

Thutmose III and the Battle of Megiddo

Reigned 1458 - 1425 B.C.

In the first year of his reign (after the reign of his aunt, Hatshepsut, 1479 - 1458 BC), King Thutmose III began a twenty-year effort to regain control of areas that had been won under **his father and predecessors. The records of his efforts are carved in monuments in the Temple of Amen at Karnak: The Annals of Thutmose III**

Breasted, 1906: "Beside the celebration in Thebes, the victory was celebrated and recorded in a poetic inscription by the viceroy of Kush, Nehi, at Wadi Halfa (**northern Sudan**). It refers to the first campaign, as follows:

'-----who (a god) stationed his majesty at the Horns of the Earth, in order to overthrow the Asiatics (Mnt-w-Stt). I am the Mighty Bull, Shining in Thebes (Waset), Son of Atum, beloved of Montu, fighting for his army himself, that the Two Lands may see it; it is no lie. I came forth from



the house of my father, the king of gods, Amon, who decrees me victory.

The king himself, he led the way of his army, mighty at its head, like a flame of fire, the king who wrought with his sword. He went forth, none like him, slaying the **barbarians, smiting Retenu (Rtnw-t, sic!), bringing their princes as living captives, their chariots wrought with gold, bound to their horses.**

The countries of Tehenu (Libya) do obeisance because of the fame of his majesty, with their tribute upon their backs, — —as do the dogs, that there might be given to them the breath of life.'

There is here further reference to the king's personal leading of his army through the mountains and in the Megiddo battle. Furthermore, we see that Libyans came with tribute on the king's return from the campaign. The Annals narrate the campaign as follows:

At the Frontier in Tharu

Year 22, fourth month of the second season (eighth month), on the twenty-fifth day [his majesty was in] Tharu (T'-rw) on the first victorious expedition to [extend] the boundaries of Egypt with might

Revolt in Asia

Now, (at) that period [the Asiatics had fallen into] disagreement, each man [fighting] against [his neighbor]



----- . Now, it happened [that the tribes] the people, who were there in the city of Sharuhen (S'-r'-h'n); behold, from Yeraza (Y' r' d') to the marshes of the earth (from northwestern Judea to beyond the Euphrates), (they) had begun to revolt against his majesty.



Arrival in Gaza, Feast of Coronation

Year 23, first (month) of the third season (ninth month), on the fourth day, the day of the feast of the king's coronation, (he arrived) at the city, the possession of the ruler, Gaza (G'-d'-tw).

Departure from Gaza

[Year 23] first month of the third season (ninth month), on the fifth day; **departure from this place in might, in power, and in triumph, to overthrow that wretched foe (King of Kadesh),** to extend the boundaries of Egypt, according as his father, Amon-Re, [had commanded] that he seize.



Arrival at Yehem

Year 23, first month of the third season (ninth month), on the sixteenth day, (he arrived) at the city of Yehem (Y-hm).

Council of War

[His majesty] ordered a consultation with his valiant troops, saying as follows: **“That [wretched] enemy, [the chief] of Kadesh (Kd-sw), has come and entered into Megiddo (My-k-ty); he [is there] at this moment. He has gathered to himself the Great Ones of [all] the countries [which are] on the water of Egypt (dependent upon or subject to Egypt),** and as far as Naharin (N-h-ry-n), consisting of

[the countries] of the Kharu the Kode (Kdw), their horses, their troops,-----thus he speaks, 'I have arisen to [fight against his majesty] in Megiddo (My-k-ty).' Tell ye me -----.

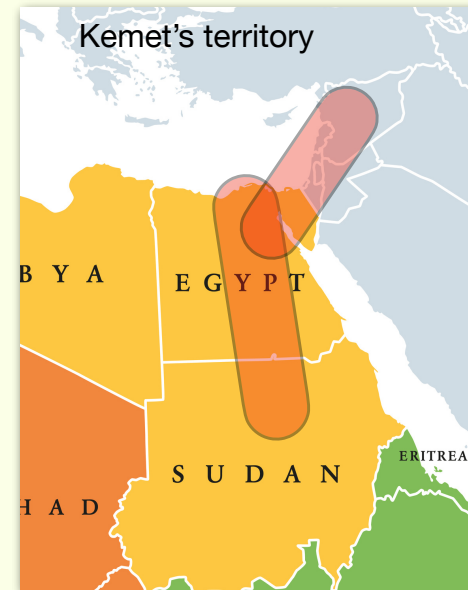
Advice of the Officers

They spoke in the presence of his majesty, **'How is it, that [we] should go upon this road, which threatens to be narrow? While they [come] and say that the enemy is there waiting,** [hold] ing the way against a multitude.

Will not horse come behind [horse and man behind] man likewise? Shall our [advance-guard] be fighting while our [rear-guard] is yet standing yonder in Aruna ('-rw-n) not having fought? There are yet two (other) roads: one road, behold, it [will] — us, for it comes forth at Taanach (T'-' 'n'-k'), the other, [behol]d, it w ill [bring us upon] the way north of Zefiti (Df-ty), so that we shall come out to the north of Megiddo (My-k-ty). **Let our victorious lord proceed upon [the road] he desires; (but) cause us not to go by a difficult road.'**

Decision of the King

Then— [messengers] concerning [this] design which they had uttered, in view of what had been said [b] the majesty of the Court, L. P. H.: **'I [swear] (Thutmose III speaking), as Re loves me, as my father Amon, favors me, as my [nostrils] are rejuvenated with satisfying life, my majesty will proceed upon this road of Aruna ('-rw-n). Let him who will among you, go upon those roads ye have mentioned, and let him who will among you, come in**



the following of my majesty. Shall they think among those enemies whom Re detests: ‘Does his majesty proceed upon another road? He begins to be fearful of us so will they think.’

Submission of the Officers

They spoke before his majesty: ‘May thy father Amon, lord of Thebes, presider over Karnak, grant thee life. **Behold, we are the following of thy majesty in every place, whither [thy majesty] proceedeth; as the servant is behind [his] lord.**’

Departure from Yehem

[Then his majesty] commanded the entire army [to march] -----[upon] that road which threatened to be [narrow. His majesty] swore, saying: ‘None shall go forth **[in the way] before my majesty, in -----He went forth at the head of his army himself, showing [the way] by his (own) footsteps; horse behind [horse], [his majesty] being at the head of his army.**’

Arrival at Aruna

Year 23, first month of the third season (ninth month), on the nineteenth day; the watch in [safety] in the royal tent was at the city of Aruna (“-rw-n). ‘My majesty proceeded northward under (the protection of my) father, Amon-Re, lord of Thebes, [who went] before me, while Harakhte [strengthened my arms] ----- (my) father, Amon-Re, lord of Thebes, victorious of the sword -----lover my majesty.’



Battle in the Mountains

[The enemy] went forth in numerous battle array ----- . The southern wing was in Taa[nach] (T'-' [-n'-k']), the northern wing was on the ground south of ----- . His majesty cried out to them before they fell; behold, that wretched foe ----- of [the city of] Aruna ('-rw-n).

Danger of the Rear

Now, the rear of the victorious army of his majesty was at the city of Aruna ('-rw-n), the front was going forth to the valley of — ; they filled the opening of this valley. Then [they] said in the presence of his majesty, L. P. H. : 'Behold, his majesty goeth forth with his victorious army, and it has filled the hollow of the valley; let our victorious lord hearken to us this time and let our lord protect for us the rear of his army and his people. Let the rear of this army come forth to us behind; then shall they (also) fight against **these barbarians**; then we shall not (need to) take thought for the rear of our army.' His majesty halted outside and waited there, protecting the rear of his victorious army.

Exit from the Mountains

Behold, when the front had reached the exit upon this road, the shadow had turned, and when his majesty arrived at the south of Megiddo (My-k-ty) on the bank of the brook of Kina (Ky-n), the seventh hour (about one o'clock) was turning, (measured) by the sun.

Camp in Plain of Megiddo

Then was set up the camp of his majesty, and command was given to the whole army, saying: 'Equip

yourselfes! Prepare your weapons! for we shall advance to fight with that wretched foe in the morning.’ [Therefore] the king rested in the royal tent, the [affairs] of the chiefs were arranged, and the provisions of the attendants. The watch of the army went about, saying, ‘Steady of heart! Steady of heart! Watchful! Watchful! Watch for life at the tent of the king.’ One came to say to his majesty, ‘The land is well, and the infantry of the South and North likewise.’

Battle of Megiddo

Year 23, first (month) of the third season (ninth month), on the twenty-first day, the day of the feast of the new moon, [corresponding to] the royal coronation, early in the morning, behold, command was given to the entire army to move. His majesty went forth in a chariot of **electrum, arrayed in his weapons of war, like Horus, the Smiter, lord of power; like Montu of Thebes, while his father, Amon, strengthened his arms. The southern wing of this army** of his majesty was on a hill south of the [brook of] Kina (Ky-n), the northern wing was at the northwest of **Megiddo (My-k-ty), while his majesty was in their center, with Amon as the protection of his members, [—] the valor — of his limbs. Then his majesty prevailed against them at the head of his army, and when they saw his majesty prevailing against them they fled headlong to Megiddo (My-k-ty) in fear, abandoning their horses and their chariots of gold and silver.**



The people hauled them (up), pulling (them) by their clothing, into this city; the people of this city having closed (it) against them [and {lowered}] clothing to pull them up into this city. Now, if only the army of his majesty had not given their heart to plundering the things of the enemy, they would have [captured] Megiddo (My-k-ty) at this moment, when the wretched foe of (Kd-s) Kadesh and the wretched foe of this city were hauled up in haste to bring them into this city. The fear of his majesty had entered [their hearts], their arms were powerless, his serpent diadem was [victorious] among them.



The Spoil

Then were captured their horses, their chariots of gold and silver were made spoil; their champions lay stretched out like fishes on the ground. The victorious army of his majesty went around counting their portions. Behold, there was captured the tent of that wretched foe [in] which was [his] son ----- . The whole army made jubilee, giving praise to Amon for the victory which he had granted to his son [on this day, giving praise] to his majesty, exalting his victories. They brought up the booty which they had taken, consisting of hands (that were cut off from the dead as proof of execution), of living prisoners, of horses, chariots of gold and silver, of _____ .

The Rebuke

[Then spake his majesty on hearing] the words of his army, saying: ‘Had ye captured [this city] afterward, behold, I would have given———— Re this day; because every chief of every country that has revolted is within it; and because it is the capture of a thousand cities, this capture of Megiddo (My-k-ty). Capture ye [mightily, mightily] —————.’



Siege of Megiddo

[His majesty commanded] the [officers] of the troops to go, [assigning to] each his place. **They measured this city, [surrounding it] with an inclosure, walled about with green timber of all their pleasant trees.** His majesty him self was upon the fortification east of this city, [inspect]ing-----

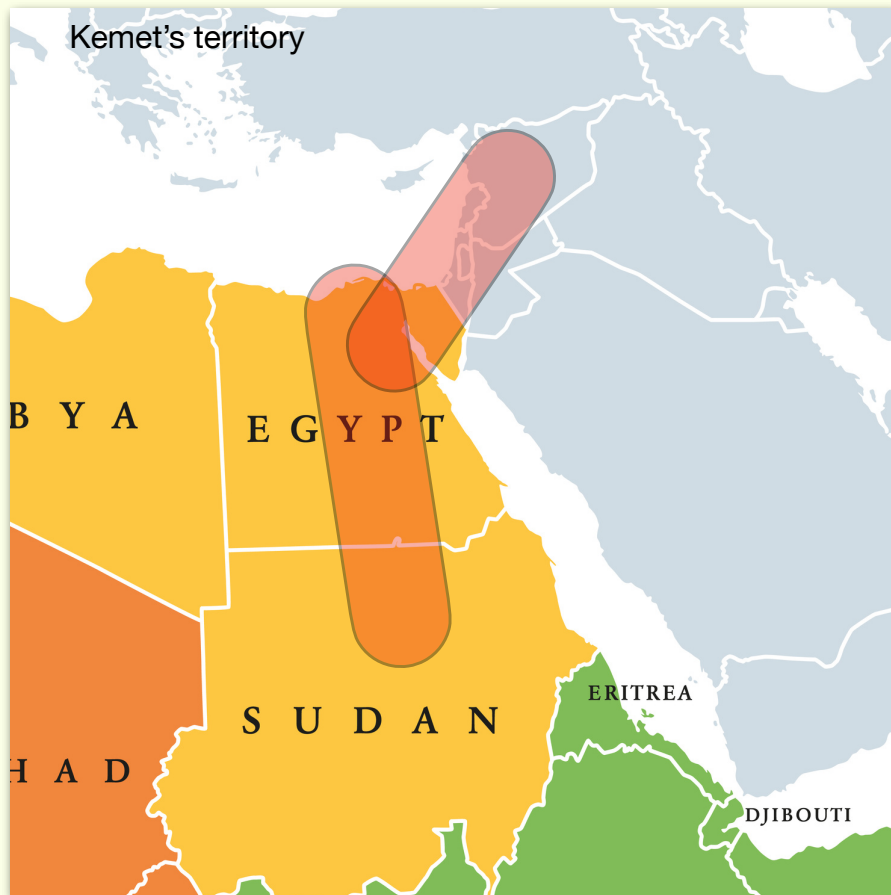


It was [wa]lled about with a thick wall with its thick wall. Its name was made: ‘Menkheperre (Thutmose III)-is-the-Surrounder-of-the-Asiatics. People were stationed to watch over the tent of his majesty; to whom it was said: ‘Steady of heart! Watch————.’ His majesty [commanded, saying: “Let not on]e among them [come forth] outside, beyond this wall, except to come out in order to [knock] at the door of their fortification (probably to surrender).’

Now, all that his majesty did to this city, to that wretched foe and his wretched army, was recorded on (each) day by its (the day’s) name, under the title of: ————— Then it was recorded upon a roll of leather in the temple of Amon this day.

Surrender of Megiddo

Behold, the chiefs of this country came to render their portions, to do obeisance to the fame of his majesty, to



crave breath for their nostrils, **because of the greatness of his power, because of the might of the fame of his majesty — — —the country — — —**came to his fame, bearing their gifts, consisting of silver, gold, lapis lazuli, malachite; bringing clean grain, wine, large cattle, and small cattle — for the army of his majesty. [Each of the Kode] (Kd-(w) among them bore the tribute southward. Behold, his majesty appointed the chiefs anew for — — — — — .

Spoil of Megiddo

----- 340 living prisoners; 83 hands; 2,041 mares (female horses); 191 foals (young horses); 6 stallions (uncastrated adult male horses); — young — ; a chariot, wrought with gold, (its) [pole] of gold, belonging to that foe (king of Kadesh); a beautiful chariot, wrought with gold, belonging to the chief of [Megiddo]; — — — — — 892 chariot[s] of his wretched army; total, 924 (chariots); a beautiful suit of bronze armor, belonging to that foe (king of Kadesh); a beautiful [suit] of bronze armor, belonging to the chief of Megiddo (M-k-ty); — — — — —, 200 suits of armor, belonging to his wretched army; 502 bows; 7 poles of 9m r y) wood, wrought with silver, belonging to the tent of that foe. Behold, the army of [his majesty] took — — 297 — —, 1,929 large cattle, 2,000 small cattle, 20,500 white small cattle.

Plunder of the Lebanon Tripolis, Megiddo, Etc.

List of that which was afterward taken by the king, of the household goods of that foe who was in [the city of] Yenoam (Y-nw-mw), in Nuges (Yn-yw-g-s), and in Herenkeru (Hw-r-n-k-rw), together with all the goods of those cities which submitted themselves, which were brought to [his majesty: 474]— — ; 38 lords ([m-r-y-n']) of theirs, 87 children of that foe and of the chiefs who were with him, 5 lords of theirs, 1,796 male and female captives with their children, non-combatants who surrendered because of famine with that foe, 103 men; total, 2,503. Besides flat dishes of costly stone and gold, various vessels, ----- , a large (two-handled) vase ('- k'-n') of

the work of Kharu (H'-rw), (- b-) vases, flat dishes, (htnw-) dishes, various drinking-vessels, 3 large kettles (rhd't), [8]7 knives, amounting to 784 deben (191.1 pounds, total of gold in the preceding list of articles).

Gold in rings found in the hands of the artificers, and silver in many rings, 966 deben and 1 kidet (235.46 pounds). A silver statue in beaten work — — the head of gold, the staff with human faces; 6 chairs of that foe, of ivory, ebony and carob wood, wrought with gold; 6 foot stools belonging to them; 6 large tables of ivory and carob wood, a staff of carob wood, wrought with gold and all costly stones in the fashion of a scepter, belonging to that foe, all of it wrought with gold; a statue of that foe, of ebony wrought with gold, the head of which [was inlaid] with lapis lazuli----- ; vessels of bronze, much clothing of that foe.

Harvest of the Plain of Megiddo

Behold, the cultivable land was divided into fields, which the inspectors of the royal house, L. P. H., calculated, in order to reap their harvest. Statement of the harvest which was brought to his majesty from the fields of Megiddo (M y-k t): 208,200 (+x) fourfold heket of grain, besides that which was cut as forage by the army of his majesty _____.”



§ 410] THE ANNALS: FIRST CAMPAIGN 177

EVENT	APPROXIMATE DISTANCE (English Miles)	EGYPTIAN CALENDAR			MODERN CALENDAR
		Year of Reign	Calendar Month	Day	Approximate Date
In Tharu	160	22d	8th	25th	April 19
In Gaza; Feast of Coronation		23d	9th	4th	" 28
Departure from Gaza		"	"	5th	" 29
In Vehem	c. 80 to 90	"	"	16th	May 10
In Aruna		"	"	19th	" 13
Departure from Aruna	c. 4 or 5	"	"	20th	" 14
Arrival before Megiddo		"	"	20th	" 14
Battle of Megiddo		"	"	21st	" 15
Beginning of siege of Megiddo	at least 75	"	"	21st	" 15
Capture of Megiddo		"	"	?	? ?
March to Lebanon		"	?	?	? ?
Capture of Yenoam, Nuges, Herenkeru		"	?	?	? ?
Construction of fort in Lebanon	over 900	"	?	?	? ?
Return to Thebes, not later than		"	2d	14th	Oct. 11

410. In less than 148 days, roughly five months, Thutmose III fought the Battle of Megiddo, completely invested with a wall the powerful fortress of Megiddo itself, and captured it; marched northward seventy-five miles to the Lebanon region, captured three cities, and built a fortress there; completed the return to the Delta coast and the voyage up-river to Thebes; and celebrated his first feast of victory there. The entire campaign from the departure from Tharu to the arrival in Thebes lasted a maximum of 175 days; that is, in five months and twenty-five days from the day on which he left Tharu he was celebrating his great Feast of Amon at Thebes. Fortunately, we are able to locate this period approximately in the astronomical calendar and tell in what month he went and returned.* (See § 409,

References and further reading:

Breasted, James Henry, Ph.D. *Ancient Records of Egypt: Historical Documents, Vol. 2*. University of Chicago Press. Chicago, 1906.

Lichtheim, Miriam. *Ancient Egyptian Literature, Volume II: The New Kingdom*. London: University of California Press, 1976.

Images:

Egyptian (Kemetic) Soldiers from the Temple of Hatshepsut, Adobe image.

Image of Thutmose III offering incense, Adobe images.

Map of Ancient Egypt and Sudan and other areas, adaptations from Adobe image.

Relief of Nebhepetre Mentuhotep II and the Goddess Hathor 2010-2000B.C. Founder of the Middle Kingdom, from the Temple of Mentuhotep II, at Del el-Bahri, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of Egypt Exploration Fund, 1907.

Sphinx of Thutmose III, 1479-1425 B.C., Metropolitan Museum, Rogers Fund, 1908, Quartzite, front view.

The Annals: First Campaign image from, Breasted, James Henry, Ph.D. *Ancient Records of Egypt: Historical Documents, Vol. 2*, page 177.

Upper part of a statue of Thutmose III, 1479-1425 B.C., Upper Egypt, Thebes, Deir el-Bahri, Temple of Mentuhotep II, Metropolitan Museum, Gift of Egypt Exploration Fund, 1907.

Note: Battle scene and walled city images are artificially generated images for background purposes.