In Search of Amalek

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ABSTRACT

The history books describe the mysterious Hyksos as overrunning ancient Egypt, but fail to identify who these people were. The Scriptures record that the children of Israel were met by, and fought, the Amalekites as they left Egypt in the Exodus, yet these people are unknown to historians. Nevertheless, the work of Velikovsky and Courville, drawing on clues from scattered ancient records, has clearly revealed that the Amalekites were the Hyksos that invaded an Egypt weakened by the plagues and loss of army and pharaoh because of the Exodus. The recognition of concurrent dynasties ruling in Egypt also ensures that the resultant reconstruction of the Egyptian chronology is consistent with the biblical record.

PREFACE

The following article is derived primarily from the publications of two men born in the last decade of the nineteenth century — Immanuel Velikovsky and Donovan Courville. Although they lived worlds apart, and worked independently, both men defended the historical reliability of the Old Testament by scholarly scientific analysis of existing secular sources. The publications of these men provide a reasonable basis for beginning a coherent reconstruction of the ancient history of Egypt and the Middle East illustrating the fidelity of the Old Testament narrative.

Courville, an avowed Christian, recognised that the Old Testament could not be reconciled with secular history as presently configured. He offered his 'altered interpretation' of secular history for the benefit of other Christians who are under pressure from the scientific community; he had no illusions about its reception by scholars. Velikovsky's defence of the Old Testament was from the viewpoint of an agnostic Jew who was intensely proud of his heritage. He strongly defended the historical relevance and accuracy of the Old Testament, but he did not seem to accept its theological message, even sympathising with the apostasy of the northern kingdom of Israel. Though he described the books of the Old Testament as 'inspired', he thought they should be handled in the same scientific manner as other documents of great antiquity. Velikovsky's first book, Worlds in Collision, published in 1950, challenged conventional ideas about the origin and stability of our Solar System and offered naturalistic explanations for some of the miracles of the Old Testament. Its popularity aroused a furious response from the academic community and discreet silence from organised religion, a response repeated with each of his subsequent books revising ancient history in compliance with Scripture. After his death in 1979, even some of his associates denounced him as a 'fundamentalist' because of his defence of the Old Testament.¹

INTRODUCTION

Two strangely similar stories from the ancient Middle East describe invasions of barbarian hordes from the East in a time of widespread natural upheaval. They both involve neighbouring regions of Palestine and Egypt — the former invaded by 'Amalekites', the latter by 'Hyksos'. Both invasions occurred in the second millennium BC. Both regions were dominated by these invaders for centuries. The many striking parallels between these stories have received little attention, presumably because of scanty information and different names, and especially because these stories appear to be separated by as much as four centuries.

THE AMALEKITES

The first story is found only in Scripture and does not appear in modern history books except as an Old Testament story. Students of the Old Testament are familiar with the encounters of the Israelites with the Amalekites which began during the Exodus from Egypt, dated by some biblical scholars in the mid-fifteenth century BC, and by others in the mid-thirteenth century BC. These encounters continued throughout the period of the Judges and the early monarchy, a total span of some 440 years by biblical standards. There are at least 51 references to Amalek or Amalekites in the...
Old Testament, and the struggles of the Israelites with the Amalekites and their allies form the basis of many events and theological expositions.

Careful reading of the Old Testament reveals that the Amalekites intermingled with and supported the Philistines (Canaanites), Moabites, and Midianites, sharing a polytheistic idolatrous religion which included human sacrifices. They were an unspeakably cruel, destructive people who routinely tortured and mutilated their victims. The Israelites seem to have been unique in their refusal to submit to the Amalekites and their allies, struggling to retain their independence during the era of the Judges. A rather cursory description of the defeat of the Amalekites by King Saul appears in the first book of Samuel, followed by an interesting story of David's rescue of his family from the Amalekites. A few years later, around 1010 BC, King Saul and his sons were slain in battle with the Philistines, allies and kin of the Amalekites. King David carried forward the assault on the remaining Amalekites and their various allies, driving them out of the region and establishing the hegemony of Israel over an area stretching from Egypt to Syria.

It is noteworthy that the Old Testament seems to remain completely silent about its Egyptian neighbour throughout the entire era of the Judges. This is especially strange because historians teach that Egypt reached its height of power and influence during those centuries, and conducted a number of military campaigns in Palestine and Syria, the very regions covered by the Old Testament.

THE HYKSOS

The second story is found in our history books about ancient Egypt, but does not seem to appear on the pages of Scripture. It is about a mysterious people known as the 'Hyksos' who overran ancient Egypt about 1730 BC, during the late 13th Dynasty, at the close of the Middle Kingdom. The story originated with a third century BC Egyptian high priest and temple scribe named Manetho, who received a Greek education under Emperor Ptolemy II Philadelphus. Manetho composed a history of Egypt in Greek, commissioned by Philadelphus, entitled *Ægyptica*. It has survived only in fragments transmitted by several ancient authors, including the first century Jewish historian Flavius Josephus. Manetho's division of the kings of Egypt into 30 dynasties is still the basic structure of Egyptian history. Josephus quoted extensively from Manetho in his book, *Against Apion*, written in response to those Greeks who rejected his former accounts of the ancient state of the Jewish nation.

*There was a king of ours, whose name was Timaus. Under him it came to pass, I know not how, that God was averse to us; and there came, after a surprising manner, men of ignoble birth out of the eastern parts, and had boldness enough to make an expedition into our country, and with ease subdued it by force, yet without our hazarding a battle with them. So when they had gotten those that governed us under their power, they afterwards burnt down our cities, and demolished the temples of the gods, and used all the inhabitants after a most barbarous manner; nay, some they slew, and led their children and their wives into slavery. At length they made one of themselves king, whose name was Salatis .... He chiefly aimed to secure the eastern parts, .... and ... he found ... a city very proper for his purpose... called Avaris, this he rebuilt, and made very strong by the walls he built about it, and by a most numerous garrison of two hundred and forty thousand armed men whom he put into it to keep it .... This whole nation was styled HYCSOS — that is, shepherd-kings.... But some say that these people were Arabs ... These people, whom we have before named kings and called shepherds also, and their descendants kept possession of Egypt five hundred and eleven years.  

The quotation continued with Manetho's description of a long war, waged by native Egyptians, gradually driving the Hyksos northward, eventually confining them in their stronghold, Avaris. The Egyptians, unable to dislodge the Hyksos, then made a treaty with them that allowed them to leave unharmed.

'... they went away with their whole families and effects, not fewer in number than two hundred and forty thousand, and took their journey from Egypt, through the wilderness, for Syria; but that, as they were in fear of the Assyrians, who had then the dominion over Asia, they built a city in that country which is now called Judea, and that large enough to contain this great number of men, and called it Jerusalem.'

This story about the founding of Jerusalem by the Hyksos, transmitted uncritically by Josephus, has been quoted repeatedly through the centuries down to our time. Most modern historians believe the Hyksos were driven out of Egypt about 1570 BC, dating this event from one to several centuries before Moses led the children of Israel out of Egypt. But many others, quoting Manetho through Josephus, believe that the Hyksos were really Israelites and their expulsion from Egypt represented the Exodus. The following quotation typifies this position, and includes other spurious conclusions about Joseph, the Oppression, and the Exodus.

'It is clear that we have here a description of the Biblical Exodus of Israel from Egypt, as seen from another point of view.... Modern opinion seems to be veering most decidedly in the direction of accepting the statement of Manetho as given by Josephus, and regarding the identification of the Hebrews with the Shepherds of Manetho as correct in its main features .... It seems highly probable that the Pharaohs who were favourable to Joseph and the Israelites were Hyksos, and that after the expulsion of the latter by Aahmes, the "Pharaoh who knew not Joseph " , followed the Oppression and
finally the Exodus, probably in the reign of Thothmes I.

It will be seen below that Manetho's story is not supported by careful examination of appropriate ancient evidence from the actual era under consideration. But its uncritical transmission by Josephus turned out to be a tragic disservice to the Jewish people, and has contributed significantly to the distortion of the history of those times. The true identity of the Hyksos had obviously been lost before Josephus wrote. Velikovsky assumed that he had been blinded by his eagerness to impress his Greek critics and establish the antiquity of the Jews. He also thought Manetho's source or text was corrupted, and/or he was motivated by anti-semitism, citing another story by Manetho maligning Moses and the Jews. We will return to Manetho's story about the founding of Jerusalem below, including some alternative explanations.

It should also be kept in mind that Manetho was writing about events that had taken place more than a thousand years earlier. During this time, in addition to the devastation by the Hyksos, Egypt had been repeatedly overrun and controlled by a series of foreign powers, including the Libyans, Ethiopians, Assyrians, Persians and Greeks. These conquerors had also been very destructive, seriously interrupting or distorting information from ancient Egypt. For example, three centuries before Manetho, the Persian conqueror, Cambyses, demolished Egyptian temples and took the learned Egyptians to the Persian capital, Persepolis, to serve the crown. In the century before Manetho, Alexander the Great executed the Egyptian savants retained in Persia, and at the same time dismantled the centre of Egyptian learning at Heliopolis, the 'On' of the Bible, in order to build his own capital at Alexandria. In the century before Josephus wrote his famous books, it is generally believed that the great library at Alexandria had been burned in the occupation of Egypt by Julius Caesar.

Though scholars agree that Egypt was indeed overrun at the close of its Middle Kingdom by a people of low culture known as the Hyksos, almost everything else about these people and times remains a controversial enigma. These invaders, who supposedly dominated Egypt for hundreds of years, seem to have left surprisingly little trace of their passing; archaeological evidence of their existence has been sparse and riddled with controversy. Scholars have been unable to agree on their identity or origin, or even on their very existence as a separate people. Manetho said they came from the east, and were said to be Arabians. Eusebius thought they were Phoenician; others thought they were Hittites, or Hurrians, or Scythians, or simply Semitics or Asiatics. Confronting this confusion, historians have resorted to denying the existence of the Hyksos as a separate people or foreign invader; rather, they discovered a variety of melding indigenous groups, perhaps joined by Asiatics from the 'Levant' leading to political hegemony over the region. This solution bears an interesting resemblance to the prevailing conventional view of the Conquest, treated as a gradual migration in total denial of the Book of Joshua. Historians also disagree about the level of culture and weaponry of the Hyksos; it is assumed that they must have possessed iron weapons; or even war chariots and horses, to overcome the most advanced nation of its time. The extent and duration of their dominion is also controversial; estimates of the duration have ranged from 100 to 1600 years, but the prevailing consensus now limits the duration to 100 years or less. Central to all these difficulties is the inability to convincingly place these people in synchrony with other people, places and events.

**ENTER IMMANUEL VELIKOVSKY**

In 1952 Immanuel Velikovsky published *Ages in Chaos*, the first book of a series of publications presenting a reconstruction of ancient Middle East history. His attention to the subject was apparently triggered by his recognition that the natural catastrophes of the Old Testament were mirrored by other ancient sources in the Middle East, and that these occurred in two major waves — in the mid-fifteenthth, and the late eighth-early seventh centuries BC, corresponding with the times of Moses and Isaiah, respectively. The centre piece of his reconstruction was the synchronisation of the Exodus with the collapse of the Middle Kingdom of Egypt, ca 1445BC. coincident with the invasion of the Hyksos. This, in turn, demanded that the expulsion of the Hyksos and the beginning of the 18th Dynasty be moved forward some five centuries to about 1050BC. Crossing this Rubicon of a flawed chronology produced a flood of synchronisms between Scripture and secular history, including the identity of the Hyksos, now convincingly seen as the Amalekites of the Bible.

**THE EVIDENCE FROM ARABIA**

Investigating ancient Arabian sources, Velikovsky found numerous references to the invasion of Egypt by the Amalekites, many of which appeared to be culled from Scripture or the Haggada. However, there were a number of authors writing between the ninth and fourteenth century referring to ancient traditions and ancient authors, sometimes even naming the ancient author. These Islamic authors described the Amalekites as one of the most ancient Arab tribes who dominated Arabia from their central position in Mecca. Like the Egyptians, they too experienced a series of natural disasters, including drought and famine, plagues of insects, earthquakes and tidal floods. Fleeing this devastation, the Amalekites moved north and west, one group turning toward southern Palestine, another arriving at the shores of the Red Sea about the time of the Hebrew crossing. Velikovsky believed that many Amalekites and other Arab tribes perished in the tidal wave that engulfed the Egyptian army. According to these Arabian sources, the Amalekites invaded Palestine and conquered Egypt.
seizing control without opposition, as stated by Manetho through Josephus. The Arab historians apparently were not aware of any link between the flood at the Red Sea and the Exodus of the Israelites.14

Velikovsky envisioned an early origin for the Amalekites, citing an Arabian scholar who identified these people as descendants of Amalek, son of Shem, grandson of Noah; others claimed that Amalek also descended from Ham. Although Old Testament references to Amalek appear to be limited to the descendants of Esau, Velikovsky thought the Genesis 14:7 reference to ‘. . . the country of the Amalekites . . .’ meant the Amalekites were at war with the ‘Two Rivers’ kings in the time of Abraham. Most biblical commentators understand this passage to mean simply a geographic area which would later be occupied by the Amalekites.15

An interesting confirmation of Velikovsky's Arabian sources is provided by the highly respected 19th century Egyptologist Dr Henry Brugsch-Bey. The second edition of his classic, *A History of Egypt Under the Pharaohs*, published in 1881, contains the following paragraph in a chapter dealing with the Hyksos occupation of Egypt:

> An ancient tradition, which has been preserved by several Arabian historians of the Middle Ages, furnishes a contribution to the proofs of the Arab origin of the hated Hyksos kings. An Arabian legend tells us of a certain Sheddad (the name means "a mighty man"), the son of Ad, who made an irruption into Egypt, conquered the country, and extended his victorious campaign as far as the Straits of Gibraltar. He and his descendants, the founders of the Amalekite dynasty, are said to have maintained themselves more than two hundred years in Lower Egypt, where they made the town of Avaris their royal residence. 26

Brugsch went on to discuss a tradition about the Phoenician origin of the Hyksos and made no further reference to the Arabian legends. Instead he proposed the thesis of a gradual infiltration of Asiatists, an idea that remains dominant among Egyptologists today.17,18

THE EVIDENCE FROM EGYPT

All historians acknowledge Manetho's story about the invasion of ancient Egypt by the Hyksos, but seem to find no other Egyptian confirmation of this story and no reference to either plagues or Amalekites. As stated above, Manetho was a very late source for something that had occurred over 1,000 years before his time, so Velikovsky embarked on his own search of ancient Egyptian sources. One can imagine the excitement he must have experienced when he succeeded in finding records of widespread natural disasters, including destructive earthquakes and terrible plagues accompanied by foreign invaders known as the 'Amu', a synonym for Hyksos or Asiatists. These ancient records are dramatically presented in *Ages in Chaos*, and seem to describe events parallel to the Hebrew biblical account.

(1) *Papyrus Ipuwer* is probably the most impressive of these ancient Egyptian records. It was acquired by the Museum of Leiden in Holland in 1828 after being found in the neighbourhood of the pyramids of 'Saqqara' just south of the Nile Delta. Scholars agreed that the document in question is a copy of an older papyrus, but its time of origin remained controversial. Velikovsky devoted several pages to this important problem.20 The 'First Intermediate Period' between the Old and Middle Kingdoms was favoured by some scholars; others favoured the 'Second Intermediate Period' at the close of the Middle Kingdom, the position defended by Velikovsky in support of his reconstruction. We will return to this question below. Interpreters of this papyrus debated whether it is a collection of proverbs, or riddles, or a literary prophecy, or an admonition about profound social changes. Using the newest (1909) translation by Alan H. Gardiner, titled *Admonitions of an Egyptian Sage*, Velikovsky declared it to be

> ‘. . . the Egyptian version of a great catastrophe . . .
> The papyrus is a script of lamentations, a description of ruin and horror

In effect, he found it to be an Egyptian eye-witness account of the plagues described in the book of Exodus. The papyrus was badly damaged with many parts missing, including the beginning and the end, that might have included important names. The following are some of the words quoted from the *Papyrus Ipuwer* on the pages of *Ages in Chaos*, which Velikovsky richly supplemented from other sources. Let the reader decide if these 'lamentations' mirror the plagues described in Exodus, and suggest the presence of Asiatic foreigners in the land.

> 'Blood is everywhere. . . . there was blood throughout all the land of Egypt. Men shrink from tasting — human beings, and thirst after water. That is our water! That is our happiness!'
> 'What shall we do in respect thereof? All is ruin! Trees are destroyed. No fruit or herbs are found. . . hunger. Forssooth, gates, columns and walls are consumed by fire. Lower Egypt weeps . . .'
> 'The entire place is without its revenues. To it belong (by right) wheat and barley, geese and fish.'
> 'Forssooth, grain has perished on every side. Forssooth, that has perished which yesterday was seen. The land is left over to its weariness like the cutting of flax.'
> 'All animals, their hearts weep. Cattle moan. . . Behold, cattle are left to stray, and there is none to gather them together. Each man fetches for himself those that are branded with his name.'
> 'The land is not light. . .'
> 'The residence is overturned in a minute. Forssooth, the children of princes are dashed against the walls . . . Forssooth, the children of princes are cast out in the streets . . .'}
Neferrohu, described a picture of natural disaster combined was supposedly written during or shortly after the end of the Middle Kingdom. 22 the Middle Kingdom, concluding that the papyrus really published in 1909 by Sir Alan Gardiner. However, he doubted reflects a troubled period in Egypt's history...: (The papyrus then records only that the pharaoh was lost under unusual circumstances 'that have never happened before')... weep... the earth is... on every side... weep... Forsooth, the laws of the judgement hall are cast forth. Men walk upon (them) in public places... The storehouse of the king is the common property of everyone... Forsooth, public offices are opened and their census lists are taken away Forsooth the Desert is throughout the land. The nomes are laid waste. A foreign tribe from abroad has come to Egypt.... What has happened?... though it is to cause the Asiatics to know the condition of the land... Men — They have come to an end for themselves. There are none found to stand and protect themselves... Today fear — more than a million of people. Not seen — enemies — enter into temples — weep.' (Other interesting fragments)... dwellers in marshes... poor men... men ventured to rebel against the Uraeus... (gold and jewels)... are fastened on the neck of female slaves... Velikovsky's conclusion about the time of the origin of Papyrus Ipuwer receives unexpected support from an academic source. In 1966, John Van Seters published a book titled The Hyksos based on a doctoral dissertation done for Yale University. This 'New Investigation' included a scholarly analysis of the Ipuwer Papyrus, carefully reviewing its linguistic and cultural origins. The author acknowledged that,... the content of the Admonitions doubtless reflects a troubled period in Egypt's history...; accepting the classic interpretation of the papyrus as published in 1909 by Sir Alan Gardiner. However, he questioned the consensus among most scholars that the papyrus originated in the First Intermediate Period at the close of the Old Kingdom. While acknowledging cultural and linguistic elements from the Old Kingdom, he also recognised elements that could not have originated before the Middle Kingdom, concluding that the papyrus really originated in the Second Intermediate Period at the close of the Middle Kingdom. 22

(2) The Ermitage Papyrus in the Museum of Leningrad, was supposedly written during or shortly after the end of the Old Kingdom. The author, a 'seer' or sage known as Neferrohu, described a picture of natural disaster combined with the subjugation of Egypt by Asiatics described as 'Amu'. The text seems to echo the text of Papyrus Ipuwer and the sixth chapter of the Book of Judges, confirming the presence of foreigners and their deliberate destruction of crops. 23

The Amu approach in their might and their hearts rage against those who are gathering in the harvest, and they take away (their) kine from the ploughing... The land is utterly perished and naught remains... The text also contained a prophecy of the liberation of Egypt by a king named Ameny, born of a Nubian woman, presumed to mean Amenhotep I of the New Kingdom. 26

(3) The Shrine of El Arish was found on the border between Egypt and Palestine, discovered in the last century, made of black granite and covered with hieroglyphic text. Translations beginning in 1890 described strange, presumably mythological events. Though the inscription seems Ptolemaic or Hellenistic in style, the events are of a much earlier period, which Velikovsky thought were the same events depicted in the papyri of Leiden and Ermitage, all echoing the Scriptural account. The text even seemed to make specific reference to the death of the Pharaoh in a whirlpool at a place named 'Pi Khiroth', in keeping with the name of the Hebrew encampment at the Sea of Passage. 27 Velikovsky's interpretation of this evidence, though hotly contested by some, was firmly supported by others in the pages of KRONOS. 28, 29 In any event, this particular piece of evidence is not vital to the validity of the Amalekite-Hyksos identification.

(4) The Sallier Papyrus I, and the Carnarvon tablets confirm Manetho's account of the Hyksos-Amu ruling from a desert stronghold at Avaris in the Delta region, where they received tribute from, and issued orders to, native vassal princes. The Papyrus describes the humiliation of a native vassal prince, Seknenre, probably of the 17th Dynasty, and the tablets identify his son Kamose as a participant in the successful campaign to oust the Hyksos. 30

(5) The inscriptions on the tomb wall of a military officer named Ahmose provided a narrative description of the officer's participation in sieges and battles. He served a native vassal prince of one of the Egyptian nomes, providing much information on the war of liberation, including the startling possibility that a foreign army played a crucial part in the defeat of the Hyksos stronghold at Avaris. The prince he served was of the same name (Ahmose), probably a brother of Kamose (above) of the late 17th Dynasty. Prince Ahmose was destined to become the first Pharaoh of the grand 18th Dynasty following the expulsion of the Hyksos. Velikovsky considered this inscription to be the most reliable Egyptian record of the war of liberation against the Amu-Hyksos, given by an actual participant. 31 It is noteworthy that this inscription makes no reference to any agreement with the Hyksos as claimed by Manetho.
THE EVIDENCE FROM HEBREW SOURCES

Turning next to Scripture as a Hebrew source about Egypt, Velikovsky described the 'eleventh plague' — the invasion of the 'king-shepherds'. Citing Psalm 78, a homily written by Asaph, David's chief musician, Velikovsky pointed to verse 43 where Asaph recounted the plagues brought down on Egypt, among which he entered the cryptic 49th verse:

'He cast upon them the fierceness of his anger, wrath, and indignation, and trouble, by sending evil angels among them.'

Velikovsky considered 'evil angels' a corruption by some editor or copyist who could not make sense of the original Hebrew text, written without vowels. He believed that verse 49 should read:

'He cast upon them the fierceness of his anger, wrath, and indignation, and trouble, invasion of king-shepherds.'

This is at least suggestive evidence that the Israelites knew what was going on in Egypt, and perhaps explains the strange silence of Scripture about Israel's supposedly powerful neighbour during the period of the Judges.

Velikovsky also quoted another Hebrew source suggesting they must have known what was happening in Egypt. Ginzberg's Legends of the Jews describes how Amalek faced the Israelite camp calling them by name, confirming the statement in the Ipuwer Papyrus about the Egyptian census lists being opened.

'Amalek fetched from Egypt the table of descent of the Jews [Israelites] . . . these lists lay in the Egyptian archives. Amalek appeared before the Jewish [Israelite] camp, and calling the people by name, he invited them to leave the camp and come out to him.'

SLAVERY IN EGYPT

If the Exodus took place at the close of the Middle Kingdom, then Scripture requires that the enslavement of the Israelites took place during the late Middle Kingdom. In his book about the Hyksos, Van Seters seems to present precisely that tantalising picture of Asiatic slaves in Middle Kingdom Egypt:

'Our chief sources of information on these Asiatic slaves are the Brooklyn Papyrus from Upper Egypt published by Hayes and the Ilahum Papyri published by Griffith. There are also a number of references to Asiatic slaves on various stelae of private persons. Posener has recently collected all the relevant material in his new review of the problem. His general observations may be summarized as followings: The references to Asiatic slaves seem to date almost entirely from the time of Amenemhet III to the middle of the Thirteenth Dynasty, and they are much more numerous in the Thirteenth Dynasty than in the Twelfth . . . . Some of the Asiatics attain to positions of responsibility and honor, and a few intermarry with Egyptians. Most of the Asiatics are assimilated to the Egyptian culture in every respect, except for the ethnic designation of 'Aam . . . . The fact that important persons in the time of Amenemhet III felt free to designate themselves as 'Aam or as born of an 'Aam means that one can hardly consider them as slaves in the ordinary sense of the Brooklyn Papyrus. One must therefore reckon with a deterioration of the status of Asiatics between the time of Amenemhet III and that of Neferhotep (Dyn. Thirteen)'

In comparing the terminology in the Brooklyn Papyrus to the Ipuwer Papyrus, Van Seters discovered at least seven references to slaves in the latter. There are also references in both papyri to census lists of slaves as mentioned in the Ginzberg Legends, as well as many Middle Kingdom references to slave caravans from Asia.

THE HYKSOS STRONGHOLD OF AVARIS

The initial Hyksos control over all of Egypt is supported by Manetho through Josephus, as well as by the limited archaeological evidence. Their first king, Salatis, immediately built a large stronghold at a place called Avaris in the north-east Delta region, to guard against the 'Assyrians', whom we now recognise as the Israelites in Palestine. It also seems agreed that for many years the Hyksos ruled from the city of Memphis at the Apex of the Nile Delta. Eventually, they were driven northward, but continued to dominate Egypt and extract tribute from their stronghold in Avaris.

Velikovsky presented detailed evidence for locating Avaris in the modern town of El-Arish in the far north-eastern Delta region near the Mediterranean shore 'on the border of Egypt, but not in Egypt proper' — even though that area had yet to be excavated. The exact location of Avaris has yet to be established. Some scholars favour Tanis; others, including Van Seters, favour Khata'na-qantir. A series of articles and letters to the editor were published in KRONOS on this subject between 1975 and 1988 which suggest that El-Arish remains the most convincing location for Avaris. Luckerman provided interesting historic and linguistic reasons for this identification. Danino identified El-Arish as the City of Palms at the south end of the Negev near the Mediterranean Sea, citing multiple Old Testament references. It was occupied by the Kenites in addition to the Amalekites and was the site of one of the biggest palm groves in the Middle East. Although Van Seters attached great significance to the exact location of Avaris, Kogan argued that any site in the eastern Delta would support the Amalekite-Hyksos identification and the war waged by Saul against the City of Amalek.

THE HYKSOS KINGS AND DYNASTIES

One of the early Amalekite-Hyksos kings was known as Agag or Agog in Scripture, Apop to Egyptologists, and...
Ogyges to the Greeks. The only other Amalekite king named in Scripture was the last Amalekite king some 400 years later in the time of Saul, also called Agag or Agog.46,47 Historians are not much more enlightening about this era. All seem agreed that Dynasties 15 and 16 were Hyksos, and Dynasty 17 now seems to be accepted as native in rebellion against the Hyksos. Nineteenth century historians engaged in some discussion of the kings of the Hyksos dynasties, based primarily on Manetho.38,49 In 1966, Van Seters was very critical of Manetho as a source and questioned the very notion of Hyksos dynasties.50 Grimal, publishing in this decade, commits only two pages to this entire era.51

**ENTER DONOVAN COURVILLE**

The confluence of the Exodus of the Israelites and the Hyksos invasion of Egypt requires some clarification of the history of Middle Kingdom Egypt. This was provided by Donovan Courville in a revision of Egyptian history, published in 1971, focusing on the Exodus problem.52 He accepted Velikovsky's identification of the Amalekite-Hyksos invaders of Egypt and the synchrony with the Exodus. Whereas Velikovsky made only limited reference to the Old and Middle Kingdoms of Egypt, Courville carefully detailed what other historians and scholars, including Velikovsky, had failed to recognise — namely, that the dark periods following the collapse of the Old and the Middle Kingdoms were one and the same. The 6th Dynasty, the last dynasty of the Old Kingdom, endured until the Hyksos occupation, as did the 13th. This observation that the Old and Middle Kingdoms existed in parallel, and both endured until the Exodus and the Hyksos invasion, provided strong support for Velikovsky's revision. It also explains the confusion about the time of origin of Papyrus Ipuwer, the Ermitage Papyrus, and other documents and monuments from the 'Old' and 'Middle' Kingdoms. According to Courville there was only one 'Intermediate' Period consisting of the centuries obscured by the destructive Hyksos occupation. This period corresponds with the Era of the Judges in Palestine, and includes native Egyptian Dynasties 7 to 10, 14 and 17, and the Hyksos Dynasties 15 and 16.53

**TOO MANY KINGS**

Conventional chronology produces serious problems for Dynasty 13, the last dynasty of the Middle Kingdom, which is presumed to follow sequentially after Dynasty 12. The acceptance of 'astronomically fixed' dates for Dynasties 12 and 18 left only about two centuries for native Dynasties 13, 14, and 17, and the two Hyksos Dynasties 15 and 16. This allowed only a few decades for Dynasty 13, despite king lists containing from 60 to over 150 names.54 Scholars speculated about reign lengths of three or four years amid civil strife, including revolts and insurrections, murders and assassinations; some historians even speculated that these kings may have been elected to office in some sort of voluntary rotation. Brugsch, the highly respected Egyptologist, candidly discussed the difficulty of explaining the large volume of Dynasty 13 monuments, including tombs and statues whose 'magnitude and style' suggest that they were created in times of 'perfect leisure'. He noted that these 13th Dynasty artifacts were scattered throughout Egypt, from the Delta to the Second Cataract of the Nile, some belonging to the late kings of the dynasty. He also saw an 'intimate' connection between the royal houses of the 12th and 13th Dynasties.55

According to Courville, the problem of too many kings and too little time is readily resolved by recognising the feudal nature of the 12th Dynasty of the Middle Kingdom. The names on the long lists of Dynasty 13 kings were feudal lords or princes subservient to Dynasty 12. Indeed, Breasted titles his chapter on the Middle Kingdom as the Feudal Age, describing a system of feudal lords serving under a strong monarch as in Middle Age Europe. But he did not recognise the Dynasty 13 kings as feudal lords of Dynasty 12.56 Courville found at least one historian, W. E. Winlock, who, in 1947, began to entertain such a concept about the true composition of Dynasty 13:

*There are more names of rulers of ancient Egypt for the period from Thirteenth to the Sixteenth Dynasties than there are for all the history of the Nile Valley before that time. This is in spite of the fact that the four dynasties could have lasted little more than two centuries, while Egypt obviously had written records dated before the close of the Twelfth Dynasty which cover some six or eight times as long. No great reduction can be made in these innumerable names, and the most drastic cutting to eliminate possible duplications still will leave the vast majority of these kings in the period. The only possible explanation of this state of affairs must be that Egypt was split up into innumerable petty kingdoms, aptly described by the Jew Artapanus of the First Century BC, who wrote that King Chenephres — who has been identified with Khâ-nefer-Re 'Sobk-hotpe — was "ruler of the regions above Memphis, for there were at that time many kings in Egypt." (Quote from Waddell, *Manetho*, p. 73, note 3.) The time which Artapanus seems to have in mind lasted from 1778 to 1645BC, as we shall see.*57

Courville apparently was not the first to consider the possibility of parallel dynasties in ancient Egypt. George Rawlinson, the famous historian who wrote about the ancient Middle East monarchies and translated Herodotus' Histories, offered such a 'scheme' in 1890, reproduced in Figure 1. Courville's reconstruction is illustrated in a similar graph in Figure 2. They differ primarily in starting dates, the inter-relationship of Dynasties 11, 12 and 13, and in the nature of Dynasty 17. Also of interest is Rawlinson's placement of Dynasty 6, which seems to endure until the advent of the 'Shepherd' dynasties without reference to the
Figure 1. Chronology of Ancient Egypt.
Reproduced from George Rawlinson, *Ancient History*, pp. 54-55 (1890).

'A careful examination of the names and numbers in Manetho’s lists, and a laborious investigation of the monuments, have led the best English Egyptologists to construct, or adopt, the subjoined scheme, as that which best expresses the real position in which Manetho’s first seventeen dynasties stood to one another.

It will be seen that, according to this scheme, there were in Egypt during the early period, at one time two, at another time three, at another five or even six, parallel or contemporaneous kingdoms, established in different parts of the country...'

Exodus or the Amalekites. At the conclusion of a sweeping reconstruction of the archaeology and history of ancient Palestine demonstrating the reliability of the Scriptural account, Osgood acknowledges Courville’s parallelism of the Old and Middle Kingdoms, but differs in the starting date for the 1st Dynasty.36,59

**HYKSOS FORTIFICATIONS AND HYKSOS EMPIRE**

Velikovsky alluded briefly to an ancient stronghold at Tel-el-Yehudiyyeh excavated by the famous Egyptologist, Sir W. M. Flinders Petrie, thought initially to be the Hyksos fortress of Avaris. Archaeological study did not confirm this identification; for one thing Avaris had to be much larger. He glossed over Petrie’s identification of the associated tombs as Hyksos, and made no further reference to Tel-el-Yehudiyyeh.60

Courville paid careful attention to Tel-el-Yehudiyyeh, devoting several pages to the subject. Though everyone agreed this was not the site of Avaris, the associated tombs studied by Petrie continued to be identified as Hyksos, and the scarabs and black incised pottery found in these tombs were assumed to be Hyksos and used as index items to
establish Hyksos presence all over the Middle East — erroneously supporting the concept of a Hyksos empire. From Petrie’s description of these scarabs, Courville makes a strong case for these tombs being Israelite — the slave labourers who built this and other similar fortifications throughout the Middle East. The names on the scarabs are all of Egyptian kings who would have been revered by the Israelites, and kept as treasured items of former times, two even containing the name of Jacob. These scarabs and other items, pressed on the Israelites when they left Egypt, have been found scattered through Palestine, but sadly misinterpreted by archaeologists and historians.

Our revision demonstrates they have been blinded by a mistaken chronology. The primary Semitic influence in Egypt occurred long before the Hyksos invasion, primarily during the Sojourn of the children of Israel during the Middle Kingdom, but beginning as early as the time of Abraham.

**THE REVISED STORY**

With the help of the reconstruction provided by Velikovsky and Courville, we return to the late 12th Dynasty in ancient Egypt. The year is approximately 1483 BC, and Sebeknefrure, a woman, accedes to the throne, apparently in the absence of a male heir. She was the daughter of Amenemhet III, identified by Courville as the Pharaoh of the oppression who ordered the killing of Hebrew male infants. She was married to Chenephes, a feudal king or prince of Dynasty 13; her name honours Sebek (crocodile), the god of many Dynasty 13 princes. Presumably Chenephes was already dead at the time of her accession, or he would probably have taken the throne. A legend cited by Petrie says Chenephes was the foster-father of Moses, which support the identification of Sebeknefrure as the foster-mother of Moses, who raised him as her own son after he was found in the bulrushes, only to have him flee Egypt after killing an Egyptian on behalf of Hebrew slaves. Sebeknefrure died without heir about 1479 BC, bringing Dynasty 12 to its close after a total duration of 213 years.

Since Dynasty 13 represented a selected series of princes in the feudal system of Dynasty 12, Courville believed that with the death of Sebeknefrure and the absence of an heir, the rule passed to one of the more powerful princes of Dynasty 13 who had managed to survive the abolishment of the feudal system by Sesostris III, the famous predecessor of Amenemhet III. This situation endured until the Hyksos took control in 1445 BC. Courville’s choice for the Pharaoh of the Exodus was a Dynasty 13 king named Koncharis, based on his analysis of king lists, and a notation by Eusebius. Velikovsky accepted the statement by Josephus that the king at this time was named Timaus, similar to Thoum or Thorn found on the shrine at El Arish. Others have placed Timaus in the late 13th Dynasty at the point of its loss of independence, though continuing into the Hyksos era and contemporary to Pepi II, the last significant king of Dynasty 6. Either of these Dynasty 13 kings would be compatible with the reconstruction.

Brugsch provides an interesting detail about the 13th Dynasty. In connection with king number 18 of the Turin Papyrus list of Dynasty 13 kings, he made reference to temple high priests, with the following footnote, repeated in his appendix to Volume II about the Exodus:

*The high-priests, also, of the sanctuaries of the "City of Ramses" (Zoan-Tanis) bore the title of Khar-tob, "the warrior", and they were the Khartumim (in Hebrew, the "magicians" of our A. V) who withstood Moses.*

We now arrive at the time of the plagues so vividly described in Scripture, but completely hidden in secular...
archives until discovered by Velikovsky. The year was approximately 1445BC: Egypt had been devastated by a series of strange disasters. On the night of the tenth plague, forever commemorated by the Hebrew Passover, the Pharaoh finally gave Moses permission to lead his people out of Egypt. However, after the Israelites had departed, the Pharaoh had a ‘change of heart’ and gave the order to mobilise his army. The Book of Exodus records for us how the Pharaoh pursued the Israelites with his entire army only to perish in the Sea of Passage, traditionally the Red Sea. In addition to being ravaged by serial plagues, Egypt was now leaderless and defenceless.

Shortly after crossing the sea, the Israelites encountered the Amalekites, invaders spreading over the land from the east.

Then came Amalek, and fought with Israel in Rephidim . . . And Joshua discomfited Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword. And the Lord said unto Moses, Write this for a memorial in a book, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua: for I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven. . . . the Lord hath sworn that the Lord will have war with Amalek from generation to generation.' (Exodus 17; 8-16)

Josephus, the first century Jewish historian, referring to the Sea of Passage, provided some interesting comments about the weapons used by the Israelites in this encounter.

‘On the next day Moses gathered together the weapons of the Egyptians, which were brought to the camp of the Hebrews by the current of the sea, and the force of the winds assisting it; and he conjectured that this also happened by Divine Providence, so that they might not be destitute of weapons.’

This was no minor skirmish. According to Rabbinic sources cited by Velikovsky, Joshua faced 400,000 Amalekite warriors in that encounter, and the Israelites prevailed only at great cost. Shortly thereafter their scouts discovered that the direct southern approach to Canaan was blocked by more Amalekites who had already allied themselves with the indigenous peoples, that is, Philistines and Canaanites (Numbers 14). They fared badly in their second encounter with the Amalekites (Numbers 14:42-45), and were destined to roam the Sinai desert for a whole generation. Speaking through Moses in the Sinai wilderness, the Lord God repeated his instructions to the Israelites about these Amalekites:

‘Remember what Amalek did to Israel, how he lay in wait for him in the way, when he came up from Egypt. Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not: but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass.’ (I Samuel 15: 2-3)

After gathering a large army, King Saul attacked the ‘city of Amalek’. Courville argues that the absence of archaeological evidence of Hyksos incursion into Palestine demonstrates that ‘they were all but annihilated by the armies of the Israelites under Saul’.

Meanwhile, this Amalekite-Amu-Hyksos hoard swept over the devastated, defenseless land of Egypt, as described in the Leiden and Ermitage Papyri. Historians have assumed these invaders must have possessed such things as military chariots and iron weapons to overcome Middle Kingdom Egypt, the most advanced nation of its time. But they needed only to walk in and take command, as Manetho attested, without meeting any resistance. These Hyksos were nomadic herdsmen whose primary weapon was the bow, which they handled expertly. Velikovsky thought their iron weapons were obtained later from the Philistines, who probably acquired them from the island of Caphthor and readily intermingled with the Hyksos. This eventually cost the Philistines their heritage, becoming a hybrid nation.

Over four centuries were to pass after the Exodus and the Hyksos invasion of Egypt — centuries encompassing the Conquest, the Era of the Judges, and the early years of the Israeli monarchy — before King Saul, in the 25th or 26th year of his reign, was instructed through the prophet Samuel to conduct a war of extermination against the Amalekites.

‘Thus saith the Lord of hosts, I remember that which Amalek did to Israel, how he lay in wait for him in the way, when he came up from Egypt. Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not: but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass.’ (I Samuel 15: 2-3)

Before he attacked Avaris, Saul encouraged the Kenites to ‘get you down from among the Amalekites lest I destroy you with them . . . ’ (I Samuel 15:6). Velikovsky speculated that this could have given rise to the garbled version recorded by Manetho many centuries later. Alternatively, he wondered if Manetho’s sources or text had been corrupted, confusing Sharuhen with the better known Jerusalem.

According to Velikovsky the Ahmose tomb inscription declared that in the war against the Hyksos, a foreign army was active, but Egyptian inscriptions do not memorialise the deeds of foreign kings, so the name of the king who
destroyed the Hyksos is missing. The inscription refers to 'one' who fought on water in the river bed, and again south of the city (Avaris). According to officer Ahmose, those Amalekites who managed to flee from Avaris, took refuge in Sharuhen, the biblical Shur, a strongly fortified city near modern Petra. Officer Ahmose followed his prince to Sharuhen to participate in the siege of this last Hyksos stronghold that lasted three years. Velikovsky quoted Ginzberg's *Legends of the Jews* telling how Joab, a captain of David in charge of 12,000 chosen troops, managed to penetrate alone into this large city. David was not present; Prince Ahmose, soon to be king Ahmose of the 18th Dynasty, was probably with Joab's army as an ally.

After fleeing from Avaris to Sharuhen, and before being besieged by the combined forces of Egypt and Israel, Amalekite bands raided neighbouring cities, including Ziklag where they took David's family captive while Saul was still king. When David pursued them, he found them with the help of an abandoned Egyptian slave, rescuing his family. According to conventional history, Egypt was at the height of its power at this time, making it difficult to explain an Egyptian enslaved by Amalekites without discrediting the biblical narrative. In one of the great ironies of history, less than a century after the Israelites under Saul and David helped the Egyptians free themselves from the dread Hyksos and give rise to the grand 18th Dynasty, a powerful Egyptian Pharaoh of that very dynasty sacked the Temple of Solomon.

**CONCLUSION**

What kind of people were these Amalekites that the Lord God would order the Israelites through Moses to, *blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven* . . . ?

Citing Hebrew, Arabian and Egyptian sources, Velikovsky described them in these words:

*The . . . people were called Amalekites. They left Arabia after a series of plagues and immediately after a violent earthquake. Many of them perished during the migration in a sudden flood that swept the land of Arabia. They sighted the Israelites coming out of Egypt, which was laid in ruins by a great catastrophe. In this catastrophe the water in the river turned red as blood, the earth shook, the sea rose in a sudden tidal wave.' The Amalekite conquerors came from Arabia, but apparently they had Hamitic blood in their veins. They were a nation of herdsmen and roamed with their large herds from field to field.' They mutilated the wounded and the prisoners, cut off their limbs, and were unspeakably cruel in many other ways. They stole children and carried off women, they burned cities, they destroyed monuments and objects of art that had survived the catastrophe, and despoiled Egypt of her wealth. They were contemptuous of the religious feelings of the Egyptians'

The Amalekites built a city-fortress on the northeastern border of Egypt Their chieftains were pharaohs and ruled from their fortress!

' . . . They kept the Egyptian population in bondage, and their tribesmen used the Egyptians as slaves. They also built smaller-strongholds in Syria-Palestine, and by periodically invading the country with their herds before harvest time, they impoverished the people of Israel. Their domination over many countries of the Middle East endured, according to various reckonings, for almost five hundred years. By the time that Manetho wrote his history of Egypt in the third century BC, the true identity of these Amalekites-Hyksos-Amu had already been lost. In the first century, as illustrated in the writings of Josephus, even the Jews no longer remembered that their ancestors had helped to liberate ancient Egypt. Modern historians and biblical scholars recognise no reference to Amalekites outside of Scripture. Except for a few followers of Immanuel Velikovsky, and Donovan Courville, Amalek remains lost to memory as prophesied through Moses some 3,500 years ago.

**REFERENCES**

6. Tompkins, R, 1971. *Secrets of the Great Pyramid*, supplement by L. C. Stocchini, Harper & Row, New York, pp. 214-215. Moses was said to have received education at On. Professor Luciano Canfora, University of Bari, claims that Julius Caesar merely set fire to a water-front warehouse. The scrolls of the library were deliberately destroyed over a period of six months as fuel for the warm baths of Alexandria on the order of the Caliph Omar in AD640. The books of Aristotle were the only ones spared. (*The Vanished Library*, University of California Press, 1990)
11. Velikovsky, Ref. 5, chapter II.
15. Velikovsky, Ref. 5, p. 60.
17. See Van Seters, Ref. 7.
19. According to Courville, one of the pyramids in this area is known locally as the 'Prison Pyramid', because of a legend that it was built near the ruins of the prison where the patriarch Joseph was held — Courville, Ref. 9, Vol. I, p. 143.
In Search of Amalek — Pacini

22. Van Seters, Ref. 7, pp. 103-105. In keeping with prevailing academic standards, the author ignored Velikovsky's *Ages in Chaos*.
26. Velikovsky seemed to have some difficulty accounting for the mention of an early king of the New Kingdom as a liberator in the papyrus from the Old Kingdom. Courville's demonstration that the Old and Middle Kingdoms existed in parallel and ended at the same time eliminates the confusion.
30. Velikovsky, Ref. 5, pp. 76-77.
31. Velikovsky, Ref. 5, pp. 77-78.
32. Velikovsky, Ref. 5, pp. 69-70.
33. Velikovsky, Ref. 5, p. 70.
35. Identified by Courville as the Pharaoh who ordered the killing of male infants born to the Hebrews — Courville, Ref. 9, Vol. 1, p. 157.
38. Van Seters, Ref. 7, chapter 7. The biblical patriarch, Joseph, was carried to Egypt by such a caravan.
40. Velikovsky, Ref. 5, pp. 72, 76-79, 86-89.
43. See I Samuel 15:5-6, Judges 1:16 and 3:13, Deuteronomy 34:3, II Chronicles 28:15, Joshua 6:26, and I Kings 16:34.
44. Van Seters, Ref. 7, chapter 9, especially, p. 127.
46. Velikovsky, Ref. 5, pp. 69-70.
47. Velikovsky, Ref. 5, pp. 77-78.
48. Van Seters, Ref. 7, chapter 7. The biblical patriarch, Joseph, was carried to Egypt by such a caravan.
49. Courville, Ref. 9, Vol. 1, p. 236.
50. Velikovsky, Ref. 5, pp. 72, 76-79, 86-89.
53. Van Seters, Ref. 7, chapter 7. The biblical patriarch, Joseph, was carried to Egypt by such a caravan.
54. The Turin Papyrus lists some sixty legible names of early Dynasty 13 kings. Courville presented evidence to identify 'Aufni', the fifth name on this king list as the Joseph of Scripture, contemporary with Sesostris I of Dynasty XII — Courville, Ref. 9, Vol. 1, pp. 126, 153-155.
55. Brugsch-Bey, Ref. 10, Chapter X.
60. Velikovsky, Ref. 5, p. 87.
63. Photographs of 'Predynastic'-graves like those found by Petrie are widely reproduced in history books. See Budge, E. A. Wallis, 1977. *The Dwellers on the Nile*, Dover Publications, New York, Plate IX.
66. Rawlinson, Ref. 8, p. 201.
67. Grimal, Ref. 18, p. 186.
68. Courville, Ref. 9, Vol. 1, pp. 150,153,155,157,221.
69. Courville, Ref. 9, Vol. 1, pp. 153,156.
72. Tiarnani from Josephus, Ref. 2, is also known as Tutimaus, Tutimaios, Diumes, Dudimo I.
74. Velikovsky, Ref. 5, pp. 45, 55.
76. Exodus 14.
78. Velikovsky, Ref. 5, p. 58.
79. Thutimosi, Ref. 5, pp. 83.
80. In a footnote on page 221, Velikovsky identified Caphtor of Scripture as Cyprus, usually identified (mistakenly) as Crete.
82. Osgood argues that the Caphtor of Scripture was the Nile Delta, the settlement site of the tribe of Capthor, son of Mizraim, who had already migrated to Canaan in the days of Abraham.
83. Courville, Ref. 9, Vol. 1, pp. 231, 270.
85. Velikovsky, Ref. 5, p. 81.
87. Velikovsky, Ref. 5, pp. 76-85.
88. Velikovsky, Ref. 5, pp. 82-83.
89. I Samuel 30.
91. Velikovsky, Ref. 5, pp. 89-94.

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