

THE AFRICAN WIFE OF SOLOMON (1 KINGS 3:1; 9:16; 7:8; 11:1)

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ABSTRACT

Both the Deuteronomist and the Chronicler repeatedly testify that Solomon married an African woman who was the daughter of Pharaoh. The fact that Pharaoh's daughter was singled out in this manner is significant as similar treatment was not given to his many other wives and concubines. In the African polygamous system, the first wife exercises enormous power over the husband and other wives. In keeping with the tradition, as chief wife Pharaoh's daughter would have had immense influence over Solomon. This pervasive influence can be seen in the economic, political, and administrative policies of the day, as well as in the prohibition on Solomon marrying an Israelite woman. Although Solomon's African wife is nameless in the biblical record, and both Solomon and his wife are unattested in the archaeological record, the marriage represents an aspect of African influence on and contribution to ancient Israel.

INTRODUCTION

Of all the personalities of the Old Testament, none is said to have taken as many wives through diplomatic marriages as Solomon, king of Israel. One of these wives came from Egypt, and was the daughter of the Pharaoh (1 Kings 3:1; 9:16; 7:8; 11:1; 2 Chronicles 8:11).

The identification of the daughter of Pharaoh whom Solomon married as reported in the books of Kings and Chronicles is problematic. The authenticity of the accounts by the Deuteronomist and Chronicler regarding Solomon is questionable. The woman who was given to Solomon as a wife is nameless. She is merely referred to as "Pharaoh's daughter". The Pharaoh who gave his daughter to Solomon is nameless also. Considering the pattern of great bronze and iron age states in the ancient Near East (such as Egypt, Babylon, Assyria, and the Hittite kingdom), one would expect that there would have been numerous documents such as inscriptions which would

have been left by such a great king as Solomon. Unfortunately, nothing bearing his name has been found anywhere in Israel or Egypt. Hazor, Gezer and Megiddo have been excavated, but the name of Solomon has never been found. Even excavations in Jerusalem have not yielded anything like the Solomaic palace complex. There is no record of any Egyptian princesses from this period forming marriage alliances in Egypt. It would have been unfashionable for ultra-orthodox Dynasty 21 to marry off an Egyptian princess to a foreign leader. When the king of Mitanni asked Amenhotep II for his daughter's hand in marriage to cement a political alliance, Amenhotep refused and he considered it an insult for an Egyptian princess to be married to a foreigner (Pitard 2008:5-14). There is also a written record that the king of Babylon sent a princess to Amenhotep III and requested that he sends his own princess in return to Babylon, but Amenhotep refused (Pitard 2008:5-14).

Does this mean that Solomon never existed? Does it mean he never married an African wife (Pharaoh's daughter)? This paper will discuss various scholarly analyses of 1 Kings 3:1; 9:16; 7:8; and 11:1, and will attempt to identify the Pharaoh who gave his daughter to the king of Israel in marriage. If it can be shown that Solomon existed and had an African father-in-law, as argued by this writer, then the influence and contribution of Solomon's African wife should not be dismissed as an invention.

ANALYSIS OF THE TEXTS

The texts (1 Kings 3:1; 9:16; 7:8; 11:1) which describe Solomon's marriage to the unnamed daughter of Pharaoh belong to a block of material (1 Kings 1-11) which describes the reign of Solomon. In the first ten chapters Solomon and his kingdom are extolled. But in the next chapter (Chapter 11) his flagrant idolatry results in condemnation. The two portrayals seem to be radically different, as if describing two different individuals. This has led to the suggestion that there were multiple authors. Hays (2003:149) suggests that the sharp differences have to do with the sources which the final editor or redactor used. According to him, the editor of chapters 1-10, who is pro-Solomon, adds his own assessment of Solomon in Chapter 11, focusing on the disastrous idolatry of Solomon, since he was writing in the light of Babylonian captivity (Hays 2003:149-174). Parker (1988:20) thinks that the author may want the reader to hold two contradictory views simultaneously in a state of tension. The contradictions, inconsistencies and repetitions are viewed as the author's deliberate

sophisticated narrative strategy (Parker 1988:19-27). Based on these repetitions and inconsistencies, and stylistic differences, a theory of multiple authorship has been put forward by Parker (Parker 1988:19-27). Gunn and Fewell (1993:152-155) have also highlighted numerous textual ambiguities and surface contradictions. Moving beyond the recognition of ambiguities and gaps, Lasine (2001:139-140) sees the entire text as “intentionally indeterminate” and that the narrative intentionally hides Solomon from the reader.

The narrative of 1 Kings 1-11 has also been viewed by some scholars as being heterogeneous, comprising legends, prophecies, archaeological data, lists and sermonic prose (Parker 1988:19-27). Several scholars point out that there are many parallels to other units in 1 Kings 1-11. Parker (1988:19-27) argues that 1 Kings 1-2 and 11:14-43 frame the whole story but that the main unit extends from 3:1 to 11:13. According to him, chapters 3-8 are paralleled by 9:1-11:14 in a chiasmic arrangement, with the first unit favourable and the second hostile. Parker sees internal logic, unity and a remarkable symmetry in 1 Kings 1-11 which is deliberate and demonstrates the author’s artistry. An example of the symmetry includes those events in chapters 1-8 that are duplicated in chapters 9-11, though with some minor differences. In addition to the symmetrical arrangement of the framed story, a remarkable symmetry characterises the six distinct episodes within the narrative. For example, the first of these episodes is Solomon’s dream at Gibeon; 3:1-15 introduces the first section of the narrative, and Solomon’s second dream theophany (9:1-10) introduces the second section of the narrative. Similarly, the sixth and concluding episode in the first section of the narrative, which describes Solomon’s attitude to God, has a parallel in the concluding episode of the second section of the narrative where Solomon’s attitude to God is also described. This reveals that a remarkable symmetry exists within the Solomonic narrative. Parallels also exist between the introductory (chapters 1-2) and concluding (11:14-43) frame stories which enclose two contrasting sections of the narrative.

Brettler (1991:87-97) sees three basic units: (1) Solomon’s accession to the throne in chapters 1-2; (2) Solomon serving Yahweh and blessing in 3:3-9:23; and (3) Solomon’s violation of Deuteronomy 17:14-17 and his punishment in 9:26-11:49. He seems to be the only person who argues for a structure that takes very seriously the importance of the parallels between 3:1-2 and 9:24-25. Porten (1967: 97) sees four divisions in a climatic sequence of three plus one: justice and administration (3:4-

4:19), building (4:20-9:23), wealth (9:26-10:29), and sin and punishment (11:1-40). Jobling (1992:57-76) also sees this narrative as consisting of a positive section (1 Kings 3-10) bracketed by two negative sections in 2:12-46, and the foreign women in Chapter 11. Jobling also sees some unusual irony in the text, that is, the presence of Pharaoh's daughter, the treaty with Hiram and the frequent mention of Deuteronomic conditioned blessings. According to him, 1 Kings 3-10 is describing "a mythical ideal kingdom, a Golden Age narrative similar to this genre in other cultures" (1992:57-76). However, Amos Frisch (1991:3-14) thinks that the unit runs from 1:1 to 12:24. There is evidence of narrative subtlety as the narrator pretends to be praising Solomon, whereas he/she was criticising him (Hays 2003:149-174). According to Younger (1990:157-175), the fact that the Solomon narrative is a sophisticated structural unity in 1 Kings 1-11 shows that the text is of a figurative nature.

According to Olley (2003:356), the use of the Hebrew word $\eta\alpha$ and the position of Pharaoh's daughter before the verb, of which she is the subject, means double emphasis. This construction shows that the narrator wants the reader to recognise a significant statement. Brettler (1967) sees this section as a means of separating a pro-Solomon section (3:3-9:23) from an anti-Solomon section (9:26-11:40). Williams (1999:58) sees the mentioning of Pharaoh's daughter in 3:1 and 11:1 as the sole linguistic link between those two verses. Similar linguistic parallels exist as those between 3:1-3 and 9:24-25 can be seen in 6:38-7:8.

Both Frisch and Walsh see the building of the temple (6:1-9:9) as central. Walsh has a chiasmic structure for 7:1-12 as an "interruption", with verse 7, the Hall of the Throne, in the centre, and verse 6, the Hall of Pillars, and verse 8, two private residences, on either side. According to him the reference to the house for Pharaoh's daughter is an interruption within an interruption which points to the motif that runs through the entire Solomon story (1996:105-106). This becomes the centre of the story.

The key phrases strongly suggest that the true centre of the chiasmic structure, framed by the building of the temple, is in fact 7:1-12, with Pharaoh's daughter as the centre of the block. Instead of being an interruption, it becomes an interpretative clue as to the narrator's perspective on Solomon (Olley 2003:358). The structure prioritises Solomon's own house, with central attention being giving to Pharaoh's daughter, his own house and the house of Yahweh, though Walsh sees the building of Solomon's house in the middle of the account of the building of the Temple as an anachronism

(Walsh 1996:106).

Camp (Camp 2000:320) reads the Solomon narrative through the lens of Proverbs rather than that of Deuteronomy and places the narrative in the later post-exilic time within a wisdom context, noting that themes central to Proverbs, such as womanly wisdom and the strange/foreign woman are likewise central themes in the Solomonic narrative. She also observes many textual ironies.

Seibert considers the Solomonic narrative as scribal propaganda and represents scribal subversion (chapters 1-2 and chapters 3-6). According to him 1 Kings 1-2 was written by a subversive scribe who was commissioned to produce a piece of royal propaganda but he inserted his own subtle criticism of Solomon. Ambiguity, strategic omissions, direct speech, and simple statement of fact are evidence of a subversive scribal hand (Seibert 2006:157).

Fretheim (1999:20) noticed the fact that there are numerous negative statements about Solomon scattered throughout 1 Kings 1-10 and not only in Chapter 11. Bruggemann (2000:11) thinks that according to the narrative “Solomon is quite a mixed bag of worldly success and Torah failure”. However, this narrative demonstrates the concern for the interaction between the divine and human agent (Pop 2009:290).

THE DEUTERONOMIST’S ACCOUNT OF SOLOMON AND HIS PHARAONIC WIFE (1 KINGS 1-11)

According to the Deuteronomistic account in 1 Kings 1-11 the reign of Solomon was the golden age of Israelite history. During Solomon’s time Judah and Israel were as numerous as the sand of the sea. Solomon was sovereign over all the kingdoms from the Euphrates to the land of the Philistines and to the border of Africa. He surpassed all the kings of the earth in riches and wisdom. He entered into diplomatic marriages with the surrounding peoples, Moabites, Ammonites, Edomite, Sidonians and Hittites. He built temples for his wives. He built Hazor, Megiddo and Gezer. The surrounding kings came to visit him with many presents. Among the foreign wives is the Pharaoh’s daughter for whom he built a house in his own palace (1 Kings 3:1; 7:8; 9:16; 11:1, and 2 Chronicles 8:11).

Although earlier generations of scholars believed in the historicity of Solomon’s grandeur, some modern scholars are skeptical. One of the reasons for this skepticism

is that archaeology has shown that Jerusalem was a small city until the eighth century when it suddenly expanded because of the refugees from the northern kingdom, after the fall of that kingdom (Collins 2004:247-248). Scholarly opinion concerning the historicity of the person of Solomon is widely divided. While one group of scholars takes the biblical account at face value (Provan et al. 2003:239-258;; Meyers 1987:181-198; Millard 1991:19-27), others question whether Solomon was a historical person at all (Soggin 1993:32; Noll 2013:265-269; Finkelstein 2006:159-162). According to Noll, although the Bible sets the event of Solomon in the eleventh century B.C.E. and modern historians set it in the tenth century, the reality behind the story belongs to the ninth century (Noll 2013:269). According to Finkelstein and Silberman, Solomon's story reflects an accurate historical memory not of Solomon, but of the dramatic era of the kingdom of Judah when it recovered from Assyria's destructive campaign and dressed an old tale of founding fathers in late eighth and seventh century costume (Finkelstein and Silberman 2006:154; Miller and Hayes 2006:186). Archaeological support for Solomon at Jerusalem in the tenth century is lacking. Solomon was never mentioned in any ancient written sources except the Bible. Lyons (2013:3) has the strangest idea, that the Solomon of the Bible in reality is Amenhotep III.

Within Samuel-Kings, the Deuteronomist has enclosed materials from many sources such as independent cycles of traditions about Samuel, Saul, David and Solomon's administrative documents from the united monarchy, some materials from royal archives, from Jerusalem temple archives and some cycles of prophetic tales (Gottwald 1985:296). Some features of the narrative of the account of Solomon suggest that the author/s or editor/s had some good historical sources at their disposal. The list of Solomon's high officials in 1 Kings 4:2-6 and the account of Solomon's building activities in 1 Kings 9: 15-18 hint at these historical sources and also suggest that it is very unlikely that the Deuteronomist invented this account. It is relatively old, and certainly pre-exilic and a product of the royal court in Jerusalem. According to Collins (2004:253) one can be confident that the tradition of Solomon's promotion of pagan deities was not invented by the Deuteronomist. Whether it is an accurate reflection of the reign of Solomon or not, it shows that there was a tradition of tolerance in Jerusalem toward the gods and goddesses of neighboring peoples prior to Josiah's reform.

It is then relatively certain that the Deuteronomist included information of great

historical value even though it is unevenly distributed (Gottwald 1985:296). The historical value of the book of Kings, though later subjected to the Deuteronomistic revision, should therefore not summarily be dismissed, because the author's use of probable reliable historical sources as well as prophetic traditions, at least in part, have a historical basis (Forher 1978:236). Whoever the author might be, there is evidence that he/she used The Books of the Acts of Solomon (11:41), The Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah (14:29), and The Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel (14:19).

It is remarkable that the above passages that mention Solomon's diplomatic marriages are not among the passages in the book of Kings (1 King 8:23-26; 41-51; 9:1-9; 1 King 20:35-43; II Kings 17:7-20, 29-40) that are usually considered later additions by many critical scholars. These passages can therefore be considered to have some possible historical reliability and value. Thus the Deuteronomist's and the Chronicler's accounts of Solomon, especially of his marriage to Pharaoh's daughter, should not be dismissed as fable or fabrication.

Despite the fact that the biblical narrative of Solomon is considered legendary, often unrealistic, and probably modeled after the Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian rulers' narrators' memory, Solomon is an historical person who ruled Jerusalem after David (Miller and Hayes 2006:187). He also built the Temple (Miller and Hayes 2006:187). Despite the lack of extra-biblical evidence mentioning Solomon of Israel, the story is too detailed and too elaborate in the biblical tradition to be an invention. He cannot be an idealised figure or just a rhetorical person (Miller and Hayes 2006:186-188).

As far as the lack of archaeological evidence to support Solomon's grandeur is concerned, those who deny the historicity of the account appear to argue from silence; such argumentation is dangerous, especially when one of the most important sites, the Temple Mount, is off limits to the archaeologists (Collins 2004:249). It is therefore still possible that new evidence may come to light. At least, there is some archaeological information on the monarchic period. For example, Solomonic casemate walls and monumental city gates have appeared in Megiddo, Hazor and Gezer (1 Kings 9:15-17) and the supposed Solomonic fortified copper smelter at Tell el-Kheleifeh on the Gulf of Aqabah has appeared. That has now been recognized as a storehouse and granary (Gottwald 1985:302). Perhaps some extra-biblical source will still be discovered in the near future.

IDENTIFICATION OF THE AFRICAN WIFE OF SOLOMON

The Africanness of ancient Egypt and Egyptians

Since many modern biblical scholars are still in doubt as to whether Egyptians are Africans or Europeans, it is important to discuss the Africanness and blackness of ancient Egypt and ancient Egyptians. This question has been contentious since the days when Euro-Americans discovered massive monuments during their archaeological discoveries in Egypt. Napoleon's invasion of Egypt in 1798 opened up Egypt for archaeological discovery. The Hamite hypothesis from that period, based on a theory of race which placed the Negro at the very bottom, could not allow the possibility that Negroes had developed such a massive civilization discovered in the Nile Valley (Copher 1974). The Euro-American Egyptologists had to formulate the theory that Egyptians were not Africans or Negroes. This idea was formulated at the very time when justification for the enslavement of the Negro was feverishly sought. For example, Junker believed that both Egyptians and the Ethiopians, whom he called Nehesi, are not Africans and, of course, not black people (Junker 1921:121-132; Adamo 1986:36-42; Budge 1978:386; 1976:505). In 1810, Blumenbach, a pioneer in racial classification, was in Egypt studying human remains in order to prove that the ancient Egyptians-Cushites were not Negroes (Blumenbach 1865). Unfortunately, many other Egyptologists accepted Junker's and Blumenbach's views uncritically (Varcouter 1976:33-34). It is unfortunate that even today many Euro-American biblical scholars believe that Egypt is not part of Africa. They frown on any claim that ancient Egyptians were black people. Lepsius says that the Kushites of the southern Wawat came from Asia between the time of Pepi I (1200 B.C.E.) and Amenemhat I (1700 B.C.E.) and drove back the Africans who occupied the place (Maspero 1968:488). Baldwin also maintained that the Kushites originated from Arabia and built settlements throughout Africa, down the eastern coastline nearly to the Cape of Good Hope (n.d.:345). Lepsius' and Baldwin's theory of the origin of the Kushites is very unlikely if it is generally accepted that Africa is the origin of the human race.

Many ancient and modern scholars maintain that Egypt is part of Africa and that the Punt and Nehesi countries in ancient Africa were their places of origin and that the present location of Egypt was originally part of an ocean but the Kushites inhabited the land (Adamo 1986:66). Ancient Egyptians themselves claimed that their place of origin is Punt. Diodorus Siculus (59-30 B.C.E.), the Greek-born writer who set out to write a general history of mankind, says that the Ethiopians were the first of all men

and the pioneers in worshipping the gods (3.8.5; 3.15.2; 3.9.2). They originated many of the customs of the Egyptians and sent the Egyptians out as colonists where they were (3.11; 3.8-2.7). Budge, Rawlinson, and Maspero are emphatic that the original home of the Egyptian ancestors was Punt which is on the African side of the gulf where the present Somalia is located (1976:512-513). Budge (1976:512-513) says:

It is interesting to note that Egyptians themselves always appear to have had some idea that they were connected with the people of the land of Punt which they considered to be peopled by "Nehesh," or "Blacks," and some modern authorities have no hesitation in saying that the ancient Egyptians and the inhabitants of Punt belong to the same race. Now Punt is clearly the name of a portion of Africa which lay far to the south of Egypt, and at no great distance from the western coast of the Red Sea, and, as many Egyptians appear to have looked upon this country as their original home, it follows that, in the early period of dynastic history, at least, the relation between the black tribes of the south and the Egyptians in the north were of friendly character.

Budge (1976:415-416) continues,

Many facts go to show the persistence of the Negro influence on the beliefs, and manners, and customs of the Dynastic Egyptians, and the most important thing of all in connection with this is the tradition which makes them to come from the land of Punt ... We may accept without misgiving the opinion of Professor Maspero and of Professor Naville, both of whom believe that it was situated in Africa, at a considerable distance to the south-east, and south of Egypt ... All things considered, it is tolerably certain that the men of Punt, who influenced the manners, customs, and beliefs of the people of the Nile Valley were of African origin.

According to David O'Connor (1982:917-918):

Typically, the men [Punt] have dark reddish skins and fine features; characteristic Negroid types ... and the Egyptians have always visited Punt from the time immemorial ... The relationship has been of trade rather than political or subordination.

The fact is that ancient Egypt and ancient Egyptians are Africans and black as attested by Mokhtar (1981:12):

The Egyptians used only one word to describe themselves: *KMT* the strongest term existing in the language of the Pharaohs to indicate blackness. This hieroglyphics was written with a piece of charcoal. The word *KMT* gave rise to the term *Hamite* which has been much used subsequently. It is also found in the Bible in the form of Ham.

Many other scholars such as Glenn Usry and Craig Keener have argued for the Africanness and blackness of ancient Egypt and Egyptians. According to them “most Egyptians were black by any one’s definition” (Usry & Keener 1996:61). The Egyptians themselves considered Africa as their origin and not Asia. The inscription of Queen Hashepsut attested to the fact that they originated from Punt to which they made several expeditions (Adamo 1986:32). Knut Holter (2008:80-81) is right in his observation when he says,

In recent years, however, one has become increasingly aware of its African heritage. On the one hand, the geographical source for the peopling of the Egyptian Nile Valley seems to have been predominantly African, rather than European or Near East. On the other hand the civilization from here was to an extent, that is usually not recognized, fundamentally African; evidence of both language and culture point in this direction.

The concept of Egypt as part of Africa is not a new one. However, it appears that people forget that Egypt is part of the continent of Africa and only think of the modern state as part of the Middle-East. This is because Arabic is the main language and the country is predominantly Islamic following the settlement there in A.D. 642 of people of Islamic culture.

From the above testimonies of the ancient Egyptians themselves, the Greek writer Diodorus Siculus, eminent scholars such as Budge, Maspero, Rawlinson, Mokhtar, Usry, Kenner, Holter and others, one can say comfortably that ancient Egyptians and Egypt are Africans and belong to Africa, even geographically. If we thus accept Egypt as an African country and that ancient Egyptians are Africans, then the assumption that the Egyptian wife of Solomon is an African is correct. What then is the relevance of her African identity?

Acknowledging the Africanness of Solomon's wife promotes African presence in the Bible, something which has not been recognized and accepted by many Euro-American and African biblical scholars. The recognition of the presence of Africa and Africans in the Bible shows that Christianity is not a foreign religion, but can be considered as an African religion also (Adamo 2012:67-78).

The story of Solomon and his African wife is part of the drama of redemption. Africa and Africans participated in the drama of redemption, not merely as slaves as many Euro-American scholars have alleged in their biblical exegesis (Mckane 1963:267; Philbeck Jr 1970:123;Ullendorf 1968:8;Smith 1910:359). This shows that the Bible is not a foreign book to Africa and Africans as some political agitators or anti-colonialists in Africa have claimed. If the Bible is not foreign to Africa and Africans, it means that Christianity is not a foreign religion, as stated above. Without the participation of Africans, the Bible would have not assumed the shape it is now. No people and continent are mentioned as many times in the Old Testament as are Africa and Africans (Adamo 2001; 2006).

Identification of the pharaoh, the father in-law of Solomon

Despite the silence of the Deuteronomist and the Chronicler regarding his name, scholars have tried to identify the pharaoh, since his identity may help to solve the riddle of the identity of Solomon's African wife. Some scholars have tried to identify this pharaoh as the pharaoh who overthrew Shishak I; others identify him as one of the pharaohs of the last 21st Dynasty (Burton 2007: 79-80). Burton says,

By the time of Solomon's reign, Israel's prestige is evidenced by the king's marriage to Pharaoh's daughter (1 Kings 3:1). Judging from the dates of Solomon's reign, she may have been the daughter of either Siamun (c.a 978-c.a 959) or Har-Psuesennes II (c.a 959- c.a 945), the final two kings of the Twenty-first Dynasty (c. 1069-c.945) (Burton 2007:79-80).

Other Pharaohs suggested are Vaphres of the twenty-first dynasty, Psuennes the last pharaoh of the twenty-ninth dynasty, and Pasebkhanu II (Ousssani 1912:14). It seems that Solomon's father-in-law should be a Tanite king of the twenty-first dynasty according to 1 King 9:16 where it was recorded that he took Gezer and gave it to Solomon as a present for his daughter. Moreover, toward the end of the eleventh

century B.C.E., Egypt was ruled by two contemporaneous dynasties, one ruling at Thebes and another in Tanis (Zoan) in the eastern delta. The ruler at Tanis however, had suzerainty over the entire country (Hasting 1988:820).

According to Burton, the most likely candidate for Solomon's father-in-law must be Har-Psuenennes because of his benevolence to Haddad. He was friendly with his neighbours and wanted to have a good alliance with them. This would also explain why he gave his sister-in-law to Haddad as wife (1 Kings 11:14-22). In fact, Har-Psuesennes' wife, Tahphenes, personally undertook the responsibility of rearing Genubath, her nephew from the union of Haddad and her sister. This may also be the reason why the king was so attached to Haddad and did not want him to return home to Edom when the entire political climate had changed under Solomon of Israel (1 Kings 11:14-22).

DeVries (1985:50) reported that Gray and Noth agreed with Montet's and Malamat's identification of the Pharaoh as Simaun, of the twenty-first dynasty, based on his incursions into the Palestinian coastal region (DeVries 1985:50). Lyons has made a very wild suggestion that the person called Solomon of Israel is in reality Amenhotep III of Egypt. His reason is that the life of Solomon of Israel is identical with Amenhotep III (Lyon 2013:3). Other pharaohs suggested are Shosenq I of the twenty-second dynasty, Seti or Ramses II of the nineteenth dynasty, Ahmose II of the twenty-sixth dynasty, and Horemheb.

Chavalas and Ash (2001:152-153) concluded that it is impossible to conclude which Egyptian monarch ruled Egypt concurrently with David and Solomon. According to Lipinski (2006:96-97) the attempt to link Siamun with Solomon of Israel is difficult to justify factually because Siamun's death precedes Solomon's accession.

Identification of the daughter of Pharaoh and her influence and contribution to ancient Israel

Unfortunately, no name has been given either in the Bible or in any archaeological record. Franklin, quoting Yikhi's Letter of the Sans Hassidim, claims that if Solomon actually married his African wife it must have been the princess's own choice to marry Solomon to seal an alliance and she could have been Princess Tashere or Niacaule, the daughter of the Libyan pharaoh, Shoshenq I of the twenty-second dynasty (Franklin 1996:2). Or she may be the daughter of Seti or Ramses II of the nineteenth dynasty. It has also been suggested that it could have been the unnamed daughter of Ahmose II of

the twenty-sixth dynasty who was supposed to have been the wife of the Persian king. It is possible that she wanted to marry Solomon instead of the Persian king. Herodotus said that her name was Nitetis and described her as “tall and beautiful”. Another candidate mentioned is Lady Sharelli, the daughter of Pharaoh Horemheb’s court. Metzler believes that the name of Solomon’s principal wife is Sheba (Metzler 2013:4).

After Solomon had established his regime by eliminating all his enemies, he sought to strengthen it through a diplomatic marriage with an African country (Egypt). The use of marriage bonds as a political aid has been a common practice of ruling monarchs from time immemorial. Interestingly, Egypt was the nearest and the most powerful of Israel’s neighbours.

Pharaoh’s daughter was the most influential wife of Solomon according to the Deuteronomic editor. She must have influenced the building of the Solomonic temple to resemble an Egyptian temple. According to the Deuteronomic author, Solomon was a master builder. He built the house of the Lord and his own house, and that of his wives. He devoted his reign to great building projects, just as King Amenhotep did in Egypt. Solomon was said to have built Gezer, Beth-Horon, Baalath, Tadmor, store cities, cities for his chariots, his horsemen, and for his pleasure in Jerusalem, Lebanon and his in all his territory (1 Kings 9:17-19). He also built not only houses but also the walls of Jerusalem, Hazor, Megiddo and Gezer (1 Kings 9:15). Amenhotep III of Egypt built a great palace in Thebes. The entire reign of Amenhotep III was devoted to monumental construction throughout Egypt, Canaan and Syria. In addition to the glorious temple in Luxor, he built many other temples with similar design throughout Egypt and his empire. The love of construction of gigantic projects by Solomon was probably the influence of his first and chief wife, the daughter of Pharaoh. In fact, Amenhotep also built a completely new palace complex in Thebes. The new royal residence included all of the elements contained in the palace complex of Solomon described in 1 Kings 7:2-12.

Solomon’s Egyptian wife also exerted a religious influence on Solomon. Although this influence was negative it should be mentioned. It is stated that Solomon married many foreign women along with the daughter of Pharaoh: “Moabite, Ammonite, Edomite, Sidonian, and Hittite women” (1 Kings 11:1). If it is accepted that Egypt is an African country and his chief wife is from Egypt, it is probable that Solomon was influenced to marry so many foreign wives by his first wife, as it is in African culture. For example, Amenhotep of Egypt was relentless in marrying beautiful women of

both royal and common background. His harem included two princesses from Babylon, two princesses from Syria, two princesses from Mitanni. It included princesses from the seven nations listed in 1 Kings 11:1. As is the custom in Egypt (Africa), she advised and influenced Solomon to marry these princesses. In Africa, South of the Sahara, it is also not uncommon that the first wife can arrange for her husband to marry other wives. In most traditional African societies, this custom is encouraged. It was a sign of power and wealth. But the daughter of Pharaoh led these other wives to change Solomon's heart to worship idols.

When he grew old, his wives turned his heart against Yahweh to worship other foreign gods. Solomon tried to justify his building and sacrificing in high places as described by the Deuteronomic editor, probably because the ark of Yahweh had not yet been set up. It was a political expediency to sacrifice in high places; with a non-Hebrew wife and with a non-Hebrew constituency to placate, Solomon had to deviate from the faith of his father (Buttrick 1954:38-40).

No wonder the Deuteronomic historian and the Chronicler mention her so many times in their records. The daughter of Pharaoh whom this author considers to be the African wife of Solomon must have been his chief wife and, of course, the most important woman in Solomon's life. She was the most celebrated of his wives and probably that is why the Deuteronomistic historians gave her pride of place in his record. Solomon's marriage with Pharaoh's daughter is regularly represented as being a matter of considerable significance (Buttrick 1954:101). She is mentioned more than any other wife. She is mentioned more than seven times among his foreign wives (1 Kings 3:1; 9:16, 24; 7:8; 11:1, and 2 Chronicles 8:11; 1 Chronicle 4:18). She is the only one that Solomon built a house for with (1 Kings 9:24). She is the only one identified with her father, Pharaoh. The rest of the foreign wives are mentioned as Edomites, Ammonites and others. She is the only foreign wife whose father gave presents to Solomon.

Pharaoh's daughter also exercised political and administrative influence over Solomon. The marriage itself was for a political alliance. It is difficult to deny the fact that it was a diplomatic marriage that guaranteed ancient Israel during the time of Solomon the support of Egypt, one of the nations that dominated the world of the ancient Near East and possessed the power to face the Assyrians and the Babylonians. Perhaps that was the reason why there was a relative peace during the period of Solomon's reign. Foreign powers were afraid of attacking a nation which had the

backing of a powerful nation like Egypt (1 Kings 4:25).

The administrative influence was vivid. Solomon administered the kingdom of Israel through twelve districts with twelve officers over all Israel, who provided food for the king and his household, each man had to make provision for a month in the year (1 Kings 4:7-20). This was probably done due to his chief wife's influence. Pharaoh's daughter was aware of the administrative genius during the time of Amenhotep III and other Egyptian kings. It was Amenhotep III who organised Egypt into twelve administrative districts, the organisation probably taken from the pattern of the Zodiac. Solomon probably copied such Egyptian systems and applied them to Israel.

Solomon's conscription of forced labour out of all Israel could also be as a result of his chief wife's influence. That was the system in Egypt which she was familiar with. Very interesting is the list of labourers: seventy thousand labourers and eighty thousand stonecutters with three thousand and three hundred supervisors (1 Kings 5:16-18). Of course, without imitating the Egyptian way of forced labourers, all the building projects of Solomon would have been impossible. No doubt, Egypt specialised in making her people perform forced labour. The book of Exodus attests to this; the children of Israel were forced to perform forced labour in Egypt before they escaped.

The marriage with the daughter of Pharaoh also had enormous economic repercussions. The marriage resulted in increased trade with Africa (Egypt) (1 Kings 10:28-29). Solomon's recruitment of foreigners, and gold, horses and other things all over the known world was probably as a result of his wife, the Pharaoh's daughter. Such was the pattern of life in Egypt, especially during the period of Amenhotep III of Egypt. Solomon imported horses from Egypt and Kue and the king's traders received them at a price. A chariot could be imported from Egypt for six hundred shekels of silver, and a horse for one hundred and fifty. So through the king's traders they were exported to all the kings of the Hittites and the kings of Aram (1 Kings 10:28-29). Through this marriage with the daughter of Pharaoh, Solomon became very rich and increased his territory. From the time of Joshua to the time of David Israel had not been able to drive out the Canaanites in Gezer (Joshua 16:10; Judges 1:29; 2 Samuel 5:25). But when Solomon married the daughter of Pharaoh, the situation changed because Pharaoh invaded Gezer, drove the Canaanites out and handed it over to Solomon as a dowry (1 Kings 9:16, 17). Josephus also related the same incident (Book

8. Ch 6. Sec 1).

CONCLUSION

The analysis of 1 Kings 1-11 by various scholars has not resulted in agreement among them as to the authenticity and the nature of the text. The recognition of ambiguities, contradictions, inconsistencies, and repetitions has led to the suggestion of multiple authors. Others conclude that the text is “intentionally indeterminate” because the author of the narrative intentionally hides Solomon from the reader.

The nature of the narrative has also been classified as a mixture of legend, prose, prophecies and sermonic narrative. The mentioning of Pharaoh’s daughter becomes the sole linguistic link between the pro-Solomon and the anti-Solomon text and becomes one of the most significant statements in the entire text with great emphasis (Olley 2003:356; Williams 1999:58). The true centre of the chiasmic structure is 7:1-12 with Pharaoh’s daughter as the centre of the block (Olley 2003:358). Others consider the entire narrative as scribal propaganda and subversion (Seibert 2006:157), and “a mixed bag of worldly success and Torah failure” (Bruggemann 2000:11).

Despite the lack of extra-biblical evidence attesting to Solomon’s existence, the Deuteronomist’s strong emphasis and extensive and detailed narrative make it difficult for any serious biblical scholar to denounce the narrative and classify it as mere fiction with the idea that Solomon never existed. The emphasis on the marriage of the daughter of Pharaoh is also too extensive and repetitive to be considered scribal propaganda. The fact that Solomon is just one of the kings of Israel (one of 33) denounced by the Deuteronomistic author, shows that there should be an element of true and authentic story in the narrative, though not verbatim. This writer holds strongly that all the kings of ancient Israel existed, though their true stories might have not been as extensive as described in the Bible. The idea that Solomon of Israel and his African wife are idealised figures because of the lack of archaeological evidence is untenable because archaeology cannot be the final judge of biblical events. Archaeological discoveries have to be interpreted. Who knows, new discovery may be made in the near future.

It is difficult to conclude dogmatically what the exact names of the pharaoh and his daughter were. However, the most probable names are Pharaoh Simeon of the twenty-first dynasty, and Nitetis respectively. What is more important to this writer is her African identity and her influence on and contribution to ancient Israel. The fact

that Pharaoh's daughter was singled out in the accounts of Solomon is very significant as similar treatment was not given to his "seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines" (1 Kings 11:3). Some scholars believe that the marriage to the daughter of Pharaoh demonstrates the wealth and power of the Hebrew monarchy, but perhaps indicates the weakness of the Egyptian kingdom of that time because pharaohs did not ordinarily marry their daughters to foreigners. Another scholar thinks that marrying the daughter of Pharaoh is significant in light of the story of exodus; a descendant of former slaves now became an in-law to the former master.

Pharaoh's daughter's influence was significant. Her economic, political and administrative contributions increased Israel's prosperity, and the political influence enabled Israel to have relative peace during Solomon's time. If all these contributions and influence are considered as an aspect of African contribution no one should deny the contribution of the daughter of Pharaoh who became Solomon's wife.

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