



## The Moses Mystery: The African Origins of the Jewish People

*By Gary Greenberg*



**The Moses Mystery: The African Origins of the Jewish People** By Gary Greenberg

An intriguing bombshell, based on extensive research into Egyptian history, archaeology, literature, and mythology, presents the idea that much of biblical scholarship concerning the origins of Israel up to 1000 B.C. is completely and totally wrong.

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### Editorial Review

From Library Journal

Despite the misleading subtitle, the principal thesis of this work by Greenberg, a trial attorney and president of the Biblical Archaeology Society of New York, is simply that the monotheistic religion of ancient Israel originated in the Aten cult of ancient Egypt. While Yahwism in some ways resembles Atenism, the claim that Yahwism derives directly from it is probably incorrect. For instance, Yahweh is in origin no benevolent sun god like Aten but rather a god of thunder, cataclysm, and war. Greenberg makes other less defensible claims, for instance, that the genealogies of Genesis 5 and 11 are really Egyptian dynastic chronology in disguise. He energetically pursues this very speculative proposal throughout the entire book. One has the feeling, though, that the author decided in advance what his conclusions would be and organized the sketchy archaeological and literary data to prove it. Dense with footnotes and complex in its reasoning, the book presumes a good background in ancient Egyptian history; it is for specialists, not for casual readers. For academic libraries. James F. DeRoche, Alexandria, Va.

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From [Booklist](#)

Greenberg is a senior trial attorney with the Criminal Division of Legal Aid in New York City and president of the Biblical Archaeology Society there. Emphasizing the absence of archaeological evidence of early Jewish history, Greenberg argues that "the refugees departing Egypt during what later became known as the Exodus were native Egyptians, devoted followers of the pharaoh Akhenaten." Moses, he suggests, "was the chief priest of the Aten cult" ; when Akhenaten died, Moses fled and then "attempted a military coup . . . to restore the Aten cult to the throne," ending in "a negotiated truce that guaranteed the insurgent army safe passage out of the country." Scholars will question at least some aspects of Greenberg's research, and given his stress on timelines in Egyptian and Jewish history, one could view his study as closer to it *could have* happened this way than it *did* happen this way. But it's a "hot" subject, and Greenberg's publisher hopes this work will appeal to students of (and opponents to) Afrocentrism. Consider cautiously. *Mary Carroll*

Review

Mr. Greenberg seems to delight in a game of scholarly "gotcha," proving that individual biblical characters couldn't have possibly been in a given place on a given day in an early century, thus overthrowing some obscure theses hatched by other (generally more credible) scholars. -- *The New York Times Book Review*, Peter S. Temes

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