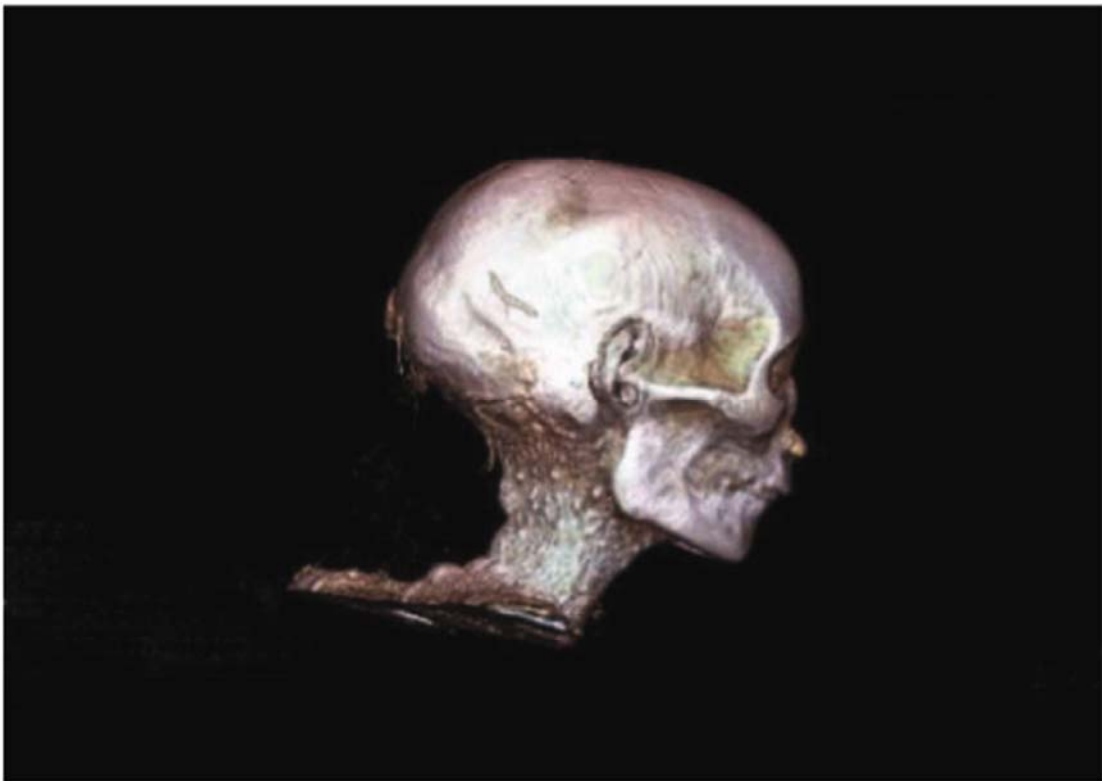


EVIDENCE OF THE EXODUS:
SCARS FROM
THE PLAGUE OF BOILS?



TUTHMOSIS II:
EXODUS PHARAOH?

SITRE-IN:
NANNY OF QUEEN HATSHEPSUT



Physical Evidence of the Exodus?

Is it possible that providence has provided us with evidence of the Exodus of the Israelites from Egypt? This article will make that case. The plague of boils, the sixth of 10 plagues visited upon the Egyptians in their clash with Moses and the God of Israel, may have left scars on the flesh of those afflicted. Recent examinations of numerous mummies from the 18th dynasty, including CAT scans, inadvertently revealed extensive, almost identical scarring on the flesh of at least 4 mummies known to have lived contemporaneously.

In 2007 the Discovery Network released a two hour documentary titled *Secrets of the Lost Queen*. In this production, a team of scientists, led by Dr. Zahi Hawass, used the latest forensic technologies in an attempt to identify the mummy of Queen Hatshepsut.

Various authorities date the beginning of the reign of Hatshepsut at between 1504 and 1473 B.C.E. According to the Discovery team, she was 12 years old when she married her half-brother, Tuthmosis II; and 15 years old when she succeeded him to the throne. Tuthmosis II is the presumptive Exodus pharaoh of our theory.

Alfred Edersheim, an Oxford scholar of the mid 19th century, wrote the following: "Now this Tuthmosis II began his reign very brilliantly. But after a while there is a perfect blank in the monumental records about him. But we read of a general revolt after his death among the nations whom his father had conquered. Of course, one could not expect to find on Egyptian monuments an account of the disasters which the nation sustained at the Exodus, nor how Pharaoh and his host had perished in the Red Sea. But we do find in his reign the conditions which we should have expected under such circumstances, vis., a brief, prosperous reign, then a sudden collapse; the king dead; no son to succeed him; the throne occupied by the widow of the Pharaoh, and for twenty years no attempt to recover the supremacy of Egypt over the revolted nations in Canaan and east of the Jordan. Lastly, the character of his queen, as it appears on the monuments, is that of a proud and bitterly superstitious woman, just such as we would have

expected to encourage Pharaoh in 'hardening his heart' against Jehovah." Edersheim, A. (1890) Bible History, reproduced by Henderson Publishers, Inc. (1995).

The first archaeologist to unwrap and examine the mummy of Tuthmosis II was G. Maspero. This took place in 1886. "He resembles Tuthmosis I; but his features are not so marked, and are characterized by greater gentleness. He had scarcely reached the age of thirty when he fell victim to a disease of which the process of embalming could not remove the traces. The skin is scabrous in patches and covered with scars, while the upper part of the (scalp) is bald; the body is thin and somewhat shrunken, and appears to have lacked vigor and muscular power." Maspero, G. (1896), The Struggle of the Nations, London: 242-3.

Some years later the anatomist G. Elliot Smith examined the mummy of Tuthmosis II. "The skin of the thorax, shoulders and arms (excluding the hands), the whole of the back, the buttocks and legs (excluding the feet) is studded with raised mascules varying in size from minute points to patches a centimeter in diameter." Smith, G.E. (1912), The Royal Mummies, Cairo: 29.

The description corresponds to the sixth plague visited upon the Egyptians in the biblical account.

"...and festering boils broke out on men and animals. The magicians could not stand before Moses because of the boils that were on them and all the Egyptians." Exodus 9:10, 11. NIV. They could not stand, nor sit very comfortably, given the coverage described by Smith.

The first century Jewish historian, Josephus, wrote regarding the severity of the plague of boils. "...for their bodies had terrible boils, breaking forth with blains, while they were already inwardly consumed (by the first 5 plagues); and a great part of the Egyptians perished in this manner." Antiquities, Book 2, Chptr. 14, 4.

The mummy of Tuthmosis II was not examined again until 2007. This time it was done by the Discovery team. They examined the mummies of three Tuthmose males: Tuthmosis I, II and III. Queen Hapshetsut, the target of the investigation, was a daughter of Tuthmosis I, and half-sister to her husband, Tuthmosis II. The team reasoned that facial characteristics of the males of the family will help them identify the Queen from among the unidentified female mummies found in collection tombs.

The team first examined Tuthmosis I. The CAT scan provided a surprise. A broken rib is revealed. Behind it, an arrow head. "History is being rewritten," Dr. Hawass suggests, with a solemn glance at the camera. It is clear that Tuthmosis I died a violent death. What is also obvious is that there are no scars on the skin, as we would expect, since he departed before the Exodus story unfolded.

Next, we see the CAT scan of Tuthmosis II, our presumptive Exodus pharaoh. The skin lesions described by Maspero and Smith over 100 years before are there for all to see. They form a thick carpet of lumps that begin at about the hairline. The scientists can be heard to mention the possibility of a hereditary skin condition. They seem bewildered by the extent of the scarring.

The final Tuthmose male, Tuthmosis III, is now examined. The skin lesions are there again, just as they appeared on his father. If our theory is correct, this would not be the first-born of Tuthmosis II. That son would have perished in the 10th plague, the death of the first-borns. We would not expect any record of this to have been made. Tuthmosis III, however, would have been alive at the time of the Exodus confrontation. He clearly bears the scars that may have been caused by the plague of boils.

The examinations of the Tuthmose males are complete. The discovery team now begins its search for the mummy of Queen Hatshepsut.

Two important prospects emerge. They were found in 1903 by the archaeologist Howard Carter. He opened a small tomb now known as KV60. It had been well pilfered by tomb robbers. There he found two female mummies. One was in an oversized coffin. The base of the coffin was well stocked with mummified geese and a mummified leg of beef. The inscription identified the occupant as Sitre-In, the wet nurse of Queen Hatshepsut. On the floor laid the remains of a hugely obese woman. She is bald in front with long red hair in back. The mummy of Sitre-In was transported to the Cairo museum. The other mummy was left where it was found, lying on the floor of the tomb, and the tomb was resealed.

The Discovery team decided to examine the mummy of the Queen's nanny, Sitre-In. That examination, which included a CAT scan, revealed a thick covering of skin lesions, identical to those found on Tuthmosis II and III. And so we have the nanny of the Queen bearing the same scars as her unrelated contemporaries. The case for a hereditary skin disease as the cause of the scars is weakened, if not eliminated.

Two other female mummies thought to date to the 18th dynasty were located on the third floor of the Cairo Museum. They were originally recovered from a cache of royal mummies found in tomb DB320. This was the cave where the Tuthmose males were found. The team CAT scanned the mummies, but could find no conclusive evidence that either was Hatshetsup.

With no resolution to the search for the mummy of Queen Hatshepsut, Dr. Hawass decided to revisit tomb KV60 to recover the female mummy left lying on its floor. An expedition was formed and the tomb was opened. At long last, the rotund, balding female gets a measure of respect. She is transported to the Cairo Museum.

It was a good decision. In a twist worthy of a mystery writer, the Discovery team closed in on its goal. A wooden box, with a volume close to that of a soccer ball, took center stage. It had been retrieved years

earlier from tomb DB320. The name of Queen Hatshepsut was clearly marked on its face. Such a box was a type of canopic jar, and would be expected to contain the internal organs of the deceased. A CAT scan of the contents of the jar revealed a solid object. It appeared to be a tooth.

Dr. Galal El-Beheri, Professor of Orthodontics at Cairo University, confirmed that it was indeed a tooth. It was a piece of a molar with a single root attached. The team returned to the CAT scans of the female mummies to see if any was missing a molar. There was an exact match with a partial molar in the jaw of the recently arrived mummy from KV60. It was conclusive. Days before, she was alone on the floor of a remote tomb; and now she is gathered to her people and recognized as a formidable figure from their past. Queen Hatshepsut had been found.

This poses a problem for our theory regarding the plague of boils, however. We would expect the mummy of Hatshepsut to bear the scars found on her three contemporaries. The Discovery team makes no mention of scars. The images of the mummy do not show scars. These images, however, do not include the areas of the skin where we would expect the scars to be. The film does not provide a conclusive answer.

That answer was provided by radiologist Ashraf Selim. He was part of the Discovery team. In a report titled *Pharaoh Hatshepsut Died in Pain*, Selim said: "Another ailment – a rather disgusting skin disease on the face and neck – might have added to Hatchepsut's health problems. We found numerous tiny spots within Hatchepsut and the Tuthmose family which could indicate a skin disease." Bio-Medicine.org, *Pharaoh Hatchepsut Died in Pain Due to Cancer*.

Our theory holds up. Queen Hatshepsut; her husband, Tuthmosis II; her step-son, Tuthmosis III; and her nanny, Sitre-In; all bear a carpet of scars that could have been caused by the plague of boils. They were a family unit – possibly at the center of the Exodus drama.

The dates associated with the reigns of Tuthmosis II and Queen Hatshepsut fall nicely within the early theory of Exodus study. That theory puts the date of the Exodus between 1550 and 1400 BCE. For instance, the anonymous author of the *Book of Jubilees*, written about 100 BCE, based his argument on a year with 364 days and concluded that the Exodus took place 2,410 years after creation or in the year 1478 BCE. A couple of hundred years later, Jose ben Halafia wrote a history titled *Book of the Order of the World*. In it, the Jewish author starts with the creation of the world and places the Exodus in 1440 BCE. Josephus settled on 1552 BCE.

Non-Jewish writers also had opinions. Herodotus, The Greek “father” of history, put the date at between 1570-1550 B.C.E. Christian writers weighed in. Africanus, writing in the 3rd century C.E., liked the 1550 date. So did Clement of Rome. On the other hand, Eusebius, the first Church historian, came up with 1446 B.C.E. In more modern times, English archaeologist Flinders Petrie suggested that 1449 B.C.E. was the correct date.

Just for fun, we can take a numerical average of the eight guesses we just mentioned. That gives us 1503 B.C.E. as a consensus date for the Exodus. That analysis is totally arbitrary, but we did use the word fun. Modern Egyptian authorities put the end of the reign of Tuthmosis II and the start of the reign of Queen Hatshepsut at 1502 B.C.E. We propose 1503 B.C.E. as the likely date of the Exodus.

In conclusion, we propose that the identical scars recently revealed on the mummies of four individuals known to have lived contemporaneously could be the result of the plague of boils. If so, the four mummies provide physical evidence, surviving through the millennia, of an act performed by the God of Israel. Providence led to the preservation of this evidence, and providence provided the modern means by which it is laid bare for the world to see at this time. To believers in the God of Israel, this may be an encouraging sign.