

of Christ; there was in fact no widespread destruction of the cities of Galilee when the Romans put down the Jewish revolt.

The word translated 'hell' here is *hades*, not *gehenna*, so there is no suggestion of a fiery destruction, and the exaltation to heaven is clearly symbolic, and applies to the privileged position of the city in having Jesus in its midst, preaching and performing miracles. The bringing down to hell would therefore be symbolic of the city declining to a position of great lowliness, and was fulfilled in the way it has become an uninhabited ruin. The fact that verse 23 refers to Sodom still remaining in Jesus's day if it had witnessed the miracles Capernaum had witnessed indicates that Jesus was referring in this verse to the fate of the cities themselves.

Regarding verse 24, the conclusion seems unavoidable that this is referring to the responsibility of individuals at the judgment to come, since the verse is referring to a day of judgment at which both Sodom and Capernaum are held accountable, and one which Sodom has yet to experience, "it *shall be* more tolerable for the land of Sodom . . .". The citizens of Sodom are responsible because they failed to heed the preaching of Lot, and the citizens of Capernaum are responsible because they failed to heed the preaching of Jesus. However, the latter are more culpable because, as verse 20 says, Jesus had done many miracles in their city, whereas Lot's preaching was not backed up by miracles.

(To be continued)

## Who was the Pharaoh of the Exodus?

Martin Cragg

**T**HE MANY attempts to identify the proud Pharaoh of the Exodus have so far failed to provide convincing proof as to his identity. Unlike the Bible, secular ancient annals tend to treat failure with silence, and this Pharaoh was a spectacular failure. It seems strange, then, that the most popular candidates have been the strong warrior kings, for example, Thutmose III or Ramesses II.<sup>1</sup>

Some workers have proposed unorthodox chronologies, which, if adopted, would place this pharaoh in a totally different dynasty.<sup>2</sup> While there are problems with the standard dating and lengths of certain Egyptian periods, there seems to be no convincing evidence requiring drastic corrections to the orthodox dates for the early eighteenth dynasty, which Biblical chronology parallels to the time of the Exodus. There are still some unsolved problems in Biblical chronology, but, if we accept the secular date of 586 B.C. for the destruction of the temple, it leads us to a date for the Exodus around the early to mid fifteenth century B.C. This is not a treatise on chronology, so actual dates are not given, but Egyptian reign lengths given by Sir Alan Gardiner<sup>3</sup> are used in the [chronological chart](#) over the page to show synchronisms between Egyptian and Israelite records. Thus, within the constraints of Biblical and Egyptian chronologies, readers can 'fit' the scheme to their own favoured dates.

### A new dynasty

The Exodus story, after reference to the sojourn of Jacob's family in Egypt and the death of Joseph, states, shortly before the record of the birth of Moses: "Now there arose up a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph" (Ex. 1:8). According to orthodox chronology, about eighty years before the Exodus a new native Egyptian dynasty overthrew the Hyksos (the so-called 'Shepherd Kings'). The Hyksos were Asiatic chieftains who had ruled Egypt from the Delta area for several generations and so could be expected to be sympathetic to the descendants of Jacob who dwelt amongst them.

This new dynasty of Theban kings, founded by **Ahmose I**, took about four years to expel the hated Asiatic Hyksos. One is immediately struck by the similarity between this new king's name (sometimes written Amosis), which was a component of many of the royal names and officials of this period, and that of Moses. The name Moses is Egyptian in origin and means 'born' or 'drawn out', and Pharaoh's daughter (called Thermuthis

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1. *Warrior Pharaohs: The Rise and Fall of the Egyptian Empire*, P. H. Newby, Faber & Faber, 1980, p. 175.
  2. *Ages in Chaos*, Vol. 1, I. Velikovsky, Gollancz, 1952; *A Test of Time*, David M. Rohl, Random House, 1995.
  3. *Egypt of the Pharaohs*, Sir Alan Gardiner, OUP, 1964 paperback edition, p. 443.

Start of XVIIIth Dynasty (New Kingdom)					(Regent/'King')			
	King who knew not Joseph?				HATSHEP-SUT 22 years			
HYKSOS	AHMOSE 25 years	AMEN-HOTEP I 22 years	THUT-MOSE I 18 years	THUT-MOSE II 20 years	THUTMOSE III 54 years		AMEN-HOTEP II 23 years	
	Expels Hyksos  Oppression of Israelites?		Builds empire  Two kings die	'Weak' king?	Egypt recovers prosperity	Egypt extends empire to Euphrates	Last incursion into N. Syria	Single raid into Canaan
	MOSES IN EGYPT 40 years		MOSES IN MIDIAN 40 years		ISRAEL IN WILDERNESS 40 years		CONQUEST OF CANAAN	UNFAITHFUL GENERATION
	Moses born  Aaron born		Moses flees aged 40		Exodus, Moses aged 80		Moses dies aged 120	Joshua and elders dead

Lengths of reigns as given by Sir Alan Gardiner in *Egypt of the Pharaohs*

**Synchronism between the early XVIIIth Dynasty of Egypt and the Israelites**

according to Josephus<sup>4</sup>) appeared to have two reasons for naming him thus: “And she called his name Moses: *and* she said, Because I drew him out of the water” (2:10); the implication of the first ‘and’ being that she called him after the dynastic name.

Ahmose I reigned for twenty-five years. It is reasonable to place the birth of Moses towards the beginning of this reign because there is no record of Aaron, who was three years older than Moses, having been threatened by the new king’s edict that all the male Hebrew children were to be killed at birth. There is, of course, an indeterminate period covering the start of the reign, the start of the oppression and the issuing of the edict. Placing the birth of Moses in this reign narrows the choice of the pharaoh of the Exodus, which occurred eighty years later, to one individual (Thutmose II), because his successor ruled for fifty-four years and could not therefore have died in the Exodus as required by Scripture (see below), and his predecessor ended his reign less than eighty years from the start of the dynasty, yet at the time of the Exodus Moses, born some years after the new dynasty began, was eighty years old.

**The Pharaohs of Moses’ exile**

**Amenhotep I**, the son of Ahmose I, was the next king. He reigned for twenty-two years, and Mo-

ses, then aged forty, must therefore have fled to Midian towards the end of his reign (Acts 7:23-29). Josephus claims that Moses had been general of the Egyptian army, and had married an Ethiopian princess. Josephus has a mixed reputation but his reliability has been proven time and again. The enigmatic Biblical reference to Moses having married an Ethiopian woman (Num. 12:1) suggests there is some truth in his latter claim, and, certainly, “Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds” (Acts 7:22). He also had the option of being called “the son of Pharaoh’s daughter” and sharing in the treasures of Egypt (Heb. 11:24,26).

Josephus suggests that Moses fled because he was suspected of sedition, and that the king was jealous of his success in the field. This is not necessarily at variance with the account of his flight given in Exodus 2 following his killing of an Egyptian: “And [the Hebrew] said, Who made thee a prince and a judge over us? intendest thou to kill me, as thou killedst the Egyptian? And Moses feared, and said, Surely this thing is known. Now when Pharaoh heard this thing, he sought to slay Moses. But Moses fled from the

4. Whiston’s Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, Book II, chapter IX.5.

face of Pharaoh, and dwelt in the land of Midian” (vv. 14,15). The implication is that Moses was a prince and judge in Egypt until he rejected his adoptive heritage and cast in his lot with his people (v. 11; Heb. 11:24-27). From the Egyptian point of view, quite apart from the killing of the Egyptian, the favour shown towards the Hebrews (linked so recently with the hated Hyksos) would have been a very alarming, if not seditious, act from one who possibly had a legitimate claim to the throne.

The departure of Moses may have simplified the succession, and Amenhotep I, not having a son of his own, chose as his successor **Thutmose I**, who reigned for eighteen years. He was a son of a woman of non-royal blood, but was married to a younger sister of Amenhotep I called **Ahmoose** (that is, a daughter of Pharaoh Ahmoose), and she bore him four children. Three of them predeceased him, but the fourth (**Hatshepsut**) was of “fine royal blood”. Hatshepsut married one of her half brothers (son of a lesser queen named **Mutnefert**, possibly a younger sister of queen Ahmoose), who became **Thutmose II**. It is very interesting, in the light of the later perishing of all the first-born children of Egypt at the Passover, that secular Egyptian history furnishes the information that neither of these two later monarchs was a first-born child. After a successful reign Thutmose I died; he “rested from life, going forth to heaven, having completed his years in gladness of heart”.<sup>5</sup>

#### The Pharaoh of the Exodus

After the death of the two previous kings, and a forty-year sojourn in Midian, Moses would be free to return from exile during the reign of Thutmose II, hence the command of God: “Go, return into Egypt: for all the men are dead which sought thy life” (Ex. 4:19). Thutmose II, who is thought by Gardiner, though not others, to have reigned for twenty years, is regarded by historians as a weak king, dominated by his wife Hatshepsut (who later became Pharaoh), although he speaks proudly of his campaign against ‘Vile Cush’ (Nubia), and there is evidence that he conducted at least one campaign in Palestine. Some regard his reign as short and ineffectual, but Gardiner sees no reason to discount a now mislaid stela recording an eighteenth year.

Thutmose II, according to the chronology adopted above, is the only candidate for the Pharaoh of the Exodus (named as Tethmosis by



Head of Mummy of Thutmose II reproduced with permission from *Faces of Pharaohs: Royal Mummies and Coffins from Ancient Thebes*, Robert B. Partridge, BCA, 1994

Josephus) in this dynasty; and, if we adopt this view, some historical records regarding him and his successors take on a new significance. His mummy has been identified (see picture). If he was the Pharaoh of the Exodus, this means that his body was recovered from the Red Sea. This is not discounted by Scripture; though Pharaoh was drowned in the Red Sea (Ps. 136:15), we are told that “Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the sea shore” (Ex. 14:30). (It should be noted, however, that, due to relabelling and reinterment in the twenty-first dynasty, the identity of the Egyptian royal mummies is not established with certainty.)

Gardiner writes concerning the death of Thutmose II: “Despite the terse way in which the fact is recorded, there is no reason to think that Thutmosis died other than a normal death”. If he was the Pharaoh who ruined Egypt, however, there would be every reason for a terse report of his death! Gardiner continues: “An almost undecorated tomb . . . is confidently ascribed to [Thutmose II], and from its neglect one might conjecture that no one cared very much what was his fate; his funerary temple . . . is a paltry affair”.

The lack of decoration could indicate a sudden death, and it is clear that the life and death of Thutmose II were not recorded for posterity with any great reverence or enthusiasm. This is a fitting memorial for one who was so stubborn

5. *Ancient Records of Egypt* (Vol. 2), James Henry Breasted, University of Chicago Press, 1906. Reprinted 2001, University of Illinois Press.

“How long wilt thou refuse to humble thyself before Me?” (10:3), said God) that he brought his country to ruin (“knowest thou not yet that Egypt is destroyed?” (v. 7), said his servants) and was humbled before his people. It is a salutary lesson also that this proud Pharaoh, who said, “Who is the LORD, that I should obey His voice . . . ?” (5:2), should go down in history as a weak king dominated by his wife!

Both Breasted<sup>6</sup> and Mertz<sup>7</sup> give an interesting translation of an Egyptian record concerning the death of Thutmose II: “He went forth to heaven, having mingled with the gods”. This seems the wrong way round for the usual report of a pharaoh’s death—he would normally have been reported as ascending to heaven *before* ‘mingling with the gods’—but this report could be literally true from the Egyptian’s point of view: “See, I have made thee [Moses] a god to Pharaoh” (7:1).

Another Scriptural fact concerning the death of the Pharaoh of the Exodus that fits Egyptian history of the time of Thutmose II is that his drowning took place shortly after the time of the first Passover, and Passover is celebrated in spring. Thutmose II was succeeded by **Thutmose III**, who was a boy at the time, the son of a palace concubine of low birth named **Isis**, and he seems to have been destined initially for the priesthood. This suggests that he was a replacement heir after the loss of Pharaoh’s first-born, another point that fits Scripture. Also, it is known that he was not the first child of Isis, for he had an elder sister. Since Scripture defines first-borns as “all that openeth the matrix” (13:15), Thutmose III would not have survived Passover night had he been the first-born of Isis but not the first-born of his father. Again, the facts are in accordance with Scripture. Thutmose III, although prevented from ruling in his own right at first due to the existence of a regency and later due to usurpation by Hatshepsut, the wife of Thutmose II, counts his accession from the time of his father Thutmose II.

Thutmose III celebrated the twenty-second anniversary of his accession at Gaza, on a spring campaign in Palestine.<sup>8</sup> Seventeen days after this celebration he fought the battle of Megiddo on the day of the ‘true’ new moon. Twenty-two Egyptian years of 365 days (leap years were not used until much later) added to seventeen days gives 8,047 days. This figure, divided by the average synodic month of 29.53 days (full moon to full moon) gives almost exactly 272.5 lunations.

Thus, if he fought the battle of Megiddo on the day of the new moon, his accession must have been on the day of a spring full moon.<sup>9</sup>

At first sight this could pose a problem for our identification, because the Passover takes place on or about the time of the full moon, whereas the crossing of the Red Sea, when Pharaoh perished, was at least three days after the Passover. However, there is the intriguing possibility that, after the horrors of the Passover night, Thutmose II panicked and made his surviving son co-regent. This latter act would legitimise and reinforce his son’s claim to the throne in the face of his ambitious stepmother Hatshepsut, who bore the titles, “King’s Daughter, King’s Sister, God’s Wife and King’s Great Wife”.

In fact, just such a co-regency is suggested by an inscription on the seventh pylon of the temple at Karnak. Here Thutmose III states that, while he was a youth serving in the temple of Amon, “There was assigned to me the sovereignty of the Two Lands upon the throne . . . by the side of my father, the Good God, King of Upper and Lower Egypt, Okheperner (Thutmose II)”.<sup>10</sup> Thus the Bible supplies a convincing reason for a co-regency which otherwise makes little sense. Why was a young boy, destined for the priesthood, suddenly elevated to the throne of Egypt? And Egyptian records supply the data to prove that his accession could have occurred on the very day (counting evening to evening) of the Passover,<sup>11</sup> his father perishing a few days later while pursuing the departing Israelites through the Red Sea.

6. *Ibid.*

7. *Temples, Tombs and Hieroglyphs*, Barbara Mertz, Gollancz, London, 1964, p. 190.

8. Gardiner, *op. cit.*, p. 189.

9. In Breasted’s translation, the day of the battle of Megiddo is stated to be “the day of the feast of the new moon, [corresponding to] the royal coronation”. It would appear from this that the Egyptian astronomers carried out the calculation above in reverse and predicted the new moon (which of course could not have been seen yet) on this auspicious day from the fact that Thutmose’s coronation had taken place on the day of the full moon. However, if observed rather than calculated, the Egyptians used the last (morning) sighting of the old moon from which to reckon their new moon day.

10. Breasted, *op. cit.*

11. Passover a day or two either side of full moon need not affect this coincidence but would have a bearing on chronology.

### Later monarchs

After the death of her husband, Hatshepsut reigned for twenty-two years. At first this was as regent, but she soon usurped the throne and called herself 'king'. Gardiner remarks upon the unusual prominence of the women of the eighteenth dynasty (*cf.* Pharaoh's daughter above), but it is difficult to imagine how the Egyptians could have accepted this usurpation were it not for the mess that her predecessor had made. There was little military activity during her reign, but she rebuilt Egypt's prosperity; the famous trading trip to 'Punt' brought great wealth.

In an inscription at Speos Artemidos, Hatshepsut makes a claim which Gardiner regards as exaggerated, referring, as he believes, to the restoration of the damage caused by the Hyksos, who had been expelled by her ancestor Ahmose I eighty years before: "I have restored that which had been ruined. I have raised up that which had gone to pieces since the Asiatics were in the midst of Avaris of the Northland, and vagabonds [wanderers, nomads, strangers] were in the midst of them, overthrowing that which had been made. They ruled without Re, and he did not act by divine command *down to (the reign of) my majesty* . . . I have made distant those whom the gods abominate, and the earth has carried off their foot(prints)".<sup>12</sup> Rather than being an empty boast, this could be her rightful claim to have restored Egypt after the chaos following the reign of her husband, with a reference to the departure of the Israelites whose exodus coincided with the start of her reign.

The succession after Thutmose II is described thus: "His son stood in his place as King of the Two Lands, having become ruler upon the throne of the one who begat him. His sister the Divine Consort, Hatshepsut, settled the affairs of the Two Lands . . . Egypt was made to labour with bowed head for her",<sup>13</sup> again suggesting that the affairs of the two lands (Upper and Lower Egypt or desert and valley) were in need of settlement.

Thutmose III reigned fifty-four years, counting from the end of the reign of his father. Hatshepsut either died or was deposed around his twenty-second year. He became Egypt's greatest king, and expanded its empire to the Euphrates, with fourteen separate campaigns against the North Eastern area from the twenty-third to the thirty-ninth year of his reign. There were no expeditions to Syria in the last twelve years of his reign. He would be well into his forties in his

thirty-ninth year, but there could be another reason for this cessation of campaigning.

If the Exodus took place at his accession, the cessation of these campaigns coincides with the ending of Israel's forty-year sojourn in the wilderness and the start of their conquest of Palestine. Thutmose III was a Pharaoh with brains, as evidenced by his strategic and tactical prowess in battle and his diplomatic skills in running his empire. It would have been foolish to take on the people who had brought such havoc and destruction in the reign of his father. Palestine had been part of Egypt's empire under this great warrior king for nearly twenty years. Its inhabitants were now abandoned to the mercy of the people who were connected with the destruction of Egypt forty years before, and who were commanded by their God Yahweh to destroy all the inhabitants of the land. No wonder they were terrified! As Rahab said to the two spies:

"I know that the LORD hath given you the land, and that your terror is fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you. For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red sea for you, when ye came out of Egypt; and what ye did unto the two kings of the Amorites, that were on the other side Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom ye utterly destroyed. And as soon as we had heard these things, our hearts did melt, neither did there remain any more courage in any man, because of you: for the LORD your God, He is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath" (Josh. 2:9-11).

Thutmose III died around the time of the new moon (another factor which rules out his candidacy for Pharaoh of the Exodus) and was succeeded by **Amenhotep II**, who reigned for twenty-three years. He sustained the empire largely by diplomacy. There was a single campaign into Canaan in his ninth year. Places mentioned are Apheq, Yehem, Socho and Anaharath, and the princes of Nahrin, Khatti and Sangar gave tribute. His ninth year was approximately sixty-three years after the Exodus. The land having been divided by lot by the forty-fifth year, calculated from the age of Caleb (Josh. 14:10), Joshua and all that generation would have died

12. Gardiner, *op. cit.*, p. 188; *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*, James R. Pritchard (editor), Princeton University Press, 1955, p. 231.

13. Breasted, *op. cit.*

by then, and a new generation arose “which knew not the LORD, nor yet the works which He had done for Israel . . . And the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel, and He delivered them into the hands of spoilers that spoiled them, and He sold them into the hands of their enemies round about, so that they could not any longer stand before their enemies . . . Nevertheless the

LORD raised up judges, which delivered them out of the hand of those that spoiled them” (Judg. 2:8-10,14-16). It is possible that this single campaign of Amenhotep II could be regarded as one or more of these raids, after which there are no more incursions into Palestine from this dynasty, and the Egyptian Empire declines as the era of the Judges unfolds.

## Archaeological evidence for the existence of Jesus

Tony Benson

**T**HE WORLD OF Biblical archaeology has been shaken by a sensational find: a limestone ossuary bearing the inscription in Aramaic, “James, son of Joseph, brother of Jesus”. This is the first direct archaeological evidence for the existence of Jesus Christ. An ossuary is a box for the storing of bones. It was the practice in first-century Israel for the dead to be laid in a tomb for about a year; then, when the flesh had entirely decayed, to place the bones in an ossuary for permanent keeping.

We think of archaeological discoveries being made by the careful excavations of trained archaeologists. However, in the land of Israel there is a flourishing trade in ancient artefacts discovered by illegal digging, investigation of tombs and so on. Such items are sold by dealers to private collectors. The ossuary concerned is such an item.

During the summer of 2002, the French epigrapher (the name given to an expert in the study of ancient inscriptions) André Lemaire, one of the foremost authorities in the study of ancient Hebrew and Aramaic inscriptions, was in Jerusalem when he was approached by a private collector who asked him to look at an ancient ossuary he had acquired in the 1970s. It had apparently been obtained from one of the ancient Jewish burial caves in the Arab village of Silwan (the Arab way of spelling Siloam), south of the old city of Jerusalem. He was amazed to discover that it bore the wording cited above. Two questions immediately arise: firstly, is the ossuary and its inscription authentic, and not a forgery? and secondly, if it is, how do we know that the inscription actually refers to the persons we know from the New Testament?

In answer to the first question, André Lemaire has spent over thirty years studying ancient Hebrew and Aramaic inscriptions, and is satisfied, after carefully examining it, that the inscription is genuine. The forms of the letters are consistent with the period, and the actual usage of Aramaic is too. The use of ossuaries by the Jews in Israel ceased after A.D. 70, and the script used came into existence about A.D. 25, which puts it into the period in which James lived and died. Another prominent Aramaic scholar, Joseph Fitzmeyer, at first expressed doubts about the inscription on the basis that the spelling of the word for ‘brother’ was not authentic, but after further study he came across two other examples of this spelling known to be of those times and withdrew his objection.

Lemaire has had the ossuary itself studied by geological experts, who say that the limestone from which it is made comes from quarries worked in New Testament times, that the patina is ancient, and that there are no signs that it was worked with modern tools. Experts, however, greatly regret the fact that the ossuary was taken from its surroundings without them having any opportunity to study its context.

Regarding the second question, all three names occur quite commonly on ossuaries from those times; of the 233 ossuaries so far discovered, Joseph occurs nineteen times, Jesus ten times and James five times. One scholar has estimated that over two generations there could have been as many as twenty people called James with a father called Joseph and a brother called Jesus. However, by no means everyone had their bones stored in an ossuary (many were too poor), and not all ossuaries are inscribed. In addition, it is