SCRIPTURE ANALYSIS · BIBLICAL ARCHAEOLOGY

# Ancient Stones, Part 4

*Egyptian Texts & Monuments*

Translations, images and commentary for the artifacts on the Ancient Stones page

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## About this study

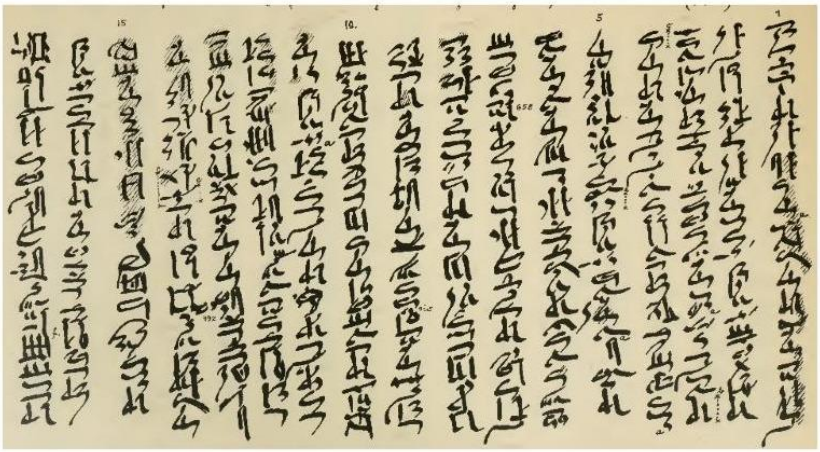
This part covers the nine Egyptian items on the Ancient Stones page: the Story of Sinuhe, Hatshepsut's barque shrine at Karnak, the Dream Stele of Thutmose IV, the Amarna stela of Akhenaten and Nefertiti (with the Great Hymn to the Aten), the Merneptah Stele, the Tale of Two Brothers, the Instruction of Amenemope, the Report of Wenamun and Shoshenq I's campaign relief. Four further entries cover the Beni Hasan procession of Asiatics, the Berlin Pedestal Relief, the "land of the Shasu of Yhw" in the Soleb lists, and Ramesses III's Sea Peoples reliefs at Medinet Habu. They span the Middle Kingdom to the Third Intermediate Period (c. 1900–925 BC). They include the earliest mention of Israel outside the Bible, the closest literary parallel to a biblical book (Proverbs), and the Egyptian record of the campaign of the pharaoh the Bible calls Shishak.

**About the translations.** Translations quoted at length come from editions in the public domain in the United States: W. M. Flinders Petrie, *Egyptian Tales* (1895); J. H. Breasted, *Ancient Records of Egypt* (1906–07) and *Development of Religion and Thought in Ancient Egypt* (1912), as reprinted by Barton (1916); and E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Teaching of Amen-em-apt* (1924). These older

translations are followed by notes giving the modern reading. Long literary works are represented by key excerpts and a summary, with links to complete modern translations.

**About the images.** All photographs are from Wikimedia Commons and are public domain or openly licensed. Keep the credit line with each image when publishing.

# 35. The Story of Sinuhe



*The opening of Papyrus Berlin P 3022, the principal manuscript of the Story of Sinuhe, in Georg Möller's facsimile of the hieratic.*

Image: Facsimile by Georg Möller (1876–1921). Public domain. Source: Wikimedia Commons, file page.

| | |
|---|---|
| **Object** | Literary tale preserved on papyri and ostraca; c. 300 lines in the main manuscripts |
| **Museum** | Ägyptisches Museum, Berlin, P 3022 ("B") and P 10499 ("R," from the Ramesseum); many ostraca, including Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, 1945.40 |
| **Date** | Composed in the 12th Dynasty (c. 1900 BC); manuscripts c. 1800–1100 BC |
| **Provenance** | Thebes (Ramesseum papyrus and Deir el-Medina ostraca) |
| **Language / script** | Middle Egyptian, hieratic |
| **Principal editions** | Blackman, *Middle-Egyptian Stories* (1932); Koch, *Die Erzählung des Sinuhe* (1990); Parkinson, *The Tale of Sinuhe and Other Ancient Egyptian Poems* (1997) |

## What it is

**Technical summary.** Sinuhe is the masterpiece of Middle Egyptian literature, written as a funerary autobiography. On hearing of the assassination of Amenemhat I (c. 1962 BC), the courtier Sinuhe flees in panic across the Sinai to Syria-Palestine ("Upper Retjenu"). There the ruler Amunenshi gives him his eldest daughter and a fertile land called Yaa. Sinuhe becomes a tribal chieftain, defeats a champion of Retjenu in single combat, and grows old abroad. At last King Senusret I invites him home. He returns, is pardoned and receives a tomb, the ultimate Egyptian good. The tale explores loyalty, exile and the meaning of Egyptian identity.

**In plain terms.** An Egyptian official panics, runs away to Canaan, marries a chief's daughter, prospers, beats a giant in a duel, and finally comes home as an old man to be forgiven and buried in Egypt.

## Key excerpt: the land of Yaa

Translation of W. M. Flinders Petrie, ed., *Egyptian Tales, Translated from the Papyri*, First Series (London: Methuen, 1895), public domain. Petrie calls the hero "Sanehat."

> And he replied to me, "Egypt is indeed happy and well settled; behold thou art far from it, but whilst thou art with me I will do good unto thee." And he placed me before his children, he married his eldest daughter to me, and gave me the choice of all his land, even among the best of that which he had on the border of the next land. It is a goodly land, Iaa is its name. There are figs and grapes; there is wine commoner than water; abundant is the honey, many are its olives; and all fruits are upon its trees; there is barley and wheat, and cattle of kinds without end. This was truly a great thing that he granted me, when the prince came to invest me, and establish me as prince of a tribe in the best of his land. I had my continual portion of bread and of wine each day, of cooked meat, of roasted fowl, as well as the wild game which I took, or which was brought to me, besides what my dogs captured. They made me much butter, and prepared milk of all kinds.

## Notes on modern readings

- **Place names.** Petrie's "land of Adim," to which Sinuhe first fled, is now read **Qedem** ("the East"). Its ruler is **Amunenshi** (Petrie's "Ammuanshi"), and the land he gives Sinuhe is **Yaa**.
- **The champion.** The "mighty one of Retjenu" whom Sinuhe defeats with arrows and his own axe (B 109–147) has long been compared with Goliath (1 Sam 17). Petrie noted the parallel in 1895.

## Points of contact with the Hebrew Bible

- **The land of Canaan.** Yaa, with its figs, grapes, abundant wine and honey, olives, barley, wheat and cattle, closely recalls the biblical descriptions of the promised land (Num 13:23–27; Deut 8:7–9). Both use the conventional language of a fertile hill-country.
- **The "sons of the east."** Qedem is the biblical *qedem*, "the east," and its people the *bĕnê qedem* (Gen 29:1; Judg 6:3; 1 Kgs 4:30).
- **Exile and return.** The Egyptian who rises in a foreign land and longs to be buried at home inverts the Joseph story (Gen 37–50), in which a Hebrew rises in Egypt and asks to be buried in Canaan (Gen 50:24–25).
- **Single combat.** The duel with a champion of Retjenu parallels David and Goliath (1 Sam 17), including the boast, the exchange of weapons and the victor's triumph over the fallen enemy.

## Further reading


- Parkinson, R. B. *The Tale of Sinuhe and Other Ancient Egyptian Poems, 1940–1640 BC*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997.
- Lichtheim, Miriam. *Ancient Egyptian Literature*. Vol. 1. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973, 222–235.
- Petrie, W. M. Flinders, ed. *Egyptian Tales, Translated from the Papyri*. First Series. London: Methuen, 1895. Project Gutenberg

# 36. Hatshepsut's Barque Shrine at Karnak (the "Red Chapel")



*Hatshepsut's Red Chapel (Chapelle Rouge), reassembled in the Open Air Museum at Karnak.*
Image: Jon Bodsworth, edited by 83d40m. Licence: CC BY 3.0. Source: Wikimedia Commons, file page.

| | |
|---|---|
| **Object** | Barque sanctuary of red quartzite and black granite blocks, carved in relief on all faces |
| **Museum** | Karnak Open Air Museum, Luxor (reassembled 1997–2000 from blocks recovered from the Third Pylon) |
| **Date** | Reign of Hatshepsut, c. 1479–1458 BC |
| **Provenance** | Temple of Amun-Re, Karnak (Thebes) |
| **Language / script** | Middle Egyptian, hieroglyphic |
| **Principal editions** | Lacau & Chevrier, *Une chapelle d'Hatshepsout à Karnak* (1977–79); Burgos & Larché, *La chapelle Rouge* (2006–08) |

## What it is

**Technical summary.** The Red Chapel was built by Hatshepsut as the central "station" of Amun's portable barque, the boat-shaped shrine in which the god's cult image travelled in procession. Its reliefs show the barque carried on poles by priests during the festivals of Opet and the Valley. They also show offerings, purifications and the oracle by which Amun proclaimed Hatshepsut king. After her death the shrine was dismantled under Thutmose III and its blocks reused as fill in the Third Pylon of Amenhotep III, which preserved them.

**In plain terms.** This chapel housed the god Amun's sacred boat. On festival days priests carried the boat, with the god's image hidden inside, out of the temple on poles across their shoulders. The chapel's carvings show these processions.

## Points of contact with the Hebrew Bible

- **The ark and its poles.** The Egyptian barque was a portable chest-shrine carried on poles by priests, with winged figures and a veiled image. It is the closest visual parallel to the ark of the covenant, which was carried on poles by Levites and overshadowed by cherubim (Exod 25:10–22; Num 4:5–15; Josh 3:3–17; 2 Sam 6:2–17). The differences are equally significant. The ark contained the covenant tablets rather than an image, and it was said to be the footstool of the invisible God.
- **Oracular procession.** Egyptian barque oracles, in which the god "nodded" or moved while being carried, invite comparison with the role of the ark in Israel's wars and processions (Num 10:33–36; 1 Sam 4:3–11).

## Further reading


- Hoffmeier, James K. *Ancient Israel in Sinai*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.
- Karlshausen, Christina. *L'iconographie de la barque processionnelle divine en Égypte au Nouvel Empire*. OLA 182. Leuven: Peeters, 2009.
- Roehrig, Catharine H., ed. *Hatshepsut: From Queen to Pharaoh*. New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2005.

# 37. The Dream Stele of Thutmose IV



*The Dream Stele of Thutmose IV standing between the forepaws of the Great Sphinx at Giza.*
Image: Kurohito. Licence: CC BY-SA 3.0. Source: Wikimedia Commons, file page.

| | |
|---|---|
| **Object** | Red granite stele, 3.6 m high, reused from a door lintel |
| **Museum** | In situ, between the paws of the Great Sphinx, Giza |
| **Date** | Year 1 of Thutmose IV (c. 1401 BC) |
| **Provenance** | Giza plateau; excavated by G. B. Caviglia in 1818 |
| **Language / script** | Middle Egyptian, hieroglyphic (lower part largely lost) |
| **Principal editions** | Breasted, *Ancient Records of Egypt* II §§810–815 (1906); Zivie, *Giza au deuxième millénaire* (1976) |

## What it is

**Technical summary.** The stele records how the young prince Thutmose, while hunting near Giza, fell asleep at noon in the shadow of the Sphinx. The god Harmakhis-Khepri-Re-Atum appeared to him in a dream and promised him the kingship if he would clear the sand that had engulfed the statue. The text legitimates Thutmose IV's accession, possibly irregular since he may not have been the designated heir, as the result of a direct divine promise. Its lower half is lost.

**In plain terms.** A young prince takes a nap by the Sphinx. In a dream the Sphinx-god promises to make him pharaoh if he digs the statue out of the sand. He did become king.

## The text (complete as preserved from §813)

Translation of J. H. Breasted, *Ancient Records of Egypt*, vol. II (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1906), §§813–815, public domain.

When his majesty was a stripling like Horus, the youth in Khemmis, his beauty was like the protector of his father, he seemed like the god himself. The army rejoiced because of love for him, the king's-children and all the nobles. Then his strength overflowed him, and he repeated the circuit of his might like the son of Nut!

Behold, he did a thing that gave him pleasure upon the highlands of the Memphite nome, upon its southern and northern road, shooting at a target with copper bolts, hunting lions and wild goats, coursing in his chariot, his horses being swifter than the wind; together with two of his followers, while not a soul knew it.

Now, when his hour came on for giving rest to his followers, (it was always) at the shoulder of Harmakhis, beside Sokar in Rosta … Now, the very great statue of Khepri rests in this place; the great in prowess, the splendid in strength; upon which the shadow of Re tarries. The quarters of Memphis and all the cities which are by him come to him, (raising) their hands for him in praise to his face, bearing great oblations for his ka.

One of those days it came to pass that the king's-son, Thutmose, came, coursing at the time of midday, and he rested in the shadow of this great god. A vision of sleep seized him at the hour (when) the sun was in the zenith, and he found the majesty of this revered god speaking with his own mouth, as a father speaks with his son, saying: "Behold thou me! See thou me! my son Thutmose. I am thy father, Harmakhis-Khepri-Re-Atum, who will give to thee my kingdom on earth at the head of the living. Thou shalt wear the white crown and the red crown upon the throne of Keb, the hereditary prince. The land shall be thine in its length and breadth, that which the eye of the All-Lord shines upon. The food of the Two Lands shall be thine, the great tribute of all countries, the duration of a long period of years. My face is thine, my desire is toward thee. Thou shalt be to me a protector, (for) my manner is as I were ailing in all my limbs … The sand of this desert upon which I am, has reached me; turn to me, to have that done which I have desired, knowing that thou art my son, my protector; come hither, behold, I am with thee, I am thy leader."

When he had finished this speech, this king's-son awoke hearing this …; he understood the words of this god, and he kept silent in his heart …

## Points of contact with the Hebrew Bible

- **Royal dream revelation.** A god appears in a dream to a young ruler, promises him a kingdom and asks something of him. The pattern resembles Solomon's dream at Gibeon (1 Kgs 3:5–15). Egypt is also the setting of Pharaoh's and Joseph's dreams (Gen 37; 40–41).
- **Legitimation by divine choice.** The Dream Stele is a classic "apology" of a ruler whose succession needed defending, a genre also proposed for the narrative of David's rise (1 Sam 16–2 Sam 5) by P. K. McCarter and others.

## Further reading


- Breasted, J. H. *Ancient Records of Egypt*. Vol. II. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1906. Internet Archive
- Bryan, Betsy M. *The Reign of Thutmose IV*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991.
- Zivie, Christiane. *Giza au deuxième millénaire*. Cairo: IFAO, 1976.

# 38. Stela of Akhenaten and Nefertiti, and the Great Hymn to the Aten



*Limestone house altar from Amarna: Akhenaten and Nefertiti with three of their daughters beneath the rays of the Aten, whose rays end in hands (Ägyptisches Museum, Berlin, ÄM 14145).*

Image: Gerbil (de.wikipedia). Public domain. Source: Wikimedia Commons, file page.

| | |
|---|---|
| **Object** | Limestone relief stela (house altar) |
| **Museum** | Ägyptisches Museum, Berlin, ÄM 14145 |
| **Date** | Reign of Akhenaten (Amenhotep IV), c. 1350–1336 BC |
| **Provenance** | Tell el-Amarna (ancient Akhetaten), Egypt |
| **Language / script** | Middle/Late Egyptian, hieroglyphic (cartouches of the Aten and the royal couple) |
| **Principal editions** | Great Hymn: Davies, *The Rock Tombs of El Amarna* VI (1908); Breasted (1912); Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature* II (1976) |

## What it is

**Technical summary.** Under Akhenaten, Egyptian religion was reorganized around the exclusive worship of the Aten, the sun-disc, depicted as a disc with rays ending in hands that offer the sign of life. Private houses at Amarna contained altars like this one, on which the royal family itself was the object of devotion as the Aten's intermediaries. The intimate, informal style of Amarna art is very clear here: the king kisses a daughter, the queen holds two others. The theology of the period is best expressed in the Great Hymn to the Aten, inscribed in the tomb of the official Ay at Amarna.

**In plain terms.** Akhenaten tried to make Egypt worship a single god, the sun-disc. Statues and pictures of the royal family under the sun's rays were set up in homes, and a long hymn praises the sun as creator of all life.

## Key excerpt: the Great Hymn to the Aten

Translation of J. H. Breasted, *The Development of Religion and Thought in Ancient Egypt* (New York: Scribner, 1912), as reprinted by G. A. Barton, *Archaeology and the Bible* (1916), pp. 403–404, public domain.

> Thy dawning is beautiful in the horizon of the sky,
> O loving Aton, Beginning of life!
> When thou risest in the eastern horizon,
> Thou fillest every land with thy beauty …
> When thou settest in the western horizon of the sky,
> The earth is in darkness like the dead …
> Every lion cometh forth from his den,
> All serpents, they sting …
> Bright is the earth when thou risest in the horizon.
> When thou shinest as Aton by day
> Thou drivest away the darkness …
> (Then) in all the world they do their work.
> All cattle rest upon their pasturage,
> The trees and the plants flourish.
> The birds flutter in their marshes,
> Their wings uplifted in adoration to thee …
> The barques sail upstream and downstream alike …
> The fish in the river leap up before thee.
> Thy rays are in the midst of the great green sea.
> Creator of the germ in woman,
> Maker of seed in man,
> Giving life to the son in the body of his mother …

## Points of contact with the Hebrew Bible

- **Psalm 104.** Since Breasted (1912), the Great Hymn has been compared with Psalm 104. Both describe the darkness when lions prowl (Ps 104:20–21), people going out to work at sunrise (104:22–23), the creatures of land, air and sea (104:11–18, 25–26), ships on the sea (104:26), and all life dependent on the creator. Most scholars accept an indirect relationship through a tradition of creation hymnody. In the Psalm the sun is a creature that "knows its going down" (104:19), not the god.
- **Monotheism.** Whether Atenism was true monotheism, and whether it influenced Israel, has been debated since Freud's *Moses and Monotheism* (1939). Most Egyptologists see it as an exclusive solar cult centred on the king. Most biblical scholars see no historical link to Mosaic religion.

## Further reading


- Assmann, Jan. *The Search for God in Ancient Egypt*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001.
- Hornung, Erik. *Akhenaten and the Religion of Light*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999.
- Lichtheim, Miriam. *Ancient Egyptian Literature*. Vol. 2. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976, 96–100.
- Breasted, J. H. *Development of Religion and Thought in Ancient Egypt*. New York: Scribner, 1912.

# 39. The Merneptah Stele ("Israel Stele")



*The Merneptah Stele in the Egyptian Museum, Cairo (JE 31408). The name "Israel" occurs in line 27, near the bottom.*

Image: Wikimedia Commons user ᚺᚻᚾᚺ. Licence: CC BY-SA 4.0. Source: Wikimedia Commons, file page.

| | |
|---|---|
| **Object** | Black granite stele, 3.18 m high, 28 lines; carved on the back of a reused stele of Amenhotep III |
| **Museum** | Egyptian Museum, Cairo, JE 31408 |
| **Date** | Year 5 of Merneptah (c. 1208 BC) |
| **Provenance** | Merneptah's mortuary temple, Western Thebes; discovered by W. M. Flinders Petrie in 1896 |
| **Language / script** | Late Egyptian, hieroglyphic |
| **Principal editions** | Spiegelberg (1896); Breasted, *Ancient Records of Egypt* III §§602–617 (1906); Kitchen, *Ramesside Inscriptions* IV (1982) |

## What it is

**Technical summary.** Most of the inscription celebrates Merneptah's victory over a Libyan invasion and its Sea Peoples allies in year 5. The closing hymn (lines 26–28) widens the scope to the whole Egyptian empire and lists conquered peoples in Canaan: Ashkelon, Gezer, Yenoam and Israel. In the hieroglyphs, Ashkelon, Gezer and Yenoam carry the determinative for a foreign land or city. "Israel" carries the determinative for a people (a seated man and woman over the plural strokes). This indicates a population group not tied to a city-state.

**In plain terms.** This is the oldest known mention of "Israel" outside the Bible, about 1208 BC. A pharaoh boasts that he wiped out Israel. That shows Israel already existed as a people in Canaan by then.

## Key excerpt: the closing hymn (lines 26–28, complete)

Translation of J. H. Breasted, *Ancient Records of Egypt*, vol. III (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1906), §617, public domain.

> The kings are overthrown, saying: "Salam!"
> Not one holds up his head among the Nine Bows.
> Wasted is Tehenu,
> Kheta is pacified,
> Plundered is Pekanan, with every evil,
> Carried off is Askalon,
> Seized upon is Gezer,
> Yenoam is made as a thing not existing.
> Israel is desolated, his seed is not;
> Palestine has become a widow for Egypt.
> All lands are united, they are pacified;
> Everyone that is turbulent is bound by King Merneptah, given life like Re, every day.

## Notes on modern readings

- **"Salam!"** is the Semitic word for "peace" (*šalām*), used here as a plea for mercy.
- **Tehenu** is Libya. **Kheta** is the Hittite land. **Pekanan** is "the Canaan," probably Gaza. **Palestine** (Breasted) is **Ḫurru**, the Egyptian term for Syria-Palestine; "a widow for Egypt" is a pun on *ḫurru* and *ḫ3rt*, "widow."
- **"His seed is not."** *Prt* can mean grain or offspring. Most scholars take it as a conventional boast of annihilation ("his offspring is no more"). Some argue for "grain," which would imply that Israel was a settled agricultural people.
- **Karnak reliefs.** Frank Yurco (1986) argued that the battle reliefs on the Cour de la Cachette wall at Karnak, previously attributed to Ramesses II, depict Merneptah's campaign, including a scene of Israelites. This is debated.

## Points of contact with the Hebrew Bible

The stele is the only Egyptian text to name Israel. It sets a firm terminus: a group called Israel existed in Canaan by c. 1208 BC. It is therefore central to every reconstruction of Israel's origins and of the date of the exodus. Those who place the exodus in the 13th century (Ramesses II) and those who date it to the 15th century (1 Kgs 6:1) both have to account for it. It confirms that by the late 13th century Israel was a people distinct from the city-states of Canaan, which accords with the picture of tribal Israel in Judges.

## Further reading


- Hasel, Michael G. "Israel in the Merneptah Stela." *BASOR* 296 (1994): 45–61.

- Kitchen, K. A. *On the Reliability of the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003.
- Yurco, Frank J. “Merenptah’s Canaanite Campaign.” *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt* 23 (1986): 189–215.
- Hjelm, Ingrid, and Thomas L. Thompson. “The Victory Song of Merneptah, Israel and the People of Palestine.” *JSOT* 27 (2002): 3–18.

# 40. The Tale of Two Brothers (Papyrus D'Orbiney)

**Image.** No openly licensed photograph of Papyrus D'Orbiney was found. The papyrus can be viewed on the British Museum's collection website (EA 10183).

| | |
|---|---|
| **Object** | Papyrus roll, 19 pages of hieratic |
| **Museum** | British Museum, EA 10183 (acquired from Mme Élisabeth d'Orbiney, 1857) |
| **Date** | c. 1215 BC (reign of Seti II); copied by the scribe Ennana |
| **Provenance** | Probably Thebes |
| **Language / script** | Late Egyptian, hieratic |
| **Principal editions** | Gardiner, *Late-Egyptian Stories* (1932); Wettengel, *Die Erzählung von den beiden Brüdern* (2003) |

## What it is

**Technical summary.** The tale opens as a realistic story of two brothers, the elder Anubis (Petrie's "Anpu") and the younger Bata, who live and farm together. When Anubis's wife tries to seduce Bata and is rejected, she accuses him of assault. Anubis tries to kill him, but Bata escapes when the sun-god places a crocodile-filled lake between them. The second half becomes a myth of transformations: Bata's heart in a cedar, his death, his rebirth as a bull and a tree, and his eventual kingship over Egypt. The two brothers bear the names of gods (Anubis and Bata) worshipped at Cynopolis.

**In plain terms.** A farmer's wife tries to seduce her husband's younger brother. When he refuses, she claims he attacked her. The angry husband nearly kills his innocent brother. Then the story turns into a fairy tale of magic and rebirth.

## Key excerpt: the attempted seduction and false accusation

Translation of W. M. Flinders Petrie, ed., *Egyptian Tales, Translated from the Papyri*, Second Series (London: Methuen, 1895), public domain.

> Once there were two brethren, of one mother and one father; Anpu was the name of the elder, and Bata was the name of the younger. Now, as for Anpu he had a house, and he had a wife. But his little brother was to him as it were a son; he it was who made for him his clothes; he it was who followed behind his oxen to the fields; he it was who did the ploughing; he it was who harvested the corn … behold, the spirit of a god was in him …
>
> The youth went into the stable; he took a large measure, for he desired to take much corn; he loaded it with wheat and barley; and he went out carrying it. She said to him, "How much of the corn that is wanted, is that which is on thy shoulder?" He said to her, "Three bushels of barley, and two of wheat, in all five; these are what are upon my shoulder:" thus said he to her. And she conversed with him, saying, "There is great strength in thee, for I see thy might every day." And her heart knew him with the knowledge of youth. And she arose and came to him, and conversed with him, saying, "Come, stay with me, and it shall be well for thee, and I will make for thee beautiful garments." Then the youth became like a panther of the south with fury at the evil speech which she

had made to him; and she feared greatly. And he spake unto her, saying, "Behold thou art to me as a mother, thy husband is to me as a father, for he who is elder than I has brought me up. What is this wickedness that thou hast said to me? Say it not to me again. For I will not tell it to any man, for I will not let it be uttered by the mouth of any man." …

And behold the wife of the elder brother was afraid for the words which she had said. She took a parcel of fat, she became like one who is evilly beaten, desiring to say to her husband, "It is thy younger brother who has done this wrong." … Her husband said to her, "Who has spoken with thee?" Behold she said, "No one has spoken with me except thy younger brother. When he came to take for thee corn he found me sitting alone; he said to me, 'Come, let us stay together, tie up thy hair:' thus spake he to me. I did not listen to him, but thus spake I to him: 'Behold, am I not thy mother, is not thy elder brother to thee as a father?' And he feared, and he beat me to stop me from making report to thee, and if thou lettest him live I shall die."

And the elder brother became as a panther of the south; he sharpened his knife; he took it in his hand; he stood behind the door of his stable to slay his younger brother …

## Notes on modern readings

- **The brothers' names.** The elder is **Anubis** (Petrie's Anpu). Petrie's "Come, stay with me" is more directly rendered "Come, let us spend an hour lying together" (Lichtheim).
- **"A parcel of fat."** She uses fat and grease to fake the marks of a beating.

## Points of contact with the Hebrew Bible

The first part of the tale is the classic parallel to Joseph and Potiphar's wife (Gen 39:6–20). In both, a married woman alone in the house propositions a young man in the household, he refuses out of loyalty to the master, and she accuses him with fabricated evidence. The "Potiphar's wife" motif is found worldwide (Stith Thompson, motif K2111). The Egyptian setting of both stories has led many scholars, including D. B. Redford, to treat the parallel as evidence for the Egyptian colour of the Joseph narrative rather than for literary borrowing.

## Further reading


- Lichtheim, Miriam. *Ancient Egyptian Literature*. Vol. 2. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976, 203–211.
- Redford, Donald B. *A Study of the Biblical Story of Joseph (Genesis 37–50)*. VTSup 20. Leiden: Brill, 1970.
- Hollis, Susan Tower. *The Ancient Egyptian "Tale of Two Brothers"*. 2nd ed. Oakville, CT: Bannerstone, 2008.
- Petrie, W. M. Flinders, ed. *Egyptian Tales*. Second Series. London: Methuen, 1895. Project Gutenberg

# 41. The Instruction of Amenemope



*Papyrus British Museum EA 10474, the only complete manuscript of the Instruction of Amenemope.*
Image: British Museum papyrus EA 10474 (photograph). Public domain. Source: Wikimedia Commons, file page.

| | |
|---|---|
| **Object** | Papyrus roll, 27 columns; prologue and thirty numbered chapters |
| **Museum** | British Museum, EA 10474 (acquired 1888); fragments on other papyri, tablets and ostraca |
| **Date** | Composed in the Ramesside period (c. 1300–1075 BC); the BM papyrus is a later copy (c. 1000–600 BC) |
| **Provenance** | Thebes |
| **Language / script** | Late Egyptian, hieratic |
| **Principal editions** | Budge, *Facsimiles of Egyptian Hieratic Papyri* (1923) and *The Teaching of Amen-em-apt* (1924); Lange, *Das Weisheitsbuch des Amenemope* (1925); Laisney, *L'Enseignement d'Aménémopé* (2007) |

## What it is

**Technical summary.** Amenemope, son of Kanakht, a scribe of the land registry, wrote a wisdom instruction for his son in thirty chapters. Unlike earlier Egyptian instructions aimed at career success, it centres on the inner piety of the "silent man," who trusts the god, controls his tongue, is honest in measures and boundaries, and is content with little, in contrast to the "heated man." In 1924 Adolf Erman pointed out that Proverbs 22:17–24:22 corresponds closely to Amenemope, both in content and in the structure of "thirty" sayings. This became the most widely accepted case of direct literary dependence between a biblical book and an Egyptian text.

**In plain terms.** An Egyptian father's thirty chapters of advice to his son. Part of the book of Proverbs follows it so closely that most scholars believe the biblical writer knew it.

## Key excerpts

Translation of E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Teaching of Amen-em-apt, Son of Kanekht* (London: Martin Hopkinson, 1924), public domain. Line numbers are Budge's.

**Chapter 1 (lines 47–49)**

47. I pray thee to lend me thine ears, hearken to the things that will be said [by me].

48. I pray thee to give thy mind (or, pay attention) to the difficult matters which will be unravelled [by me].

49. The setting of them in thy heart will be advantageous [to thee] …

### On boundaries and the widow's field (from Budge's "Sixth Chapter")

Commit no robbery (i.e., filch not away land) by means of the cubit of the fields

When thou art assessing the bounds of the estate of the widow …

142. Take good heed concerning the treading down of the boundaries of the fields,

143. Lest horrible calamity be brought upon thee …

148. Drive not thy furrows through the lands of another.

### Chapter 30 (lines 539–544)

539. Behold the Thirty Chapters!

540. They will give [thee] pleasure, they will teach [thee],

541. They will [serve as] a leader (or, guide) to every book.

542. They will give knowledge to (i.e., make to be wise) the ignorant man.

543. If they be read out in the presence of an ignorant man

544. Assuredly he will steer his course [through life] according to their mouth.

## Notes on modern readings

- **Chapter division.** Budge's divisions differ from the scribe's numbered chapters as now printed. The boundary passage is Amenemope **chapter 6** (7.12–8.10) in Lichtheim's edition, which Budge also labels his "Sixth Chapter."
- **"Thirty."** Most modern editors read Proverbs 22:20 as "Have I not written for you **thirty** sayings?" (Hebrew *šlšwm*). The traditional text has "excellent things" or "formerly." The emendation is adopted by several modern translations.

## Points of contact with the Hebrew Bible

| Amenemope | Proverbs |
|---|---|
| Prologue and ch. 1: the call to lend one's ears to the sayings and set them in one's heart | 22:17–18 |
| Ch. 30: the reader is pointed to "these thirty chapters" | 22:20 |
| Ch. 2: Do not rob the wretched or attack the cripple | 22:22 |
| Ch. 6: Do not move the boundary stone or encroach on the widow's field | 22:28; 23:10 |
| Ch. 7: ill-gotten riches sprout wings like geese and fly off to the sky | 23:4–5 |

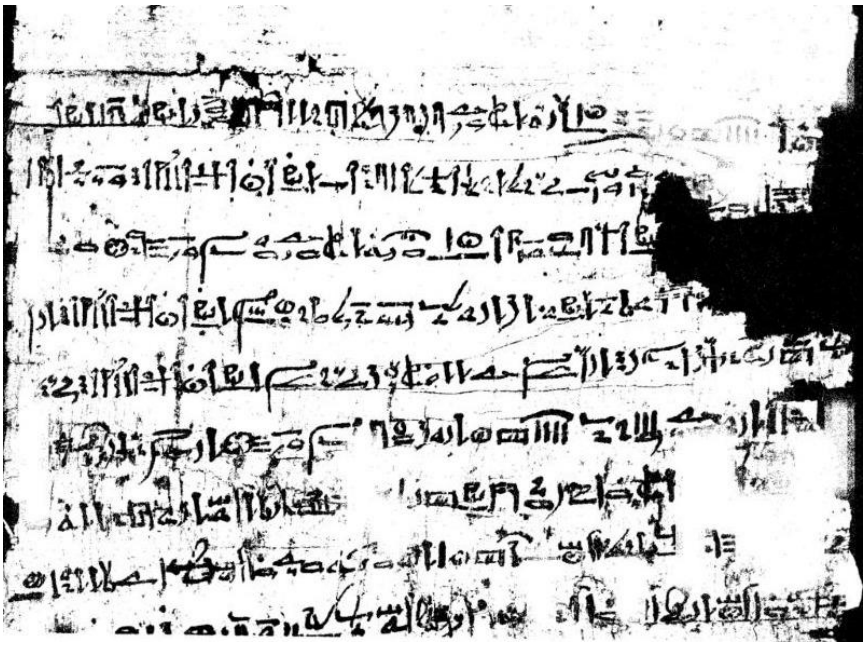
| Amenemope | Proverbs |
|---|---|
| Ch. 9: Do not befriend the heated (hot-tempered) man | 22:24–25 |
| Ch. 23: Do not eat bread before a noble … look at what is before you | 23:1–3 |
| Ch. 30: A scribe skilled in his office is worthy to be a courtier | 22:29 |

The direction of dependence was briefly debated (some proposed a Semitic original behind Amenemope), but most scholars hold that the Hebrew sage adapted Amenemope or a Semitic version of it. The adapter recast its Egyptian piety in the name of the LORD (Prov 22:19, 23; 23:11). Recent study (e.g., N. Shupak; M. V. Fox) emphasizes the creativity of the adaptation.

## Further reading


- Fox, Michael V. *Proverbs 10–31*. Anchor Yale Bible 18B. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009.
- Lichtheim, Miriam. *Ancient Egyptian Literature*. Vol. 2. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976, 146–163.
- Shupak, Nili. "The Instruction of Amenemope and Proverbs 22:17–24:22 from the Perspective of Contemporary Research." In *Seeking Out the Wisdom of the Ancients*, ed. R. L. Troxel et al. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2005.
- Budge, E. A. Wallis. *The Teaching of Amen-em-apt, Son of Kanekht*. London: Martin Hopkinson, 1924. Internet Archive

# 42. Amun’s Sacred Barque and the Report of Wenamun



*Part of the first page of Papyrus Moscow 120, the only manuscript of the Report of Wenamun (Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow).*

Image: Photograph of Papyrus Moscow 120. Public domain. Source: Wikimedia Commons, file page.

| | |
|---|---|
| **Object** | Papyrus, two pages (the end is lost) |
| **Museum** | Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow, Papyrus Moscow 120 |
| **Date** | Story set in year 5 of the “Renaissance” era of Ramesses XI (c. 1075 BC); the papyrus is probably early 21st Dynasty |
| **Provenance** | El-Hiba, Egypt; acquired by V. Golenishchev in 1890 |
| **Language / script** | Late Egyptian, hieratic |
| **Principal editions** | Gardiner, *Late-Egyptian Stories* (1932); Breasted, *Ancient Records of Egypt* IV §§557–591 (1906); Schipper, *Die Erzählung des Wenamun* (2005) |

## What it is

**Technical summary.** Wenamun, an elder of the temple of Amun at Karnak, is sent to Byblos to buy cedar for Amun’s great river barque, *Userhat-Amun*. The website pairs his report with a relief of that barque. He is robbed at Dor, a harbour of the Tjeker (one of the Sea Peoples), and is coldly received by Zakar-Baal (Tjekerbaal), prince of Byblos, who keeps him waiting in harbour for weeks. A young man of the prince’s court goes into an ecstatic frenzy and demands that the envoy and his travelling idol, “Amun-of-the-Road,” be received. Zakar-Baal reminds Wenamun that Egypt no longer commands Byblos and must pay for timber. Whether a real report or a literary work, it vividly portrays Egypt’s decline at the end of the New Kingdom.

**In plain terms.** An Egyptian priest is sent to Lebanon to buy timber for the god's sacred boat. He is robbed on the way, insulted by the local king, and has to wait weeks for cedar, a sign that Egypt was no longer the great power it had been.

## Key excerpt: at the harbour of Byblos

Translation of J. H. Breasted, as reprinted by G. A. Barton, *Archaeology and the Bible* (1916), pp. 353–354, public domain.

> [I] arrived the harbor of Byblos. [I made a place of concealment, I hid] "Amon-the-way," and I placed his things in it. The prince of Byblos sent to me, saying: "Betake thyself from my harbor." … I spent nineteen days in his harbor and he continually sent to me daily, saying: "Betake thyself from my harbor."
>
> Now, when he sacrificed to his gods …, the god seized one of his noble youths, making him frenzied, so that he said: "Bring [the god] hither! Bring the messenger of Amon who hath him. Send him and let him go."
>
> Now, while the frenzied youth continued in frenzy during this night, I found a ship bound for Egypt, and I loaded all my belongings into it …
>
> When morning came he sent and had me brought up … I found him sitting in his upper chamber, leaning his back against a window, while the waves of the great Syrian sea beat against the … behind him. I said to him: "Kindness of Amon!" He said to me: "How long is it until this day since thou camest away from the abode of Amon?" I said: "Five months and one day until now." He said to me: "Behold thou art true, where is the writing of Amon, which is in thy hand? Where is the letter of the High Priest of Amon, which is in thy hand?" …

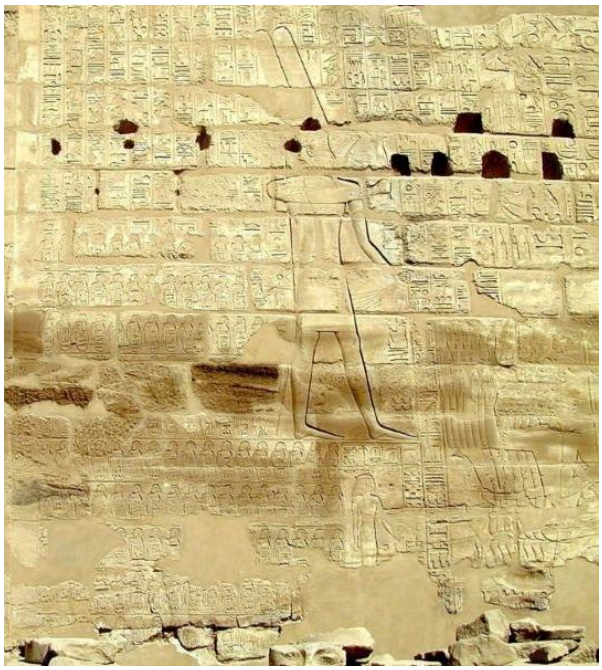
## Points of contact with the Hebrew Bible

- **Prophetic ecstasy.** The frenzied youth at Byblos is the earliest Levantine example of ecstatic prophecy, comparable with the bands of prophets "prophesying" in 1 Sam 10:5–13 and 19:20–24, and with Baal's prophets in 1 Kgs 18:26–29.
- **Cedar trade.** Zakar-Baal's insistence on payment for Lebanese timber, recorded in the accounts of his fathers, illuminates the commercial treaty between Solomon and Hiram of Tyre for cedar from Lebanon (1 Kgs 5:1–12).
- **The Sea Peoples.** Wenamun shows the Tjeker established at Dor on the coast south of Carmel about 1075 BC, the same era in which the Philistines are settled on the southern coast in the books of Judges and Samuel.

## Further reading


- Schipper, Bernd U. *Die Erzählung des Wenamun*. OBO 209. Fribourg: Academic Press, 2005.
- Lichtheim, Miriam. *Ancient Egyptian Literature*. Vol. 2. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976, 224–230.
- Sass, Benjamin. "Wenamun and His Levant—1075 BC or 925 BC?" *Ägypten und Levante* 12 (2002): 247–255.

# 43. Shoshenq I’s (Shishak’s) Campaign Relief at Karnak



*Part of the triumphal relief of Shoshenq I on the Bubastite Portal at Karnak, with rows of name-rings listing conquered towns.*

Image: Jack1956. Public domain. Source: Wikimedia Commons, file page.

| | |
|---|---|
| **Object** | Triumphal relief and topographical list of c. 150 name-rings |
| **Museum** | In situ, south outer wall near the Bubastite Portal, Temple of Amun, Karnak |
| **Date** | Reign of Shoshenq I (c. 945–924 BC); the campaign c. 925 BC |
| **Provenance** | Karnak (Thebes); a fragment of a victory stele of Shoshenq was also found at Megiddo |
| **Language / script** | Egyptian, hieroglyphic |
| **Principal editions** | Breasted, *Ancient Records of Egypt* IV §§709–722 (1906); Kitchen, *The Third Intermediate Period in Egypt* (3rd ed., 1996); Wilson, *The Campaign of Pharaoh Shoshenq I into Palestine* (2005) |

## What it is

**Technical summary.** The relief shows Amun leading rows of bound captives to Shoshenq, founder of the 22nd (Libyan) Dynasty. Each captive’s body is a fortified oval enclosing a place name. About 150 names survive, arranged in rows that seem to follow the routes of several army columns. They include towns in the northern kingdom of Israel (Gibeon, Beth-horon, Aijalon, Mahanaim, Penuel, Taanach, Shunem, Rehob, Beth-shean and Megiddo) and a long list of settlements in the Negev. Jerusalem is not preserved in the list. Whether it was in a lost section or deliberately omitted is debated.

**In plain terms.** Pharaoh Shishak carved a giant wall-picture at Karnak listing the towns he captured in a raid on Israel and Judah around 925 BC, the same raid the Bible describes in the reign of Rehoboam.

## The list (selected names)

The following names are widely accepted identifications, from Kitchen (1996) and Wilson (2005). Numbers are those of the Karnak list.

| No. | Place |
|---|---|
| 13 | Rubute (perhaps Rabbah of Judah, Josh 15:60) |
| 14 | Taanach (Josh 12:21) |
| 16 | Shunem (1 Sam 28:4) |
| 17 | Beth-shean (1 Sam 31:10) |
| 22 | Mahanaim (2 Sam 2:8) |
| 23 | Gibeon (Josh 9:3) |
| 24 | Beth-horon (Josh 10:10) |
| 26 | Aijalon (Josh 10:12) |
| 27 | Megiddo (1 Kgs 9:15) |
| 53 | Penuel (Gen 32:31; 1 Kgs 12:25) |
| 71–72 | "The field of Abram" (a much-discussed reading in the Negev list) |

## Points of contact with the Hebrew Bible

- **1 Kings 14:25–26; 2 Chronicles 12:2–9.** In the fifth year of Rehoboam, "Shishak king of Egypt" came up against Jerusalem and took the treasures of the temple and palace, including Solomon's gold shields. Chronicles adds that he took the fortified cities of Judah. The Karnak list, which centres on the northern kingdom and the Negev, complements the biblical account, which centres on Jerusalem. Most scholars believe Rehoboam bought off the pharaoh with tribute.
- **Chronology.** The synchronism between Shoshenq I and Rehoboam's fifth year is one of the key anchors linking biblical and Egyptian chronology in the 10th century BC.
- **Jeroboam.** Shishak had earlier given asylum to Jeroboam (1 Kgs 11:40). The campaign's focus on Israel, Jeroboam's kingdom, has prompted various historical explanations.

## Further reading


- Kitchen, K. A. *The Third Intermediate Period in Egypt (1100–650 BC)*. 3rd ed. Warminster: Aris & Phillips, 1996.
- Wilson, Kevin A. *The Campaign of Pharaoh Shoshenq I into Palestine*. FAT II/9. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005.

- Finkelstein, Israel. “The Campaign of Shoshenq I to Palestine: A Guide to the 10th Century BCE Polity.” *ZDPV* 118 (2002): 109–135.
- Breasted, J. H. *Ancient Records of Egypt*. Vol. IV. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1906, §§709–722.

# 44. The Beni Hasan Procession of Asiatics



*The procession of the ʿAamu (Asiatics) led by Abisha, wall painting in the tomb of Khnumhotep II at Beni Hasan (composite photograph).*

Image: A. D. Riddle (photograph of a public-domain painting). Public domain. Source: Wikimedia Commons, file page.

| | |
|---|---|
| **Object** | Painted wall scene in a rock-cut tomb |
| **Museum** | In situ, Tomb BH 3 (Khnumhotep II), Beni Hasan, Middle Egypt |
| **Date** | Year 6 of Senusret II (c. 1890 BC), 12th Dynasty |
| **Provenance** | Beni Hasan, Egypt |
| **Language / script** | Middle Egyptian, hieroglyphic captions |
| **Principal editions** | Newberry, *Beni Hasan* I (1893); Kamrin, "The Aamu of Shu in the Tomb of Khnumhotep II," *JAEI* 1.3 (2009) |

## What it is

**Technical summary.** The north wall of Khnumhotep II's tomb shows a group of 37 ʿ*3mw* (Asiatics, i.e., people from Syria-Palestine) being presented to the nomarch. Their leader is labelled "the ruler of a foreign land (*ḥq3 ẖ3swt*), Abisha" (*Ibš3*). They bring *msdmt*, black eye-paint (galena). The men wear brightly patterned woollen garments and carry throw-sticks, bows and spears. The women wear coloured dresses. Donkeys carry children and equipment, including what appear to be bellows, which suggests travelling metal-workers. The phrase *ḥq3 ẖ3swt* is the origin of the later term "Hyksos."

**In plain terms.** An Egyptian tomb painting from about 1890 BC shows a family group of Semitic people from Canaan arriving in Egypt, with their donkeys, weapons and colourful clothes, led by a chief named Abisha.

## The captions

Translation by the author of this study from the hieroglyphic text (Newberry 1893; Kamrin 2009).

> Arrival, bringing eye-paint, which 37 Asiatics brought to him.
>
> The ruler of a foreign land, Abisha.

## Points of contact with the Hebrew Bible

- **The patriarchs in Egypt.** The scene is the most vivid contemporary image of Semitic pastoralists entering Egypt in the Middle Bronze Age, the setting in which Genesis places Abraham's and Jacob's descent to Egypt (Gen 12:10; 46:5–7). It shows that such travel by family groups with donkeys was routine and officially recorded.

- **The name.** *Ibš3* (Abisha) is a West Semitic name of the same type as Abishai (1 Sam 26:6) and Abishua (1 Chr 6:4).
- **Garments.** The patterned garments have often been compared with Joseph's distinctive robe (Gen 37:3). The meaning of the Hebrew phrase is itself uncertain.

## Further reading


- Kamrin, Janice. "The Aamu of Shu in the Tomb of Khnumhotep II at Beni Hassan." *Journal of Ancient Egyptian Interconnections* 1.3 (2009): 22–36.
- Newberry, Percy E. *Beni Hasan*. Part I. London: Egypt Exploration Fund, 1893.
- Hoffmeier, James K. *Israel in Egypt*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1997.

# 45. The Berlin Pedestal Relief (ÄM 21687)



*Berlin Statue Pedestal Relief ÄM 21687, with three bound captives whose name-rings have been read as Ashkelon, Canaan and possibly Israel.*

Image: Photographer unknown. Public domain. Source: Wikimedia Commons, file page.

| | |
|---|---|
| **Object** | Fragment of a grey granite statue pedestal |
| **Museum** | Ägyptisches Museum, Berlin, ÄM 21687 |
| **Date** | 18th Dynasty (c. 1400 BC) on stylistic grounds; some date the inscription later |
| **Provenance** | Unknown (purchased in Egypt) |
| **Language / script** | Egyptian, hieroglyphic |
| **Principal editions** | Görg, "Israel in Hieroglyphen," *Biblische Notizen* 106 (2001); van der Veen, Theis & Görg, *JAEI* 2.4 (2010) |

## What it is

**Technical summary.** The fragment shows three bound Asiatic captives above three name-rings. The first two read Ashkelon and Canaan. The third, damaged ring was read by Manfred Görg (2001) as *I-šr-il*, which he and later P. van der Veen, C. Theis and Görg (2010) identified with Israel. If correct, this would be about two centuries older than the Merneptah Stele. Critics note differences from the Merneptah spelling, the damaged sign forms, and the possibility of other readings (e.g., Ashur), and the dating of the inscription itself is debated.

**In plain terms.** A broken Egyptian statue base names three conquered places. Two are certainly Ashkelon and Canaan. Some scholars think the third is "Israel," which would make it the earliest mention of Israel, but this is disputed.

## Points of contact with the Hebrew Bible

The reading bears directly on the date of Israel's emergence in Canaan. If it is accepted, it would support the existence of a group called Israel in the 15th–14th century BC, which would fit the earlier date for the exodus and conquest suggested by 1 Kings 6:1. Most scholars currently treat the identification as possible but unproven.

## Further reading


- van der Veen, Peter, Christoffer Theis and Manfred Görg. "Israel in Canaan (Long) Before Pharaoh Merenptah? A Fresh Look at Berlin Statue Pedestal Relief 21687." *Journal of Ancient Egyptian Interconnections* 2.4 (2010): 15–25.
- Hoffmeier, James K. "What Is the Biblical Date for the Exodus?" *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 50 (2007): 225–247.

# 46. The “Land of the Shasu of Yhw” (Soleb and Amarah-West)

**Image.** No openly licensed photograph of the Soleb name-ring was found. The list is published in photographs and drawings by Giveon (1971) and Schiff Giorgini, *Soleb* V (1998).

| | |
|---|---|
| **Object** | Topographical name-ring lists carved on temple columns and walls |
| **Museum** | In situ, temple of Amenhotep III at Soleb (Sudan); copy in the temple of Ramesses II at Amarah-West (Sudan) |
| **Date** | Soleb c. 1380 BC (Amenhotep III); Amarah-West c. 1250 BC (Ramesses II) |
| **Provenance** | Nubia (northern Sudan) |
| **Language / script** | Egyptian, hieroglyphic |
| **Principal editions** | Giveon, *Les bédouins Shosou des documents égyptiens* (1971); Fairman (1939) |

## What it is

**Technical summary.** Among lists of conquered peoples, Amenhotep III’s temple at Soleb names several “lands of the Shasu,” pastoral nomads of the southern Levant and Transjordan. One is *t3 š3sw yhw3*, “the land of the Shasu of Yhw.” The Ramesside copy at Amarah-West lists it alongside “the land of the Shasu of Seir.” Most scholars take *yhw3* as a place or tribal name that is linguistically identical with the divine name YHWH. It is the earliest occurrence of the name outside the Bible.

**In plain terms.** An Egyptian king’s list of conquered nomad territories, from about 1380 BC, includes “the land of the Shasu of Yahweh,” somewhere in the region of Edom. It is the oldest occurrence of the name of Israel’s God, there used for a place or people.

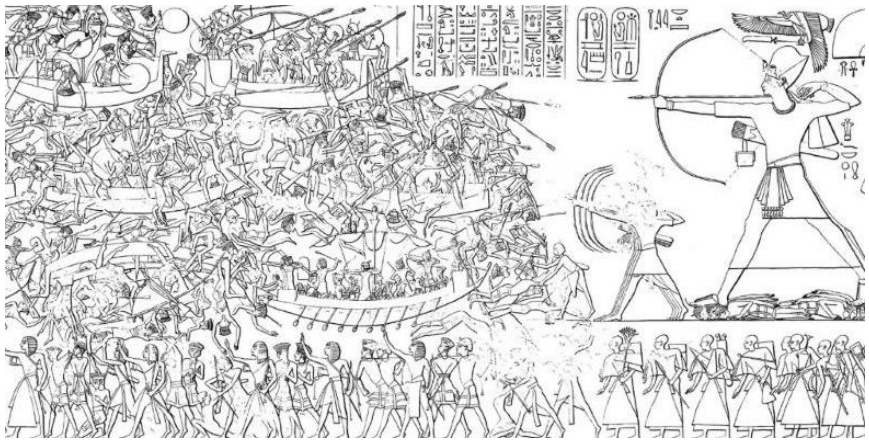
## Points of contact with the Hebrew Bible

- **YHWH from the south.** Several ancient poems describe the LORD coming from Seir, Edom, Teman or Paran (Deut 33:2; Judg 5:4–5; Hab 3:3). The Egyptian association of *Yhw* with Shasu lands near Seir is the main external evidence for the theory that YHWH worship originated among southern pastoral groups (the Midianite–Kenite hypothesis; cf. Moses and Jethro, Exod 3:1; 18:1–12).
- **Caution.** The Egyptian references concern a place or group name, not a deity, and do not show who worshipped YHWH or how.

## Further reading


- Giveon, Raphael. *Les bédouins Shosou des documents égyptiens*. Leiden: Brill, 1971.
- Smith, Mark S. *The Early History of God*. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002.
- Blenkinsopp, Joseph. “The Midianite-Kenite Hypothesis Revisited and the Origins of Judah.” *JSOT* 33 (2008): 131–153.

# 47. The Sea Peoples Reliefs of Ramesses III at Medinet Habu



*Drawing of the naval battle against the Sea Peoples on the north wall of the mortuary temple of Ramesses III at Medinet Habu. Ramesses (right) shoots from the shore.*

Image: Drawing of the Medinet Habu relief. Public domain. Source: Wikimedia Commons, file page.

| | |
|---|---|
| **Object** | Monumental battle reliefs and inscriptions on the temple walls |
| **Museum** | In situ, mortuary temple of Ramesses III, Medinet Habu, Western Thebes |
| **Date** | Year 8 of Ramesses III (c. 1177 BC); temple completed c. 1175 BC |
| **Provenance** | Medinet Habu, Egypt |
| **Language / script** | Egyptian, hieroglyphic |
| **Principal editions** | Epigraphic Survey (Oriental Institute), *Medinet Habu* I–II (1930–1932); Breasted, *Ancient Records of Egypt* IV (1906) |

## What it is

**Technical summary.** The reliefs record Ramesses III's defeat of a confederation of migrating "Sea Peoples" by land and sea. The accompanying text names them as the Peleset, Tjeker, Shekelesh, Denyen and Weshesh. It says they had overrun Ḫatti, Qode, Carchemish, Arzawa and Alashiya (Cyprus) before setting up camp in Amurru. The Peleset are shown with distinctive feathered or reed headdresses, and the land battle shows their families in ox-carts. After their defeat, groups of the Peleset were settled on the southern coast of Canaan.

**In plain terms.** An Egyptian pharaoh shows on his temple walls how he beat back invaders from the sea about 1177 BC. One of those groups, the Peleset, are the Philistines of the Bible.

## Summary of the year 8 inscription

Paraphrase by the author of this study. The foreign peoples made a conspiracy in their islands, and the lands were swept away all at once. No land could stand before them: Ḫatti, Qode, Carchemish, Arzawa and Alashiya were cut off, and they set up a camp in Amurru. Their confederation was the Peleset, Tjeker, Shekelesh, Denyen and Weshesh. Pharaoh prepared his frontier in Djahi (the

Levant), and closed the river-mouths with warships. Those who reached his border were destroyed, and those who entered the river-mouths were caught like birds in a net.

## Points of contact with the Hebrew Bible

- **The Philistines.** Egyptian *Prst* is the biblical *Pəlištîm*. Their arrival around 1175 BC agrees with the biblical tradition that they came from Caphtor (Crete or the Aegean; Amos 9:7; Jer 47:4; Deut 2:23) and with their prominence in Judges and 1 Samuel. Archaeology of the Philistine Pentapolis (Ashdod, Ashkelon, Ekron, Gath, Gaza) shows Aegean-style pottery and practices from the early 12th century BC.
- **The Tjeker** settled at Dor, where Wenamun encountered them (Part 4).
- **The Denyen** have been compared, speculatively, with the tribe of Dan (Judg 5:17 places Dan "in ships").

## Further reading


- Cline, Eric H. *1177 B.C.: The Year Civilization Collapsed*. Rev. ed. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2021.
- Killebrew, Ann E., and Gunnar Lehmann, eds. *The Philistines and Other "Sea Peoples" in Text and Archaeology*. Atlanta: SBL, 2013.
- Epigraphic Survey. *Medinet Habu*. Vols. I–II. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1930–1932 (free PDFs from the Institute for the Study of Ancient Cultures).