

THE EXODUS

The Exodus occupies a place of utmost importance in the study and understanding of the history of ancient Israel and the ancient Near East. Subsequent historical events, such as the conquest of the land of Canaan and related events, drastically change their meaning according to the date fixed for the Exodus. Two interrelated problems have to be considered: one—when did the Exodus take place, and the other, from where did it start out, that is the location of the land of Goshen, in which the Israelites are reported to have dwelled.

The date of the Exodus varies depending on what location is accepted for the land of Goshen, and the opposite also applies. If, for instance, Goshen is located in the Nile Delta, then the Exodus could not have taken place before c. 1200 B. C. (i. e. the period of Raamses II), for it is commonly assumed on the basis of archaeological evidence that there was no extensive building activity in the area of the Nile Delta before Raamses II, whereas the Israelites are reported in the Bible to have built the two cities Pithom and Raamses. This circumstance has been cited by several scholars to prove that the oppression of the Israelites took place during the period of Raamses II¹. Rowley² writes: "We may note that the fifteenth-century date for the Exodus would make Thotmes III the Pharaoh of the Oppression. No known building operation of this Pharaoh took place in the Nile Delta region and he is not known to have had a royal residence in the district" He cites Mallon³ in support of his contention: Wright who considers Goshen was located in the Delta region, states⁴: "Lack of evidence for Egyptian building in the Egyptian

* For the identification of place names see attached map.

1 e. g. Rowley, *The Date of The Exodus*, PEQ, 1941, p. 154.

Wright, *Biblical Archaeology Today*, BA, 1, 1947, p. 14.

Wright, *Two Misunderstood Items In Exodus Conquest. etc.*, BASOR, 86, 1942, pp. 32–35.

Loewenstamm, S. E., *The Tradition of The Exodus In Its Development*, Magness Press,

Jerusalem, 1965, p. 6. (Heb.)

Eisfeldt, O. *The Exodus And Wanderings*, CAH. 1975, Vol. II. part II. Chap. XXVI, p. 321,

2 Rowley, *From Joseph To Joshua*, pp. 23–24.

3 Mallon, *Supplement Au Dictionnaire De La Bible II*, 1934, col. 1340, see Rowley *ibid.* p. 24, n. 1.

4 Wright, *Biblical Archaeology Today*, BA, 1947, p. 14.

Delta during the 18th dynasty points to the 19th dynasty for the Hebrew construction of Pithom and Raamses (Exod. 1, 11)"; and elsewhere⁵: "The pharaohs of the 18th dynasty with their capital at Thebes did little building in the Delta. Israelite forced labor on royal projects in the Delta therefore could only have been in the 19th dynasty."

In his book on biblical archaeology Wright says about Tell Rotaba–Artabi (which has been identified as the biblical Raamses), "No other royal building of an earlier Pharaoh was found there, so we must conclude on the basis of our present evidence that if the Israelites worked on royal projects, it must have been in the time of Rameses II."⁶ However, if we accept that the land of Goshen was located in Upper Egypt, then for the reasons cited above the Exodus must have taken place at an earlier date. According to the biblical narrative, and certain historical and archaeological facts, this would be in the reign of Amenophis II, (Amenhotep II) (c. 1446 B. C.). There are many theories regarding the Exodus, its starting point, its date and the location of the Red Sea crossing. Yet, aside from the biblical account, there is no epigraphical evidence relating to it, and all scholars—irrespective of their conclusions—base their theories on the Bible, whether they accept its statements or not. The date of the Exodus is given in the Bible (1kn. 6: 1) as being 480 years before the fourth year of Solomon's reign. Given that the beginning of Solomon's reign dates to c. 970 B. C.⁷ the Exodus would then have taken place in c. 1446 B. C. But, the LXX reads "the 440th" probably omitting the forty years' wandering, so virtually coinciding with the Hebrew. Josephus variously states the period as 592 years (Ant. VIII iii § 1 and X VIII § 6), and 612 years (Ant. XX. x § 1). So this specific biblical reading has been much questioned without any direct critical evidence, and is not accepted by most investigators, and indeed there are differing versions of the event. The Exodus never occurred (Nibuhr), there were two Exoduses (Albright, Gressman, Meek, Rowe and others) etc.; What I shall try to show in the following is that all these theories were INEVITABLY created and indeed had to come about because of an erroneous primary belief which scholars in the past as well as in the present have taken as the point of departure. The Bible states that the Israelites settled in Egypt in the land of Goshen (Gen. 47: 4: 6: 27) (also called the land of Raamses), and built the store cities Pithom and Raamses (Gen. 47: 4: 11 ; Ex. 1: 11) The mention of the name Raamses was considered by Brugsch, Naville and Bunsen as positive proof that Raamses II was the Pharaoh of the Oppression, and accordingly the Exodus took place in

5 Wright, Two Misunderstood Items etc. pp. 32—35.

Barton, expresses the same opinion, Barton, The Habiri of The El-Amarna Tablets And The Hebrew Conquest of Palestine, JBL. (48), 1929, p. 144.

6 Wright, Biblical Archaeology, 1957, p. 58

7 Cook, CAH. p. 160; Peet, T.E., Egypt and the Old Testament, p. 112.

the days of his successor king Merneptah This belief prevails to this day.⁸ Once Raamses II was claimed to be the pharaoh of the Oppression this INEVITABLY led scholars to look for the land of Goshen in the region of Lower Egypt, seeing that during Raamses II's reign there was extensive building in this area, (though the monumental activity of the pharaohs of the 18th dynasty took place mainly in Upper Egypt). This have been cited by many scholars as proof that the oppression took place during the period of Raamses II⁹ They ignore that this so-called proof is an outcome and consequence of their primary assertion that Raamses II was the king of the oppression Moreover from biblical statements such as: "...every shepherd is an abomination unto the Egyptians "(Gen. 46, 33–34), and "God led them not through the way of the land of the Philistines although that was near" (Ex. 13: 17), it was inferred that Goshen was a pasture region and its location must not be sought in Egypt itself, but on its borders near the land of the Philistines.¹⁰ These statements were seen to corroborate the belief that Goshen was in Lower Egypt. Moreover since the building activity in this region was mainly during Raamses II reign, it was inferred once again that Raamses II was the Pharaoh of the Oppression. Today most if not all scholars tend to agree with Ebers, Lepsius, Petrie and Naville¹¹ and locate Goshen in the area

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- 8 Naville, *The Exodus and The Crossing of The Sea*, p. 165. in: *Illustrated Bible Treasury*, edit. Wright, London, 1896.
 Naville. *The Geography of The Exodus*. J. E. A. p. 32.
 Lepsius, *Letters From Egypt etc.* p. 426
 Petrie, *Palestine and Israel*, p. 55. ; – *Egypt and Israel*, p. 37.
 Sayce, A. H., *The "Higher Criticism"*, PP. 238–240.
 Barton, *Archeology and The Bible*, p. 26.
 Lods, *Israel*, p. 192.
 Burney, *Israel Settlement In Canaan*, p. 83.
 Wright, *Two Misunderstood Items In The Exodus Conquest Cycle*. *BASOR*. 86, 1942, p. 34;
Biblical Archaeology, p. 60.
 Gardiner, *The Geography of The Exodus*, *Recueil Champollion*, pp. 204, 208.
 Oesterly and Robinson, *A History Of Israel*, p. 73
 Aharoni, *Eretz Israel In Biblical Period*, pp. 167, 168. (Hebrew). Brugsch, *Hist. of Egypt*, II, p. 353. See also Conder, *Note On The Supposed Date of The Exodus*, *TEAT* p. 191.
 Trumbull, *Kadesh Barnea.*, p. 381.
- 9 See above notes no. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6.
- 10 See for example Trumbull, *ibid*, p. 381
 Naville, *The Geography of The Exodus*, *JEA*. (10), 1924, p. 32.
 Bourdon, *La Route de L'Exode*, *RB*. 1932, p. 371.
 Mallon, *ibid*. p. 93.
- 11 Naville, *The Geography of The Exodus*, *JEA*. (10), 1924, p. 32.
 Ebers, *Egypt*, *English Trans.* pp. 87–115.
 Petrie, *Egypt and Israel*, p. 29 ; *Researches In Sinai* p. 203.
 Lepsius, *Letters From Egypt etc.* pp. 410, 448–449
 Mallon, *Les Hebreux En Egypte*, *Orientalia*, 1921, p. 90.
 Bourdon, *La Route De L'exode etc.* *RB*. 1932, pp. 370–372.

between today's Seft-el-Henna and Ismailia, that is in the region of Zagazig-Wadi Tumilat. Naville in 1884 excavated in the area of Tell-el-Maskhuta which by Lepsius and Linant is identified with the biblical Raamses, and by Naville with the biblical Sukkot and with the name T. K. U mentioned in the Egyptian papyri (Papyrus Anastasi; V-VI)¹². Among other objects, Naville found in this excavation a sphinx and the figure of a hawk, which he connects with the god Tumm. He also unearthed a few epigraphical and monumental finds that range in date exclusively from the period of Raamses II to the Roman period. These findings led him to ascribe this city to Raamses II.¹³ In addition, he uncovered foundation courses which seemed to him the foundations of storehouses. In the Bible we read about the children of Israel: "And they built for Pharaoh store cities (Hebrew – מִסְכְּנוֹת *miskenot*) Pithom and Raamses" (Ex. 1: 11). Naville following Delitsch accepts the interpretation of *miskenot* as 'stores', and accordingly sees complete agreement between his findings and the biblical narrative. This leads him to identify Tell-el-Maskhuta with the biblical Pithom,¹⁴ and the entire region with T. K. U (to him TUKU), which according to him, is the biblical Sukkoth, of which Pithom is the district town¹⁵ This is the accepted identification today. Petrie,

Kent, *Biblical Geography And History*, p. 108.

Renan, *Histoire Du Peuple D'israel*, p. 139.

Robinson, *Biblical Research In Palestine*, vol. I, pp. 76-78

Conder, *The Exodus*, PEP. 1883, pp. 83, 88.

Weld, *The Route of The Exodus*, PEP. 1883, p. 139.

Trumbull, *Kadesh Barnea*, pp. 382 – 383.

Lucas, *The Route of The Exodus*, p. 11

Javis, *The Forty Years Wandering of The Israelites etc.* PEQ. 1938, p. 28.

Clark-Smith, *The Route of The Exodus*, PEP. 1883, pp. 223 – 224.

Scarth, *A Few Thoughts Upon The Route Of The Exodus*, PEP. 1882, p. 237

Rowley, *The Date of The Exodus*, PEQ. 1941, p. 153

Watson, *Egypt and Palestine*, PEQ. 1915, p. 133.

Maspero, *The Struggle of The Nations: Egypt, Syria and Assyria*, p. 172.

12 The Egyptian hieroglyphic system did not provide for the notation of vowels, only for consonants. So T. K. U can be read Taku; Tuku; or Teku, and each scholar refers to it as best suits him.

13 Naville, *The Geography of The Exodus*, JEA, 1924, p. 35 ; see also: Servin, *LA Tradition Judeo – Chretienne De L'exode*, BIE, 1949, p. 326.

Sayce, A. H., *The "Higher Criticism"* pp. 240 – 245.

14 Gardiner likewise identifies Tell Maskhuta with T. K. U (mentioned in Papyrus Anastasi V), and Tel-Artabi he identifies with Pithom. Linant as quoted by Conder, identifies Tell Maskhuta with Raamses.

Brugsch equates Raamses with Zoan which he identifies with San. About this identification Mallon writes: "It is a pure hypothesis of poor consistency".

Gardiner, *The Geography of The Exodus*, an answer to Prof. Naville and others, JEA, 1924, pp. 87-96.

Conder, *The Exodus*, PEP, 1883, p. 84.

Brugsch, *Egypt Under The Pharaohs*, 1891, p. 91.

Mallon, *Les Hebreux En Egypte*, *Orientalia*, 1921 (3), p. 165.

15 Naville, *ibid.* p. 34.

who excavated (1905–6) in Wadi Tumilat at the site of Tell Rotabah (Artabi; Rotab), found a granite stela with only its lower part preserved. The inscription on it may be interpreted in one way "...and building in cities upon which his name is to eternity".¹⁶ This slight reference to building activity was seen by Petrie,¹⁷ Naville,¹⁸ and others as irrefutable proof that the inscription refers to Raamses II, and that Tell Rotaba is to be identified with Raamses–Goshen. Petrie also found a victory stela of king Merneptah. Its inscription reads, inter alia: "The kings are overthrown saying Salam; Not one raises his head among the Nine Bows; Vanquished are the Tahenu (Tehenu); the Khita (Hathi) are quieted, ravaged is Pa Kanana(Canaan) with all violence. Taken is Askadni (Ashkelon); seized is Kazmel(Gezer); Yenu of the Amu (Yenoam) is made as though it had not existed. The people of Isirar (Israel–N. G.) is spoiled; it hath no seed; Ruten (Hurru) has become as widow of the land of Egypt; all together are in peace."¹⁹ As Raamses II has been considered the Pharaoh of the Oppression so Merneptah his successor is seen as the Pharaoh of the Exodus.²⁰ Petrie who agrees in this matter with Bunsen and Brugsch, regards the mention of Israel's defeat in this inscription as proof of its veracity; and he identifies it with the defeat at Horma (Nu. 21), which according to him took place in the fourth year of Merneptah's reign, and in the second year of the Exodus.²¹ Therefore he believes that the entry into the land of Canaan took place in about 1186 B. C., i. e. during the reign of Raamses III.²² Most other scholars agree with him. Brugsch,²³ Petrie,²⁴ Naville and others rely on the biblical mention of the name 'Raamses' as proof that Raamses II was the Pharaoh of the Oppression. Yet Jacob is said to have settled "in the land of Rameses" (Gen. 47: 11). Conder referring to this writes: "One of the chief arguments in favour of the date proposed by Egyptologists for the Exodus is founded on the mention of Rameses as the starting point (Exod. xii

16 Naville, *ibid.*, p. 2

17 See Petrie, *Egypt and Israel*, p. 33; pp. 55, 63; –Hyksos And Israelite Cities, p. 2.

18 Naville, *ibid.*, p. 32

19 Breasted, *Records*, vol. III, pp. 263, 616.

Pritchard, *ANET*, 376–378. p. 231, Princeton 1973

Conder, *The Date of The Exodus*, PEP. 1896, p. 255 (Translation by Petrie)

Slouschz, *Motzai Haivrim*, p. 44 (Hebrew)

Aharoni, *Historical Geography*, p. 163 (Hebrew)

20 Brugsch, *Egypt Under The Pharaohs*, p. 318.

Conder, *ibid.*, p. 255.

Clarke, *The Route of The Exodus*, PEP. 1883, p. 318.

Maspero, *Histoire Ancienne Des Peuples de L'orient*, p. 308

21 Petrie, *Palestine and Israel*, p. 67.

22 Petrie, *ibid.*, p. 58.

23 Brugsch, *Hist. Of Egypt*, II, p. 353. See also Conder, *Note On The Supposed Date Of The Exodus*, TEAT p. 191.

24 Petrie, *Egypt and Israel*, p. 37; *Palestine and Israel*, p. 55.

37, Num. xxxiii 5), but the earliest mention of the land of Rameses in Genesis destroys much of the force of the argument for no critic has as yet proposed to make the descent of Jacob into Egypt as late as the time of Miamoun the founder of Pi-Ramesseu.²⁵ And elsewhere²⁶ he notes: "If the conclusion is to be that Jacob therefore lived in or after the time of Rameses II the Exodus would be brought down to 250 or 400 years after his reign that is to say, to the time of David or Ahab. If the biblical statements are quoted at all it is impossible to argue on one to the exclusion of the other". In other words, what has become of the scientific approach and clear methodical thinking? Either the biblical mention of Raamses is seen as proof that the oppression in Egypt did not take place before his period, in which case one must go all the way and accept that Jacob also lived "not before Rameses" – an argument that no critic, as Conder states, has yet dared to propose; or one must regard the name 'Raamses' as an anachronism, as suggested by Hall, Jack, Dussaud, Lucas and others.²⁷ Anachronisms of this type are not unusual in the biblical context, where frequently a name is applied to a specific place in one period, while elsewhere in the text the same name refers to a later period. Abraham pursues Chedorlaomer "as far as Dan".²⁸ However, in the Bible the name of the city of Dan belongs to a much later period than Abraham's, namely the period of the conquest of Canaan.²⁹ Jacob on his way to Haran slept at Beth El, and the Bible³⁰ tells us: "And he called the name of that place Beth-El, but the name of the city was Luz at first". Yet we learn from the book of Judges (1: 22–27) that Luz continued to be the name of the city of Beth-El as late as the period of conquest. Now if one assumes that the Bible was edited (though not written) at a later period than the events it narrates, it will be evident that in order to give later readers a precise idea of the places where the narrated events occurred, the editor, or editors had to have recourse to the contemporary place names (i. e. the names of cities, etc. as current in the period in which the Bible was edited, which of course differed from those when the Israelites were in Egypt). Moreover we know that Raamses II annexed to himself activities of earlier pharaohs by erasing their names from

25 Conder, *The Exodus*, PEF. 1883, p. 84; *Topography of The Exodus*, PEF, 1880, p. 231.

He expresses the same views elsewhere in his book, *Syrian Stone Lore*, pp. 52–53.

26 Conder, *The Exodus*, PEF. 1883, p. 84. see also: TEAT 1893. Appendix, p

27 Jack, *The Date of The Exodus In The Light of External Evidence*, pp. 24–25.

Lucas, *The Date of The Exodus*, PEQ. 1941, pp. 110–112

Dussaud, RHR. 109, 1934, 126.

Redford, *Exodus*, I ii, VT., 1963, p. 401.

28 Gen. 14: 14.

29 Judges 18: 29 "And they called the name of the city Dan, after the name Dan their father howbeit the name of the city was Laish at the first."

30 Gen. 28: 19.

memorial stele and inscribing his own name instead.³¹ The belief which treats the biblical mention of 'Raamses' as evidence for the oppression of the Israelites in the time of Raamses II caused scholars to look for 'scientific' and archaeological documentation. This resulted in the finding of the Raamses stele at Tell Rotaba, also in Naville's excavations at Tell Maskhuta, as well as in the victory stele of Merneptah. On the excavation at Tell Rotaba (Artabi) Wright comments³²: "...the finest structure on the site was the temple built by the great builder Rameses II (1290–1224 B. C.). No other royal building of an earlier Pharaoh was found there, so we must conclude on the basis of our present evidence, that if the Israelites worked on royal projects at the site, it must have been in the time of Rameses II." We quoted Wright in order to indicate an approach to the subject, which is not peculiar to this scholar only. It is based primarily on identifying Raamses II as the pharaoh of the Oppression, with the inevitable consequence that this particular region is then identified as the land of Goshen, and further that Tell Rotaba–Artabi is identified as the biblical Raamses. This identification leads willy–nilly to the conclusion "...that if the Israelites worked on Royal projects at the site, it must have been in the time of Rameses II", So here we have "proof" that the oppression took place during the rule of Raamses II and consequently the Exodus from Egypt took place in the period of Merneptah, his successor. However this argument is based entirely on the assumption that Tell Rotaba is the biblical Raamses; and what proof is there for this, in fact a single line which tells of "building in cities upon which his name is to eternity." Is this sufficient evidence to show that this was indeed the site of biblical Raamses? Gardiner, the eminent Egyptologist, states: "Is there any serious evidence that Tell–er Retabah was ever called Raamses or was a royal residence at all? Certainly the stela of Raamses II on which Naville comments proves nothing of the kind."³³ Mallon states similarly: "It should be observed that this theory is scarcely more than a conjecture and does not attain any sort of certainty."³⁴ Naville in his statement bases himself on the excavations at Tell el Maskhuta where he supposedly found storehouses – a finding that according to him corroborates the biblical statement that the Israelites "built for Pharaoh treasure (Heb. *miskenot*) cities, Pithom and Raamses". (Ex. 1: 11) The word '*miskenot*' was interpreted by him as 'stores'³⁵ and he claimed that the

31 Maspero, *The Struggle of The Nations*, Egypt, Syria and Assyria, p. 421. *Histoire Ancienne Des Peuples de L'Orient*, p. 270.

32 Wright, *Biblical Archaeology*, p. 58.

33 Gardiner, *The Geography of The Exodus*, etc., JEA. 1924, p. 8.

34 Mallon, *Les Hebreux En Egypte*, *Orientalia*, 1921, p. 9. ("Il est juste de remarquer que cette theorie ne depasse pas les limites d'une opinion et n'atteint aucun degré de certitude").

35 He follows Delitsch who translated "*Verpflegungs Magazine*"; see also Gesenius for the word "*miskenot*" – "*מִסְכְּנוֹת*"; Redford, *EXODUS 1: 11 VT*. 1963, p. 407. Onkelos' – The Aramaic translation of the O. T. has "*Beth–Otzarin*" – treasure

foundations unearthed in his excavations were those of storehouses. Peet³⁶ objecting to Naville's identification claims that "the 'store chambers' which he unearthed, ...and which he assumed, on no evidence whatever, to extend 'over the greater part of the space surrounded by the enclosure', are probably nothing more than the foundation walls of a fortress precisely similar to those found at Naukratis and Daphnae." Gardiner³⁷ agrees with him. Wright³⁸ notes that "...the 'store chambers' which Naville discovered are actually the foundations of a large fortress which we know to have existed there."

As already stated, Naville claimed the ruins at Tell el Maskhuta to be those of a city built by Raamses II, since the findings from this site date exclusively to the time-span between Raamses II and the Roman period. On the other hand, Servin³⁹ disagrees with the view put forward by Naville: "The excavations of M. Naville were published in 1885. Twenty years later, in 1908, M. Cledat made an interesting discovery on the same site, which, however, remained unnoticed at the time. In a ditch about twenty meters from the temple's gate of Tell el Maskhuta, he found a cylindrical seal with the double cartouche of Mirinri and his brother Pepi II. This discovery recalls the passages in Ounis' inscription that refer to a series of campaigns which failed to expand the borders of the Kingdom in the direction of distant Palestine, but which led to the annexation of Wadi Tumilat to the Kingdom of Egypt, and most probably to the creation of an important administrative center at Tell el Maskhuta, from the VIth dynasty onwards. Naville's main argument in favour of locating Pithom at Tell Artabi is thus shown to be mistaken". The Arabic مسحوظة = mashūṭa (with its guttural sound ح), generally transliterated in Latin characters by scholars 'maskhuta'; which eventually produced the spelling 'maskuta', thus creating a phonetical resemblance to the biblical 'Sukot'. A similar approach is evident in words like Kheta, T. K. U, which appear in the Egyptian papyri. These also appear in variant spellings like Kheta-Khetam-Etam; Tuku -Tukut - Suku-Sukot, thus producing an illusory phonetic resemblance to the biblical names Etam and Succoth.⁴⁰ Phytian Adams, in his excellent article on the subject,⁴¹ writes: "It is the prevailing fashion today to assume that the Exodus took place in the reign of Pharaoh Merneptah (1225-1215 B. C.) and so firmly has this idea been allowed to take root that it seems almost idle to plead for

house, Rabbi Saadia (892-942 A. D.) in his Arabic translation has "Makhazin" = Magasins.

36 Peet, *Egypt and The Old Testament*, p. 8, n. 2. p. 84, n. 1 ; Gardiner, *ibid.*, p. 61.

37 Gardinr, *ibid.*, p. 61.

38 Wright, *ibid.*, p. 61.

39 Servin, *La Tradition Judeo-Chretienne de L'exode*, BIE. 1949, p. 327

40 See for example Sayce, *The Early History of The Hebrews*, pp. 155; 181.

41 Phytian Adams, *Israelite Tradition and The Date of Joshua*, PEQ. 1927, pp. 34-35.

an open mind on the subject. Yet it is of this hypothesis that Prof. Peet, who recently subjected the whole problem to a searching re-examination records the following considered judgement (Egypt and the Old Testament, 1922, p. 108); 'The evidence for the belief that Merneptah was the Pharaoh of the Exodus, nevertheless, can only be described as so flimsy that it is difficult to see how the belief can ever have arisen'. Those who will take the trouble to study that evidence for themselves with unbiased minds can hardly fail to agree with Prof. Peet as to flimsiness with which he charges this theory". Prof. G. Steindorff in an outline of ancient history of Egypt in Baedeker's Egypt writes: "Ramses II is frequently identified, but probably erroneously, with the Pharaoh of the oppression".⁴²

The belief of an Exodus during Merneptah's reign brings in its wake many discrepancies which require to be explained.:

1. How can we explain the date of the Exodus as given in 1Kn. 6: 1, which is completely at variance with the supposed date of an Exodus in the period of Merneptah.
2. The El Amarna Tablets, which have been dated to the 14th century B. C, depict the destruction of cities in Canaan. On the other hand, the biblical account tells of their destruction by the incoming Israelites. Archae-ological evidence points to the destruction of the cities in about the c. 14th cent. B. C. Therefore an Exodus supposedly during Merneptah's reign inevitably leads us to the conclusion that the Israelites at their arrival in Canaan found those cities already destroyed.
3. In the Amarna letters we find mention of invaders named Ḫabiru, which by most scholars were identified with the Hebrews, Yet how can we explain the invasion of the Hebrews into Canaan in the 14th century B. C. if we accept an Exodus during the reign of Merneptah (c. 1220 B. C.).
4. A triumphal stela of Seti I (c. 1303–1290 B. C.) includes a description of a victory over a tribe named Asaru settled in the north of Canaan in a region which according to the Bible was allotted to the tribe of Asher. Most scholars (following Miller) tend to see the name 'Asaru' as synonymous with 'Asher'. But the supposition that the Exodus took place during Merneptah's reign (c. 1220 B. C.) makes it difficult to explain the presence of the tribe of Asher in Canaan as early as the period of Seti I.
5. According to the Bible the period of the Judges lasted about 380–400 years. However, acceptance of an Exodus during Merneptah's reign shortens this to a period of about 180 years.

To explain these discrepancies various a posteriori theories were constructed:

⁴² Baedeker's Egypt. 6th edit. 1908, p. lxxxii

1. According to the biblical account (1Kn. 6: 1) the Exodus took place 480 years before the fourth year of Solomon's reign, that is in c. 1446 B. C. This date agrees with archaeological findings and also with the views of Garstang, Newberry, Marston, Rowe and others concerning the destruction of Jericho, but contradicts the belief that the Exodus occurred during the period of Merneptah. The principal argument to overcome this contradiction, used by Wellhausen, Lepsius, Petrie, and followed by Burney, Rowley and others down to our day, states that we cannot accept uncritically the biblical statement, for the reason that 480 is an artificial and unfeasible number, and in fact is the result of the multiplication of the number 40 by 12.⁴³ The number 40 corresponds to the 40 years wandering in the desert, and in addition represents a conventional reckoning of the length of a generation. Therefore, the biblical scribe used the number 480 in a symbolic sense to denote the duration of twelve generations (ie. $12 \times 40 = 480$) that elapsed from the time of the Exodus to the building of the Temple, and not in the actual sense of 480 years. As a consequence the Exodus did not take place in c. 1446 B. C. (i. e. 480 years before Solomon), but in c. 1170 B. C., which is approximately the period of Raamses–Merneptah. So, to all intents and purposes, this controversy supposedly has been settled. Yet curiously, though the number 40 is claimed to represent the length of a generation in the Bible, each individual scholar adopts the number that suits him best. Thus, for Lepsius it is 30 years, for Petrie 21 years, while for Burney it is 25 years. Again, for Rowley it is circa 50 years⁴⁴; and there are also other estimates. To strengthen their argument scholars draw on certain dynastic lists in the O. T.⁴⁵ Petrie on 1Chr. 6 (4–47). Burney on 1Chr. 6. (3–10) (In the Hebrew text it corresponds to 1Chr. 5: 29ff.) Burney names twelve priests in consecutive order between Elazar, Aaron's son, and Azaria, the high priest in Solomon's time, who represent according to him twelve generations, he accepts each generation to be 40 years—equal to the number of years in the desert. Multiplying 40 by 12 we get 480; therefore in his opinion the text indeed refers to 12 generations. Petrie, for some reason, came to a different

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- 43 See for example: Burney, *Israel Settlement In Canaan*, p. 4.
 Lods, *Israel*, p. 208.
 Albright, *A Revision of Early Hebrew Chronology*, JPOS. 1920–1921, p. 64 (note 1).
 Lepsius, *Letters From Egypt*, etc. pp. 403, 457, 460–470.
 Petrie, *The Date of The Exodus*, PEF. 1896, p. 335
 Bright, *A History of Israel*, p. 113.
 Aharoni, *Eretz Israel In Biblical Period*, p. 168. (Hebrew).
- 44 Petrie, *Egypt and Israel*, p. 56.
 Lepsius, *ibid.*, pp. 457, 460–470.
 Rowley, *From Joseph to Joshua*, p. 161.
 Burney, *ibid.* p. 4
- 45 Petrie, *Egypt and Israel*, p. 56. Burney, *Israel Settlement in Canaan*. p. 4.

conclusion from Burney, namely that the duration of a generation is only 21 years, and that there were ten to eleven generations. The arguments produced by Petrie and Burney are misleading, and basically erroneous. In the dynastic lists on which they rely, we count from priest Aaron till Azaria (inclusive) fifteen names and not twelve. Why make an arbitrary cut-off and start the count only after Elazar? For the period of Elazar's priesthood began only at Mount Hor, that is a short time before the Israelites' entry into Israel, and he was also among those who settled in the country. On the other hand the number 480 mentioned in the Bible denotes the period of years that elapsed from the Exodus, that is we have to include in this period all the names in the dynastic list, including that of Aaron the priest, and not start the name-count only from the period after Elazar, though this fits in better with some theory. While it is possible to accept the idea that the biblical narrator considered 40 years as the span of one generation, it is not comprehensible why the same narrator, using the same criteria, should condense twelve generations into approximately 200 years (i. e. the time from Merneptah till king Solomon). Moreover, elsewhere in the Bible we find year counts that are not divisible by the number 40, as for instance: 38 years' journey from Kadesh-Barnea to the brook Zered (Deut. 2: 14); the children of Israel dwelling in Egypt during 430 years (Ex. 12: 40), 300 years from the conquest of the Jordan's east bank till Jephthah's time (Ju. 11: 26); etc. These numbers are not divided by the biblical narrator by 40 years ("one generation count"). If this indeed had been characteristic of him he would surely have applied the same system to these numbers also. Why then should he do so only in the instance of the 480 years following the Exodus?

It is mistaken to identify the 40 years wandering in the desert with the period of one generation, since in this context 40 years do not refer to one (full) generation. Scholars misunderstood the biblical text, which in regard to the 40 years wandering states clearly: "For the children of Israel walked forty years in the wilderness, till all the people that were men of war, which came out of Egypt, were consumed". (Jos. 5: 6). "Until all the generation of the men of war were wasted (consumed)" (Deut. 2: 14); The Vulgate reads "donec consumeratur omnis generatio humanum bellatorum de castris" (Deut. 2: 14). Thus the meaning as between "a period of one generation" and "until the generation... were wasted" or "till all the people. . were consumed", is not at all the same, for the one indicates a full generation, while the others – ("until all the generation was wasted"; "till all...were consumed") refer to only part of a generation. It is clear that the biblical scribe regards the 40 years in the desert as part of a generation. Elsewhere it may be inferred that the biblical narrator calls 'Dor (Heb. = generation) a period of one hundred years (i. e. a century): "Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them, and they shall afflict them four

hundred years... But in the fourth generation (Heb. =Dor (-'דור they shall come hither again". In other words, four generations denotes a period of 400 years, and any attempt to explain this as a later addition⁴⁶ is untenable. After all, no later addition which assumes a generation to be one hundred years is reasonable if at that time a generation was thought to be 20 or 25 years. The notion that the duration of a generation is 40 years seems to derive from Moore, citing Hecateus of Miletus who compiled the ancient chronology of the Greeks, based on dynastic genealogies that counted 40 years for each generation. Lagrange who similarly tries to explain the 480 years from the Exodus on the 40 years generation principle also relies on Moore. However, he notes referring to Mayer⁴⁷ that the alleged chronology is not found in the fragments of Hecateus cited in Dido's writings⁴⁸. Nevertheless this does not prevent him from citing the number 480 as representing 12 generations⁴⁹. In contrast, Lepsius, who likewise refers to Greek chronology, considers 30 years the length of a generation, basing himself on Eratosthenes, Apollodore and Diodorus.⁵⁰ However, if scholars consider a generation variously to be 20, 25, 30, etc. years they must be consistent all the way and agree that four generations' sojourn in Egypt adds up to respectively only 80, 100, 120 or 200 years. It follows therefore that the entry of the Israelites into Egypt happened only 80 or 100 etc., years before their leaving it. If so, how does this agree with the argument that the entry of the Hebrews into Egypt took place in the period of the Hyksos?

2. Most scholars agree that the reign of King David begins circa 1040 B. C. If therefore we accept the theory that the Exodus took place in the period of Merneptah (c. 1220 B. C.), it logically follows that after subtracting the forty years wandering in the desert the entire period of the Judges lasted only about 180 years. However this conclusion blatantly contradicts the biblical narrative. Moreover the Bible states that three hundred years passed from the time of entry of the Israelites into the eastern part of Canaan till the period of Jephthah⁵¹ In Acts (13. 20) the apostle Paul specifies the period of the Judges as 450 years. Thus 480 years from the Exodus to king Solomon seems a more reasonable period than 180 years.

Petrie⁵² trying to explain this discrepancy claims that the individual

46 Rowley, *From Joseph To Joshua*, pp. 69–70.

47 E. Mayer, *Forschungen*, 1, p. 169ss.

48 *Fr. Hist. Grec.* I

49 Lagrange, *Introduction Au Livre Des Juges*, RB. 1902, p. 27. see there also note 1.; see also: Albright, *Syria, The Philistines And Phoenicia*, CAH Vol. II, Chap. 33. P. 39.

50 Lepsius, *Letters From Egypt, Etc.*, P. 470.

51 *Ju.* 11: 27

52 Petrie, *Egypt and Israel*, pp. 54–55

judges ruled concurrently in their various districts; and thus condensed the period of the Judges into 120 years, rather than the 400 years indicated in the Bible. This idea prevails to this day. He, as well as his followers, disregard the explicit Biblical statements that the judges succeeded one another: "And Othniel the son of Kenaz died. And after him was Shamgar.. after Abimelech arose Tola ...and after him arose Jair... And after him Iban...and after him Elon. and after him Abdon the son of Hillel a Pirathonite ...When Ehud was dead and it came to pass as soon as Gideon was dead." (Ju. 3: 11; 3: 31; 10: 1; 10: 3; 12: 8; 12: 11; 12: 13; 4: 1 ; 8; 33). Thus even if we admit that the Judges ruled in different districts, it is clear from the Bible that the periods of their rule did not overlap.

3. For some reason scholars tend to specially point up the name "Isirar" on the Merneptah stela, while at the time ignoring the fact that this stela tells of the wars fought by Merneptah in Canaan but not in Egypt.⁵³ "Isirar" is taken as equivalent to the name 'Israel'; yet in order to have the stela serve as proof that the Exodus took place in Merneptah's reign, it is necessary for scholars to distort the biblical narrative and utterly disregard the forty years wandering in the desert, as also the time necessary for the wars of conquest in Canaan. How else could Merneptah's encounter with the people of Israel in Canaan be explained, seeing they were supposed to have left Egypt during his reign? Moreover this will also produce a discrepancy between the biblical chronology on the one hand and certain archaeological findings (Jericho, Ay, etc.) on the other. Petrie, attempting to resolve this discrepancy, has suggested two alternative explanations: One, that a certain number of Israelite families did not migrate to Egypt but remained in Canaan; and two, that a certain number of families left Egypt in advance of the main body⁵⁴. This second explanation of two separate "Exoduses" (as will be seen below) gained a following in the studies of Burney, Rowton, Meek and Albright. The stela of Merneptah recounts his victories and destruction of the cities of Yenoam, Kazmel, Paganana etc. (the precise identification of these cities is unimportant.) However, at the end of the list of cities the subject changes from the destruction of the cities to the destruction of a nation (people): "Ishirar is laid waste, his seed is not". The phrase "his seed is not" clarifies beyond doubt that that the subject is now the destruction of a nation. But why only in relation to Ishirar? The accepted explanation was first given by Petrie⁵⁵: The Israelites had already infiltrated into Canaan but had not yet

53 Conder and Faulkner hold the same view.

Conder, *The Date of The Exodus*, PEF. 1896, 255.

Faulkner, *Egypt from the Inception of The 19th Dynasty To The Death Of Raamses III*,

CAH. vol. II, Chap. xxiii, 1966

54 Petrie, *Egypt and Israel*, p. 35.

55 Wright, *ibid.*, p. 71.

become a settled people in that country; therefore Merneptah refers to them as a people but not yet in connection with a specific place. Petrie alludes to the biblical verses (Nu. 14: 40–45) about the children of Israel who went up the hill and fought the Amalekites and Canaanites who came down and smote them. He also refers to the story of the Canaanite king of Arad who fought against Israel and took some of them captives (Nu. 21: 1). He interprets these as an attempt by some of the Israelites to invade Canaan from the south. The Merneptah stela is seen by him as a recounting of this attempted invasion, which in his view took place in the fourth year of Merneptah's reign and in the second year of the Exodus.⁵⁶ It is evident that this accepted interpretation a) disregards the biblical text, which speaks of a war by Canaanites and Amalekites and not by Egyptians b) disregards the extended period of many years before the Israelite tribes entered the central region of the land of Canaan c) disregards the fact that the Exodus must be considered an Israelite and not an Egyptian victory; d) does not make sense, for if Israel was (as supposed) a nomadic people which had not yet acquired a fixed place of settlement, it seems ridiculous that a king should boast of his victory over these nomads and record it on a stela, while his conquest of established cities such as Ashkelon, Gezer, Yenoam, etc. is mentioned offhandedly: "plundered is Canaan carried off is Ashkelon, seized upon is Gezer...". For in the very reference to "his seed is not" the author of the stela inscription expressed the importance he ascribes to Isirar. For some reasons it has been usual for scholars to cite only partially Merneptah's triumphal hymn, beginning from: ..."The kings are overthrown saying Salam...", but if we view it in its entirety we obtain a totally different picture⁵⁷. The hymn opens: "great joy has come to Egypt, rejoicing comes forth from the towns of Tomeri (Egypt). They converse of the victories which Merneptah has achieved AMONG THE TEHENU: 'How amiable is the victorious ruler, how magnified is the king among the gods. How fortunate is he, the commanding lord. Sit happily down and talk or walk far upon the way, (for) there is no fear in the heart of the people. The strongholds are left to themselves, the wells are opened (again).'(emphasis – N. G.) The hymn continues with a description of the peace and tranquillity that have returned to Egypt, and then goes on: "The kings are overthrown saying Salam..." etc.

From the outset we learn that this is a paean for the victory over the TEHENU; and the cities mentioned in it make up a list of the cities of the Tehenu. Therefore, the final line "Isirar is destroyed..." may be seen as

Virey, Note Sur Le Pharaon Menepthah Et Le Temps De L'exode, RB. 1900, p. 585.

56 ANET, p. 376; Petrie, Palestine And Israel, p. 67.

57 Breasted, Records, vol. III, p. 263 ; § 616
ANET, pp. 376 – 377

summing up the destruction of the country, that is having described the destruction of the land of the Tehenu the hymn proceeds to recall the destruction of its people. In the Bible (Nu. 26: 35–37) the name Tahan denotes a clan of the Ephraimite tribe, while the city of Gezer which on the Merneptah stela is of the Tehenu, is described as an Ephraimite city (Ju. 1: 29). The accepted explanation for the mention of Isirar in this hymn appears an unconvincing attempt to sustain the theory which places the Oppression in the reign of Raamses II. The belief that Raamses is the Pharaoh of the Oppression and therefore Merneptah the Pharaoh of the Exodus, though it lacks any logical basis and contradicts the biblical text as well as Josephus and several archaeological findings, is very deeply rooted and widely accepted. However, one may well agree with Prof. Peet that "If analysed impartially it amounts to nothing more than the facts that Pharaoh of the Oppression has generally been assumed to be Raamses II, and that Merneptah succeeded him. The identification of Raamses II with the Oppressor is based merely on the statement that under the Oppression the Israelites 'built for Pharaoh store cities, Pithom and Raamses'." (Peet, p. 108) Yet, this belief produces many contradictions, the most important of which are:

1. The stela of Merneptah recounts a victory over Isirar (Israel) in the land of the Tahanu (in Canaan), while the Exodus is depicted in the Bible as a victory of the Israelites over the Egyptians (in Egypt). If the stela refers, as Petrie suggests, to the war of the Israelites against the Amalekites and the Canaanite king of Arad (Nu. 14: 40–45), it should be recalled that the biblical narrative refers to Canaanites and not to Egyptians.

2. According to the biblical account the Children of Israel wandered forty years in the desert before they entered the land of Canaan and then they spent several years (as we have seen, approximately thirty one years) in wars before they finally settled in the country. If the stela of Merneptah is taken as contemporary evidence of the Exodus, it follows that the wanderings in the desert (including the period of wars in Canaan and of the settlement) lasted only one or two years. Indeed some scholars are content with this explanation. However, if we accept that the stela relates to the Exodus and likewise accept the biblical narrative concerning the forty years wandering plus the additional years before the settlement of the Israelites, it follows that the Exodus could not have taken place in the period of Merneptah but only in the reign of Raamses his predecessor. Indeed, Albright tries to argue along these lines, but his view involves a new contradiction of the biblical text, as this states that the Exodus took place when a new Pharaoh acceded to the throne (Ex. 2: 23).

3. According to Burckhardt⁵⁸ Merneptah reigned from 1235–1227 B.

58 Cited by Albright, who affirms this date: Albright, *Archaeology And The Date Of The Hebrew Conquest Of Palestine*, BASOR., 58, 1935

C., according to Breasted,⁵⁹ from 1225–1215 B. C. . These are the accepted dates today. On the other hand, Brugsch and Mahler date the beginning of Merneptah's reign outside these limits, the one to c. 1300 B. C. and the other c. 1190 B. C. Therefore, if we accept the theory that the Exodus took place in the reign of Merneptah we have to allow that the date of the Exodus is either 1235 B. C. or 1225 B. C. ; And if we accept the extreme chronologies of Brugsch and Mahler we can add to these dates also the years c. 1190 and c. 1300 B. C. Adding the forty years of wandering in the desert⁶⁰, we find therefore that the Israelites reached the land of Israel either in c. 1195 or in c. 1180 B. C. (or according to Brugsch and Mahler, either in c. 1260 or in c. 1150 B. C.). This means that the destruction of the cities of Jericho, Ay, etc., as described in the Bible, must have taken place within the limits of the above dates. But the archaeological findings contradict these dates. Watzinger, who excavated in Jericho, believed the city was destroyed in 1600 B. c., while Vincent thought this happened between 1600–1200 B. C.⁶¹. Wright⁶² rejected Vincent's opinion and agreed with Garstang that the city was destroyed in c. 1407 B. C. Garstang who likewise excavated in Jericho, concluded that the cities of Hazor, Ai and Beth–El were also destroyed in the same period⁶³. Accordingly he fixed the date of the Exodus in c. 1447 B. C., which coincides with biblical chronology. Newberry, who examined the scarabs from the tombs of Jericho, confirmed this dating of Garstang by showing that these scarabs dated to the Hyksos up to the time of Amenophis (Amenhotep) III. Moreover he found no objects that belonged to the period between Amenophis IV and the time of Raamses II. Sir Charles Marston draws on the researches of Garstang and Newberry, as well as on certain pottery types from the burnt strata of Jericho to prove that the city was destroyed by Joshua during the reign of Amenophis III. On the basis of this evidence he concludes that the Exodus took place in the beginning of Amenophis II's reign. i. e. c. 1447 B. C.⁶⁴. Albright who disagrees with

59 Breasted, *A History of Egypt*, p. 597.

60 As already noted we refer to the Biblical text and not to scholarly theories which will be discussed later.

61 Vincent. L. H., *The Chronology of Jericho*, PEQ. 1931, pp. 104–105; *Ceramique Et Chronologie*, RB. 1932, pp. 269, 271; *La Chronologie Des Ruines de Jericho*, RB. 1930, p. 432. *Chronique, L'aube De L'histoire A Jericho*, RB. 1938, pp. 561–589; RB. 1939, pp. 91–107.
see also: Lucas, *The Date of The Exodus* PEQ., 1941.

62 Wright, *Two Misunderstood Items, etc.*, BASOR, 861942 ., pp. 32–35.

63 Garstang, *The Date of The Destruction of Jericho*, PEQ, 1927, pp. 96–100; *Jericho*, PEQ, 1930, p. 132. ; *The Story of Jericho*, PEQ. 1941, pp. 168–171. *The Ruins of Jericho*, PEQ. 1936, p. 170. ; *The Fall of Bronze Age Jericho*, PEQ. 1935, p. 68. ; – *Joshua – Judges*, pp. 54–55; 225. – *A Third Season At Jericho*,

City And Necropolis, PEQ. 1932, pp. 149–153.

64 Marston, *The Bible Is True*, 1934, p. 154.

Garstang believes that Jericho was conquered between 1360–1320 B. C.⁶⁵, and Beth–El and Ai between 1300–1250 B. C. Therefore, if the Israelites left Egypt during the reign of Merneptah, the inevitable conclusion is that when they reached Jericho, Beth–El, Ai and other cities they must have found them already destroyed. Many scholars refer to this argument⁶⁶, and we shall quote them in the course of our discussion.

4. Petrie, has suggested two possibilities: one, a certain number of the Israelite families did not migrate to Egypt but remained in Canaan and the other –a certain number of families left Egypt in advance of the main body, and remained in Canaan "during most, or all, of the time that the others were in Egypt". (Petrie. *Egypt and Israel* 1912, p. 35) Thus, inevitably, we witness the formation of a theory of two Exoduses. A succession of scholars ranging from Petrie, Steuernagel to Burney, Rowley, Meek and Albright, tried each in his own systematic way, to prove that there were two Exoduses (or two separate entries into Canaan), either of concubine tribes or of Leah or Rachel tribes (Steuernagel, Bohl, Barton and others), or Josephite and Levites tribes (Albright) or only of Caleb tribes (Gemoll)⁶⁷. According to Rowley, during the el–Amarna period a group of Israelite tribes (Judah, Simeon, and Levy) joined by Kenites, Calibbites and others penetrated into Canaan from the south. A small group of the tribe of Levy migrated to Egypt, where it joined a group that had earlier arrived there. Four centuries later, i. e. in the Merneptah period the Exodus took place under the leadership of Moses Hence, Jericho, Ai and other cities were destroyed by the first wave which he

65 Albright, *The Israelite Conquest of Canaan In The Light of Archaeology*, BASOR, 1939, pp. 18–19; *Archaeology and The Date of The Hebrew Conquest of Palestine*, BASOR, 58, 1935, pp. 16–17.

66 Rowley, *From Joseph To Joshua*, p. 19; – *The Date of The Exodus* PEQ. 1941, p. 155.

Phytian–Adams, *Jericho, Ai And The Occupation of Mount Ephraim*, PEQ. 1936, pp. 141–143.

Wright, *Epic of Conquest*, BA. 1940 (3), p. 36. ; *Biblical Archaeology*, p. 80.

Albright, *The Israelite Conquest of Canaan In The Light of Archaeology*, BASOR, 74, 1939, p. 16.

Bright, *A History Of Israel*, pp. 118–119.

Cook (S. A. C.), *Notes on Excavation*, PEQ. 1926, p. 208.

Dussaud, *Note Additionelle*, SY. 16, 1935, p. 351. ; *Notes*, PEQ. 1936, p. 54.

Meek, *Hebrew Origins*, p. 24.

Aharoni, *Eretz Israel In the Biblical Period*, p. 107. (Hebrew).

67 According to Gemoll only Caleb sojourned in Egypt. Bohl believes that Rachel tribes were in Egypt whereas Leah tribes together with concubine tribes were already settled in Canaan Steuernagel identified the Habiru with Leah tribes, whom he believes conquered the south of Canaan, at c. 1400 B. C. Patton identified the Habiru with what he calls adult Leah tribes –Reuben, Simeon, Levy, Judah and a wave of young Leah tribes – Zebulun and Issaschar, whereas the Exodus concerns the Rachel tribes. According to him Gad, Asher and Zilpah were Canaanite tribes intermixed with Leah tribes, while Dan Naphtali and Bilha were Canaanite tribes intermixed with Rachel tribes.

identifies with the Habiru. But in the national consciousness the two waves of conquests merged into one. Albright believes that one Exodus came after the expulsion of the Hyksos from Egypt, this was an Exodus of "Josephites"; whom he identifies with the Habiru (14th century), who conquered Jericho. A second Exodus of "Levites" (Levi tribes and especially the tribe of Judah) under the leadership of Moses and Joshua took place c. 1260 B. C. Meek believes an invasion of Israelite tribes under the leadership of Joshua took place c. 1400 B. C., and one in c. 1200 B. C. under the leadership of Moses. Other scholars like Burney, Rowton etc. adopt a similar line of thought. Some scholars quote Josephus (Cont. Ap. I. 26), who cites Manethon to the effect that the Israelites left Egypt in the days of a king named Amenophis; and elsewhere Josephus (Cont. Ap. I, 15) says that the Israelites were driven out by Thutmosis and subsequently built Jerusalem. The name 'Amenophis' is explained by the scholars to be Manethon's corruption of the name Merneptah.⁶⁸ All these ideas share several common features, 1) The belief that the Exodus took place in the Raamses–Merneptah period (c. 1200 B. C.). 2) Placing of Goshen in the Wadi Tumilat region 3) The assumption that the biblical text is a conflation and harmonisation of different traditions which are not to be trusted historically. This assumption is brought into play whenever a fact or a verse is problematic or contradictory. There were scholars (Nibuhr, for example) who went so far as to deny the story of the Exodus, and in the wake of this denial demolished a whole set of facts.

Having earlier discussed the factors which led to these assumptions we found them to be basically erroneous, and therefore there can be no substance to any of the views founded on them.

What can we learn from the Bible?

1. We have seen that on the basis of certain statements, (Gen. 46, 33–34; Ex. 13: 17 and others), it was rightly inferred that Goshen was located on the borders of Egypt. In Genesis (45: 10) we are told that Joseph invited his father to Egypt and informed him "... and thou shalt dwell in the land of Goshen, and thou shalt be near unto me." This means that Goshen was considered to be near Joseph's dwelling place. It is logical to assume that Joseph resided in the royal city, which at the time of Jacob's descent to Egypt was the city of On. Moreover he marries Asenath, the daughter of Poti–phera priest of On. This implies that the land of Goshen was near the city of On. About the proximity of the royal residence to Goshen can also be learned from the biblical account of Moses' ark being found by Pharaoh's daughter; (Ex. 2: 5), as well as from the story of the Exodus. We read (Ex. 12: 31 ff) that Pharaoh summoned Moses and Aharon in the middle of the night and ordered them to leave Egypt; and on the same night they gathered together the Israelites and all of them left Egypt. This shows that the biblical narrator thought the distance

68 Conder, *The Date of The Exodus*, PEP. 1896, p. 256.

between Pharaoh's residence and the land of Goshen to be sufficiently short for all these activities to take place in one night. Elsewhere (Ex. 8: 25–27) Pharaoh tells Moses and Aaron: "...Go ye, sacrifice to your God in the land". And Moses answers him: "It is not meet so to do, for we shall sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians before their eyes, and will they not stone us?" These verses indicate that the dwelling place of the Israelites was in the midst of the Egyptians and not at the border of Egypt, as is universally accepted. Also in the story of the ten plagues the emphasis is on the fact the plagues afflicted the Egyptians but left the Israelites unscathed: "And I will sever in that day the land of Goshen And I will put a division between my people and thy people" (Ex. 8: 22–23). This would be pointless if the Israelites had not lived among the Egyptians. Gardiner⁶⁹ states unequivocally that the Israelites lived in the capital. Clark⁷⁰ refers to the biblical story wherein the Israelites were ordered to mark their houses, so that the angel of God would pass them by, and sees this as evidence that the Israelites did indeed live among the Egyptians, for otherwise the order to mark the houses would be pointless. This too is the opinion of Robinson⁷¹, who gives yet another reason, namely that the Israelites were ordered to borrow vessels of silver and gold from their Egyptian neighbours. (Ex. 11).

To sum up: The Bible indicates that the dwelling place of the Israelites was among the Egyptians, somewhere near Pharaoh's residence, AND AT THE SAME TIME ON THE BORDER OF EGYPT. At the time of Jacob's descent to Egypt the Royal Residence was in the city of On, and it follows that Goshen had to be in that region (i. e. today's Cairo). We thus return to Josephus' and the Septuagint who identify On with Goshen. As to the location of the Israelites' dwelling place on the borders of Egypt, the natural tendency is to apply modern territorial notions and not ancient ones. The term 'Land of Egypt' (Hebrew – אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם Eretz mitzraim) is regarded by scholars as a territorial name, corresponding to Egypt's present-day geographical situation; however, in the Bible we read; "The land of Egypt is before thee; in the best of the land make thy father and brethren to dwell; in the land of Goshen let them dwell." (Gen. 47: 6). "And the sons of Israel dwelled. . in the land of Egypt, in the best of the land, in the land of Rameses..." (Gen. 47: 11). Clearly therefore the land of Goshen was located IN the land of Egypt. How can one land exist within another land? Perhaps the word "land" (Heb. eretz) is used in the Bible in a different sense from the modern? That this was indeed the case is confirmed by certain biblical passages containing the word "land" (Heb. eretz, אֶרֶץ) – as "gave him a house... and gave him land*" (1Kn.

69 Gardiner, *ibid.*, p. 89

70 Clarke, *The Exodus*, PEF, 1883, p. 92

71 Robinson, *Biblical Research In Palestine*, Vol. I, p. 77

* The Hebrew has: eretz – אֶרֶץ

11: 18); "As for the earth,* out of it cometh bread" (Job. 28: 5); "...Pirathon in the land * of Ephraim " (Ju. 12: 15); "...in the land* of Benjamin." (Jer. 3, 33: 13); ". the land * of Shalisha, the land * of Shalim. . the land* of the Benjamites..." (1 Sam. 9: 44); "...the land * of the plain" (i. e. the region of Sodom – Gen. 19: 28); "Like worms of the earth * "(Mi. 7: 17); "mine hand also hath laid the foundation of the earth *...(Is. 48: 13); "and I will sever in that day the land * of Goshen in which my people dwell."(Ex. 8: 2 2) In the Hebrew text (Ex. 8: 18) it read –"ארץ גשן אשר עמי עמד עליה" literally translated "The land of Goshen whereon my people stands." It is clear therefore from the foregoing that the Hebrew word ארץ (eretz) has the double meaning of both "land"and 'earth', 'ground'... This also applies to all the other quoted verses. The equivalent Arabic word "ard" and "similarly means both 'ground' and 'land.'

From what is said above, 'eretz must be understood to mean 'ground', 'earth', and not 'state' or 'land'. Moreover in the past the word eretz was not applied to an extended area of territory but also to specific regions, such as "land (eretz) of the plain", "land of the Benjamites", etc. Accordingly "And Israel dwelt in the land * of Egypt in the country * of Goshen " is to be understood as meaning that the Israelites settled in the land of Egypt, in the land of Goshen, that is within the land of Egypt, in the territory of Goshen.

But what in fact is the land of Egypt?

About the Exodus we read: "...even the SELFSAME DAY it came to pass, that all the hosts of the Lord went out from the land of Egypt. It is a NIGHT to be much observed unto the Lord for bringing them out from the land of Egypt: This is THAT NIGHT of the Lord to be observed of all the children of Israel in their generations" (Ex. 12: 41–42. emphasis–N. G.) Evidently this narrative concerns only the night of the 14th of the month of Nissan⁷², (i. e. the biblical date of the Exodus from Egypt). Yet according to the Bible story it took the Israe – lites another three days AFTER THE EXODUS at least, till they reached the Red Sea⁷³, generally regarded the border of Egyptian territory. However, the biblical text indicates the night of 14th Nissan as the date of the, Exodus, and even insists on this: "...this is that night of the Lord to be much observed..." etc. It is clear therefore that from the biblical viewpoint, the Land of Egypt – ERETZ MITZRAYIM –indicates merely the name of the location (town or region) – which the Israelites left on the night of 14th of Nissan, and does not denote the country of Egypt as whole. Hence it is evident that Egypt (–mitzrayim) was the name

72 See also: Ex. 12: 6, 18, 39, 51.

73 Josephus (Ant. II, 315) writes: "They took the road to Letopolis. Omitting the country by the shortest route, they arrived ON THE THIRD DAY, at Beelsephon, a place beside the Red Sea." (emphasis – N. G.)

of a district (and the district town), which eventually became the name of a more extensive territory (i. e. complete country) As has been noted the Bible places Goshen near Pharaoh's residence, which location In the time of Joseph's was the city of On . The city of Cairo (i. e. the region of ancient On) is called in modern spoken Arabic 'masr' = (Mitzrayim = Egypt), whilst Old Cairo (Fustat) is called 'MASR el ATTIKA'⁷⁴, with New Cairo known as 'MASR el GEDIDA' (or 'MASR el KAHIRAH')⁷⁵; the entire country of Egypt is called today 'BALLAD MASR'.⁷⁶ Accordingly this takes us back to Josephus and the Septuagint who identify Goshen–Raamses with Heliopolis (On), that is the area of present–day Cairo. According to Josephus the king then permitted him (Jacob) to live with his children in Heliopolis"⁷⁷.

To sum up: 'The Land of Egypt' (Heb. erez–mizrayim) is meant to denote the land (i. e. area) of the district town Mitzrayim; and when told in the Bible that the Israelites dwell on the borders of Egypt, we are to understand that they lived at the edge of this district town, i. e. in its suburbs. Thus the biblical narrative which describes the Israelites as living amongst the Egyptians and at the same time on the border of Egypt, near the Egyptians is clarified. This district town is to be identified with Heliopolis (On), that is the area of present day Cairo.

In the following we shall review some of the theories underlying most arguments and views still current today: Like many other scholars Burney in his book "Israel Settlement in Canaan" claims that the Exodus took place in the time of Merneptah; moreover he asserts that the biblical statement about the Exodus occurring 480 years before the construction of the Temple. (1Kn. 6: 1.) cannot be accepted uncritically; the reason given for this is that 480 is an artificial number, in effect merely the result of multiplying 40 by 12. The number 40 corresponds to the 40 years wandering in the desert; and moreover denotes a conventional reckoning of the length of a generation.⁷⁸ This argument was fully discussed in an earlier chapter, and was shown

74 See for example maps: Murray's Handbook for Travellers, 8th. ed. pp. 161; 221; Baedeker's Egypt etc. 1908, pp. 40; 101

Les guides bleus, Egypte p. 76. Hachette, paris 1956.

Wright, The Illustrated Bible Treasury, London 1896, map, p. 166

75 See map of Egypt in "National Geographical Magazine", May, 1965.

76 Also in modern Arabic the word "medineh"(-state) means both "state" and "town".

77 Josephus, Ant. II, 183.

78 See for example: Burney, Israel Settlement In Canaan, p. 4.

Lods, Israel, p. 208.

Albright, A Revision of Early Hebrew Chronology, JPOS. 1920–1921, p. 64 (note 1).

Lepsius, Letters From Egypt, etc. pp. 403, 457, 460–470.

Petrie, The Date of The Exodus, PEF. 1896, p. 335

Bright, A History o, . /f Israel, p. 113.

Aharoni, Eretz Israel In Biblical Period, p. 168. (Hebrew).

to be basically misleading. Another argument of Burney that gained wide acceptance is one that assumes the books of Joshua and Judges "consist of a substratum of ancient narratives which frequently run parallel in presenting more or less variant traditions of the same series of events. These narratives have been utilized and combined by later editors" (ibid. p. 6). Burney also believes that "in dealing with this period of Israel settlement in Canaan we have to rely upon records which as written documents are undoubtedly much further removed from the handed down across a considerable period in the form of stories told and retold period with which they deal than are the records of the monarchy", and "Events have been round the camp fire and beside the well and have undergone (can we doubt it?) some amount of modification and embellishment in the process". Moreover Burney bases his theory on the seeming contradiction between the account of the conquest of Hebron and Jerusalem by Joshua on the one hand, and the conquest of these cities by Judah, Benjamin and Caleb on the other.⁷⁹ Accordingly he regards the story of the conquest as a synthesis of two versions. One version speaks of a quick and all-sweeping victory under Joshua's leadership, while the other depicts a slow, gradual penetration of the country by separate tribes. Yet Burney thinks that we have to accept the version of the conquest as described in the book of Judges: namely gradual penetration of the country by separate tribes, who mostly did not succeed in driving out the original inhabitants but had to be content with settling alongside them. In other words, the settlement was accomplished in the form of a gradual and peaceful infiltration⁸⁰. He bases this view on the biblical statement that the tribes did not dispossess (Heb. *lehorish*—להוריש) the inhabitants of the country.⁸¹ But, as already noted, the interpretation of *lehorish* as "dispossess" or "driving out" is utterly erroneous, and so equally is the conquest concept. According to Burney the biblical narrative of Joshua's conquests may be divided into two campaigns: the first the conquest of the south of the land of Canaan, and the second – the war against Yavin king of Hazor and the conquest of the north of the land⁸². Since in the Song of Deborah there is a "Jabin... who reigned in Hazor", he assumes that the Yavin who in Joshua xi is depicted as warring against Joshua is the same Yavin who fought against Deborah and Barak (Burney, p. 54). This leads him to conclude that the war in the north was conducted by the tribes of Naphtali and Zeb-ulun only. The verse "From Machir came down the commanders..." (Ju. 5: 13–15) in the Song of Deborah demonstrates

79 The conquest of these Canaanite cities as well as the conquest of Canaan overall has already been discussed earlier and it was clearly shown that the alleged contradiction is illusory.

80 Burney, *ibid.* pp. 24–28.

81 Burney, *ibid.* pp. 17, 18, 22.

82 Burney, *ibid.* p. 15.

to Burney that Machir was on the west side of the Jordan at the period of Deborah. However, this necessarily contradicts the statement in Joshua that the sons of Machir were in Gilead, east of the Jordan. To resolve this contradiction Burney, (pp. 33–34) argues that in the period of Deborah the sons of Machir were settled west of the Jordan and only afterwards migrated to the east of the river, and therefore the "settlement supposed to have been carried out under the direction of Joshua, really only took place later than the victory of Barak and Deborah. This later hypothesis is certainly to be preferred; AND, IF CORRECT, it forms a second illustration of the fact that our old Jnarrative of the settlement assigns to the direction of Joshua movements which were really undertaken independently of him, and at a different period." (Burney, p. 34 ; emphasis – N. G.)

The conquest of the south is reconstructed by Burney as follows: In Num. XXI, 1–3, we read: "And the Canaanite, the king of Arad who dwelt in the south, heard tell that Israel came by the way of Atharim; and he fought against Israel, and took some of them captives. And Israel vowed a vow unto Jehovah, and said, if thou wilt indeed deliver this people into my hand, then I will utterly destroy their cities. And Jehovah hearkened to the voice of Israel, and delivered up the Canaanites; and they utterly destroyed them and their cities, and the name of the place was called Horma" On the other hand in Ju. 1: 17 we read: "And Judah went with Simeon his brother and they smote the Canaanites that inhabited Zephath and utterly destroyed it. And the name of the city was called Horma." According to Burney these are two parallel narratives telling the same story (Burney, p. 28): "Adopting then the view that the position of the narrative as it stands in Numbers is the more correct, and that the conquest of Arad in the Negeb (here the conquest of Arad is an accomplished fact, because of his assumption that the two narratives tell the same story – N. G.) took place through a tribal movement northward from the neighbourhood of Kadesh, THE INFERENCE BECOMES PLAUSIBLE that this movement was effected, as related in Judges, by the tribes of Judah and Simeon in alliance with the Kenites". (Burney, pp. 29–30, emphasis – N. G.) Burney ignores the fact that the story in the book of Numbers deals with a number of cities; "I will utterly destroy their cities... and they utterly destroyed them and their cities, and the name of the place was called Horma", that is, the story tells of a number of cities in the region of Arad, whereas the book of Judges is concerned with only one specific city, namely Safad (Zephath). In fact, Burney seizes only on the word "Horma", which is enough for him to combine the two stories and develop an overarching theory. It should be noted that both biblical stories concern cities which, after being destroyed, are called "Horma". In Hebrew horma means 'absolute destruction', and one should therefore understand that Horma emphasizes the extent of utter destruction to the city (or cities) and does not signify a

new name for a new city. The conquest of Caleb, as related in the book of Judges, seems to Burney to have a somewhat contradictory character which causes him to ask (Burney, p. 31): "Is it not, then, at least a plausible theory that the original Calibite story related that Caleb, after first spying out the Negeb, then proceeded to go up and conquer it?" He links this to his former theory about Arad, and sees it as proof that the tribes of Simeon and Judah, together with what he calls North Arabian clans advanced from Kadesh Barnea northward, conquered Arad and from there advanced to a region which later became known as the hill country of Judah (Burney, pp. 31–32) "...IF THIS INFERENCE BE CORRECT," Burney continues, "it will help to explain to us a very striking fact in the later history, viz. the isolation of Judah and Simeon from the rest of the tribes." (pp. 31–32). (The fact that the tribes of Simeon and Judah are not mentioned in the Song of Deborah is sufficient reason for Burney to assume they were isolated from the other tribes). So on the strength of several completely unfounded assumptions, Burney reaches the conclusion that Joshua did not lead the Children of Israel across the Jordan but was only the leader of what he (Burney) calls the Joseph tribes, who gradually infiltrated into the country (Burney, p. 27). Yet the el Amarna Tablets mention the Habiru who are identified with the Hebrews. How, therefore, can this contradiction be explained from Burney's viewpoint? He leans on the fact that the Habiru are mentioned together with the 'Sa-Gaz', and these in their turn are mentioned together with 'Aziru' in 'his' wars in the north of the country. Since in Babylonian epigraphical findings the name 'Sa-Gaz' is supposedly mentioned, Burney concludes that the mention of the Habiru in the el Amarna Tablets in fact refers to an Aramaic invasion of northern Canaan (Land of Israel) (Burney, pp. 74–76). The Bible tells us that Jacob and his sons returned from Padan – Aram, and this story is enough for him to determine that the Habiru are merely tribes—the tribes of Jacob – who conquered the country while returning from Padan – Aram. According to him, they also conquered the town of 'Shechem' at the same time, (Burney, pp. 85–86), and moreover, this is proved by the story of the rape of Dina and the killing of the Shechem inhabitants by Levy and Simeon (Gen. 34). According to Burney "the story is one which beyond a doubt we are dealing with the doings of tribes under the guise of individuals. The small Israelite tribe of Dinah enters into terms of friendly alliance and intermarriage with the Bene – Hamor of Shechem. an event which excites the resentment of the tribes of Simeon and Levy. Under cover of friendly overtures these two latter tribes treacherously attack the Shechemites... and effect a general massacre" (Burney, p. 37). He presumes that the inhabitants of Shechem retaliated and eventually expelled and drove them out, greatly reducing their number (Burney, p. 46). The remnants of the two tribes settled in the desert region bordering on Egypt, and in due time, during the reign of Amenhotep II,

also entered Egypt (Burney, p. 87). Why should a friendly alliance have led to resentment and war? This Burney does not explain, as he does not explain on what evidence he concludes that they were expelled from Shechem and entered Egypt. Indeed he states that "Available evidence is but slight, and is much obscured by accretions representing later points of view, and any such theory must therefore be largely tentative". (Burney, p. 46)

Furthermore, how can Burney's theory explain that in the time of the Joshua conquest Shechem did not remain in the hands of Simeon and Levy but was allotted to the sons of Joseph?

Burney finds the explanation in a phrase in Jacob's blessing; "There is an interesting but obscure allusion in Gen. XLVIII, 22 E, WHICH PROBABLY has a bearing on the question. Here, the aged Jacob is pictured as saying to his son Joseph: 'Moreover I have given to thee one mountain-slope (in the biblical text "portion"

Hebrew – שכם 'Shehem – lit. 'shoulder' – N.G.) above thy brethren, which I took from the hand of the Amorite with my sword and with my bow.'" He (Burney) construes שכם= shechem –not as shoulder but as the town of Shechem (pp. 43–44). Thus Burney arrives at the general conclusion that Hebrew tribes settled in Egypt together with the Hyksos and were later driven out. He finds an echo of this settlement in the biblical narrative of the descent of Abraham to Egypt and of his subsequent expulsion.⁸³ One of these tribes–Yacobel–dwelled in Israel at the time of Thotmes (Thutmosis) III. and was expelled by the Edomites; when the tribe returned from Padan–Aram it managed to conquer a part of the country. These are the Habiru conquests which were concentrated in the region of Shechem. Some of the conquerors (the tribes of Joseph, Simeon and Levy) went to Egypt in the period of Amenophis II, while the other Israelite tribes remained behind. Therefore, the name of the tribe of Asher is mentioned on the stelae of Seti I and Raamses II, and the name Ishirar on the stela of Merneptah. Phytian – Adams commenting on Burney's book concluded:⁸⁴ "Let us... note their most prominent characteristic, as revealed in the 60 pages of Burney's investigation. 'The inference becomes plausible' 'gains some support', 'we seem to be in the brink', 'if this inference be correct', 'it is not improbable that', 'we shall probably not be far wrong', 'we may reasonably conjecture'. These are only a few expressions culled from these pages at random, and they can hardly fail to impress the reader with the extreme tenuity of the structure upon which the thesis is based. Such speculative methods are of course quite legitimate provided that the 'conjectures' of one page do not become the 'facts' of another". These sentences of Phytian–Adams convey only a few of

83 The Bible does not refer to Abraham's expulsion from Egypt but to his leaving it.

84 Phytian–Adams, *Mirage In The Wilderness*, PEQ. 1935, pp. 69–78.

the multitude of speculative assumptions on which Burney bases his theories; these gained plausibility and support from the theories of Rowley and Meek, which seemingly are independent and self-sufficient but in fact are founded on Burney's ideas. Where for Burney the assumptions on one page become 'facts' on the next, for Meek and Rowley, Burney's assumptions have already become facts in support of their arguments. Rowley,⁸⁵ attempting to validate Burney's theories also starts from the assumption that the Exodus took place in the period of Raamses II–Merneptah, and that Goshen was located in Wadi Tumilat. Rowley argues that during the el–Amarna period (14th century B. C.) a group of Israelite tribes penetrated into Canaan from the south. This group included the tribes of Judah, Simeon and Levy, joined by non–Israelite elements: Kenites, Calibbites and others. At the same time more distantly related tribes settled in other parts of the country, that is what he calls "other Leah and concubine tribes" while from the first group Israelite elements separated and migrated to Egypt. In a later period—the period of king Ikhnaton—one of the people of these elements gained power and became governor. Rowley believes that the group of Simeon, Levy and Judah penetrated the region of Shechem and conquered it, though they suffered heavy losses and even defeat. In consequence the Simeonites became absorbed in the tribe of Judah. Also a part of the tribe of Levy combined with the tribe of Judah, but the majority dispersed over the entire country. Simultaneously a small group of the Levites migrated to Egypt, where they joined the group that had earlier arrived there. Four centuries later, in Merneptah's period, the Exodus took place under the leadership of Moses, who on his mother's side was a Kenite. This group which made up the people of the Exodus was comprised mostly of the Joseph tribes and elements of the tribe of Levy; it was this group that penetrated under the leadership of Joshua into the central part of Canaan. Therefore Jericho, Ai and other cities were in fact destroyed by the first wave of the invasion which Rowley identifies with the Habiru. However in the national consciousness the two waves of conquest became merged into one. What then are the true facts and on what rests Rowley's theory?

Primarily it is the assumption that Goshen is in Wadi Tumilat, and accordingly he concludes: "...the fifteenth-century date for the Exodus (according to biblical chronology – N. G.) would make Thothmes III the Pharaoh of the Oppression. No known building operation of this Pharaoh took place in the Nile Delta region, and he is not known to have had a royal residence in the district. It is of the essence of the biblical tradition of the

85 Rowley, *From Joseph To Joshua*. He expresses the same ideas also in: *The Exodus And The Settlement In Canaan*, BASOR. 85, 1942. pp. 27–35. ; *The Date of The Exodus*, PEQ. 1941, pp. 152–157. *Israel's Sojourn In Egypt*

Exodus that the building operations on which the Israelites were engaged were close to the palace,... On the other hand, when the Israelites went into Egypt, they were assigned a district far from the court, "(Rowley, pp. 23–24; see also p. 77). Thus, according to Rowley we have to look for a period when Goshen at the time of the Israelites' entry into Egypt was far from the royal court and situated near it in the period of their exit from it. For this reason he is opposed to the suggestion that the Exodus took place in the 15th century B. C. and that the Israelites entered Egypt during the Hyksos period (Rowley, pp. 25–28): "For the Hyksos monarchs had their capital at Avaris, which has been identified with the Delta residence of Rameses II by recent writers. A descent in Hyksos period and Exodus in the thirteenth century B. C. would therefore mean that the proximity of the Hebrews to the court would be the same in both ages". (Rowley, p. 25.). Elsewhere (pp. 77–79; 89–90; 94) when referring to the biblical statement that the Exodus took place 480 years before king Solomon's reign, he (Rowley) claims this number to be a fictitious one. Moreover, he claims a generation to be "more than forty years "(Rowley, p. 161). However, as seen already in the case of Burney, this claim severely undermines his position, for accepting the notion of a 50 years generation inevitably means accepting the idea that the Israelites entered Egypt only 200 years before they left it, (i. e. four generations). Hence this renders his arguments invalid. Rowley's views are based chiefly on three assumptions, which he regards as indubitable and verified facts, namely:

1. Biblical Goshen located in Wadi–Tumilat.
2. The Israelites' entry into Egypt in the Hyksos period
3. Avaris = Pi–Ramesu= biblical Raamses.

The belief that the Israelites entered Egypt in the Hyksos period is shared by many scholars,⁸⁶ and though they rely on the biblical narrative for its corroboration, it is in fact contradicted by it, as was pointed out already by Yahuda and by Lucas,⁸⁷ They both refer to the biblical narrative about Joseph and his brothers: "...and said, set on bread. And they set on for him by himself, and for them by themselves, and for the Egyptians, which did eat with him, by themselves: because the Egyptians might not eat bread with the Hebrews; for that is an abomination unto the Egyptians". (Gen. 43: 31–32). Hence, they rightly concluded from the fact that the Egyptians would not eat with the Hebrews that the period of the biblical narrative was not that of the Hyksos, since there was nothing whatever to prevent the latter

86 For example: Meek, *Hebrew Origins*, p. 17; Albright, *A Revision of Early Hebrew Chronology*, JPOS, 1920, p. 65. Hall. H. R. *The Ancient History of the Near East*. 1913.

87 Yahuda, *The Accuracy of The Bible*, 1935, p. 46.

from eating with the Hebrews.⁸⁸ The same also arises from the biblical text: "that ye shall say, Thy servants' trade hath been about cattle...that ye may dwell in the land of Goshen; for every shepherd is an abomination unto the Egyptians." (Gen. 46: 34). Not only are the Hyksos not prevented from sitting with the Hebrews, but seeing their name is usually interpreted as "kings of the shepherds", it would be absurd to have them regard shepherds as an abomination. Speaking about Joseph, his brothers and the Egyptians: the Bible text reads: "for he spake unto them by an interpreter"⁸⁹ If this concerned the Hyksos period, why the need for an interpreter?

Rowley has yet another argument to oppose to a 15th century B. C. Exodus. If we accept the Exodus occurred in the 15th century it follows that Joshua's conquest coincides with the period of the el-Amarna Tablets, but according to Rowley, the wars described in the EAT. should not be linked with Joshua's wars, for the Tablets speak of wars by small groups whereas the book of Joshua describes a war by a united army (Rowley, pp. 39, 41)⁹⁰. Moreover he maintains that the names of individuals mentioned in the Tablets and the names in the Bible (relating to the conquest period) bear no relation whatever to each other (pp. 41–42). Added support for his theory is found by Rowley in Albright, who places the destruction of the Canaanite cities in the 13th century. Although the biblical mention of Raamses is regarded by Rowley as an anachronism, he nonetheless accepts that the Exodus took place in the days of Merneptah. However, because the Merneptah stele refers to the undeniable fact of wars in Canaan, Rowley argues: "Yet if Merneptah was the Pharaoh of the Exodus, then the Israelites traditions carry ample memory of their relation with him, and the non-mention of the activity as recorded on the stele is not seriously surprising. For there is no pretence to record every detail of history in the book of Judges and there can be no doubt that the event recorded on the stele was of trivial significance for Israel's history compared with the event of the Exodus." (Rowley, p. 31)

However, if the Merneptah stele is expected to serve as evidence of a war in Canaan fought by the group that left Egypt, one may well ask: How, two years after Merneptah came to power could there be a war in Canaan fought with a group which according to the biblical narrative had entered that country only after 40 years wandering in the desert? Rowley tries to overcome this problem by taking the Israelites straight to Kadesh-Barnea in three days; (Rowley, p. 104): "When the Israelites came out of Egypt we read that after crossing the Red Sea they went three days journey into the

88 This same argument was already pointed out by Yahuda in 1935. (ibid p. 47.). Lucas believes the Israelites entered Egypt in c. 1876 B. C

89 Gen. 42: 23.

90 His opinion here contradicts that of Burney, who believes Joshua's wars were conducted by the individual tribes.

wilderness without finding water (Ex. xv 22). We are not told the name of the place they then reached, BUT IT SEEMS PROBABLE that it was Kadesh. For they came to a place called Marah, where there were some bitter waters which Moses sweetened (ibid 25), and we read that after the sweetening of the waters God made for them statutes and ordinances, and there he tested them (ibid, 25). This would seem to refer to the testing which took place at Massah (ibid. xvii 1–7), which means 'testing'. But Massah is identified with Meribah (ibid. 7), and Meribah is elsewhere located at Kadesh (Num. xx 13; xxvii 14)" (Rowley p. 104). However, in a footnote Rowley states: "On the other hand Ex. xvii, 6f. would appear to associate Massah and Meribah with Horeb. BUT IT IS PROBABLE that there was some conflation here, and that these two verses come from separate sources". Thus he deliberately sidesteps the contradiction; and this allows him to conclude that the Israelites reached Kadesh Barnea in only three days, i. e. in time to be inscribed on Merneptah stele (Rowley p. 137)⁹¹. How could this body of people that included women, children and the aged, along with their flocks and herds be able to traverse the waterless desert and moreover cover the whole distance to Kadesh Barnea in only three days? Apparently only Rowley knows the answer. According to the Bible in order to get from Goshen to the Red Sea (Yam Suph) – a much smaller distance – (the true identification of these places is irrelevant here) – three days walking was needed. His theory of the three days trek to Kadesh, which was designed to explain the Exodus occurring in Merneptah's days, as well as the name Isirar inscribed on the Merneptah stele two years after his ascending to the throne, obliged Rowley to correlate these matters with the biblical account of the 40 years wandering in the Sinai desert; and so he explains: "It is likely, therefore, that two accounts of what happened after the Israelites came out of Egypt have been combined. According to the one they proceeded straight to Kadesh, and there offered sacrifice to Yahweh and received his statutes. They remained there for thirty – eight years and then advanced northwards into territory occupied by Judah. According to the other, they proceeded to the sacred mount of Sinai or Horeb, where they received the divine ordinances, and had a two years' period of wandering in the wilderness." (Rowley, pp. 105–106). From Rowley's text it is not clear; a) Why the Israelites remained in Kadesh thirty – eight years, if their brethren, the tribe of Judah, had already occupied the south of Canaan whom they joined after this prolonged delay? b) If they waited thirty – eight years at Kadesh, how then does it come about that the name Isirar appears on Merneptah's stele?

Rowley tries to get out of this dilemma by explaining (Rowley, p. 106): "We have to distinguish between the history behind the tradition and the

91 Baker – Green also believed the Israelites passed straight through Wadi et-Tieh, but he took them to Eilat and not to Kadesh.

tradition as it is modified by combination with the traditions of the various tribes. If the tribes all came out of Egypt and were all led by Moses, they cannot have gone first to Kadesh and also have gone first to Sinai and Horeb, and one of these traditions would have to be pronounced false. But if some of the tribes came out of Egypt and some did not, and if some were led by Moses and some were not, then it is equally possible that some went to Kadesh and some did not, and that some went to Sinai or Horeb and some did not". But Rowley fails to explain how a tradition of 40 years wandering in the desert came about when one group is said by him to have traversed the Sinai desert in three days straight to Kadesh, whilst the other "had a two years' period of wandering in the wilderness". (Rowley, p. 106) Of course, given his opposition to the theory that the Exodus occurred in the 15th century B. C., there remains for him to explain the biblical statement that the Exodus took place 480 years before Solomon's reign. Rowley, in common with Wellhausen, Burney and others⁹², regards this a fictitious number. However, he tries to bring "added proof" to Burney's presentation, namely the assumption that Balaam son of Beor who was summoned by Balak to curse the Israelites, is the same Bela son of Beor who is mentioned in the Bible as being the first king of Edom (Gen. 36: 32).

The Bible mentions eight kings who ruled in Edom before there reigned a king in Israel, and since in Rowley's opinion "an average of more than fifty years each for a succession of eight kings would be most remarkable, and it can scarcely be seriously maintained. An average of twenty-five years would seem more probable, and this would bring the period from the Exodus to the fourth year of Solomon to something in the neighbourhood of 260 years". Elsewhere (ibid. p. 161) he holds a generation to be "somewhat more than forty years". Hence the number 480 is not for him a reliable one (p. 79).

According to Rowley an Exodus of all the tribes in the 13th century B. C. is inadmissible: "It can claim the support of Ex. 1, 11⁹³ and of the relevance of Egyptian conditions at the time of the Exodus, but it has to deny or explain away the earlier Egyptian references to Asher, and to overpress the philological difficulties in the equation of Habiru and Hebrews so as to dissociate the Amarna letters entirely from the biblical history and it is embarrassed by the Merneptah stele. It is significant that Meek and Albright, no less than many older scholars, hold that there was a double entry into Palestine, even though their account of the double entry differs materially from that represented by Burney." (Rowley, p. 109)

Rowley, like Burney, distinguishes in the Amarna letters accounts of wars in the south and the north of Canaan which, in his opinion, reflect wars of the Hebrew tribes. This conclusion, he says, is made not on the ground of

92 Rowley, *ibid.* p. 94.

93 And they built for Pharaoh treasure cities, Pithom and Raamses

the philological equation of the names Habiru and Hebrews, but because of the evidence of identical activity. According to him the Hebrews, like the Habiru, made war in both the south and the north (Rowley, p. 110). Proof for his assertion he sees, like his predecessors Burney and others, in the biblical account of the unsuccessful attempt to attack Arad; in the story about Horma; and the non-mention of the names of the tribes of Judah and Simeon in the Song of Deborah (Rowley, pp. 102–103; 111). From this he concludes – like his predecessor Burney – that the Israelites entered from the south (Rowley, p. 11), whereas the war in the north he links with the biblical story about Simeon and Levy who killed the inhabitants of Shechem (Rowley, pp. 113–114).

It seems strange and surprising that these magnificent victories (assigned by him to the sons of Jacob), which find powerful expression in the Amarna letters, and refer to the conquest of a vast territory in the south and north, should be reflected in the biblical narratives by no more than two meagre allusions: one– the description of a failure and of an unsuccessful military attempt, in place of the celebration of a famous victory; and the other, an account of the massacre of the inhabitants of Shechem, and nothing beyond this. Admittedly, Rowley states elsewhere (pp. 3–4) that "it was believed that this was due to a harmonistic motive, and that really this was a separate movement in a different age ". Yet whatever this harmonistic motive aimed to achieve, it is illogical and difficult to believe that the intention was to turn victory into failure.

Thus in the way indicated above, Rowley constructs his theory of two separate invasions. However, as we have seen, the principal basis underlying this theory is the determination that the Exodus took place in the period of Raamses II and accordingly that Goshen was located in Wadi-Tumilat, for the reasons that no known building operation took place in the Nile delta prior to Raamses etc. There is also his desire to explain on the one hand, the stelea of Merneptah, Seti-I and Raamses II, and on the other hand, the destruction of Jericho in 1407 B. C. and the TEAT dating from the same period.

Meek,⁹⁴ whose main ideas are also derived from Burney, regards the biblical story of the descent into Egypt of Abraham, Isaac Joseph and Jacob, as connected with and reflecting successive waves of the Hyksos entering Egypt. He sees the story of the settlement in Goshen as reflecting (somehow) division of the land among the conquering Hyksos (p. 17), that is, according to him the entry of the Israelites into Egypt occurred in the Hyksos period (as stated above, the biblical narrative contradicts this belief). On the other hand, he sees the accounts of war in the EAT. as exactly paralleling the biblical narrative of the conquest of Jericho and Canaan by Joshua, and consequently identifies

94 Meek, Hebrew Origins.

the Habiru with the Hebrews; (p. 21), However since the biblical narrative makes mention that the invading tribes did not evict⁹⁵ the inhabitants of the country he argues: "The so called 'conquest' was neither complete nor immediate. The Old Testament picture here, as so frequently elsewhere, is very much foreshortened. The 'conquest' was rather gradual infiltration of the Hebrews into the country by small groups or clans, and it must have continued over a century or more before they had made any considerable portion of the land their own." (pp. 22–23). But this view contradicts what is stated by the EAT., which, as stated, he sees as exactly paralleling the account of the Joshua wars. He therefore continues: "The account in the Tell el – Amarna letters marks the beginning of the movement, while the Old Testament account has to do largely with its final accomplishment, the end product. That the two accounts are not contemporaneous is indicated by the fact that the Canaanite kings mentioned in the two bear altogether different names and so cannot be of the same time." (p. 23). Meek fails to explain how in the two accounts different names came to be linked to the conquest of places with identical names. This points to anything but different periods. Also the archaeological evidence does not indicate that these cities were destroyed twice over within a short period of time. (People are liable to be killed during fighting and wars, hence the names of kings may well be different in the same period, but this hardly applies to place names).

Meek, who makes use also of Garstang's finding that Jericho was conquered in 1407 B. C. considers this date as evidence that Joshua invaded the country in the el–Amarna age (p. 23). Moreover, he quotes a number of additional facts to prove that Israelites were settled already in Canaan from the el–Amarna period. These are:

a. The stele of Seti – I, found at Beth–Shan (Beisan), which mentions the "Apiru" (identified with the Hebrews) (p. 23–24).

b. Inscriptions of Seti I and Raamses II mentioning the name of Isr (Asar), which applies to the inhabitants in the northern region of Israel (Canaan) Most scholars identify this name with the tribe of 'Asher' (p. 30).

c. Jephthah's words to the effect that Israel dwelt on the east bank of the Jordan "...in Heshbon and her towns, and in Aroer and her towns, and in all the cities that be along the coasts of Arnon, three hundred years" (Ju. 11: 26). (Meek, p. 30)

d. The story about Judah who married a Canaanite woman (Gen. 38) is seen by Meek as evidence of intermarriage with and assimilation to the Canaanites; he therefore considers that the Canaanites continued to live among the Israelites. (Meek, p. 30)

e. Merneptah's stele with its mention of a victory over Isirar proving

95 The Hebrew reads "lehorish" which, as explained earlier, was misunderstood and mistranslated as "drive out".

beyond any possibility of doubt that there were Israelites there at that time and the Exodus had not as yet taken place." (Meek, p. 31).

On the other hand, Meek takes the biblical mention of the names Pithom and Raamses as proof that Raamses II was the Pharaoh of the oppression; hence the Exodus could not have occurred earlier than his reign, c. 1290–1223 B. C. (Meek, p. 34). Yet he himself notes that: "A date as late as this, however, conflicts seriously with that of the fall of Jericho and continues: "Out of this dilemma there are only two avenues of escape, both of them quite drastic: either to deny the historicity of Ex. 1: 11, as some scholars do, or to assign the conquest of Jericho to an invasion that antedated the Exodus, as we have done, because the fall of Jericho cannot possibly be brought down to a date as late as Rameses II and there is no good reason to doubt the historicity of Exodus 1: 11. In that case Joshua has to be dissociated from Moses or from the capture of Jericho he cannot possibly be both the successor of Moses and the conqueror of Jericho if the Exodus occurred c. 1200 B. C. and the fall of Jericho c. 1400 B. C., as there is every reason to believe. He is so inextricably connected with Jericho that we have to dissociate him from Moses, and again we would account for the disorder in the Old Testament narratives by the fusion of the different sagas of the several groups that eventually coalesced to make the Hebrew people." (Meek, pp. 34–35). Meek does not consider the existence of a third possibility, namely that his basic assumptions that the oppression in Egypt took place in the days of Raamses II, and that the Exodus occurred during Merneptah's reign may be mistaken. Thus Meek concludes that there were two invasions of the country. One of these c. 1400 B. C. was of Israelite tribes under the leadership of Joshua. These tribes "were more natives than Hebrews", and included the tribes of Asher, Dan, Naphtali, Issachar and Zebulun. They entered from the east across the Jordan, and their conquests are in the north of the country (Meek, pp. 42–44). The second invasion was of Jewish tribes in c. 1200 B. C. under the leadership of Moses. It was accomplished from the south and concerns the tribes of Judah, Simeon, Caleb, Othniel and other related tribes. (Meek, pp. 44–46). According to Meek, the biblical narrative of the conquest is a fusion of the stories of both invasions (p. 45). This he claims on the basis of the supposed disagreement between the Book of Joshua and the Book of Judges concerning the conquest of Debir and other cities, as we have already indicated in an earlier chapter.

The theory of two invasions demands an explanation of how the second group reached Egypt. This is already provided by Meek at the beginning of his book (p. 28), where he refers to the story of the Israelites' attempt to battle uphill (Num. 14: 39–45; Deut. 1: 41–44). Burney had already referred to the same story, but while Burney regards it as referring to a possible successful penetration into Canaan, Meek on the contrary infers from the same story

that the Israelites failed and were driven back and that "some of the more venturesome spirits pushed their way to the very borders of Egypt and by the benevolent government they were allowed entrance into Wadi-Tumilat, the land of Goshen of the Old Testament." (p. 28). This group leaves Egypt c. 1200 B. C. under the leadership of Moses, and penetrates into Israel directly from the south without touching Jericho. Moreover according to Meek, Bedouin tribes, called Habiru and mentioned in the EAT., came from the desert and invaded the region. From the main body of Habiru one group split off and under the leadership of Joshua penetrated into Israel from the south-east and conquered Jericho c. 1400 B. C. On the other hand, the main body of the Habiru continued to advance toward the eastern side of the Jordan. On their advance into the interior of the country their groups separated from the main body of the Habiru and established the kingdoms of Ammon, Moab and Edom, whilst another group, as mentioned, descended to Egypt, which they left c. 1200 B. C. under the leadership of Moses. They were joined by other tribes from Sinai. This latter group penetrated Israel directly from the south and did not pass by Jericho at all. (p. 28ff). Albright, trying to find a compromise between the various theories on this subject, advances the hypothesis that there were two Exoduses. One Exodus came after the expulsion of the Hyksos from Egypt in c. 1550 B. C. but not before 1400 B. C. This was an Exodus of "Josephites" (whom he identifies with the Habiru), who conquered Jericho between c. 1375–1300 B. C. The second Exodus, under the leadership of Moses and Joshua, occurred in 1290 B. C.⁹⁶ that is midway in the reign of Raamses II was of "Levites" (Leah tribes and especially the tribe of Judah). Elsewhere he suggests c. 1260 B. C. as the date for the Exodus and c. 1230 B. C. as the year of entry into Israel⁹⁷. According to Albright the Merneptah stele refers to a war fought in Canaan a short time before 1231 B. C.⁹⁸ or c. 1225 B. C.⁹⁹.

Rowton,¹⁰⁰ also, agrees that an Exodus of "Levites" took place in c. 1125 B. C., that is in the period of Raamses III.

The common denominator of these theories that underlie most views today (not to say all) is the assumption that the oppression of the Israelites in Egypt took place in the period of Raamses II, the Exodus in the period of Raamses – Merneptah, and that the location of Goshen was in Wadi –

96 Albright, *Archaeology and The Date of The Hebrew Conquest of Palestine*, BASOR, 58, 1935, pp. 10–18.

– *The Israelite Conquest of Canaan In The Light of Archaeology*, BASOR 74, 1939, pp. 11–23;

– *A Revision of Early Hebrew Chronology*, JPOS. 1920 – 21, pp. 68–79

97 Albright, *A Revision of Early Hebrew Chronology*, JPOS. 1920–21, p. 79

98 Albright, *Archaeology and The Date of The Hebrew Conquest*, BASOR. 58, 1935, p. 17.

99 Albright. *A Revision of Early Hebrew Chronology*, JPOS. 1920–1921, p. 79.

100 Rowton, *The Problem of The Exodus*, PEQ, 1953, p. 46.

Tumilat. All in complete disregard of the biblical narratives about the forty years wandering in the desert, and the 480 years that elapsed from the Exodus till king Solomon, etc. To these scholars the biblical narratives are but a gathering of traditions which were passed on orally until a later period when they were recorded in writing. Thus the story of a single, unified conquest of the whole country is but a fusion of different traditions about different conquests in different periods (Burney, Meek and others). The story of the conquest of Ai really refers to the conquest of the city of Beth-El, but the two conquests were mixed up by the Israelites as the story was passed down the generations. (Albright)¹⁰¹. According to these scholars the biblical stories do not belong to the realm of true historical facts, despite the biblical statement that Moses himself wrote about the wanderings of the Israelites – from the day they left Egypt till their arrival in Israel (Canaan), and about the law-giving, which it is difficult to imagine could have been preserved verbatim, had those laws been passed on orally from generation to generation. One of the main reasons for this approach seems to be that the beginning of phonetic writing was assigned to about 1000 B. C., hence it was thought, that the biblical narratives about the Exodus and the conquest had to be oral traditions. Moreover this explanation seemingly contributed to the clarification of some hitherto unsolved problems. Thus when the Protosinaïtic inscriptions and the Ras Shamra tablets were discovered, the beginning of the phonetic script was advanced to the middle of the 15th century B. C.; Accordingly there is nothing to debar us from accepting that events were recorded in writing – as indeed is attributed by the Bible to Moses and Joshua at the period of the Exodus and the conquest of Israel, Yet the change of conceptual attitude towards writing did not produce a parallel change of conceptual attitude to the biblical narratives, which are still thought to be based on oral traditions. It should be observed that the theories of Burney, Rowley, Meek Albright etc. lack all real basis in archaeology or the Bible. They serve merely to smooth out the contradictions occasioned by the view that the oppression took place in the reign of Raamses-II and that the Exodus occurred in the period of Merneptah. And this in complete disregard of the biblical text, or in Conder's words: "We know nothing of Hebrew history outside the Bible for this period, and the Bible discountenances such suppositions."¹⁰²

The theory that Raamses was the Pharaoh of the oppression also extends to the identification of the place where the Israelites crossed the Red Sea. The Bible particularizes the route taken by the Israelites from the moment they left Goshen-Raamses until they reached Yam Suph (Red-Sea). Their second encampment after Goshen was Succoth, and thereafter "...they took

101 Albright, *Archaeology and The Date of The Hebrew Conquest of Palestine*, BASOR. 1935, p. 15.

102 *The Date of The Exodus*, PEP. 1896, p. 256

their journey from Succoth, and encamped in Etham, in the edge of the wilderness" (Ex. 13: 20), and here "...the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, that they turn and encamp before Pi-Hahiroth, between Migdol and the Sea, over against Baal-Zephon: before it shall ye encamp by the Sea" (Ex. 14: 1-3)

The journey from Goshen to Yam-Suph, as related in the Bible, took three days. This is confirmed by Josephus who writes: "Quitting the country by the shortest route they arrived on the third day at Beelsephon, a place beside the Red Sea."¹⁰³ Accordingly if we assume that Raamses-Goshen was really located in the Wadi-Tumilat area (and this assumption is compelling, once we accept that Raamses II was the Pharaoh of the oppression), it follows logically that the crossing place on Yam-Suph was about three days' walking distance from this area. (i. e. Wadi Tumilat) This has resulted in different theories regarding the crossing place on the Red Sea, corresponding to the different identifications of the places mentioned in the Bible: Succoth, Etham, Baal-Zephon, Migdol and Pi - Hahiroth. Thus Brugsch identified Yam-Suph with the Mediterranean, and he contends that the Israelites never crossed the Red Sea at all, but marched along a narrow strip of shore between the Serbonian lagoon and the Mediterranean.¹⁰⁴

According to Trumbull¹⁰⁵ the theory of the israelites never crossing the Red Sea etc. was first suggested by Haas at the beginning of the 18th century, and subsequently revived from time to time, by Richter at the end of the same century (1778), by Tierbach (1830,) and by Schleiden (1858) and finally by Brugsch (1874) who supposedly found support for it in Egyptian monuments¹⁰⁶. Subsequently many other scholars adopted this theory. Thus

103 Josephus, Ant. II, 315, Loeb Classical Library, London., MCML. (1950).

104 Brugsch, Egypt Under The Pharaohs, 1891, pp. 95-97; L'exode et Les Monuments Egyptiens, 1875, pp. 8, 12, 19-25.

Brugsch identified Goshen with Phacusa (Fakus), Raamses with Tanis, (San el Haggar), Etham with Kheta (of the Papyri) and with Tel Defneh, while Migdol he believes is the Migdol mentioned in the book of Antonin, situated 18 km. south of Pelusium, which he identifies with Tel Habooa (or Tel Samut) near Kantara. Pi-Hahiroth he locates in the Serbonis, while Baal Zephon is placed by him in Mount Kasius in El Kelzeh. He identifies Succoth with T. K. U. of the Papyri. See also: Chester, A Journey To The Biblical Sites In Lower Egypt, PEF, 1880, p. 144.

Conder, The Exodus, PEF. 1883, pp. 85-86. Conder like Robertson Smith disagrees with the identification of Etham with Kheta of the Papyri (ibid. p. 85)

105 Trumbull, Kadesh Barnea, p. 403. See also: Lagrange E, L'itineraire Des Israelites etc. RB. 1900, p. 79

106 Trumbull, ibid. p. 403. See also: Brugsch, L'exode Et Les Monuments Egyptiens, Brugsch bases his belief on a passage from Papyrus Anastasi which tells about a chase after two escaped slaves, and that the pursuer reached T. K. U on the tenth day of the month and Kheta on the twelfth day. Brugsch who identified T. K. U. with Succoth, and Kheta with Etham insists however that the distance between

Noth¹⁰⁷ identifies Baal-Zephon with Mehmedia, Migdol with Tel-el-Hir and Yam-Suph with the Serbonian lake.

According to Eissfeldt the Israelites left Raamses (the site of which he does not identify) and from there went on to El-Gisir, there changing direction by turning through an angle of 90 to as much as 180 degrees, and then advancing toward the Mediterranean where they finally encamped near Pi-Hahiroth; this he does not identify, but places between Migdol – identified by him with Tel-el-Hir and the Mediterranean and Baal-Zephon, which he identifies with Casius in Mehmedia.

Chester traversed himself along the land-strip of the Serbonian lagoon and came to a point where it is cut off by the sea and does not permit passage by foot; and here is his comment: "The map. is a sheer invention and creation of Herr Brugsch's imagination... I now saw that it was so ...all communication with the mainland being here impracticable... the remark may be allowed that it was scarcely fair of Herr Brugsch to construct a map and publish it to the world without having himself visited the place depicted."¹⁰⁸

Trumbull writes in a similar vein: "Brugsch is clearly at fault in his Exodus theory, and is at variance with positive declarations and exhibits of fact made by himself elsewhere in his writings. He has rearranged sites, changed directions, and mis-stated distances, as if for the purpose of conforming the facts to a preconceived theory of the Exodus." (Kadesh Barnea p. 404). Both Ebers and Renouf insist that Brugsch is entirely wrong in the location of Pi-Hahiroth, with Renouf going to the extreme of saying that Brugsch's attempt to identify this site "involves the wrong reading of many words, a fatally erroneous and exploded system of etymology and false theories of decipherment and language."¹⁰⁹

Brugsch theory of a Mediterranean passage is completely at variance with the biblical account. Conder, drawing on the survey of the Royal British Engineers and on the Geography of Ptolemy (A. D. 147), concluded that the region of the Serbonian lake did not exist at the time of the Exodus¹¹⁰. He strongly disagrees with the views of Brugsch, Scarth and Chester (to be discussed later). Conder's disagreement is based inter alia on the fact that if Brugsch's and Chester's identifications of the places (of the Exodus route), are accepted. it becomes difficult to explain the distances which the Israelites had to traverse by foot. There is also the notion of Barton that in late geological times, the region north of Cairo was a bay of the Mediterranean¹¹¹. About

these two places was only one day's walk.

107 Noth, Exodus, pp. 109–110.

108 Chester, *ibid.* pp. 154–155.

109 Trumbull, Kadesh Barnea, pp. 373–374; 405.

110 Conder, *The Exodus*, PEF, 1883, pp. 83, 86;

Topography of The Exodus, PEF, 1880, pp. 231–234

111 Barton, *Archaeology and The Bible*, p. 4

the crossing of Yam–Suph the biblical text reads: "Speak unto the children of Israel, that they turn and encamp before Pi–Hahiroth (Ex. 14: 2). The verb "turn" (Hebrew – יָשׁוּבוּ yashuvu) in this verse means in Hebrew a turning back, i. e. either an exact retracing of steps along 'the same track, or a return to the point of departure but not exactly along the same route. If we accept that the Israelites passed along the narrow land–strip of lake Serbonian, it follows on the basis of the biblical statement and of the topography of the region that when ordered to turn back they would have found themselves either at a fairly advanced place along the way to the land of Israel or on the way to the Port–Said region. of today. Indeed Chester has the Israelites advance in the direction of Port Said but then makes them turn back, probably in order to harmonize his theory with this particular biblical verse. Earlier already Conder had pointed to the contradictions and difficulties presented by this verse; and he therefore suggested an emendation; i. e. veyeshvu (=וַיֵּשְׁבוּ abide, dwell, settle), instead of veyashuvu (return).¹¹² The two suggested solutions, one by Brugsch and the other by Chester, are both implausible and illogical. If the Israelites were already at an advanced point along the way to the Land of Israel, there was neither rhyme nor reason for them to turn back, so that they could cross the Serbonian lagoon, and strike the same path somewhat farther from where they had been when ordered to return? As to the Egyptians, it is hard to imagine they would be so stupid and foolhardy as to pursue the Israelites into this narrow strip of land which permits only a narrow column of people to pass along it? In these circumstances it would be possible to capture only a very few stragglers, at best. It is highly unlikely that the Egyptians were so ignorant of the topography of their own country not to know that this narrow strip of land extended to the other side of the shore? All that was required, therefore, was to send a small contingent of men to bar the Israelites' exit to the shore, and capture them all at one blow with no risk. Moreover, as it is generally agreed that the "Way of the Philistines" should be traced along the sea shore; and hence, since this route must have been known to the Egyptians, there was no reason, topographic or other, to prevent them from barring the way to the Israelites. Was it likely that the builders of the pyramids and conquerors of the East were so completely lacking in savoir faire? If Moses was capable of leading the Israelites out of Egypt, he most probably was familiar with the region, especially as he

112 Conder was not aware that "yeshiva"(staying) in biblical Hebrew means a long and not a short stay, as shown by such verses as: "Now the sojourning (Hebrew: moshav) of the children of Israel, who dwelt (Hebrew ; yashvu) in Egypt, was four hundred and thirty years". (Ex. 12: 40)."And Israel dwelt (Hebrew; vayeshev) in the land of Egypt, in the country of Goshen" (Gen. 47: 27). Moreover, if Conder's interpretation is taken as correct it makes little sense to repeat twice the same instruction, i. e. veyeshvu – "stay – (Conder's interpretation) and encamp"

is credited with knowing about a passage along a narrow land-strip of the Serbonian Lagoon. It is nonsense, therefore, to believe that Moses would lead the Israelites in the direction of Port Said, a swampy region in the past as it is today, if his real goal was the Land of Israel. Chester, like Brugsch, believes that the crossing of Yam-Suph was in the area of the Mediterranean, though not along the narrow land-strip of the Serbonian lake, because; "It is remarkable that throughout the direct narrative there is no mention of a Jam-suf or Sea of Reeds at all, the Jam, the sea alone, is spoken of. The Israelites were commanded to encamp not by the Sea of Reeds but by the sea which can scarcely be understood of any other body of water than the Mediterranean. In all this direct narrative not one word is said about any Jam-Suf or sea of reeds –the sea alone is spoken of, and that in a manner suitable to the physical features of the region between the Gelse Hemediyeh, the presumed Pi-Hahiroth and El Gelse, mount Cassius, the presumed Baal Zaphon."¹¹³.

According to Chester, the children of Israel left Raamses-Goshen (identified by him as Tell Fakusa) and passed through Succoth to Etham, which he identifies with Tell Defneh; and from there went to Migdol—which he identifies with Tell-El-Hir¹¹⁴ – and encamped before today's Gelseh-Hemediyeh (ibid. p. 107). As stated, he also "sends" the Israelites in the direction of Port Said and makes them turn back. Gardiner¹¹⁵ likewise identifies Yam-Suph with the Mediterranean, but locates it in the area of lake Menzelah and not the Serbonian lake. According to him, Raamses (Goshen) was located in the area of Pellusium, Pithom he identifies with Tell-Rotaba and the biblical Migdol with Tell-El-Hir; whereas Baal-Zaphon he believes must be sought in the far north, though he does not state exactly where. He disagrees with the identification of Succoth with T. K. U. mentioned in the Egyptian Papyri. Gardiner's point of departure is that Raamses equals Pi-Ramesu, the Pharaonic city in the Delta; and he supposes that it was the northernmost city from which the Israelites were said to have made their Exodus.¹¹⁶

113 Chester, *Notes on The Topography of The Exodus*, PEP. 1881, p. 107. Brugsch, also, was of the opinion that the failure to mention Yam-Suph proves the crossing of the Mediterranean sea by the Israelites (*L'exode et Les Monuments Egyptiens*), p. 5.

114 Chester justifies this identification as follows: "My reasons for suggesting that Tell el Hir is the site of the Migdol of Exodus and the Magdolon of the Greeks are that at the point I found not only the remains of a city of large extent and evidently of considerable importance in ancient times, but that at the same place I found a massive square tower of crude brick, the remains of a strong and important frontier fortress." (ibid. p. 106; see also pp. 145–146)

115 Gardiner, *The Geography of The Exodus etc.* pp. 87–96
–Tanis and Pi-Ramesse' A Retraction, *JEA* (19), 1933, pp. 122–128;
–*The Geography of The Exodus*, *Recueil Champollion*, pp. 203–215.

116 Gardiner, *The Geography of The Exodus*, *Recueil Champollion*, p. 209.

According to the Anastasi Papyrus, Pi-Ramessu was located on the edge of the desert¹¹⁷, whereas the Israelites had to travel some days before they reached Yam-Suph. Consequently Gardiner concludes that Yam-Suph is identical with lake Menzaleh, and that the biblical chronicler "have been ignorant of actual geographical facts and had wrongly identified Pi-Ramessu with Tanis, etc."¹¹⁸ A view similar to Chester's based on the fact that in the biblical text the word YAM (sea) is frequently mentioned but YAM-SUPH (Sea of Reeds) only twice, is advanced by Scarth.¹¹⁹ Notwithstanding the very fact that YAM-SUPH does appear in the text, if only twice, leads him to conclude that the crossing must have taken place in an area which on one side was bordered by the YAM-SUPH and on the other by the YAM i. e. the Mediterranean.¹²⁰ Indeed, it is hard to conceal one's impatience with these ideas and formulations –they are obviously the product of people not familiar with the Hebrew language for whom the biblical idiom is completely alien. Indeed, it is difficult to understand how they ever found adherents.¹²¹ Admittedly in Exodus 14, the word YAM (sea) only is mentioned: "between Migdol and the sea" "Encamp by the sea", etc. . However at the beginning of the narration in chapter 13 we read: "But God led the people about through the way of the wilderness of the Red Sea", (Heb. Yam-Suph) (Ex. 13: 18), and at the end of the same narrative, in the Song of the Sea (Heb. Yam-Suph) (Ex. 15: 4); "His chosen captains also are drowned in the Red Sea." Anyone conversant with the Hebrew language knows that the demands of stylistic variation make it unnecessary to repeat a name in full once it has been mentioned at the beginning of a narrative. A specific example is found in the book of Exodus; the Israelites have reached the "Wilderness of Sin" (Ex. 16: 1), but after its first full mention the name always appears in shortened form as "wilderness": "And the whole congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness" (Ex. 16: 2); "into this wilderness" (Ex. 16: 3); "toward the wilderness" (Ex. 16: 10); "in the wilderness" (Ex. 19: 2). A more striking example perhaps is found in Ex. 19: 2: "For they were departed from Rephidim, and were come to the desert of

117 Gardiner, *ibid.* p. 210

118 Gardiner, *ibid.* pp. 210–213.

119 Scarth, *A Few Thoughts Upon The Route of The Exodus*, PEP. 1882, p. 244.

120 Snaith, (V. T. 1965, pp. 395–398), however, regards the expression of "the depths have covered them" (Ex. 15: 5) as proof that "The Yam Suph was the deep sea away to the south with its tides and great depths, all of it very different from the Mediterranean which was close at hand and the only sea they really knew".

121 Noth, *Exodus*, pp. 109–110.

Aharoni, *Eretz Israel In The Biblical Period*, pp. 169–170, (Hebrew), accepts the crossing of Yam Suph in the Serbonian lake and draws a map to correspond. See also *Map of the Exodus in the Biblical Atlas* (Heb.), Mazar – Shapira. *Map in Toldot Eretz Israel etc.* p. 142. Edit. Ministry of Defence Israel, 1980.

Sinai and had pitched in the wilderness; and there Israel camped before the Mount." The name of the mountain goes unmentioned and only in verse 11 does one read "Mount Sinai". Subsequently the site is referred to in the text NINE times as merely "mountain" and twice only as "Mount Sinai". Adopting the views of Chester, Brugsch and Scarth it would appear that whenever the word "mountain" is mentioned alone this refers to the mount of Moriah, and likewise the mention of 'desert' only, without addition, invariably refers to the Negev desert. Perhaps this can serve as "proof" that the Israelites never left Israel at all. The belief that the Israelites crossed the Mediterranean Sea because the name Yam-Suph does not appear in full is quite absurd. It so happens that the biblical text frequently mentions the Yam-Suph as the place of the crossing¹²², and it is also mentioned similarly in the apocryphal writings¹²³ as well as in Acts.¹²⁴ The name "Yam-Suph" is commonly interpreted as "The Sea of Reeds". Since no reeds grow today on the banks of the Red Sea, this is seen by some scholars to imply that it should not be identified with the biblical Yam-Suph¹²⁵. We shall not inquire here into the meaning of "Yam-Suph" or seek to find out if reeds did or did not grow on its banks, but simply try to learn from the Bible which sea is meant by Yam-Suph. In the account of the locust plague we read: "and the Lord brought an east Heb. – kadim – (קדים) wind upon the land all that day, and all that night; and when it was morning, the east wind brought the locust." (Ex. 10: 13–14). And further in the same chapter, verse 19: "And the Lord turned a mighty strong west (Heb קז = yam = sea) wind, which took away the locusts, and cast them into the Red Sea;" It is evident from this account that the sea wind (in the A. V. translation: 'west wind') is the opposite to the wind from KEDEM, that is the wind from the east (Heb; kedem = קדם east). This sea wind carried the locusts to the Red Sea (Yam Suph). We conclude therefore:

1. Yam Suph is not to be identified with Yam (i. e. the Mediterranean)
2. Yam Suph must be identified with a sea located east of Egypt and opposite the Mediterranean (i. e. Yam), that is, today's Red Sea.

In contrast to the above ideas we have the views of many other scholars who claim that today's Red Sea is indeed the biblical Yam-Suph but suggest different identifications for the places–Pi–Hahiroth, Baal–Zephon etc. mentioned in the text; and therefore reach different conclusions regarding the place of crossing. Conder believes the crossing was made near Kantara, somewhere between Birket–Ballah and lake Menzaleh,¹²⁶ He identifies Pi–

122 Jos. 2: 10; 4: 23 ; 24: 6. Deut. 11: 3–5. Ps. 106: 9 ; 136: 3

123 Judith, 5: 13; I Maccabees 4: 10.

124 Acts 7: 36.

125 For example: Wright, *Biblical Archaeology*, p. 61.

Javis, *The Forty Years Wanderings of The Israelites*, PEQ. 1938. pp. 24–2

126 Conder, *Kadesh – Barnea*, PEP. 1885, p. 25.

Hahiroth with Tell-el-Hir, and as to Baal-Zephon he looks for it somewhere east of Birket-Ballah. He disagrees with Brugsch's identification of Kheta of the Papyri with the biblical Etham, and sides with Robertson Smith who questions this identification.¹²⁷ Lucas thinks the place of the crossing was at Lake Timsah. Naville who identifies Pithom with Tell-el-Mashuta, Migdol with Serapeum, and locates Etham in the area of Lake Timsah, considers the crossing was at mid-point between the Bitter Lakes and Lake Timsah.¹²⁸ According to Trumper the Israelites made the crossing in the area of today's Bitter Lakes.¹²⁹ Petrie believes the crossing was at Serapeum between the Bitter Lakes and Lake Timsah,¹³⁰ while Gell claims it was near Shalufeh. He identifies Gebel-Gineffeh with Migdol, and locates Goshen in Wadi Tumilat.¹³¹ Ali Bey Shafi¹³² believes that Raamses was located in Kantir, and he identifies Succoth with the ruins of Salieh; Etham he locates in the desert of Salieh; Migdol he identifies with Tell el-Hir; Baal Zephon with Tell Defneh; consequently he argues that the crossing of Yam Suph was made in Lake Ballah. Bourdon places Goshen in Wadi—Tumilat near Seft-el-Henna; Succoth and Etham he identifies with T. K. U and Kheta of the Papyri; and Etham, according to him, should be identified with Serapeum. Moreover he believes that in the past the Red Sea was continuous with the Bitter Lakes, and consequently the crossing of Yam-Suph must have been near Gebel Gineffeh¹³³. On the other hand, Stanley¹³⁴ claims the Israelites crossed in the region of today's Suez and he identifies Raamses with Tell Mashuta; Pi-Hahiroth with Ageroud, Baal Zaphon with Suez, and Migdol with the Muktalla hills. Ebers, as quoted by Trumbull,¹³⁵ identifies Pi-Hahiroth with Ageroud, and Baal Zaphon with Gebel Ataka. Mallon¹³⁶, like Gardiner, places Raamses in the Pelusiatic region but disagrees with the identification of Succoth with T. K. U. and the Kheta of the Papyri. He also regards today's Red Sea as the biblical Yam Suph, and

–Topography of The Exodus, PEP. 1880, pp. 231–234.

–The Exodus, PEP. 1883, pp. 88–89.

127 Conder, Kadesh-Barnea, p. 24.

128 Lucas, The Route of The Exodus etc, p. 41

Naville, The Exodus and The Crossing of The Red Sea—article in p. 165 – Illustrated Bible Treasury, edited by Wright, London, 1896.

129 Trumper, The Route of The Exodus, PEQ, 1915, pp. 22–29. He identifies Pithom with Tell el Mashuta, and Baal Zaphon with Gebel Kabrit.

130 Petrie, Palestine and Israel, p. 65;

– Egypt and Israel, p. 39.

– Researches In Sinai p. 205.

131 Gell, The Exodus, PEP. 1883, pp. 97–98.

132 Gazelle, Les Localisations De L'exode etc. RB. 1955, p. 331.

133 Bourdon, La Route De L'exode De La Terre De Gesse' A Mara, RB. 1932, pp. 370–392, 538–549.

134 Stanley, Sinai and Palestine, pp. 37–66.

135 Trumbull, Kadesh Barnea, pp. 406; 423.

136 Mallon, Les Hebreux En Egypte, pp. 162–175.