimate kings of Egypt (Candelora 2017, 207–208).

Spalinger then proceeded to contrast 13 characteristics between the non-contemporary *Quarrel Story* and the contemporary Kamose Stela. These include time, setting, orientation, main actor(s), and descriptions. He concluded that the retrospective literary story differed from the stela erected in the aftermath of

Kamose's conflict with the Hyksos (2010, 135). In the Second Stela of Kamose the tables are turned when the Egyptian leader complains that Apophis belittles his stature by calling him a 'chieftain' meaning the 'head of a town' and not the ruler of a country (Habachi 1972, 32–33). Kamose is the exemplar of the *Königsnovelle* genre. In his royal monument, he is the heroic king who acts decisively and emerges as the victor in a way Seqenenre could not.

Spalinger's analysis relies heavily on the validity of the archaeological record. In particular, he attributes greater accuracy to the references revealed through archaeology than to the later literary narrative. Ryholt advised caution here even when using the seemingly more objective contemporaneous archaeological record. Although the Second Stela of Kamose designates Apophis as a chieftain of Retenu, one should not interpret this reference to mean that Apophis did not rule in Egypt. Rather it 'was rather a pejorative reference to Apophis intended to disparage him as a petty chieftain with no claim to any part of Egypt, just as Apophis had called Kamose a chieftain and thus discredited his claim to be a king' (Ryholt 1997, 131, see also 326). Therefore, shocking as it may seem, authentic archaeological records of the political leader may express biases and agendas and should not necessarily be regarded as objective truth. The critical point however is that Kamose and, especially, Ahmose are the historical heroes in a society of Pharaoh smites the enemy and remembering that helps one to understand the motifs the author chose to employ in his literary creation.

The missing ending of the story continues to be a tantalizing void drawing Egyptologists to fill it in the quest to understand the purpose of the story (summarized in Biase-Dyson 2013, 200–203). At the tenth *International Congress of Egyptologists* in 2008, Camilla di Biase-Dyson suggested that the story be considered as a parody. Her grammatical analysis indicated that 'Apophis ... is characterised as consummately active, and as someone who makes decisions and issues commands' in contrast to the 'inactive' Seqenenre who is the recipient of commands and not the issuer. Apophis initiates the action so even if he is initially identified as a *wr*, chief, he acts like a *nsw*, king. With Seqenenre, the situation is reversed: he is identified as a king but acts like a chief. She called this inversion a 'subversion of "normality"' (Biase-Dyson 2008, 69, see also 2013, 2, 56, 193, 197–198, 204–209, 220–222). This sense of literary topsy-turvy may be exactly correct since, historically, the enemy Hyksos leader did smite Seqenenre (see Chapter 4). Nonetheless, Biase-Dyson stuck with the traditional view that 'It is therefore probable that Seqenenre emerged as the victor of the tale' (2008, 69; 2013, 203).

In a more recent festschrift, Colleen Manassa continued this tradition. She focused on the fictionality of the *Quarrel Story* (2010). While the two protagonists were in fact historical figures, the setting for their exchange apparently was imaginary. She saw this story as part of a New Kingdom fascination with the conflicts of the Second Intermediate Period. Furthermore, she suggested the conflict was expressed in what might be considered both a theological and an historical context: the land was in a

state of pestilence, thus a violation of *maat* had occurred. Such an expression was a topos during what in Egyptian terms would be designated 'times of troubles' (Manassa 2003, 110–113). Therefore, Manassa documents that the 'time of troubles' motif was part of the New Kingdom tradition in response to the Hyksos dating back at least to the *Quarrel Story* in the time of Merneptah (2010, 252–253).

According to her analysis, the story was designed to highlight the absurdity of the request made by Apophis of Seqenenre. Manassa additionally suggested that Seqenenre's passive, seemingly cowardly, behavior may in fact have emulated Seti's reaction when faced with a rebellion whereby he consciously gave the foe time in order to learn his plans. This interpretation indicates that the story more likely originated in the time of Ramses II, Seti's son and successor, about a recent event rather than with Merneptah who then would be chiding the actions of his grandfather roughly seven decades earlier.

Manassa proposed that Apophis's actions against the hippopotami in the *Quarrel Story* were in accordance with Egyptian mythical conventions. This equation of a foreign king and the force of chaos also appears in the Great Karnak Inscription of Merneptah, produced around the time same the extant copy of the *Quarrel Story* was written (Manassa 2003, 122–124).

Her observation raises some intriguing possibilities. If historical Seti was the basis for literary Seqenenre, then who was the historical basis for the literary Apophis, force of chaos? In this scenario, the story could have been composed in the time of Ramses II or Merneptah as a story of legitimacy in some way. On the other hand, if Seti was not the historical basis for the literary Seqenenre then was it Ramses II and his poor decision-making at Kadesh that was being chided? But then who was his Apophis? By raising the issue of the figures in the story being about or at least alluding to people in the present, Manassa has presented the possibility for further exploration of whether Apophis and Seqenenre were historical people used as ciphers for contemporary thirteenth century BCE figures and if so, which ones.

Manassa also offered her own speculation on the missing ending of the *Quarrel Story*. Based on parallels with other Egyptian stories, she suggested the most likely ending was 'that Seqenenre capitalizes on his superior wit and strategy to gain victory over the Hyksos king, personification of chaos, who professes to worship Seth, yet represents the solar enemy Apep' (Manassa 2010, 253). In this conclusion, that Seqenenre is the hero of the story, she is in good Egyptological company as noted above. She acknowledged that Seqenenre died in battle but suggested that the 'Ramesside author of the tale, as well as its readers, may or may not have been aware of the historical ending for the Theban king' (2010, 253). Actually the audiences' knowledge about historical Seqenenre as the ultimate loser in Egyptian history more likely was crucial in the author's selection of him as a leading character in the story especially if he represented someone in the thirteenth century BCE present known to the audience. Manassa recognized that Seqenenre may not be the hero of the tale (2010, 247–250) which suggests a figure from the missing portion may be.

In 2013, Biase-Dyson returned to the *Quarrel Story*. Her observation 'that the author may have been responding in a literary manner to socio-political conditions' is correct but vague (2013, 48). Her claim that the story was a parody implies that the original audience knew exactly who and what were being parodied. Di Biase-Dyson's recognition that Egyptologists impose the swashbuckling heroics of Kamose and Ahmose on Seqenenre is correct despite his grisly end. However such actions 'could hardly be considered an appropriate end to a humorous tale' (2013, 225–226, 231): it is a Ramesside political parody. She even 'wonders whether a narrative of this kind would have ended in an Egyptian defeat ... but then would the text even have entered the scribal canon if it had ended this way' (2013, 232)? She sees no escape from this dilemma save through the unexpected, surprising, spontaneous or uncalculated accidental maneuver (2013, 203, 232–233, 254). Manassa's observation that Seqenenre might not be the hero similarly brought her to the brink of reconstructing the missing portion at odds with the standard Egyptian template, but fell short. The possibility of other episodes in the story of the true Egyptian hero who restores order that Seqenenre failed to maintain beckons to Egyptologists. They are on the verge of realizing the *Quarrel Story of Apophis and Seqenenre* is really the *Triumph Story of Ahmose over Apophis*.

In 2020, Ellen Morris offered another interpretation of the story that implicitly draws on these recent ideas that perhaps Seqenenre was not the original hero of the story. She suggests that the 'frustratingly but compellingly incomplete' story would have an extant ending had it been incorporated in the scribal curriculum (2020, 163). That raises the question of why it was not included. She interprets Apophis as rendering the treaty between the two kingdoms void. He uses provocation to offend the honor of his vassal through a patently absurd and impossible demand. By contrast, the patient Seqenenre acts in accordance with traditional Egyptian values which counsels caution when dealing with an argumentative man (Morris 2020, 163).

Here is where Morris is stumped. Apophis is the villain in the Egyptian story. Seqenenre is the hero. He behaves appropriately. Yet the archaeological verdict is clear. Seqenenre dies a gruesome death. It was Apophis who lived to fight another day. Seqenenre was the loser. That gap between the archaeological reality and the Egyptian convention causes her to ask how the story ended and what it meant. She wonders if there was a different hero waiting in the wings. She even suggests some possibilities (Morris 2020, 164). Unfortunately Ahmose is not one of them. Intriguingly she concludes her article with the thought recognizing that political authorities 'play a strong role in promoting the type of "hero" most serviceable to their state' (Morris 2020, 164). Morris is exactly right. The hero most serviceable to Merneptah was Ahmose who had defeated Apophis. Seqenenre/Ramses II had failed against Moses but Merneptah had destroyed the seed of Israel.

As O'Connor has noted, Osiris was the one figure in Egyptian myth who experienced brutal death. An Egyptian hearing the *Quarrel Story* would have made the connection between the mythical murder of Osiris and the historical death of Seqenenre. O'Connor also noted the emotional impact upon the pilgrimage audience

at Abydos hearing the story of Osiris (2011, 16). Apophis, like Seth, was the force of chaos who had to be defeated. Ahmose was the Horus who defeated him. Who was the new Ahmose? The taunting motif by Apophis against Seqenenre in the *Quarrel Story* would have called to mind the taunt speeches of Kamose against Apophis (and by the champion of Retenu towards Sinuhe)(Smith and Smith 1976, 51–52, 69, 72, 75).

The story as perceived by Egyptologists is a mess. All the standard expectations of the original audience were being violated by the author of this story. Conceptions of Osiris, Horus, Set, cosmos, chaos, flood, the Hyksos, and Pharaoh all are brought to bear in this story in unanticipated ways. Egyptologists assume Seqenenre is the hero instead of recognizing that the ceremonially-executed figure was the ultimate loser, as was the figure in the thirteenth century BCE he represented. The author's reasons creating this story must have been extremely important and pivotal to legitimating the rule of the current king who had replaced his failed predecessor against the Hyksos.

The ancient Egyptian writer pushed the literary envelope in the story to create a three- period tale in the *Königsville* tradition. Hans-W. Fischer-Elfert claims 'it is extremely unlikely that the text was composed merely to deride and make fun of the Hyksos' (2003, 134). Seqenenre does not conform to the standard prototype of an Egyptian hero and the extant story mocks the conventional *Königsnovelle* (Fischer-Elfert 2003, 134–135). Someone else is the hero. The original story began with the triumph of chaos and ended with the royal savior restoring order. Merneptah had succeeded against the Nubians, the Libyans, and the Sea Peoples as well as the Asiatics/Israel. Truly he was a great king worthy of a great story. Truly, his literary innovation was deserving of a Nobel Prize in Literature had the award existed then.

As it turns out, perhaps the person who may best have known how the *Quarrel Story* originally ended was an Egyptian Nobel Prize winner in literature in 1988, Naguib Mahfouz (Peled 1983; El-Enany 1993; 2007; Davies 2005). He was not an Egyptologist but a political writer. He brought a literary and nationalist, not Egyptological, perspective to the analysis. Mahfouz authored *Thebes at War* inspired by his seeing the mutilated corpse of Seqenenre (Davies 2005, vii). The author considered the uprising against the Hyksos to have been one of the greatest moments in Egyptian history. He wrote the book in 1937–1938 (published in 1944) covering 12 years and three Pharaohs, Seqenenre, Kamose, and Ahmose.

He was not writing solely about the past. The translator of the book into English commented:

> What is clear that this is a profoundly political novel whose ringing patriotism and passionate call to Egyptians to defend their country against any outsider who would seek to dominate it continues to resonate today. Unsurprisingly, *Thebes at War* is a set text in modern Egypt's elementary and intermediate school curricula. (Davies 2005, viii)

One should not read his book to learn about the history of Apophis and Seqenenre but to learn what those figures meant in the political environment in 1937–1938.

Mahfouz created an unhistorical story. He added a fictional Hyksos princess to serve as a marker of power between Ahmose and Apophis. She was a beautiful blond-haired blue-eyed woman. At first glance one might think she represented the British, a reasonable presumption under the circumstances. However, the more likely choice is the Ottoman Turks who ruled Egypt, as was later realized. In the novel, Ahmose has to make a choice: the woman he loves or his country. Since historical Ahmose was an Egyptian hero, we know the choice literary Ahmose made through the fictional device of the woman.

One may conjecture that the hippopotami in the *Quarrel Story* served a similar function as the Hyksos princess in *Thebes at War*. The storyteller is deliberately setting a choice for both the hero and the audience to make. Similar examples of this technique include the fictional slave girl caught between Kirk Douglas's Spartacus and Lawrence Olivier's Crassus in *Spartacus* and the fictional Rachel between the fictionalized John Scopes and her non-historical fundamentalist father in *Inherit the Wind*. In those cases, it is not the male hero who has to make a choice; it is the fictional female representing the audience who is called upon to decide. Her decision becomes our decision.

These observations belie the often-made comment that the imaginary hippopotamus motif is patently absurd and would have been so understood by the original audience. Spalinger's assessment that the hippopotamus episode 'crucial' and not just some 'battle of wits' is correct (2010, 125). It represented a test of power over who controls the forces of chaos.

In this modern political story of Egyptian pride, Seqenenre dies in battle:

> Seqenenra fought magnificently, never despairing or flagging, appearing at times as though he were the angel of death, choosing whomever he wished from the enemy. (Mahfouz 2005, 41)

But alas, his valiant efforts are not enough. He dies a violent death and later the Egyptians locate his body among the corpses left strewn about the battlefield. That discovery takes place on page 44 of the novel. There are still about 200 pages to go! What transpires is not quite was should be expected. Kamose victoriously leads his forces into battle and then is unexpectedly slain himself while walking amidst dead Hyksos, one of whom turns out not to be dead after all. His Chamberlain then sends the message to all who fight on Egypt's behalf on the death of Kamose: 'he was martyred on the field of battle, fighting for Egypt, as was his father before him ...' (Mahfouz 2005, 153). Ahmose then rises to the occasion as he ascends to the throne and Egypt is free at last.

Certainly one may take issue with Mahfouz's historical reconstruction in the novel just as one could with Merneptah's version. Mahfouz made Nubia, historically, an ally of the Hyksos, the refuge for Egypt. Kamose regrouped and re-armed before the next round in the confrontation with the Hyksos (Mahfouz 2005, 48, 145). Yet in this modern telling one has a truth of the *Quarrel Story* that the Egyptological analyses so far have failed to see. It delivered a political message at the time of its creation.

The *Quarrel Story* was not ancient Egypt's Alamo or Masada and Seqenenre was no martyr seeking the rewards of virgins in paradise. Mahfouz wrote in a time of foreign rule and out of a sense of pride in ancient Egyptian history. Seqenenre was not that figure of pride, he was a figure of humiliation and defeat. If the entire *Quarrel Story* had survived, it would end with a triumphant Ahmose restoring the cosmic order as part of the *Triumph Story of Ahmose over Apophis*.

Mahfouz's story delivers a message in the author's present using an event set in the past. Even stories set in mythical times may be understood as a reflection of royal succession issues (L. Lesko 1986, 101; Hollis 1990, 168; Katary 1994, 39). Therefore these stories may have an internal political message on the topic of the legitimacy of the king. In a book on the laurels and limitations of historical fiction, Lion Feuchtwanger observes that biblical writers, Homer, Virgil, and Shakespeare all wrote about the present in stories set in the past (1963, 129–130). He avers that they are writing about contemporary problems without setting the story in the present.

> Historical disguise often enables an author to express truths, notably those of a political or daring exotic kind, he would fear or be incapable of stating in a contemporary setting. (1963, 133)

Howard Fast and Arthur Miller wrote about their present through two different historical settings; H. G. Wells used the future. Historical literature and science fiction share that attribute in common. How exactly could Merneptah have criticized his father?

At his accession, Merneptah said, also from Papyrus Sallier I:

> Be joyful the entire land!
> Good times have come.
> The lord has ascended in all the lands,
> And orderliness has gone down to its throne.
> (quoted in Hoffmeier 1997, 153)

Good times have come, bad times have ended. Of course, such words are part boilerplate so determining if an actual restoration from existing chaos is difficult. Eyre's observation is telling:

> Ramsesside stories focus on the behaviour of the great - typically royal or divine characters – and their fallibility. (Eyre 2018, 96)

He rejects the idea that history stories themselves were found to be entertaining. So who is the royal figure in the story who is being satirized?

The *Triumph Story of Ahmose over Seqenenre*

Necessity is the mother of invention. The political reality of the times spurred literary innovation. In the *Triumph Story of Ahmose over Apophis*, Ahmose is the hero who triumphs over Apophis. The ancient story celebrated his and Merneptah's restoration

of *maat* and defeat of chaos. The *Triumph Story of Ahmose over Seqenenre* is an Egyptian literary creation based on historical figures intended to deliver a message in the author's present. The challenge is to determine when that present was and who, meaning which king, was intended as the beneficiary of the story. The presumption is that the readers or listeners of the story would recognize that the triumph of the hero king in the story was to be equated in some way with the current king. The story of the triumph over Apophis celebrated the Pharaoh who was linked with the success of Ahmose and not the failure of Seqenenre. The author drew on the very elements of Leiden Hymn 30 to reverse its message. He was using a 17th century BCE event and a 13th century BCE hymn to comment on the reign of Merneptah in his present. It is important to keep those considerations in mind, lest one apply inappropriate standards of historicity to a metaphorical expression of legitimacy (Eyre 1996).

The story expresses the classic confrontation between cosmos and chaos, between order and disorder, between Egypt and foreigner that one would expect to find in Egyptian literature but with the orientation reversed. Since the story is not a literal rendering of an actual event in history but a metaphorical expression of one, one must scrutinize each element chosen by the author to understand the meaning of his creation. Since the story begins when the land was in a state of pestilence, one may reasonably conclude that the story will end with the cessation of pestilence and the restoration of order, cosmos, or *maat*. Seqenenre was not the person historically who achieved that condition and he was not the hero of the story; Ahmose, who did succeed, was as expressed in his Tempest Stela (see Chapter 4). The specific characters, characteristics, and actions in the story all serve to deliver this message: the current king was the one who restored *maat* and the previous king had failed.

In the Egyptian culture, the hippopotamus is an animal to be harpooned by the heroic warrior leader. It is a representation of the forces of chaos dating back to prehistoric times. Tomb burials at Hierakonpolis from the late fourth millennium BCE contain hippopotami. A living hippopotamus can quickly destroy a crop, threaten fishers or anyone working along the banks of the river or in a marsh; a killed beast can provide an immense amount of food (Säve-Söderbergh 1953, 46; Hassan 1988, 148; Hendrickx 2014, 269) so the control over this force of chaos was essential. For a modern version of the destructive power of the hippopotamus, consider the situation in Columbia. The drug-dealer Escobar brought four of them to Columbia in the 1980s. They have grown to be nearly 100. That is partly because Colombia is, from a hippo's point of view, a paradise on Earth: plenty of water and grass to pasture on and, relative to the African savannah, there are no predators. If unchecked, there could be up to 7000 hippos in Colombia by 2060 (Pozzebon 2021).

In ancient times, harpooning the hippopotamus would become a staple of royal iconography and part of the story of Horus and Seth. Harpooning the hippopotamus equated to the king smiting the forces of chaos (Säve-Söderbergh 1953, 16). There are multiple tombs from the time of Hatshepsut and Thutmose III showing the deceased

tomb owner hunting the ferocious hippopotamus in the marshlands. However, no matter how realistic the scene seemed, it was not real then. Rather it glorified the lone hunter who subdued the feared beast (Säve-Söderbergh 1953, 5, 10–12). This scenario equates the King Apophis with the mythical Apophis, the chaotic serpent and solar enemy on Ra's daily nocturnal sojourn.

The hippopotamus is a stock figure in Egyptian story telling. The animal figured prominently in the performance of Horus and Seth at Edfu (see Chapter 2). Säve-Söderbergh suggested a real harpooning in the hippopotamus ritual in Thebes underlay this story (1953, 44–45). Griffiths considered allegory to be a critical element in the story telling with the religious dimension of the harpooning of the hippopotamus representing the triumph of Horus over Seth being the key (1967, 96). Redford introduced the concept of a West Asian creation myth basis expressed using Egyptian fauna instead (1986, 278 n79). The idea of an Asian influence in the story is worth pursuing but more for the noise than the hippopotamus. Spalinger completely rejects the notion that the story itself is anything but an Egyptian story through and through in its motifs and actions (2010, 125).

These animals are not beasts of silence; that too, is part of the author's message. Goedicke characterized the 'noise' of the beast as an 'insane message' (1986b, 3). Other Egyptologists take issue with this analysis (Säve-Söderbergh 1953, 44). Spalinger plaintively asks:

> I deem the hippopotamus episode crucial. It has to be. Why would the author of the composition bother with pure silliness? (2010, 125)

The inclusion of this purported insanity is due to the sanity of the author and its function needs to be determined. First, in an Egyptian context, noise has a deleterious significance. In the *Admonitions of Ipuwer*:

> Lo, [one is numb] from noise,
> No voice is straight in years of shouting,
> No end of shouting.
> (Lichtheim 1975, 153)

The noise is recurrent. The implication of the years of noise is that chaos permanently pervades the land (Enmarch 2008, 95). The speaker yearns for the cessation of this disturbance:

> Then the land would cease to shout,
> Tumult would be no more!
> (Lichtheim 1975, 154)

Ceaseless noise has consequences. In the *Myth of Athrahasis*, fragments found at Ugarit at this time (Lambert and Millard 1969, 131–133) noise is the disruptive motif which eventually led to a deluge destroying almost the entire human race:

Enlil heard their noise:

> and addressed the great gods:
> The noise of humankind has become too intense for me,
> with their uproar I am deprived of sleep.
> (Arnold and Beyer 2002, 26)

Deluge itself is a cosmological term which need not necessary be taken literally. In the Assyrian royal monuments, the Deluge represents the overpowering onslaught of the onrushing Assyrian king and army. It overwhelms and sweeps away the old order so the new order centered on the Assyrian king can be built:

Adad-Nirari II A.0.99.2 (911–891 BCE):

> I overwhelm like the deluge -
> [I laid] traps as strong as the destructive deluge for him

Ashurnasirpal II A.0.101.1 (883–859 BCE):

> Ninurta...king of battle ... whose attack is a deluge ...
> Ashurnasirpal ... mighty flood-tide which has no opponent.
> (Grayson 1991, 148, 150, 194)

Flooding waters then were a metaphor for military victory. If the *Triumph Story* followed this scenario, then it would have transformed the flood into a weapon against Egypt. The land that was the Gift of the Nile now would experience its wrath. The so-called 'absurd' request of Apophis to Seqenenre should be understood, instead, not as an absurdity or battle of wits but as a warning of 'tomorrow you die' ... and by a flood! For thematic purposes, the power of the story would have been enhanced if the flooding which destroyed the hippopotami had occurred at night, precisely when Apophis was to be vanquished.

According to this reconstruction, in the next episode of the story, the battle would switch from verbal to martial.

> Even though the rest of the papyrus is lost, there is no doubt that a war between two protagonists is going to take place and, more importantly, that just as in the human sphere there are two royal antagonists (Apophis and Seqenenre), so too in the realm of the divine two players are rivals. (Spalinger 2002b, 330)

Exactly right. The time for riddles is over. The motif of messengers is finished. The time for fighting had begun.

Literary Seqenenre faced the same fate as historical Seqenenre. We now know he was ritually executed on the field of battle by Apophis who thought he was the real king who was restoring *maat* by destroying the rebel. We need to pause here and let sink in the enormity of this scene in the performance of the *Triumph Story of Ahmose*

over Seqenenre. Imagine the audience response to the scene early in the show that depicts the ritual execution of Seqenenre. This scene of Seqenenre's execution would have brought down the house. How would the Egyptians have responded witnessing blow after blow striking the head of their king? Would they have shrieked? Would they have yelled? Would cries of anguish have pierced the performance and risen to the heavens? NO! NO! HOW CAN THIS BE HAPPENNING! The audience would have eagerly awaited the opportunity to cheer Ahmose's success in the final scene. And never would the names Ramses, Moses, or Merneptah be mentioned. There was no need. The audience knew.

The author of the *Triumph Story* used this historical legacy to deliver his message in the thirteenth century BCE. Seqenenre is defending the symbol of chaos. Apophis restores order by killing the bellowing beasts through a flood. The Egyptian leader is not the restorer of *maat*, he is a defender of chaos and was defeated. That was precisely the point of the story: the disruption to *maat*. Literary Seqenenre was ritually killed in a ceremony that reversed the normal order and humiliated Egypt. In a society based on Pharaoh smites the enemy, Seqenenre could not be a hero since the reverse had occurred and Egypt abhorred a world turned topsy-turvy. The story was much more powerful, more dramatic, and more effective when the author deliberately used conventional Egyptian iconography but with reverse polarity (David kills the Philistine warrior! [I Samuel 22:19]). The literary inversion helps deliver the message regardless of the historical details of Seqenenre's death. This does not mean that a thirteenth century BCE Pharaoh died in battle, but one is being mocked for having failed against Hyksos Moses just as Seqenenre had failed against Hyksos Apophis.

The missing portions would regale the achievements of Ahmose for his victory over Apophis. He would be celebrated for that event just as Merneptah sought to be for his destruction of the seed of Israel. The chaos of the triumph of the false Horus had ended. *Maat* had been restored. The *Triumph Story of Apophis over Seqenenre* is a powerful political narrative of considerable importance in understanding Egyptian history at a particular point in time. In summary:

1. At the time when the story was written neither the Hyksos nor Seth were villains in the Egyptian culture.
2. The standard Egyptian paradigm of 'Pharaoh smites the enemy' and *Königsnovelle* story format applies in the *Triumph Story.* Ahmose is the heroic warrior victor who restored *maat* following the ritual execution of Seqenenre by Apophis. The natural order had been violated. Chaos had triumphed.
3. The author delivered a message about the legitimacy of his king in the Nineteenth Dynasty through the telling of a story involving historical individuals from the Fifteenth and Seventeenth Dynasties.
4. The story is not about Amarna, the Hyksos people, or anti-Semitism regardless of what it might have come to mean post-Assyrian invasion.

According to Assmann, for the Ramesside period, 'the world has become unintelligible, incalculable and unstable. It no longer inspires comfort and confidence' (1995, 195). Perhaps the *Triumph Story* represents the effort by one Pharaoh to restore comfort, confidence, and *maat*.

The Hyksos need to be understood in the context in which the *Triumph Story* was written and not the time in which it is set. While Hatshepsut's anti-Hyksos statements may have been directed against the collective Hyksos, by the time of composition of the *Triumph Story*, she had been dead for over 150 years and was out of favor along with perhaps other female figures of the Eighteenth Dynasty (L. Lesko 1986, 101–102). By the end of the Eighteenth Dynasty, the Hyksos were old news and presumably allies against the new Hittite threat to Egypt that Horemheb, Seti, and Ramses II all confronted. At this time, Seth was held in high regard. Pharaoh was named Seti, his capital would be at the Hyksos capital of Avaris, and the selection of the site would be celebrated by his son Ramses II in the 400 Year Stela. Ramses II would be rescued at Kadesh by his Canaanite forces and name a daughter after Anat. The negative portrayal of the collective Hyksos as contained in Manetho's description, as reported by Josephus, is unwarranted. It should not be retrojected to the *Triumph Story*.

The story is not a blanket condemnation of a people either. Instead it is about specific individuals: Moses, Ramses II, and Merneptah. It is about the victory of Moses acting as a Horus over Ramses who failed to succeed against him. It is about the victory of Merneptah, not directly over Moses but over the people Israel he created, whose seed the victorious Pharaoh claimed to have destroyed. Historical Apophis is not the target of the story; he is the vehicle through whom Merneptah can mock the one who failed without mentioning the name of his own father. Moses was already dead by the time Merneptah told this story. Israel still lived and knew the story was about them. Undoubtedly, Israel learned this technique of writing although it would be centuries before it applied it to its own political events in what would become the Hebrew Bible including its versions of the Exodus.

> Man dies, his body is dust,
> his family all brought low to the earth,
> But writing shall make him remembered,
> alive in the mouths of any who read.
> Better a book than a builded mansion,
> better than body's home in the West,
> Splendid above a fine house in the country
> or stone-carved deeds in the precinct of God
> (Papyrus Chester Beatty IV in Foster 1992, ix)

Moses was a storyteller, too. I speculate that when Moses told the story where the one-river garden was Egypt, the first man of Yahweh was Moses, the uraeus cobra was Ramses in the upright or kill position, and Zipporah, his wilderness Kenite wife, represented the Israelite people: it was about the Exodus.

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Index

Gods

People and peoples (ancient)

People and places (modern)

Places and objects

Stories, texts, and inscriptions

Topics

Biblical citations