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Michael G. Hasel, Ph.D.
Southern Adventist University, mhasel@southern.edu

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History, Egyptology, and the Bible:
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Michael G. Hasel

Southern Adventist University

Abstract

This is a case study that follows the principles developed in the first conference paper presented in the Biblical Foundations for Faith and Learning Conference (Cancun, 2011) and specifically applies these principles to a problem in the narrow field of History, Egyptology, and the Bible. Due to political and ideological reasons the field of Egyptology has been largely isolated from biblical studies and the history of Canaan and Israel. In recent years, minimalist biblical scholars have challenged the long-held consensus that the peoples, places, and polities of Canaan and Israel existed in the second millennium. The biblical references to these entities have been re-dated to the sixth-third centuries BC, hundreds of years after the setting presented by the biblical writers. This paper will address these assumptions and provide new evidence from Egyptology that supports the geographical setting presented in the Bible during the second millennium BC. The conclusions are based on a book that will be completed this year, entitled, *The Name Equation: Asiatic Peoples, Places, and Polities during the Egyptian New Kingdom*. Its goal is to draw together the biblical, archaeological, and Egyptological data together for an interdisciplinary approach to the problem from a biblical foundation.

Key Words: History, Egyptology, Bible, Canaan, Israel, second millennium, Asiatic, archaeology, interdisciplinary, biblical foundation

**History, Egyptology, and the Bible:
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In the first study for a biblical foundation for history and archaeology, a thorough theological overview of the biblical concept of history and its significance for faith was established (Hasel 2011b). The centrality of the nature of God's divine interaction in time and space in human affairs was documented as the central worldview of Scripture. The divine-human relationship is defined and given meaning by God's acts in history. From special Creation, to Christ's incarnation, and ultimately His return and this earth's re-Creation, the Bible is a record of God's intervention and guidance in human history. Scripture predicts and documents these events through the divine inspiration of the Holy Spirit who directly communicated these messages to the prophets, apostles and writers. They testify that Jesus was sent into this world in the "fullness of time." For this reason, the Bible contains more than mere theology, ideology, or philosophical ideas. It is unique in the world of religious literature because it is constituted in history. Its message is inextricably bound in the historical events it relates. As G. Ernest Wright (1966, p. 17) of Harvard University writes:

The Bible, unlike the other religious literature of the world, is not centered in a series of moral, spiritual, and liturgical teachings, but in the story of a people who lived at a certain time and place.... Faith was communicated, in other words, through the forms of history, and unless history is taken seriously one cannot comprehend biblical faith which triumphantly affirms the meaning of history.

In the flow of God's divine interaction in time and space, the Exodus event stands out in its wide-ranging impact on God's divine plan. The theological themes and motifs of Exodus permeate the fabric of the entire Bible. God reminds His people 125 times in the Old Testament, "I am the Lord God who brought you out of the land of Egypt" (cf. Kaiser 1987, 67). Of the hundreds of quotes and allusions in the New Testament, those from Exodus rank third in number (Piper 1957, p. 3). Intervention, Judgment, Deliverance, Law, Covenant, and ultimately Salvation are all themes that form the basis and pattern for God's work throughout redemption history. These are not abstract theological concepts but experiential acts inextricably tied to history. God intervenes to judge the corruption and oppression of Egypt. God delivers a nation of slaves whom He has heard. He establishes them as His people by setting forth laws and making a covenant with them. He leads them to the Promised Land where they can experience the fruits of His salvation. In Genesis we find God's sovereignty over nature as its Creator. In Exodus we

experience his divine work in history. In this work among the people of the earth, God reveals himself as the great “I AM,” who is holy and awesome, but who comes down to lead a people in a pillar of fire by night and hovers protectively over them in a cloud by day. He is the God who lays out the plan of salvation in his sanctuary and who ordains the organization of a priesthood to teach the way of redemption. He is a God whose plan cannot be thwarted. These are the events that not only founded a nation but reveal the everlasting character of God and his merciful love to his lost creation. In that sense, Exodus continues to unveil the plan that God has to deliver and provide salvation for all people in the world who will follow him to the Promised Land that He is preparing for us now. The Exodus event will be remembered in Heaven where the redeemed saints will join in singing the Song of Moses before the throne of God (see Hasel in press). As James K. Hoffmeier (2012, p. 111) summarizes, “The Old Testament Scriptures do not treat the sojourn-exodus-wilderness events as trivial matters. Rather these events stand at the heart of Israel’s religious life, as evidenced by the fact that these themes are ubiquitous throughout the Old Testament itself.”

Developments in Modernism and Postmodernism

The Exodus event was widely accepted as historical in its basic outline until the late 1970s. As late as 1981, John Bright, whose *A History of Israel* had become the standard textbook, wrote, “There can really be little doubt that ancestors of Israel had been slaves in Egypt and had escaped in some marvelous way. Almost no one today would question it” (1981, p. 120). His assessment was based on the large consensus established by William F. Albright of Johns Hopkins University and G. Ernest Wright of Harvard University, who greatly influenced North American biblical archaeology by challenging the historical-critical consensus that had formed in Europe (for assessments, see Hess 1993; Ray 2008). But already with a 1977 article by J. Maxwell Miller, that consensus in North America would drastically change. Today the results of the last two centuries of modern, historical-critical scholarship has largely resulted in the dismissal of the Exodus event together with the subsequent sojourn and conquest (Dever 1992; 2003). This was already determined by the presuppositions of the method, which operates in (1) the closed continuum, cause-effect nexus of philosophical naturalism; (2) the principle of analogy; and (3) the principle of methodological doubt (Troeltsch 1913; G. F. Hasel 1985, pp. 73-77). In other words, the events of God’s calling Moses at the burning bush; God’s deliverance through ten plagues; God’s miraculous parting of the

Red Sea; God's providence in providing manna six days a week; God's speaking with Moses on Sinai, God's writing with His finger the Ten Commandments; God's dwelling in the sanctuary, etc., are all divine events that are precluded by the presuppositions of the historical-critical method which approach history from the perspective of *etsi deus non deratur* ('as though God did not exist'; see Dietrich 2007, p. 102). If God does not interact historically with humanity, then these events become mythological or merely theological and are no longer rooted in history.

Two types of responses to these arguments have been posed by scholars who continue to hold that the Bible contains a historical account: (1) a contextual approach that compares and contrasts the biblical narrative with ancient Near Eastern and Egyptian accounts (Hallo 1990; Hasel 2005; G. F. Hasel and M. G. Hasel in press); and (2) a historical background approach that recognizes the limitations of the extra-biblical record, yet studies the background evidence from surrounding cultures and historical contexts (Hoffmeier 1996; 2005; Currid 1997; Kitchen 2003; Hess 2007).

History, Egyptology, and the Bible

Ever since the first documentation of Egyptian monuments by Napoleon's Commission for the Arts and Sciences, Egypt's contacts with foreign territories, cities, and peoples has captivated Egyptologists and historians of the ancient Near East. The military campaigns of Egypt against surrounding areas produced vivid depictions of their exploits. Here was a source of new information that, apart from biblical records, could elucidate these ancient peoples from an Egyptian perspective. Libyan and Kushite tribes, Asiatic peoples, and even empires such as the Hittites were now accessible. Scenes showing the Egyptian king smiting his enemies became ideological symbols (for expressing his restoration of *ma'at* (Hall 1986) and the depiction of the Nine Bows on the footstools and sandals of Tutankhamun illustrated vividly his domination and power (Easton-Krauss 2008). The Egyptian description and representation of these new entities led to several studies. From 1925-1931 Henri Gauthier produced seven volumes on Egyptian geographical names. Four years later W. Wreszinski (1935) conducted his detailed art historical study that attempted to further define the ethnicity of various Asiatic groups. Alan Gardiner's *Ancient Egyptian Onomastica* (1947) continues to be a standard reference work. But in the last 20 years many of these widely accepted identifications based on the Egyptian textual and iconographic evidence have been challenged. In summary, let us look briefly at two examples.

The discovery of the Merenptah stela in 1896 by Sir W. Flinders Petrie caused a sensation in biblical scholarship for many believed it contained the first extra-biblical reference to Israel. The first translation by Wolfgang Spiegelberg (1896: 23; 1908: 404 n. 5) made note of the fact that the designation was followed by the determinative for people. Its designation as a people or socioethnic entity was widely accepted by Egyptologists for almost a century (see references in Hasel 1998a, p. 194; to these add Bietak 2000, p. 194; Görg 2001, p. 21; Kitchen 2004).

However, as early as 1950, John A. Wilson stated in a footnote to his translation of the Merenptah stela that the interpretation of Israel as a people was good “but not conclusive, because of the notorious carelessness of Late-Egyptian scribes and several blunders of writing in the stela” (1950, p. 378, n. 18). Although the convention of the scribal use of determinatives had never been systematically studied, the footnote by Wilson in the influential first through third editions of *Ancient Near Eastern Texts (ANET)* continued to have a major influence in biblical scholarship, especially on those who had limited knowledge of the Egyptian language. Wilson’s sentiment was echoed by Roland de Vaux and others (de Vaux 1978, p. 390). In 1985 an article published by G. Ahlström and D. Edelman built on this assumption by presenting an entirely new interpretation of the designation ‘Israel’ in the Merenptah stela. The conclusion was reached that the ‘Israel’ of the Merenptah stela was not a socioethnic entity but a geographical territory that encompassed the central hill country of Ephraim. The main argument in favor of this interpretation was that “the use of the determinative for people instead of land may be insignificant, resulting from the author’s loose application of determinatives in connection with names of foreign regions and peoples with which he was not personally familiar” (1985, p. 60; Ahlström 1986; Edelman 1992). In 1990 O. Margalith posited that “the denominator for people and not town might be a scribe’s error of the king which is common in Egyptian epigraphy” (p. 229). Although this reinterpretation has met with opposition (Emerton 1988; Bimson 1991; Rainey 1992; Hasel 1994; 1998a, pp. 198-199; Kitchen 2004, pp. 271-272), the view continues to be perpetuated. Most recently, Thomas Thompson and Ingrid Hjelm (2002) have restated similar sentiments and proposed a variety of new meanings for this designation. I have dealt with these interpretations elsewhere and will simply say here that it would have been important for these biblical scholars to understand at least something of Egyptian

language and orthography (see Hasel 2008a, pp. 48-49). The result of these reinterpretations has a major bearing in the current debate on the origin of ancient Israel.

A second toponym also has received considerable interest. By the 1960s a general consensus had emerged regarding the nature and extent of the land of Canaan, its boundaries, and its geographical area (Na'aman 1994c, p. 397; cf. Aharoni 1967, pp. 61-70; de Vaux 1968; 1978, pp. 125-139; Weippert 1980; Stolz 1988, pp. 539-545). The primary sources for the reconstruction of this geographical area include: (1) the Mari letters; (2) the Amarna letters; (3) Ugaritic texts; (4) texts from Aššur and Hattusha; and (5) Egyptian texts (Na'aman 1994c). The term Canaan is found 16 times in New Kingdom sources (Görg 1982; Ahituv 1984, pp. 83-85). Most scholars have concluded that Canaan in a number of these texts, particularly during the XIXth Dynasty, referred to the entire area of Palestine synonymous with the toponym Kharu (see summary arguments in Hasel 1994, p. 56 n. 10; 1998, p. 258). This view was recently challenged by N.-P. Lemche (1991, p. 50), who stated that there is a "correspondence between the imprecise and ambiguous Egyptian use of the geographical name Canaan and the likewise imprecise understanding of Canaan displayed by the inhabitants of Western Asia themselves." In conclusion to his study of the Amarna letters he writes, "evidently the inhabitants of the supposed Canaanite territory in Western Asia had no clear idea of the actual size of this Canaan, nor did they know exactly where Canaan was situated" (1991, p. 39). In essence, "the Canaanites of the ancient Near East did not know that they were themselves Canaanites" (1991, p. 152). Lemche's conclusions have been challenged by Nadav Na'aman, Anson Rainey and others, but he has maintained his interpretation of historical sources which he calls "imprecise" and "ambiguous" (1998). One is left with an open question concerning the meaning of this toponym to the Egyptians themselves and what, if any, connection it has with contemporaneous Near Eastern sources (see now Hasel 2009).

In fact, these examples—Israel and Canaan—demonstrate the problem in recent scholarship over Egyptian foreign names, and by extension, designations of polities and entities of the eastern Mediterranean world. The wide reaching impact on our historical understanding of the geography, peoples, and places of the ancient Near East and the Bible is apparent. Yet an even larger question looms before those interested in this part of the world: do these reinterpretations truly represent the *Egyptian* perception of meaning? Indeed, the very

nature of Egyptian scribal practices and tradition as well as the Egyptian ability to understand the world around them is brought into sharper focus and scrutiny. Were the names in ancient Egypt intended as ethnic, sociocultural, or geographical designations or were they simply loose designations given with little reference to meaning? Can we be certain that the authors (scribes) of these texts knew what they were recording? How accurate were they and with what consistency did they record their perceptions of the world around them? These are significant epistemological and historiographical questions. They impinge on whether it is possible to establish (1) that the communication system used (written language and iconography) was able to provide such distinctions, and ultimately (2) whether the communicators (writers and artists) knew what these names meant and the reality they represented. One of the reasons for the present impasse, as Robert Merrillees (1987) correctly pointed out in his study on the identification of Alasiya, is that no detailed, comparative analysis had yet been conducted on the defining characteristic of the Egyptian language that allows such distinctions; the determinative. For some years now I have been completing a comprehensive study of foreign names and their determinatives in the Egyptian New Kingdom, which I hope will add significantly to the understanding and definition of the peoples, places, and polities in the eastern Mediterranean world (Hasel forthcoming). To accomplish this task, a database of over 120 different foreign names in the approximate area of the eastern Mediterranean, including modern Turkey, Cyprus, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Israel, and Palestine, were compiled from the reign of Thutmose III to Ramses III. These names are used over 1200 times. In the study presented here, I summarize the results of one aspect of this wider undertaking (the results were published in Hasel 2011a). While I have dealt with Israel and Canaan in other publications, for this article I would like to focus on the accounts of the *Battle of Kadesh*.

Perspectives on the 'Battle of Kadesh'

During the New Kingdom one event stands out above all others in its vivid portrayal in reliefs and in written form repeated numerous times throughout Egypt – the 'Battle of Kadesh.' This most celebrated of all Egyptian military campaigns is also one of the most successful examples of the propaganda of an event known in the ancient world. The strategic location of Kadesh in the Eleutheros Valley was the key to the territory of Amurru and provided the entry way into the Syrian plain (Goedicke 1985, p. 84 n. 35). It was the crucial role of Kadesh, among other things, that made it one of the most important battles (Ockinga 1987). Although the outcome of the

battle is still a matter of intense debate,¹ important details in matters of geography are apparent, indicating both place and people's names. This battle alone, and more importantly its recording from Abu Simbel in the far south clear to Abydos in the north, provides one of the most important test cases for the authenticity and consistency of scribal tradition in the use of determinatives.

“Literary Record” of the Battle of Kadesh

The longest written version of the battle of Kadesh is known as the “Poem” or literary record. It “has been seen as a more propagandistic version of the conflict, whose supposed emphasis is upon the bravery of the king in combat” (Morschauser 1985, p. 124).² Breasted (1906, p. 141 § 313) called it “highly idealized and sometimes purely imaginary ... the creation of a poet.” Wilson (1927, p. 266) characteristically intoned that the actual reason for the text was to glorify Ramses “to the sacrifice of accuracy” And it is true, as Morschauser's (1985, p. 197) detailed analysis of the “literary record” concludes, that the literary accounts are “highly finished literary compositions.”

Kitchen's *Ramesseid Inscriptions* (1983; abbreviated *KRI*) which serve as the basis for the statistical analysis that follows, records seven complete or partial copies of the literary record. Six copies are found in Thebes³ and one at Abydos in the temple of Ramses II (A). Three other copies were written in hieratic on papyri.⁴ Twenty toponyms are mentioned in the various copies of the literary record and two additional designations, one for the elusive Sherden with a unique determinative of a “seated man with headdress” and another of Kharu consistently determined with the “enemy, captive” sign. All of the 20 place names are those of the various territories and cities forming the coalition of Hatti (for description and locations, see Breasted 1906, p. 136 n. c,

¹ As Goedicke (1985: 78) points out, there have been scholars who doubt the historical veracity of the texts altogether (Otto 1953, p. 177; Helck 1971, p. 197). Others take the position that Ramses II changed an ambush and possibly overwhelming defeat into a respectable draw (Wilson 1951, p. 246; Hayes 1959, 339; Desroches-Noblecourt 1976, p. xxiv; Hornung 1978, p. 104; Kitchen 1984, p. 62), while others see these accounts as political propaganda to cover up Egypt's defeat by the Hittites (Helck 1968, p. 185; Beckerath 1971, p. 43; Simpson and Hallo 1971, 279; Mayer and Mayer-Opificius 1994, 321-368). However, as I have argued elsewhere, the unity and remarkable detail of the account testifies to an actual campaign in Syria regardless of the question of outcome (Hasel 1998, p. 155; cf. Gardiner, 1960, p. 52).

²The designation “Poem” is somewhat misleading. According to Gardiner (1960, p. 2) “there is no justification for thinking that any part of it was written in verse” echoing the sentiment of Breasted (1906, p. 6) who believed that “the entire so-called Poem does not differ in form from the Record [Bulletin] and is not essentially different from other accounts of their victories left by Pharaohs.” Most Egyptologists today prefer the title “literary record” (Gardiner 1960, p. 2; Morschauser 1985, pp. 123-206; Kitchen 2000, pp. 32-38).

³The abbreviations of Kitchen are followed: K₁ and K₂ = Karnak; L₁, L₂ and L₃ = Luxor; R = Ramesseum.

⁴They are abbreviated as follows: Rf = Papyrus Raifé; S = Papyrus Sallier III; ChB₁ = Chester Beatty Papyrus III, *verso*, 2-3 and ChB₂ = Chester Beatty Papyrus III, *verso*, 1). The most extent copy is Papyrus Sallier III (Kuentz, 1928, pp. 199ff).

§306; Gardiner 1960, pp. 57-59; Kitchen 2000, p. 33 n. 3). The contextual framework of each of these occurrences indicates that none of these toponyms can be conceived in their contexts as referring to a specific people or representing an ethnicon. Thus, for example, while individuals are singled out, this is usually done in the following manner: *wr n Hatti*, “chief of Hatti” (*KRI* II:89,11-15) where it is apparent that this is the “chief of the land of Hatti.” Other names fit into the categories of city-states (Aleppo, Carchemish, Kadesh, Ugarit) while others represent regions or territories (Amurru, Arzawa, Kizzuwadna) and finally a foreign country (Hatti). It is fitting given these types of polities that the determinative employed would be the “hill-country” sign occasionally accompanied by the “throw stick.”⁵

Of all the copies available today, foreign place names were employed a total of 60 times in the literary record. Of those 60 place names, we find that there were 380 actual occurrences in the various copies studied, of which 367 had surviving determinatives. Of those 367, only 3 scribal inconsistencies were found. That is an accuracy of 99.182%. Furthermore, all three of the inconsistencies occurred in two papyrus copies (Rf, ChB₁). This means that in the surviving copies of the literary record, the monumental inscriptions at Thebes and Abydos were 100% consistent in the determination of foreign place names and the designation of Sherden and Kharu.

“Bulletin” of the Battle of Qadesh

A second version of the battle that was recorded has become known as the “Bulletin” (Gardiner 1960, pp. 3-4; Goedicke 1985; Spalinger 1985) or “Report” (Faulkner 1958). It is shorter than the literary record (P) and generally considered, with the reliefs, to be primary when reconstructing the events of the campaign (Morschauer 1985, p. 123). The account is straightforward and focuses primarily on the king’s heroic deeds (Goedicke 1985, p. 115). A textual-critical approach was begun by Alan Gardiner (1960) with a much more detailed study completed by Anthony Spalinger (1985, pp. 43-75). Spalinger concentrated on the “informational aspect of the textual side to the Kadesh accounts” (Spalinger 1985, p. 43). Major differences were noted among the variants. The different spellings and alternate writings indicated that the scribes possessed a certain flexibility in recording

⁵The “throw stick” which indicated the concept of “foreign” need not be applied to toponyms accompanied by the “hill-country” sign since it inherently indicated a foreign territory, land, or city (Gardiner 1957, p. 488). Perhaps Egyptian toponyms never received the “hill-country” sign for the very reason that such a designation could not apply to Egyptian topography but certainly would be suitable for western Asia with its hills and mountains. Nevertheless, it is worth pointing out that the “hill-country” determinative is almost always accompanied by the “throw stick” in the hieratic versions of the literary record (Rf, S, ChB).

the Bulletin on various temple walls. In particular, Abu Simbel contained a summary account confined to a single wall that was then generously supplemented by reliefs. Spalinger (1985, p. 62) is careful to conclude that the variation among the versions, including spellings and the omission of certain sections or phrases, do not affect the flow of the historical narrative or its factual reliability. Moreover, the present study indicates that the consistency or inconsistency of the scribal use of determinatives is also unaffected. If anything, the consistency of determinative usage is even more significant when compared to the flexibility in copying activities from one location to another.

According to Kitchen's *Ramesside Inscriptions* there are currently seven copies on monumental buildings.⁶ An eighth copy was found by Bill Murnane and is now being published by Peter Brand at the University of Memphis and is not included here. There are a total of 17 toponyms mentioned in the various copies of the Bulletin and 1 additional designation for the spies from the tribe of Š3sw, "Shasu," appropriately the consistent determinative of the "enemy, captive." Again, as in the literary record, the 17 place names are those of the various territories and cities forming the coalition of Hatti (Breasted 1906, p. 136 n. c §306; Gardiner 1960, pp. 57-59; Kitchen 2000, 33 n. 3). The contextual framework of each of these occurrences indicates that none of these toponyms should be conceived in their contexts as referring to a specific people or representing an ethnicon. The toponyms in this version also fit into the categories of city-states (Tunip, Carchemish, Kadesh, Ugarit) while others represent regions or territories (this time Djahy) and finally a foreign country (Hatti). Of all the copies available today foreign place names were employed 48 times in the Bulletin. Of those 48 place names, we find that there were 177 actual occurrences in the various copies studied, 158 with surviving determinatives. Of those 158 occurrences only 1 scribal inconsistency was located.⁷ The scribal error was found in R₁ at the Ramesseum where the "garden pool" sign is used for the toponym ĩatti instead of the otherwise consistently used of the "hill-country" sign. Of 196 occurrences of ĩatti in all 3 versions and 14 copies this is the only scribal error. This is perhaps the most striking example of the uniformity of Ramesside scribal convention from a geographical perspective. Going back to the

⁶These include three copies at Luxor = L₁ and L₂ and an earlier version which Kitchen designates as L_p over which L₁ is written. There is also one from Abu Simbel = I; one fragmentary version from the temple of Ramses II at Abydos (A); and two from the Ramesseum (R₁ and R₂).

⁷The scribal error was found in R₁ at the Ramesseum where the "garden pool" sign (Gardiner 1957, p. 491, N37-38) is used for the toponym Hatti instead of the otherwise consistently used of the "hill-country" sign. Of 196 occurrences of this toponym in all 3 versions and 14 copies this only occurs once. This is perhaps the most striking example of the uniformity of Ramesside scribal convention from a geographical perspective.

'Bulletin,' from a statistical standpoint there is an impressive rate of accuracy within the various copies of the "Bulletin," 99.371%, a percentage even higher than the literary record.⁸

Reliefs of the Battle of Kedesh

Beginning with the XIXth Dynasty, reports of military campaigns abroad were accompanied with artistic representations of the king going forth in battle. These commemorative reliefs provided a direct mode of communication in grand scale (Gaballa 1976; Tefnin 1981). Together, the textual material and the reliefs served the purpose of communicating their intended message to both literate and illiterate during the New Kingdom, giving them a sense of the military prowess of their king, his victory over foreign lands, and ultimately his protection of Egypt (Hasel 1998, p. 21). These records worked in tandem so that "nearly all Egyptian accounts included a pictorial representation with the hieroglyphic narrative" (Spalinger 1985, 44). The accounts of the battle of Kedesh are no different and with them are preserved some of the most detailed representations of New Kingdom military art. The interest of this study is to compare the iconographic information with the associated names, and their determinatives for the pictorial record can provide further details in distinguishing between countries, regions, cities, and people.

A total of eight copies of the reliefs survive,⁹ but many of the scenes and place names are missing. Even from those that are preserved much information can be gained. For example, in several copies of the reliefs the city of Kedesh is depicted. In this relief from Luxor the city is depicted. Soldiers from the Hittite coalition are occupying its towers and a Hittite chariot is fleeing into the city. The fact that this is the city of Qadesh is made clear from the inscription on the wall of the city identifying it. In another similar scene from Abu Simbel the identification is made even more explicit. Here the inscription reads: "the city of Qadesh." This is in contrast to the enemy soldiers engaged in battle, which are labeled by the Egyptians "fallen ones of Hatti." The contrast and comparison is important. Both employ the same hill-country determinative, but one is clearly designated as a city within the larger territory of Hatti.

⁸It is important to note that the scribes were completely consistent in their designation of the Shasu spies which were determined with the "enemy, captive" sign.

⁹Following the collation by Kitchen (*KRI* II, pp.125-128) these include reliefs at Karnak (K₁ and K₂), Luxor (L₁ and L₃), the Ramesseum (R₁ and R₂), Abydos (A), and Abu Simbel (I).

There are a total of 10 place names designated in the reliefs. All of the place names occurring in the reliefs are also found in the Bulletin with the exception of *rtnw*, “Retenu” and *ûbsw*. Djahy appears in the Bulletin and Reliefs but not in the Literary Record. All of the names among the reliefs are known to be place names and not people names, thus the use of the “hill-country” determinative is consistent. Once again, in harmony with the other versions, these place names include cities (Kadesh, Ugarit, Carchemish) territories or regions (Retenu, Djahy) and land polities (Hatti). The 10 place names were employed 85 times, of which 79 had surviving determinatives. All 79 occurrences used the “hill-country” determinative so that there is 100% consistency among the reliefs. This is the highest level attested in the various versions.

Through the limited glimpse of the various accounts of the “battle of Kadesh” several important questions concerning the consistency of Egyptian scribes in the usage of determinatives were addressed. Such a case study is important because of the multiple copies and versions of the account found throughout Egypt depicting one particular battle. The overall consistency in the usage of determinatives is remarkable given the total number of place and people names mentioned. This is being borne out as well in the wider survey of Egyptian literature from the New Kingdom.

Given this limited snapshot of one, albeit widely recorded event in history could it be that the scribes were indeed more consistent than we give them credit for? In an article on determinatives in a recent issue of the *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, Anthony Spalinger concludes, “The various determinatives are not as haphazard as one might at first believe.” Of course other aspects must also be addressed. How is the determinative used over time in the New Kingdom? Are there differences in monumental inscriptions and in papyri copies (we have just noted some differences for the Battle of Kadesh)? Are there local scribal conventions that vary from place to place? I am also looking at scribal conventions at Thebes over the entire New Kingdom to try to answer some of these questions in order to find patterns and perhaps reasons behind their use.

There is a further aspect that is often not addressed by Egyptologists and textual scholars. How does the Egyptian perspective of these countries, places, and peoples correspond to the archaeological data on the ground? As we excavate sites mentioned in these texts do they provide evidence that can help us in identification? The earlier sources cited above are virtually silent concerning the archaeological data. With some sites, such as Beth

Shan, we have comparative evidence both in Seti I's reliefs at Karnak and in stelae found directly at the site (Murnane 1990; Mazar 2011). In other cases we have the Egyptian textual evidence and historical geography to guide us. It is our hope that as we continue to ask these broad and, indeed, interdisciplinary questions our understanding may be broadened.

Conclusions and Implications

Ancient Egypt had extensive interactions with the western Asiatic world as described in the Pentateuch. The geographical and ethnic descriptions of this region lend itself to important comparisons between the biblical world and that of ancient Egypt. It is clear from the ancient Egyptian sources that a large number of the peoples, places, and polities mentioned also in the biblical narratives are attested. They appear in the correct locations and, in some cases, are the first extra-biblical mention of these places. Although this evidence does not confirm the specific events described in the biblical account of the Exodus, they lend credibility to the historical context of the events that the Bible describes. There is a further observation that should be noted: the consistency of the Egyptian scribal tradition provides some circumstantial evidence for the training that Moses would have received as the future king of Egypt in the New Kingdom. The attention to detail and the careful recordkeeping of the Egyptians provides a good background for the meticulous wilderness itinerary that received such extensive documentation from Exodus to Deuteronomy.

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