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THE THEOLOGY OF ISRAEL'S SEA CROSSING

A Dissertation Presented to the Faculty of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Department of Exegetical Theology in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Theology

bу

Rodger Wayne Dalman

May 1990

Approved by_

Advisor

Reader

Reader

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

A.J.B.A. Australian Journal of Biblical Archaeology A.O. Acta Orientalia A.S. Anatolian Studies A.U.S.S. Andrews University Seminary Studies B.A. Biblical Archaeologist B.A.R. Biblical Archaeology Review B.A.S.O.R. Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research Bib. Biblica B.O. Bibliotheca Orientalis B.S. Bibliotheca Sacra B.I.A. Bulletin of the Institute of Archaeology B.S.R.G. Bulletin de la Societe Royale de Geographie de' Egypte C.T.M. Concordia Theological Monthly Evangelical Quarterly <u>E.Q.</u> <u>E.S.</u> Egyptological Studies E.T. **Expository Times** History of Religions H.R. H.T.R. Harvard Theological Review Int. Interpretation Israel Exploration Journal <u>I.E.J.</u>

Journal of African Civilization

J.A.C.

J.A.O.S.	Journal of the Americal Oriental Society
J.B.L.	Journal of Biblical Literature
J.C.S.	Journal of Cuneiform Studies
J.E.A.	Journal of Egyptian Archaeology
<u>J.J.S.</u>	Journal of Jewish Studies
J.N.E.S.	Journal of Near Eastern Studies
J.P.O.S.	Journal of the Palestine Oriental Society
J.S.S.	Journal of Semitic Studies
J.T.S.	Journal of Theological Studies
L.T.Q.	Lexington Theological Quarterly
Or.	Orientalia
P.E.Q.	Palestine Exploration Quarterly
R.B.	Revue Biblique
Rel.	Religion
S.E.A.J.T.	Southeast Asia Journal of Theology
<u>S.W.J.T.</u>	Southwestern Journal of theology
<u>T.B.</u>	Tyndale Bulletin
T.R.	Theological Review
<u>v.T.</u>	Vetus Testamentum
Z.A.W.	Zeitschnift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft

INTRODUCTION

In Exodus 14:2, God commanded Israel to do a strange thing. God directed Israel to turn from their route, and to walk into a trap. By wandering to the shores of a reed sea, Israel intentionally gave Pharaoh the impression that they were lost, and tempted him to pursue them. Why would God command this? After all, Egypt had already been destroyed. Thousands of Egyptians had died. Pharaoh's will had been broken, and he had let Israel go. The nation was already leaving Egypt for Palestine. Why did Israel not simply pass through the border fortresses and go on their way? Why would God decree a second act of judgment and deliverance? An event of this magnitude must have had a purpose, but what could it have been?

Most commentators dwell at length on questions of date and location, but say little about purpose. This study will begin by looking at explanations for Israel's sea crossing which have been offered. Then this study will look carefully at some aspects of Egyptian and Canaanite religion. After all, God delivered Israel both from physical and spiritual captivity. Israel had spent centuries involved in the Canaanite and Egyptian syncretism found in the Nile delta. If the sea crossing had symbolic meaning,

that meaning should be sought in the struggle for truth necessitated by Israel's involvement in Egyptian culture.

CHAPTER I

WHY WOULD ISRAEL CROSS THE SEA?

Proposed Explanations

There can be little doubt that Israel's sea crossing was intended to teach Israel and the nations. Already in Exodus 15, Moses and Miriam were drawing lessons from the event. 1 Later Biblical writers frequently looked back to the exodus and applied its lessons to their own day. Israel's Red Sea crossing provided a reason for praising God. 2 It was frequently mentioned in listings of God's faithful deeds. It was contrasted with Israel's rebellious unbelief, 3 and it provided a pattern which God would later repeat with, for, and through Israel. 4

The New Testament continued to draw theological lessons from the exodus. In 1 Corinthians 10:1-4, Paul

^{&#}x27;Moses' words in Ex. 15:2 may be quoted in Ps. 118:14 and Is. 12:2. Brevard Childs argued that standardized descriptive formula already were used in Deuteronomy. The significance of this would depend on when Deuteronomy was dated. Brevard S. Childs, "Deuteronomic Formulae of the Exodus Traditions," Hebräische Wortforschung, (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1967), 30-39.

²Ps. 114:3-6; 66:6.

³Neh. 9:9; Ps. 78:13; .106:8-12; 136:13; Is. 63:10-12.

⁴Is. 10:26; 11:15; 43:14-21.

associated the sea crossing with baptism. Hebrews 11:29 used it as an example of faith. Revelation 15:3 promised that a new Song of Moses would be sung. Several other examples have also been proposed, though these are generally less clear.5

Most Biblical references to the sea crossing used it as evidence of God's sovereignty and of deliverance through Him. It certainly provided striking proof of both truths. However, did this usage really answer the question of why Israel crossed the sea? Egypt's plagues proved God's sovereignty and produced a miraculous deliverance. A second act of deliverance was hardly necessary to establish the point. Israel and all believers could sing God's praises forever because of this miracle alone. The Egyptians could hardly be more impressed by God's wrath and power. So why travel south to the sea?

The Sea Crossing as Justice

What could have been the point of crossing the sea?

One suggestion has been that the sea crossing may have been an appropriate expression of God's justice. The Dutch

⁵For a discussion of this theme, see the following. Otto Piper, "Unchanging Promises," Int. 69 (1957): 3-19. Leonhard Goppelt, Typos: the Typological Interpretion of the Old Testament, (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1982), 144. Fred L. Fisher, "The New and Greater Exodus: The Exodus Pattern in the New Testament," S.W.J.T. 20 (1977): 69-73. Kenneth Bailey, "The Song of Mary: Vision of the New Exodus (Luke 1:46-55)," T.R. 2 (1979): 29-35.

⁶In fact, several later texts described the exodus without mentioning the sea crossing at all

Authorized Version contained a footnote explaining the sea crossing in these terms. This footnote suggested that Pharaoh's troops were drowned as a punishment for throwing Israelite babies into the river. 7 The strong point of this explanation was that it interpreted the account by using another aspect of the account. However, Scripture itself implied that drowning babies was an unusual and desperate step for Pharaoh to have taken. It is hardly likely that Pharaoh would have pursued such a policy for very long. Historically, both the Egyptian Eighteenth and Nineteenth Dynasties would have had reason to be nervous about a large Semitic population. The Eighteenth Dynasty had just driven out the Hyksos rulers. A large Israelite population would naturally have raised fears of renewed Semitic domination.8 After Ramses the Great, the Nineteenth Dynasty rulers were even more threatened by a large Semitic population because they faced an invasion along their northern borders. So direct action to limit Israel's population would have been However, there is little reason to believe understandable. that the Egyptians would have made a routine policy of genocide. Such a policy would have been against Egypt's best interests. The Egyptian texts noted the importance

⁷William Hendrik Gispen, <u>Exodus</u>, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1982), 145.

⁸This fear was seen in an Eighteenth Dynasty text, the "Instruction of King Merikare" which read, "Beware of being surrounded by the serfs of the foe, Caution prolongs life." Miriam Lichtheim, Ancient Egyptian Literature A Book of Readings, 2 Vols. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), 1:104.

of slaves in the Egyptian culture, especially as workers on temple estates like Pithom. Pharaohs frequently bragged about the number of captives which they provided for the temples, and both the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Dynasties brought thousands of Semitic captives into Egypt. It is hardly likely that the Egyptians would have taken thousands of Palestinian captives at the same time that they were limiting the Israelite population in the delta. Since drowning Israelite babies was probably an unusual event, Israel's sea crossing would probably not have been intended solely as a judgment against this sin.

The Canaanite Parallel

Other explanations for Israel's sea crossing have also been proposed. Most of these suggestions have drawn heavily on ancient Near Eastern material. These parallels have often been drawn at the expense of a high view of Scripture. 10 Three approaches are especially worthy of note. First, Frank E. Eaken Jr. suggested that the sea crossing account actually had its roots in the expulsion of Egypt's

⁹James H. Breasted, <u>Ancient Records of Egypt 5</u> Vols. (New York: Russell and Russell, 1962), 3:42.

¹⁰For a survey of the issues raised for the exodus by the documentary hypothesis, see two C.T.C.R. studies: Horace D. Hummel, <u>Critical Study and the Exodus Pericope</u>, Biblical Studies Series #3, (St. Louis: The Commission on Theology and Church Relations, The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, 1973), Eric H. Kiehl, <u>A Case Study in Contemporary Biblical Interpretation: The Exodus Account</u>, Biblical Studies Series #2, (St. Louis: The Commission on Theology and Church Relations, The Lutheran Church Missouri Synod, 1973).

Hyksos rulers by Ahmose I.11 Eakin suggested that Ephraim and Manasseh had left Egypt with the Hyksos, and had interpreted their departure from Egypt with imagery drawn from Baal worship. With the rise of Israel and Yahweh worship, this mythologically understood event was then reinterpreted as a victory of Yahweh over the Sea. Eakin argued that the sea crossing was a northern account, which was merged with southern stories of a Mosaic exous.

Rather closely related to this was a second approach. This approach traced the roots of Israel's sea crossing to a cultic festival. Johannes Pedersen suggested this as early as 1934. He argued that the passover pointed equally both to the night of the firstborn plague, and to the night of Israel's sea crossing. Pedersen saw these as symbolically equal in the festival drama of the Passover. 12 Ivan Engnell picked up this position and developed it in some detail. Engnell argued that an original historical core probably did stand behind the account of the exodus. However, this original historical core could not now be recovered by any means. 13 Engnell argued that this original historical core provided the theme for Israel's cultic passover festival.

¹¹Frank E. Eakin, Jr., "The Reed Sea and Baalism," <u>J.B.L.</u> 86 (1967): 383.

¹²See George W. Coats, "The Traditio-Historical Character of the Reed Sea Motif," <u>V.T.</u> 17 (1967): 254, 255, and Johannes Pedersen, <u>Israel</u>, <u>Its Life and Culture</u>, (London: Oxford University Press, 1940), 728-737.

on the Old Testament by Ivan Engnell, (Nashville: Vander-bilt University Press, 1969), 204-206.

The exodus and the sea crossing then came to be reinacted annually, celebrating God's victory over Chaos and Sheol represented by the Sea of Reeds and Egypt. Engnell then argued that this cultic festival was lost, and was only reflected behind the present text which has been historicized.

The third approach was also closely related. This approach traced Israel's sea crossing to the Near Eastern myth of the Tehom, the Deep. Ivan Engnell also defended this idea, arguing that the Sea of Reeds represented the Tehom, the primal deep. Engnell was placing the exodus within the broad Near Eastern tradition of the cosmic conflict. In this tradition, creation followed the defeat of a primeval chaos/sea monster by a storm god. In different forms, this tradition has been identified from one end of the fertile crescent to the other. Theodore Gaster listed nine Near Eastern myths which he saw as variant forms of this myth.14

Several writers have seen this motif in Israel's sea crossing, and have applied it in a variety of ways.

¹⁴Theodore Gaster, Thespis: Ritual, Myth, and Drama in the Ancient Near East, (Garden City: Doubleday and Company, 1961), 138. This material has been used to interpret Scripture since Herman Gunkel first drew the parallel in 1895. See Brevard S. Childs, "A Traditio-Historical Study of the Reed Sea Tradition," V.T. 20 (1970): 412, 413, who notes that Gunkel and Kaiser pioneered seeing myth language in the Old Testament. Gunkel's classic work is, of course, Herman Gunkel, Schöpfung und Chaos in Urzeit und Endzeit, (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1921). Kaiser's work is Otto Kaiser, Die mythische Bedeutung des Meeres in Ägypten, Ugarit und Israel, (Berlin: Alfred Töpelmann, 1962).

Robert Luyster gave one of the most comprehensive treatments of similarities between the Exodus account and the
Enuma Elish. Luyster concluded that the main outlines of
the Exodus account were borrowed from Babylonian sources,
and that the account was based on myth rather than history. 16 Other writers have been more charitably inclined
toward at least the existence of a historical core behind
the account. 17

Those who have seen Israel's sea crossing as historicized myth have frequently stressed the importance of Canaanite mythology. Since the account is assumed to have arisen in Palestinian synergism, the Canaanite myth of Baal and Yam has generally became the primary form of the chaos sea myth present behind the Exodus account. 18 A rather strong case can be made in defense of this.

Israel's sea crossing can be compared with the Baal Yam myth in at least nine points. 19 (1) Both the Canaanite

¹⁶Robert Luyster, "Myth and History in the Book of Exodus," Rel, 8 (1978): 160.

¹⁷Another others, see J. Philip Hyatt, <u>Commentary of Exodus</u>, (London: Marshall, Morgan and Scott, 1971), and Norman H. Snaith, " ጥ ጥ , The Sea of Reeds: The Red Sea." V.T. 15 (1965): 397.

¹⁸Richard Clifford listed Exodus 15 as one of many Biblical examples of the Near Eastern creation myth. See Richard J. Clifford, "Cosmogonies in the Ugaritic Texts and in the Bible," Or. 53 (1984): 200. See also Loren R. Fisher, "Creation at Ugarit and in the Old Testament," V.T. 15 (1965): 320-323.

¹⁹For a brief statement of the parallels between Exodus 15 and the Baal Yam myth, see Theodore H. Gaster, "The Egyptian 'Story of Astarte' and the Ugaritic Poem of Ba'al," B.O. 9 (1952): 82. See also H. Daniel Beeby,

texts and some later Biblical texts personified the sea. (2) Israel was delivered by the splitting of Yam/Sea, while Baal conquered by cleaving Yam/Sea to the bottom. (3) The dried sea was attributed in Exodus to a strong east wind, while Baal was the storm god. (4) Moses lifted a special staff in the air, producing the split sea. Baal conquered Yam with a special club built by a god. (5) The Canaanite texts saw Baal's victory over Yam as being a victory over an entity who was both the Sea and the River. Biblical texts combined the sea crossing with Israel's crossing of the Jordan. (6) Baal's defeat of Yam gained him the kingship, while God's defeat of Pharaoh gained Him sole rule over His people. (7) Both Baal and God were described as acting in wrath. (8) Baal's conquest led to the construction of his temple on his holy mountain. In Exodus 15, God lead His people to His holy mountain, and to the sanctuary which He had established. (9) In both Canaanite and Biblical texts, this mountain was the site of conflict, but was ultimately inviolable. It was also the meeting place of man with God, and of the divine assembly.20

These parallels are rather impressive, but how can they be explained? Why would there be such similarities between Israel's sea crossing and the Baal Yam myth?

Authors like Eakin, Engnell, Gaster, and Luyster suggest

[&]quot;The Exodus against the Background of Mythology," <u>S.E.A.</u> <u>J.T.</u> 11 (1969): 96.

²⁰These parallels will be discussed at length below.

that the Scriptural text is either partly or completely unhistorical. They suggest that Israel's exodus resembles the Ugaritic Baal myths because the Baal myths shaped the text. These perspectives generally require that a high view of Scripture be abandoned. Because of this, conservative scholars have been less than impressed with the case for mythical parallels to Israel's sea crossing.

The Polemical Alternative

There is a better alternative. It is possible to affirm both a high view of Scripture and the force of the Canaanite and Egyptian parallels. This is possible if Israel's sea crossing is viewed as a polemical action. Scripture itself seems to indicate that Israel's sea crossing was intended as a polemical event. In Exodus 14:4 and 14:17,18, God declared that He would be honored through this event, and the Egyptians would know that He was God.

And I will strengthen the heart of Pharaoh, and he will pursue after them, and I will be honored on account of Pharaoh and on account of all of his army, and the Egyptians will know that I am Yahweh.

And I, behold I, am making strong the heart of the Egyptians, and they will go after them, and I will be honored on account of Pharaoh, and on account of all his army, and on account of his chariots, and on account of his horsemen. And the Egyptians will know that I am Yahweh because of my being honored on account of Pharaoh, on account of his chariots, and on account of his horsemen.

The sea crossing clearly found its purpose in God's being honored, and in Egypt's learning about Him. Then, in Exodus 14:30,31, \$cripture noted that Israel also was strengthened in their belief through this event.

And Yahweh delivered in that day Israel from the hand of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians, dead on the shore of the sea, and Israel saw the great hand which Yahweh did against the Egyptians, and the people feared Yahweh, and were made firm in Yahweh, and in Moses His servant.

The didactic purpose of this event was also recorded later in Scripture. Isaiah 63:11-13 noted how God made for Himself an everlasting name through Israel's sea crossing.

Then Psalm 106:7-12 recorded,

Our fathers in Egypt did not teach your wonderful acts, and did not remember your abundant faithfulness, and were rebellious at the sea, at the sea of reeds. But He delivered them for the sake of His name, to make known His might, and He rebuked the sea of reeds and laid it waste (or dried it up) and He brought them into the depths as into a wilderness. And He delivered them from the hand of the one hating them, and redeemed them from the hand of their adversary. And the water covered their foes, and (even) one of them did not remain. And they were made firm in His words, and they sang His praises.

There can be little doubt that Israel's sea crossing was intended to teach Egypt about God, and to confirm Israel in their belief.

The polemical purpose of Israel's sea crossing has not been completely overlooked by recent writers.²¹ A. H. W. Curtis recognized the polemical purpose of the account. He suggested that Israel encountered Baal worship as they settled into the agricultural communities of Palestine.

Israel then reconstructed the history of her exodus from

²¹Clyde Francisco defended the polemical principle by noting that the conflict between Moses and Pharaoh was primarily a conflict between Yahweh and the gods of Egypt, and between the Hebrew faith and the Egyptian religion. Clyde T. Francisco, "The Exodus in its Historical Setting," S.W.J.T. 20 (1977): 13-15.

Egypt using Canaanite mythological imagery in order to construct a polemic against Baal worship.²² Curtis' position fails to note the pervasive presence of Baal worship in the Nile delta, and it fails to recognize God's original polemic intent in the historical act itself.

H. Daniel Beeby also recognized the polemical character of the account. Beeby suggested that Israel's sea crossing should be related in some fashion to the Babylonian creation epic, the Enuma Elish. Exploring this idea, he suggested that belief in a primal Chaos/Sea monster was both deep and ubiquitous in that age. He suggested that Israel would have accepted the validity of this belief as her neighbors had, and he argued for the presence of this myth in passages like Isaiah 51:9, 10, and Psalm 74:12-15. He then suggested that a statement to Israel of God's omnipotence would have to include a statement that in some fashion, God was victorious over Chaos/Sea. Beeby suggested that the purpose of the sea crossing account was thus didactic.23 However, Beeby declined to take a firm position on the exact relationship between Israel's myth and Israel's history. He suggested that while the exodus itself may have been a historical event, the authors of the Scriptural account would have chosen, arranged, and mod-

 $^{^{22}}A.$ H. W. Curtis, "The Subjugation of the Waters Motif in the Psalms," <u>J.S.S.</u> 23 (1978): 251, 252. For evidence of Baal worship in the Levant at this time, see pages 159, 160 of this dissertation.

²³H. Daniel Beeby, "The Exodus against the Back-ground of Mythology," 99.

ified their material so that "mythical" questions were answered, and myth related fears were allayed. Beeby held that the exodus account was not necessarily mythical, or even mythologized. Rather, the account as it reads may have been intended to refute myth, on the principle of setting a thief to catch a thief.

On this last point, Beeby seems to have been most accurate. The exodus was indeed intended to teach Egypt and Israel about God by refuting myth. However, the original event itself carried this purpose, not just later accounts about it. Beeby seems to have been incorrect in relating the sea crossing to the Enuma Elish. Mesopotamian theology would have had relatively little influence on an Israelite community which was still living in Egyptian bondage.24 The important mythical themes for Israel would have been based on Egyptian theology and on Canaanite theology. These two traditions were the dominant philosophical and theological forces in the Egyptian delta during the Mosaic age.25

²⁴There has been a long and complex debate over the extent of Mesopotamian influence on Egypt. Muller argued that the Mesopotamian Bel-Marduk vs. Tiamat myth penetrated Egypt around 2,500 B.C. See Henry O. Thompson, Mekal: the God of Beth-Shan, (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1970), 135. Any Mesopotamian influence present would have been at best of a limited and secondary character. For a discussion of the extent of Mesopotamian influence on Egypt, see: Sabatino Moscati, The Face of the Ancient Orient, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1960), 15, and M. S. Drower, "Early Connections between Sumer and Egypt," B.I.A. 8-9 (1970): 243-247.

²⁵See below for discussion.

If Israel did cross a real historical sea of reeds, how would that crossing function as a polemic against Egyptian and Canaanite theology? Israel's sea crossing formed a theological argument by imitating key aspects of Egyptian and Canaanite theology. Israel acted out a drama. Israel experienced motifs that stood right at the heart of the Egyptians' greatest hopes for a blessed eternity. However, when Israel acted out these motifs, the conclusion was not a blessed eternity for the Egyptians. The conclusion was a great judgment and destruction for Pharaoh's army, and a blessed deliverance for Yahweh's people. This argued strongly that the Egyptians' own hopes for eternity would bring them only ruin, and that real hope could only be found in Israel's God.

Six features of Israel's sea crossing imitated specific aspects of Egyptian theology: (1) the crossing of a reed sea, (2) the crossing on a miraculous pathway, (3) the creation of this pathway by a strong east wind, (4) the crossing to God's holy dwelling place, (5) the crossing at dawn, and (6) the pillar of fire preventing Pharaoh's passage. The sea crossing also functioned as a polemic against the form of Baalism in the Nile delta. This part of the argument closely resembled the polemic against Egyptian theology, and it was based on parallels with the Baal Yam myth which have already been discussed.

The sea crossing polemic would have been a very strong argument for the Egyptians, and for the generation of Jews

that left Egypt. Both groups would have been quite familiar with the complicated world of Egyptian theology. However, the force of this argument has largely been overlooked today because so few conservative Old Testament scholars have tried to swim in the deep waters of Egyptian theology. Without a firm grasp on the Egyptian traditions, it is impossible to understand and evaluate the strength of this polemic.

This study will attempt to provide both a detailed discussion of the sea crossing polemic, and an overview of some aspects of Egyptian theology which are necessary for understanding it. This study will proceed by asking five questions. (1) Why was such a polemic necessary in the first place? (2) What was the Egyptian Field of Reeds motif, and what other motifs were related to it? (3) How did this shed light on what really happened at the Red Sea? (4) How did Israel's sea crossing actually function as a polemic against Egyptian theology, and (5) how did it serve as a polemic against Baalism as well?

CHAPTER II

THE NEED FOR SUCH A POLEMIC

Egyptian Inclusive Theology

Through ten awful plagues, God had poured out His judgments on Egypt and on her gods. No one in Egypt could deny His power. Before the locust plague, Pharaoh's own advisors had urged him to let Israel go because the land was perishing. After the last plague, the Egyptian people gave Israel riches, and hurried them out fearing that all of Egypt would die. 1 No one in Egypt could have doubted Yahweh's power. Could there then have been any further need for a polemical action against Egypt? The answer is yes, there was a great need for such a polemic. Israel's sea crossing polemic was needed for four reasons. It was because of the inclusive nature of Egyptian relineeded gion. It was needed because of the dramatic and narrative character of the Egyptian texts. It was needed because it touched the soul of Egypt's hopes for eternity. Finally, it was needed because of the nature of Israel's sin in Egypt.

The need for such a polemic was grounded first in the

¹See Ex. 10:7 and 12:33.

inclusive character of Egyptian religion. Like most large polytheistic systems, the Egyptian religion could absorb other religious traditions without changing its essential character. Egypt's religious system could have absorbed Israel's God as easily as it had absorbed so many other gods. The Canaanite gods El, Baal, Anath and Astarte had found a warm reception in Egypt as they were associated with local Egyptian deities.² Why would Israel's God not be similarly absorbed?

The Egyptian religion could incorporate other traditions because of its nearly endless ability to identify one
god with another. This can be seen in a text from the
Abydos temple of Ramses II.

Lo, as for a king, he is the divine seed, while he is a dweller in heaven, as when he is on earth; he assumes the forms, which he desires, like the Moon-god.³

In other words, as god incarnate, Pharaoh could take many forms. He could even appear as the moon god. A similar idea stood behind an Eighteenth Dynasty text from the east wall of tomb 110 at Thebes.

O Re (Amun, lord of the) thrones of the Two Lands, in all thy names and in all thy seats in heaven and earth,

²For the most comprehensive treatment of Canaanite gods in Egypt, see Wolfgang Helck, <u>Die Beziehungen</u>
Ägyptens zu Vorderasien im 3. und 2. Jahrtausend v. Chr,
(Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1962), 480-514. Other useful studies include Rainer Stadelmann, <u>Syrisch-Palästinen-sische Gottheiten in Ägypten</u>, (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1967, and Siegfried H. Horn, "Foreign Gods in Ancient Egypt,"
Studies in Honor of John A. Wilson, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1969), 37-42.

³James H. Breasted, <u>Ancient Records of Egypt</u>, 5 Vols. (New York: Russell and Russell, 1962), 3:208.

and with what the king Menkheperre has given thee..."4

The implication here is that various local gods were actually manifestations of Re if properly understood.

This created a very confusing religious environment.

Egyptian theology could not be organized into any consistent system of beliefs. It was instead, a wide affirmation of many incompatible motifs. A broad spectrum of inconsistent Egyptian traditions were affirmed, while non-Egyptian ideas were either Egyptianized, or were rejected as simple ignorance.5

This broad affirmation of incompatible motifs made Egyptian theology nearly impossible to refute, and very difficult even to understand. This created special problems for evangelism, and for maintaining the purity of Israel's faith. Israelite religion was based on the belief that only Yahweh was God. How could the Egyptians be pursuaded to turn away from an epistomological tradition which affirmed many truths and many gods, and turn to belief in

⁴N. DeG. Davies, "Tehuti: Owner of Tomb 110 at Thebes," <u>Studies Presented to F. Ll. Griffith</u>, (London: Oxford University Press, 1932), 284.

⁵This rejection of foreign theology can be seen in Ramses II's evaluation of the Hittites as "the wretches ignorant of god." Mirian Lichtheim, Ancient Egyptian Literature: A Book of Readings, 2 Vols. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), 2:65. J. M. Plumley noted that the Egyptians even considered themselves to be the only real human beings. Plumley also commented on the timeless character of Egyptian religion. This ageless character was reinforced by the fact that hieroglyphic did not even negate state of being verbs until rather late in history. J. M. Plumley, "The Cosmology of Ancient Egypt," Ancient Cosmologies, (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1973), 25, 32.

one God? Something more was needed than simply the outpouring of Yahweh's great plagues. The thing needed was the kind of evidence provided by Israel's sea crossing.

This Egyptian inclusiveness and ambiguity has been a serious hindrance for scholars trying to understand Egyptian faith. Several scholars have commented on this character of Egyptian theology, including Sabatino Moscati, John Wilson, and Rudolf Anthes.

If, however, we examine this religious world more thoroughly, and seek with our modern eyes to discern its essential features, it repels and baffles us with the endless multiplicity of its forms, the obscurity which is characteristic of so many of them, and its many contradictions. It can be likened to a kaleidoscope, with an immense range of colours which shift and turn in perpetually changing juxtaposition and superposition. There is nothing more difficult than to describe and define them.6

Within Egypt the most divergent concepts were tolerantly accepted and woven together into what we moderns might regard as a clashing philosophical lack of system, but which to the ancient was inclusive. The way of the Semite, who held a contact with the desert, was to cling fiercely to tradition and to resist innovations, which changed the purity and simplicity of life. The way of the Egyptian was to accept innovations and to incorporate them into his thought, without discarding the old and outmoded. This means that it is impossible to find in ancient Egypt a system in our sense, orderly and consistent. Old and new lie blandly together like some surrealist picture of youth and age on a single face.

Egyptian religion is, I think, completely free of those logics which eliminate one of two contradictory contradictory concepts and press religious ideas into a

⁶Sabatino Moscati, <u>Face of the Ancient Orient</u>, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1960), 111.

⁷H. Frankfort, John Wilson, et al, <u>The Intellectual Adventure of Ancient Man</u>, (Chicage: The University of Chicago Press, 1946), 33.

system of dogmas.8

While these statements are generally correct, it is important that claims to Egyptian inclusiveness be kept within reasonable bounds. Several major temples and many minor sites were all competing for Pharaoh's financial support. The best way to keep money and slaves flowing in was to avoid conflicts between temples, while stressing the central importance of their individual worship sites. It is rather hard to believe that Egyptians failed to recognize the contradictions inherent within their theological system. One interesting text demonstrated the tension between competing perspectives in Egypt. A text from the tomb of Nefer-hotep at Thebes complained about those who mock and belittle the necropolis. 10 This is hardly con-

Rudolf Anthes, "Egyptian Theology in the Third Millenniuim B.C.," J.N.E.S. 18 (1959): 170. The confusing character of Egyptian theology is noted in Hans Goedicke, "Unity and Diversity in the Oldest Religion of Ancient Egypt," Unity and Diversity: Essays in the History, Literature, and Religion of the Ancient Near East, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1975), 201. Barbara Watterson, The Gods of Ancient Egypt, (New York: Facts on File Pubcations, 1984), 40. N. Rambova, "The Symbolism of the Papyri," Mythological Papyri: Texts, (New York: Pantheon Books Inc., 1957), 30. Rambova argued that the basic idea behind Egyptian theology was the renewal of life through co-operation and through the fusion of opposites.

⁹For a comparison of rival theologies in Egyptian temples, see the following. E. A. E. Reymond, The Myth-ical Origin of the Egyptian Temple, (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1969), 56-74, S. F. Brandon, "The Propaganda Factor in Some Ancient Near Eastern Cosmogonies," Promise and Fulfilment (Edinburgh: T and T Clark, 1963), 20-28, E. O. James, Creation and Cosmology, (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1969), 15-21.

¹⁰ James Pritchard, <u>Ancient Near Eastern Tests</u>
Relating to the Old Testament, (Princeton: Princeton

sistent with the kind of all inclusive theology so often described. So claims to Egyptian inclusiveness can be everdone. However, there is no doubt that the Egyptian religion was endlessly complex and self contradictory. Egyptian theology could, and did, assimilate many other religious traditions into itself, and could easily have absorbed the Israelite faith.

A Dramatic Theology

Israel's sea crossing was also necessary because of the dramatic and narrative character of Egyptian theology. The genre of Egyptian mortuary literature was significant. While several different kinds of literature were preserved in the Egyptian texts, theological ideas were commonly expressed in dramatic narrative. The texts recorded actions. What did Pharaoh say and do? How did the gods respond? Where did Osiris reign? How did Re rise and set? While this dramatic character of the texts has been widely noted, its implication for Egyptian theology have been debated.11 This dramatic character was described in the following comment by Claas Bleeker.

University Press, 1955) p.33.

¹¹Pritchard included the Twelfth Dynasty stela of Ii-kher-nnofret at Abydos in <u>Ancient Near Easter Texts</u>. This stela expressed an official's appreciation for having been able to participate in a ceremonial drama. Pritchard, <u>Ancient Near Eastern Texts</u>, 329. K. Sethe maintained that the Memphite cosmogony was actually the libretto of a sacred drama performed annually. On this, see Plumley, "The Cosmology of Ancient Egypt," 32, 33. While clear descriptions of religious drama were rare, most Egyptian literature was narrative.

This fact confirms the thesis which is defended here, that ancient Egyptian religion first expressed itself, not in dogma but in cultic forms. The tenor of many religious texts and their presentations on temple walls and on papyri are entirely in agreement with this opinion. The majority of these texts, from the oldest pyramid texts to the inscriptions in the Ptolemaic temples, have a cultic function. They are intended for the cult of the gods and of the dead. This does not require further explanation. Although every Egyptologist will agree with this, its importance is rarely The same is true of the representations in the temples and the vignettes of the papyri. They have a cultic function and repeatedly depict a sacrifice. More often than not the scene depicted, shows how the king makes different sacrifices to the gods. Anyone who has allowed himself to come under the influence of the spirit and style of these texts and representations, feels strongly that they are narrative by nature and that they are completely void of any contemplative tendencies. They testify to a belief in actu and not to a speculative religious spirit.12

Bleeker's point is that the texts depicted Pharaoh as doing something, and usually doing something related to the Egyptian cult. 13 Hans Goedicke defended a related position. Goedicke suggested that the Egyptians tended to think in word pictures because of the way that hieroglyphics were written.

Theological speculation in ancient Egypt often manifested itself in forms different from what is commonly associated with this term. Mostly it is not analytic or deductive, although treatments in this vein, like the Memphite Theology, are preserved. The common is rather the expression in pictorial symbols or their composites. Often decried as "paralogical" or "pro-

¹²Claas J. Bleeker, <u>Egyptian Festivals: Enactments</u> of Religious Renewal, (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1967), 18.

¹³While the texts have a narrative character, it is somewhat unlikely that all of them were acted out in the cult. There is simply no evidence to determine how many of the texts were ever acted. Henri Frankfort argued against the presence of drama in the texts at all. Henri Frankfort, Ancient Egyptian Religion: An Interpretation, (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1948, reprinted 1961), 135-144.

tological" it is, especially in the case of ancient Egypt, the result of a predominantly visual thinking process reflecting the close interaction of visual impression and expression, additionally fostered by the pictorial peculiarities of hieroglyphic writing which dominated the Egyptian thinking process. If this, for us, alien form of expression is taken into consideration, the store of reflections or indications of Egyptian religious thought is substantial. Its unravelling is closely intertwined with the understanding of the Egyptian concept of "writing" and its predominantly conceptual attitude.14

Goedicke's point was that the Egyptians associated ideas with mental pictures, not with abstract concepts. If so, the Egyptians learned theology through dramatic narrative and through picturing concepts. If so, a polemical action should be an effective means of communicating the truth to them. It was truth in action, and truth pictured through action.

Egyptian Hopes for Eternity

Israel's sea crossing polemic was also appropriate for Egypt because it touched the soul of the Egyptians' hope for eternity. While several texts spoke of the joy and abundance in the Field of Reeds, 15 even the most confident texts rarely lacked a note of anxiety. This anxiety was quite understandable because the Egyptians' hope for

¹⁴Goedicke, "Unity and Diversity," 203.

¹⁵See Coffin Spells 159 and 767 which stressed the joy and contentment of those dwelling in the horizon. The Coffin Spells are rather widely available in translation. Unless otherwise indicated, translations in this study will be taken from R. O. Faulkner, The Ancient Egyptian Coffin Texts, 3 Vols. (Warminster: Aris & Phillips, 1973), On these two spells, see also Alexandre Piankoff, Mythological Papyri: Texts, (New York: Pantheon Books, 1957), 3, 4 which depicts plowing in the Yaru Field.

eternity was grounded in personal effort. An Egyptian could never really know if he had been faithful enough to his god, and if his righteousness outweighed his sin. He could not know if he had learned enough spells to survive in the underworld, or if he had included in his coffin those spells which were most needed for his survival in the realm of the dead.

An example of this constant anxiety can be seen in a hymn to the sun translated by T. G. Allen, part of which read.

- P 1 Praising Re at his rising in the eastern horizon of the sky.
 - 2 N.shall say:
- S 1 Hail to thee, him who rises in his sacred land, light that has dawned in the east of the sky, great of esteem in the secret chapel.
 - 2 O Re, mayest thou hearken; O Re, mayest thou circle about. (For) I have read the 77 rolls concerning the place of slaughter of Apophis every day.
 - 3 His soul is given to the fire, his corpse to the flame, his magic to the (blazing) eye of Horus, so that he ceases to exist and is not remembered. 16

Two points here are quite striking. The first is that the speaker claimed to have read seventy seven rolls of text every day. If even approximately correct, this verse points to continual fear of death. This preoccupation with the afterlife is echoed by the fact that so many New Kingdom tombs contained papyrus sections of the Coffin Spells. The second striking point is that Apophis, the great evil serpent, was given to the fire. The underworld was very dangerous. If the deceased were not destroyed by

¹⁶T. George Allen, "Some Egyptian Sun Hymns," J.N.E.S. 8 (1949): 352.

one of many demons, he could still perish in the lake of fire, 17 or could be thrown into the burning ovens which destroyed Re's foes. 18 These fates would constitute the second death described in texts like Coffin Spell 458.

I will not die in the Abyss, and the messengers of those who are in the Abyss have no power over me, for I am Horus, son of Osiris.

I will not die a second time, and the dwellers in the Netherworld have no power over me. I will not eat their fish, their fowl shall not scream over me, for I am Horus, son of Osiris. NOT TO DIE A SECOND TIME IN THE REALM OF THE DEAD.

Alfred Wiedemann and James Breasted commented on this dark side of fear in Egyptian religion. Alfred Wiedemann described the melancholy character of the Egyptian conception of life after death. Then Wiedemann noted a stell from Cleopatra's age. On this stella, a deceased woman wrote to her living husband, describing her new environment. Wiedemann quoted her as describing the underworld in terms like these.

For as for Amenti it is a land of sleep and of darkness, a dwelling wherein those who are there remain.
They sleep in their mummy forms, they nevermore awake
to see their fellows, they behold neither their fathers
nor their mothers, their heart is careless of their
wives and children. On earth each tasteth of the water
of life, but I suffer thirst. Water cometh to him who
is upon earth, but I thirst after the water that is by
me. Since I came unto this valley I know not where I
am. I long for the water that floweth by me. I desire
the breeze on the bank of the river, that it may refresh my heart in its distress. For the name of the

¹⁷See Coffin Spell 1054, and E. A. W. Budge, <u>The Book of the Dead</u>, (New Hyde Park: University Books, 1960), 394, 395, 445, 446.

¹⁸On Egyptian fiery underworld judgments, see in Jan Zandee, <u>Death as an Enemy</u>, (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1969), 135–145, 197–217.

god who ruleth here is 'Utter Death.' 19

James Breasted noted in his work <u>Development of Religion</u>
and Thought in Ancient Egypt,

It will be seen that in spite of the conviction of life, abounding life, with which the Pyramid Texts are filled, they likewise reveal the atmosphere of apprehension which enveloped these men of the early world as they contemplated the unknown and untried dangers of the shadow world. Whichever way the royal pilgrim faced as he looked out across the eastern sea he was beset with apprehensions of the possible hostility of the gods, and there crowded in upon him a thousand fancies of danger and opposition which clouded the fair picture of blessedness beyond.20

When Egyptians asked whether they would be accepted by god, the Egyptians frequently looked for an answer in a set of ideas which revolved around the field of reeds. Through Israel's sea crossing polemic, God mimicked this set of ideas. Then, by destroying the Egyptian army and delivering Israel, God showed overwhelmingly that any hope for eternity must be found in Him.

Israel's Idolatry

Israel's sea crossing polemic would have served as an evangelistic polemic for the Jews as well. The reason for this is that at least some Israelites fell into idolatry in Egypt. This can be seen in Ezekiel 20:5-10. This section clearly describes Israel's sin in Egypt before the exodus. Verse 8 reads;

¹⁹Alfred Wiedemann, Religion of the Ancient Egyptians, (London: H. Grevel & Co., 1897), 96, 97.

²⁰James H. Breasted, <u>Development of Religion and Thought in Ancient Egypt</u>, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1912), 115.

8) And they contended with Me, and they did not desire to hear Me. Each man did not throw away the abomination of their eyes, and they did not abandon the idols of Egypt, and I declared that I would pour out my wrath against them in the midst of the land of Egypt.

Other texts also mention Israel's idolatry in Egypt, though these were somewhat less clear.21 Scripture does not spell out which Egyptian idols were worshiped by the Israelites. The only useful references are Amos 5:26 and its quotation in Acts 7:42,43. These verses are not without their own difficulties.22

In the thoroughly syncretistic environment of Egypt's delta, Israel's apostasy can easily be understood. Israel would have been tempted to accept either the local form of Baal worship, or the more traditional Egyptian motifs. The question of Baal worship will be discussed at length below. The temptations toward Egyptian theology are of greater significance at this point. What factors would have influenced Israel to accept Egyptian theology?

The first indication of temptation can be found in the dominant position given Joseph's brothers in Egypt. Genesis 47:6 states that they became overseers of cattle. This was a powerful position in Egypt.²³ After the seven year

²¹Texts worth mentioning here include: Ez. 23:19; Joshua 24:14; 5:9; Lev. 18:3.

²²Could Sikkuth of Amos 5 be an alteration of Sutekh, a common form of the Egyptian god Set/Baal?

²³See Alan H. Gardiner, "Ramesside Texts Relating to the Taxation and Transportation of Corn," <u>J.E.A.</u> 27 (1941): 21, and Breasted, <u>Ancient Records</u>, 4:50 for useful parallels.

famine, only Egypt's priests and Joseph's family owned property. All the rest of Canaan and Egypt came into Pharaoh's possession. This implied a position of wealth and power for Israel.24 In this context, Genesis 41:45 was rather interesting. It noted that Pharaoh gave Joseph a wife named Asenath, daughter of Potiphera, priest of On. This may well have been a political marriage, intended to strengthen Joseph's authority. The priests of On (Heliopolis) were politically very powerful, though perhaps not as powerful as they had been in the Old Kingdom. 25 In the Old Kingdom, one Fourth Dynasty story had even claimed that Fifth Dynasty rulers would be sons of the sun god through union with the Heliopolitan high priest's wife.26 By marrying into the Heliopolitan community, Joseph became linked with one of the most important Egyptian sites for solar religion and Field of Reeds theology.

An interesting parallel to Israel's political power may come from the Fifth Dynasty inscription of Uni. Here the overseers of crown property were described as leading

²⁴See Gen. 45:11; 46:6; 47:14-18, and 47:26,17. Ex. 9:4 indicates that Israel retained their own livestock until the exodus.

²⁵J. H. Hayes, Ancient Civilizations: Prehistory to the Fall of Rome, (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1983), 88. See also, Alan Rowe, "The Famous Solar City of On." P.E.Q., 94, 95 (1962-63): 134 who argues that Potiphera was actually the high priest of On. See also Clyde Francisco "The Exodus in its Historical Setting", S.W.J.T. 20 (1977): 14, Paul J. Ray, Jr., "The Duration of the Israelite Sojourn in Egypt," A.U.S.S., 24 (1986): 242.

²⁶Breasted, Ancient Records, 1:143.

troops in Pharaoh's army.27 It is fair to assume that whatever political power Israel may have exercised would have been lost after Ahmose I drove out the Hyksos kings.

Another indication of temptation can be found in Exodus 4:11. Israel built for Pharaoh the store cities of Pithom and Ramses. Pithom is mentioned in an Egyptian letter from the reign of Merneptah.

We have finished passing the tribes of the Shasu (S -sw) of Edom through the Fortress of Merneptah-Hotephirma, L.P.H., in Theku, (T-kw) to the pools of Pithom, of Merneptah-Hotephirma in Theku in order to sustain them and their herds in the domain of Pharaoh, L.P.H., the good Sun of every land ---- I have caused them to be brought other names of days when the fortress of Merneptah-Hotephirma may be passed, ----28

So after the exodus, Pithom remained a place near Egypt's border where northern Semitic peoples could sustain themselves.

The name Pithom is generally recognized to be a contraction for Per-Atum, the House of Atum. The god Atum was originally the primordeal god who existed before the creation of all other things.²⁹ After the creation, Atum became a solar deity. As a solar deity, Atum was closely associated with the sun god Re, especially at Heliopolis.

²⁷W. J. Perry, "The Cult of the Sun and the Cult of the Dead in Egypt," <u>J.E.A.</u> 11 (1925): 197.

²⁸Breasted, Ancient Records, 3:272. This letter could also be interpreted to mean that he had put an end to their passing. E. P. Uphill, "Pithom and Raamses: their Location and Significance," J.N.E.S. 27 (1968): 296.

³⁰Anthes, "Egyptian Theology in the Third Millennium B.C.," 173. See also the discussion in Breasted, <u>Ancient Records</u>, 2:90.

The relationship between these two gods was rather fluid and complex. In the Pyramid Texts, the names Atum and Re were sometimes used interchangeably for the sun in its solar bark.³⁰ The god Horus (and thus also Pharaoh) was described both as Son of Re, and as one born of Atum. 31 The names Re and Atum frequently appeared together in compound names describing the solar deity.32 In the tale of Horus and Seth, 33 Re appeared in the form of Pre-Harakhti. Here Re and Atum were sometimes treated as different gods, and sometimes treated jointly as one god. In his travels across the sky, the sun god could be called either Re or Atum. There was a general tendency for the rising sun to be called Re, and the setting sun to be called Atum, but either name could be used at either time. An example of this can be seen on a Karnak obelisk.

³⁰See Pyramid Texts 207-213.

³¹See Breasted, <u>Ancient Records</u>, 2:255, and Lichtheim, <u>Ancient Egyptian Literature</u>, 1:117.

³²Any number of examples can be mentioned. Harmakhis-Khepri-Re-Atum appeared in Breasted, Ancient Records. 2: 323. Re-Atum appeared in Pyramid Text 152. E. O. James sited an example of Atum-Re-Khepri. James, Creation and Cosmology, 15. Hans Goedicke suggested that the name Re was originally associated with the verb i'r, "to ascend." Goedicke explained this as "the ascendancy and manifestation of the transcendental Absolute above the delineation of the immanence." Goedicke then suggested that the compound Re'-Atum was not a syncretism, but rather should be translated as "the Re' of Atum." Goedicke, "Unity and Diversity," 207.

³⁴This is a Nineteenth Dynasty text from the time of Ramses V. It can be found in Lichtheim, Ancient Egyptian Literature, 2:214-223. For the relationship between these gods, see footnote 1 on page 223 of that work.

...as Re sets in the evening-barque, as he rises in the morning barque, as he joins his two mothers in the divine barque, as heaven abides, as that which he hath made endures, as I shall be unto eternity like an 'Imperishable,' as I shall go down in the west like Atum³⁴

The identification of Pithom as Per-Atum is important because it places Israel at a cult site. This should not be surprising. Semitic peoples did commonly work on Egyptian temple estates. As early as the Twelfth Dynasty, Asiatics were working at the temple town of Kahun in the Fayum. A. R. David suggested that some of these Asiatics were involved in Egyptian religious practices and were working in Egyptian temples.³⁵ Perhaps the clearest description of Asiatics in Egypt came from an inscription of Amen-hotep III.

Its workhouse is filled with male and female slaves, the children of the princes of every foreign country of his majesty's plundering. Its magazines enclose good things of which the count is not known. It is surrounded with Syrian towns, settled with the children of princes. Its cattle are like the sands of the shore; they total millions.³⁶

The annals of Thutmose III at Karnak recorded that after his Palestinian victories, Thutmose III gave 1,578 Syrian slaves to the temple of Amon to work its fields and to fill its storehouses.³⁷ An inscription from the tomb of Rekh-

³⁴Breasted Ancient Records, 2:133. For a Discussion of the solar bark of Re and Atum, see Elizabeth Thomas, "Solar Barks Prow to Prow," J.E.A. 42 (1956): 77.

³⁵A. R. David, <u>The Pyramid Builders of Ancient</u> <u>Egypt</u>, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1986), 189-194.

³⁶Pritchard, Ancient Near Eastern Records, 375.

³⁷Breasted, Ancient Records, 2:222, 258. See also Hatshepsut's promise in 2:91, 92.

mire, vizier of Thutmose III, described Semitic foreigners among the brickmakers at the Karnak temple.³⁸ Since the Karnak temple incorporated some features of the solar cult in its structure, this servitude at least exposed the Semitic captives to Field of Reeds theology.³⁹

Nineteenth Dynasty texts also recorded the presence of Asiatics in Egyptian temples. An inscription in the great temple of Abu Simbel noted of Ramses the Great,

His might is in all lands; bringing for him multitudes of workmen from the captivity of his sword in every country. He has filled the houses (pr·w) of the gods with the children of Retenu (Rtnw).40

Since so many Asiatics worked on Egyptian temple estates, it is not surprising that Israel was forced to build a temple storehouse city like Pithom. Also, given A. R. David's evidence from the Fayum, it is not surprising that some Israelites would have become involved in the Egyptian cult at these temple estates.

³⁸As Breasted noted, this was exactly what was exacted of the Hebrews at Pithom. Breasted, Ancient Records, 2:292, 293. See also Pritchard, Ancient Near Eastern Texts, 248 which described a settlement of Syrians founded by Thutmose IV.

³⁹While Karnak was not a great center of the solar cult like Heliopolis, it did incorporate some artistic elements related to the Field of Reeds. For example, the temple pylons in the east may well have represented the mountains between which Re rose every morning. The presence of solar theology at Karnak would be especially likely after Amun was merged with Re in the Eighteenth Dynasty. On this merger, see A. R. David. The Ancient Egyptian: Religious Bliefs and Practices, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1982), 123.

⁴⁰Breasted, Ancient Records, 3:213. See also 3:42, 36, 4:75. Note also the Syrians who served as slave labor in the house of Thoth. Gardiner, "Ramesside Texts," 21.

CHAPTER III

THE EGYPTIAN FIELD OF REEDS

The Source of Field of Reeds Theology

Israel's sea crossing refuted one of the oldest and most basic aspects of Egyptian religion, the Field of Reeds motif. This motif was already ancient and diverse when the Pyramid Texts were written during the Fifth and Sixth Dynasties. The origins of this motif are largely lost in antiquity, with only a limited amount of useful material coming from the archeological record. 2

The standard explanation for the origin of the Field

¹Several authors have pointed to the presence of predynastic material in the mortuary texts. These include the following: James H. Breasted, <u>Development of Religion and Thought in Ancient Egypt</u>, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1912), 85-87, 101-103, E. A. W. Budge, <u>The Book of the Dead</u>, (New Hyde Park: University Books, 1960), 1, and R. O. Faulkner, <u>The Ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead</u>, (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1972), 11, 12.

²The following are of some value here. John Wilson, The Culture of Ancient Egypt, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1951), 28, N. Rambova, "The Symbolism of the Papyri," In Mythological Papyri: Texts, (New York: Pantheon Books, 1957), 31. William C. Hayes, The Scepter of Egypt, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1953), 1:21, 52. M. A. Murray, "Burial Customs and Beliefs in the Hereafter in Predynastic Graves," J.E.A. 42 (1956): 87-89. Adolf Erman, A Handbook of Egyptian Religion, (Boston: Longwood Press, 1977), 6. H. Frankfort, Ancient Egyptian Religion An Interpretation, (New York: Harper & Row, 1961), 151, Rudolf Anthes, "Egyptian Theology in the Third Millennium B.C.," J.N.E.S. 18 (1959): 179.

of Reeds motif is that the Egyptian spiritual world was modeled after the pattern of the Nile valley ecosystem. Several authors can be cited who viewed the Field of Reeds in this light. E. A. W. Budge suggested that the original Field of Reeds was located in the northern or northeastern delta. He even suggested that Tattu, near the capital of the Busirite nome of lower Egypt should be regarded as a prototype of this region.3 I. E. S. Edwards suggested that the Field of Reeds originally grew from the Osiris cult. He suggested that the Field of Reeds below the western horizon was an idealized version of this world.4 E. O. James explained that the Field of Reeds seemed to be an idealization of the Nile valley with beautiful roads and winding lakes which were difficult to cross. 5 Henri Frankfort suggested that instead of being an idealization of the Nile valley, the Field of Reeds material pointed back to the era when the Nile valley was originally settled.6

These writers agree in seeing the Nile valley as the prototype for the Field of Reeds. However, they disagree on several points. Was this Field of Reeds located in the

³E. A. W. Budge, <u>Egyptian Ideas of the Future Life</u>: Egyptian Religion, (New York: University Books, 1959), 204, 211.

⁴I. E. S. Edwards, <u>The Pyramids of Egypt</u>, (Balti-more: Penguine Books, 1961), 30.

⁵E. O. James, <u>The Tree of Life: an Archaeological</u> Study, (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1966), 68.

⁶Frankfort, Ancient Egyptian Religion, 110, 111, 154.

northern delta? Was it beyond the western horizon? Was it in the East, or was it a primordial zone of some kind? The simple truth is that different Egyptian texts support locating this region in various places. The Egyptians themselves would have affirmed all of these locations.

Perhaps the best avenue for approaching the Field of Reeds material is to begin by distinguishing between three early traditions. One early tradition placed the Field of Reeds either among the stars or in the sky. A second early tradition placed the Field of Reeds in a transition zone beyond the horizon. A third early tradition placed the Field of Reeds in the underworld. These three traditions generally intermingled with each other in the extant texts.8

The Astral Field of Reeds

Several authors have suggested that the earliest Egyptian texts placed the Field of Reeds either among the stars or in the air. John Wilson expressed this position rather clearly in The Intellectual Adventure of Ancient Man, where he wrote:

In the clear air the stars stand out with brilliance. Most of the stars swing across the sky with a scythelike sweep and disappear below the horizon. But one section of the skies employs a smaller orbit, and there

⁷Henri Frankfort suggested that, "The Field of Rushes does not, then, possess any particular location; it may be invoked as the place where the dead are in connection with any part of the solar and astral circuit which happens to be discussed." Frankfort, Ancient Egyptian Religion, 113.

⁸The complex Egyptian notion of human souls is, of course, a complicating factor here, which must remain large—ly beyond the limits of this study.

the stars may dip toward the horizon but never disap-Those are the circumpolar stars swinging around the North Star, stars which the Egyptians called "those that know no destruction" or "those that know no weariness." These undying stars they took as the symbol of the dead who triumphed over death and went on into eter-That north section of heaven was in early times an important part of the universe. Visibly there was no death there; therefore, it must be the place of the eternal blessedness for which Egyptians longed. the early mortuary texts, which we moderns call the Pyramid Texts, the goal of the deceased was the region of Dat in the northern part of heaven, where he would join the circumpolar stars "which know no destruction" and thus live forever himself. There were located their Elysian Fields, the "Field of Reeds" and the "Field of Offerings," in which the dead would live as an akh, an "effective" spirit.

As time went on, and as the dominant mythology of the sun spread its weight over the nation, the region of Dāt shifted from the northern part of the sky to the underworld. The old texts which tried every conceivable method of boosting the dead into heaven were still reiterated with solemn fervor, but the two Elysian Fields were below the earth.9

In other words, Wilson holds that the circumpolar stars which never set were originally seen as the site of the Egyptian Field of Reeds. This is a rather old interpretation of the data. Adolf Erman defended a similar position in 1907,10 and the position has had a number of other adherents. Henri Frankfort suggested that while Pharaoh rode the solar bark in its circuit, the common dead found their home among the circumpolar stars. 11 Many texts could be used to

⁹H. Frankfort, John Wilson, et al, <u>The Intellectual</u> Adventure of Ancient Man, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1946), 47, 48.

¹⁰Erman, A Handbook of Egyptian Religion, 91.

¹¹Frankfort, Ancient Egyptian Religion an Interpretation, 103. Frankfort even suggested on page 109 that the Egyptians knew no land of the dead per se, but only constantly moving stars.

illustrate the astral setting of the Field of Reeds. 12 Some texts describe Pharaoh as a star among stars and a ruler over stars. 13 One of the better examples of this comes from the tomb of Si-renpowet I, prince of Elephantine.

I rejoice over my being caused (?) to reach heaven; my head pierced the sky; I grazed the bodies of the stars; I won rejoicing (?); I shone (?) as a star; I danced like the planets. 14

Other typical texts include Pyramid texts 882, 1048, 1049, and part of Coffin Spell 63. These read:

O King, you are this great star, the companion of Orion, who traverses the sky with Orion, who navigates the Netherworld with Osiris; 15

O King, free course is given to you by Horus, you flash as the Lone Star in the midst of the sky; you have grown wings as a great- breasted falcon, as a hawk seen in the evening traversing the sky

Receive this sceptre of yours which is at the feet of Re' and your rod which is at the feet of the Morning Star; you shall ascend to the sky among the stars which do not perish, you shall strike with the sceptre and govern with the rod. 16

¹²For the Pyramid Texts which imply an astral setting, see R. O. Faulkner, "The King and the Star-Religion in the Pyramid Texts," J.N.E.S., 25 (1966): 153-161.

¹³E. A. W. Budge, <u>Osiris</u>, (New Hyde Park: University Books, 1961), See page 107 on the stars as departed beings. See also Breasted, <u>Development of Religion and Thought</u>, 101.

¹⁴Alexandre Piankoff, The Wandering of the Soul, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974), 6. Piankoff was quoting A. Gardiner, "Inscriptions from the Tomb of Sirenpowet I, of Elephantine," Z.A.S., 45 (1908): 125.

¹⁵Unless otherwise indicated, Pyramid Texts will be taken from R. O. Faulkner, <u>The Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts</u>, (Oak Park: Bolchazy-Carducci Publishers, 1969).

¹⁶Any number of texts could be added here, including the following: Pyramid Texts 782, 785, 1123, and Coffin Spells 517 and 866.

One unusual text even depicted the foundation of this astral Field of Reeds. Coffin Spell 61 recorded that the star constellations Orion and the Great Bear took water from their lakes to prepare a place for Pharaoh. This watery place was the astral Field of Reeds.

This astral Field of Reeds was usually located in the far north. This can be seen in Pyramid Text 801, 802 which reads:

May you remove yourself to the sky, for the roads of the celestial expanses which lead up to Horus are cleared for you. Seth is brotherly toward you as the Great One of On, for you have traversed the Winding Waterway in the north of the sky as a star crossing the sea which is beneath the sky.

In other words, Pharaoh was to travel celestial roads across the Winding Waterway in the north of the sky. 17 The Coffin Spell frequently mentioned this northern location. One such can be found in Coffin Spell 473, which reads in part:

I will appear as a Great One and will go aboard the boat and sow the land to the northern sky, and I will join up there with the gods, for my bread is in the Field of Rushes, my supper is in the Field of Flood; 18

This passage identifies the Field of Rushes as the northern land where Pharaoh would sow grain for his bread. This northern Field of Reeds looks rather like a delta site projected into the mythological north. This can be seen in Coffin Spell 581.

I have flown up as a swallow, I have cackled as a goose, I have alighted on the great northern plain of the Great One. See, I will not die; standing on you when I appear

¹⁷See also Pyramid Text 1000.

¹⁸See also Coffin Spells 347, 474, 582, and 704.

as a god; I see you when I seek out your riparian land. I glitter as a glitter-bird on your vertex, my water-sources are the marshes of the Mansions of the Red Crown, my eye is the pupil(?) of the Eye of Horus. I will make a descent to the riparian land of \underline{Sk} ; I will eat and gorge in the Field of Offerings, I will land in the northern sky, I will open the doors of the horizon, I will travel to the northern limits. I am bound for the northern sky and I will dwell in it with Seth. 19

Seth is, of course, god of Libyans and northern asiatics. Other texts stress that the north is generally the home of the $\gcd 20$

It is interesting to notice that these texts make no distinction between the Field of Reeds located among the stars, and the Field of Reeds located in the sky. This should not be surprising. From an Egyptian perspective, the two were inseparable. If the sky was perceived as a great goddess, stars covered her body. If the sky was seen as the bull Hathor, its belly was covered with stars.²¹

Now, this seems rather simple and easy to understand.

Unfortunately, Egyptian theology is never simple. From the earliest texts, Egyptian theology mixes together various divergent and even incompatible motifs. The astral Field of Reeds always competed for popularity with the worship of Osiris. The Osirian religion usually placed the realm of

¹⁹See also Coffin Spell 285.

²⁰See also Coffin Spell 479. This northern location of the Field of Reeds is especially clear is Faulkner's translation "polar region" is accepted. See Coffin Spell 1030, and Pyramid Text 1168. However, compare Faulkner's translation with that of Piankoff, The Wandering of the Soul, 12.

²¹This unity of stars and sky can be seen in Pyramid Texts 2126 and 821–822.

the dead either beyond the western horizon, or in the underworld.²² In the texts, several attempts can be seen to deal with the tension between the astral Field of Reeds and the Osirian underworld. These attempts sometimes added a note of disharmony to Egyptian theological unity. At other times they tended to move the Field of Reeds away from the northern sky, and toward the western horizon.

One attempt to deal with this tension intentionally drew a distinction between the two regions. In this approach, the astral Field of Reeds remained the realm of blessing, while the Osirian West became an area of doom. This can be seen in Pyramid Text 2175.

Do not travel (on) those western waterways, for those who travel thereon do not return, but travel on these eastern waterways among the Followers of (Re'...) an arm (is upraised) in the East (...).23

Another interesting approach involves the nature of the stars which accompany Re's solar bark. Several texts

²²⁰siris was almost as important as Re at Heliopolis, and several texts placed Osiris among the stars, in the solar bark, or in the astral Field of Reeds. This can be seen clearly in the "Hymn to Osiris" which says of Osiris, "The imperishable stars are under thy supervision, and the stars which never set are thy thrones." Budge, The Book of the Dead, 59, 60. Other important texts include the following: Pyramid Texts 464, 749, 971, and Coffin Spells 629, 801, 1147. This is consistent with claims by Breasted and James that the Osirian West was incorporated into the solar skyworld by the Heliopolitan priests. James, The Tree of Life, 68, Breasted, Development of Religion and Thought, 103. See also on this point, Anthes, "Egyptian Theology in the Third Millenniun B.C.," 182, and Faulkner, The Ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead, 12.

²³Similar sentiments are expressed in Pyramid Text 251 and Coffin Spell 44, where the king is expected to be encircled by Orion, Sothis, and the morning stars, and not to be among the dead who suffered lamentations in the West.

claim that the "imperishable" stars served as attendants in Re's bark.24 These "Imperishable" stars are normally interpreted as being the northern circumpolar stars which never set. If Re's bark is manned by the circumpolar stars, then the bark can never set below the horizon, and both its day and night journeys must occur above the earth.

However, some texts move this theme toward the Osirian underworld by manning Re's bark with "Unwearying" stars rather than "Imperishable" stars. The "Unwearying" stars can and do set below the horizon. The distinction between these two groups of stars can be seen in Coffin Spell 62, part of which reads:

A ladder to the sky shall be put together for you and Nut will extend her hands toward you, you shall navigate on the Winding Waterway and sail in the eight boat. These two crews of the Imperishable Stars and the Unwearying Stars shall navigate you, they shall pilot and tow you over the District of the Waters with ropes of iron.²⁵

This distinction can also be seen in Coffin Spell 255 which distinguished between the "Imperishable" stars that aided Re's bark, and the "Unwearying" stars that opened the underworld gates. Coffin Spell 42/43 promised that the "Unwearying" Stars would see Pharaoh's power when he went down into

²⁴Pyrammid Texts 1432, 1439, Coffin Spell 786, 939.

²⁵R. O. Faulkner defended this distinction in his article "The King and the Star-Religion," 16O. Breasted interpreted these two groups of stars as the stars in the northern and southern heavens. James H. Breasted, Ancient Records of Egypt, 5 Vols. (New York: Russell and Russell, 1962), 3:114. See Coffin Spell 53. There are, of course, exceptions to every rule in the Egyptian texts. Breasted, Ancient Records, 2:133 gives an example of Pharaoh as an Imperishable star setting in the west.

the West as god. Coffin Spell 424 also placed the "Unweary-ing" stars below the western horizon. Manned by these stars, it would be possible for Pharaoh's bark to travel through the Osirian underworld.26

Finally, the tension between an astral Field of Reeds and an Osirian realm was often mitigated by redefining the word "sky." Instead of being a distant, lofty region, the sky now became equivalent to "horizon." This horizon zone was of central importance for both Solar and Osirian religions. Re bathed and changed barks in the horizon zones. The western horizon zone was the beginning of Osiris' realm, and it led down into the underworld. By locating the Field of Reeds in the horizon sky, the texts found a location compatible with both traditions.27

This merger of sky and horizon can be seen in several texts. In Coffin Spell 30, the resurrected Pharaoh is seen traveling peacefully on beautiful paths in the West. Then the western horizon gods say to him,

²⁶Sir Flinders Petrie described the Duat as an underworld of stars. He located the Duat in the underworld because of depictions in the Book of the Dead, a late form of the mortuary texts. Sir Flinders Petrie, Religious Life in Ancient Egypt, (New York: Cooper Square Publishers, 1972), 118.

²⁷Erik Hornung argued that the transition from a Field of Reeds in the sky to one in the underworld occurred quite late in Egyptian history. He argued that the sky was the gods' favorite abode in the Old Kingdom. The Middle Kingdom then saw this perspective complemented by the underworld, and the New Kingdom saw a detailed development of underworld motifs. Erik Hornung, Conceptions of God in Ancient Egypt, trans. John Baines, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1982), 228.

Go, row to the Field of Rushes within the Islands of the sky, navigate therein to Him who is on his $\mbox{$k$}3dt-$ plant

Similarly, the tomb of Sen-Mut at Thebes contained an inscription which read in part,

- 1. ...with the Great God. Mayest thou proceed (in peace)
- to heaven, to the two horizons, to the Fields of Ya(ru)²⁸

While the western horizon is associated with the sky in some texts, more commonly the eastern horizon is described in these terms. For example, Pyramid Text 340, 341 reads:

The Fields of Rushes are filled (with water), and I ferry across on the Winding waterway; I am ferried over to the eastern side of the horizon, I am ferried over to the eastern side of the sky, and my sister is Sothis, my offspring is the dawn-light.

Similarly, Pyramid Text 351-353 reads:

The reed-floats of the sky are set in place for me my-

That I may cross on them to the horizon, to Re' and to Harakhti.

The Nurse-canal is opened,

The Winding Waterway is flooded,

The Fields of Rushes are filled,

That I may be ferried over to the eastern side of the sky.

To the place where the gods were born,

And I was born there with them

As Horus, as the horizon dweller.

One of the more interesting sky texts is Coffin Spell 766 which describes the Jackal Lakes and the marshes of the floor of the sky.

This Field of Reeds in the sky could also be moved to the underworld, just as the unwearying stars could set

²⁸William C. Hayes, Ostraka and Name Stones from the Tomb of Sen-Mut (No. 71) at Thebes, (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1942), 19.

there. This was occasionally done by suggesting that there were two skies, one above the earth, and the other below it.

This can be seen in several of the Pyramid Texts. For example, Pyramid Text 406 reads:

Those who are in the sky serve the King, And the hearth-stones are wiped over for him With the feet of their women. He has travelled around the whole of the two skies

In footnote 18, Faulkner suggests that these two skies are the skies of the upper world and the netherworld.29 This motif of upper and lower skies appears in Hatshepsut's inscriptions at the temple of Deir El Bahari.30 It is also implied in Spell 15 of the Book of the Dead. Part of this spell reads:

Horakhty multiple of forms and great of shapes, Ptah-Sokar, Atum in Heliopolis, Lord of the Shetyt-shrine, who enriches Memphis; these are the gods who govern the Netherworld; they protect you when you go to rest in the Lower Sky. 31

The Horizon Field of Reeds

As was noted earlier, the Field of Reeds texts can be

²⁹Faulkner, The Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts, 83. See also Pyramid Text 149 which distinguishes between ascending to the Upper Sky and Descending to the Lower Sky. Coffin Spell 463 identifies the Lower Sky as the Netherworld, and Pyramid Text 207 associates the Lower Sky with the throne of the Abyss.

³⁰Edouard H. Naville, <u>The Temple of Deir El Bahari</u>, (London: Egypt Exploration Fund, n.d.), 4:10. T. George Allen also noted a late Egyptian sun hymn which described Re as striding at will through the nether sky. Allen, "Some Egyptian Sun Hymns," <u>J.N.E.S.</u> 8 (1949):353.

³¹Faulkner, The Ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead, 40.

grouped very loosely into astral, horizon, and underworld locations. The astral texts placed the Field of Reeds either among the stars or in the sky. The horizon texts placed the Field of Reeds around creation beyond the horizon, and the underworld texts placed the Field of Reeds either beneath or beside the earth.

Since the horizon zone linked sky, earth, and underworld, texts which described the horizon Field of Reeds frequently described it as being a part of the sky or the underworld. Several examples of this were noted in the previous section on the astral Field of Reeds. However, the horizon motif involved a separate set of ideas which deserve separate treatment.32 The first significant feature of this horizon Field of Reeds was that it surrounded the whole This could be seen first in Pyramid Text 2175 which world. contrasted the eastern waterway with the western waterway. This implied at least that both horizon regions shared the same swamp like character, even though in this text, inhabitants of each suffered different fates. Coffin Spell 347 spoke of the northern portal of the Field of Reeds, and claimed:

The great West is joined together at the south of the

³² Of course, the Egyptian texts are endlessly complex, with various themes which are continually interwoven. The identification of three separate motifs is a theoretical abstraction useful for analysis. As such, it is necessarily a distortion. Readers who wish to appreciate the spirit of Egyptian theology must unhinge their minds from a world composed of parts, where ideas are right or wrong, and enter a world of glorious ambiguity and complexity which functions only as a whole.

land and (at) this polar region which is in front of the zenith (?).

The idea here seemed to be that the northern, western, and southern borders of the Field of Reeds were joined together. They were joined because the Field of Reeds encircled the earth.³³ This great circle of marsh was called the "Great Circle" and resembled the Greek concept of Okeanos.³⁴

The second significant feature of this region was its primeval character. This primal aspect of the horizon can be seen in Coffin Spell 286.35

BECOMING (A FALCON). The Two Enneads of Horus are afraid of me and tremble at me, (even they) the Primeval Ones who witnessed the separation of the sky from the earth, when he who in the past brought my father into being was created. Regard me, one who was conceived and born as Horus the heir; I was created for you, (even I) the Lord of the Enneads.

O you plebs, look on me, the son of Isis; I was conceived in Pe and born in Chemmis; I was nursed in my Field of Fire on that day when I was received(?) on the birth-stool, I was taken to my father Atum, and he gave me the ornaments of his father Geb; I entered into the horizon.

So Horus (and thus also Pharaoh) was nursed in the Field of Fire, which became the Field of Reeds, and then entered his horizon.

³³The Field of Reeds is routinely located in the east, north, and west. A few texts also locate it in the south, completing the circle. These texts include Pyramid Texts 1084, 1087, and Coffin Spell 498. In a related motif, Pyramid Text 464, 465 notes that the northern, southern, eastern and western gods all set down reed floats so that Osiris could ascend to the sky. On the other hand, it is possible that these texts could simply be a reflection of the north/south and east/west orientation of the solar bark. In that case, a circular Field of Reeds may not have been in view.

³⁴This Great Circle will be discussed at greater length below.

E. A. E. Reymond interpreted the significance of the Field of Reeds by combining its circular and primal characteristics. Reymond explained the importance of the Field of Reeds in this way.

The circumstances described reveal the importance of the field of reeds in Egyptian mythology. It was in a field of reeds that the first sacred domain was created and existed. When this domain vanished the field of reeds was believed to have protected the funerary abode of its rulers. It was again in a field of reeds that life was renewed. In our creation story it was in the field of reeds that the early divine generation of gods revealed themselves after its sanctity was revivified by the creation of the Perch. In the same field of reeds the first domain for the new divine being was founded. It follows that the field of reeds had vital significance in the origin of sacred places.³⁶

Reymond suggested that creation began in a large shallow area of reeds within the great Chaos/Sea.³⁷ This shallow

³⁵Pyramid Text 353 identified this horizon region as the place where the gods were born. B. Watterson suggested that the Field of Reeds was originally created as a grazing ground for the air goddess Nut as she stood with arms and legs over the horizon. Barbara Watterson, The Gods of Ancient Egypt, (New York: Facts on File Publications, 1984), 64. Alfred Wiedemann cited a text which credited Re with forming the Field of Reeds, and then forming inhabitants in it to praise him. Alfred Weidemann, Religion of the Ancient Egyptians, (London: H. grevel & Co., 1897), 63.

³⁶E. A. E. Reymond, Mythical Origin of the Egyptian Temple, (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1969), 124. Reymond published several articles based on her studies of the Edfu temple texts. For further study of this motif, see her articles in J.E.A. 48 (1962): 81-88; 49 (1963): 140-146; 50 (1964): 133-138, and 51 (1965): 144-148. Of course, like most major Egyptian temples, the Edfu temple was a Ptolemaic reconstruction. As such, its texts must be used with some care, though there is little reason to doubt their antique character.

³⁷Coffin Spell 551 described this watery region by putting into Pharaoh's mouth the words, "I have come to you, my father Re'; I have traversed the air, I have swallowed the Great One, I have gone around the watery Chaos four times."

region was all that remained of a destroyed land which had been a home for the gods. When the Horus falcon landed on a stalk in the reeds, creation began once more. A primal hillock rose from the sea with the stalk at its center. 38 This primal hillock became the site of Egypt's first temple. Then the hillock spread out, rising, becoming the whole inhabited world. As this primal hillock expanded, the Field of Reeds was stretched as a ring around it.

The most important horizon regions were the eastern and western horizons. The eastern Field of Reeds was almost exclusively associated with the royal solar cult. It will be discussed at length below. The western horizon motifs were much more eclectic. Several different traditions located the realm of the dead in the west. One of these West traditions was the Field of Reeds motif. A good example of this western motif can be seen at Deir El Bahari,

Hail to thee Re; thou settest in the holy horizon of the west, thou settest in thy fields in Mannu; 39

Other western traditions which may have been originally independent include the realm of Osiris, the mountain of Anubis, and the mountain of Seth.40

The Netherworld Field of Reeds

The final location for the Field of Reeds is in the

³⁸See also Pyramid Text 1022.

³⁹Naville, <u>Temple of Deir El Bahari</u>, 4:11. The western horizon is being seen here as the doorway into the netherworld.

⁴⁰⁰n Anubis kingdom, see Pyramid Texts 804 and 1552.

underworld. This underworld region is described in a wide variety of ways and with different names. Most commonly, this area is called either the Duat,41 the Abyss, or the land of Rostau.42 The texts showed a remarkable diversity in the location and character of these sites. E. A. W. Budge implied a reason for this diversity in his discussion of Papyrus Ani.

When Afu Ra arrives at the last of the pits, his journey through the Tuat proper is ended, and it only remains for him to pass through the ante-chamber to the east of it, in order to arrive at the sky of this world. In his journey he has traversed the Tuat of Thebes, the Tuat of Osiris of Abydos, the Tuat of Seker of Memphis, the Tuat of Neith of Sais, the Tuat of Bast of Bubastis, and the Tuat of Tem of Anu, or Heliopolis, and he has followed a course which first went from south to north, then to the east, and finally towards the Mountain of the Sunrise. 43

The implication of this is that the Book of the Dead incorporated Duat motifs from various sites, and each of these sites described the Duat in a slightly different way.

The same kind of diversity is reflected in both the Pyramid Texts and the Coffin Texts. In the Pyramid Texts,

⁴¹This name is transliterated in several different ways. Some writers print it as Dewat, Tuat, or Tat, though Duat is the most common form. Other authors simply translate it as "Netherworld."

⁴²R. O. Faulkner offered two explanations for this name in <u>The Ancient Egyptian Coffin Texts</u>, 3 Vols. (Warminster: Aris & Phillips, 1973). In 1:44. he noted that Rostau was the necropolis of Memphis, and this name was later generalized for the underworld. In 2:134 he noted that Rostau was a term used for the ramp, or slide, used for moving the sarcophagus into a tomb, and this was transferred to the region beyond. He noted that there could be a Rostau at any important cult center.

⁴³Budge, <u>The Book of the Dead</u>, 149. Papyrus Ani is the best source for the Theban recension of the Egyptian mortuary texts.

the Duat was commonly not even located beneath the earth. It was located in the northern sky, and was closely related to the northern celestial Field of Reeds.44 The Duat was basically the route traveled by Re's night bark as it returned from sunset to dawn.45 The Duat could be described as a celestial place because this return route was originally placed either through the air goddess' body or above the starry firmament, where it could not be seen from earth.46 However, the Pyramid Texts were not entirely consistent in this location. Some texts seem already to have equated the Duat with the underworld.47 This seems to be implied by Pyramid Text 2083-2085.

...those who are in the Netherworld have recovered their wits, they have unstopped their ears at this King's voice, for he descends among them, and He whose power is heavy tells them that this King is one of them, for this

⁴⁴See Samuel A. B. Mercer, <u>The Pyramid Texts in Translation and Commentary</u>, 5 Vols. (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1952), 4:33, and the following Pyramid Texts: 362, 953, 1168-1175, and 1717.

⁴⁵Travel in the duat occurred in both a north/south and an east/west direction. Similarly, solar barks were described as traveling on a north/south route as frequently as an east/west one. See Thomas, "Solar Barks Prow to Prow," J.E.A. 42 (1956): 77, 78. Thomas explained this route in terms of the suns apparent motion. However, it may be a reflection of the Nile rivers path.

⁴⁶Piankoff suggested this explanation. See Alexandre Piankoff, "The Sky Goddess Nut and the Night Journey of the Sun," <u>J.E.A.</u>, Vol. 20 (1934): 58. This may be why stars were in the Duat in Pyramid Text 953.

⁴⁷See Breasted, <u>Development of Religion and Thought</u>, 144. Samuel Mercer suggested that this distinction reflected the difference between solar and Osirian cullts. The solar Duat was among the stars, while the Osirian Duat was in the underworld. See Mercer, <u>The Pyramid Texts</u>, 4:35.

King is recorded among them as a great recorded one who has been conducted to the West. 48

Along similar lines, the Pyramid Texts frequently placed the Abyss in the sky, 49 though it was also found in the underworld. 50

Early texts did not give a clear picture of the nature of this netherworld, though hints of future developments could already be seen. Several texts described the netherworld as the realm of the dead, and described the abundant provisions to be found in this region. 51 One text even described the caverns of the Abyss, which clearly pointed to later usage. 52 Many texts mentioned the gates, or portals, of the Duat, of the Abyss, and of the sky. 53 In the Pyramid Texts, the underworld gates were normally the horizon passages into the underworld instead of being structural features of the underworld.

In the Middle Kingdom texts, earlier themes were developed in more detail. Celestial and horizon locations for the Field of Reeds continued to appear, but the Coffin

⁴⁸The word translated here as "Netherworld" is Duat. Other Pyramid Texts which place the Duat in the underworld include 272, 273, 306, 882,883, and 1987. Piankoff noted that some Pyramid Texts located the Duat in the eastern sky near the land of morning and the Field of Reeds. Piankoff, "Sky Goddess Nut and the Night Journey of the Sun," 59.

⁴⁹See Pyramid Texts 1486, 2206.

⁵⁰See Pyramid Texts 207, 237, and 1778.

⁵¹See Pyramid Texts 132, 310, 314, 318, 319, 1677, and 1679.

⁵²Pyramid Text 268.

Texts did see an increased tendency to place the Duat in the underworld. Earlier texts had often seen the underworld realm of the dead as a place which Pharaoh could avoid by traveling the solar bark to the Field of Reeds. Middle Kingdom texts were more likely to depict Pharaoh traveling through this region.54 One of the more interesting examples of this is Coffin Spell 317. Part of this spell reads, "and my seat is prominent in the Bark of Re' in the midst of the lower Netherworld." In this text, Pharaoh is identifying himself as a manifestation of the Nile god, sailing on Re's bark through the lower Duat. This lower Duat is the underworld.55

The clearest references to this region are found in the Eleventh and Twelfth Dynasty texts from El-Bersheh called These texts include Coffin Spells
1029 to 1130. Some of these texts describe a region called the Land of Rostau. 56 This Land of Rostau was the domain

⁵³See Pyramid Texts 392, 603, 604, 871-874, 1582, 1583.

⁵⁴This can be seen in Pharaoh's determination that he not eat detestable things in the realm of the dead. These detestable things had sunk through the earth, and had become available in the underworld. Pharaoh was delivered from such a doom by traveling the solar bark to the Field of Reeds. See Pyramid Texts 127, 128, 718, 1060, 1061. Texts which seem to place the netherworld below ground include Coffin Spells 607, 619, and 703.

⁵⁵See footnote 14 in Faulkner, <u>The Ancient Egyptian</u> Coffin Texts, 1:244

⁵⁶See the discussion in Piankoff, The Wandering of the Soul, 3-35. Piankoff suggests on page 11 that two ways, by water and by land, led to Rostau, which was the gate of the necropolis, giving access to the Netherworld.

though Re was also an influential force there.⁵⁷ Rostau could be in the limit of the air, just as the Duat could be located in the sky. In other texts, Rostau was a horizon and, or was clearly in the underworld.⁵⁸

Rostau was a great river valley based on the prototype of the Nile valley.59 The Rostau river valley had steep walls of flint and charcoal. Travel along this valley was possible only on paths which ran either through the dangerous river channels, or along the equally dangerous and steep valley cliffs.60

The Rostau references in the Coffin Texts do give a fairly clear picture of a netherworld river valley. They do not describe this area with anything like the clarity of later texts which make up the Book of the Dead tradition. However, scattered references in the Coffin Texts demonstrate that most of the key concepts found in later texts were already in use. Two texts are especially interesting here. Part of Coffin Spell 759 reads:

Prepare paths for me, open for me the gates which are

⁵⁷See Coffin Spells 1087 and 1085. The name Rostau occurred only once in the Pyramid Texts at 445.

⁵⁸See Coffin Spells 1035, 1150, and 1080.

⁵⁹E. A. W. Budge noted the influence of the Nile valley on the structure of the Duat. Budge, The Book of the Dead, 136. For a brief sketch of the islands and swamps of the upper Nile, see Pierre Montet, Eternal Egypt, (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1964), 3.

⁶⁰Coffin Spells which described the Land of Rostau included the following: 1034, 1035, 1072, 1079, 1086, 1087, 1150, 1182, and 1184. The two routes of Re-Atum are also mentioned in Coffin Spell 674 without reference to Rostau.

among the Coiled Ones, for I know the circuit of Rē' and of those who are with him, I know his foes who are in the gates, I know the paths (...).

Coffin Spell 49 adds:

Be vigilant, you who are in the Pure Place! Beware, you who are in the great Place! See, the god himself is afraid of the Evil Ones....Light a torch, you Wardens of the Chambers, you gods who are in darkness, set your protection about your lord, divide up the hours for the Lord of the White Crown until Horus comes from On, (even he) to whom the great crowns have been given. The sceptre of Him who is in the place of embalming appears, the Wardens of the Chambers are glad,

In Coffin Spell 759, Pharaoh claimed to know the path of the solar bark. and demanded that the gates of that region be opened, for he knew Re's foes in the gates. Coffin Spell 49 commanded the Wardens of those chambers to divide the hours. This could have referred to the twelve hours of the night which were divided by gates in later texts. Several other Coffin Spells described the netherworld gates and their guardians. 61 These paths could only be crossed with magic by one who knew the names of the paths. Without the aid of magic spells, even Pharaoh faced dangers on every side in this region. 62

Coffin Spell 991 claimed that Pharaoh had been given the Niles. The name was plural. There were in fact three Niles in the Egyptian myths. This can be seen in the "Hymn

⁶¹These included Coffin Spells 673, 758, 1037, 1108-1111, and 1149. Of course, some Coffin Spells simply continued the tradition of the Pyramid Texts. These saw the gates of the netherworld as a horizon entrance into the other world. Another interesting tradition was preserved in Coffin Spell 901 which saw various gates dividing rooms in Pharaoh's tomb.

⁶²See Coffin Spells 760 and 458.

of Aten^{*63} from Akenaton's reign in the Eighteenth Dynasty. First, there was the visible Nile. Second, there was an underworld Nile which flowed through the Duat, returning water to Upper Egypt. Finally, there was an upper Nile above the air which brought rain to foreign nations. The underworld Nile was the waterway in the valley of Rostau. Its bends were occupied by guards who tried to turn Pharaoh back from the gates of the Field of Reeds. Several of the Coffin Spells prevented these watchmen from stopping Pharaoh.64 For example, Coffin Spell 404 taught Pharaoh what to say to get past the guardian of the first portal of this Field of Reeds in the netherworld. The underworld Field of Reeds was described in at least two other texts. Coffin Spell 629 mentioned the two fields of offerings of Osiris, and Coffin Spell 619 spoke of the cultivator who dwells in the Netherworld, and of the Field of the Netherworld.

The clearest descriptions of the underworld Field of Reeds came from a recension of the mortuary material called the <u>Book of the Dead</u>. These documents were generally later than the Coffin Texts, though the earliest copies date to the Mosaic age. 65 They generally reflected a Theban rather than Heliopolitan tradition.

⁶³William Kelly Simpson (ed.), The Literature of Ancient Egypt, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973), 293.

⁶⁴See Coffin Spells 1168, 1169, and 1175-1178.

⁶⁵ The Litany of Re was found in a wooden statue of Amenophis II which Piankoff dated between 1450 and 1425 B.C. See Piankoff, The Wandering of the Soul, 42.

This Theban recension was preserved primarily in two kinds of sources. First, many texts were preserved on the walls of temples and tombs in Upper Egypt. A good example of this can be seen in the texts on the walls of Hatshepsut's temple at Deir El Bahari. These texts were divided into twenty four sections, representing the twelve chambers crossed by Re's solar bark daily, and the twelve netherworld chambers crossed by the night bark. While much of the text has been destroyed, enough remains to see that the Field of Reeds motif was applied in several ways. Hatshepsut sailed the day bark to the islands of the Fields of Aalu in the ninth hour of the day, and the Field of Cranes in the tenth hour. In the twelfth hour of the day, Re set in the holy horizon of the west, setting in his fields in Mannu, and descending into the underworld. In the first hour of the night, Hatshepsut came forth from the fire, and was identified with Osiris of Roset66

Dead tradition were frequently carved into tomb and temple walls. These four works were The Book of Am Duat, The Litany of Re The Book of Caverns, and The Book of Gates. The Book of Am Duat was properly the Book of What is in the Netherworld. It was painted on the walls of the tombs of Seti I and other kings in the Valley of the Kings. It was also carved into the south chamber of the

⁶⁶Roset is presumably equivalent to Rostau. For the texts in question, see Naville, <u>The Temple of Deir El Bahari</u>, 4:10, 11.

Osireium at Abydos, and it appeared on papyrus.67 In The Book of Am Duat all twelve chambers of the netherworld were described in detail. Pharaoh sailed the night bark with Re along the underworld river through these chambers. The chambers were each quite different. Chambers six and seven were uniquely given to Osiris; chamber ten was chiefly aquatic, et cetera. Yet one characteristic united them all. Each chamber was composed of fields which were given to Re's righteous servants as their eternal reward. The Book of Am Duat depicted the whole netherworld as a vast Field of Reeds stretching from the western horizon to the east.

The tomb of Seti I also contained another major work called The Book of Gates. This book structured the Duat along lines similar to those seen in The Book of Am Duat, though with a few striking differences. 68 The Book of Gates stressed man's judgment before Osiris. Those who were found just were allowed to work their fields in the sixth chamber. Those who were condemned were executed by fire and water in the eighth chamber. The Book of Gates also differed in another way. In The Book of Gates, the twelve chambers were guarded by entirely different beings, and the chambers were separated by river bends and fortresses instead of doors.

These underworld caverns were also described in different ways in <u>The Litany of Re</u> and in <u>The Book of</u>

⁶⁷For a discussion of the texts, see Wiedemann, Religion of the Ancient Egyptians, 83-95.

Caverns. Both were engraved on the walls of the Osireion at Abydos. The Litany of Re depicted seventy-five forms of Re in his caverns. The Book of Caverns depicted Re meeting parts, or aspects, of himself in each of these underworld caverns. 69

The Theban recension of the Egyptian Mortuary texts was also preserved in a large number of papyri. These papyri were placed either within or beside the coffins of most wealthy Egyptians. On these papyri, scribes copied selected chapters from the mortuary material. These chapters were copied in no predictable order, and with little attention to detail. The best papyrus copy of the Theban recension of the mortuary texts was the Papyrus of Ani. When translations of the Book of the Dead are printed, this papyrus generally stands behind the text. Papyrus Ani depicted the Field of Reeds as a subdivision of the Field of Offerings. The Field of Offerings was then limited to the fifth and sixth chambers where Osiris held court. The Field of Reeds itself contained seven halls or mansions which had to be crossed to enter the presence of Osiris.71

⁶⁸See the discussion in Weidemann, Religion of the Ancient Egyptians, 95-102.

⁶⁹See the discussion in Piankoff, Mythological Papyri: Texts, (New York: Pantheon Books, 1957), 15, and Piankoff, The Wandering of the Soul, 42.

⁷⁰In the Twenty Sixth Dynasty, the Saite Recension did finally regularize the text of the Book of the Dead. See Budge, The Book of the Dead, 1-3.

 $^{^{71}}$ See the discussion in Budge, <u>The Book of the Dead</u>, 136, 137, and chapters 107–110 and 145–150.

CHAPTER IV

LOCAL MANIFESTATIONS OF THE FIELD OF REEDS

Pharaoh: The Divine Ruler

How important can an area really be if it is located beyond the horizon, in the air, or in the underworld? How much can it matter for life here and now? The ancient Egyptians would respond that it mattered a great deal because there was no clear distinction between the physical and spiritual realms. Men lived in both at the same time. The Field of Reeds was not just a promise of future blessing when life was past. Instead, the Field of Reeds was already a reality in the here and now, breaking into physical existence and manifesting its presence. How did the Field of Reeds manifest itself? The Field of Reeds broke into human experience in at least three ways, by Pharaoh's presence among men, by the presence of temples, and by the presence of geographical areas which manifested the eternal.

This immanence of the Field of Reeds can be seen first in Pharaoh's presence among men. Pharaoh was not a normal human being. Pharaoh was god incarnate, the earthly manifestation of the falcon god Horus. 1 As such, he was the

¹As Pharaoh was progressively extolled in ever greater terms, he came to be seen as the manifestation of other gods

only son of god, and the living image of god.² Pharaoh's identification with Horus was important because this falcon god landed in the primal Field of Reeds, causing the primal hillock to appear, and beginning the process of creation.³ So Horus' throne was in the Field of Reeds from creation. This was the background behind Pharaoh's return to the Field of Reeds at his death. As Horus incarnate, Pharaoh was destined to rule over the Field of Reeds among his faithful servants. He was destined to be purified there with Re, and to sail there on Re's solar bark. Pharaoh's office was inseparably bound up with the Field of Reeds motif, and he served as a living witness to the reality of that region.⁴

Egyptian Temples and the Field of Reeds

The Field of Reeds was also present in many Egyptian temples. These temples were local manifestations of the

as well. In later texts, he was described as the embodiment of Re. However, his identity as Horus was the underlying and pervasive motif.

²See James Pritchard, Ancient Near Eastern Texts
Relating to the Old Testament, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1955), 376, James H. Breasted, Ancient
Records of Egypt, 5 Vols. (New York: Russell & Russell,
1962), 3:181, 121, and 4:26.

³See E. A. E. Reymond, "The Primeval Djeba," <u>J.E.A.</u>, 48 (1962): 85. Several gods were associated with creation, especially Re and Ptah, but only Horus landed on a shoot in the Field of Reeds.

⁴A full discussion of Pharaoh's divinity must remain beyond the scope of this study. The question has been explored at length by Henri Frankfort, Rudolf Anthes, and others. See Henri Frankfort, <u>Kingship and the Gods</u>, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1978), p.45, and Rudolf Anthes, "Egyptian Theology in the Third Millenniun B.C.", <u>J.N.E.S.</u> 18 (1959): 185, 186.

horizon Field of Reeds, and were each the site where ground first rose from chaos/sea.⁵ A good example of this can be seen on a Karnak obelisk where Hatshepsut wrote:

Ascent of the beginning.6

In other words, the great Karnak temple was a manifestation in Egypt of the horizon Field of Reeds. Along similar lines, Ramses I described the temple of Min-Amon in Bohen as, "a temple like the horizon of heaven where Re (rises)."7

I know that Karnak is the horizon on earth, the August

Egyptian temples demonstrated that they were local manifestations of the Field of Reeds in their architecture. Temple floor levels often rose in imitation of the primal hillock. Temple columns and decorations often imitated swamp plants.⁸ As the horizon on earth, Egyptian temples frequently included pools of water constructed for their symbolic value. H. W. Fairman mentioned pools at Denderah

⁵This aspect of Egyptian theology had clear similarities to cosmic mountain motifs across the ancient Near East.

⁶See Breasted, Ancient Records, 2:132.

⁷Breasted, Ancient Records, 3:36. For a similar text, see 2:240. See also Mirian Lichtheim, Ancient Egyptian Literature: A Book of Readings, 2 Vols. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), 2:27, and Donald B. Redford, "New Light on Temple J at Karnak," Or. 55 (1986): 12. There has been broad academic discussion of this. See, A. R. David, The Ancient Egyptians: Religious Beliefs and Practices, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1982), 126-131, and Eric Hornung, Conceptions of God in Ancient Egypt, trans. John Baines, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1982), 229.

⁸Harold H. Nelson, "The Egyptian Temple," <u>B.A.</u> 7 (1944): 44-53, and Henri Frankfort, <u>Ancient Egyptian Religion: An Interpretation</u>, (New York: Harper & Row, 1961), 153.

were called "pools of Horus." The pools of Pithom are famous from the letter to Merneptah. This is especially significant since Israel labored at Pithom building a store city for the solar god Atum. The great temple at Abydos even contained a deep indoor pool with a large stone in its center. This central stone platform may have been related to solar theology since a shelf around the pool would have enabled a model of the solar barks to be towed around the platform, replicating the solar cycle.

Local Manifestations of the Field of Reeds

It is all well and good to suggest that Egyptians would have seen Field of Reeds mythology reflected in Pharach's office and in various temples. However, Israel did not cross the sea at the site of an Egyptian temple. 12 Can it be shown that the Egyptians would have seen a geographical region as a manifestation of the Field of Reeds? The answer is yes, though the evidence here is more complex.

It should be remembered first that the Egyptians drew

⁹H. W. Fairman, <u>The Triumph of Horus</u>, (Berkeley: The University of California Press, 1974), 42, 46.

¹⁰Breasted, Ancient Records, 3:273. See also the previous discussion on Pithom.

¹¹See Edouard Naville, "Excavations at Abydos: the Great Pool and the Tomb of Osiris," J.E.A. 1 (1914): 164. See also, Frankfort, Ancient Egyptian Religion, 153, 154, and J. M. Plumley, "The Cosmology of Ancient Egypt," In Ancient Cosmologies, ed. C. Blacker and M. Loewe, (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1973), 28, 29.

¹²Baal-Zephon was probably a Canaanite worship site, but there is no reason to believe that it would have participated in Field of Reeds theology.

all three Field of Reeds motifs from geographical parallels. The Duat Field of Reeds seemed to have been modeled after the narrow Nile valley. In the Duat, the Field of Reeds tended to be a limited area surrounded by other geography. The astral Field of Reeds seemed to have been modeled after the Nile delta, with its broad expanse of swamp and habitable areas. The horizon Field of Reeds seemed to have been modeled after the islands which arose as the Nile's annual innundation subsided. 13 This model gave rise to the creation myth of a primal hillock arising in the reeds of chaos sea. This hillock became the inhabited earth floating on chaos sea, surrounded by a broad band of marshland. Since the Field of Reeds motifs were drawn from Egyptian geography, there was a natural link between these motifs and various geographical locations.14

The Egyptians also applied Field of Reeds theology to their understanding of the world as a whole. The Egyptians saw the world as an island floating on Nun, surrounded by a band of reeds. The obvious question became, where was this horizon boundary between earth and sea? The Reed Sea boundary could only be beyond the known territory. This

¹³See F. Ll. Griffith, "A Stela of Tirhaqa from Kawa, Dongola Province, Sudan," <u>Mélanges Maspero I: Orient Ancien</u>, Second Fascicule, (Cairo: Institut Francais d' Archeologie Orientale, 1935-1938), p. 428.

¹⁴Frankfort saw Buto in the delta as the start of the Field of Reeds.Frankfort, Ancient Egyptian Religion, 114, 115. Budge argued that the 14th Aat in Papyrus Ani was the celestial equivalent of the area between the Nile and Heliopolis. E. A. W. Budge, The Book of the Dead (New Hyde Park: University Books, 1960), 141.

placed the boundary at some distance since the Egyptians were normally competent geographers for their time. They knew their world fairly well from the Euphrates in the north, 15 to the Greek islands in the west, 16 and from at least the horn of Africa in the south, 17 probably to Arabia and the Persian Gulf. 18 There is even surprisingly good evidence that Pharaoh Necho II launched an expedition which circumnavigated Africa in three years. 19 Herodotus account

¹⁵Breasted, Ancient Records, 2:265, 317.

¹⁶Breasted, Ancient Records, 4:511.

¹⁷Already in the Sixth Dynasty, the inscription of Uninamed six specific African tribes against which he waged war. See Breasted, Ancient Records, 1:142. Kamil noted that the southern city of Edfu served as a caravan stop for traffic between the Kharga Oasis and the Red Sea coast. This may imply knowledge of the southland. See Jill Kamil, Upper Egypt, (London: Longman, 1983), 152. On a southern location of Punt, see John A. Wilson, The Burden of Egypt, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1954), 127.

¹⁸The question of trade between the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea has been debated endlessly. Some scholars even claim that the Egyptians made no use of the Red Sea and knew little about it. See Alessandra Nibbi, Ancient Egypt and Some Eastern Neighbors, (Park Ridge: Noyes Press, 1981), 109. M. S. Drower gave a brief and useful summary of the arguments supporting the possibility of trade between the Persian Gulf and Wadi Hammamati. See Drower, "Early Connections between Sumer and Egypt, " B.I.A. 8-9 (1970): 243-247. Pierre Montet even suggested that an Egyptians sailed the length of the Euphrates, down the Persian Gulf, around Arabia, down to Punt, and back to Wadi Hammamati. See Pierre Montet, Eternal Egypt, trans. D. Weightman, (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1964), 124. However, the Mu Gedi reference of Papyrus Harris has also been interpreted in other ways.

¹⁹The evidence comes entirely from Herodotus Book IV, Section 42. Herodotus claims that Necho II sent Phoenician ships to circumnavigate Africa. The account has the ring of truth. It assumes that water surrounds the continent, while Herodotus professed not to know if water surrounded Europe. It noted the Phoenicians' claim that the sun shone on their

of this expedition has been accepted by writers like John Ruffle and in Egypt, by Aly Bey Shafei.20 The Egyptians also recognized that unexplored regions of the earth lay beyond their knowledge.21 So within the bounds of their mental horizon, the Egyptians were as competent geographers as anyone else in their day.22 This is only to be expected of a great world power.

While they knew the world around them fairly well, the Egyptians expected to find a Field of Reeds at its borders. Three key Egyptian geographical motifs showed the importance of horizon motifs and Field of Reeds theology. These three motifs were the Great Circle, Punt as God's Land, and the Great Green. These three motifs can be seen in many texts. For example, the Stela of Amenhotep II at Giza reads in part, "His portion is that on which Re shines, To him belongs what Ocean encircles." 23 Along the same lines,

right hand side. This assumed that their fundamental direction was north/south. Herodotus' own maps of the continent would have required an east/west route. See George Rowlinson, The History of Herodotus, (Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, 1952), 131.

²⁰John Ruffle, The Egyptians: An Introduction to Egyptian Archaeology, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977), 95. Aly Bey Shafei, "Historical Notes on the Pelusiac Branch, The Red Sea Canal and the Route of the Exodus," B.S.R.G.E., 21 (1946): 231-287.

²¹See the inscription of Ptahwer in Breasted, <u>Ancient Records</u>, 1:319.

²²It seems strange that anyone would even question this obvious truism, but several recent writers have questioned the extent of Egyptian geographical knowledge, of regions to the south and east.

²³Lichtheim, Ancient Egyptian Literature, 2:41.

Thutmose I claimed on the Tombos Stela that he had conquered as far as the circuit of heaven, and the beginning of the underworld, even the islands of the Great Circle.24 Thutmose III described his reign, claiming that his western boundary stretched to the mountain of Manu.25 These inscriptions contained references to the Great Circle, God's Land, the Great Green, and other related motifs. These Egyptian geographical motifs will now be analyzed in greater detail. Then insights drawn from them will be used to understand the Scriptural location for Israel's sea crossing at the Red Sea/Yam Suph, and at Pihahiroth.

The Great Circle

When Egypt's rulers expanded their military campaigns into Palestine and Syria, they frequently claimed to have conquered as far as the Great Circle. What was this Great Circle? The Great Circle motif was used at least two ways. Sometimes it simply described Mesopotamia, the land circled by two rivers. 26 In other texts, the Great Circle included the islands of the Mediterranean Sea. 27 The sea islands were included in the Great Circle because they were being described as an end of the world. This can be seen in the

²⁴Breasted, Ancient Records, 2:30, 31.

²⁵Breasted, Ancient Records, 2:134, 135.

²⁶For a good example of this, see E. A. W. Budge, A History of Egypt, 8 Vols. (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., Ltd., 1902), 4:54.

²⁷Breasted, Ancient Records, 2:31; 5:82.

victory hymn of Thutmose III.

I have causing thee to smite the uttermost ends of the lands, The circuit of the Great Circle (Okeanos) is inclosed in thy grasp.²⁸

The Great Circle was the end of the earth. It was the great band of reeds and water that surrounded the land. This identification was recognized by John Wilson in The Intel-lectual Adventure of Ancient Man where he identified the Great Circle as Nun, the deep waters encircling the earth.²⁹

The Great Circle was associated with three other motifs which described Egypt's far horizons. The first of these was the mythical Mount Manu which served as Egypt's western boundary. The western horizon was an especially easy area for the Egyptians to interpret in mythological terms. By the early dynasties, land areas west of the Nile had dried out, leaving relatively little human life. 30 The western tribes along the Mediterranean coast remained a continual threat, but south of that region, only a few pockets of settlement remained west of the Kharga Oasis.

²⁸Breasted, Ancient Records, 2:265. See on this, Pritchard, Ancient Near Eastern Texts, 374, Lichtheim, Ancient Egyptian Records, 2:37, 41. Thutmose I expressed a similar idea on the Tombos Stela, claiming, "His name has reached as far as the circuit of heaven, it has penetrated the Two Lands as far as the netherworld," and "<subject> to him are the isles of the Great Circle (sn<w>-wr, Okeanos), The entire earth is under his two feet." Breasted, Ancient Records, 2:31.

²⁹H. Frankfort, John Wilson, et al, <u>The Intellectual</u> Adventure of Ancient Man, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1946), 45.

³⁰G. A. Wainwright, "The Origin of Storm-Gods in Egypt," J.E.A. 49 (1963): 19.

So it was easy for the Egyptians to visualize a western world's end rather near them.

Mount Manu was the mountain of sunset, one of the great mountains that held up the sky, and the place where the sunset. 31 Mount Manu was also a horizon place of the dead. As such, it was similar to Field of Reeds theology. This can be seen in Spell 15 of the Book of the Dead, which Faulkner translated in part;

All your foes are overthrown, the Unwearying Stars acclaim you, the Imperishable Stars worship you when you set in the horizon of Manu, being happy at all times, and living and enduring as my lord.³²

Papyrus Harris added, "May I mingle with the excellent souls of Manu, who see thy radiance at early morning." 33 A text already noted from Deir El Bahari also added, "Hail to thee Ra; thou settest in the holy horizon of the west, thou settest in thy fields in Mannu." 34

The northern and southern equivalents of Mounts Manu and Bakhau were the northern and southern "horns of the earth," which were mentioned in several texts.35 These

³¹An eastern mountain of sunrise paralleled Manu, named Bakhau. See E. A. W. Budge, <u>The Gods of the Egyptians</u>, 2 Vols. (New York: Dover Publications, 1969), 2: 101, and Budge, <u>The Book of the Dead</u>, 130, 205.

³²H. W. Faulkner, <u>The Ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead</u>, (New York: Macmillan Co, 1972), 40.

³³Breasted, Ancient Records, 4:140.

³⁴Naville, <u>The Temple of Deir El Bahari</u>, 7 Vols. (London: Egypt Exploration Fund, n.d.), 4:11. Manu can also be spelled Mannu.

³⁵Breasted, <u>Ancient Records</u>, 4:60 notes a Twentieth Dynasty text describing the town of Usermare-Meriamon which

"horns" were clearly mountains. They appeared both beyond the northern marshland and in the far south.³⁶ Their relationship with Field of Reeds theology is reflected in Pyramid Text 469, 470.

Hail to you, Ostrich which is on the bank of the Winding Waterway! Open my way that I may pass. Hail to you, Bull of Re' who has four horns, a horn of yours in the west, a horn of yours in the east, a horn of yours in the south, and a horn of yours in the north! Bend down this western horn of yours for me that I may pass.

So the western horn at least was an entrance into the netherworld, and the context associated these horns with the Winding Waterway of the Field of Reeds. Several texts associate these "horns of the earth" with the marshland northeast of Palestine.³⁷ Egyptian texts occasionally described these wetlands as the end of the world, since the region was seen as being inaccessible. Thutmose III called these wetlands the "marshes of the earth."³⁸ These descriptions sound more like the Great Marsh in the lower valley³⁹ than the western Euphrates where Thutmose actually crossed, to pillage Mittani territory in the northern plains. However, this section of the Euphrates had quite a bit of ground water, and may have contained marshland at the time.⁴⁰

is upon "the Mount of the Horns of the Earth."

³⁶Breasted, Ancient Records, 2:261.

³⁷Breasted, Ancient Records, 2:178, 253, 261; 3:58.

³⁸Breasted, Ancient Records, 2:171; 3:58; 2:179.

³⁹See on this G. Le Strange, <u>The Lands of the Eastern</u> <u>Caliphate</u>, (London: Frank Cass & Co., 1966), 41-44.

⁴⁰Breasted, Ancient Records, 2:301. See also the

God's Land

Thutmose III identified Egypt's southern border as Punt. Punt was as well known an area as the Asian marshes. Its precise location has been debated, but it must have been near the horn of Africa.41 Expeditions to Punt generally arrived there by sailing south along the Red Sea coastline. These expeditions began as early as the Fourth and Fifth Dynasties,42 and continued through most of Egypt's history.

discussion in George Steindorff and Keith C. Seele, When Egypt Ruled the East, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1971), 58, 59. On ground water along the Euphrates, see Harvey Weiss, ed. Ebla to Damascus, (Washington: Smithsonian Institute Traveling Exhibition Service, 1985) 35.

⁴¹Punt's southern location seems clearly implied by its identification as Egypt's southern border. There are also several other lines of evidence. Hatshepsut's Punt reliefs at the temple of Deir-El- Bahari located Punt on the south wall of the temple, and associated it with typical African animals like giraffes and black panthers. See William S. Smith, Interconnections in the Ancient Near East, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1965), 68, 138. H. Frankfort argued for a cultural continuity between depictions of Punt and the current Massai warrior culture. See H. Frankfort. "Modern Survivors from Punt," Studies Presented to F. Ll. Griffith, (London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1932), Further evidence was provided by the inscription of Khentkhetwer. This stela was discovered at Wadi Gasus on the western Red Sea shore. This inscription recorded that Khentkhetwer arrived safely from Punt, and landed his army at Sewew. See Breasted, Ancient Records, 1:275. argues for a common assumption about the route taken by expeditions to Punt. It is generally assumed that such expeditions traveled by land across Wadi Hammamati, and then built ships on the Red Sea shore for the trip south to Punt. See R. O. Faulkner, "Egyptian Seagoing Ships," J.E.A. 26 (1940) 3. The danger from attack while building ships on the Red Sea shore was demonstrated by the fate of Enenkhet. Breasted, Ancient Records, 1:163, 210. When the Wadi Tumilat canal and the Bitter Lakes/Red Sea canal were completed, ships could sail from the Mediterranean shore south See Breasted, Ancient Records, 2:103.

⁴²Breasted, Ancient Records, 2:102.

The name Punt generally does not occur in a mythological context. One possible exception to this may be an inscription at Karnak which reads in part:

I turn my face to the east, I work a wonder for thee, I bind them all for thee, gathered in thy grasp. I gather together all the countries of Punt, all their tribute, of gum of myrrh ('nty), cinnamon, and all the pleasant sweet woods of God's-Land, <fragrant> before thee, and thy uraeus.43

This associated Punt with the east instead of the south, and implied that there were several "countries of Punt."44 This eastern location of Punt probably grew from Punt's identification as "ta-neter," "the Land of God." The God's Land motif was a pervasive and important theme in Egyptian texts. It has received considerable attention because of its similarity to God's Land motifs in Scripture and in the Near East.

Where was "God's Land?" God's Land was located anywhere along Egypt's eastern border from the far south to the
far north. 45 Since it covered such a broad horizon, God's
Land was made up of several regions. The inhabitants of
Punt were the "Southerners of God's Land," 46 and several

⁴³Breasted, Ancient Records, 3:57.

⁴⁴The notion of multiple Punts may be drawn from the parallel of multiple God's Lands. The Book of the Dead gives this name in the plural, taiu-nu-neteru, "the lands of the gods." E. A. W. Budge, An Egyptian Hieroglyphic Dictionary, 2 Vols. (New York: Dover, 1920), 2:816.

⁴⁵The location of God's Land has, of course, been debated at length. This interpretation of the data is the most common. See H. Frankfort, John Wilson, et al., The intellectual Adventure of Ancient Man, 43. For a different approach, see Nibbi, Ancient Egypt and Some Eastern Neighbors, 32.

⁴⁶Breasted, Ancient Records, 2:117.

especially in Hatshepsut's Punt reliefs at Deir-El-Bahari.47 God's Land was also located directly east of Egypt. The victory hymn of Thutmose III equated the eastern lands with the regions of God's Land.48 One stela from Wadi Hammamati even equated God's Land with the wadi's stone quarry.49 God's Land was also commonly located in the northeast or in the north. Several texts equated it with Retenu, which was approximately Syria and Lebanon. Amenhotep III boasted that he had cut cedar in the countries of God's Land, and had dragged the wood over the mountains of Retenu.50 As Thutmose III conquered Upper Retenu, he took the time to collect all the flowers and plants which grew in God's Land.51 Among the products of Syria and the northland, several texts included the sweet woods and costly stones of God's Land.52

So God's Land ran from south to north along Egypt's eastern border. It is hardly a coincidence that the eastern horizon Field of Reeds was located in the same place.

⁴⁷Breasted, Ancient Records, 2:104-121.

⁴⁸Breasted, Ancient Records, 2:264, Pritchard, Ancient Near Eastern Texts, 379.

⁴⁹Breasted, Ancient Records, 4:224. Perhaps the best study of the Wadi Hammamati stela is M. Charles Kuentz, "Conception Égyptienne Méconnue: L'Akhit Ou Soi-Disant Horizon," <u>Bulletin de l'Institut Français d'Archeologie Orientale</u>, 17 (1920): 121-190. Kuentz interpreted God's Land in the horizon as the luminous land with the solar mountain.

⁵⁰Breasted, <u>Ancient Records</u>, 2:359, Pritchard, <u>Ancient Near Eastern Texts</u>, 375.

⁵¹Breasted, Ancient Records, 2:193.

⁵²Breasted, Ancient Records, 2:326, 4:443.

One text even seems to spell out the relationship between God's Land and the eastern horizon land. One Eleventh Dynasty stela in Wadi Hammamat included this section.

Primordial, first-ranking, in the land of horizon-dwellers, God's palace endowed with life, Divine nest of Horus in which this god flourishes, His pure place of heart's content, Set above the deserts of god's land.53

This text claimed that God's palace in the horizon land was set above the deserts of God's Land. 54 The relationship between God's Land and Field of Reeds theology may also be implied by the name of this region. Who was the god of God's Land? Normally, no specific deity was ascribed to this region. 55 The reason for this lack may be that the chief god of God's Land was none other than Pharaoh himself. 56 As the earthly manifestation of Horus and Re, Pharaoh was often called simply the God, or the Good God. For example, the scribe Thaneni inscribed on his tomb:

⁵³Lichtheim, Ancient Egyptian Literature, 1:114.

⁵⁴This passage would seem to support Erik Hornung's understanding of God's Land. He argued that the term referred to earthly regions especially near to the sky. Erik Hornunr, Conceptions of God in Ancient Egypt, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1971), 229.

⁵⁵Thoth and Hathor do seem to be lord and lady of Punt. See Nibbi, Ancient Egypt and Some Eastern Neighbors, 103. However, their relationship with the rest of God's Land was less clear. The connection of Hathor and Thoth with God's Land was also defended by C. J. Bleeker, Hathor and Thoth, (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1973), 130. Bleeker compared t3-ntr, God's Land, with hr-ntr, the necropolis.

⁵⁶This would seem especially likely if Charles Kuentz was correct in identifying Horus with the horizon God's Land. Kuentz held Horusto be originally a solar deity, ruling over the brilliant lightland. Kuentz, "Conception Égyptienne Méconnue: l'Akhit Ou Soi-Disant Horizon," 190.

I followed the Good God, Sovereign of Truth, King of Upper and Lower Egypt, Menkheperre (Thutmose III).57

Pharaoh's relationship with God's Land may be at least implied by an inscription on Thaneni's tomb which reads as follows.

Bringing in the tribute of Retenu, presentation of the northern countries; silver, gold, malachite, every costly stone of God's-Land; by the princes of all countries. They come, to (make gifts) to the Good God. 58

This at least places God's Land in the same context with a description of Pharaoh as the Good God.

This eastern land may have been called God's Land because Pharaoh claimed sovereignty over it. This claim may have been expressed most clearly by Hatshepsut, who said,

Punt is mine, and the fields of sycamore bearing fresh myrrh, the highways which were closed up, and the two ways. 59

Pharaoh's claims to sovereignty over eastern lands were based on his role as the manifestation of Horus and Re, and on the parallel between God's Land and the eastern horizon zone. Pharaoh ruled the east because the eastern horizon belonging to the sun god.60

⁵⁷Breasted, Ancient Records, 2:165; 1:108, 319.

⁵⁸Breasted, Ancient Records, 2:326.

⁵⁹Breasted, Ancient Records, 2:124. It is doubtful that Punt's queen would have recognized Hatshepsut's claim. While several Pharaohs claimed to receive annual tribute from Punt, this tribute may well have been gifts, or goods exchanged in trade. Only a few Pharaohs like Thutmose III and Ramses II really exercised consistent control over territories beyond Egypt's borders.

⁶⁰See Breasted, Ancient Records, 3:72, and 2:313 where Pharaoh was granted rule over everything which the sun god illumined. See also the Tombos Stela where Pharaoh was

The Great Green

The final Egyptian geographical motif to be discussed is the Great Green. 61 This motif was closely related to that of the Great Circle. John Wilson suggested that both were descriptions of Nun, the deep, primal waters which encircled the earth. 62 If so, the Great Green would point to that reedy expanse of chaos/sea where the primal hillock arose. From an Egyptian perspective, these ancient waters of Nun were manifested in every large body of water. Deep water seas were manifestations of the deep regions of Nun. Shallow reedy areas were manifestations of the reedy area in Nun where creation began. So a clear distinction between sea and swamp was unnecessary. Both were Nun and Great Green. This can be demonstrated with a survey of the data.

The name Great Green was used most frequently to describe the Mediterranean Sea.63 This identification is rather clear because the Nile River is said to flow into the Great Green Sea.64 Several texts described the islands in

given rule over the whole circuit of the sun, Breasted, Ancient Records, 2:29.

⁶¹The hieroglyphic signs translated as Great Green are the papyrus stalk with or without a superimposed serpent (Green), and a swallow (Great), followed by water determinatives. These symbols have been transliterated in several ways. Most commonly they are written as Uatch-Ur. Also in use are: Uaz-Ur, w3d-wr, w;d-wr, and other constructions.

⁶²Frankfort, Wilson et al, <u>The intellectual Adenture</u> of Ancient Man, 45.

⁶³See Budge, <u>Osiris</u>, (New Hyde Park: University Books, 1961), 137.

⁶⁴See Budge, A History of Egypt, 7:172.

in the Great Green.65 These islands seem to include the region which became Greece.66 The deep water character of this Great Green can be seen in a few lines from a Ramesside rhetorical poem.

The King of Upper and Lower Egypt...
The valiant ruler, smiting those who are ignorant of him; Like the wind, loud of cry in the Great Green (b'); Its waves are like mountains (c') that one cannot approach (d'); Everyone in it is submerged in the underworld; 67

Such dangerous and mountainous waves should logically be found in the great deep.

It is commonly recognized that the name Great Green was used for both the Mediterranean Sea and the Red Sea.

The name Uatch-Ur, Great Green, clearly appeared in the Inscription of Se-Ankh in the Wadi Hammamati.68 In this context, it must have described the Red Sea. A Red Sea identification for the Great Green is also implied by a statement on the Stela of Pithom. Here Ptolemy II was described as transporting elephants and goods from the east

⁶⁵Breasted, Ancient Records, 2:263, 265. See also Budge, A History of Egypt, 4:54, 65.

⁶⁶Maurice Copisarow noted that the term Uatch-Ur, the Great Green, could originally describe any sea. In later texts, this name was enlarged with modifiers to specify individual seas. Thus Uatch-ura-āa-Mehu, the Very Great Green Water of the North Land, came to mean the Mediterranean Sea, while Uatch-ur-Hau-nebtiu came to indicate the Ionian Sea. See Maurice Copisarow, "The Ancient Egyptian, Greek and Hebrew Concept of the Red Sea," V.T., 12 (1962): 1.

⁶⁷Anthony Spalinger, "Two Ramesside Rhetorical Poems," Egyptological Studies in Honor of Richard A. Parker, (Hanover: The University Press of New England, 1986), 139.

⁶⁸Percy E. Newberry, <u>Beni Hasan</u>, Part II, (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., n.d.), 18, 19.

over the Great Green to Egypt.69 Maurice Copisarow commented on this use in Papyrus Harris as well.70 A Stela of Amenhotep III in Sinai may also be significant. The text seems to be describing a sea route across the Great Green to Sinai, though the text is too fragmentary for translation.71

While these uses of the name Great Green are commonly recognized, fewer authors have noted the use of this name for other regions. The term Great Green was used to describe inland marshland, and it was also associated with the netherworld. The best evidence for a marshland Great Green came from the Fayum. The Fayum was a depression west of the Nile, and south of Memphis. It was watered by the Bahr Yusuf branch of the Nile which flowed south past Heracleopolis, then west into the depression. In the Mosaic age, the Fayum contained the best agricultural land in Egypt. It also contained a great lake with vast marshlands and abundant wildlife.71 Pierre Montet noted that this region was

⁶⁹Budge, A History of Egypt, 7:204.

⁷⁰Copisarow, "The Ancient Egyptian, Greek and Hebrew Concept of the Red Sea," 2. Copisarow did not note specific passages.

⁷¹Breasted, Ancient Records, 2:352.

⁷²See the discussion in Montet, <u>Eternal Egypt</u>, 3. Even in Greek and Roman times, the Fayum depression held an enormous lake with its water level controlled by a canal from the Nile. Herodotus named this area Lake Moeris, and described it at length. See Alan H. Gardiner, "The Name of Lake Moeris," <u>J.E.A.</u> 29 (1943): 37, and Wainwright, "The Origin of Storm Gods in Egypt," 18. For the geography of this region, see the maps in George Hart, <u>A Dictionary of Egyptian Gods and Goddesses</u>, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1986), xv.

abundant wildlife.72 Pierre Montet noted that this region was originally called either Ta-She, Lake Land, or the Very Green, to identify it with the Real Sea. Then in the New Kingdom, the region came to be called simply Pa-Ym, The Sea. This name was preserved down to the present as Fayum.73 So the vast lakeland marshes of Fayum were apparently identified with the Great Green.74

Pyramid Text 707 may also shed some light on the Great Green. This section of Utterance 406 paralleled "the overspill of the lake (she)" with "surge of the sea (Uatch-Ur)." Mercer suggested that the lake in question was actually the Nile River in flood, and that this passage paralleled the Nile inundation with the primeval ocean (the Great Green).75

This marshland Great Green was sometimes viewed as a manifestation of the horizon Field of Reeds. This may be implied in three of the Pyramid Texts. In Pyramid Texts 1059 and 1359, the Field of Reeds was described as the Green Field. While any region of reeds was self-evidently green,

⁷³Montet, Eternal Egypt, 3.

⁷⁴A Karnak relief of Seti I provided a parallel to Pa-Ym. Here, the northeast marshes of Asia were called the Great Bend of the Sea (Uatch-Ur, the Great Green), Breasted, Ancient Records, 3:58. The Great Bend was clearly the Euphrates, Breasted, Ancient Records, 2:263. So in both texts, inland rivers and marshlands were described as being part of the sea. Alessandra Nibbi argued that the term Great Green should be reserved for marshland, and identified part of Wadi Tumilat as the original Great Green. Nibbi, Ancient Egypt and Some Eastern Neighbors, 105.

⁷⁵See the discussion in Mercer, <u>The Pyramid Texts in Translation and Commentary</u>, 5 Vols. (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1954), 3:307, 348.

the usage here seemed more to be a technical name. 76 The third text was Pyramid Text 1508. Here Pharaoh was called a star crossing the Great Green. This might identify the Great Green with the celestial Field of Reeds. 77

The connection between the Great Green and Field of Reeds theology was also seen in the Book of the Dead tradition, as it was preserved in Papyrus Ani. Chapter XVII, plate VIII of Papyrus Ani was especially important here. This plate depicted a god named Uatch-t-ura, the god of the Great Green. 78 This god was standing near a doorway named Rastau, the entrance into the Duat. 79 So the Great Green must have been the horizon zone which gave access to the netherworld. The text of chapter XVII even stated that Re dwelt in the Great Green Lake, and associated this Great Green Lake dwelling with Herakleopolis near the Fayum.

"I am purified in my great double nest which is in Hensu (Herakleopolis) 44. on the day of the offerings of the followers of the Great God who dwelleth 45. therein." What is the "great double nest"? "The name of one nest is 'Millions of years,' and "'Great Green (Sea)' 46. is the name of the other, that is to say 'Lake of Natron'

⁷⁶See Budge, <u>Osiris</u>, 144, 145 where the Great Green Sea seemed to be a part of the solar cycle, and the Green Fields seemed to be a part of the Field of Offerings.

⁷⁷Compare this with Pyramid Text 1752, where Pharaoh ferrys across to his house, the Great Green. See Mercer, The Pyramid Texts in Translation and Commentary, 3:733, 816.

⁷⁸The goddess Uatachet was symbolized by the Green Crown, the uraeus serpent on Pharaoh's crown. Uatachet was worshipped especially in the capital of the seventh nome, Per-uatchet. See the discussion by Richard D. King, "The Symbolism of the Crown in Ancient Egypt," <u>J.A.C.</u> 6 (1984): 138.

and 'Lake of Salt.' 47. Others, however, say the name of the one is 'Guide of Millions of Years,' and that 'Great Green Lake' 48. is the name of the other. Yet others say that 'Begetter of Millions of Years' is the name of one, and 'Great Green Lake' 49. is the name of the other. Now, as concerning the Great God who dwelleth therein, it is Ra 50. himself.80

In other words, Pharaoh had a double dwelling in the spiritual realm. One part of it went by several names. The other part was rather consistently called the "Great Green Lake." The point to note in all of this was that both the seas around Egypt, the marshlands within Egypt, and the marshes in the spiritual realm were associated with the Field of Reeds in chaos/sea.

79Budge, The Book of the Dead, 260.

80Budge, The Book of the Dead, 381, 382.

CHAPTER V

THE RED SEA/YAM SUPH AND PIHAHIROTH

The Red Sea

What does all of this have to do with Israel's Red Sea crossing? The Egyptian material is useful for two reasons., It sheds light on the theology of Israel's sea crossing, as will be discussed at length in Chapter VI, and it sheds light on the location of Israel's sea crossing. First, how does the Egyptian material shed light on the location of Israel's crossing? The Old Testament claims that Israel crossed the Yam Suph near Pihahiroth. The Septuagint and the New Testament claim that Israel crossed the Red Sea. The Egyptian texts provide valuable clues about what kind of a place the Yam Suph/Red Sea might have been.

It is useful to remember that the Yam Suph was a site in Egyptian territory. As such, the Egyptians would have viewed it in the context of Egyptian geographical motifs. After centuries in Egypt, many Israelites and many of the "mixed multitude" would also have tended to see it in this light. As Chapter IV indicated, these geographical motifs include: (a) a lack of distinction between deep water ocean

¹Ex. 15:4 in the LXX and Acts 7:36, Heb. 11:29 in the New Testament.

and neighboring marsh, and (b) a tendency to look for the Field of Reeds at Egypt's eastern or western horizons.

If the first characteristic is applied, Israel's sea crossing would be expected in a large swampy marsh bordering on the Red Sea. The Suez region today does not contain such a marsh. Several scholars have argued that the Yam Suph could not be the Red Sea since no reeds or rushes grow in its salt water. For example, Frank Eakin Jr. argued that the Red Sea had to be ruled out because it had no reeds, and because the lengthy route would have enabled Pharaoh to catch Israel. 2 Clyde Francisco countered that Suph could mean "seaweed" according to Jonah 2:5, and the northern Red Sea clearly does have sea weed.3 Both of these positions run counter to a claim found in S. R. Driver's commentary that a marshy lagoon ten miles long stretched north from Suez.4 If there was such a swampy lagoon north of Suez, it could have made a credible Yam Suph. Egyptian geographical motifs would have considered it a part of the Red Sea, and

²Frank E. Eakin Jr., "The Reed Sea and Baalism,"

<u>J.B.L.</u> 86 (1967): 378. The length of Israel's route makes a rather strange argument. It can be questioned with some force whether Israel could have traveled the required distance in the time allowed. However, there is no way to know when Pharaoh sent his forces against Israel. Also, the Isthmus was fortified from north to south to prevent Asiatic incursions. Pharaoh probably could have unleashed his forces against Israel quite rapidly from any of several sites.

³Clyde T. Francisco, "The Exodus in its Historical Setting," <u>S.W.J.T.</u> 20 (1977); 17, 18.

^{4\$.} R. Driver, The Book of Exodus, (Cambridge: the University Press, 1953), 125. Driver footnoted one of John Murray's travel guides to support this.

since it would have started about six miles south of the Bitter Lakes, it would have been a credible traveling distance from Wadi Tumilat. The problem with this theory is that the area today is not a marshy lagoon, but a vast stretch of sand dunes.

Several scholars have suggested that the area might have originally been marshland, 5 but is that idea really credible? Is there any evidence that Moses may have faced an impenetrable swamp here? If true, how might such marshlands have become sand dunes?

Several interesting facts apply here. First, there is a ten mile long stretch of sand separating the Red Sea from the Shalûf.6 While this sandy plain is very long, it is also very low. The average height of these sand dunes is only four feet above sea level. This is low enough that the whole region is periodically inundated by Red Sea storms.

Normal Red Sea tides only rise and fall less than three feet. However, the greatest difference between high and low tide recorded before 1879 was already placed at 3.24 meters, or ten feet seven inches. Before the Suez Canal was dug, such storms occurred about every twenty years, and brought north enough sea water to cover the plain. S. C. Bartlett

⁵See for example, Hans Wolfgang Helck and Eberhard Otto, <u>Lexikon der Ägyptologie</u>, Vol. 5, (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1984), 630, 631.

⁶The Shalûf is a great mass of tertiary limestone. It rises between twenty and twenty five feet above sea level, and is five or six miles broad from north to south. The Shalûf separates the Bitter Lakes from the southern plain. The formation was no doubt present in the Mosaic age.

recorded such a storm in 1879.7 Several days after the storm, he traveled five miles north of Suez on the Suez canal. There he found that great pools of water still stood behind the first canal station. These pools had originally been six and a half feet deep, and great plains of water had stretched north beyond this station. So if Israel crossed in this region, even a natural Red Sea storm could have brought north enough water to drown Pharaoh's army.

Early descriptions of this region testify to its original marshy character. In 1822, Ruppell noted marshland north and east of Suez in his chartographic survey. John Murray described at some length the digging of the Suez canal through this region. He described marshlands stretching north from the Red Sea to the Shaluf. He also noted that the clay in this region was so dense that earth moving machines could not handle it. The whole area had to be dug out with pick axes. Karl Baedeker added that the sandy area near the Shaluf yielded crocodile teeth and the remains of hippopotami. So the area was very probably rather deep

⁷For a discussion of this plain and the Red Sea tides, see S. C. Bartlett, <u>From Egypt to Palestine</u>, (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1879), 158, 159, 180.

⁸Bartlett, From Egypt to Palestine, 152. Edward Robinson described the southern plain in 1838, before the Suez canal was dug. He noted that the ground gave every indication of being occasionally flooded. The fine sand bottom was packed hard by water action, and was covered in some places with a saline efflorescence. Edward Robinson, Biblical Researches in Palestine and in the Adjacent Regions, 2 Vols. (Boston: Crocker and Brewster, 1860), 1:60.

⁹A Handbook for Travellers in Egypt, (London: John Murray, 1873), 236. Karl Baedeker, Egypt and the Sudan,

swampland at some time.

Geographical descriptions by Claudius Ptolemaeus in the second century are also interesting, though they have much less force as an argument. 10 He placed both Arsinoe and Clysma on the western shore of the Gulf of Suez, instead of locating them at its northern tip. He depicted the Gulf as stretching far north of Suez. Even today, a shallow tongue of water nearly a mile wide and four miles long stretches north of Suez. 11

How could a marshland become desert? At least four forces were at work in this region, two natural and two man made. The natural forces are rather easy to understand. Wind blows constantly from the wilderness, carrying dirt and sand into the marsh. Over the millennia, these winds alone could have filled the marshlands, especially if they began driving sand dunes into the region. Storm surges coming north from the Red Sea would also have carried in sand from the sea bed, and could have damaged plant life as well

⁽Leipzig; Karl Baedeker, Publisher, 1908), 182.

¹⁰John Ball, Egypt in the Classical Geographers, (Cairo: Government Press, Bulaq, 1942), 85, 177, plate II. Ptolemy was a good recorder of delta locations, but he was not always at his best with desert locations beyond the delta.

¹¹Is. 11:15 promised that God would destroy the tongue of the sea of Egypt. Isaiah 11 promised that Babylon would fall to Persia. Since Darius I dug the first Red Sea canal, did Is. 11:15 predict that this canal would drain the Red Sea marsh, leaving only the small tongue seen today? S. R. Driver described this region in 1911. He noted that the soil north of Suez consisted of sand blown in from the eastern desert. See Driver, The Book of Exodus, 125.

The man made forces include canal digging and land Egypt's greatest public works were not the reclamation. pyramids, but the canals. Egypt was full of canals, some of them very impressive. Before Moses' day, a canal may already have been dug from the Bitter Lakes to the Red Sea, passing over the Shaluf in locks. 12 In subsequent years, Necho II tried to open a Red Sea canal, but stopped, fearing that Persians would use it. Darius I finished Necho's canal in 521 B.C. Xerxes re-excavated it. It was redug by Ptolemies Philadelphus in 286 B.C., and by Euergetus in 246 B.C. It was cleaned out by Trajan and Hadrian. Then, in 641, 642 A.D. it was reopened for the last time by Amr-ibn el-'Asi. The Red Sea canal was over a hundred feet wide. Every time that it silted up and was redug, the dirt had to be placed somewhere. It is only logical to believe that it ended up filling surrounding low lands. Since the Suez Canal was opened over a century ago, it has been constantly widened and dredged. Where has the dirt gone? At least some of it has probably gone onto the surrounding wetland. faced marshland south of the Shalûf, many centuries of canal digging would have tended to fill in the marsh with dirt. 13

The marshland may also have disappeared due to land reclamation. While Egypt has always been a large land geo-

¹²See further discussion below.

¹³Hugh Schonfield, The Suez Canal, (Harmondsworth; Penguin Books, n.d.), 16-18. John Baines and Jaromir Malek, Atlas of Ancient Egypt, (New York: Facts on File Publications, 1982), 48, 51.

graphically, it has had only a small amount of irrigable land to support its people. To increase its farmland, Egypt has always drained and filled its marshlands. The papyrus plant itself is now virtually extinct in Egypt because the northern marshlands have almost all been reclaimed. 14 The region north of the Red Sea was probably settled as early as the Twelfth Dynasty when Wakhare established a fortified port there. 15 In Roman times, Clysma had such a large population that it sent its own bishop to the Council of Constantinople. 16 It is fair to assume that many of these people lived on reclaimed marsh land, farmed with canal water irrigation. The farmlands could have been wiped out by another Red Sea storm surge, or the fields could simply have become too saline to work. Either way, the ground would have been left barren. So it is possible that natural and man made processes could have turned a Mosaic age swamp into a desert.

Does this rule out the possibility of an Exodus route further north? The answer is no. Egyptian geographical motifs would also have anticipated a Field of Reeds on the eastern horizon. A crossing near Lake Timsah, or near the

¹⁴Richard F. Nyrop, et al., <u>Area Handbook for Egypt</u>, (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1976), 64. Irrigation itself can lead to dune formation. See Margaret Catlin Brandt, 'Nippur: Building an Environmental Model," <u>J.N.E.S.</u> 49 (1990): 67-73.

¹⁵William A. Ward, Egypt and the East Mediterranean World 2200-1900 B.C., (Beirut: American University of Beirut, 1971), 24.

¹⁶Bartlett, From Egypt to Palestine, 152.

Bitter Lakes, would have fit this anticipation quite well. The distances involved would also have been easier for Israel to accomplish. 17 Is such a northern route ruled out by the fact that the Septuagint and the New Testament specify a Red Sea crossing? The answer is again, not necessarily. While a southern route may be more likely, it is still possible that a northern inland marsh could have been intended by the names Yam Suph and Red Sea. The name Red Sea may be an appropriate name for northern inland marshes as well as for the southern seas. In order to understand this, it is necessary to look at how the name Red Sea was used in antiquity, and at how the concept Red was used in the Nile delta.

¹⁷Men can walk at least twenty miles a day with little difficulty. Small children, lambs and cattle can not. It has been suggested that the Israelites could have carried their women and children in wagons, just as Jacob's family traveled to Egypt in Genesis 45 and 46. However, the Egyptians used very few wheeled vehicles, transporting almost everything by water. Wheeled vehicles were expensive and slow. John A. Wilson, The Culture of Ancient Egypt, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1951), 178. While there were no doubt some carts in the delta, it is highly unlikely that enough wheeled vehicles were available to transport Israel. Herodotus Book II, 108, claims that Egypt had so many canals that wagons were useless, especially after Sesostris' reign. See also Paul Johnson, The Civilization of Ancient Egypt, (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1978), 109. Gardiner, 'Ramesside Texts Relating to the Taxation and Transportation of Corn," J.E.A. 27 (1941): 47, 52, 57, and William C. Hayes, The Scepter of Egypt 2 Vols. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1953), 2:26. For examples of Egyptian wheeled vehicles from the Eighteenth Dynasty, see R. O. Faulkner, "The Euphrates Campaign of Thutmose III," <u>J.E.A.</u> 32 (1946): 41. See also William S. Smith, <u>InterConnections in the Ancient Near</u> East, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1965), 23, and T. Säve-Söderbergh, "The Hyksos Role in Egypt," J.E.A. 37 (1951): 59, 60.

How was the name Red Sea used in antiquity? The name Red Sea first appeared in texts from the Greek period. In the fifth century B.C., Herodotus already knew the term. For Herodotus, the current Red Sea was only a gulf of this sea. Herodotus used the name Red Sea to describe a much larger region, including the current Red Sea, the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean The name Red Sea was an alternative expression for the Southern Sea which surrounded Africa and India. 18 This Southern Sea was part of the sea around the earth.

The Red Sea was also mentioned by the Roman historian Titus Livy, a contemporary of Christ. 19 Livy used the name Red Sea to describe the Indian Ocean. 20 He called the Red Sea the Ocean which held the earth in its embrace, 21 and claimed that the Red Sea reached the farthest shores of India (de ultimis Indiae oris), and the uttermost ends of the earth (terrarum ultimos). 22

Another Roman historian from about the first century was named Quintus Curtius Rufus. Curtius used the name Red

¹⁸Herodotus, II, 158. See also the maps in George Rowlinson, <u>The History of Herodotus</u>, (Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, 1952), 317-319. The best survey of the classical authors is John Ball, <u>Egypt in the Classical</u> <u>Geographers</u>, (Cairo: Government Press, Bulaq, 1942).

¹⁹B. O. Foster gives his probable dates as 59 B.C. to 17 A.D. B. O. Foster, <u>Livy</u>, Vol. 1, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1939)

²⁰Livy, Book 45, IX. 6.

²¹Livy, Book 34, XVII, 15

²²Livy, Book 42, LII, 14 and 45, IX, 6.

Sea frequently, especially in reference to the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean.²³ In his work <u>History of Alexander</u> X, i, 13, 14, Curtius made an important observation about the name Red Sea.

As to other matters they had taken the word of the natives; that the Red Sea was so called, not from the colour of its waters, as most people believed, but from a King Erythrus.24

Erythrus is, of course, a Latinized form of the Greek word for red, ἐρυθρὰ. It is the same word which appeared in ἐρυθρὰν θάλασσαν, the Red Sea. It seems unlikely that the Red Sea was named after a king named Red. However, Curtius' comment does preserve a tradition which associates the color red with politics.

These texts show that the name Red Sea was used in a way rather like the Egyptian term Great Green. It described quite a large area of water without dividing it up into specific seas. It also clearly was associated with the ends of the earth, and at least the southern part of the seas surrounding the earth.²⁵ This is important because the

²³Curtius, <u>History of Alexander</u> V, i, 15; V, iv, 5; VI, ii, 12. In VIII, ix, 4-6, Curtius noted that the Indus and Genges rivers flow into the Rubro Mari, the Red Sea.

²⁴John C. Rolfe, trans., <u>Quintus Curtius</u>, Vol. 2, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1946), 471.

²⁵⁰ne Midrashic tradition is very interesting here. This tradition claims that Jonah travelled through the Red Sea while in the fish's belly. Ibn Ezra and Kimchi held that this was possible because the Red Sea waters extended to the northern Mediterranean Sea. If this pointed back to an earlier tradition, it could reinforce associating the Red Sea and Great Green motifs. See the footnote in Bernard F. Batto, "Red Sea or Reed Sea?", B.A.R. 10 (1984): 61. Batto used this Midrashic tradition to reinforce his argument that

Egyptians associated many local marshes with the Field of Reeds and the horizon sea. If Nun, the great horizon sea, was called the Red Sea, perhaps marshlands could be called this as well.

Can it be shown that the name Red Sea was used for inland marshes? No extant text clearly uses the name in this way. However, several lines of evidence suggest that the Septuagint could have drawn on such a tradition. The key question is, where did the Red Sea get its name? The traditional assumption is that the Red Sea was named this by Greek mariners because of the red rocks which surrounded Three points of evidence support this assumption. First, the name ἐρυθρὰν θάλασσαν is self-evidently Greek, so Greek mariners could have created the name. Second, the Red Sea is also self-evidently surrounded by red rocks, both red granite and red sandstone, so the name fit naturally. Third, parallel expressions are fairly common, like the Yellow River, the Red Rock Canyon, and the Black Sea. It is not a great leap from these three facts to assumptions about the origin of the name.

The problem with all of this is Egyptian history and culture. The color red played a very important role in Egypt's political history. The origin of the name Red Sea may well rest in these Egyptian motifs.

that the Red Sea was a part of the primal deep.

²⁶See Maurice Copisarow, "The Ancient Egyptian, Greek and Hebrew Concept of the Red Sea," V.T. 12 (1962): 5.

Red was an important symbol in Egypt long before Menes united the nation and formed Egypt's 1st Dynasty.27 Before Menes, the Nile valley had been dominated by two strong kingdoms, one in the north and the other in the south. The northern king wore a red crown,28 and ruled in the red mansion, while the southern king wore a white crown and ruled in the white mansion.

Through Egypt's history, the red crown remained the common symbol for authority over northern Egypt.29 The earliest depiction of a red crown came from the pre-dynastic, Gerzean II period. G. A. Wainwright described a pot from this period with the red crown molded into it.30 The red crown also appeared on the Palermo Stone with the names of nine predynastic rulers of Upper Egypt included on the fragment.31 Even after Menes merged the red and white crowns into a composite crown, both continued to be men-

²⁷While several powerful kings ruled in Egypt before his time, Menes was credited with uniting Upper and Lower Egypt. See Sabatino Moscati, The Face of the Ancient Orient, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1960), 101, and A. R. David, The Pyramid Builders of Ancient Egypt, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1986), 21, 22.

²⁸William Hayes explains that the red crown was composed of wickerwork, and was the crown of the delta war god Nit. Hayes, The Scepter of Egypt, 1:26. The best study of "dsr", red, in Egypt is Gustave Lefebvre, "Rouge et Nuances Voisines," J.E.A. 35 (1949): 72-76.

²⁹George Steindorff and Keith Seele, When Egypt Ruled the East, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1971), 11, 84.

³⁰Wainwright, "The Origin of Storm-Gods in Egypt," 17.

³¹Hayes, <u>The Scepter of Egypt</u>, 1:26, Breasted, Ancient Records, 1:66.

tioned in the texts as symbols for rule over these areas.32

The authority of this Red Crown was exercised in the Red Mansion, or Red House, 33 where the northern ruler held sway. Walter Emery noted that the southern White House and the northern Red House continued to function as separate administrative centers through at least the first two dynasties. 34 The White House became the more dominant center for many years. 35 By the Eighteenth Dynasty, Egypt's attention had become focused on the north, emphasizing the need for an administrative center there. In Hatshepsut's reign, Sen-Mut wore among his many titles the duties of administrator over the Red Crown castle. 36 In the Ptolemaic era, the Shrine of El-Arish listed both Ta-Desher (the Red Land), and Per-Desher (The Red House) as Egyptian nomes, so the Red Mansion

³²See Breasted, Ancient Records, 1:66; 2:323. 133, and Coffin Spell 757. Pyramid Text 410 speaks of the king eating the red crown, which describes the conquest of Lower Egypt. While Menes is credited with uniting these crowns, Childe notes that Udimu, the fifth king of the 1st Dynasty was the first king to be pictured wearing both crowns simultaneously. See V. Gordon Childe, New Light on the Most Ancient East, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd, 1964), 81.

³³⁰n the Red House, see Alan H. Gardiner, Ancient Egyptian Onomastica, 2 Vols. (London: Oxford University Press, 1947), 2:215.

³⁴Walter B. Emery, <u>Archaic Egypt</u>, (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1961), 109.

³⁵A 12th Dynasty official named Ameni was described as being the chief of the White House. Breasted, <u>Ancient Records</u>, 1:317. Several authors have suggested that only the White House survived after this period.

³⁶H. E. Winlock, <u>Excavations at Deir El Bahri 1911–1931</u>, (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1942), 146.

retained its new importance.37

The northern ruler not only wore his Red Crown in his Red Mansion, but he also ruled over an area called the Red Land. The notion of a Red Land was very ancient. A. R. David suggested that the northern and southern kingdoms were called the Red Land and White Land in the predynastic Gerzean II period.³⁸ The Red Land remained a key Egyptian political and geographical motif throughout Egypt's history. In the dynastic age, the normal distinction was not between Red Land and White Land. It was between Red Land and Black. Any number of texts describe Egypt as these two lands united by Pharaoh's rule. For example, Hatshepsut claimed on the Speos Artemidos,

The lands together are under my authority, the Black and the Red are under my authority.39

Thutmose III echoed,

The god knew it in me, Amon, lord of Thebes; he caused that I should reign over the Black and the Red Land as a requital therefor.⁴⁰

³⁷⁰f course, these are not traditional names of Egyptian nomes. See George Hart, <u>A Dictionary of Egyptian Gods and Goddesses</u>, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1986), xiv, xv. Since names appear on the shrine in no apparent order, it is difficult to determine which nomes were being described in these terms. See F. Ll. Griffith, <u>The Antiquities of Tell El Yahûdîyeh</u>, (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner, 1890), 73, and plate XXV.

³⁸David, The Pyramid Builders of Ancient Egypt, 21. David did not list her evidence for this statement. However if true, it is certainly consistent with the red crown and red mansion motifs. As was just noted, the Red Land was still named as an Egyptian nome in the Ptolemaic period.

³⁹Breasted, Ancient Records, 2:123.

⁴⁰Breasted, Ancient Records, 2:134.

The Black Land is generally taken to be the narrow band of black mud in the Nile valley.41 The Red Land is the region beyond its borders. It is highly significant that there was only one Black Land, but there were several Red Lands. The plurality of Red Lands was reflected in a Karnak obelisk of Hatshepsut and Thutmose III. This inscription read,

He hath made my kingdom, the Black Land, and the Red Lands are united under my feet. 42

The Egyptian texts described many Red Lands. In some texts, the Red Lands were clearly areas beyond the Nile valley over which Egypt claimed sovereignty. Thus Amenhotep II cut off the heads of the chiefs of the Red Land. 43 Merneptah made the Libyans' camps into wastes of the Red Land. 44 Pharaoh Menmare promised that future rulers who preserved his works would trample the Red Land and Nubia. 45 Punt was part of the Red Land, 46 and the name Red Land may even be preserved down to the present time in the name Eritrea.

⁴¹While this association is probably correct, one could wonder if Osiris role as the black god may not also lie in the background.

⁴²Breasted, Ancient Records, 2:134.

⁴³Breasted, Ancient Records, 2:319. It is interesting to note here that Palestine was also a Red land. This fact seems to have been preserved in Hebrew. The presumed Hebrew root Adam, "to be red", gave rise to both Adamah, "ground", and Edom, "the land of Edom," another Red Land.

⁴⁴Breasted, Ancient Records, 3:254.

⁴⁵Lichtheim, Ancient Egyptian Literature A Book of Readings, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), 2:55, also Breasted, Ancient Records, 3:85.

⁴⁶Breasted, Ancient Records, 1:209.

The Red Lands were not just areas distant from the Nile valley. The Red Land began just beyond the borders of cultivation. This can be seen clearly at the beginning of Hatshepsut's inscription on the Speos Artemidos.

He hath established her great name like the heavens. She hath made excellent the <records> of her might over the Red Land of the Goddess of the Mountain.47

The phrase "Goddess of the Mountain" referred to a site which is still called the Red Mountain. This site was a mountain of red conglomerate stone near modern Cairo. The mountain was a famous quarry for temple stone. 48 So the Red Land of the Red Mountain was located just beyond the western edge of the delta's cultivation.

This is important because when Israel crossed the sea, they were already on the fringe of the Red Land. According to Exodus 12:37 and 13:20, Israel left Pithom and Rameses, traveling through Succoth to Etham. Exodus 13:20 specifically describes Etham as being " אַרְשָּׁתְּהְ ," "on the edge of the wilderness." The Egyptian texts support this. The Egyptian town of Succoth and the fortress Thel are located near the eastern end of Wadi Tumilat. Both are spelled in hieroglyphics with the throwstick and mountain determinative of a foreign land.49 This is normally taken to mean that these places were perceived to be Egypt's eastern bound—

⁴⁷Breasted, Ancient Records, 2:123, Gardiner, Ancient Egyptian Onomastica, 2:130, 138.

⁴⁸Breasted, Ancient Records, 1:237, 2:64, 253.

⁴⁹Alan H. Gardiner, "The Delta Residence of the Rames-sides," J.E.A. 5 (1918): 242, 243, 266.

ary. 50 So Israel passed near Egypt's border fortresses, traveled to the edge of the wilderness, and journeyed to Yam Suph. Since the Yam Suph was on a border of the Red Land, it was a Sea of the Red Land, or possibly, a Red Sea.

It is also significant that the Egyptians associated their Red motifs with both the eastern horizon and the underworld. Coffin Spell 1145 referred to the sun by the epithet "O Red $\overline{O}n$," and promised,

The god will come in peace, (even he) the Lord of the Red Mansion which is in the horizon. 51

So the delta's Red Mansion was seen as a manifestation of Re's Red Mansion in the eastern horizon.

One very interesting text even described the marshes which were associated with this heavenly Red Mansion.

Coffin Spell 581 read in part:

I have flown up as a swallow, I have cackled as a goose, I have alighted on the great northern plain of the Great One. See, I will not die, standing on you when I appear as a god; I see you when I seek out your riparian land. I glitter as a glitter-bird on your vertex, my water-sources are the marshes of the Mansions of the Red Crown, my eye is the pupil(?) of the Eye of Horus. I will make a descent to the riparian land of \underline{Sk} ; I will eat and gorge in the Field of Offerings, I will land in the northern sky,

This text clearly describes Pharaoh's life in the horizon

⁵⁰These determinatives were common in the Egyptian texts, and were used in several ways. See Raphael Giveon, "Determinatives of Canaanite Personal Names and Toponyms in Egyptian," Actes du Premier International de Linguistique Semitique et Chamito-Semitique, (The Hague: Mouton, 1974), 55-57.

⁵¹See Coffin Spells 682, 952. The redness of this mansion might be related to the color of the marsh vegetation. A few writers have suggested that the marsh plants may have had a red color, like cattail flowers.

Field of Reeds. It promises that when he lives in these fields, his water sources will be the marshes of the Mansion of the Red Crown. Can the eastern, heavenly marshes of the Red Crown be called Red Marshes on the analogy of the White Land and Red Land?

In this context, one plate in Papyrus Ani is also interesting. This copy of the <u>Book of the Dead</u>, chapter XVII, plate VIII describes the goddess Uatch-t-Ura, the goddess of the Great Green. The interesting fact is that this goddess is painted red. In the papyri, colors are significant. 52 The same plate depicts a water god who was painted cobalt blue. 53 In other texts, Osiris is painted black because he is god of the dark underworld. So why would Uatch-t-Ura, goddess of the Great Green and of the Green Crown be painted red? This might suggest that there was a close connection between the Great Green and the color red. This connection would seem to be the fact that Uatch-t-Ura was fundamentally a Northern Egyptian goddess, 54 and from the predynastic age, red has symbolized Northern Egypt, both the delta and the surrounding arid lands.

What are the implications of this for inland marshy

⁵²The color red was used commonly in the text to symbolize several different ideas. It could represent life, danger, anger, fire, and related strong concepts. See Manfred Lurker, The Gods and Symbols of Ancient Egypt, (London: Thames and Hudson, 1974), 100.

⁵³E. A. W. Budge, <u>The Book of the Dead</u>, (New Hyde Park: University Books, 1960), 260.

⁵⁴Richard D. King, "The Symbolism of the Crown in Ancient Egypt," <u>J.A.C.</u> 6 (1984): 138.

areas around Lake Timsah and the Bitter Lakes? Could the name Red Sea have actually described such swamps?55 Any conclusions drawn must be at best tentative due to the lack of clear textual examples of such usage, but three points are clear. First, the color Red had a central importance in the delta politics, and was associated with Field of Reeds theology. Second, the Hebrew word as could describe such an area. The Greek, Hebrew, and Egyptian words translated as "sea" can refer to various sized bodies of water. The Greek θάλασσα is used to describe the Sea of Galilee in John word 6:1. This is hardly a sea in the traditional sense of the The Hebrew word © 56 is even used for the brass laver word. in Solomon's temple (2 Chronicles 4:2).57 and the Nile river.58 The word yam is also found in New Kingdom Egyptian

⁵⁵These marshes were not called the "Red Sea" in the Egyptian texts, but the km-wr. the Great Black. See Pvramid Text 629. The exact identification of km-wr has been debated. Mercer interprets it as the Bitter Lakes. See Samuel A. B. Mercer, The Pyramid Texts in Translation and Commentary, 5 Vols. (New York: Longmans. Green and Co. 1954). 2:307. Ward identifies it specifically as "Lake Timsah in the Bitter Lakes region." and notes two other Egyptian locations which were called by the same name. See William A. Ward, Egypt and the East Mediterranean World 2200-1900 B.C., (Beirut: American University of Beirut. 1971), 31.

⁵⁶See Horace D. Hummel. <u>Critical Study and the Exodus</u>
<u>Pericope</u>, Biblical Studies Series #3. (St. Louis: The commission on Theology and Church Relations. LCMS. 1973), 8.

⁵⁷Some writers have seen this laver as a symbol for the primal deep. The word could. of course, simply be a homonym. See John A. Tvedtnes. "Egyptian Etymologies for Biblical Cultic Paraphernalia." <u>E.S.</u> 28 (1982): 216.

⁵⁸Is. 19:5, Ezek. 32:2. See Merrill F. Under. and William White (eds.) Nelson's Expository Dictionary of the Old Testament, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers. 1980). 356.

texts as a loan word from Semitic. 59 It is used in several contexts. For example, the Lake Land of the Fayum acquired its name of Pa Yum, "The Sea." So in both Hebrew and Egyptian texts, the word "Sea" in the name Red Sea does not necessarily refer to a large body water. It could refer to any large wet area.

Finally, the name Red Sea was first attached to the sea crossing in the Nile delta, since the Septuagint was first translated into Greek in Alexandria. 60 It addressed the needs of a large Jewish population that had been living in Egypt for centuries. That population would have been well aware of the various Egyptian Red motifs and geographical motifs. It is completely possible that they could have chosen a Greek name for the location of Israel's crossing that was consistent with these motifs. 61 The New Testament would then have carried over this name from the Septuagint.

It is fair to say that this explanation is a little forced. It is more likely that Israel left Egypt through marshland south of the Bitter Lakes. However, a central Isthmus crossing can not be ruled out completely. It is at least possible that the name Red Sea may have been used to

⁵⁹See below for discussion.

⁶⁰The letter of Aristeas claims this, although of course, the Septuagint is a broad tradition of texts translated at different places and different times.

⁶¹John R. Tower has argued along similar lines in his article "The Red Sea," <u>J.N.E.S.</u> 18 (1959): 150-153. On page 150 he argued that the Red Sea may have been named after the Red Mountain.

describe inland swamps in antiquity. It would certainly be consistent with other Egyptian Red motifs.

The Yam Suph

The second Biblical geographical term which should be discussed is the Hebrew name note. (yam suph). This name has generated nearly endless academic debate because Exodus 15:4, 22 claims that Israel crossed the note. In theory, if this note could be identified, then the site of Israel's sea crossing would be known. Unfortunately, the identification of the yam suph has been anything but simple. The yam suph discussion has necessarily been bound up with the broader debate over the sea crossing location, but that debate has produced neither a universally recognized definition for note, nor a clear location for this sea.

The yam suph debate has been complicated by the fact that the noun no is rather rare in Hebrew. Other than the twenty three instances of the name yam suph in Scripture. the noun only appears three times. 62 Each time. it clearly refers to reeds, rushes, swamplands or marshlands. 63 Exo-

⁶²There may be one other example of the word ηφ that has been overlooked. Is. 21:1 reads. "The oracle of the Wilderness of the m. πφορ." πφορ is normally understood as πρω (tempest). However, its appearance immediately after m is striking despite the athnach, and may well be a literary allusion. πφορ appears after a long prophecy which promises that Egypt's reeds and suph will be dried up in God's judgment. Is. 21:1 may build on this theme, predicting that rushes will pass away in the south. προρ may then be suph with a fem. pl. ending.

⁶³Authors who have understood $\eta \phi$ as a Sea of Reeds have tried to determine what kind of plants these Suph may have been, and where they may have been found. On this, see

dus. 2:3, 5 refers to the reeds where the infant Moses was placed as ηφ. Isaiah 19:6 describes God's iudqment on Egypt, promising that the reeds and Suph will be dried up. Then, Jonah 2:6 uses the noun ηφ to describe vegetation wrapped about the prophet's head.

The debate has drawn heavily on the fact that a late Egyptian word čwfy is usually understood to be the hieroglyphic spelling for 70.64 This word became rather common after the Eighteenth Dynasty flooded Egypt with Semitic captives. 65 In these texts, čwfy was used in contexts

Francisco, "The Exodus in its Historical Setting." 17. and Aly Bey Shafei, "Historical Notes on the Pelusiac Branch. the Red Sea Canal and the Route of the Exodus. " B.S.R.G.E. 21 (1946): 269. The results of this discussion have been inconclusive. While the Red Sea water level has not changed significantly in historical times, and the Isthmus' geology has only changed in a few areas, both the salinity and the water level of inland lakes have changed greatly. Canals in use in antiquity have silted up and dried out. Coastal regions have sunk and become salty. The delta has grown northward. So plant life patterns today do not duplicate plant patterns present in the Mosaic age. See Pierre Montet. Eternal Egypt, trans. D. Weightman. (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1964). 4. and William H. Shea. "A Date for the Recently Discovered Eastern Canal of Eqvpt. B.A.S.O.R. 226 (1977): 34. Further confusing the issue is the question of exegesis. When Jonah spoke of Suph beneath the sea in Jonah 2:5, he could have been reflecting current usage. interpreting Suph as seaweed. However, he also could have been describing his experiences by using traditional imagery which had its roots in Near Eastern mythology. The same verses do speak of the Tehom. the bars of the earth. and the bases of the mountains. See Bernard F. Batto. "Reed Sea: Requiescat in Pace. " J.B.L. 102 (1983): 32. 33.

⁶⁴J. Simmons expressed doubts about the validity of this common identification because the Equation rope sign (th) would not normally become a Hebrew sameck. J. Simons. The Geographical and Topographical Texts of the Old Testament, (Leiden: E. J. Brill. 1959). 78.

⁶⁵The Egyptian word čwfv is spelled with four signs. the rope (th), the chick (u. though actually a consonant).

where the word "marsh" could be expected to appear. Sometimes čwfy appeared with the article, indicating that a specific area was in view. In these cases, the noun would be translated something like "the marshland near _____," with the blank filled in by any of several locations bordering on swamp areas. 66 The most famous example of čwfy in the texts comes from papyrus Anastasi III, 2:11-12, which describes the delta city of Pi-Rameses. This papyrus claims that the čwfy comes to the city with papyrus reeds, and the waters of Horus with rushes. 67 A variety of other texts have been cited by Gardiner and others. One text described Egyptian workers who cut marsh plants in the čwfy. In another, Horus hid from Seth in the čwfy. 68 Still another

the horned snake or snail (f), and the double stroke (either y, or a place holder). See Adolf Erman and Hermann Grapow, Wörterbuch der äegyptischen Sprache, 5 Vols, (Berlin: Akademie, 1955), 5:359. For a discussion of the word, see also William A. Ward, "The Semitic Biconsonantal Root SP and the Common Origin of Egyptian ČWF and Hebrew SUP: "Marsh (-Plant)"," V.T., 24 (1974): 339, 340. This word has been transliterated in a variety of ways, including: cwf, cwfy, twfi, toofi, tufi, and soofy. The word refers either to the marshland, or to marsh vegetation of some kind. It is often a generic for several species of aquatic plants.

⁶⁶In these contexts, čwfy sometimes appeared with the town determinative, even though a swamp was clearly in view. See Gardiner, Ancient Hebrew Onomastica, 2: 201- 204 for a list of places where the noun cwf appeared in the Egyptian texts. His work is normally cited in current discussions of the question. Ward mentioned a text where p3-cwf seemed to describe the area near Lake Manzelah. Ward, "The Semitic Biconsonantal Root SP," 341.

⁶⁷Since this text mentions both Per-Raamses and Suph, it has been translated and cited in any number of sources. See Ward, "The Semitic Biconsonantal Root SP," 341, and Shafei, "Historical Notes on the Pelusiac Branch," 237, 259.

⁶⁸Ward, "The Semitic Biconsonantal Root SP," 342.

visualized the Nile valley as an ox standing with its tail resting on čwfy.69 Another listed cwfy as a festival offering given to the gods.70

It is obvious that the Egyptian noun cwfy was related somehow to the Hebrew noun not. The exact nature of the relationship is less obvious, and has generated substantial debate. Several scholars have assumed that the three Hebrew examples of the word are simply instances of an Egyptian loan word entering the Hebrew language.71 If so, the notion is should probably be translated as the "Sea of Reeds." The problem with this assumption is that cwf seems to have been unknown in Egypt before the Eighteenth Dynasty. So it is possible that cwfy itself could be a loan word into Egyptian from another language.72 If the Egyptian cwfy is not used to explain not not be that the possibility of a Semitic

⁶⁹Gardiner, Ancient Egyptian Onomastica, 2:168. Gardiner identifies this reference as part of a fictional story called the "Blinding of Truth."

⁷⁰Alan H. Gardiner and H. S. Bell, "The Name of Lake Moeris," J.E.A. 29 (1943): 40. This is a Twentieth Dynasty text of Ramses III included in the Heliopolitan section of the Harris Papyrus.

⁷¹See Thomas O. Lambdin, "Egyptian Loan words in the Old Testament," J.A.O.S. 73 (1953): 153, Arlis E. Ehlen, "Deliverance at the Sea: Diversity and Unity in a Biblical Theme," C.T.M. 44 (1973): 169, J. D. Douglas (ed.), The Illustrated Bible Dictionary, 3 Vols. (Wheaton: Tyndale House Publishers, 1980), 3:1323.

⁷²Maurice Copisarow and William Ward have both recently discussed this possibility. See Copisarow, "The Ancient Egyptian, Greek and Hebrew Concept of the Red Sea," 6, 11, 12, and Ward, "The Semitic Biconsonantal Root SP," 346, 347.

origin should be explored.73

Among the possible Semitic parallels, two Hebrew words have received considerable academic attention, the hollow verb Suph and the noun Soph. There are three clear examples of the Hebrew verb pap. 74 All three describe bringing something to a complete end. In Esther 9:28, it is used to express the hope that the Jews' memory would not perish from their seed. In Psalm 73:19 and Isaiah 66:17, it describes how the wicked are destroyed completely in God's judgment. The noun paper is more common. It occurs five times in Hebrew and five times in the Aramaic section of Daniel.75 It is used topographically for the farthest extremity of a valley, or of the earth.76 It is used temporally for the end of a man's life, and for the farthest extremity of time.77 It

⁷³The noun Yam is clearly a Semitic word which appeared as a loan word in Egyptian texts at the same time that Suph appeared. Seeing Suph as another Semitic import gives consistency to the name. On Yam in Egyptian literature, see Gardiner, Ancient Egyptian Onomastica, 1:7, 162, 163, also Erman and Grapow, Wörterbuch der Äegyptischen Sprache, 1:78.

⁷⁴Mandelkern adds to this list the infinitive absolute constructions in Jer. 8:13 and Zeph. 1:2,3. However, the verb forms in these texts are rather unusual. It is not even clear whether they are based on the root Suph or Asaph. See Solomon Mandelkern, Concordantiae Hebraicae atque Chaldaicae, (Tel Aviv: Sumptibus Schochen Hierosolymis, 1978), 794.

⁷⁵Saebo noted that the Qumran literature also read nio as "end" in three texts. See G. Johannes Botterweck, Helmer Ringgren and Heinz-Josef Fabry, Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Alten Testament, 5 Vols. (Stuttgart: W. Kohlammer, 1986), 5:793.

⁷⁶² Chron. 20:16, Dan. 4:8; 4:19, and Num. 21:14.

⁷⁷Ecc. 7:2; Dan. 7:28; Joel 2:20.

is used for the final end of God's works, and for the end of a matter under discussion. 78 It is even used to describe the farthest forces of an army. 79

Both the verb and the noun carry the idea of a complete end, or a farthest extremity of something. Applying this meaning to the name as a "Sea at the End of the Earth." This interpretation is supported by the frequently noted fact that the Gulf of Akaba is called a part of the name as a schate thalassa in the Septuagint of that verse. 80 Other Red Sea references to the farthest parts of the earth are also frequently brought to bear.

This position has been defended most frequently by scholars who are oriented toward the world of Sumerian, Assyrian and Babylonian literature. 8 by viewing the program as an "End of the World" sea, these writers suggest that the sea crossing is a recension of the Near Eastern creation account. The sea crossing becomes one more battle with

⁷⁸Ecc.3:11; Dan. 7:28; Joel 2:20.

⁷⁹Joel 2:20.

⁸⁰See Copisarow, "The Ancient Egyptian, Greek and Hebrew Concept of the Red Sea," 8, and Bernard F. Batto, "Red Sea or Reed Sea?" <u>B.A.R.</u> 10 (1984): 59, 60. James Montgomery offered an interesting alternative interpretation of this passage. He suggested that the gulf was being described as the farthest border of Israel, rather than the farthest ocean. James A. Montgomery, "Hebraica (2) Yam Sup ("The Red Sea")=Ultimum Mare?" <u>J.A.O.S.</u> 58 (1938): 131, 132.

⁸¹Of course, an "End Sea" definition could be used in theory, by anyone interested in locating Israel's sea crossing at the Red Sea.

Tehom, the primal deep. Norman Snaith defends this position. He comments on Exodus 15:5 in these words.

In verse 5 with its references to the Deeps and the depths we have passed into the realm of the great creation-myth, that story of the fight against the monster of Chaos which is interwoven with the story of God's rescue of the people from bondage both in Egypt and in Babylon: Isa. li 9-11, Jonah ii with Jer. li 54. The word tehóm does not refer to the depths of any natural sea. This is the depths of the primeval ocean, of Tiamat the great sea monster.82

Snaith's position has been defended recently by Batto, Ward and others.83

Snaith's position can be reinterpreted in a way consistent with Egyptian theology. If the ጥጥ was an "End Sea," it may have been named this as a Semitic equivalent to the Egyptian Field of Reeds theology. The Egyptian Lake, or Field, of Reeds was the reedy border of Nun, the primal ocean which surrounded the earth. Any large watery area was seen as a local manifestation of this horizon Field of Reeds. So a region of reeds near Egypt's eastern border could easily have been called a ጥጥ, a local manifestation of the End Sea.

This explanation is attractive and is certainly possible. However, another explanation is more likely. The noun Suph may have arisen from an old Semitic root refer-

⁸²Norman H. Snaith, "Yam Suph: The Sea of Reeds: The Red Sea," <u>V.T.</u> 15 (1965): 397.

⁸³See Batto, "The Reed Sea: Requiescat in Pace," 32, Ward, "The Semitic Biconsonantal Root SP," 343, J. Philip Hyatt, Commentary on Exodus, In The New Century Bible, ed. R. E. Clements and M. Black (London: Morgan and Scott, 1971), 164.

ring to reeds used as animal fodder. It is probably not possible to reconstruct the exact form of this root. It may have been a biconsonantal root Samech Pe, or it may have combined these radicals with an Aleph. The primary evidence for the existence of such a root is the striking similarity between the Egyptian noun čwfy and three Semitic words, ASP, the Old Persian noun for "fodder," SP², the Canaanite verb "to eat," and Krep, the Hebrew noun "fodder."

The meaning "fodder" is quite important for the discussion because the delta čwfy swamps were a major Egyptian source for animal feed. This can be seen in papyrus Sallier I,4,9. This papyrus mentions grooms bringing green fodder from the čwfy for the king's horses.84 This use of reeds for fodder is not without contemporary parallels. A century ago, Rawlinson noted that large tracts of delta wetland were being used by "the marshmen" for raising cattle. More recently, Shafei noted that the Egyptians still raised cattle herds on the Suph near the mouth of the Bahr el Bagar drain.85

The Old Persian and Canaanite nouns will only require a brief note. The Old Persian noun ASP demonstrates that the radicals SP were associated with fodder in the broader Semitic field. The Canaanite verb SP³, "to eat," has gen-

⁸⁴Alan H. Gardiner, <u>Late-Egyptian Miscellanies</u>, (Brussels: La Fondation Egyptologique, 1939), 81, Gardiner, <u>Ancient Egyptian Onomastica</u>, 2:202.

⁸⁵George Rawlinson, <u>History of Ancient Egypt</u>, (New York: The Publishers Plate Renting Co., 1880), 87. Shafei, "Historical Notes on the Pelusiac Branch," 269.

erated more discussion. Ward derives it from the Canaanite noun for "bowl." Segert seems to disagree, identifying it as a final aleph root, and associating it with the Hebrew with the postbiblical Hebrew and Aramaic forms SP' and SPY, "to give a portion to eat."86

The closest parallel to the Egyptian noun čwfy is the Hebrew word for fodder, kgp. This noun seems to have been drawn from a final aleph root SP'. Suph probably did not come from it directly, since nouns drawn from final aleph roots usually end in either aleph or yodh. There are exceptions to this rule, but they are rather unimpressive.87

The presence of a Semitic word for marsh in Egyptian should not be surprising. Semitic peoples often found a home in the delta during dry years. After all, Jacob's sons were placed over Pharaoh's cattle in Goshen. Fodder could be obtained from the čwfy swamps there even in drought years. Since Semitic peoples farmed the delta, it is quite possible that the Semitic word for "animal fodder" could have entered the Egyptian language through the delta, and

⁸⁶On the Old Persian form, see A. Leo Oppenheim (ed.), The Assyrian Dictionary, 21 vols. (Chicago: The Oriental Institute, 1968), vol. 1, pt. 2, 338. For Ward's analysis, see Ward, "The Semitic Biconsonantal Root SP," 345. For Segert's note, see the glossary in Stanislav Segert, A Basic Grammar of the Ugaritic Language, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 195.

⁸⁷Perhaps the clearest exception comes from Ex. 17:16, where Kisse, "throne," appears as a biconsonantal noun Kes. It may be true that such exceptions occur most frequently in contexts that are subject to Aramaic influence, like Tsevu in Daniel 6:18 and Shav in Job 15:31. Mispo would seem to be closer to both the Egyptian čwfy and the Canaanite SP², SPY than to the Hebrew 70 since it retains the final aleph.

could have come to refer to marshland plants in general.88

The noun keps appears four times in Genesis and once in Judges, so it clearly was used by the same generation that crossed the Yam Suph. The context in which keps appeared in Genesis is quite important. In Genesis 42:27 and 43:24, keps referred to animal feed obtained in northern Egypt. It is fair to assume that keps here referred to marshplants from the čwfy swamps, since these plants clearly were used as fodder by the Egyptians.

which also appeared in Judges 19:19 as animal fodder used in Israel. While the meaning of which here is unclear, marsh plants were not uncommon in Palestine. From the Chalcolithic Period, inhabitants of the Palestine highlands had been building reservoirs to hold run off water for later use. Several authors have described marsh plants in Israel. Also, permanent swamp regions were not unknown in the area. So marsh plants were locally available, and may well have been used as animal fodder.91

⁸⁸Pyramid Text 2069, 2070 contains an interesting word SP. The meaning of this word is unclear, and Faulkner suggests that it may be a place name. However, it occurs in the context of herdsmen raising cattle, so it might be an early example of this Semitic word being taken into Egyptian, before the spelling cwfy became standard. This could reflect pre-Israelite Semitic influence.

⁹¹David C. Hopkins descussed early reservoirs in Palestine in The Highlands of Canaan, (Decatur: The Almond Press, 1985), 95. Harold and Alma Moldenke described many areas of reeds and rushes in Palestine. They noted that the same reeds that fed Pharaoh's cattle were found in Palestine, along with 15 kinds of Scirpus (bulrushes) and 21 kinds of Juncus (rushes). See Harold N. and Alma L. Moldenke, Plants of the Bible, (Waltham: Chronica Botanica Co., 1952), 40, 50, 62, 92, 120, 121. See also A. W. Ander-

The noun htelps also appeared in Genesis 24:25 and 24:

32. In these verses, Abraham's servant obtained fodder

(htelps) for his camels at Haran in Mesopotamia. In the lower

Mesopotamian valley, marsh plants were commonly used for

animal fodder. H. F. Lloyd Seton noted that the Marsh Arabs

of southern Iraq used the young shoots of reeds and cattails

for fodder. Kay Prag described large herds of buffalo

grazing in several Mesopotamian marshland locations.92

Unfortunately, Haran was not located in southern Mesopotamia. It was located in the semi-arid region in the north. Aside from a few reeds along the gravel bars, marsh plants are not common in the area.93 This argues against interpreting kieps as marshplants, or at least suggests that

son, <u>Plantsof the Bible</u>, (London: Crosby Lockwood & Sons, 1956), 29. The marshlands east of Tell Mardikh are noted by Paolo Matthiae, <u>Ebla: An Empire Rediscovered</u>, (New York: Doubleday & Company, 1981), On the Abana River marsh, see Menashe Harel, "The Route of the Exodus of the Israelites from Egypt and their Wandering in the Sinai Desert: a Geographic Study," (PhD Dissertation at New York University, 1964), 256. See also Harvey Weiss, <u>Ebla to damascus</u>, 35. On the Orontes River marshlands, see <u>The Middle East in North Africa 1989</u>, (London: Europa Publications Ltd., 1988), 795.

[&]quot;Tigris and Euphrates Rivers," by H. F. Lloyd Seton, See also Kay Prag, "Ancient and Modern Pastoral Migration in the Levan," Levant, 17 (1985): 84. Since these marsh reeds were economically important, they were carefully preserved. This can be seen in a Sumerian fable where a hoe boasted that he was more important than the plough. The hoe claimed this because he filled all the irrigable land with water, and flooded all the reed thicket. See Thorkild Jacobsen, Salinity and Irrigation in Antiquity, (Malibu: Undena Publishing Co., 1964), 66.

⁹³Private communication from Mike Fuller of St. Louis Community College.

the noun may have a wider range of meaning. Of course, basin irrigation was common in antiquity, holding snow melt water for later use. It is not inconceivable that such pools could have provided an environment where marsh plants could have grown.94

How did an Egyptian area come to be called not?? While no definite answer can be given, the parallel with the Fayum is quite instructive. The Fayum is a large depression west of the Nile and south of the delta. In the Biblical period, this depression contained an enourmous reed filled lake which was fed by a branch of the Nile. It also contained some of the best agricultural land in Egypt. The Egyptian names for this region included ta-she, "Lake Land," and sha-t Asar, the "Lake of Osiris."95 During the empire age, the Fayum was filled with asiatic slaves, including captives from Syria and Palestine. At this time, a new name came into use for the region. It came to be called pa-ym, "The Sea."96 There can be no doubt that ym is a Semitic loanword imported into Egyptian. The name Yam appears ten times in the Astarte Papyrus alone. The Astarte Papyrus seems to be a hieroglyphic recension of the Canaanite Baal/

⁹⁴For a discussion of basin irrigation, see Karl Butzer, Environment and Archaeology, (Chicago: Aldine Publishing Company, 1964), 463.

⁹⁵See Gardiner, "The Name of Lake Moeris," 37-51, and E. A. W. Budge, An Egyptian Hieroglyphic Dictionary, 2 vols. (New York: Dover Publications, 1978), 2:720. See also David, The Pyramid Builders of Ancient Egypt, 254.

⁹⁶Montet, Eternal Egypt, 3.

Yam myth. So this papyrus shows Yam being brought into the Egyptian language. 97 So the name pa-ym, "The Sea," probably was a name given to the region by its Semitic inhabitants. This name was handed down among the Semitic speaking peoples, and was preserved down to the present time as Fayum. However, along side of this Semitic name, the traditional Egyptian names for the region also continued in use. For example, the Ptolemaic era shrine of El-'Arish still called the Fayum by the traditional name of ta she.98

The name Yam Suph probably arose in a similar way. The Semitic peoples living in the eastern delta and in Wadi Tumilat needed a name to describe the vast marshy areas around them. They chose a Semitic name which accurately described those regions, and which probably approximated Egyptian names in use at the time. So instead of calling the swamps an Egyptian name like she iaru, or mer iaru, "Lake of Reeds," they chose the Semitic name אָשְּיִּיבּ, "Lake of Reeds." If so, then John Towers is quite justified in claiming that she iaru and אִשְיִיבּי are identical in meaning. Towers may also be correct in suggesting that the name אִשְּיִבּי could have carried with it overtones drawn from Egyptian the—

⁹⁷See below for further discussion of the Astarte Papyrus. See also Alan H. Gardiner, "The Astarte Papyrus," Studies Presented to F. Ll. Griffith, (London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1932), 74-85, Alan H. Gardiner, Late-Egyptian Stories, (Brussels: La Fondation Egyptologique, 1932), 76-81, and Wilson, The Culture of Ancient Egypt, 320.

⁹⁸F. Ll. Griffith, <u>The Antiquities of Tell El</u> Yahûdîyeh, 70-73.

ology. 99 The name Yam Suph could easily have led Israelites astray into the whole world of Egyptian Field of Reeds theology. The equation of """ with she iaru would also have turned Israel's sea crossing into a very effective polemical statement.

<u>Pihahiroth</u>

One more Biblical geographical term should be discussed here. Exodus 14:2 noted that Israel camped at a site called Pihahiroth. What was Pihahiroth? The name Pihahiroth is actually made up of two nouns, 'a, "Pi," and nin, "Hiroth," with the article n, "Ha." The name is most commonly translated as "the mouth of the canal, "100 although other translations have also been proposed, including the "Mansion of Hathor," the "House of (the serpent goddess) Gerehet," and the "Mouth of the Abyss." 101 In all probability, the name ning a refers to the mouth of some canal.

⁹⁹Towers, "The Red Sea," 150-153.

¹⁰⁰See for example, Emmanuel Anati, <u>Har Karkom: the Mountain of God</u>, (New York: Rizzoli International Publications, 1986), 185.

¹⁰¹The best survey of alternative interpretations can be found in Henri Cazelles, "Les Localisations de l'Exode et la Critique Litteraire," R.B. 62 (1955): 350-364. Translating "P as "House" assumes that the Egyptian hieroglyph "Per" stands behind the name. This hieroglyph can either mean "house, mansion, temple," or simply indicate the sound "per." In Late Egyptian, the "r" sound was dropped from the pronunciation of "per." See Budge, An Egyptian Hieroglyphic Dictionary, 1:cxxvii. It is quite possible that a Semitic people in the delta could have used a name which included an Egyptian element. The name "pa-ym" (the sea) is a good example of this. "pa" is the Egyptian definite article, and "ym" is undeniably Semitic. However, "mouth" is a simpler, and a more likely, translation.

though the identification and location of this canal have been debated. 102

Pi Hahiroth is a Semitic name used to describe an Egyptian location, just like the other names in Exodus 14:2, Yam, Baal Zephon, and Migdol. 103 Perhaps the best Semitic parallel to him is the Akkadian noun "hirītu." The Assivian Dictionary lists eleven examples where "hirītu" means "ditch" or "canal," and nine examples where it means "defensive moat." A related word "herūtu" refers to a diging work, especially digging involved in irrigation. 104 Since the rise of Mesopotamian civilization was grounded in irrigation, the presence of Semitic words for "canal"

¹⁰²The "mouth" of a canal is usually taken to be the place where a canal opens onto another body, either a river, a sea, a marsh, or whatever. Cazelles notes that this "mouth" might actually refer to the bank of a canal. He defends this interpretation with his understanding of Is. 19:7. See Cazelles, "Les Localisations de l'Exode," 351. Cazelles also notes that Egyptian texts used the word "ro" (mouth) to describe the end of a river. For example, he interprets "ro-hawt" as a "mouth" of the Nile.

Nineteenth Dynasty did give Baal a prominent place in the delta. Yam and Migdol are also clearly Semitic loan words brought into Egyptian. See Gardiner, Ancient Egyptian Onomastica, 1:7', 2:214'. Albright held that Pi Hahiroth was actually a popular Semitic etymology for an Egyptian name. Albright suggested that the Egyptian name was originally Pi-H-r-t (temple of the Syrian goddess H-r-t). He then suggested that the Semitic peoples understood this name as "mouth of the canals." See William F. Albright, "Exploring the Sinai with the University of California African Expedition," B.A.S.O.R., 109 (1948): 16. However, would Semitic peoples have misunderstood the name of a temple named for a Syrian goddess?

¹⁰⁴Oppenheim (ed.), <u>The Assyrian Dictionary</u>, 6:176. Both forms are probably related to "hēru," which means "dig." This word may also be related to the Hebrew root יְּתָר, "hole, hiding place, cave."

the presence of Semitic words for "canal" should come as no surprise.105

The name יְּחָדְּוֹת itself may appear on the shrine of El-

¹⁰⁵For a discussion of Mesopotamian canal irrigation, see the following. Charles Burney, "Urartian Irrigation Works," A.S. 22 (1972): 179-186. Thorkild Jacobsen, Salinity and Irrigation Agriculture in Antiquity, 57-87. Karl W. Butzer, Environment and Archeology, (Chicago: Aldine Publishing Co., 1964), 464-465. G. Le Strange, The Lands of the Eastern Caliphate, (London: Frank Cass & Co., 1966), 39-69.

¹⁰⁶B.D.B. lists an Arabic cognate khrt, "preforate, slit," and especially, "engrave", which is digging a small channel into something. See Francis Brown, Samuel R. Driver, Charles A. Briggs, The New Brown-Driver-Briggs-Gesenius Hebrew and English Lexicon, (Christian Copyrights,, 1979), 362.

¹⁰⁷Budge, Egyptian Hieroglyphic Dictionary, 499, 533,

'Arish which contains a name "Pekharti," 108 though this is rather problematic. 109 There is also a strikingly similar Egyptian name. The Fayum contains a town named El-Lāhūn.

Behind the name Lāhūn stands the Egyptian name Rě-ḥōně,

"mouth of the canal." 110 It is interesting that the Harris papyrus associates hone with the čwfy swamps, as is ning a.

Also, since Hôně could mean "lake, pool," or "river," Rěhōně could mean "lake shore." This supports Cazelles' interpretation of ning \$111 as a canal bank.

The translation "mouth of the canal" has received repeated attention of late because of a survey conducted in the early 1970's as a part of the Geological Survey of Israel. In this survey, air photographs of the northern Isthmus of Suez revealed the remains of a large canal stretching from the Mediterranean Sea south through the western side of Lake Ballah, and then southeast to Lake

¹⁰⁸Griffith, The Antiquities of Tell El Yahûdîyeh, 72, XXV.

¹⁰⁹Griffith claimed that the shrine was transported north from Goshen. Griffith, Antiquities of Tell El Yahû-dîyeh, 71. There are several problems with this name. Any canal mouth site could have been called by this name. Also, this form ends in a foreign land or desert determinative. Normally, Egyptian words for "canal" end in water or canal determinatives. However, this foreign land or desert determinative could indicate that Pihahiroth was a Semitic loan word, or that the place described was on the edge of the wilderness. The names Succoth and Thel were followed by the same determinative. Also, the beginning of this word includes an erased sign ("p"?), and the name could be translated differently.

¹¹⁰For a discussion of this name, sea Gardiner, "The Name of Lake Moeris," 39, 40.

¹¹¹Cazelles, "Les Localisations de l'Exode," 351.

Timsah. William Shea described this canal in <u>B.A.S.O.R.</u>

226.112 Exposed sections of this canal measured twenty
meters wide at the bottom and seventy meters wide at the
top. So this canal compared favorably with the size of the
Suez Canal dug in 1875. Shea argued that this canal was a
defensive moat to prevent Asiatic raids into Egyptian border
areas. Shea suggested that this canal was originally dug
during the Middle Kingdom. It went out of use in the Hyksos
era, and was restored in the Eighteenth or Nineteenth Dynasties. 113 This canal would have created a barrier which
Israel could not cross, unless Israel chose to pass through
one of the border fortresses like Thiel or Tjeku, north of
Lake Timsah. 114 Israel's progress may also have been somewhat hindered by the Wadi Tumilat canal, even though its

¹¹²Shea, "A Date for the Recently Discovered Eastern Canal of Egypt," 31-38. See also Ward, Egypt and the East Mediterranean World 2200- 1900 B.C., 30-34. See also, Alan H. Gardiner, "The Ancient Military Road between Egypt and Palestine," J.E.A. 6 (1920): 104.

¹¹³See Shafei, "Historical Notes on the Pelusiac Branch," 242, 243 for a description and map of the southern part of this canal. Shafei wrote two decades before the Geological Survey of Israel, so he accepted the traditional association of this canal with Pharaoh Necho. Shafei noted that the canal bed rose to fourteen meters above sea level as it rose to climb el Gisr north of Lake Timsah. Even recognizing that the Egyptians used locks to control water level, such an elevation would have required constant upkeep.

¹¹⁴Tjeku may have been Succoth, though the question is rather difficult. For a discussion of Tjeku and Succoth, see Menashe Harel, "The Route of the Exodus of the Israelites from Egypt and their Wandering in the Sinai Desert: a Geographic Study," 1964. The fortress Thel was pictured at Karnak in Amon's temple. This relief depicted the Nineteenth Dynasty Pharaoh Seti I returning in triumph over a bridge spanning this eastern canal.

purpose was not defense. This canal stretched west from Lake Timsah to the Nile. The Wadi Tumilat canal was in use at least by the Nineteenth Dynasty, and remained in use until 767 A.D. when it was finally blocked by Mohamed Abdallah. Is a same as somewhat harder to evaluate. The region between Lake Timsah and the Bitter Lakes is now an eight mile long stretch of sand dunes. J. Philip Hyatt suggested that the region probably contained marshy lagoons in antiquity. In E. A. W. Budge suggested that this region was crossed by a canal in the Mosaic age. 117

Other Egyptian texts also suggest that this region was impassable since Asiatics had to pass through the fortress at Tjeku. Egyptian control of Asiatic immigration was reflected in the famous "Letter of a Frontier Official" from Merneptah's reign. This letter advised the crown that Tjeku had completed passing Edomite Shasu tribesmen through the fortress to the pools of Pithom. 118 If the Shasu could not

¹¹⁵Harel, "The Route of the Exodus of the Israelites from Egypt," 256.

¹¹⁶Hyatt, Exodus, 157.

¹¹⁷Budge, The Book of the Dead, 142. Budge noted that Papyrus Ani depicted a great canal flowing through the fourteenth Aat. Budge suggested that this canal was an allusion to the canal which flowed from the Nile, through the delta, and to the great canal that flowed into the Bitter Lakes. Since Papyrus Ani was written between 1500 and 1350 B.C., Budge's interpretation of Papyrus Ani implies the existence of a canal between Lake Timsah and the Bitter Lakes in the Mosaic age.

¹¹⁸See previous discussion along with Breasted, Ancient Records, 3:272, and E. P. Uphill, "Pithom and

enter Egypt without permission, and without passing through Tjeku Israel may well have faced the same problem in order to leave the country. Israel may have been trapped by the canals, the fortresses, and the swamps. It is also interesting that reeds grow thickly where canals and drains empty into larger bodies of water. So the name him to may fit quite well with a swamp location near a canal mouth.

If the canal behind ning's was the eastern defensive canal, its "mouth" could have been its southern end at Lake Timsah, or its northern end, or the western end of Lake Ballah. It is also possible that a different canal entirely was in view, either an irrigation canal, the Wadi Tumilat canal, or a canal between Timsah and the Bitter Lakes.

It is also possible, though unlikely, that him is described a site on the Red Sea shore. Several writers have claimed that a Red Sea canal was dug before the Mosaic age. 120 This claim is based on an observation made by Aristotle, Strabo and Pliny that Sesostris III, the famous Twelfth Dynasty Pharaoh, first planned and attempted to dig

Raamses: Their Location and Significance, J.N.E.S. 28 (1969): 296.

¹¹⁹Shafei made this point in reference to the canals and drains which empty into Lake Menzala. Shafei, "Historical Notes on the Pelusic Branch," 269.

¹²⁰For one example of this position, see Kay Showker's overview of Egyptian history in Fodor's Egypt, 1981, (New York: Fodor's Modern Guides, 1981), 219. Showker claims that the first canal was dug about 1900 B.C. from the Red Sea and the Bitter Lakes to the Nile. This same canal was redug by Darius I in 521 B.C. Showker claims that this canal was called the "Canal of the Pharaohs" and was in use for about a thousand years.

a Red Sea canal. 121 Sesostris III ruled 1887-1849 B.C. He did excavate a major canal around the first cataract of the Nile, and he was generally interested in land reclamation. Sesostris III left two inscriptions to commemorate his accomplishment. 122 If Sesostris attempted a Red Sea canal, he probably would have dug north from the sea, as Necho II did later. 123 At least the track of this canal would have been visible in the Mosaic age, and could have been called שׁלְּתְּדְּלֵח, However, it is quite unlikely that such a canal was attempted before Necho II. There is no clear archeological or literary evidence from the Twelfth Dynasty for the existence of such a canal. There is, on the other hand, rather good evidence that Sesostris was idealized by the Greek period, and became almost a mythical figure. As this process continued, Sesostris was credited with the accomplishments of much later rulers. 124

While the name nim is can not pinpoint the location of Israel's sea crossing, the name is quite significant in the context of Egyptian theology. It is significant because

¹²¹This claim was expressed by Aristotle in "Meteorologica" I.xiv, by Strabo in "Geography" 17.I.25, and by Pliny in "Natural History" Book IV, xxxii, 165.

¹²²Breasted, Ancient Records, 1:290-292. There were three rulers named Sesostris between 1980 and 1849 B.C. The name has also frequently been identified with Ramses II. See A. H. Sayce, The Ancient Empires of the East, Herodotus I-III, (London: Macmillan and Co., 1883), 178.

¹²³Herodotus, Book II, 158.

¹²⁴An excellent analysis of this problem can be found in Alan B. Lloyd, <u>Herodotus: Book II</u>, (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1988), 16, 20, 29.

canals played an important role in Field of Reeds theology. Pharaoh could only cross the Field of Reeds when a special canal was opened, and the field was flooded. This can be seen in Pyramid Texts 352, 353 and 1102, 1103.

The Nurse-Canal is opened,
The Winding Waterway is flooded,
The Fields of Rushes are filled,
That I may be ferried over to the eastern side of the sky,
To the place where the gods were born,
And I was born there with them
As Horus, as the horizon-dweller.

The B'n-canal is opened, the Field of Rushes is flooded, the Winding Waterway is full of water; the reed-floats of the sky are set down for Horus that he may cross on them to Re'. 125

This canal was sometimes described as an obstacle to be crossed to reach the Field of Reeds. One text reads,

May you cross the Winding Waterway, may you traverse the Canal of Kenzet, may you fall in the eastern side of the sky, may you sit in the Two Conclaves of the horizon, 126

Other texts seem to imply that the canal was itself a place of the dead. Pyramid Text 1245 describes Pharaoh bathing in the Field of Reeds, and going down to the canal of Kenzet. Pyramid Text 920 describes Pharaoh going down to the Field of Kenzet. So the canal and field of Kenzet seem to be related places of the dead.

¹²⁵Later texts like Coffin Spell 398 continued to stress that the Field of Reeds had to be flooded if Pharaoh was to pass through the region safely.

¹²⁶Pyramid Text 1541. See also Griffith, The Antiquities of Tell El Yahûdîyeh, 71 for an example of passing be the canal into Re's presence. See also J. Zandee, "A Site of the Conflict between Horus and Seth," Ex Orbe Religionem, (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1972), 35.

Why was canal water necessary for Pharaoh to cross into Re's presence? The answer is that the Field of Reeds was an area of impenetrable marshland. 127 When not flooded, it could not be crossed for two reasons. The first is that the marsh plants were so thick that they made progress almost impossible. Elizabeth Thomas described similar marsh plants in her article "Terrestrial Marsh and Solar Mat."

The pointed, alternate, sheathed leaves of Phragmites cover inconspicuous joints of an upright culm that never branches, but the sheath is striated, as it is without exception or variation when detail is included in the Egyptian depictions. The older examples may also show the sheath itself and occasionally pointed leaves that are not opposite, while the culm can be upright and even have rather the appearance of a single 'bush' of Phragmites. When its full, dense growth is attained it is impenetrable, but the edges can always be fished and hunted. 128

When Egyptian paintings portrayed Pharaoh hunting in such marshland, the paintings depicted him floating on a small raft or canoe on the water between such reed clumps. 129

Since the mythological Field of Reeds was modeled after the delta marshland, such reeds were also assumed to exist in the Field of Reeds. 130

¹²⁷The swampy character can be seen in Pyramid Text 871 where Pharaoh in the Netherworld is called the "Lake-Dweller." Faulkner notes that the name "Lake-Dweller" looks like a nisba of hnt, "swampy lake." Raymond O. Faulkner, The Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts, (Oak Park: Bolchazy-Carducci Publishers, 1969), 154.

¹²⁸Elizabeth Thomas, "Terrestrial Marsh and Solar Mat," J.E.A. 45 (1959): 46, 47.

¹²⁹Shafei, "Historical Notes on the Pelusiac Branch," 262, 263.

¹³⁰On the delta roots of this Field of Reeds, see E. A. W. Budge, Egyptian Ideas of the Future Life: Egyp-

The Field of Reeds was also impenetrable without flooding because of the elastic and viscous character of its soil. Marsh muck tends to be quite deep and can not support a man's weight unless thoroughly dried. 131 One Egyptian text describes the problem faced by those who tried to cross this celestial Field of Reeds when it was not flooded. Coffin Spell 622 reads in part,

Ho! Fear and tremble, you violent ones who are on the storm-cloud of the sky which he split open safely on the day when he desired to come thence'-so says the cultivation-ass which dwells in the Netherworld. Your uproar will pass to the Field of Rushes, and you shall travel therein to Him who is on his k3dt-plant, having appeared as Hnty-mnyt.f. You sink into the earth to your thickness, to your middle, to <your> full span(?), you see Re' in fetters, you worship Re' in the loosing from fetters by means of the amulet of the Great One who is in red linen, the Lord of offerings.

The Field of Reeds could not be crossed because swamp muck in the low areas would not support a man's weight. Anyone trying to cross the region would drown in the slime. 132

tian Ideas of the Future Life: Egyptian Religion, (New York: University Books, 1959), 204, 207, 211. The link between Egyptian geography and mythology can be seen in a text from Kawa Sudan. This text specifically compares the Nile inundation with the primal waters. F. Ll. Griffith, "A Stela of Tirhaqa from Kawa, Dongola Province, Sudan," In Mélanges Maspero I, Orient Ancien, 2nd Fascicule, ed. M. P. Jouquet, (Cairo: Institut Francais d' Archeologie Orientale, 1935-38), 428. It can also be seen in Papyrus Ani of the Book of the Dead. In this papyrus, the 14th Aat was the celestial equivalent of the area between the Nile and Heliopolis. See on this text, Budge, The Book of the Dead, 141.

¹³¹The author recalls his own experience as a child with such swamp muck. Even when dried by August's heat, the upper layer of muck would bounce on the underlying elastic mud, and a misplaced foot would still sink deep in the mire.

¹³²This theme might also be found in Pyramid Texts 2183 and 2231 which promise that Pharaoh will judge his

It is certainly true that many texts described agriculture and cities of the blessed in the Field of Reeds. The most popular example of this is Coffin Spell 159 which describes an iron wall around the Field of Reeds, and miraculous abundance within it. 133 Coffin Spell 161 describes the city of Re in the Field of Reeds. Coffin Spell 1129 describes innumerable towns north of the Winding Waterway. Coffin Spell 464 describes Pharaoh rowing on the waterways of the Field, and arriving at its towns. If the field of Rushes was composed of elastic slime, how could such agriculture and habitation be possible? The answer is obvious when paintings of the Field of Reeds are reviewed. Paintings on papyri and on coffins which depict the Field of Reeds show it to be a collection of islands in the great Winding Waterway. These islands were inhabited and were farmed. 134 However, these islands could only be reached when the Winding Waterway around them was flooded with canal water. 135

enemies by drowning them. However, since Pharaoh himself needed special spells to breath air in the waters of Nun, his enemies may just have drowned in the netherworld waters. See Jan Zandee, <u>Death as an Enemy</u>, (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1960), 72, and Coffin Spells 467 and 631. This sinking into muck is somewhat at variance with the common theme that Pharaoh will bathe in the Field of Reeds.

¹³³See Alexandre Piankoff, <u>Mythological Papyri:</u> <u>Texts</u>, (New York: Pantheon Books, 1957), 4.

¹³⁴See Budge, Egyptian Ideas of the Future Life:
Egyptian Religion, 204, and Piankoff, The Wandering of the
Soul, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974) 10.

¹³⁵ Samuel Mercer noted that the Egyptian noun "she" should not be tanslated as "field," but as "marsh." So the

This parallel with Field of Reeds theology may explain one of the most vexing problems associated with Israel's exodus. How could the Yam Suph waters be shallow enough to be blown dry, and deep enough to drown Pharaoh's army?136

The answer may be that Jahweh's strong east wind flattened the reed beds and dried a surface firm enough to support Israel's crossing. The returning water could have rehydrated the muck, restoring its elasticity and normal viscosity. When Pharaoh's army began to sink into the mire, relatively little water would have been needed to drown them. Pharaoh's chariot wheels may well have broken the surface enough to compound the problem.

This interpretation may be supported by an interesting claim by Moses in Exodus 15:12. Moses claims that God stretched out His hand, and אַרְלְּמֵטֹ אָרָץ, , the earth swallowed, Pharaoh's army. This claim would be quite accurate if Pharaoh's forces sank into the marsh slime and drowned.137

horizon zone was the "Marsh of Reeds." He noted that the Winding Waterway was formed by inundating this marsh. He also noted that the water which filled this marsh was "wb3," "lifted water" lifted to fill a canal. Mercer. Pyramid Texts, 2:161, 3:799, and 4:65-68.

¹³⁶Several writers have commented on this problem. Lewis Hay saw the problem as a careless combination of originally divergent sources. Lewis S. Hay, "What Really Happened at the Sea of Reeds?" J.B.L. 83 (1964): 398. On the other hand, Frank Eakin suggested that Israel crossed the proper on a sandbar, and that the returning water drove the Egyptians into deeper water. Frank E. Eakin, Jr, The Religion and Culture of Israel, (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1971), 63.

¹³⁷S. C. Bartlett described a fairly recent example of this danger. He noted an interview with M. de Lesseps, who designed and built the Suez Canal. Lesseps claimed that

The Egyptian parallel may also explain why Exodus 15: 4,5 and Nehemiah 9:11 associate Israel's sea crossing with the abyss. These verses do not necessarily require a deep water crossing.138 If Israel's sea crossing intentionally mimicked Field of Reeds theology, the marshes crossed would be associated with the horizon Field of Reeds. This horizon region was the beginning of Nun, the primal abyss. Coffin Spell 279 is quite interesting here. If Raymond Faulkner's translation of it is correct, the spell promises that Pharaoh will "bathe in the basin of the Abyss," and "come to land at the Field of Rushes." If the "abyss" here is Nun, the Great Deep, it at least contains a shallow basin for bathing, which is the Field of Reeds. So perhaps Exodus 15:4,5 and Nehemiah 9:11 simply indicate some awareness of the event's intended polemical theology.

while riding his horse in the Bitter Lakes region, he became entangled in the morass, and only escaped with difficulty. Bartlett From Egypt to Palestine, 149. The TM in Exodus 15:12 is often taken to be the underworld, and is paralleled with passages like Num. 16:1-32, 1 Sam. 28:13, and Is. 29:4. See Hyatt, Exodus, 165. Of course, this explanation is most useful for a central Isthmus Exodus route. If Israel crossed south of the Shaluf, a Red Sea storm surge could have brought north more than enough water to drown Pharaoh's army.

¹³⁸These verses are sometimes taken as evidence for a deep water crossing. See for example, William H. Gispen, Exodus, In The Bible Student's Commentary, trans. Ed. vander Maas, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1982), 147, 148.

CHAPTER VI

THE SEA CROSSING POLEMIC

A Reed Sea Crossing

How did Israel's sea crossing refute Egyptian field of reeds theology? The answer is that Israel's sea crossing imitated key aspects of that theology, and in acting out these motifs, proved that they were wrong. There are at least six striking parallels between Israel's sea crossing and Egyptian Field of Reeds theology.

The first parallel comes from Exodus 13:18 and 15:4.

Both Israel and Pharaoh crossed a Reed Sea. Much has already been said about Israel's journey across the more. The exact location of this crossing can not be determined. Manfred Bietak lists six different swamp areas which have been suggested as sites for Israel's crossing, but no one site has gained wide acceptance. Whatever its location might have been, it is quite significant that Israel should be able to cross such a sea. Pharaoh's claims to righteousness were bound up with such reeds. When Pharaoh's army could not follow Israel, God demonstrated that Pharaoh's claims were incorrect.

¹Lexikon der Ägyptologie, vol. 5 (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1984), s.v. "Silfmeer," by Manfred Bietak.

How did the Field of Reeds prove that Pharaoh was righteous before God? When Pharaoh died, he crossed the eastern Field of Reeds into Re's presence. There Pharaoh bathed in the waters of the Field of Reeds, making himself fit to join Re on his solar bark. He bathed in the reeds just as Re himself bathed, preparing for his ascent into heaven. Any number of texts demonstrated this bathing, including Pyramid Texts 1430, 1164, and 710.

Re' has bathed in the Field of Rushes; Horus has bathed in the Field of Rushes; I have bathed in the Field of Rushes.

Oho! Raise yourself, my father, receive these four pleasant nmst-jars; bathe in the Jackal Lake, be cleansed in the Lake of the Netherworld, be purified on top of your lotus-flower in the Field of Rushes. Traverse the sky, make your abode in the Field of Offerings among the gods who have gone to their doubles.

I purify myself, I assume my pure throne which is in the sky, I will endure and my goodly thrones will endure, I assume my pure seat which is in the bow of the Bark of $R\bar{e}^{\dagger}$.

These texts spoke about Pharaoh's purification in the afterlife, but they were also more than this. This future bathing was enacted daily by the living Pharaoh. Every morning, Egyptian priests bathed Pharaoh in the house of morning, preparing him for the day. This daily ablution was a symbol for his purification, his divinity, and his participation with Re in the life of the Field of Reeds.² The cultic character of this morning ablution can be seen in Pyramid Text 519 and Coffin Spell 439.

²For a discussion of Pharaoh's morning bath, see Alyward M. Blackman, "Osiris or the Sun-God?" <u>J.E.A.</u> 11 (1925): 206, 207.

The King speaks: I have bathed with Re' in the Lake of Rushes.

The priest replies: Horus will rub your flesh, 0 King; Thoth will rub your feet. O Shu, raise up the King; O Nút, give your hand to the King.

Wash yourself in the swamp-waters of the inundation and in the waters of the Nile which are in the Broad Hall, for I have brought to you the Eye of Horus so that you may feed on it just as Horus fed on it.

Since this was a normal part of Pharaoh's morning ritual, all Egypt would have known that Pharaoh was justified and purified by the Field of Reeds waters. However, when Pharaoh's army crossed into a real Field of Reeds, they were not justified by its waters. They were destroyed.

Pharaoh's purification in the Field of Reeds was echoed in an interesting way by the apostle Paul. In 1 Corinthians 10:1-4, Paul noted that Israel was baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea. While the exact force of this will depend on one's baptismal theology, it is fair to say that Paul's comment was consistent with the event's original polemical intent. Who was purified in the Field of Reeds, Pharaoh or Israel?

God's Pathway

A second parallel can be seen in Exodus 14:21,22 with the motif of a miraculous pathway. Israel faced death and captivity sandwiched between Pharaoh's forces and the קיקים. Escape was impossible until God opened a pathway before Israel so that they could cross the קיק on dry ground.

³Several remarks have already been made about this pathway. Its cause has been debated endlessly. Recent discussions of it include the following: Hershel Shanks,

This miraculous pathway paralleled closely one of the oldest aspects of Egyptian Field of Reeds theology, the motif of a miraculous path through the marsh. As Field of Reeds theology developed into several astral, horizon, and underworld forms, each Field of Reeds location came equipped with its miraculous pathway through the marsh. 4 Texts which placed the Field of Reeds in the sky also described a celestial pathway which led to god's presence. The celestial pathway can be seen in Pyramid Text 801.

May you remove yourself to the sky, for the roads of the celestial expanses which lead up to Horus are cleared for you.⁵

Other texts located these pathways in the horizon Field of Reeds, both in the east and in the west. In O'Connell's analysis of Coffin Spell 148, he depicted Pharaoh as claiming,

[&]quot;The Exodus and the Crossing of the Red Sea Acording to Hans Goedicke," <u>B.A.R.</u> 7 (1981): 45, 46. Lewis Hay, "What Really Happened at the Sea of Reeds," <u>J.B.L.</u> 83 (1964): 397-403. George W. Coats, "History and Revelation: The Reed Sea Event," <u>L.T.Q.</u> 4 (1969): 22-27.

⁴This motif is complicated by the fact that it was often manifested in the cult, especially in burial ceremonies. Texts like Coffin Spell 1084 indicate this cultic involvement. When Pharaoh's body was transported to his mortuary temple, he was described as being ferried across the divine pathways to god's presence. See on this, Piankoff, The Wandering of the Soul, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974), 6.

⁵In the Coronation Inscription of Thutmose III, the king claimed to have been taken up into heaven, and to have seen the horizon god on his mysterious heavenly ways. James H. Breasted, Ancient Records of Egypt, 5 vols. (New York: Russell and Russell, 1962), 2:61. See also Coffin Spell 629 which describes the sunbeam as a great causeway to the sky, and Coffin Spell 822 which describes pathways in the sky in the Field of Rushes.

'Behold Horus, O gods!

'I am Horus the Falcon who is over the ramparts of the mansion of The-Hidden-of-Name.

My flight has reached the horizon, I having surpassed the gods of the sky, so that I have elevated my place more than the Ancients.

The Aggressor cannot reach (even) my first flight so my place is far from Seth, the enemy of my father Osiris. I have traversed the roads of eternity to the dawn after having ascended in my flight.

At least three texts located these pathways in the West.

Coffin Spell 30 portrayed Pharaoh traveling peacefully on
the beautiful pathways of the west. Coffin Spell 482 and
789 described the origin of these pathways.

It is Orion who has given me his warrant; it is the Great Bear which has made a path for me to the western horizon.

O you who are in charge of the Milky Way(?). who guard gates of the Netherworld, prepare a fair path for N, so that N may enter and that N may worship Osiris, and (himself) be a god for ever.

Still other texts described pathways in the Netherworld. In Coffin Spell 619, Pharaoh demanded that the great cultivator of the Netherworld prepare a path for him. Coffin Spell 790 empowered Pharaoh to open all of the pathways in earth and in the Duat.

Some of these pathways were clearly water routes which Pharaoh could traverse either on his reed floats, or on the ferryman's craft, or on the solar bark. In Pyramid Text 709, Pharaoh prayed to Re,

May I see you when you go forth as Thoth, when a waterway is prepared for the Bark of $R\bar{e}'$ to his fields which are in 'I3sw; may you rush on(?) as one who is at the head of his Chaos-gods.

⁶Robert H. O'Connell, "The Emergence of Horus: An Analysis of Coffin Text Spell 148," <u>J.E.A.</u> 69 (1983): 75.

These ancient waterways are also depicted in a New Kingdom rhetorical poem.

I am Re', the lord of heaven who is in charge (c) of the earth.

I am a protection, beneficial to the one who hearkens to

There is no steersman in the breeze for the one who skips past my deeds (e).

It is upon the water of my father that I have sailed (f). It is upon his path that I have coursed (g).

Other texts describe crossing such pathways on dry ground. This is clearly true in Coffin Texts 1029 to 1130 which describe the land of Rostau. This underworld region was a narrow valley which could be crossed in two equally dangerous ways. Pharaoh could sail down a river on the valley floor, or he could walk along pathways lining the valley walls. Both pathways led to the Field of Reeds and to god's presence. These two pathways through Rostau can be seen in Coffin Spells 1035 and 1074.

I have passed over the paths of Rostau, whether on water or on land, and these are the paths of Osiris; they are in the limit of the sky.

The paths by water and by land which belong to Rostau.

Other texts also describe dry land routes. Pyramid Texts

1198, 1199 describe the "Causeway of Happiness" in the Field of Offerings, and Coffin Spell 296 warned

O you keepers of the gate, make a path for N, who is one like you. May N go forth into the day, may N walk on his feet, may N have power over the movements of the sunshine, for N knows the secret ways and the portals

⁷Anthony Spalinger, "Two Ramesside Rhetorical Poems," Egyptological Studies in Honor of Richard A. Parker, ed. L. H. Lesko (Hanover: The University Press of New England, 1986), 158.

of the Field of Rushes; may N be there.8

It is very interesting that these miraculous pathways are often depicted as divine creations. They are made by the gods for Pharaoh. Coffin Spells 425, 496, 497, and 1105 read in part:

I have come to you that I may break your water-pots and smash your inkwells, for a path is prepared for me to the place where the great god is.

May he prepare a path for the equipped spirit in me, I indeed have prepared a path to the place to the place where $R\tilde{e}'$ is, to the place where Hathor is.

O all you gods who are in sky and earth, in the waters and in the horizon, prepare a path for my soul, my spirit and my shade in the retinues of $R\bar{e}$ ' and of Hathor for all eternity.

I have come into the sky of the Double Lion, I have nurtured Ma'et; prepare a path for me, that I may receive the wrrt-crown which is on Horus the first-born of Re' from her into my hand, so bring it to me. Prepare a path for me that I may pass on it, that I may set Ma'et aright, and that I may split open the darkness.9

Divine help was not only needed to create these pathways, but also to find a way through them. The underworld pathways were often depicted as a frightful confusion of routes where most men would become hopelessly lost without divine guidance. This confusion can be seen clearly in Coffin Spell 1072,

Spell for the paths of Rostau. These paths here are in confusion; every one of them is opposed to its fellow. It is those who know them who will find their paths.

⁸See also Coffin Spell 650, and E. A. W. Budge, <u>The Book of the Dead</u>, (New Hyde Park: University Books, 1960), 137.

⁹The divine origin of these pathways is commonly assumed. See also Coffin Spells 296, 649, 686, 1029, 1063, 1071, and 1073.

They are high on the flint walls which are (in) Rostau, which is both on water and on land.

Divine guidance through these paths is described in Pyramid .

Text 822 and Coffin Spell 901.

your third is Sothis pure of thrones, and it is she who will guide you both on the goodly roads which are in the sky in the Field of Rushes.

The seventh room. The room of Her who is hidden(?), mistress of paths, who guides Horus and Seth when the bark passes by.

This divine help was given because Pharaoh was greater and more righteous than other men. In Coffin Spell 489, Pharaoh prayed,

O Osiris, Osiris, see, my soul has come to you in order to improve affairs for you and to set your movements in order. Make a path for me on this day of covering the lips, for I am one who surpasses mortal men.

In the Theban recension, Pharaoh requested this pathway because of his own integrity.

May you give me a path that I may pass in peace, for I am straightforward and true; I have not wittingly told lies. I have not committed a second fault. 10

This distinction between Pharaoh and lesser men can be seen most clearly in Coffin Spell 1035.

I have passed over the paths of Rostau, whether on water or on land, and these are the paths of Osiris; they are in the limit of the sky. As for him who knows this spell for going down into them, he himself is a god, in the suite of Thoth; he will do down to any sky to which he wishes to go down. But as for him who does not know this spell for passing over these paths, he shall be taken into the infliction (?) of the dead which is or-

¹⁰Spell 15 of the Book of the Dead. See Raymond O. Faulkner, The Ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead, (New York: Macmillan Co., 1972), 41. See also Coffin Spell 1139 which stresses the purity of this path, created by the Lord of eternity who is in righteousness.

dained, as one who is non-existent, who shall never have righteousness.

Pharaoh knew the magic spells. He was god incarnate. He was righteous. He could cross on god's pathway unharmed by fire or by threatening spiritual beings. 11 He could cross the marshland Field of Reeds to live in god's presence forever.

However, all of this theology did Pharaoh little good when his chariots pursued Israel through a real field of reeds. By his own theology, Pharaoh should have been able to charge across this miraculous pathway, scattering Israel, and triumphantly entering God's presence. Instead, his armies were driven back in confusion, fled in terror, and were destroyed in the field of reeds. By Pharaoh's own theology, this testified to his wickedness, his ignorance, and his inability to stand in God's presence.

The East Wind

The third parallel between Israel's sea crossing and Field of Reeds theology requires only a more brief comment. Exodus 14:21 states that Israel's miraculous pathway was formed by a strong east wind. Then Exodus 15:10 notes that God blew with His wind from apparently a different direction, drowning Pharaoh's chariots.12 Coffin Spell 162 is

¹¹See also Coffin Spells 650 and 1153.

¹²Exodus 10:13, 19 recorded a similar miracle. God blew with an east wind, driving locusts onto the land. Then God reversed the wind, blowing the locusts into the $\eta \phi$. This should have served as a warning to Pharaoh.

very striking here. It says:

These winds have been given to me by these maidens. Such is the east-wind which opens the celestial windows; the east-wind is opened and a fair path is made for Re' that he may go forth on it. Re' grasps my hand and sets me in this field of his in the midst of rushes, and I flourish in it like the condition of Apis and Seth. The east-wind is the breath of life, and what it has granted to me is that I may live by means of it.

This spell states that the east wind is the breath of life which gives Pharaoh new life. This east wind opens the miraculous pathway by which Pharaoh can cross into god's presence in the Field of Reeds.

The east wind only is given this role in Coffin Spell 162. However, a few other texts are also useful for this discussion. A. de Buck translates part of Spell 78 from the Book of the Dead in this way.

(81a) I am he who knows the roads of Nut, (b) the winds are my magical protection. (c) The raging bull shall not drive me back. (d) I go to the place where dwells he who sleeps, being helpless, who is in the Field of Eternity. (e) who was conducted to the painful western darkness, (f) (even) Osiris. 13

This section claims that the winds are Pharaoh's magical protection as he crosses the roads of Nut to the Field of Eternity. Also of some interest is Coffin Spell 1071 which reads in part.

His name is High-of-winds. This a spell for passing on it which is beneath it. His name is Lord-of-striking-

¹³A. de Buck. "The Earliest Version of Book of the Dead 78," J.E.A.. Vol. 35 (1949) 95. An interesting historical example of such a pathway can be seen in the pre-Mosaic Egyptian work The Admonition of an Egyptian Sage. This work describes a drought which dried the marsh and opened to public inspection all of the secret places of the marshland. Alan H. Gardiner. The Admonitions of an Egyptian Sage, (Hildesheim: Georg Olms. 1969). 38.

power. O you who watch, I am loud-voiced in the horizon, as your Great One. Down on your faces, you watchers; prepare a path for your lord, for such am I. His name is Flame.

This at least associated a being named "High-of-winds" with Pharaoh's miraculous pathway through the reeds.

Pyramid Text 1703, 1704 is also interesting. This section reads.

O King, your mother Nut has borne you in the West; go down to the West as a possessor of honour. Your mother Isis has borne you in Chemmis; extend your hands which belong to the north-wind, that your field(?) may be inundated behind the north-wind, O my father the King. The Lake of Rushes is filled, the Winding Waterway is flooded, the Nurse-canal is opened for you; you cross thereon to the horizon, to the place where the gods were born, and you were born there with them.

This section claims that Pharaoh controls the north wind, and that the north wind floods the Winding Waterway at his command so that he can cross the Lake of Rushes. In Coffin Spell 1130, Pharaoh claimed to be Lord of the winds, the one who foretold the north wind. It is fair to assume that Pharaoh's control of the winds was called into question when a real wind from God flooded a real field of reeds, drowning his army. Israel's sea crossing proved that Pharaoh could neither predict nor control the winds which flooded the Field of Reeds. So how could he provide safety for him—self, or for anyone else in the afterlife?14

¹⁴Note also Nakhtamun's claim that Amun came to him as the northwind, in a gentle breeze. See Miriam Lichtheim, Ancient Egyptian Literature: a Book of Readings, 2 vols. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), 2:106. In contrast, Jahweh's strong wind judged Pharaoh to be a sinner. See E. A. W. Budge, Egyptian Ideas of the Future Life: Egyptian Religion, (New York: University books, 1959), 216 which claims that Hetep is Lord of the winds.

God's Holy Dwelling Place

The fourth parallel between Israel's sea crossing and Field of Reeds theology can be seen in Exodus 15:13. After passing through the קְּיֵיִי , God led Israel to His holy dwelling place. This verse, and its parallel in Exodus 15:17 has generated substantial discussion 15 because they are among the earliest Scriptural examples of the Sinai-Zion-mountain theme which is ubiquitous both in the Bible and in the ancient Near East. 16

Perhaps the most significant comments in this discussion have been made by Frank M. Cross Jr. and David Noel Freedman, whose doctoral studies centered on Exodus 15. In 1955, they coauthored an article entitled "The Song of Miriam." In that article, they noted that the word for "dwelling place" in Exodus 15:13 was,

An archaic designation of the divine sanctuary. The term nawe strongly reflects the desert origin of Yahwism. Cf. n. 3°; also Amorite (from Mari) nawûm. 17

¹⁵See, for example, James Muilenburg, "A Liturgy of the Triumphs of Yahweh," <u>Studia Biblica et Semitica</u>, (Wageningen: H. Veenman & Zonen, 1966), 244. Marc Rozelaar, "The Song of the Sea," <u>V.T.</u> 2 (1952): 225. John D. W. Watts, "The Song of the Sea-Ex. XV," <u>V.T.</u> 7 (1957): 375.

¹⁶The holy mountain theme will be discussed at greater length in Chapter VII. However, it is far too broad a subject to treat adequately in this paper. Holy mountain motifs appear from Asia and India, around the fertile crescent, and north into Europe, from the earliest recorded literature to the present day.

¹⁷Frank M. Cross Jr. and David Noel Freedman, "The Song of Miriam," <u>J.N.E.S.</u> 14 (1955): 248. See also David Noel Freedman, "Temple without Hands," <u>Temples and High Places in Biblical Times</u>, (Jerusalem: The Nelson Glueck School of Biblical Archaeology, 1977), 26, and "Early Israelite History in the Light of Early Israelite Poetry,"

In footnote 3, page 244. Cross and Freedman note Albright's conclusions. Albright placed nawum from Mari in the context of several Semitic examples, including the Ugaritic nwyt. "settlement," and the Hebrew words nawe. "pastoral or nomadic abode," and nawa. "range, pasture." In his article. "The Song of the Sea and Canaanite Myth," Cross noted that.

nāwê is a designation of a tent shrine. Its proper meaning is "pastoral abode or encampment." Cf. Mari, nawûm, "encampment." "pastoral range." See D. O. EDZARD, "Altbabylonisch nawum," ZA, 19, 1959, pp. 168-173.18

Martin Noth rendered the same word as "abode." He noted that the word originally described a pasturage, then a resting place in general. 19

This is very interesting. Verses 1 and 20 of Exodus 15 imply that the Songs of Moses and Miriam were first sung on the Red Sea shore following Israel's deliverance. While Cross, Freedman and Noth may not completely agree, their interpretation of nāwê is certainly in keeping with the text's probable meaning. The verbs in Exodus 13 are perfects, while the verbs in Exodus 15:17 are imperfects. This may well indicate a distinction in time between the verses. Having crossed the norm. God has brought Israel to His

Unity and Diversity. (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1975). 6.

¹⁸Frank M. Cross Jr., "The Song of the Sea and Canaanite Myth," <u>God and Christ: Existence and Provence</u>. (New York: Harper & Row, 1968). 15.

¹⁹Martin Noth, <u>Exodus</u>. (London: SCM Press. 1962). 125.

pasturage, His resting place, and His tent of meeting. God then promises in Ex. 15:17 that He will bring Israel safely to the mountain of His inheritance, the chosen place of His dwelling. This points partly to Sinai, fulfilling God's promise in Exodus 3:12. However, Sinai was not Israel's inheritance. Israel's inheritance was Bethel, Mount Moriah, and the highlands of Canaan. This was the land that God had promised to give Abraham's descendants. So Exodus 15:17 is primarily a statement that God will keep His covenant promise, and will bring Israel into the promised land.20

This is admittedly debatable, 21 but if it is correct, it raises an interesting question. What was the purpose of Exodus 15:13? Why did Moses declare on the Red Sea shore that God had brought Israel to His dwelling place? The answer would seem to come from the event's polemical purpose, since both Pharaoh and Israel crossed the 70, to God's dwelling place.

One of the most pervasive characteristics of Egyptian theology was a belief in god's mansion. There were in fact many mansions, just as there were many god's.22 While the

²⁰God's initial statement to Moses in Ex. 3:7, 8 promised that He was about to bring Israel to Canaan. Ex. 15:15 noted that Edom and Moab would fear to oppose Israel. This was fulfilled, at least in part, in Num. 22:3.

²¹Commentators normally link both of these events, and see them both as retrospective observations. See example, Freedman, "Temple without Hands," 26.

²²The texts mention among others: the Mansion of Fire in Coffin Spell 885, the Mansion of Life in Pyramid Texts 686, and 677, the Mansion of the Ibis in Coffin Spells 215 and 395, and the Mansion of the Soul in Pyramid Text 1740.

mansion motif occurred in many different forms, several of these divine dwelling places were located in the Field of Reeds. The texts often suggested that Pharaoh crossed the Field of Reeds on a miraculous pathway, and arrived at God's mansion. Coffin Spell 491 described Pharaoh's trip across pathways in the sky.

A path is opened for my soul, my spirit, my magic and my shade, and it will enter to Re' within his shrine, it will see the great god in his true shape, and it will repeat the words of Osiris to those whose places are secret, who are in charge of the members of Osiris.

In other words, when Pharaoh crossed the miraculous pathway, he arrived at Re's shrine, the Great Mansion, and there he saw god in his true shape. Coffin Spell 383 is rather similar.

NOT LETTING THE HEART BE WEARY IN THE REALM OF THE DEAD. 'I am the torch of the Milky Way (?), the gate-keeper of the Double Lion, and a path is prepared for me'.

'Who are you?'

'I am the heron (?), the lotus-bird which is on the limitless plain.'

'What do you want?'

'I am going to spear fish in the lakes of the Abyss'.

'Do you know the path on which you should go?'

'As the Sole Lord lives, I know the sky in all its coasts'.

'Tell me the particulars of the House of the Double Lion which is there.

'The Mansion of the Double Lion is on the north of the House of the Morning at the House of Dwn-'nwy,

and I will be there.23

This spell claimed that Pharaoh knew the paths of the sky, and the Mansions contained in it, so he was able to float on the reed lakes of the Abyss.

²³⁰ther texts placing god's mansion in the sky include Coffin Spell 571, and Pyramid Texts 1025-1028, 1469, and 1765, 1766.

Some texts located god's mansion in the western horizon. Coffin Spell 709 noted,

TO BUILD A MANSION IN THE WEST. The sky trembles, the earth quakes at the voices of Hu and Him who awakes hale; they mould the bricks for this mansion which is in the Field of Offerings, and the gods who preside over the Mansions of the Red Crown come to them. I know them and I know those names of theirs, (namely) the great ones who strike (the bricks) and Atum invisible of shape; they carry the bricks for this mansion of mine which is in the Field of Offerings.

A few lines later, this spell adds,

my mansion is within the limit of the horizon on a (legal) deed of the West... I have appeared as Lord of eternity, I have been wiped down(?) at the great stairway, I am greater <than> the wrdnw-bird. My mansion is within the limit of the horizon, for I am Atum. Lord to the limit of the sky, and the entire limit is given to me by Atum.

This text locates the Field of Offerings and the solar deity's mansion in the West.24 Coffin Spell 279 adds,

you will descend, you will bathe in the basin of the Abyss; you will come to land in the West; you grow as a growing-bird, you glitter as a glitter-bird; you come to land at the Field of Rushes, you eat the cucumbers of the two mysterious mansions (...); you have divided the field-plots of the two Fields of Offerings;

Here Pharaoh is promised that he will bathe in the abvss. land in the Field of Rushes. and eat produce in its man-sions.

Other texts locate god's mansion in the underworld.

The best example of this is the Theban Recension of the mortuary texts, preserved in Papyrus Ani. This copy of the Book of the Dead placed the mansion of Osiris/Re in the middle of the underworld Field of Reeds. This divine resi-

²⁴Atum was originally a solar deity. See also Pyramid Text 2081-2086.

dence was actually composed of seven halls which had to be crossed before Pharaoh could stand in god's presence.25

The most popular location for Re's residence was the eastern horizon. Pyramid Text 598-600 is a good example of this.

O Ferryman of the Winding Waterway, tell my name to $R\bar{e}'$, announce me to $R\bar{e}'$, for I am bound for yonder distant castle of the owners of doubles who worship $R\bar{e}'$ there in the Mounds of Horus and the Mounds of Seth their god of those who have gone to their doubles.

O Rē', commend me to M3-ḥ3'f, the ferryman of the Winding Waterway so that he may bring me his ferry-boat which belongs to the Winding Waterway, in which he ferries the gods to yonder side of the Winding Waterway to the eastern side of the sky,

Here Pharaoh requests the ferryman of the Winding Waterway to ferry him across to the distant castle where Re's wor-shipers gather. Coffin Spell 281 echoes,

N has taken possession of everything within the Broad Hall in the eastern horizon of the sky;

Examples like this can be multiplied at some length. Many of these examples associate the eastern mansion with crossing the Field of Reeds.²⁶

This motif is also very closely tied up with the formal Egyptian cult. Every temple was the earthly manifestation of a god's heavenly dwelling. Every mortuary temple was a local presence of the Field of Reeds. Perhaps the

²⁵See the discussion in Budge, <u>The Book of the Dead</u>, 136, 137, and <u>Book of the Dead</u> chapters 107-110 and 145-150. While the religions of Osiris and Re were originally distinct, later texts showed a tendency to merge them, seeing Osiris as an underworld form of Re.

²⁶See Pyramid Texts 372-375, 487, 488, 1370-1372, and Coffin Spells 422, 571, 990, and 1145.

clearest statement of this principle was preserved in Pyramid Text 1278.27

As for anyone who shall lay a finger on this pyramid and this temple which belong to me and my double, he will have laid his finger on the Mansion of Horus in the firmament, he will have offended(?) the Lady of the Mansion everywhere(?)

Pyramid Text 1657, 1658 is also quite interesting.

O Horus, this King is Osiris, this pyramid of the King is Osiris, this contruction of his is Osiris; betake yourself to it, do not be far from it in its name of 'Pyramid", you being complete and great in your name of 'Mansion of the Bitter Lakes'.

The name "Bitter Lakes" in this text is a translation of Km-wr, the "Great Black." At least three delta sites were called by this name, and it is unclear whether the eastern Km-wr was the Bitter Lakes or Lake Timsah.28 It is also unclear why Raymond Faulkner chose to locate this Km-wr in the Bitter Lakes, instead of chosing a site closer to the pyramids. However, if his translation is accepted, Pharaoh's heavenly mansion in the Field of Reeds was associated in at least this tradition with both the pyramids and the marshland east of Wadi Tumilat.29

²⁷⁰n this, see also E. A. E. Reymond, <u>The Mythical Origin of the Egyptian Temple</u>, (New York: Barnes & Nable, 1969), 148, 154, 183, 232, 255, and Harold H. Nelson, "I. The Egyptian Temple," <u>B.A.</u> 7 (1944): 44-53.

²⁸See William A. Ward, Egypt and the East Mediterranean World 2200-1900 B.C., (Beirut: American University of Beirut, 1971), 31, and Budge, The Book of the Dead, 204.

²⁹A. H. Gardiner wrote a valuable survey of the cultic aspects of the mansion theme in 1938. See Gardiner. "The Mansion of Life and the Master of the King's Largess."

J.E.A. 24 (1938): 83-91. Cultic aspects of this theme can be seen behind several texts, including Pyramid Texts 308.

1451, 1452, and Coffin Spells 314. 837, and 888.

Why would Moses note that God had brought Israel to His holy dwelling place? The answer may be that Pharaoh expected to cross a Field of Reeds to Re's dwelling place. This eastern mansion was more than a holy health spa where Pharaoh prepared to embark on Re's solar ship. The eastern mansion was often seen as being the center of Pharaoh's rule over all righteous Egyptians who had faithfully served and worshiped him. This can be seen in several texts. Coffin Spell 571 calls on men, spirits and the dead to rejoice at seeing Pharaoh's mansion among the waters. Pyramid Text 373 describes Horus making courts for Pharaoh in the mansion. Coffin Spell 439 places Pharaoh in God's mansion when rule and judgment are being exercised. Several other texts do not mention the mansion, but do stress that Pharaoh had a right to rule in the netherworld. Pyramid Text 1371, 1372 calls on the deceased Pharaoh to smite and govern, for he is among those who surround Re. It states that Pharaoh has crossed the lake and traversed the Netherworld so that he may rule towns, govern settlements, and give orders to those in the Abyss. However, if Israel came to God's dwelling place while the Egyptians were destroyed, how could Pharaoh claim to occupy god's mansion in eternity? If a living Pharaoh could not bring a real army across a real sea of reeds, what confidence could anyone in either Israel or Egypt have in Pharaoh's ability to govern in the afterlife? Yahweh's servants were demonstrably the real inhabitants of His holy mansion.

A Dawn Crossing

The fifth parallel between Israel's sea crossing and Field of Reeds theology requires only a briefer discussion. Exodus 14:25 notes that Yahweh confounded Pharaoh's chariots in the morning watch. The time that this occurred is significant. S. R. Driver noted that the Hebrews divided the night into three watches of about four hours each. The morning watch was the period between two A.M. and six A.M.30 If so, then Israel crossed the sea in the middle of the night. Exodus 14:27 adds that Moses stretched out his staff once more at dawn, and the sea returned to its place.

These are strange verses. Israel had been traveling for three days. They were undoubtedly tired and afraid. Footing on the dried TOT. bed could not have been very good, especially if it was able to entangle Pharaoh's chariot wheels. So why cross the sea at night? The answer would seem to come from the event's intended polemical theology.

Dawn was an important time of day in Egyptian theology. Dawn was first of all, a time when Re was worshipped. This fact was noted in Pyramid Text 2288.

O Lord of the horizon, Foremost of the gods, to whom worship(?) is done at dawn, 31

³⁰S. R. Driver, The Book of Exodus, (Cambridge: The University Press, 1953), 119. See also J. Philip Hyatt, Commentary on Exodus, In The New Century Bible, (London: Marshall, Morgan and Scott, 1971), 154.

³¹E. A. E. Reymond described a ceremony of "Awakening the Spear at dawn" from the Edfu texts. See E. A. E. Reymond, "The Cult of the Spear in the Temple at Edfu."

These dawn ceremonies were cultic re-inactments of Pharaoh's mythical bathing in the Field of Reeds. Both Pharaoh and Re bathed in the reeds at dawn. In Pyramid Text 1133, Pharaoh described his morning bath.

The doors of the sky are opened. The doors of the firmament are thrown open for me at dawn. That I may go down and bathe in the Field of Rushes

Dawn was also the time when the deceased souls of Manu saw

Re on his celestial bark.32

Dawn was the time when Re rose to destroy his enemies.

Jan Zandee noted this fact in an article about the coflict between Horus and Seth. He wrote.

As to a bush (b3.t) connected with Thoth, Borghouts points to Edfu I, 333,17, where it is thought to be in Hermopolis. In a well documented article Altenmuller has demonstrated that the "Winding Waterway" (mr n h3 or s n h3) is to be identified with mr nrsr, the Pool of Flame, or mr dsds, the Pool of Knives. He translates mr n h3 as "Pool of Destruction". This is the primeval site of Hermopolis which is important for the local cosmogony. There the sun-god shone forth for the first time and slew his enemies, the powers of chaos. This is repeated every morning at sunrise.33

While few texts described Re's victories directly, several Pharaohs alluded to them, especially Ramses III. In these

<u>J.E.A.</u> 51 (1965): 144. See also Allen, "Some Egyptian Sun Hymns," 352, and Sasbatino Moscati, The Face of the Ancient Orient, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1960), 370, 371.

³²See Ramses III's prayer in Breasted, Ancient Records, 4:140.

³³See Jan Zandee, "A Site of the Conflict between Horus and Seth," In <u>Ex Orbe Religionem: Studia Geo.</u>
<u>Widengren</u>, ed. C. J. Bleeker, S. G. F. Brandon and M. Simon (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1972), 37, and Jan Zandee, <u>Death as an Enemy</u>, (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1960), 145 where Zandee noted that Re's rising was preceded by the destruction of his enemies.

allusions, the Pharaohs claimed to deliver Egypt, just as Re rose daily to deliver the nation. An example of this was written by Ramses III at Medinet Habu.

when there was not a single man among them to rescue (them) from the Nine Bows. I surrounded her, I established her by my valiant might. When I arose like the sun as king over Egypt, I protected her, I expelled for her the Nine Bows.³⁴

What does this have to do with Israel's sea crossing? Pharaoh's own theology should have given him every reason for confidence as he sent his chariots into the Yam Suph.

Not only were miraculous Reed Sea crossings his prerogative, but dawn was coming. Re was about to rise in the eastern horizon. His rising should bring destruction to Pharaoh's enemies, and great vindication to Egypt. However, this vindication never came. As dawn broke, Pharaoh's chariots drew near to the true God. They were driven back in confusion from His presence, and died in His judgment.

A Path Through the Fire

A sixth parallel between Israel's sea crossing and Field of Reeds theology can be seen in Exodus 14:19, 20. Pharaoh's chariots were prevented from approaching Israel by the pillar of cloud and fire. The Egyptian forces simply could not penetrate this barrier. This fire barrier had substantial polemical importance because supernatural fire played an important role in the Egyptian texts.

While the Egyptian texts used fire symbolically in

³⁴See Breasted, <u>Ancient Records</u>, 4:37. See also 4:24, 26.

several ways, three motifs were especially important. The first was closely associated with Field of Reeds theology.

The Egyptian texts frequently described an Island of Fire in the Field of Reeds. This Island of Fire was mentioned in at least fifty texs, including Coffin Spells 402 and 467.

O you who bring the ferry-boat to $R\hat{e}'$, strengthen your warp, launch your ferry-boat, ferry over to the Island of Fire, for see, I have gathered together this magic of mine wherever it was.

SEEKING THE FIELDS, TOWNS AND WATERWAYS, PLOUGHING, REAPING, SEEING RE', OSIRIS AND THOTH DAILY, HAVING POWER OVER WATER AND AIR, DOING ALL THAT HE WISHES LIKE ONE WHO IS IN THE ISLAND OF FIRE WITH LIFE IN HIS NOSE, WHO WILL NEVER DIE, WHO IS IN THE FIELD OF OFFERINGS IN WHICH ARE HIS FIELDS AND HIS GIFTS FOR EVER AND EVER.

This Island of Fire seems to have been the original dwelling place of the gods. This world was destroyed, leaving only the Field of Reeds in Nun. Then, creation began anew as the primal hillock arose in the Field of Reeds, recreating at least partly the Island of Fire.³⁵

If this was true, Pharaoh should not have been surprised to find supernatural fire in the Field of Reeds.

Some Egyptian texts even claimed that the pathways which led to Re's presence were composed of fire. Coffin Spells 758 and 428 are good examples of this.

The paths of fire go round about the seat of the Shining Sun, who guards the paths for the great bark of the Coiled One, who makes a circle for myriad after myriad.

TO GO TO THE GREAT GOD. I have seen the doubles, and the fire goes forth; it guides me on a fair path to the

³⁵Pyramid Text 397 describes the Island of Fire as the god's original home. See also Coffin Spells 629, 465, and 573.

to the place where the great god is.36

Fire also played a key role in descriptions of the netherworld. One of the most dangerous regions in the netherworld was named "The Lake of Fire." This lake was a road block in the Duat which no one could cross. Only Pharaoh knew the magical spells to pass through this consuming fire. This lake of fire was described in Coffin Spell 1054.

Its name is 'The lake of fire of the knife-wielders'. There is no-one who knows how to enter the fire, for he is turned back from it; it means that he inherits the path. Spell for the true lake.

This Lake of Fire is depicted on the tombs in the valley of the kings. In these texts, the second gateway of the Duat is guarded by a god named "Swallower of Sinner," and beyond his gate lies a lake of fire. 37 This Lake of Fire in the underworld prevents anyone from arriving at the shore of the Field of Reeds. Only Pharaoh with his magic spells can cross through the fire unharmed.

Supernatural fire was also associated with Pharaoh himself in the Egyptian texts. In later texts, Pharaoh was described not only as the incarnation of Horus, but also as the incarnation of his father Re. As such, Pharaoh inher-

³⁶See also Coffin Spell 1129 which describes the towns in the Winding Waterway which are surrounded by supernatural fire.

³⁷See George Hart, A Dictionary of Egyptian Gods and Goddesses, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1986). 68.
Other texts place this Lake of Fire in the fifth section of the Duat. See Manfred Lurker, The Gods and Symbols of Ancient Egypt, (London: Thames and Hudson, 1974). 51.

ited his father's burning radiance. This can be seen in Pramid Text 324.

The King is a heart-tosser (?), the favourite son of Shu, long-extended, fierce of brilliance; the King is a flame (moving) before the wind to the end of the sky and to the end of the earth when the hand of the lightning is voided of the King.³⁸

This burning radiance was not just a sign of Pharaoh's glory. It was proof of his divine ability to judge and destroy his enemies. Just as the desert sun killed anyone trapped beneath its rays, so also Pharaoh's radiance served as a metaphor for his ability to consume his enemies.

Ramses III described his own conquests in these words.

The king, rich in might, at his going forth to the North, great in fear, dread of the Asiatics (St'ty), sole lord, skilled in hand, conscious of his might, like Baal, valiant in strength, ready for battle against the Asiatics (''mw), marching afar in his advance, <confident>, -, smiting tens of thousands <in heaps> in the space of an hour. He overwhelms the combatants like fire, causing all those who confront him to become (ashes). They are terrified at (the mention of) his name, while he is (yet) afar off, like the heat of the sun over the two (Nile) shores; a wall casting a shadow for Egypt. They dwell (confident in) the might of his strength, King Ramses III.39

Along the same lines, Coffin Spell 946 reads in part.

I am a fire in sky and earth, and all my foes are under my flame.

If Pharaoh's own theology was correct, supernatural fire should have caused him no trouble. He knew the magic spells for surviving supernatural fire in the Field of

³⁸See also Coffin Spells 649, 951, and Breasted, Ancient Records, 3:57, 4:46, 54.

³⁹This inscription appears over the king's picture at Medinet Habu. See Breasted, Ancient Records, 4:42.

Reeds, and Re's own fire belonged to him. When Pharaoh's chariots faced the pillar of cloud and fire. Pharaoh should have had power over the fire. Several texts stated quite clearly his power over such fire. Coffin Spells 1116, 1130, 1033, and 1094 are especially interesting in this context.

This is the seat of a spirit who knows how to enter into the fire and split open the darkness.

As for anyone who knows this spell, he will be like Rē' in the east of the sky like Osiris within the Nether-world, and he will go down to the circle of fire; there will never be a flame against him for ever.

Swamp the fire, quench the fire, prepare a path for me, for it is he who mixes them who presents the horizon to me. I have passed by the great ones, I have instructed Him of the West whois in his bark, I have traversed the circle of fire which is about the Lord of them of the braided locks.

I have gone aboard your bark, O Re'. I have swamped the fire, I have lightened the darkness among those who come with offerings when Ma'et is brought to Him who crosses the waterway.

As Re incarnate, and as the son of Re, Pharaoh claimed the ability to split open the darkness for his people, and to bring them his spiritual fire. However, this claim did Pharaoh little good when he faced a real pillar of fire and cloud. His chariots were completely unable to penetrate the dark cloud, or to stand before the spiritual fire. Pharaoh obviously had no power over real spiritual fire. So his claims had to be false.

Summary

How did Israel's sea crossing serve as a polemic? The polemical event can be summarized in this way. Pharaoh pursued Israel to the shores of a reed filled swamp. There

Israel was trapped, and Pharaoh could expect complete victory. However, strange things began to happen. A pillar of fire and smoke stood between his chariots and Israel which his forces could not cross. Pharaoh had been taught to expect power over such spiritual fire, but this fire defied his authority.

Then, as the east wind blew, a pathway opened up in the mpon. Pharaoh had learned much about such pathways through the reeds and through the fire. All of his training had taught Pharaoh that the gods would open such a pathway for him to cross into god's presence. Israel's flight across such a pathway could only lead to their destruction, and to Pharaoh's glorious victory.

As Israel finished her crossing, the sun began to rise. Pharaoh sent his armies charging aross the divine pathway. He had every reason to expect that his army would be brought into fellowship with their god, as Re rose to deliver Egypt, and to destroy her enemies. However, dawn brought something entirely different. As Pharaoh's chariots approached the pillar of spiritual fire, his chariots were turned aside in confusion and defeat. They were forced to flee back across the pathway. Before they could arrive at the shore, the field of reeds was flooded. The Egyptians were drowned in the Field of Reeds, just as wicked men always drowned when they tried to cross into god's presence.

Only Israel was brought across the Field of Reeds into God's holy dwelling place, and into fellowship with Him.

Only Israel could rise and travel with God to His holy mountain. Only Israel would know the abundance of His presence in His kingdom. Pharaoh's pretensions to this end were proven false.

CHAPTER VII

A BAAL WORSHIP POLEMIC?

Baal Worship in the Delta

Part I of this study surveyed current proposals for interpreting Israel's sea crossing. It noted claims by Frank E. Eakin Jr., Ivan Engnell, and Robert Luyster1 that Israel's sea crossing should be interpreted as a historicized version of either the Canaanite Baal Yam myth or the Near Eastern creation account. The assumption behind these claims is that the Exodus account was formulated in Canaan under the influence of Canaanite theology. While there are rather clear similarities between Israel's saa crossing and the Baal Yam myth, the point at issue is how these similarities should be explained.

The events associated with Israel's sea crossing may resemble some aspects of the Baal Yam myth because the sea crossing was in part an intentional polemic against Baal worship. For the existence of such a polemic to be believable, at least two conditions are necessary. First, Baal worship must have been present in the Nile delta. Second, Israel must have been influenced by Baalism there strongly

¹See pages 6-11 of this study.

enough to require such a polemic. Can it be demonstrated that Baal worship actually was present in the delta during the Mosaic age? Several lines of evidence suggest that it was a pervasive presence at the time.

The first point to note is that the Egyptians had always maintained some kind of relationship with the Levant. This relationship can be traced all the way back to the pre-dynastic age in trade goods. In the First Dynasty, the Egyptians launched a military campaign into Palestine, and for some years maintained trading centers like Gath to protect her interests in the region. Starting in the Second Dynasty, Egypt maintained an important trade route by sea with Byblos.² This trade continued throughout Egypt's history. Egypt also launched periodic raids into Palestine, and in the New Kingdom, controlled a Palestinian empire. All of these contacts would at least have exposed Egyptians to the Canaanite religion in the north.

Egypt's ongoing contact with the Levant resulted in a constant movement of northern peoples south into Egypt.

Many came south voluntarily as traders, immigrants, and

²Egypt's early relations with the Levant have been discussed in many books and articles. Recent studies include the following. Amnon Ben-Tor, "The Relations between Egypt and the Land of Canaan during the Third Millennium B.C.," J.J.S. 33 (1982): 3-18. Mary Wright, "Contacts between Egypt and Syro-Palestine during the Protodynastic Period," B.A. 48 (1985): 240-253. Paul Lapp, "Palestine in the Early Bronze Age," Near Eastern Archaeology in the Twentieth Century, (New York: Doubleday & Company, 1970), 101-131. Itzhaq Beit-Arieh, "New Evidence on the Relations between Canaan and Egypt during the Protodynastic Period," I.E.J. 34 (1984): 20-23.

refugees. Many others were taken south as captives.³ This influx increased greatly in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Dynasties, which included the Patriarchal age.⁴ Jacob's immigration to Egypt was a part of this broad movement.

The name Baal first appeared in Egyptian texts from the Thirteenth, or the end of the Twelfth Dynasties. It appeared on the Brooklyn Papyrus from this time. In this papyrus, an Egyptian woman named Senebtisi tried to establish her legal right to a group of ninety five slaves. This group contained several people with Northwest Semitic names, which were written in hieroglyphics. William F. Albright understood names 35 and 64 as Baalat and Baal.5 The name

³Early raids into Palestine which brough captives south included those of Narmer and Pepi I. On Narmer's raid, see Wright, "Contacts between Egypt and Syro-Palestine during the Protodynastic Period," 240-253. On Pepi I, see James H. Breasted, Ancient Records of Egypt, 5 vols. (New York: Russell and Russell. 1962), 1:138-144.

⁴See the discussion in A. R. David, The Pyramid Builders of Ancient Egypt, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1986), 31, 32, 189-194. A campaign by the Twelfth Dynasty ruler Sesostris III brought many Canaanite captives into Egypt. See Breasted, Ancient Records, 1:304. See also Sabatino Moscati, The Face of the Ancient Orient, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1960), 104.

sumes that the Semitic R (L) is transcribed as 3, instead of the more common mouth sign. Albright argues from this that the names reflected an early Semitic spelling, and that they were already common enough to have achieved a fixed spelling. See William F. Albright, "Northwest-Semitic Names in a List of Egyptian Slaves from the Eighteenth Century B.C.," J.A.O.S. 74 (1954): 223, 224, 231. See also David, The Pyramid Builders of Ancient Egypt, 189-191. Recent studies have shown that Baal was already worshiped as a recognizable deity in the texts from Abu Salabikh which date to around 2,600 B.C. Baal was also mentioned in texts from Mari, Ebla, and Ur III. So he was clearly an early West Semitic deity. See Giovanni Pettinato, "Pre-Ugaritic Documentation of

Hadad also appeared at this time in the Execration Texts from Saqqara (c. 1825 B.C.), though surprisingly not in the Execration texts from Luxor (c. 1900 B.C.).6

Shortly after this time, Egyptian culture descended into the Second Intermediate Period. With the break down of central authority, 7 northern immigrants in the delta prospered. Their wealth and power increased, until they finally seized Egypt's throne for themselves. These Semitic rulers came to be called the Shepherd Kings, or the Hyksos. Recent studies have suggested that these Hyksos rulers originally immigrated to Egypt from Palestine. The Hyksos worshiped primarily the Egyptian god Seth, who was the god of foreigners, of desert dwellers, and of mariners. Most

Baal, In The Bible World: Essays in Honor of Cyrus Gordon, (New York: K.T.A.V. Publishing House, 1980), 203-209.

⁶Ulf Oldenburg argued from this that the storm god Baal Hadad entered Palestine at this time. See Ulf Oldenburg, The Conflict between El and Baal in Canaanite Religion, (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1969), 68. Oldenburg added that the name Hadad was mentioned in the 15th century B.C. letters from Tell Ta'anach, in the 14th century Amarna Letters, and in the 13th century witness list from Shechem. See also Cross' critique of Oldenburg's position in Frank M. Cross, Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973), 21. See also John Gray, The Legacy of Canaan, (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1965), 153.

⁷See T. Säve-Söderbergh, "The Hyksos Rule in Egypt," <u>J.E.A.</u> 37 (1951): 55.

⁸See Aaron Kempinski, "Some Observations on the Hyksos (XVth) Dynasty and its Canaanite Origins," Pharaonic Egypt, (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, 1985), 130. See also William C. Hayes, The Scepter of Egypt, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1953) 1:351, 2:3-41, and Raphael Giveon, The Impact of Egypt on Canaan, (Gottingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1978), 10-13.

mariners.9 Most writers assume that the Hyksos identified Seth with the chief Palestinian deity Baal. While there is no clear evidence to support this, it seems to be a reasonable assumption. The Hyksos were from Palestine, and may well have worshiped Baal Hadad there. 10 Frank Eakin has even suggested that the Semitic linkage between the Hyksos and the Hebrews may have led to a Hebrew awareness of Baal mythology. 11

Ahmose I drove the Hyksos from Egypt, pursued them into southern Palestine, and slaughtered many of them there. 12 Ahmose I established the Eighteenth Dynasty and the Egyptian Empire. The Egyptians simply took control of Palestine. Eighteenth and Nineteenth Dynasty rulers campaigned in the Levant quite frequently, putting down any sign of revolt. They prevented Palestinian towns from being fortified against them. They ruled Palestine through two administrative centers as Gaza and Joppa, and held military outposts at key sites, like Beth-Shan. They established

⁹Säve-Söderbergh, "The Hyksos Rule in Egypt," 55, 67,

Manfred Bietak, <u>Avaris and Piramesse: Archaeological Exploration of the Eastern Nile Delta</u>, (London: Oxford University Press, 1981), 249-253, 270. See also H. Te Velde, <u>Seth, God of Confusion</u>, (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1967), 121, 122, 126, and Siegfried H. Horn, "Foreign Gods in Ancient Egypt," In <u>Studies in Honor of John H. Wilson</u>, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969), 37.

¹¹Frank E. Eaken Jr., "The Reed Sea and Baalism," J.B.L. 86 (1967): 381, 382.

¹²See the discussion in Hans Goedicke, "The End of the Hyksos in Egypt," <u>Egyptological Studies in Honor of Richard A. Parker</u>, (Hanover: Brown University Press, 1986), 37-47.

a policy of educating in Egypt the sons of local rulers, 13 and transported many captives to Egypt. In one campaign alone, Amenhotep II carried south over eighty nine thousand captives. 14 These captives would have brought their own religious traditions with them.

Another line of evidence demonstrating the presence of Baal worship in the Nile delta is the fact that Canaanite temples were present in Egypt. It is not clear when these temples were first built, but they were already present in the Eighteenth Dynasty. The Egyptian texts mention several temples for Baal in Egypt. 15 They were generally located in port cities, either on the coast, or on inland canals or rivers. This seems to be true because Baal was the god of mariners. Baal inherited this role for two reasons. First, as the storm god, Baal controlled the force which was most likely to sink ships. 16 As storm waves crash over the bows, it would seem expedient to pray to the storm god.

¹³One of the better treatments of this period is George Steindorff and Keith Seele, When Egypt Ruled the East, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971).

¹⁴Steindorff and Seele, When Egypt Ruled the East, 70, 113-115.

¹⁵The most comprehensive treatment of Canaanite gods in Egypt is Wolfgang Helck, <u>Die Beziehungen Ägyptens zu Vorderasien im 3. und 2. Jahrtausend v. Chr.</u>, (Weisbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1962), 480-514. Also of value is Ranier Stadelmann, <u>Syrisch-Palästinensische Gottheiten im Ägypten</u>, (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1967). The extent to which native Egyptians ever worshiped Canaanite gods has been debated at some length.

¹⁶See André Caqot and Maurice Sznycer, <u>Ugaritic</u> Religion, (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1980), 10.

Second, Baal was god of mariners because his holy mountain, Mount Zaphon, stood by the Mediterranean shore. Since Mount Zaphon could be seen at a great distance across the water, it served as a lighthouse and navigation aid. 17 So mariners sailed their ships either toward or away from Baal's holy mountain. Prayers to the god of this mountain should not be unexpected. In distant ports, these mariners seem to have established Baal Zaphon shrines, which were local manifestations of Baal's holy mountain.

while the Baal Zaphon shrine mentioned in Exodus 14:2 cannot be located, there are two possible references to it in the Egyptian texts. G. I. Davies noted one of these from the Ptolemaic age. Cairo Papyrus 31169 includes at section 3.20-3 a list of four migdols located near Wadi Tumilat. One of these fortresses was probably called a migdol "of Baal-Zaphon." Another possible reference is a stela of Ramses II. This stela was found at the migdol at gebel-abu-hasah. It mentions Baal among other gods. 19

The Baal shrine mentioned most frequently in the

¹⁷Te Velde, <u>Seth, God of Confusion</u>, 122. This identification is strengthened by Baal's association with Seth, since Seth has close ties to the solar bark motif. See Te Velde, 105, 106.

¹⁸G. I. Davies, <u>The Way of the Wilderness</u>, (Cambridge University Press, 1979), 81, 116.

¹⁹J. Simons, The Geographical and Topographical Texts of the Old Testament, (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1959), 249. Unfortunately, Ramses II referred to Baal many times in different contexts. So finding a reference by him to Baal is rather poor evidence that a given site should be identified as Migdol Baal Zephon.

Egyptian texts is Baal's temple in Prw-nfr, the harbor district of Memphis. It appears in the Petersburg Papyrus 1116A, vso 42, from the time of Amenhotep II.²⁰ This temple may well have existed in the Mosaic age.

There may also have been a Baal worship site at Tahpanhes. Discussions about such a Baal site have centered around a Phoenician letter from the sixth century B.C. (KAI 50.2-3). In this letter, the writer blessed the recipient in the names of Baal-Zaphon and all the gods of Tahpanhes. This is, of course, a late text. Also, the letter may not actually imply that a Baal site even existed at Tahpanhes,²¹ though it is normally taken as evidence of that. The Baal site which has received the greatest academic attention is located on the Mediterranean coast north of Lake Sirbonis. There clearly was a Baal shrine there in the Greek period, and the presence of this shrine has led several scholars to

²⁰For further references to this Baal temple, see Helck, Die Beziehungen Ägyptens zu vorderasien im 3. und 2. Jahrtausend v. chr., 482-485. For a translation of this text, see Pritchard, Ancient Near Eastern Texts, 249, 250. See also Horn, "Foreign Gods in Ancient Egypt," 37, and Stadelmann, Syrisch-Palästinensische Gottheiten in Agypten, 32-47.

²¹See Noel Aime-Giron, "Ba'al Saphon et led Dieux de Tahpanhes dans un Nouveau Papyrus Phenicien," Annales du Service des Antiquities de l'Egypt 40 (1941): 433-460. See also Walter Beyerlin, ed., Near Eastern Religious Texts Relating to the Old Testament, (London: SCM Press, 1978), 253, 254, Eakin, "The Reed Sea and Baalism," p. 382, and William F. Albright, "Baal-Zaphon," Festschrift Alfred Bertholet, (Tubingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1950), 9. Perhaps the most widely quoted work which identified Baal-Zaphon at Tahpanhes was Otto Eissfeldt, Baal Zaphon, Zeus Kasios und der Durchzug der Israeliten durchs Meer, (Halle: Max Niemeyer, 1932.)

to defend a northern exodus route.²² However, the earliest clear references to this shrine come from Herodotus, and no cultic objects have been found here from before the Greek period.²³ In fact, only a few Bronze Age shards have been found here at all. Almost all artifacts from this site are from the Iron II and the Persian periods.²⁴

The presence of Baal worship in the delta can also be demonstrated by the great frequency with which Nineteenth Dynasty rulers used Baal's name. 25 Several writers have commented on the synthesis of Baal and Seth implied by these texts. Albright spoke of the fusion of Egyptian and Canaanite pantheons which took place at Tanis, and noted that Egyptian iconography of Baal and Seth can not be distin-

²²For discussions of this site, see Tommy Brisco, "The Sinai Peninsula and the Exodus," S.W.J.T. 20 (1977): 26, Simons, The Geographical and Topographical Texts of the Old Testament, 235-238, and Menahem Harel, "The Route of the Exodus of the Israelites from Egypt and their Wanderings in the Sinai Desert: A Geographical Study," (PhD dissertation, New York University, 1964), 20, 49, 50.

²³Herodotus mentions Baal Zaphon in <u>History</u>, 2.6 158 3.5. See G. I. Davies, <u>The Way of the Wilderness</u>, 116. note 17.

²⁴See M. Dothan, "Lake Sirbonis," <u>I.E.J.</u> 17 (1967): 279.

²⁵It is not surprising that the 19th Dynasty rulers should have stressed the importance of Baal and Seth. The Ramesside rulers gew from a delta family which had strong contacts with Sile and Avaris. Ramses the Great's father came to Avaris to celebrate the 400th anniversary of Seth's rule over Egypt. Se Te Velde, Seth, God of Confusion, 120-126. If Bietak is correct in identifying Avaris and Piramesse with Tell el-Dab'a-Qantir, Ramses the Great built his new city at, or near, the old Hyksos capitol. Bietak, Avaris and Piramesse: Archaeological Exploration in the Eastern Nile Delta, 281.

guished from each other.26

The identification of Baal with Pharaoh was taken to an extreme in some texts. A Hittite king was actually depicted as claiming that Pharaoh was the storm god Baal himself.27 However, in most texts, Pharaoh was content to compare only his strength and military prowess to Baal.28 Since the Nineteenth Dynasty, rulers campaigned in Palestine frequently, there was much to be gained by claiming that the chief Canaanite deity had legitimized their conquests.

Finally, the presence of Baal worship in the delta can be demonstrated by the presence of a recension of the Baal Yam myth in Egypt. This version of the myth was recorded on the Astarte Papyrus.²⁹ This papyrus is very fragmentary. While the original manuscript was over four meters long,

²⁶William F. Albright, "The Ancient Near East and the Religion of Israel," <u>J.B.L.</u> 59 (1970): 107

²⁷Miriam Lichtheim, <u>Ancient Egyptian Literature: A book of Readings</u>, 2 vols. (Berkeley: University of California Pess, 1973), 2:71, 72.

²⁸See Breasted, Ancient Records, 3:43, 59, 72, 154, 4:25, 36, 44, 140. The 19th Dynasty did, of course, have close ties with Seth, the Northeast Delta, and Avaris. Hugo Gressman surveyed the examples of Teshub, Hadad and Baal in the Egyptian texts in his article "Hadad und Baal nach den Amarnabriefen und nach ägyptischen Texten," In Wolf Wilhelm Grafen von Baudissin, (Giessen: Alfred Töpelmann, 1918), 191-216.

²⁹Gardiner noted that the Astarte Papyrus was the earliest of the extant Late-Egyptian stories, possibly dating to the reign of Haremhab (1342 to 1303 B.C.). See Alan H. Gardiner, "The Astarte Papyrus," In Studies Presented to F. Ll. Griffith, (London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1932), 74-85, and Alan H. Gardiner, Late-Egyptian Stories, (Brussels: La Fondation Egyptologique, 1939), 76-82.

only two full pages remain, and fragments from the bottom edge of other pages.

The Astarte Papyrus is important because it is a hieroglyphic text which frequently mentions the Canaanite gods Yam and Astarte in the context of conflict. This papyrus is normally interpreted to be either a recension of the Baal Yam myth, or a recension of the broader Near Eastern creation myth.³⁰ Theodore Gaster draws this link more forcefully than other writers. He suggests that the Astarte Papyrus supplies the missing beginning of the Baal Yam myth and explains the sudden appearance of Astarte in the Ugaritic accounts.³¹ If Gaster is correct, the Astarte Papyrus provides very strong evidence for the presence of the Baal Yam myth in Egypt near the Mosaic era.

In short, there can be no doubt that many Canaanites were present in Egypt from very early times, and it is fair to assume that many of them worshiped Baal. There can be

Ganaan, (New York: Doubleday & Company, 1968), 133, and Albright, "Zabul Yam and Thapit Nahar in the combat between Baal and the Sea," J.P.O.S. 15 (1935) 18, 19. See also A. H. Sayce, "The Astarte Papyrus and the Legend of the Sea," J.E.A. 19 (1933): 56, 57, and Te Velde, Seth, God of Confusion, 122, 123. However, academic opinion has not been unanimous in drawing this connection. George Posener argued that the Astarte Papyrus was only superficially similar to Canaanite parallels. He argued that it was actually based on Egyptian thought. See Edward F. Wente Jr.'s introduction to this papyrus in William Kelly Simpson, The Literature of Ancient Egypt, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973), 133.

³¹See Theodore Gaster, "The Egyptian 'Story of Astarte' and the Ugaritic Poem of Baal," <u>B.O.</u> 9 (1952): 82-85, and Gaster, <u>Thespis: Ritual, Myth and Drama in the Near East</u>, (Garden city: Doubleday & Co., 1961), 114.

no doubt that Baal temples were present in northern Egypt by at least the Eighteenth Dynasty, and especially after the reign of Amenhotep II. There can be little doubt that Baal myths were present, especially following Haremhab's reign. Baal was certainly mentioned many times in the Nineteenth Dynasty texts. The implications of this for the Exodus depend partly on when the event occurred. If a late date for the Exodus is defended, there can be no doubt at all that Baal worship and Baal mythology were strong forces in the Nile delta at the time. If an early date is defended, the clear evidence is more tenuous. However, the pervasive presence of Canaanites in Egypt, and the former presence of the Hyksos rulers make the presence of Baal worship almost inevitable. So it is fair to assume that Baal worship would have been a present temptation for Israel in Egypt.

Israel and Egyptian Baal Worship

For a Baal worship polemic to be appropriate, it is not only necessary to show that Baal worship was present in the delta, but also that Israel would have been tempted by it. The evidence is not crystal clear that Israel did fall into Baal worship in Egypt. Ezekiel 20:5-10 states that Israel fell into idolatry there, 32 but does not spell out the nature of that idolatry. However, it is reasonable to believe that Baalism would have been a great temptation because of the nature of Israel's patriarchal history.

³²See also Ez. 23:19; Joshua 24:14; 5:9; Lev. 18:3.

Israel may have been prone to Baalism because some aspects of her patriarchal traditions could have been misunderstood as supporting this idolatry. First, God gave Abraham and his descendants the land of Canaan. This is significant because by the Mosaic age, Baal worship had become the dominant religion among the Canaanites, Hurrians, and Hittites, covering an area from Egypt's eastern border to western Anatolia. 33 When Israelites looked north to the land of their heritage, it would have been natural for them to have associated that heritage with Baal worship.

Several events in the patriarchal tradition would have tended to reinforce this identification. For example, when Abraham entered Canaan, he settled in sites like Hebron and Bethel. These towns were located along the mountain chain which formed the backbone of Ephraim and Judah. Moses described several patriarchal altars in these mountains, including ones at Shechem, Bethel, Hebron, and Moriah.³⁴ When the Israelites finally re-entered Canaan, they reaffirmed the patriarchal assessment that these high places were proper worship sites. With the exception of Gideon's

³³It is clear that Baal had been a recognized Semitic deity for over a millennium before the Mosaic age. See Giovanni Pettinato, "Pre-Ugaritic Documentation of Ba'al," 205-209. However, it is not at all clear when Baal worship became the dominant religion of Canaan. The question has generated substantial debate. On the Hittite and Hurrian forms of Baal worship, see Oliver R. Gurney, The Hittites, (Baltimore: Penguin books, 1952), 140, 141, and Hans G. Guterbock, "The Song of Illikummi: Revised Text of the Hittite Version of a Hurrian Myth," J.C.S. 6 (1952): 13.

³⁴See Gen. 12:6-8; 13:18; 35:1-6.

family shrine at Ophrah, all of Israel's recorded early worship sites were concentrated in one continuous block, in the mountains of Judah, Benjamin, and Ephraim. 35 So Israel knew that God should properly be worshiped in the mountains of Canaan.

When Israelites in Egypt remembered their patriarchal roots and their promise of a return to Canaan, they would also have remembered that they were a people of the northern mountains. This memory would have been reinforced by the Egyptians attitude toward Canaan. The Egyptians considered every foreign country to be in the mountains beyond the Nile valley. When the Egyptian texts described either Canaan, the cities in Canaan, or the peoples from it, the Egyptians wrote their names with a mountain determinative. 36 So the Egyptians would have reminded Israel continually that they were a mountain people. When Canaanites in the delta invited Israel to worship at the shrine of a northern mountain god, the identification between Baal and Israel's God would have been easily drawn.

Another element of Israel's patriarchal history that would have tempted Israel into idolatry was reflected in

³⁵See the discussion in Menahem Haran, <u>Temples and Temple-Service in Ancient Israel</u>, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), 41.

³⁶Israel's own patriarchal traditions were consistent with this motif. Travel to Egypt involved "going down" to Egypt, while the return route involved "going up" to Palestine. Examples of this usage can be found in Gen. 12:10 and 13:1. The Egyptian texts described travel to and from Palestine in similar terms. See Lichtheim, Ancient Egyptian Literature, 1:170, 171.

Genesis 31:31; 35:2, and Joshua 24:14. Even the patriarchs tolerated some idolatry in their households. Rachel stole Laban's household idols, 37 and Jacob required the members of his household to bury their gods beneath a tree before journeying to Bethel. These idols may well have included Baal, Astarte, and Anat, 38 though Moses took pains not to mention the names of the idols buried. Israelites in Egypt could have interpreted these elements of their tradition in two ways. They may have recognized in Jacob's requirement of Genesis 35:2 a claim that only Yahweh was God, or they may have used these elements of their tradition as warrant for tolerating Canaanite idolatry in their own households. 39

Jacob's journey to Bethel is itself somewhat problemmatic. Bethel was a common worship site for Abraham, Isaac

³⁷She probably did so to support any claim that Jacob may make on leadership and inheritance in the family.

³⁸H. T. Frank claimed that Baal worship was co-extensive with Canaanite culture. He also described the numerous small Canaanite idols which have been found at every Syrian and Palestinian site. Harry T. Frank, <u>Bible</u>, <u>Archaeology</u> and <u>Faith</u>, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1971), 81.

³⁹The whole question of patriarchal age idolatry continues to cause confusion today. Some writers suggest that Baal worship was not present in Canaan in the patriarchal age because it is not mentioned in Genesis. This is probably not correct. Moses seems to have intentionally avoided naming foreign gods, their worship sites, or the nature of their cults. Moses mentioned several inhabitants of Canaan who worshipped the true God under the name of El. texts have also caused confusion because of the important position which El played in the Ugaritic myths. It has been suggested that the patriarchs worshiped the Canaanite god However, the noun el simply means "god," and there is no reason that the examples noted by Moses could not have referred to worship of the true God, rather than a Canaanite idol. The origin of both true belief and idolatry in Canaan can not be traced clearly at this time.

and Jacob. 40 Jacob's dream at Bethel had close similarities to holy mountain theology in Mesopotamia, and to early solar pyramid theology in Egypt. 41 Bethel itself was an ancient mountaintop sanctuary, and it had been a place of sacrifice since the Chalcolithic Age. 42 It is hardly likely that only Israel's God would have been worshiped there. This may have been why Abraham's actual shrine was somewhat removed from Bethel itself. So an identification of the patriarchs with Bethel may have worked toward a tolerance of syncretism in Egypt.

In this context, the discussion over God's name in Exodus 6:3 becomes very interesting. Here God declared that He had appeared to the patriarchs as El Shaddai, but now He made known His name of Yahweh to Israel. The name El Shaddai has generated quite a bit of discussion and has been explained in several ways. 43 However, the most popular

⁴⁰See Gen. 12:8; 13:3; 28:9; 31:13. and 35:1-16.

⁴¹C. Houtman, "What Did Jacob See in his Dream at Bethel?" V.T. 27 (1977): 337-351, E. A. Speiser, Genesis, (New York: Doubleday & Company, 1979), 219. J. Gwyn Griffiths, "The Celestial Ladder and the Gate of Heaven (Genesis xxviii.12 and 17)," E.T., 76 (1964/65): 229. See also Pyramid Texts 365, 389, 390.

⁴²James L. Kelso, <u>The Excavation of Bethel (1934–1960)</u>, (Cambridge: American Schools of Oriental Research, 1968), 20, 21, 45.

⁴³See the history of the discussion in David Biale, "The God with Breasts: El Shaddai in the Bible," <u>H.R.</u> 21 (1981): 240-256. Biale understands Shaddai as "the god with breasts." Lloyd Bailey takes Shaddai as a lunar deity. Lloyd R. Bailey, "Israelite 'El Šadday and Amorite Bêl Šadê," <u>J.B.L.</u> 87 (1968): 434-438. Walter Wifall defends "God of the Fields." Walter Wifall, "El Shaddai or El of the Fields," <u>Z.A.W.</u> 92 (1980): 24-32.

positions have generally built on a suggestion made by
Friedrich Delitzsch and William F. Albright. This suggestion linked the name Shaddai with an Akkadian word (shadu)
for mountain. This explanation has taken several forms
through the years, but the general meaning maintained for
El-Shaddai is "the Mountain God."44 The name Yahweh has
also been interpreted in a variety of ways. While the
debate is too long and complex to address here,45 it should
be noted that when Moses delivered Israel from Egypt, a new
name for God was thought necessary. Why would God augment
the name El-Shaddai with a new name? The answer may be that
God's name of El-Shaddai had become another justification
for syncretism. Who was the northern mountain god, Yahweh
or Baal?

Albright's position is quite interesting here. He held that Shaddai was originally an Amorite god brought to

⁴⁴See Frank M. Cross Jr., "Yahweh and the God of the Patriarchs," <u>H.T.R.</u> 55 (1962): 225-259. Herbert G. May, "The Patriarchal Idea of God," <u>J.B.L.</u> 60 (1941): 113-128. Eric Burrows, "The Meaning of El Saddai," <u>J.T.S.</u> 41 (1940): 152-161.

⁴⁵See, for example, Charles R. Gianotti, "The Meaning of the Divine Name YHWH," B.S. 142 (1985): 38-51. The exact hieroglyphic equivalent of the name YHWH has been found on two Egyptian place lists written in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Dynasties. The Amarah-Soleb lists included six locations preceded by the words t3 s3sw, the Shasu Land, or the Beduin Land. One of these six names was Jhw3. See Michael C. Astour, "Yahweh in Egyptian Topographical Lists," In Festschrift Elmar Edel, (Bamberg: Kurt Urlaub, 1979), 17-33, and Th. C. Vriezen, "The Study of the Old Testament and the History of Religion," Congress Volume: Rome, 1968, (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1969), 16. This raises the interesting possibility that the name YHWH may have been given at least partly to prepare Israel for her wanderings in the wilderness.

Syria, where he became the Canaanite Baal-Hadad, the mountain storm god. Albright may have been correct at least in suggesting that the worship of El-Shaddai was becoming involved with Baalism. 46 Adding a new name for God would serve to differentiate Yahweh from Baal before God delivered His people from bondage.

The Baal Polemic

If Israel's sea crossing was partly intended as a polemic against Baal worship, it was probably aimed primarily at the Baal Yam myth. This myth was a part of a broad Near Eastern tradition. The ancient Near East knew several closely related myths in which a mountain storm god fought the sea.47 It is no longer possible to reconstruct the exact relationship between these myths, or to determine what their relationship may have been with the Near Eastern creation account. However, it is fair to say that the form of this myth found in the Ugaritic texts has unusually close ties with Egypt. This is especially true if the Astarte Papyrus is interpreted as a recension of it. At the same time, it is fair to say that the Ugaritic Baal Yam myth had rather weak ties with the rest of the Canaanite Baal cycle. In most Canaanite texts, Baal was a fertility god who con-

⁴⁷Two Egyptian New Kingdom texts referred to a combat between Seth and the Sea. See Te Velde, Seth, God of Confusion, 123. For Hittite and Hurrian versions of this myth, see A. H. Sayce, "The Astarte Papyrus and the Legend of the Sea," J.E.A. 19 (1933): 56-59, and Hans C. Güterbock, "The Son of Illikummi: Revised Text of the Hittite Version of the Hurrian Myth," J.C.S. 6 (1952): 8-42.

trolled the storms and rain. He gave prosperity and abundant crops. 48 Various attempts have been made to reconcile the Baal Yam myth with mainline Canaanite theology, 49 but the attempts have not been overwhelmingly successful. 50 The Baal Yam myth concerns the subjugation of the sea, and does not clearly mention fertility per se. André Caquot and Maurice Sznycer recognized this in their book <u>Ugaritic</u>

Religion. They noted that it is difficult to see how the Baal Yam myth could have been linked directly to the Baal Mot myth, or to the building of Baal's temple. They suggested that the Baal Yam myth was originally written to reassure sailors of Ugarit by reminding them that Baal had overcome the sea. If Caquot and Sznycer were correct, the

⁴⁸On Baal's association with the rain, see Theodor Gaster, "The Battle of the Rain and the Sea: An Ancient Semitic Nature-Myth," <u>Iraq</u> 4 (1937): 21-32.

⁴⁹Gaster suggested that this myth reflected the natural rivalry between rain and river/sea as sources for irrigation. Gaster, "The Battle of the Rain and the Sea," 21. Beyerlin tried to connect the cyclical pattern of the seasons with two aspects of the myth. Neither Yam nor Baal possessed a permanent abode when the myth began, and both were struggling for control of the earth. Walter Beyerlin, et al, Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament, (London: SCM Press, 1978), 202, 203. Such a seasonal interpretation can be read more easily into the myth of Baal and Mot, though even that identification is not without significant difficulties.

⁵⁰Both Adrianus van Selms and Sam Meier have argued that tablets containing the Baal Yam myth were written in a different style than tablets containing the rest of the Baal Cycle. Baal Yam tablets were written with significantly longer lines, and with a different number of columns per tablet. See Adrianus van Selms, "Yammu's Dethronement by Baal," Ugarit-Forschungen 2 (1970): 251, and Sam Meier, "Baal's Fight with Yam (KTU 1.2 I,IV): A Part of the Baal Myth as Known in KTU 1.1, 3-6?" Ugarit-Forschungen 18 (1986): 243.

Baal Yam myth would have been important for sailors plying the ancient trade route between Memphis and Byblos.⁵¹ This sea route was open more or less constantly from the Second Dynasty through the Mosaic age. This may explain why this myth seems to have had close ties with Memphis and with Egyptian theology.⁵²

The link between the Canaanite Baal Yam myth and Egyptian theology can be seen in the dominant role played by the Canaanite craftsman god ktr-w-hss.53 This god did not have his dwelling place in the Levant. Messengers had to be sent to summon him from far away. The location of his dwelling has generated substantial debate, with the main contenders being Crete, Cappadocia, and Memphis.53 A good case can be made that ktr-w-hss came from Memphis. His dwelling was described in the Ugaritic texts as being at hakpt and kptr.

⁵¹André Caquot and Maurice Sznycer, <u>Ugaritic Religion</u>, (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1980), 10. This aspect of Baalism was important enough that the Baal temple at Ras Shamra actually incorporated stone anchors into the walls of the building. Peter C. Craigie, "Ugarit, Canaan and Israel," <u>T.B.</u> 34 (19983): 151.

⁵²Theodor Gaster suggested that the Astarte Papyrus may have come originally from Memphis which had long been a center for Baal worship in Egypt. Gaster also gave rather strong evidence that the Astart Papyrus had been translated into hieroglyphics from a Canaanite original. Gaster, "The Egyptian 'Story of Astarte' and the Ugaritic Poem of Baal," 83.

⁵³This name is transliterated and translated in a conusing variety of ways. He is the foreign craftsman god who built Baal's temple.

⁵⁴Caquot and Sznycer found the arguments for Memphis unconvincing, preferring Crete or Cappadocia. Caquot and Sznycer, Ugaritic Religion, 14.

Albright suggested that hakpt should be identified with Memphis, which the Egyptians called hat-ka-ptah, "the house of Ptah's ka." The southern location of hakpt is supported by the fact that Baal's messengers to ktr-w-hs had to travel past Byblos, but not past Crete. 55 If this identification is accepted, then the common equation of ktr-w-hs with the Egyptian deity Ptah also probably follows. Ptah was the Egyptian craftsman god, like ktr-w-hs. He was also the high god of Memphis, where temples of Baal, Astarte, and other Semitic deities were once located. 56

If ktr-w-hss was Ptah in this myth, then Ptah's role in the Baal Yam myth becomes quite important. 57 The conflict begins with Yam's claims on Astarte, who is described as being the daughter of Ptah. 58 Then Astarte addressed her complaint to Ptah before Baal even became involved in the conflict. 59 When Baal chose to struggle with the sea, Ptah created magical staffs for him. Ptah empowered these

⁵⁵See the discussion in Oldenburg. The Conflict between El and Ba'al in Canaanite Religion. 95-100.

⁵⁶See the discussion in Oldenburg. The Conflict between El and Ba'al in Canaanite Religion. 96. and Gaster. Thespis, 161, Cyrus H. Gordon. "The Poetic Literature of Ugarit," Or. 12 (1963): 56. 65.

⁵⁷It is, of course. possible that ktr-w-hss could have been associated with Ptah in this myth. and be a different deity entirely in the main Baal cycle.

⁵⁸Gaster, "The Egyptian 'Story of Astarte' and the Ugaritic Poem of Baal." 81. Gaster suggests that the description "daughter of Ptah" might reflect a connection with Memphis, or it might be a misunderstood Canaanite term describing a singer.

⁵⁹Gardiner, "The Astarte Papyrus." 81-83.

staffs by naming them, just as Ptah named all things which he had created by his word of power. 60 When Baal was too weak to struggle against the sea. Ptah's magical power brought victory. Then Ptah decreed Baal's right to rule in Syria because of the victories which Ptah had provided.

So, if ktr-w-hss was Ptah in this myth. then the mind-set suggested by this myth was not unlike Egypt's under-standing of her relationship with the Levant. The Canaan-ites were given control of the sea, and of the sea trade routes.61 However, they could only claim this dominion with the sufferance and assistance of Memphis. With that practical and religious assistance, they could be assured of safe travel from the Baal shrine at Memphis to the Baal temples of Byblos and Ugarit, and on north to Baal's holy mountain itself.

How did Israel's sea crossing mimic and refute the Baal Yam myth? A few parallels are worth noting. The first comes from Exodus 15:16, 21.62 Moses raised the "staff of

⁶⁰Ragnhild B. Rinnestad. "Ptah. Creator of the Gods."

Numen 23 (1978): 81. 84. 104. 106. Pritchard. Ancient

Near Eastern Texts. 4-6. Gerhard F. Hasel. "The Polemical

Nature of the Genesis Cosmology," E.G. 46 (1974): 90.

that Baal's victory produced a calm and gentle sea. Gaster. "The Battle of the Rain and the Sea." 31. His translation certainly fits well with the notion that Yam's defeat made sea travel possible. It is not clear how many Egyptians took part in this trade. Some writers have suggested that Egyptians and Canaanites both manned the Byblos ships. Others have claimed that all the sailors were Canaanites.

⁶²Moses' staff is called the "staff of God" in Ex. 4:20. In interesting allusion to Exodus 15 can be found

God, stretching out his arm over the 神空 , and the waters parted. Moses' staff created an interesting foil to two aspects of the Baal Yam myth, the clubs of ktr-w-hss, and the messengers' staffs.

The first of these is the clearest and the most obvious. Baal defeated Yam with the aid of two miraculous staffs created by ktr-w-hss. These staffs were named after their ability to drive out Sea from his throne.63 By striking the Sea with these miraculous weapons, Baal split open the Sea to the ground. There was an obvious superficial similarity between this and the sea crossing account. However, the differences are also striking. Baal had to wrestle with a stronger divinity, and only with miraculous assistance could split him to the sea bottom. Moses was not struggling with a god of the seas. Nothing in the Exodus account even hinted that the TOT was personified. The TOT was simply a body of water under the control of its Creator. Moses only raised the "staff of God" and spoke God's word. The sea obeyed.

The second parallel between the Baal Yam myth and Moses' staff is at best only a possibility. Adrianus van Selms translated line 40 of the tablet which Gordon numbered as 137 in this way.

in Is. 10:26. This verse seems to describe God Himself striking Yam with His rod of judgment.

⁶³Julian Oberman takes these weapons as staffs. He also noted the parallel between the staffs of Moses and Baal. Julian Oberman, "How Baal Destroyed a Rival," J.A.O.S. 67 (1947): 195-208.

A messenger carries a staff on the shoulder, A scepter a messenger on his collar-bone.64

This section describes Yam's messengers. Van Selms explains 'that messengers were not allowed to carry their own staffs. However, when they were on an errand, they carried their master's staff as a sign that they spoke with his authority. Moses' staff certainly had this function. Its purpose was not one of defeating Moses' enemies, but rather of validating God's word. Exodus 4:5 states clearly that Moses was to use it to authenticate his message from God.65

The second parallel between Israel's sea crossing and the Baal Yam myth is that both victories were a deliverance. The force of this will depend on how the texts are translated and interpreted. If Gaster's interpretation of the Astarte Papyrus is correct, Yam had threatened the honor of the virgin war goddess Astarte. Baal's victory over the sea had spared her from that humiliation. 68 If Gray's

⁶⁴van Selms, "Yammu's Dethronement by Baal," 262. According to Herdner's classification, this tablet would be CTA 2,i. This translation is certainly not universally accepted. For example, Gibson translated this section as, "a messenger; between (his) shoulders is the word of his lord," John Gibson, Canaanite Myths and Legends, (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1977), 42.

⁶⁵An interesting parallel can also be drawn between Moses' staff and an Egyptian reference in Coffin Spell 469. In this text, Pharaoh claims that Osiris and Orion have given him a staff of rank. This staff enables Pharaoh to be a god, and ensures that strong ones in the Field of Reeds will tremble before him. Moses' staff of rank made him a servant, not a god. Pharaoh and Egypt were forced to tremble before Yahweh when his servant held up God's staff, declaring His word.

⁶⁶Gaster, "The Egyptian 'Story of Astarte' and the Ugaritic Poem of Baal," 83.

translation of Gordon's tablet UH 68, lines 28-32 is correct, Attarat urged Baal to scatter Yam's body because Yam had held the other gods captive.67 The parallel with Israel's sea crossing is rather obvious. The TOT had held Israel captive, and had threatened their freedom to serve God. Yahweh's victory over the sea freed Israel to serve Him, just as Baal's victory over Yam freed the gods to follow him.

The third parallel between Israel's sea crossing and the Baal Yam myth is that Yam was both Prince Sea and Judge River.68 This fact has generated substantial discussion because in Joshua 3:16, a similar miracle allowed Israel to cross the Jordan river at flood stage. These two crossings are surprisingly similar. In each, the waters stood up in a , a heap, or a wall. The word papears in Scripture only in descriptions of the sea crossing and the Jordan crossing.69 It is at least possible that the water crossing miracle was repeated in Joshua 3 in order to strengthen the polemic against Baal worship. As Israel stood on the threshold of entering Canaan, they were reassurred that

⁶⁷John Gray, <u>The Legacy of Canaan</u>, (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1965), 28, 29.

⁶⁸William F. Albright noted that the Akkadian river god Naru appeared already at Mari, and was called "the Judge, River." Albright, "Zabúl Yam and Thâpit Nahar in the combat between Baal and the Sea," 19, 20.

⁶⁹This word appears in Ex. 15:8; Joshua 3:13, 16, and Ps. 78:13. See the discussion of it in Arlis J. Ehlen, "Deliverance at the Sea, Diversity and Unity in a Biblical Theme," C.T.M. 44 (1973): 174.

Yahweh was Lord of both river and sea.70

The fourth parallel between Israel's sea crossing and the Baal Yam myth is the central role played in each by holy mountains. Action in the Baal Yam myth travels from El's holy mountain, into the great deep, and finally to Baal's holy mountain, Mount Zaphon. 71 The Exodus account travels from Sinai to Baal-Zaphon, and then from Baal-Zaphon and the great deep, to Yahweh's dwelling place, and Yahweh's holy mountain. In a sense, the polemic is chiastic. The Baal myth leads to Baal's temple on Baal's holy mountain, while the Exodus account leads away from Baal's shrine and holy mountain to Yahweh's shrine and mountain instead. 72

It goes without saying that Baal-Zephon and God's holy mountain have generated a great debate because they are among the earliest Biblical examples of the cosmic mountain theme. Unfortunately, that discussion is much too large

⁷⁰F. M. Cross Jr. suggested that Psalm 114 pairs the sea and the Jordan crossings in a way that echoes Yam's identification as Prince Sea and Judge River. Frank M. Cross Jr., "The Song of the Sea and Canaanite Myth," In God and Christ: Existence and Province, ed. Robert W. Funk, (New York: Harper & Row, 1968), 22, 23. However, it is fair to observe that such a pairing of two similar events requires neither cultic association nor Canaanite influence.

⁷¹The Baal Yam myth per se breaks off at the establishment of Baal's kingship and his eternal kingdom. It is quite possible that the missing ending of the myth described Baal's mountain, as the main Baal cycle did. The "Song of Illikummi," a Hittite and Hurrian form of this myth, begins at Mount Zaphon. Güterbock, "The Song of Illikummi," 13.

⁷²It is uncharacteristic of Moses to mention the name of an idolatrous worship site. He only does so when the action at that site has some theological importance. His primary reason for mentioning Baal-Zaphon here may have been the role that this site played in the polemic.

to address here.73

The fifth parallel between Israel's sea crossing and the Baal Yam myth is the fact that both victories resulted in the establishment of an eternal kingdom. This can be seen in CTA 2,iv (Gordon's tablet 68), lines 9 and 10, where ktr-w-hss commanded Baal to defeat Yam, and to establish his everlasting kingdom, and his dominion forever. Then in line 32, when Yam had been defeated, ktr-w-hss declared that Yam was dead, and Baal would be king.74 Other tablets in the Baal cycle claim that Baal's new kingship was reflected in the establishment of His temple on Mount Zaphon. This temple was built by ktr-w-hss, and its creation was recorded at length on CTA 3 and 4.75 The parallel in the Exodus account is rather clear. Exodus 15:13 states that God has led Israel to His holy habitation. Exodus 15:17 states that

⁷³A few useful references would include the following. Freedman, "Temple without Hands," 21. B. Margulis, "Welt-baum and Weltberg in Ugaritic Literature: Notes and Observations on RS 24.245," Z.A.W. 86 (1974): 15. Baruch Halpern, The Emergence of Israel in Canaan, (Chicago: Scholar's Press, 1983), 32-36. Gispen, Exodus, 150, 151. Kalman Yaron, "The Dirge over the King of Tyre," Annual of the Swedish Theological Institute 3 (1964): 43, 44.

⁷⁴Gibson, Canaanite Myths and Legends, 43-45. See also the discussions in van Selms, "Yammu's Dethronement by Baal," 267, and Helmer Ringgren, Religions of the Ancient Near East, (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1973), 134, 144-154.

⁷⁵Umberto Cassuto, "The Palace of Baal," J.B.L. 61 (1942): 51-56. Richard J. Clifford, "The Temple in the Ugaritic Myth of Baal," In Symposia Celebrating the Seventy-Fifth anniversary of the Founding of the American Schools of Oriental Research, (Cambridge: American Schools of Oriental Research, 1979), 137-145. F. Lokkegaard, "The House of Baal," A.O. 22 (1955): 10-27.

God will lead Israel to the mountain of his inheritance.

Then Exodus 15:18 declares that the LORD will reign forever.

The last parallel between the Baal Yam myth and Israel's sea crossing is the fact that both gods are depicted
as divine warriors. Baal's role as a warrior is self-evident, since he was locked in a life and death struggle with
Yam. Exodus 15:3 declared that the LORD was a warrior.
Leonard Greenspoon called this the most succinct statement
of the divine warrior theme in Scripture. 76 When Yahweh
destroyed Pharaoh's army and split the Sea to the ground,
Yahweh proved that he was the warrior that Pharaoh and Baal
only claimed to be. By proving Himself a warrior, God
created a powerful polemic against both Canaanite and Egyptian theology. 77

Conclusion

It is fair to say that the similarities between Israel's sea crossing and Field of Reeds theology are much
stronger than the similarities with Baalism. The generation which left Egypt needed a strong polemic against Egyp-

⁷⁶Leonard Greenspoon, "The Origin of the Idea of Resurrection," In <u>Traditions in Transformation</u>, (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1981), 262-269. Cross also discussed this theme at some length. Frank M. Cross Jr., "The Divine Warrior in Israel's Early Cult," <u>Biblical Motifs</u>, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1966), 11-30.

⁷⁷James Hoffmeier has pointed out that the divine warrior imagery in the Exodus account imitated standard Egyptian expressions, and formed an effective polemic against Pharaoh's claims. James K. Hoffmeier, "The arm of God Versus the Arm of Pharaoh in the Egyptian Narratives," Biblica 67 (1986): 379, 387.

tian theology more than a refutation of Baalism. by the end of Moses' lifetime. Egyptian theology was becoming largely a dead issue. After Israel entered the land. Egyptian theology was never a great threat to their faith. Oh, the Egyptians did campaign in Palestine occasionally. 78 They held fortresses like Beth-Shan to defend their interests, and there is some evidence that Egyptian theology was known in the Levant. 79 However. the Egyptians were not concerned about the highlands. They did not create settlements there, and made little attempt to impose their will there.80 They certainly made few attempts to spread Egyptian culture to the highlands of Palestine. The issue for Israel's future was Baalism. When later Israelites used the sea crossing account as a polemic against idolatry. they aimed the polemic at Baalism because that was the battle being fought.

⁷⁸If an early date for the Exodus is defended. all of the Nineteenth Dynasty campaigns in Palestine occurred while Israel was in the land. If a late date is defended. Egyptian military activity in the Levant was near its end when Israel entered the land.

⁷⁹Two seals from northern Jordan depict a solar god seated in a boat. These could be based on Egyptian solar theology. A. D. Tushingham. "God in a Boat." A.J.B.A. 1 (1971):.23-28. The temple at Beth-Shan also shows the presence of Egyptian theology.

⁸⁰See especially the following. Donald B. Redford. "The Relations between Egypt and Israel from El-Amarna to the Babylonian Conquest." Biblical Archaeology Today. (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society. 1985). 193. 199. Giveon, The Impact of Egypt on Canaan. 11-14. 23-25. Brian Peckham, "Israel and Phoenicia." In Magnalia Dei: The Mighty Acts of God. (New York: Doubleday & Company. 1976). 228, 229.

However, even here, the academic debate has far outstripped the Scriptural evidence. The clearest Scriptural examples of the Baal Yam imagery being used to describe the Exodus come from Isaiah 51:9, 10. Psalm 77:16-20, and 114:3. In Isaiah 51:9, 10, the prophet equated God's pathway in the TYPE with His act of cutting Rahab in pieces, and piercing the dragon. Psalm 77:16-20 personified the sea, stating that it saw God and was in anguish when God made His pathway through the sea.81 Psalm 114:3 also personified the sea. stating that it looked and fled before the Lord.

Quite a few other Scripture passages use imagery drawn originally from mythology. Various passages describe God's victory over Rahab. Leviathan. the sea monster. and related terms. These have generated substantial academic debate, and have been suggested as examples of either the Baal Yam myth, or the Near Eastern creation account.82 Most Biblical references to this primal monster occur either in descriptions of creation. or in promises of judgment on Egypt.83

⁸¹See Richard J. Clifford. "Cosmogonies in the Ugaritic Texts and in the Bible." Or. 53 (1984): 186.

⁸²See Gaster, Thespis. 142. Gaster lists about a dozen passages which he places in this category. See also. Ehlen, "Deliverance at the Sea: Diversity and Unity in a Biblical Theme," 175-180. Cyrus H. Gordon. "Leviathan: Symbol of Evil," Biblical Motifs. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1966), 1-9. For a discussion of a similar texts from Gordon's UH 67. see Gray. The Legacy of Canaan. 56. Meredith G. Kline. "Death. Leviathan. and the Martyrs: Isaiah 24:1-27:1." In A Tribute to Gleason Archer. (Chicago: Moody Press, 1986). 229-249.

⁸³Verses used in this context include: Ps. 74:12-17. Is. 27:1, and Ex. 29:3.

The authors of Scripture almost seem intentionally to have avoided describing the Exodus with mythological imagery in order to preserve the historical validity of the event.

Israel's main response to Baalism would seem to have been that while Baal cleaved a mythological Yam, Yahweh split a real historical sea.

Summing up all of this briefly, there can be little doubt that Israel's sea crossing was intended to teach Israel and the nations about God. It warned the Egyptians that their own theology was mistaken, by imitating key aspects of the Field of Reeds theology. It also warned Pharaoh that his pretensions to deity were in error, and would end in his judgment, not in his deification. The sea crossing also warned Israel to turn away from the mistaken concepts which some members of the community would have acquired in Egypt, whether those based on traditional Egyptian motifs, or those based on the Baalism of the Nile delta. With this aspect of the polemic, Israel's sea crossing opened the battle against Baalism which would continue for centuries thereafter. Finally, it taught the gospel, that salvation comes by faith in Yahweh, and by stepping out in faith to follow God's Son through the sea.

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