

THE NAME YAHWEH IN EGYPTIAN HIEROGLYPHIC TEXTS

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INTRODUCTION

Among ancient Egyptian designations for types of foreign peoples in the New Kingdom, the term Shasu occurs fairly frequently. It is generally accepted that the term Shasu means nomads or Bedouin people, referring primarily to the nomadic or semi-nomadic peoples of Syria-Palestine. There are two highly significant hieroglyphic references in New Kingdom texts to an area called "the land of the Shasu of Yahweh."¹ Except for the Old Testament, these are the oldest references found in any ancient texts to the God Yahweh. The purpose of this paper is to study these two references to Yahweh in Egyptian texts and to stress their possible importance in dating the exodus story.

THE TERM SHASU

The term Shasu is found in a variety of New Kingdom hieroglyphic texts including the military, administrative, and diplomatic documents of Thutmose III, Amenhotep II, Thutmose IV, Amenhotep III, Akhenaton, Seti I, Ramses II, Merneptah, and Ramses III.

One of the most intriguing of the Nineteenth Dynasty documents referring to the Shasu is a letter, dated 1192 B.C., which states in part:

Another communication to my Lord: We have finished
letting the Shasu tribes of Edom pass the fortress
of Merneptah Hotep-hir-Maat... which is in Tjeku, to
the pools of Per Atum of Merneptah Hotep-hir-Maat,

which are in Tkeku, to keep them alive and to keep their cattle alive.... 2

Note here that the Shasu tribes are linked with the Edomites, a tribal people with a well-known relationship to the Israelites. Note too that these “Shasu tribes of Edom” were settled, after they crossed the border into Egyptian territory, at Per Atum in Tjeku, or, to put it in Biblical terms, at Pithom in Succoth.³ In addition, it should be noted that these Shasu Edomites were animal herders and that they were also, of course, Semites.

According to Exodus 1:11, Pithom and the nearby city of Raamses were two “storage cities” built by the Israelites for Pharaoh during their bondage in Egypt. In addition, the German scholar Siegfried Herrmann, who translated the above text on the “Shasu tribes of Edom,” has identified the area of Tjeku, where these Shasu Edomites were settled, with the general area of the Land of Goshen mentioned in Genesis 46:34.⁴ The treatment of these Shasu Edomites by the officials of Pharaoh is very reminiscent of the Pharaoh’s earlier treatment of the Israelites in Egypt during the time of Joseph.

As was noted above, the generic term Shasu appears in a number of ancient Egyptian texts coming mainly from the New Kingdom. There are a few references in Egyptian texts to Shasu nomads living in the area of Nubia, south of Egypt, but the vast majority of references are to Shasu living north of Egypt, and it is these Shasu who are the focus of this paper.

For an excellent study of the use of the term Shasu in Egyptian texts, see Kenneth R. Cooper’s two-part series of articles titled “The Shasu of Palestine in Egyptian Texts” that appeared in Artifax.⁵ As Cooper points out in his articles, most Egyptologists derive the name Shasu from an Egyptian verb meaning “to wander” and thus translate it as “nomads” or “Bedouin.”

However, the vast majority of scholars who have written on the Shasu stress that

they were a people who were not totally nomadic. As will be seen below, there were specific geographic areas associated in Egyptian topographical texts with the Shasu, thus indicating that at least some Shasu lived a somewhat settled existence in defined areas. “Semi-nomadic” is probably a more accurate translation of the term Shasu.⁶

While the term Shasu is used primarily for these semi-nomadic Semitic herders who lived north of Egypt, it also has a secondary usage in some New Kingdom texts for the geographic areas where these Shasu people lived. When used in Egyptian texts as the geographic area where the Shasu people lived, the hieroglyphic word *t3* is used, and this word should be translated as “land of.”

In the case of the two references to Yahweh, which will be discussed in detail below and which appear on inscriptions at Soleb and Amarah-West, the Egyptian phrase is *t3 sh3sw ya-h-wa*, i.e. “the land of the Shasu of Yahweh.” Incidentally, this secondary use of the term Shasu as a geographic term clearly indicates, as was noted above, that the Shasu people were not completely nomadic, as for example was true of the ancient nomadic herders of the Asian steppe.

The term Shasu is almost exclusively used in New Kingdom texts for semi-nomadic peoples living in parts of Lebanon, Syria, Sinai, Canaan, and Transjordan. When used for nomads living in these areas, the term Shasu seems to have been used by the ancient Egyptians almost exclusively for people groups that can clearly be identified as Semitic herders.

It is clear from New Kingdom texts that the Shasu were rarely if ever under the control of the Egyptian government and were almost always looked upon as enemies of the Egyptians. For example, at the famous Battle of Kadesh in ca. 1275 BC, there were Shasu soldiers who were allies of the Hittites against Ramses II.

It is very likely that the ancient Egyptians of the New Kingdom classified all of the

ancient Edomites, Ammonites, Moabites, Amalekites, Midianites, Kenites, Hapiru, and Israelites as Shasu. This list should also probably include the Amorites and the Arameans. There is even a very interesting reference dating to ca. 1250 BC in *Papyrus Anastasi I* to a group of giant Shasu living in Canaan who are almost certainly to be identified with the giants encountered by the Israelites at the time of the exodus.⁷

THE LAND OF THE SHASU OF YAHWEH

As was noted above, there are two ancient hieroglyphic inscriptions dating to the New Kingdom, which refer to “the Land of the Shasu of Yahweh.” These references to the Shasu of Yahweh are found in two topographical lists. These two references are of great importance to biblical scholars studying the origins of Israel and its unique religion.

The topographical lists in question are found at two temples, one at Soleb and the second at Amarah-West. Soleb, a temple dedicated to the god Amon-Re, was built by the Egyptian Pharaoh Amenhotep III in ca. 1400 BC, but it is today located in the nation of Sudan. It is located on the left bank of the Nile about 135 miles south of Wadi-Halfa.

Amarah-West, which is also now located in the modern nation of Sudan, is a construction of Ramses II in the 13th century and has massive topographical lists inscribed in it. The particular section of the Amarah-West topographical list, which contains the reference to “the land of the Shasu of Yahweh,” is not original with Ramses II and was almost certainly copied by him from the earlier list of Amenhotep III at Soleb.

It must be noted at this point that Egyptologists in general do not question the appearance of the name Yahweh in these two ancient Egyptian topographical lists. For example, Donald Redford writes of the reference to Yahweh at Soleb:

For half a century it has been generally admitted that we have here the tetragrammaton, the name of the Israelite god “Yahweh”; and if this be the case, as it undoubtedly is, the passage constitutes the most precious indication of the

whereabouts during the late 15th century BC of an enclave revering this god.⁸ As will be seen below in this article, Redford identifies the Shasu of Yahweh with the ancient Edomites and argues that Yahweh was at first worshipped as an Edomite god. He also argues that one tribe of Edomites split from the main body of Edomites, moved northwest, and later became one of the tribes of the Israelites, thus taking their god Yahweh with them. For Redford, this explains how Yahweh became the God of the Israelites.⁹

There are several problems with Redford's position, and these will be dealt with later in this paper. However, it suffices here to note that there are almost no scholars who question the appearance of the name Yahweh in these New Kingdom hieroglyphic texts at Soleb and Amarah-West.

The best discussion of the place names in Egyptian topographical lists that are related to the location of "the land of the Shasu of Yahweh" is that of Michael Astour in his chapter in the Festschrift Elmar Edel published in 1979. Astour points out in his article that the place names listed at Soleb and Amarah-West include both Egyptian possessions in Syria-Palestine as well as non-Egyptian controlled ethnic groups and regions in that area.

The topographical lists that are of most interest are the group of texts which read "*t3 Sh3sw of X*," or "Land of the Shasu of X," where X is normally a place. Astour observes that, contrary to what has been stated by some other scholars, Redford being a good example, not all of the Shasu lands mentioned by Amenhotep III, and copied by Ramses II, were located in the general area of Edom, but were scattered throughout the areas of Syria, Lebanon, Canaan, Sinai, and Trans-Jordan.¹⁰

As was stated above, almost all Egyptologists accept the appearance of the name Yahweh in these topographical lists at Soleb and Amarah-West, but the implications of its appearance do not seem to have been fully appreciated by Old Testament scholars. Of

course the question remains, who or what is being referred to by the word Yahweh? Is it a reference to the God of Israel? Or is it just a reference to a town or city like any of the other toponyms beginning with *t3 sh3sw*? In other words, should the phrase *t3 sh3sw ya-h-wa* be translated as “the land of the nomads who worship the God Yahweh” or as “the land of the nomads who live in the area of Yahweh”? The answer to this is not known with absolute certainty, but even if Yahweh is a place in these hieroglyphic texts, it was clearly a place named after the God Yahweh of the Old Testament. Anything less seems too coincidental. But let us look at Astour's proposed locations of the other *t3 Sh3sw* toponyms in these lists at Soleb and Amarah-West.

Astour correlates the Amarah list of Ramses II with the Soleb list of Amenhotep III. He also correlates both of these lists with a parallel, but partial, topographical list of Ramses III that is located in his great mortuary temple at Medinet Habu on the west bank of the Nile at Luxor.

First, let us look at Astour's correlation of the parallel portions of the Amarah and Soleb lists. Both of these lists begin with a place called *t3 sh3sw pys-pys*, which Astour identifies with a spring in the Biqa Valley, near the Litani River in the modern nation of Lebanon.¹¹ Its modern name, Ayn (spring) Fishfish, seems to clearly preserve the ancient name. The main point to keep in mind here, and for some of the other sites called "the Land of the Shasu," is that they were not necessarily located in the general area of ancient Edom; several were clearly located north of the land of Canaan, as appears to have been the case with *t3 sh3sw pys-pys*.

The second place in the two lists is *Sa-ma-ta*, a place that Astour again is quite certain as to its precise location. He identifies Sa-ma-ta with Samat, a site on the Phoenician coast some 7 miles south of Batrun. This site is located north of Canaan in an area that is generally considered to be a Canaanite/ Phoenician area. It should be noted again that this

is a site which is also located far away from Edom.¹²

The third place name and the one that is of the greatest interest to us is “the Land of the Shasu of Yahweh.” Astour makes no attempt to locate this people group, and for a good reason. There is no topographical site in the entire region today that bears the name Yahweh or anything remotely similar. There is also no biblical reference or ancient historical source that mentions a topographical site named Yahweh. We will return to this point later.

Astour observes that the name Yahweh also appears in a topographical list at Medinet Habu (12th century B.C.) with the variant spelling *yi-ha*.¹³ This constitutes a third reference in hieroglyphic texts to the God Yahweh. However, in the Medinet Habu list, the phrase “the Land of the Shasu” has been omitted. Astour believes that *yi-ha* is just a variant of *ya-h-wa* as found on the Soleb and Amarah-West topographical lists. He also believes that it refers to the same people since it is followed in all three lists by some version of a place called “the Land of the Shasu of *Tu-ra/Tu-ra-ba-ar*.” However, the Medinet Habu list has mistakenly split the name *Tu-ra* from the last elements of this place's full name, *Tu-ra-ba-ar*, and has made this one locality into two places. Nevertheless, the full name *t3 shsw tu-ra-ba-ar* appears after the place mentioning Yahweh on both the Soleb and Amarah lists.

Astour has identified *Tu-ra-ba-ar* with the name Turbul. It should be remembered that the Egyptian language has no L sound and routinely uses R for L sounds. Astour states that there are two possible locations for ancient *Tu-ra-ba-ar*, both with the modern name Turbul. One of these two Turbuls is located in the Biqa Valley in Lebanon and the other a little farther north but also in Lebanon.¹⁴

It should be observed at this point that the Amarah-West list presents, at the head of the Shasu lands section, two additional Shasu locations not found in the earlier text from Soleb. The first, *Sa-a-r-ar*, is difficult to identify on linguistic grounds. Some scholars, including

Redford, have identified it with Mt. Seir in Edom, but other identifications have also been suggested.¹⁵ It should be pointed out, however, that if this toponym does refer to Mt. Se'ir and therefore to Edom, the Egyptians seemingly were differentiating between the Land of the Shasu of Yahweh and the Land of the Shasu of Edom. We will return to this apparent distinction between the Shasu of Yahweh and the Shasu of Edom when the theories of Redford are dealt with below.

Another item in the Amarah list of Shasu sites that does not occur at Soleb, is *ra-ba-na*. However, this term does occur at Medinet Habu, and Astour identifies it with the city state of Labana in Middle Syria.¹⁶ Again, this shows us that Shasu peoples and their lands were spread throughout the region and were not limited to just the areas of Edom and the Sinai.

Now let us draw some conclusions regarding the Land of the Shasu of Yahweh. It will be remembered that no geographical term anything like Yahweh has been identified, and this suggests that the hieroglyphic phrase *t3 sh3sw ya-h-wa* should be translated as “the land of the nomads who worship the God Yahweh” rather than as “the land of the nomads who live in the area of Yahweh.” In addition, the fact that no geographical term anything like Yahweh has been identified also strengthens the likelihood that the words *ya-h-wa* in the Soleb and Amarah texts are indeed early mentions of the God of Israel.

As Astour points out, the reference to Yahweh at Soleb is 500 years earlier than the well-known Moabite Stone's reference to Yahweh, and thus it is by far the earliest non-biblical occurrence of the name Yahweh. Even if Yahweh in these Egyptian texts is a place, it seems nearly certain that such an area, city, or town was named after the Hebrew God Yahweh of the Old Testament. We thus still would have the earliest references to the God Yahweh found outside of the Old Testament.

EGYPTIAN SYNCRETISM AND THE GOD YAHWEH

At this point it is worth taking a look at Egyptian references to foreign gods and

goddesses to see how they were normally treated. Kenneth Ostrand published a study of foreign deities in ancient Egypt in 2006 in KMT magazine.¹⁷ Let us survey four foreign deities that Ostrand discusses in order to see how foreign gods were generally regarded in ancient Egypt.

The West Semitic goddess Astarte, who probably evolved out of Semitic Ishtar and/or Sumerian Inanna, was a goddess of love and fertility. She does not appear in Egyptian texts until the reign of Amenhotep II in the 15th century BC, when she is mentioned in that king's famous sphinx stele as being pleased with the king's vaunted horsemanship. It is important to note that in the New Kingdom, Astarte was made a consort of Set and a daughter of Re. It is possible that her connection with Set had something to do with the warlike nature of both deities. In Egyptian art, Astarte is depicted standing on a horse, wearing a crown on her head, and holding various weapons. A temple to her was built at Tell el Dab'a, biblical Rameses, a city site associated both with the Israelites and the Hyksos. The city of Rameses was also the 19th Dynasty's capital of Egypt.

Another West Semitic female warrior deity revered in Egypt was Anath, who appears as early as the late Middle Kingdom, perhaps as a part of the influx of Semites into Egypt that eventually produced the so-called Hyksos period in Egyptian history. After a brief hiatus in Dynasty 18, Anath enjoyed a resurgence of popularity in Dynasty 19, being credited with giving military victories to both Seti I and to his son Ramses II. The center of her worship was the Delta. Because of the sexual nature of her worship, Anath was viewed as an associate of a number of sexually-oriented Egyptian deities, Min, Hathor, and Set. She was depicted either wearing a traditional Egyptian sheath dress or wearing nothing at all. She also tended to be shown holding weapons, such as a spear or battle-axe.

Reshef, a Canaanite god of war and thunder, seems to have been introduced into Egypt

by the Hyksos. As king of the netherworld, Reshef was thought to bring plague and war upon humanity. The Egyptians depicted him in a distinctly Syrian style, with kilt, beard, and horned helmet, but he could also be shown wearing the White Crown of Upper Egypt and holding the Egyptian ankh and scepter, or sometimes holding Canaanite weapons. This, along with Reshef being inserted as a member of a trinity of deities with the god Min and the goddess Qadesh, shows the marked degree of syncretistic integration of foreign deities into the Egyptian pantheon that could take place.

Deities from even more obscure areas could also be worshipped in Egypt. An example cited by Ostrand is Ash, a Lybian god who entered Egypt in the Middle Kingdom. He was, naturally, a god of desert regions and oases and was eventually totally equated with the Egyptian god Set. The ancient Egyptians depicted Ash as a man with either a hawk or a snake head, or sometimes as a lion or vulture.

All of this illustrates that the Egyptians were perfectly willing to worship foreign gods, including building temples to them, giving them Egyptian attributes, emphasizing their similarities to their own gods and goddesses, and even sometimes completely equating them with their own deities.

By studying the general syncretistic acceptance by the ancient Egyptians of the gods of other nations and by comparing their syncretistic acceptance of foreign gods with the treatment afforded Yahweh, one recognizes that Yahweh was for some reason treated very differently. Clearly the Egyptians knew about Yahweh as can be seen in the Soleb, Amarah-West, and Medinet Habu topographical lists, but they did not worship him, and they apparently did not want to worship him.

Nor was Yahweh equated to or identified with any Egyptian deity. There were no temples to Yahweh built by the Egyptians, nor were there any artistic representations made of him, or in fact even any discussions of him in Egyptian texts. There are no other

mentions of him in any Egyptian texts besides the topographical references found at Soleb, Amarah-West, and Medinet Habu. It appears that the ancient Egyptians placed Yahweh into a category all by himself. To say the least, this is very strange for the syncretistic Egyptians. A possible explanation is that Yahweh was seen by the Egyptians as an enemy God of an enemy tribal group which was a part of the hated Shasu peoples who lived north of Egypt.

WAS YAHWEH A PLACE NAME?

It seems significant that there is no modern or ancient place name that can be connected with the name Yahweh. One in fact wonders if the attempts by Astour and others to always supply a place name at the end of the phrase "Land of the Shasu of X" is not putting the cart before the horse.

Perhaps what we now accept as place names in these topographical lists were originally something else, perhaps the names of deities or of eponymous ancestors that came to be attached to a particular group of Shasu nomads/Bedouin. For example, was *sa-ma-ta* a leader or some other important figure for a group of Shasu, and was his name only later attached to a physical location? It should be noted that this was exactly what happened to the name Israel; first it was the name of an eponymous ancestor, but later it became the name of a place.

Perhaps originally none of the terms indicated by the phrase "the land of the Shasu of X" were place names, including the name Yahweh. This possibility again suggests that the hieroglyphic phrase *t3 sh3sw ya-h-wa* could and probably should be interpreted as "the Land of the Shasu who worship the God Yahweh" rather than being interpreted as "the Land of the Shasu who live at a place called Yahweh." By any means, topographical lists at both Soleb and Amarah-West unquestionably use the name Yahweh, and this Yahweh is almost unquestionably the God of the Israelites of the Old Testament.

WHO WERE THE SHASU OF YAHWEH?

Redford, in his book Egypt, Canaan, and Israel in Ancient Times, assumes that the Shasu of Yahweh were very early worshippers of the God Yahweh. Redford also argues that these early worshippers of Yahweh were a tribe of Edomites who originally lived in the general area of Edom in the 15th century BC. Redford writes:

But lists from Soleb and Amarah, ultimately of fifteenth century B.C. origin, suggest that an original concentration of Shasu lay in southern Transjordan in the plains of Moab and northern Edom.¹⁸

Redford here contradicts Astour, who argued that the various groups of Shasu mentioned in the Soleb, Amarah-West, and Medinet Habu lists were scattered over Canaan, Lebanon, and parts of Syria, and were not located only in the area of Edom. Redford not only assumes that the Land of the Shasu of Yahweh was located in the general area of Edom, but he also assumes that the earliest worshippers of Yahweh were Edomites. He then goes on to argue that the worship of Yahweh was introduced to “proto-Israelites” in the mountains of Canaan by a tribe of Edomites who migrated northwest and merged with these proto-Israelite tribes. Redford writes:

The only reasonable conclusion is that one major component in the later amalgam that constituted Israel, and the one with whom the worship of Yahweh originated, must be looked for among the Shasu of Edom already at the end of the fifteenth century B.C. ¹⁹

However, as was noted above, there are major problems with Redford’s assumptions. First, there is no proof supporting his assumption that the Shasu of Yahweh were Edomites. If they were Edomites, then it must be explained why the Edomites are strangely mentioned twice in the list at Amarah West since Redford translates the phrase *t3 sh3sw sa-a-r-ar* on this list as “the land of the Shasu of Se’ir.” As Redford himself notes, Se’ir is another name for Edom in the Old Testament. Redford writes of Amarah West: “Here a

group of six names is identified as in “the land of the Shasu” and these include Se’ir (i.e. Edom).”²⁰ If Redford is correct in his translation of this phrase, then, as was noted above, the Edomites are strangely mentioned twice in the six references to “the lands of the Shasu of X” found at Amarah West. Of course, Redford would probably respond to this criticism by answering that he believed that all 6 references to “the land of the Shasu of X” were references to Edomite groups who in the fifteenth century BC were located in the general area of Edom, an assumption that Astour strongly rejected.

And second, there is a major problem with Redford’s Edomite theory because *Sa-a-r-ar* may not be Mt. Se’ir, i.e. Edom. Astour questions translating *Sa-a-r-ar* as Se’ir because of the way that it is spelled in the list at Amarah. *Sa-a-r-ar* is an unusual Egyptian spelling for Mt. Se’ir, if it indeed is Mt. Se’ir. *Sa-a-r-ar* cannot be explained away as just a misspelling since it is also spelled the same way in an even earlier topographical list of Pharaoh Thutmosis III.²¹ If *Sa-a-r-ar* was not Se’ir, then, as Astour suggests, it might not have even been located in the area of ancient Edom.

Based upon the evidence provided by Astour, Redford’s theory that the Shasu of Yahweh were Edomites has very little to support it. Who then were the Shasu of Yahweh? A good guess is that they were the Israelites of the exodus period, but this possible identification will be discussed in more detail below.

THE SHASU OF YAHWEH AND THE DATE OF THE EXODUS

There are two indisputable facts that Old Testament scholars must face when dealing with these hieroglyphic references to the Shasu of Yahweh. First, there is no doubt that the name of the Israelite God Yahweh appears in these hieroglyphic texts at Soleb and Amarah-West, and also probably at Medinet Habu. And second, at Soleb the reference to Yahweh dates to ca. 1400 BC during the reign of Pharaoh Amenhotep III. In other words, Pharaoh Amenhotep III, or at least his scribes, must have at least heard about the Hebrew

God Yahweh in ca. 1400 BC. This fact is highly significant when trying to date the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt under Moses.

In Exodus 5:2 Pharaoh answers the first request of Moses to allow the Israelites to go into the desert to worship Yahweh by saying: “Who is Yahweh that I should obey His voice to let Israel go? I do not know Yahweh, and besides I will not let the Israelites go.”²² Pharaoh appears here to be saying that he had never heard of the God Yahweh. This interpretation of Pharaoh’s statement is reinforced by Exodus 7:17 where God responds to Pharaoh: “Thus says Yahweh, ‘by this you will know that I am Yahweh, behold I will strike the water that is in the Nile with the staff that is in my hand, and it will become blood’” (NASV).

In his third meeting with Moses and Aaron after the second plague, Pharaoh clearly recognizes Yahweh as some sort of deity and asks Moses and Aaron to pray to Yahweh to remove the plague of frogs (see Exodus 8:8). If the Pharaoh of the exodus had never before heard of the God Yahweh, this strongly suggests that the exodus should be dated no later than ca. 1400 BC because Pharaoh Amenhotep III had clearly heard about Yahweh in ca. 1400 BC.

There is one further fact which must be added to this discussion. Exodus 6:3 states: “Elohim said to Moses, I am Yahweh. “I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob as El Shaddai, but by my name Yahweh, I did not make myself known to them.” In other words, the name Yahweh was first made known to Moses, and since the name Yahweh is used at Soleb and dates to ca. 1400 BC, Moses must date before ca. 1400 BC. This fact eliminates the possibility that the Exodus took place in ca. 1270 BC during the reign of Pharaoh Ramses II, as some scholars have suggested.

CONCLUSION

It is clear that there once was a group of Shasu Bedouin/nomads living in Syria-

Palestine who were associated with either a deity or a place named Yahweh. It is also clear that the name Yahweh was known to the Egyptians in the 18th Dynasty in ca. 1400 BC during the reign of Pharaoh Amenhotep III.

But it must be admitted at this point that we also know from the Old Testament that there were other worshippers of El Shaddai in Canaan who did not go into Egypt and therefore did not leave Egypt at the time of the exodus. The question thus arises, were they perhaps the Shasu of Yahweh mentioned at Soleb and Amarah?

Although we do not have all the information that we wish we did, it is significant that there are no mentions of the Shasu of Yahweh in Egyptian texts earlier than the reign of Amenhotep III. If the group in question were Yahweh followers who never went to Egypt, why are they absent in topographical lists from the early period of the 18th Dynasty, for example, from the extensive topographical lists of Thutmosis III? The reason may very well be because the Shasu of Yahweh were indeed the Israelites and that they were still living in Egypt in the early 18th Dynasty. In addition, as will be seen below, the name Yahweh was not known until the time of Moses.

The fact that the Shasu of Yahweh first appear in topographical lists under Amenhotep III in ca. 1400 BC fits perfectly with the Early Date of the exodus, but this fact presents major problems for those scholars who believe that the exodus took place during the reign of Pharaoh Ramses II in the 13th century BC. In any case, these references to Yahweh have been ignored for far too long by both conservative and liberal biblical scholars.

It thus appears highly likely that the Shasu of Yahweh, who are mentioned in the topographical texts at Soleb and Amarah-West, were the Israelites who in ca. 1400 BC had settled into their own land (*t3*) in the mountains of Canaan. It also appears that for the ancient Egyptians the one feature that distinguished the Israelites from all the other Shasu

(Semitic herders) in this area was their worship of the God Yahweh.

FOOTNOTES

1. Michael C. Astour, "Yahweh in Egyptian Topographic Lists" in Festschrift Elmar Edel in the series Agypten und Altes Testament, edited by Manfred Gorg (Bamberg, Germany, 1979), pp. 17-19. Astour points out in this article that there is a third likely use of the name Yahweh in the Medinet Habu topographical lists of Ramses III in the early 12th century BC, pp. 19-20. However, as will be seen below in this article, at Medinet Habu the name Yahweh appears in the form "yi-ha." However, at Medinet Habu "yi-ha" is used without the phrase "land of the Shasu."
2. Siegfried Herrmann, Israel in Egypt (Naperville, IL: Alec R. Allenson Inc., 1973), p. 25.
3. For the identification of the Egyptian name Tjekku with the Hebrew name Succoth, see Donald B. Redford, Egypt, Canaan, and Israel in Ancient Times (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993), p. 203.
4. Herrmann, Israel in Egypt, pp. 26-27. See also Herrmann's article "Der Alttestamentliche Gottesname in Evangelischen Theologie" 26 (1966), pp. 289-291.
5. Kenneth R. Cooper, "The Shasu of Palestine in Egyptian Texts," Part One, Artifax, Autumn, 2006, Vol. 21, No. 4, pp. 22-27; and Part Two, Artifax, Winter, 2007, Vol.22, No. 1, pp. 24-29.
6. Cooper, "Shasu," Part One, pp. 24-25.
7. W.W. Hallo, ed. The Context of Scripture (Leiden: Brill, 2003), Vol. 3, p. 9. See also Clyde E. Billington, "Goliath and the Exodus Giants: How Tall Were They?" in the Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society, 48 (2005), pp. 505-506.
8. Redford, Egypt, Canaan, and Israel, p. 272.
9. Redford, Egypt, Canaan, and Israel, pp. 272-273.

10. Astour, "Yahweh," pp. 20-29.
11. Astour, "Yahweh," p. 29.
12. Astour, "Yahweh," p. 28.
13. Astour, "Yahweh," p. 26.
14. Astour, "Yahweh," pp. 26-27.
15. Astour, "Yahweh," p. 21.
16. Astour, "Yahweh," p. 23.
17. Kenneth Ostrand, "Aliens in Egypt," KMT, 17.2, Summer 2006, pp. 71-76.
18. Redford, Egypt, Canaan, and Israel, p. 272.
19. Redford, Egypt, Canaan, and Israel, p. 273.
20. Redford, Egypt, Canaan, and Israel, p. 272.
21. Astour, "Yahweh," p. 21.
22. This quotation is taken from the New American Standard translation, but we have substituted Yahweh from the Hebrew for the word LORD.