

Why Mount Horeb is not in Saudi Arabia and why the crossing of the Sea of Reeds did not occur at the Gulf of Aqabah

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In recent years, this author has been repeatedly asked by his readers about the equation of Mount Horeb with Mount Jebel al-Lawz (in North Arabia) and about the crossing of the Red Sea at Nuweibeh, which has been advocated above all in popular scientific circles. He has therefore decided to discuss here, why he does not share this view. Undoubtedly, the topic requires a more extensive discussion. On the other hand, the discussion offers further evidence for the working hypothesis advocated by this author and his co-author Uwe Zerbst¹, since it shows that the traditional arguments for the localization of Horeb in Sinai and of Yam Suph on the eastern border of the Egyptian Nile Delta are clearly compatible with the postulated early date of Exodus and Conquest (also shared by J. Bimson and D. Rohf²), even if this has been queried by proponents of the late date, such as James Hoffmeier and Kenneth Kitchen.³

During recent decades, some authors have repeatedly argued that biblical Mount Horeb is not to be found in the southern part of the Sinai Peninsula, but rather much further to the east, on the North Arabian Peninsula, in the mountainous region of Jebel al-Lawz or more precisely so at Jebel Maqla.⁴ This, so they say, is supported not only by the biblical narrative, but also by the description of the miraculous crossing, which they believe must have been a deeper body of water, as Pharaoh's cavalry completely drowned in it.

In the following, it will be shown, however, that there exists solid archaeological and topographical evidence in favor of the traditional view. Thus, it indicates that immediately after their Exodus from Goshen, the Israelites did not take the long way across the Sinai Desert to Arabia, but desperately moved to and thru the desert along the fortified eastern border of Egypt and the Bitter Lakes before they finally reached the eastern shore of the Sea of Reeds on dry feet. Subsequently they continued south along the eastern coast of the Gulf of Suez towards southern Sinai to camp at Jebel Musa (or at another candidate site for Mount Horeb in that region), where Israel would receive the Decalogue.⁵

Horeb in Arabia

One of the main reasons put forth by proponents of the eastern Exodus route is the claim by the Apostle Paul that the biblical mountain was located in Arabia (Galatians 4:25).⁶ However, we know from several classical sources that the term Arabia encompassed a much wider region during the Hellenistic-Roman period than it does today, as it included areas further to the west (even including the Wadi Tumilat in the Egyptian eastern delta). Also, the pilgrim Egeria in the late 4th century AD mentions Clysma (i.e. the

modern town of Suez) “in Arabia” and clearly locates the site on the eastern border of Egypt (Fig. 1).

A similar understanding of Arabia is held by the classical authors Strabo, Diodorus Siculus, Ptolemy and Pliny.⁷ The close association of the eastern Nile delta with Arabia is not surprising, as Arabian tribes had settled there since the 7th century BC, when king Esarhaddon of Assyria commissioned them to accompany his military convoys to Egypt with camels between 676–669 BC.⁸ During the reign of the Achaemenid king Cambyses II (525–521 BC) and afterwards, the whole region, including Gaza, was under Arab influence and was controlled by Arab rulers.⁹

One of these rulers was called Geshem of Qedar, who is mentioned in the Book of Nehemiah (Nehemiah 2:19; 6:1). Silver bowls of this specific ruler with the Aramaic inscription “Geshem son of Shahar” and of his son “Qainu son of Geshem” were discovered at Tall al-Mashkuta (likely the ancient site of Succoth) in the Wadi Tumilat near the city of Ismailia and the Suez Canal. The biblical scholar Edwin Yamauchi states that Geshem led “a powerful north Arabian confederacy that controlled vast areas from northeast Egypt to northern Arabia and southern Palestine.”¹⁰ It is therefore not surprising that biblical Goshen was called “Gesem Arabia” during the Hellenistic period.¹¹

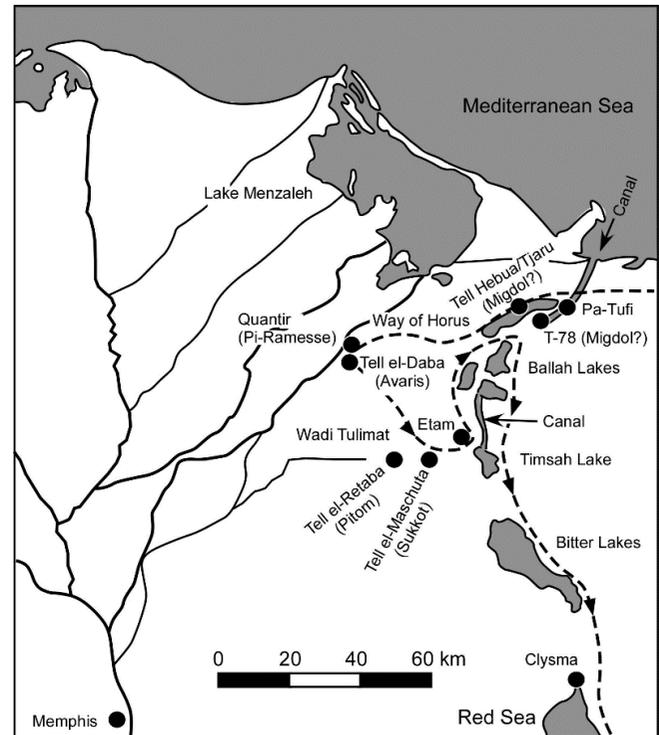


Fig. 1. Map of the Egyptian eastern delta showing the localities and waters discussed in the article. (After Dr. Bryant Wood, Associates for Biblical Research)

Edom, Seir and Paran were not only situated to the northeast of the Gulf of Aqaba

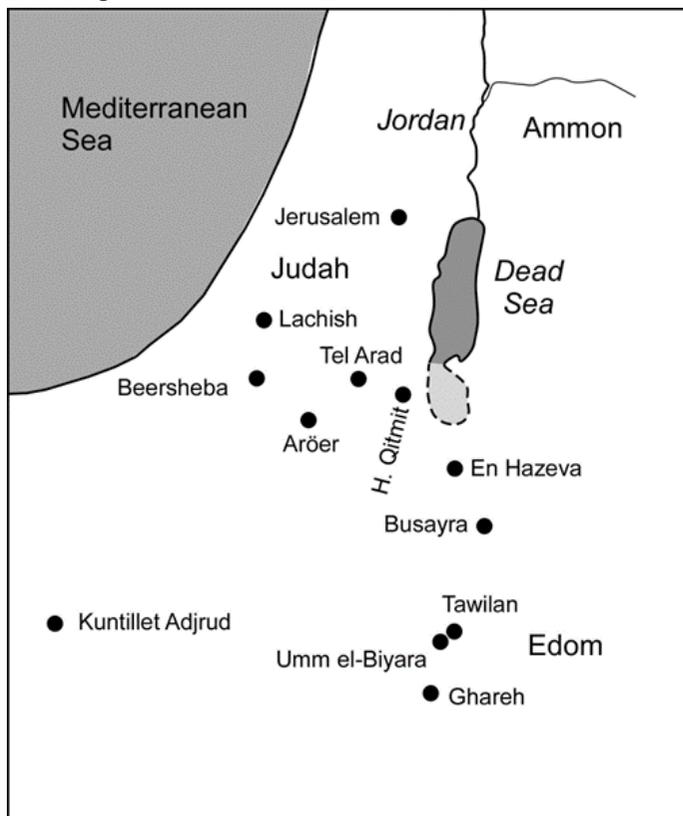
Another reason why some scholars located Horeb east of the Red Sea is their claim that Edom, Seir and Paran (regions crossed by the Israelites on their way to the Promised Land) are only located northeast of the Gulf of Aqaba. In the following, however, it will be shown that at least parts of this region were located west of the Arabah Valley.

Although the core area of the kingdom of Edom with its main centers Busayra (biblical Bozrah), Tawilan and Umm al-Biyara in the 1st millennium BC was located northeast of the Gulf of Aqaba¹² (Eusebius, *Onomasticon* 260:150), the Edomite peripheral zone no doubt also encompassed areas as far north as the southern border of Judah and the northern Negeb.¹³

For here archaeologists unearthed several Edomite settlements (for instance En Hazeva

and Horvat Qitmit) from the late 8th–6th centuries BC, whose objects (inscribed sherds, seals with Edomite divine names, painted and unpainted pottery and cult objects) have been clearly identified as Edomite in origin (Fig. 2).¹⁴ Edomite pottery was also found at several Judean sites in that region (e.g. at Beersheba, Tel Aroer, Tel Ira, and Tel Qudeirat), suggesting a cultural interchange between the local inhabitants (Fig. 3).¹⁵

In addition, Judean ostraca from the same period provide evidence that Edomites resided near Judah's southern border and increasingly became a threat there.¹⁶ The area of "Teman" (used in the Old Testament as a synonym for Edom and Paran, cf. Habakkuk 3:3-4; Obadiah 9)¹⁷ – also known as the dwelling place of Yahweh (as indicated by inscriptions from Kuntillet Adjrud [Pithos 2]¹⁸) – likely included parts of northern Sinai, where Kuntillet Adjrud is in fact located.¹⁹ Church father Jerome also seems to have held a similar view concerning this region.²⁰



Figs. 2–3. Bottom left: Map of the Negeb-Arabah region showing the most important Edomite forts of the 7th–6th century BC and the Judean trading posts along the southern border of Judah where Edomite pottery has been found.

Above: Fluted Edomite bowl from Tell Beersheba. (Photo J. Schweinsberg, courtesy of Lily Singer-Avitz, Institute of Archaeology, Tel Aviv University)

Already during the Late Bronze Age, the region of Seir (the name Edom is only attested from the Ramesside period onwards²¹) included peripheral zones bordering the southern mountains of "Judah", as appears from the correspondence of Abdi-Heba of Jerusalem to his overlord in Egypt (Amarna letter 288:26).²² While biblical tradition associates the mountains of Seir and its Edomite inhabitants with Esau's descendants (undoubtedly suggesting their geographical proximity), Š3sw-nomads from both Seir and Edom are listed side by side in a topographical list at Amarah West from the reign of Ramesses II, which also suggests their proximity.²³ Inscriptions from the reigns of Amenhotep III (Soleb), Ramesses II (Amarah West) and Ramesses III (Medinet Habu) also mention a "Shasu district of Yahu" (t3š3sw yhw3).²⁴ A relationship between this "Shasu-district of Yahu" and "Yahweh of Teman" mentioned at Kuntillet Adjrud has been discussed.²⁵ Consequently, Shmuel Ahituv concludes that these Shasu clans were not only

found to the east of the Arabah Valley, but also in northern Sinai and the Negeb:

As there is no archaeological or historical evidence for Egyptian penetration into the high mountain country of Edom-Seir, east of the Arabah Valley, it is most probable that the southern Negeb and northern Sinai are referred to in these inscriptions.²⁶

As a matter of fact, campaign lists from the New Kingdom period confirm that the Egyptian army encountered Shasu bedouins when it traversed northern Sinai and the Negeb (this is particularly the case as seen on the temple reliefs of Seti I²⁷) before the soldiers reached the coastal plain of southern Canaan.²⁸

Based on these observations, it is apparent that Seir and Edom encompassed undefined stretches of land throughout an extensive grazing area, where non-sedentary clans resided seasonally.²⁹ The fact that there existed also smaller settlements (perhaps even small principalities) in their nomadic hinterland and copper mines where smelting was carried out, as archaeological evidence shows, does not contradict this view. Similarly, also Paran included tracts of land to the west of the Arabah Valley, i.e. along the so-called Nahal Paran. As the author has argued elsewhere, El-Paran mentioned in Genesis 14:6 may well be located near Har Karkom in the central Negeb, and therefore it too was located west of the Arabah.³⁰ Given the vastness of the grazing terrain, Paran even included tracts of land as far west as southeastern Sinai in the so-called Wadi Feiran area, where many Nabataean inscriptions referring to this region as p'rn were discovered.³¹

Moreover, it cannot be ruled out that these names “migrated” with the bedouins during their search for better pasture lands. In addition, the

toponyms of this area have such common names that they easily apply to other steppe regions on the edge of the desert as well. Teman, for example, simply means “South Land” while Seir means “scrub” or “wooded area”.³² Paran likely means “splendid” (from p'r I), “rich in caves” or “shrubs” (from p'r II). For this reason alone, a too narrow definition of these localities appears unwarranted.

Was Sinai part of the Egyptian heartland at the time of the Exodus?

Another argument often brought to the fore by adherents of the Arabian Horeb relates to the biblical tradition that the mountain of God lay outside Egypt at the time of the Exodus. Indeed, the biblical narrative appears to convey that both Midian and Mount Horeb were outside Egypt's direct sphere of influence. Thus, Moses refers to himself as a “stranger” in the land of his father-in-law Jethro (Exodus 2:22). Pharaoh also understands the place where Moses wants to lead his people as a country that was not under his influence (Exodus 7:16; 8:21). Chronologically, however, Sinai (including the military “Way of Horus” leading to Gaza and the turquoise and copper mines) were Egyptian terrain during the New Kingdom period, when according to the conventional chronology Exodus occurred. Only when the Egyptian army reached Gaza (called Pa-Canaan – “the gate to Canaan”) did it enter foreign territory. Even so, the northern provinces were still under pharaonic sovereignty.³³

The situation, however, is quite different during the Middle Kingdom and Second Intermediate Period, when according to this author's view the Israelites sojourned in Egypt and when they finally returned to the Promised Land. At that time, the Egyptians did not (yet) understand Sinai as one of their northern provinces (as

would be the case later), but clearly as foreign territory.³⁴ Egypt's eastern border lay directly east of the Nile Delta, in the Wadi Tumilat and near the Bitter Lakes. Exactly this understanding of the eastern border is also conveyed in the story of Sinuhe from the early 12th Dynasty, when the so-called "Walls of the Ruler" (Egyptian 'Inb.w ḥq3) served as an unbroken line of fortifications dotted by castles, canals and lakes to prevent unwanted intruders from entering the Nile Valley (ANET 446).³⁵ As soon as Sinuhe had crossed the frontier, he found himself in foreign territory, where he had to rely on the hospitality of its local princes. This imposing line of fortifications is probably also alluded to in the Hebrew Bible when it refers to the "Desert of Shur" (literally, the "Wilderness of the Wall", see Genesis 16:7; Exodus 15:22; 1 Samuel 15:7; 27:8).

During his expeditions to the copper and turquoise mines of Sinai, king Amenemhat III (late 12th Dynasty) sent military convoys to protect his miners, as many dangers lurked in that foreign land (Fig. 4).



Fig. 4. Head of a colossal statue of pharaoh Amenemhat III from Bubastis, Egypt. (Photo P. van der Veen, courtesy of the British Museum Trustees in London)

At the mines of Serabit el-Khadim and Maghara, rock inscriptions report that the Egyptians invoked the mother goddess Hathor ("Lady of Turquoise") and Sopdu (the Egyptian god of the Asiatic foreigners) and that they cooperated there with the locals, including the "sand-crossers" and the princes of Retenu and their brothers.³⁶ One inscription recounts how Amenemhat wandered "to the borders of the foreigners by foot", crossing "mysterious valleys" before he reached "the borders of the unknown".³⁷ Even though the Egyptians repeatedly sought to extend their rule over Sinai, the area remained "foreign territory."³⁸

Thus, if the Exodus took place sometime during the Second Intermediate Period, as we believe it did, Sinai was still considered to be foreign territory. Hence Horeb was too.

The Toponyms of Exodus: from Ramesses to Yam Suph

That the Israelites crossed the Sea of Reeds near the eastern border of the Nile Delta and not further east at the Red Sea or the Gulf of Aqaba, becomes evident when we take a closer look at the Egyptian place names of the Exodus route between Ramesses and Yam Suph. While no Egyptian border posts are known near the Gulf of Aqaba (for no such posts are ever referred to in any Middle and New Kingdom inscriptions), New Kingdom inscriptions mention precisely these names in the eastern delta. Almost all of them also fit the earlier Exodus date (see Fig. 1).

Succoth (Greek Σοκχωθ) = Tjeku = Tall al-Mashkuta.

After the Israelites left Goshen, they first came to a place called Succoth (Hebrew for "tents", "booths") in biblical tradition (Exodus 12:37). It is

generally assumed that biblical Succoth is to be identified with the Egyptian site of Tjeku.³⁹ While the name Tjeku was used both for an entire region (Wadi Tumilat) and for a specific town, the remains of that place are likely to be found at Tall al-Mashkuta, located in the western part of the Wadi Tumilat. Even if not all scholars share this equation, there are good reasons to accept it. Both the name (Tall al-Mashkuta) and the archaeological finds substantiate this view.⁴⁰ Although Tjeku is mentioned by name only during the 18th Dynasty (under Thutmose IV) in an inscription of the troop commander Amenemhat in Sinai⁴¹, archaeological finds testify that the place was already inhabited during the late Middle Kingdom period.⁴² Like at Avaris, many Western Asiatics lived in Tall al-Mashkuta at that time.⁴³ Although it cannot be ruled out that the name Succoth had been derived from Egyptian Tjeku, the derivation of Egyptian Tjeku from West Semitic Succoth is all the more likely, because the term Tjeku lacks a firm connotation in ancient Egyptian.⁴⁴ Hoffmeier also suggests that the name was connected with the Asiatics who dwelt there during the Second Intermediate Period.⁴⁵

Etham (Greek Ὀθωμ, Βουθάν) = *i[w]-[i]tm, “Island of Atum”?

When the Israelites departed from Succoth, they camped at Etham (Numbers 33:6), which was apparently situated on the edge of the desert (Exodus 13:20), perhaps near Lake Timsah. Could Etham have served as a meeting place from where all fleeing Western Asiatics (a mixed multitude including the Israelites, see Exodus 12:38) set out on their way to freedom?⁴⁷

Several scholars suspect that the Egyptian word ḥtm, “castle”⁴⁸ lies behind the Hebrew name, a suggestion that was made long ago by German Egyptologist Georg Ebers.⁴⁹ If so, then Etham

could have been one of the many border fortresses associated with the “Walls of the Ruler.”⁵⁰ Linguistically, however, the equation is doubtful, since Hebrew aleph “cannot transcribe Egyptian kh”.⁵¹ Therefore, Kenneth Kitchen’s proposition is more likely, when he suggests that Etham derives its name from the god Atum, while Etham would have had its own Atum temple. For Atum was venerated as the “Lord of An/Tjeku” in the Wadi Tumilat.⁵² Inscriptions from the Egyptian Late Period substantiate that Tall al-Mashkuta was indeed dedicated to Atum of Tjeku, which is why some scholars have identified the site with biblical Pithom.⁵³

After leaving Etham, the Israelites apparently changed the direction of their march. In any case, they subsequently camped at Pi Hahiroth between Migdol and Yam Suph, opposite Baal Zephon (Exodus 14:2). Hoffmeier suspects that the Israelites changed their direction as they were halted by a canal that ran between Lake Timsah and the Ballah Lakes to the north, the topography of which can still be seen in aerial photographs and on satellite images.⁵⁴ Sneh and Weissbrod suggest that this ca. 70 m wide canal already existed during the 12th Dynasty.⁵⁵ The canal also seems to have been an important part of the so-called “Walls of the Ruler” fortification system.⁵⁶ Parts of it have also been found further to the north. These fortifications appear to have sealed off the entire region all the way up north to the Mediterranean coast. The entire eastern frontier was thus secured by castles, canals, and lakes with only a very few passages⁵⁷, which made an escape virtually impossible. Both Hoffmeier and Rohl assume that the Israelites, instead of continuing south, would have swerved north along the western shore of the Ballah lakes and into the area of Khatana-Qantir.⁵⁸ The following toponyms (see Fig. 1) support this view.⁵⁹

Pi Hahiroth (Greek ἐπαύλεως) = p3-ḥrw

According to Numbers 33:7, the Israelites literally “returned” (Heb. *yšb'l*) to Pi Hahiroth, which can hardly mean other than that Pi Hahiroth was only a few kilometers (east) of Ramesses (Tell el-Daba/Avaris), from where many Israelites had originally set out (v. 5).⁶⁰ While the Septuagint mentions only a small nameless village (ἐπαύλεως) between Migdol and the sea, the Hebrew text uses a word that appears to be of Semitic origin and can be translated as “mouth of the canal”.⁶¹ Thus, for example, in Akkadian, canal is *ḥarru(m)*.⁶² An Egyptian “canal” called p3-ḥrw in the eastern delta is mentioned in Papyrus Anastasi III 2.9 and 3.3ff from the Ramesside period.⁶³ It thus seems plausible that the Israelites camped at the “mouth” of p3-ḥrw. Moreover, Hoffmeier suspects that p3-ḥrw was part of the so-called “Eastern Frontier Canal” that ran past Tell el-Borg, some 5 km southeast of Tell Hebua and T-78 (Migdol?).⁶⁴ In addition, building remains (shelters for soldiers and bedouins) and pottery from the Second Intermediate Period at Tell el-Borg (Field VI.1) suggest that these features date back at least to before the New Kingdom.⁶⁵

Migdol (Greek Μαγδώλου) = Magdalu (EA 234) = T-78 or even Tjaru (Sile)?

Exodus 14:2 and 9 names two places that were near the Israelite camp, namely Migdol and Baal Zephon. A place called Magdalu in Egypt is known from the Amarna letters (EA 234). New Kingdom inscriptions also mention a Migdol of pharaoh Menmaatre (Seti I), and although the word “Migdol” only means “watchtower” and could therefore refer to any similar site in the region, Hoffmeier considers Migdol Menmaatre to be biblical Migdol.⁶⁶ It remains unclear, however, whether Migdol Menmaatre is located at the ruined mound T-78 (immediately south of

the “Eastern Frontier Canal”) or perhaps at T-116 (Tell Ebedah), on the east side of the lagoon.⁶⁷ These sites are near Tell Hebua I and II, which is now almost certainly believed to be Egyptian Tjaru, the very “Gate to Egypt”. Middle Kingdom and Second Intermediate Period traces have been found here too.⁶⁸ However, it cannot be excluded that Tjaru itself was biblical Migdol, Egypt’s most significant border town. For the Israelites, this fortress would undoubtedly have been another obstacle to overcome.⁶⁹

Baal Zephon (Greek Βεελσεπφων) = Temple of Seth-Baal in R3-3ḥw (“the mouth of the fertile land”)?

At this site the Canaanite deity Baal Zephon (Baal of the North) was venerated.⁷⁰ A locally manufactured 13th Dynasty cylinder seal from Tell el-Daba depicts Baal “of the North” striding across the mountains. He was worshipped as the patron of shipmen by the Asiatics of Avaris during the 13th Dynasty (Fig. 5).⁷¹



Fig. 5. Cylinder seal from Tell el-Daba depicting the deity Seth-Baal. (Drawing by Maria Antonia Negrete-Martinez © ÖAI, with kind permission of Prof. Manfred Bietak and Dr. Ernst Czerny)



Fig. 6. Inscription of pharaoh Nehesi (14th Dynasty) with a reference to the temple of Seth-Baal in R3-3ḥw, possibly biblical Baal Zephon. (After W.M. Flinders Petrie, 1885. *Tanis, Part I, 1883-1884*, London, Plate III).

Inscriptions from Tell el-Daba also show that pharaoh Nehesi of the 14th Dynasty had a temple built for Seth (the Egyptian version of Baal). The so-called 400-year stele from the reign of Ramesses II likely also refers to this temple.⁷² Inscriptions of Nehesi have also been found at other eastern delta sites, including Tjaru (Tell Hebua). A statue of the same ruler from Tanis (see Fig. 6) mentions that Seth-Baal was also worshipped at R3-3ḥw (“mouth of the fertile land”), whose exact location remains disputed.⁷³

Manfred Bietak suggests that the site lay northeast of Avaris on the edge of the desert, roughly in the area of Tanis between the “Pelusian arm of the Nile and the Bahr el-Baqar, near Tell el-Ahmar.”⁷⁴ Places such as Tell Abu Seifah, Tell Qedua (which lies about 1 km north of Tell el-Herr⁷⁵) and Tell Defenneh (biblical Tahpanhes) where according to a 6th century BC papyrus Baal-Zephon was worshipped⁷⁶, have been considered as possible candidates

for this site. However, none of these settlements is older than the Saitic period (7–6th century BC).⁷⁷ Thus, R3-3ḥw is currently the only serious candidate for biblical Baal Zephon whose approximate location fits the date of Exodus advocated by this author.⁷⁸ Also Bietak relates the site to the book of Exodus: “It would be conceivable that R3-3ḥw lived on meaningfully in the biblical toponym Baal Zephon in the Book of Exodus 14.2 u. 9 ...”.⁷⁹ Papyrus Anastasi III from the Ramesside period mentions a village called Baal in the same region. Could this name be just the younger name of Second Intermediate Period R3-3ḥw?

Yam, Yam Suph (Greek θαλάσσης, ἔρυθρὰν θαλάσσαν) = p3-tjwfi

According to Exodus 14:2ff, the Israelites stayed on the shore of “Yam”, specifically called “Yam Suph” (“Sea of Reeds”) in Exodus 10:19 and 13:18. Whether the translation as “sea” is correct, cannot be stated with certainty, since the Hebrew word has several meanings, including “lake” (Numbers 34:11), “[great] river” (Nahum 3:8; Jeremiah 51:36), “[artificial] body of water”, in the sense of a water basin (in the temple), pond or canal (2 Kings 25:13).⁸⁰ While Hebrew “suph” means an indefinite “water plant”, Egyptian tjwfi translates “reed” or “papyrus”. It is therefore probable that the Hebrew term had derived from the Egyptian word.⁸¹ The Septuagint, however, translates “Yam Suph” with “Red Sea”.



Fig. 7. The now largely silted region of the biblical Sea of Reeds on the northeastern border of the Nile delta.
(Photo and courtesy of David Rohl)

Why this is so, can only be conjectured. Perhaps the Greek translators meant that the crossing of the Sea of Reeds took place somewhere near the northern shore of the Gulf of Suez or at one of the nearer lakes to the north, since the memory of the precise location was lost (likely due to the silting up of the region). Since the Hebrew Bible also refers to the eastern arm of the Red Sea (i.e. the Gulf of Aqaba) as the Sea of Reeds (Numbers 21:4; 1 Kings 9:26), the proponents of the Arabian location of Horeb have repeatedly argued that “Yam Suph” of the Exodus narrative too must be located at the Gulf of Aqaba. But as we have shown, the toponyms discussed above, clearly show that Yam Suph of the Exodus was not at the Gulf of Aqaba. On the contrary, the ancient Egyptian inscriptions locate a certain p3-tjufi near Tjaru. The name literally means “place of reeds”. James Hoffmeier has convincingly argued that this was a body of water in the eastern delta and that according to the Onomasticon of Amenemope it was near the aforementioned Tjaru and therefore near biblical Migdol, Pi Hahiroth and Baal-Zephon (Fig. 7).⁸²

Moreover, representatives of the Arabian Horeb theory have also argued that biblical Yam Suph must have been a deep body of water since Pharaoh and his chariots drowned in the Sea. But how compelling is their criticism? The

description of the deep sea does not stem from the narrative in the book of Exodus (chapter 14), but from the Song of Moses in chapter 15, where in a psalm-like poem the cosmic intervention of Yahweh is hailed as a victory over the powers of darkness. It is further mentioned that Yahweh will eternally reside as king in his sanctuary, and how he will plant Israel on the mountain of his inheritance, which no doubt is Mount Zion (v. 17).⁸³ Similar to David in Psalm 18, the author uses literary metaphors that echo the victory of Yahweh as cosmic warrior over the stormy primeval flood (Hebrew *tehom*: vv. 4, 7).⁸⁴ It is striking that the narrative in Exodus (14:21–31 and 15:19–21) more naturally recounts how a strong east wind exposed the seabed all night long and how the Israelites reached the other shore dry-footed. When the water flowed back, Pharaoh’s army was surprised by the waves and finally drowned. The height of the waves forming a dam is not actually mentioned in the text. However, the book of Joshua reports a similar event when it recounts how the Jordan River was likewise drained, not far from Jericho, so that the Israelites could enter the Promised Land dry footed. Again, it mentions a water dam (Joshua 3:13 and 4:23–24; emphasis by the author):

*And as soon as the priests who carry the ark of the Lord—the Lord of all the earth—set foot in the Jordan, **its waters flowing downstream will be cut off and stand up in a heap.** ... For the Lord your God dried up the Jordan before you until you had crossed over. The Lord your God did to the Jordan what he had done to the Red Sea when he dried it up before us until we had crossed over. He did this so that all the peoples of the earth might know that the hand of the Lord is powerful and so that you might always fear the Lord your God.*

Here, too, the water heaped up or stood up as a wall, as it was presumably held back by fallen

debris further to the north.⁸⁵ Since the Jordan River is not deep, the dam does not imply deep water, but only that the water was “held back” or “dammed up”.

Secondly, the drowning of the Egyptian soldiers is not so much related the depth of water than to the force with which the water flowed back and swept the victims into the waves. Carl Drews and Weiqin Han of the University of Colorado were able to prove experimentally that a much less spectacular hydrodynamic event in Egypt’s north-east delta would have been clearly sufficient to dry out a lagoon of a mere depth of 2 m, by lowering the water by wind. Their experiment showed how, at Tell Hebua and Tell el-Borg on the Pelusian arm of the Nile, a land bridge 5 km wide would have persisted for over four hours at a wind speed of 28 m/s, while the same phenomenon would have lasted as long as seven and a half hours at a wind speed of 33 m/s.⁸⁶ They also refer to a similar event that occurred in 1882, when the water of nearby Lake Menzaleh was driven back 11 km to the northwest by a strong easterly wind, so that the seabed was exposed, and the fishermen could walk through the mudflats.⁸⁷

Finally, it can be said that no conclusive arguments exist in favor of the Arabian location of Mount Horeb. On the contrary, the topographical considerations show clearly that the Israelites left the Egyptian delta near Tjaru and crossed a lagoon nearby. It is therefore not surprising that in the Papyrus Anastasi III 2.8–12, like in Exodus 14:2, three toponyms Baal, p3-ḥr and p3-ṯwfi are closely related to each other, which clearly confirms the north-eastern delta as the place where Israel traversed Yam Suph.

Notes and references

¹ An earlier version of this article appeared as an appendix to our German book: U. Zerbst & P. G. van der Veen (eds), 2018/3. Keine Posaunen vor Jericho? Beiträge zur Archäologie der Landnahme. Holzgerlingen: Hänssler Verlag, 174–188.

² See e.g. J. J. Bimson, 1988. “Exodus and Conquest – My or Reality? Can Archaeology Provide the Answer?”, *Journal of the Ancient Chronology Forum* 2, 27–40. In his recent book on the biblical Exodus, Rohl also rejects the eastern locality of Horeb in favor of the traditional view. See D.M. Rohl, 2015. *Exodus - Myth or History*. St. Louis Park MN, esp. Appendix C: “The Midian Exodus Theory”, 379–398. See also the discussion on the Exodus route, 167–260. See also J.K. Hoffmeier, 2005. *Ancient Israel in Sinai: The Evidence for the Authenticity of the Wilderness Tradition*. Oxford/New York.

³ Pers. comm. with J. Hoffmeier during the German ABA conference of Biblical Archaeology, October 2010.

⁴ E.g. R. Cornuke and D. Halbrook, 2000. *Mountain of God*. Nashville; J. & P. Caldwell, 2003. *Jebel Maqla - Mount Sinai? Diamondhead MS*; P.C. Caldwell, 2008. *The God of the Mountain: The True Story behind the Discoveries at the Real Mt. Sinai*. Alachua FL; L. Möller, 2008. *The Exodus Case: New Discoveries of the Historical Exodus*. Copenhagen; B. Hahne-Waldscheck, 2012. “Wo ist Midian, wo der Horeb?” *Factum* 3, 40–43. Although this theory has gained popularity and has received new wind in the sails through the Thinking Man Films (*Patterns of Evidence*) *Journey to Mount Sinai I and II* of T. Mahoney (2022-2023), it is by no means a recent position, see e.g. E. Beke, 1878. *The Late Dr. Charles Beke’s Discoveries of Sinai in Arabia and of Midian*. Ludgate Hill; K. van der Toorn, 1996. *Family Religion in Babylonia, Syria and Israel: Continuity and Change in the Forms of Religious Life*. Leiden, 282–283.

⁵ Some scholars prefer a location in the Negeb. E. Anati identifies the biblical mountain with Har Karkom, see www.harkarkom.com/Anati.php, while B. Wood suggests Jebel Khashm et-Tarif. See his “In Search of Mt. Sinai” (*ABR E-Newsletter*, June 2007).

⁶ E.g. Cornuke and Holbrook [4], 171.

⁷ Among others Pliny, *Natural History* V, 14; Ptolemy, *Geography* IV, 5:24; Strabo, *Geography* XVI, 4,2; 17,1, 21. See also the helpful discussion by G. Franz: “Is Mount Sinai in Saudi Arabia?”, on <http://www.Idolphin.org/franz-sinai.html>.

⁸ J. Pritchard, 1969. *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*. Princeton, 292. See K. Radner, 2008. “Esarhaddon’s Expedition from Palestine to Egypt in 671 BCE: A Trek

through Negev and Sinai". In: D. Bonatz et al. (eds.), *Fundstellen: Gesammelte Schriften zur Archäologie und Geschichte Vorderasiens, ad honorem Hartmut Kühne*. Wiesbaden, 310.

⁹ Herodotus Book III.7. See also P. Briant, 2002. *From Cyrus to Alexander: A History of the Persian Empire*. Winona Lake IN, 716.

¹⁰ See E.M. Yamauchi, 19962. *Persia and the Bible*. Grand Rapids MI, 269.

¹¹ So according to the Septuagint in Genesis 46:34.

¹² E.g. U. Hübner, 2008, on

www.bibelwissenschaft.de/stichwort/27607/

¹³ E.g. I. Beit-Arieh, 1995. "The Edomites in Cisjordan". In: D.V. Edelman (ed.), *You Shall Not Abhor an Edomite for He is Your Brother: Edom and Seir in History and Tradition*. *Archaeology and Biblical Studies (ABS)* 3. Atlanta Georgia, 33–40; P.G. van der Veen, 2013. "Juda unter Joschija". In: W. Zwickel et al. (eds.), *Herders Neuer Bibelatlas*. Freiburg i. Br., 182.

¹⁴ Concerning the Edomite and Arabic inscriptions of that region, see P.G. van der Veen & F. Bron, 2014. "Arabian and Arabizing Epigraphic Finds from the Iron Age Southern Levant". In: J.M. Tebes (ed.), *Unearthing the Wilderness: Studies on the History and Archaeology of the Negev and Edom in the Iron Age*. *Ancient Near Eastern Studies (ANES)* 45. Leuven, 203–226.

¹⁵ E.g. L. Singer-Avitz, 2014. "Edomite Pottery in Judah in the Eighth Century BCE". In: Tebes [14], 267–281.

¹⁶ E.g. Tel Arad ostrakon, no. 40 in: J. Renz and W. Röllig, 1995. *Handbuch der althebräischen Epigraphik*, vol. 1. Darmstadt, 148. For a general discussion, see P.G. van der Veen, 2014. *The Final Phase of Iron Age II in Judah, Ammon and Edom: A Study of Provenanced Official Seals and Bullae as Chronological Markers*. *Alter Orient und Altes Testament (AOAT)* 415. Münster, 236. Concerning the Assyrianizing Edomite styles, see P.G. van der Veen, 2020. *Dating the Iron Age IIB Archaeological Horizon in Israel and Judah: A Reinvestigation of "Neo-Assyrian (Period)" Sigillographic and Ceramic Chronological Markers from the 8th and 7th Centuries B.C.* *Ägypten und Altes Testament (AOAT)* 98. Münster.

¹⁷ See also Genesis 36:10–11 (here Teman is mentioned as a grandson of Esau), 36:31, 34 (as a town and a region in Edom), Amos 1:12 (Bozrah, as the capital of Edom as compared with Teman).

¹⁸ In a similar vein, note the connection between Yahweh and Mount Paran (Deuteronomy 33:2), the realm or mountain of Edom (Judges 5:4; Psalm 68:8) and Teman and Paran (Habakkuk 3:3).

¹⁹ J. Renz and W. Röllig [16], 64. Hess is certainly right,

when he describes Teman in general terms as the "desert region to the south of Judah": R.S. Hess, 2007. *Israelite Religions: An Archaeological and Biblical Survey*. Grand Rapids MI, 285.

²⁰ Jerome, *Onomasticon*, 137: 15–17.

²¹ E.g. W. Zwickel & P.G. van der Veen, 2017. "The Earliest Reference to Israel and Its Possible Archaeological and Historical Background", *Vetus Testamentum (VT)* 67, 129–140 (esp. 136).

²² See W.L. Moran, 1992. *The Amarna Letters*. Baltimore/London, 330–332. On the vastness of the entire region of Seir and Edom, see O. Keel & M. Küchler, 1982. *Orte und Landschaften der Bibel*, vol. 2. Göttingen, 309–310; B. Wood, 2008. "What do Mt. Horeb, the Mountain of God, Mt. Paran and Mt. Seir have to do with Mt. Sinai", see on <https://www.biblearchaeology.org>.

²³ I.e. Š3sw n jdwm ("Shasu of Edom"), Š3sw n s'rr ("Shasu of Seir") and Š3sw n rbn ("Shasu of Libnah or Reuben").

²⁴ M. Weippert, 1974. "Semitische Nomaden des zweiten Jahrtausends: über die Š3św der ägyptischen Quellen", *Biblica* 55:2, 265–280; M. Görg, 1989. "Jahwe - ein Toponym?" In: M. Görg, *Beiträge zur Zeitgeschichte der Anfänge Israels. Ägypten und Altes Testament (ÄAT)* 2. Wiesbaden, 180–187; M. Weippert, 2010. "Nomaden in Palästina und seinen Randgebieten in der Spätbronzezeit". In: M. Weippert, *Historisches Textbuch zum Alten Testament. Grundrisse zum Alten Testament (GAT)* 10. Göttingen, 179–198.

²⁵ E.g. K. van der Toorn, 1999. "Yahweh". In: K. van der Toorn et al. (eds.), *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible (DDD)*. Brill: Leiden, 912; J. Kelley, 2009. "Towards a New Synthesis of the God of Edom and Yahweh", *Antiquo Oriente (AntOr)* 7, 255–280.

²⁶ S. Ahituv, 1984. *Canaanite Toponyms in Ancient Egyptian Documents*. Jerusalem/Leiden, 169.

²⁷ See already A.H. Gardiner, 1920. "The Ancient Military Road between Egypt and Palestine", *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology (JEA)* 6:2, 99–116. Likewise, Weippert [24], 270.

²⁸ For a detailed overview of the Shasu texts, see R. Givon, 1971. *Les bédouins Shosou des documents égyptiens*. Leiden. For the whereabouts of the Shasu Bedouins according to the Egyptian texts, see Weippert [24], 270, 277; W. Zwickel, 2013. "Ägyptische Außenpolitik zur Zeit der Ramessiden". In: Zwickel et al. [13], 48.

²⁹ S. Ahituv et al., 2012. "The Inscriptions". In: Z. Meshel, *Kuntillet cAjrud (Ḥorvat Tēmān): An Iron Age II Religious Site on the Judah-Sinai Border*. Jerusalem, 130. Even though it is assumed that Teman lay south of the Negev

(esp. p. 96), the authors understand the term as a very general toponym: “Tēmān refers here to the South, as shown by the paralleling of Tēmān with Paran, both of which are brought as synonyms for the whole of the Sinai Desert, namely the place of divine revelation.” So also P.K. McCarter Jr., 20092. “The Religion of the Israelite Monarchy”. In: P.D. Miller et al. (eds.), *Ancient Israelite Religion: Essays in Honor of Frank Moore Cross*. Minneapolis, 140; V.H. Matthews, 2016. In: J.G. Taylor et al., *The Minor Prophets*. Zondervan’s *Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary*. In their E-book on Habakkuk 3:3. See also D. Jericke, 2013. *Die Ortsangaben im Buch Genesis: Ein historisch-topographischer und literarisch-topographischer Kommentar*. Göttingen, 182.

³⁰ P.G. van der Veen & U. Zerbst, 2022. In *Search of the Biblical Patriarchs: A Historical and Archaeological Quest*. Morgantown, PA, 127–128.

³¹ See E.A. Knauf, 2009. “Teman” on www.bibelwissenschaft.de/Stichwort/33170/. For the localisation of Paran in northern Sinai, see D. Jericke [29], 150–152.

³² E.g. W. Gesenius, 192117. *Hebräisches und aramäisches Handwörterbuch über das Alte Testament*. Leipzig, 790, 877; L. Koehler & W. Baumgartner, 1958. *Lexicon in Veteris Testamenti Libros*. Leiden, 926–927, 1027.

³³ For an overview of these terms, see M. Hasel, 2009. “Pa-Canaan in the Egyptian New Kingdom: Canaan or Gaza?” *Journal of Ancient Egyptian Interconnections (JAEI)* 1:1, 8–17. On this see also B. Manley, 1996. *The Penguin Historical Atlas of Ancient Egypt*. London, 67, 71, 73, 81, 97.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 49.

³⁵ Sinuhe describes its function as a frontier fortress, “made to oppose the Asiatics and to crush the Sand-Crossers” (ANET p. 19). See also: C. Vogel, 2004. *Ägyptische Festungen und Garnisonen bis zum Ende des Mittleren Reiches*. Hildesheim, 93, 161–162. Vogel, however, believes there was only one fortress in the region, an opinion that is difficult to accept. Although initially there may have been only one fortress, later, as excavations confirm, it was a complete boundary line dotted by many strongholds. For instance at Tall al-Mashkuta, Tell er-Retaba, Tell el-Borg and Tell Hebua (I and II) archaeologists discovered below the Ramesside levels remains from the Middle Kingdom or Second Intermediate Period. Rohl also refers to 12th Dynasty traces of a canal that was discovered by Sneh and Weissbrod. See Rohl [2], 170–174. On this see also Hoffmeier [2], 70–71.

³⁶ L. Morenz, 2011. *Die Genese der Alphabetschrift*. Berlin, 68, 72–73.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 75.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 67, 78.

³⁹ For a concise summary, see Y. Muchiki, 1999. *Egyptian Proper Names and Loanwords in North-West Semitic*. SBL Dissertation Series 173. Atlanta, 232–233.

⁴⁰ The Arabic name was derived either from the Egyptian name Tjeku or from the West Semitic Succoth. See Hoffmeier [2], 65. Both sites (Tall al-Mashkuta and Tell er-Retabah) were only about 15 km apart. In the Ramesside inscriptions they are regularly mentioned in the same breath. During the Ramesside period, the name Tjeku is attested both as a designation for a region (i.e. the Wadi Tumilat) and for a residential castle (ägy. p3 sgwr n Tkw). K.A. Kitchen, 2006. On the Reliability of the Old Testament. Grand Rapids MI, 256–259; Hoffmeier [2], 65–66. See also J.K. Hoffmeier, 1997. *Israel in Egypt: The Evidence for the Authenticity of the Exodus Tradition*. Oxford, 179–181.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 180.

⁴² E.g. J.S. Holloday, 1997. “The Eastern Nile Delta during the Hyksos and Pre-Hyksos Periods: Toward a Systematic/Socioeconomic Understanding”. In: E.D. Oren (ed.), *The Hyksos: New Historical and Archaeological Perspectives*. University Museum Monographs (UMM) 96. Philadelphia, 188.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 183–252.

⁴⁴ Muchiki [39], 233.

⁴⁵ Thus Hoffmeier [2], 65. Holloday views Tall al-Mashkuta as a trading post in the immediate vicinity of Avaris and points to the substantial Asiatic population that left this place during the Hyksos period, Holloday [42], 197. Sivertsen also suspects that this event may well be connected with the Israelite Exodus. See B.J. Sivertsen, 2009. *The Parting of the Sea: How Volcanoes, Earthquakes, and Plagues Shaped the Story of the Exodus*. Princeton, 37. A similar situation is found at Kahun, where the Asiatic workers left the city at about the same time. On this see R. David, 19962. *The Pyramid Builders of Ancient Egypt: A Modern Investigation of Pharaoh’s Workforce*. London, 194, 199. See also Rohl [2], 169–170. Also P. Saretta, 2016. *Asiatics in Middle Kingdom Egypt: Perceptions and Reality*, London. 159–160.

⁴⁶ On this, see

www.odb.bibelwissenschaft.de/ortsnamen/ortsname.php?n=376.

⁴⁷ Regarding this proposal, see Rohl [2], 169.

⁴⁸ E.g. G.L. Robinson, 1901. “The Route of the Exodus

from Egypt”, *The Biblical World* (BW) 18:6, 418; H. Gazelles, 1955. “Les localisations de l’Exode et la critique littéraire”, *Revue Biblique* (RB) 62, 357–360.

⁴⁹ G. Ebers, 1868. *Durch Gosen zum Sinai*. Leipzig, 114, 508.

⁵⁰ Thus Gazelles [48]. See also J.K. Hoffmeier et al., 2016. “New Archaeological Evidence for Ancient Bedouin (Shasu) on Egypt’s Eastern Frontier at Tell el-Borg”, *Ägypten und Levante/Egypt and the Levant* (ÄgLev) 26, 287.

⁵¹ Kitchen [40], 259; Muchiki [39], 230; Hoffmeier [2], 69.

⁵² Kitchen [40], 257–259. Similar thoughts were also expressed by M. Görg, 1990. “Etam und Pithom”, *Biblische Notizen* (BN) 51, 9–10. The Arabic name Tumilat still seems to contain the ancient name Tem/Atum in the first syllable. See Hoffmeier [2], 62–64.

⁵³ The equation of Pithom with Tell er-Retaba to the west of Tall al-Mashkuta, where there was a temple of Atum too, seems likely, a view shared by both Hoffmeier and Kitchen. On this see Hoffmeier [2], 63 and Kitchen [40], 256–259. The shrine of Atum at Tall al-Mashkuta /Succoth/Tjeku is perhaps referred to in an inscription from the reign of Ptolemy II as ḥwt n(y) pr krth s??t ḥwtn(y)t it.f itm ‘3 nṯr ‘nh ṯkw, likely meaning “temple of Pr-Kereteḥ, the temple of his father Atum, the great god of Tjeku”. Hoffmeier [2], 61.

⁵⁴ Rohl also speculates that the Israelites may have originally moved south to the Bitter Lakes (Egyptian kem wer, the “Great Black”) [2], 170.

⁵⁵ A. Sneh et al., 1975. “Evidence of an Ancient Frontier Canal”, *American Scientist* 63, 542–548. See also E. Oren, 1984. “Migdol: A New Fortress on the Edge of the Eastern Nile Delta”, *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* (BASOR) 256, 9–10.

⁵⁶ Rohl [2], 170–171.

⁵⁷ One of these few culverts was located close to the Bronze Age Mediterranean coast, between Tell Hebua I and II (Tjaru/Sile), which is named t3-dnit on the temple reliefs of Seti I, literally meaning “parting of the waters”. Hebua also existed during the Middle Kingdom and the Second Intermediate Period, as has been confirmed by inscriptions and pottery found at the site. See Hoffmeier [2], 100; J.K. Hoffmeier, 2006. “The Walls of the Ruler in Egyptian Literature and the Archaeological Record: Investigating Egypt’s Eastern Frontier in the Bronze Age”, *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* (BASOR) 343, 5, 9.

⁵⁸ Hoffmeier [2], 73; Rohl [2], 170–174.

⁵⁹ Also see B. Wood, see:

[https://biblearchaeology.org/research/exodus-from-](https://biblearchaeology.org/research/exodus-from-egypt/4092-new-evidence-from-egypt-on-the-location-of-the-exodus-sea-crossing-part-ii)

[egypt/4092-new-evidence-from-egypt-on-the-location-of-the-exodus-sea-crossing-part-ii](https://biblearchaeology.org/research/exodus-from-egypt/4092-new-evidence-from-egypt-on-the-location-of-the-exodus-sea-crossing-part-ii)

⁶⁰ This maneuver is also mentioned in Exodus 14:3, where it is said that Pharaoh should think: “The Israelites are wandering around the land in confusion, hemmed in by the desert.”

⁶¹ From a possible Hebrew verb *ḥrr, “to hollow out.” Since Hebrew py “mouth” is missing in Numbers 33:8, it seems plausible that the place was originally called ḥhyrt or ḥyrt with the article h. Muchiki [39], 234. The article is also contained in the Egyptian p3-ḥrw. Presumably the feminine plural ending t in Pi Hahiroth was lost by the Ramesside period, a linguistic phenomenon well attested in ancient Egyptian, see B.J. Noonan, 2016. “Egyptian Loanwords as Evidence for the Authenticity of the Exodus and Wilderness Traditions”. In: J.K. Hoffmeier et al. (eds.), “Did I Not Bring Israel Out of Egypt?": Biblical, Archaeological, and Egyptological Perspectives on the Exodus Narratives. *Bulletin for Biblical Research Supplement* (BBRSup) 13. Winona Lake IN, 63.

⁶² J. Black et al., 20002. *A Concise Dictionary of Akkadian*. Wiesbaden, 109. See also Hoffmeier [2], 105, 107.

⁶³ R.A. Caminos, 1954. *Late Egyptian Miscellanies*. London, 74, 78–79. Also J. Hoch, 1994. *Semitic Words in Egyptian Texts of the New Kingdom and Third Intermediate Period*. Princeton NJ, 232 with further details.

⁶⁴ For the historical topography, see Hoffmeier [50], 288, fig. 1.

⁶⁵ Hoffmeier [57], 11; Hoffmeier [50], 292, 307–309. On Tell el-Borg, see J.K. Hoffmeier (ed.), 2014. *Tell el-Borg I, “The Dwelling of the Lion” on the Ways of Horus*, Excavations in North Sinai. Winona Lake IN.

⁶⁶ J.K. Hoffmeier & M. Abd el-Maksoud, 2003. “A New Military Site on the ‘Ways of Horus’: Tell el-Borg 1999–2001: A Preliminary Report”, *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* (JEA) 89, 196–197.

⁶⁷ Hoffmeier [57], 4, fig. 2. When Hoffmeier’s team explored the area, they no longer found traces of T-78, which had been seen by Oren’s team back in the 1970s, likely because of silting. See also Oren [55], 35. Oren confirms that in 1973 a shallow depression was discovered on the bank of an old canal, partly covered by the debris of an ancient embankment. In addition, stones, hearths, and pottery, among others from the Middle and Late Bronze Age were found. (pers. comm. with E. Oren, Email of April 3, 2018).

⁶⁸ See also J.K. Hoffmeier, 2004. “The North Sinai Archaeological Project’s Excavations at Tell el-Borg (Sinai): An Example of the ‘New’ Biblical Archaeology?” In: J.K. Hoffmeier and A.R. Millard (eds.), *The Future of*

Biblical Archaeology: Reassessing Methodologies and Assumptions. Grand Rapids MI, 64–66. Also D.B. Redford, 2003. The Wars in Syria and Palestine of Thutmose III. Leiden, 8.

⁶⁹ Several finds from the Middle Kingdom and Second Intermediate Period have been uncovered there. For example, two stelae of pharaoh Nehesi were unearthed at Tell el-Hebua I, as well as a lintel of the royal sealer Aper-Bacal. In addition, a cylinder seal of Senusret II from the 12th Dynasty and a seal of Niuserre II from the Second Intermediate Period were unearthed. Tell el-Yahudiye pottery also proves that the site was inhabited at this time. For example, Hoffmeier [57], 9; A. Rahman Al-Ayedi, 2000. Tharu: The Starting Point on the “Ways of Horus”, MA thesis, University of Toronto, 100–101; A.-L. Mourad, 2015. Rise of the Hyksos: Egypt and the Levant from the Middle Kingdom to the Early Second Intermediate Period. Archaeopress Egyptology 11, Oxford, 44–48.

⁷⁰ E.g. E. Levy, 2014. “A Fresh Look at the Ba'al-Zaphon Stele”, *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology (JEA)* 100, 305.

⁷¹ E. Porada, 1984. “The Cylinder Seal from Tell el-Dab'a”, *American Journal of Archaeology (AJA)* 88, 485–488; M. Bietak, 1990. “Zur Herkunft von Seth von Avaris”, *Ägypten und Levante/Egypt and the Levant (ÄgLev)* 1, 15; Mourad [69], 25; Saretta [45], 244, n. 172.

⁷² Bietak [71], 14.

⁷³ Nehesi bears in his inscriptions the epithets “beloved of Seth, the Lord of Avaris” and “beloved of Seth, the Lord of R3-3ḥw”. Both localities in the northeastern delta are thus associated with the cult of Seth-Baal. For the inscription, see supra fig. 6, after W.M. Flinders Petrie, 1883–1884, Tanis, Part I, London, Plate III: 19A.

⁷⁴ Bietak, 1984. “Zum Königreich des ‘3-zḥ-R’ Neḥesi”. In:

H. Altenmüller (ed.), *Studien zur Altägyptischen Kultur 11: Festschrift Wolfgang Helck zu seinem 70. Geburtstag*. Hamburg, 66. In an older study he suggested the equation with Heracleopolis Mikra (i.e. Tell Belim or Tell Ayid). Bietak [71], 16.

⁷⁵ E.D. Oren, 1993. “Northern Sinai”. In: E. Stern (ed.), *The New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land*, vol. 4. New York, 1392–1393. See also Hoffmeier & Abd el-Maksoud [66], 171.

⁷⁶ Rohl [2], 175.

⁷⁷ See www.trismegistos.org/place/2109.

⁷⁸ For more information, see Bietak [74], 66–67, with fig. 3.

⁷⁹ Bietak [71], 16.

⁸⁰ Köhler & Baumgartner [32], 383–384. J.K. Hoffmeier, 1997. קנה. In: W.A. VanGemeren (ed.), *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*, vol. 3. Grand Rapids MI, 943.

⁸¹ Noonan [61], 52.

⁸² Hoffmeier [2], 81–89.

⁸³ E.g. B.S. Childs, 1974. *Exodus*. Old Testament Library. London. 250–251.

⁸⁴ E.g. P.C. Graigie, 1983. *Psalms 1–50*. Word Biblical Commentary. Waco TX, 172–177.

⁸⁵ A. Nur & D. Burgess, 2008. *Apocalypse: Earthquake, Archaeology, and the Wrath of God*. Princeton, 199–205.

⁸⁶ C. Drews & W. Han. “Dynamics of Wind Setdown at Suez and the Eastern Nile Delta”, *PLoS ONE* 5:8 (online) e12481, 1–14.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 2.