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ISRAEL IN EGYPT AND THE EXODUS.

WITH REFERENCE TO PROF. FLINDERS PETRIE'S RECENT
DISCOVERY.

THE recent discovery by Prof. Flinders Petrie of the mention of "the people of Israel" on a monument of Merenptah, the son of Rameses II.,¹ will afford food for reflection to Egyptological experts for a considerable time to come; but meanwhile we may be permitted to submit some views, based on earlier studies, on which this discovery seems to have a very direct bearing. We assume for the present that the reading of the passage given by Prof. Petrie, on the authority of Mr. Griffiths—"The people of Ysiraal is spoiled; it hath no seed"—is correct; that at least the proper name can with certainty be identified with "Israel," though neither point is beyond challenge.² It may turn out that, as in the cases of the supposed mention of "the King of Judah" in the lists of Shishak at Karnak, or of "Ahab of Israel" on the monolith of Shalmaneser II., this reading may have to be abandoned, but there is a

¹ *Contemporary Review*, May, 1896.

² Dr. Spiegelberg, of Strassburg, in whose hands the results of Prof. Petrie's excavations have been placed, and who has published the text of the inscription (in *Reports of the Royal Academy at Berlin*), gives a different translation—"Israel is a barren land without fear"—and finds a difficulty in the rendering of the Hebrew *Sin* by *S*. Prof. W. Max Müller, an able American Egyptologist, author of the book *Asien und Europa*, renders, "Israel has been torn out without offshoot," but is clear about the proper name (in *New York Independent*, July 9th). Sir P. le Page Renouf has challenged the reading altogether, and maintains that it is "Jezreel" that Prof. Flinders Petrie has mistaken for "Israel." Prof. Cheyne and Colonel Conder support Prof. Petrie. Dr. Steindorff, in *Zeitschrift f. alttest. Wissenschaft*, translates "Israelites," not "Israel" (1896, 2nd Part, p. 331).

sufficient consensus of opinion in its favour to warrant at least its provisional acceptance. Then we are brought face to face at once with an exceedingly interesting problem. It is well known that, according to the generally received view of the connection of the history of Egypt with that of Israel, Rameses II., the father of Merenptah, was the Pharaoh of the great oppression, and Merenptah himself—or, if not he, one of his immediate successors—was the Pharaoh of the Exodus. There are many plausible reasons for this identification, particularly the mention of “the store-cities, Pithom and Raamses” in Exodus i. 11, and it is not surprising that it should have gained the almost unanimous assent of scholars, and have come to be regarded by them as beyond serious dispute. Yet the newly-discovered inscription would seem to deal a death-blow to this theory, for the “spoiling of Israel” to which it relates took place, not in Egypt, *but in Palestine*—was, in fact, part of a general subjugation of the northern nations by Merenptah. Obviously, if the Israelites were already settled in Palestine in the reign of this monarch, he could not be the Pharaoh of the Exodus. Prof. Flinders Petrie, in his article, makes various suggestions to obviate this difficulty, but they are of a somewhat far-fetched character (as, *e.g.*, that part of the children of Israel had either never left Canaan, or had returned to it before the Exodus), and we do not observe that they have met with much favour.¹ A hypothesis which has commended itself to several²—it would appear independently—is that which makes the words “is spoiled, hath no seed” refer retrospectively to the repressive measures of Pharaoh recorded in Exodus i. But, apart from the grave doubt as to the reading, this also

¹ These alternatives of Prof. Petrie, which find a point of support in 1 Chron. vii. 21, 22, are ably discussed and rejected in an article in the *Neue Kirchengeschichte*, No. 6, by Dr. Sellin. The writer favours the view of the destruction of the male children by Pharaoh.

² Dr. Sellin, as above; and writers in *Expository Times* for July.

must be regarded as unsatisfactory. It is too plainly a harmonistic makeshift, and it is overlooked, besides, that the edicts in question, commanding the destruction of the male children,¹ were over eighty years old at the time of the Exodus, and had early become practically a dead letter. Else how could there have been a vast body of people to go out of Egypt at all, or a younger generation swelling to hundreds of thousands, as the numberings show to have existed?² We are driven, therefore, as the remaining alternative, to face the question of the correctness of our original assumption, and boldly to ask whether, after all, the Exodus took place, as commonly supposed, under Merenptah, or whether, as many older Egyptologists held, and a minority have always contended, some couple of hundred years earlier, under the 18th dynasty. This is the view to which, on independent grounds, we have always felt constrained to adhere, and the new discovery gives it added probability.³ The time is perhaps opportune for a brief statement of the reasons which shut us up—we were about to say almost demonstratively—to the earlier date.

We shall endeavour to show below that the Exodus is placed by Manetho, and nearly all ancient historians and chronologers, under the *eighteenth*, and not under the nineteenth dynasty, as is often stated; but we may first consider a little more critically the bearings of the newly-discovered inscription on the question. We shall then look back to the 18th dynasty, and ask the reader's attention to the remarkable harmonies of date and circumstance which, without being sought for, meet us there.

In two ways the inscription brought to light by Prof. Flinders Petrie seems absolutely to exclude the hypothesis

¹ Exod. i. 16, 22.

² Num. i.—iii.

³ The probable need of a change of view has already been acknowledged by several scholars since the discovery, as Prof. W. Max Müller and Dr. Steindorff.

that the Exodus took place under the 19th dynasty, in the reign of Merenptah, or of his son, Seti-Merenptah, as some think, a few decades later.¹

1. The Israelites are already settled in Palestine in the reign of Merenptah—the apparently insuperable difficulty referred to above. A singular confirmation of this result is derived from another inscription of the reign of Merenptah, not hitherto much noticed. Speaking of the district of Goshen, this inscription says:—"The country around was not cultivated, but left as a pasture for cattle, because of the strangers. It was abandoned since the time of the ancestors." This clearly proves, as Dr. Naville has remarked, "that the land of Kes, or Kesem (Goshen) was not inhabited,"² and the abandonment had been of long duration. The Israelites, therefore, it is natural to conclude, had left it before the days of Merenptah.

2. The chronology imperatively forbids such a synchronism. This, to our mind, is a point of even greater importance than the other, for it does not depend, like that, on minute accuracy of translation; yet, if Prof. Petrie is correct in placing the middle of Merenptah's reign about 1200 B.C., it seems quite decisive of the fact that the Exodus could not have happened *then*, but must have occurred much earlier. This is a matter, therefore, entitled to receive our closest attention.

The uncertainty of Egyptian chronology is proverbial, but most writers have followed Lepsius in placing the accession of Merenptah about 1322 B.C. (Brugsch, 1300; Lenormant, 1350), and the Exodus a few years later.³ The

¹ The balance is thought by some to be turned in favour of the latter king by a hieratic inscription deciphered by Dr. Eisenlohr, of Heidelberg, in 1872 (*Trans. S. B. A.*, i. pp. 355-384). Sir J. W. Dawson also argues for this view.

² Paper on "The Route of the Exodus," in *Transactions of the Victoria Institute*, vol. xxvi. (1892-3). Dr. Naville and Prof. Sayce infer from this, *per contra*, the presence of the Israelites in Goshen as a pastoral people. But surely the language does not apply to a thickly populated district.

³ It is important to notice how Lepsius arrived at this result. The

tendency in recent years, however, has been to lower considerably the dates of Rameses II. and Merenptah,—Lieblein (whose method of genealogies Brugsch adopts, though differing from him in results) bringing Rameses down as late as the 12th century (1170),¹ while others place the accession of Merenptah about 1280 or 1250. Prof. Petrie goes below these latter dates, and, on the ground of astronomical data, places the accession of Merenptah in 1208 B.C., and the Exodus about 1200 B.C.² We are perfectly aware of the great insecurity of these astronomical reckonings, and that the most diverse schemes of Egyptian chronology are supported by appeal to them.³ There seems, however, to be a remarkable concurrence of evidence fixing the dates of Thothmes III. in the 18th dynasty, as Dr. Mahler does,⁴ at about 1503 to 1449 B.C., and from this, with the aid of other data, Prof. Flinders Petrie reckons down to the date of Merenptah before given, with the assurance that he can hardly be more than a few years wrong at the utmost.⁵ Assuming, however, as again we

Alexandrian astronomer Theon gave the year 1322 B.C. as the commencement of a cycle named by him "the era of Menophres." Lepsius supposed *μενόφρεως* to be an error for *μενόφθεως*, and identified accordingly. But there seems the highest probability that Lepsius was wrong, and that Menophres is to be identified with Rameses I., the first king of the 19th dynasty, whose throne-name was Men-peh-ra (Flinders Petrie, *Hist. of Egypt*, ii. pp. 29, 33; compare art. "Manetho," in Kitto's *Bib. Cyclop.*). This date, therefore, brought to prove the accession of Merenptah in 1322 B.C., rather proves the opposite, and shows that his date must fall late in the next century.

¹ *Revue Archéologique*, October, 1868.

² *Hist. of Egypt*, i. pp. 250-1.

³ See remarks by Brugsch, *Hist. of Egypt*, i. pp. 35, 36; art. "Manetho," as above; Canon Cook, Essay appended to *Speaker's Commentary* on Exodus, pp. 454-5. Brugsch himself, founding on the same data as Mahler, places the accession of Thothmes III. about 1600 B.C. (*Hist.*, i. p. 395), and is followed by Conder, in *The Bible and the East* (p. 51). Lenormant can, "with mathematical and absolute certainty," fix the accession of Rameses III. (half a century after Merenptah) in 1311 B.C. (*Ancient Hist.*, i. p. 269), etc.

⁴ Dr. Mahler's calculations are set forth in the *Zeitschrift für Aegyptische Sprache* for Sept. 1, 1889. His dates are accepted by Sayce, Tomkins, Brugsch-Pasha, Petrie, etc.

⁵ See his tables, *Hist. of Egypt*, ii. pp. 28-34, and Canon Cook's Essay cited

may provisionally do, that this date for Merenptah is approximately correct, the difficulty it creates for the current theory is sufficiently obvious. Even on the higher reckoning of 1322 B.C. for the accession of Merenptah, it was difficult enough to find space for the events recorded in the Book of Judges, arrange them in "strands" as one may, but if a century more is to be taken off from the interval between the Exodus and the building of the Temple, we venture to say, despite Prof. Petrie's opinion to the contrary, that the problem is insoluble. The date of the founding of the Temple may now be approximately fixed by the aid of the Assyrian synchronisms with the Books of Kings at 969 B.C.,¹ leaving roughly 230 years as the length of the interval between this event and the assumed date of the Exodus (1200 B.C.). Deducting from this, on the one side, the period of the desert wanderings and of the conquest under Joshua, and, on the other, the interval and reigns from Eli to the building of the Temple, it will be seen to leave scarcely sixty or seventy years for the whole period of the Judges, *i.e.*, from Joshua to the death of Eli—a reckoning impossible to harmonise with any reasonable version of the facts.² To lower the chronology, therefore, as Prof.

above. A striking corroboration of the later date for Merenptah may be here mentioned, though in itself much weight cannot be laid upon it. In Mr. Gladstone's *Time and Place of Homer*, allusion is made to the invasion of Egypt by the Achæans mentioned on the monuments as taking place in the fifth year of Merenptah. On various grounds, but specially on the ground that the name Achæans immediately thereafter disappears from the monuments, Mr. Gladstone plausibly concludes that this expedition happened a few years before the fall of Troy (pp. 144, 187). If any faith can be placed in the old statement of Trogus, preserved in Justin (xviii. 3), that Tyre was founded in the year preceding the capture of Troy, this would put that event about 1210 B.C. Merenptah's reign on this reckoning would fall towards the end of the century. Tyre is said to have been founded 240 years before the Temple (Josephus, on Tyrian authority, *Ant. Jud.*, viii. 3).

¹ The grounds of this reckoning are carefully investigated in an article by the present writer on "Assyrian and Hebrew Chronology," in *The Presbyterian Review* for January, 1889. Smith's *Bible Dictionary* (new edition), in art. "Chronology," suggests 965 B.C.

² Compare Canon Cook's "Essay," dealing with the *higher* reckoning, p. 470.

Petrie in fullest confidence does in writing on this inscription, is, on the face of it, to put Merenptah out of court as the Pharaoh of the Exodus.

There is another aspect of the subject, however, not always attended to, in view of which this identification of Merenptah with the Pharaoh of the Exodus is seen to fail chronologically. If the chronology will not suit in a downward direction, as little will it suit in an upward. Archæological discovery has now enabled us to fix with an approach to certainty the date of Abraham, through his connection with Chedorlaomer.¹ Taking the lowest date for this ruler, we may place his invasion of Canaan about 2100 B.C.² From this to 1200 B.C., the supposed date of the Exodus, is 900 years. But no stretch of calculation, which pays any regard to Biblical data, can make out this interval between Abraham and the Exodus. The scriptural indications give us at most about 650 years. Here, then, the Exodus is placed some 250 years too low, and would be too low even if Merenptah were placed a century higher. Both from above and below, therefore, the theory which puts the Exodus in the 19th dynasty breaks down chronologically. Against these growing impossibilities, the argument, plausible as it seems, based on the mention of Pithom and Raamses, must give way.³

We advance now a step further, and proceed to substantiate an assertion made earlier, that it is under the 18th dynasty, not under the 19th, that the Exodus, or what passes for it, is placed by Manetho, and nearly all the old authorities. The opposite is frequently alleged, but we

¹ Gen. xiv.

² Thus, *e.g.*, Conder in *The Bible and the East*, p. 29; others, as Sayce place it higher.

³ It will be necessary to assume,—a view not without support and probability—that Rameses II. enlarged and improved older cities. Rameses was apparently the name of a district before it was the name of a city, and so is mentioned in the life of Jacob (Gen. xlvii. 11). Compare Canon Cook's "Essay," pp. 466, 486.

shall see immediately with how little reason.¹ The confusion and corruption of these old notices and lists, preserved by Josephus and the ecclesiastical historians, are known to every student of the subject, but we shall not plunge further here than we can help into this thicket.² A few points, however, stand out fairly clear. Our attention is naturally first directed to the two passages from Manetho, quoted by Josephus as having a bearing on the Exodus. These are,—

1. The account of the expulsion of the Hyksos from Egypt by a king Tethmosis, whom no one doubts to belong to the 18th dynasty.³

2. The story of the expulsion of the lepers by Amenophis.⁴ This Amenophis it is customary to identify with Merenptah. But, in the first place, Amenophis is not naturally Merenptah (Menephtah, in the lists ἀμμενεφθῆς, with variants);⁵ and next, it is not observed that Manetho gives a further statement about the king he means, which absolutely fixes him down to the 18th dynasty. He had an adviser, he tells us, of the same name with himself—Amenophis, the son of Paapios, a man of extraordinary wisdom. This is evidently no other than the famous Amenhotep, the son of Hapis, who bore this character, and rose to the highest honours, in the court of Amenhotep III., in the 18th dynasty.⁶ The Sethos (called also Rampses), following this Amenophis in the story, must be identified with the Seti at the *beginning*

¹ Canon Cook in his "Essay" takes a similar view, though his line is different from ours. "The Exodus," he says, "is assumed by all ancient chronologers, who derived their information from Egyptian sources, to have taken place under the 18th dynasty (pp. 451-2).

² The texts are given in Müller's *Fragmenta Hist. Græcorum*, which we use as our authority.

³ *Contra Apion*, i. 14.

⁴ *C. A.*, i. 26.

⁵ Amenophis for Merenptah in Josephus, *C. A.*, i. 15, where Africanus and Eusebius have as above, is probably a corruption; so in Canon of Eusebius (not Chronicon).

⁶ See Brugsch, *Hist. of Egypt*, i. pp. 423-6; Flinders Petrie, ii. p. 196.

of the 19th dynasty, not with Seti II. after Merneptah.¹ Names and dates throughout are in sorriest confusion, but the story is evidently an 18th dynasty one.

The other notices agree with this result. Chæremon gives another version of the leper story in which the Israelites are led out by Joseph and Moses (!), and the king also is Amenophis.² Eusebius put the Exodus for some reason a little later, under a king Achencheres, but still under the 18th dynasty.³ The one absurd exception is the foolish story of Lysimachus, who puts the Exodus under Bocchoris, of the 24th dynasty (!)⁴

We are not, however, yet quite done with Manetho. It is commonly assumed that the confusion of the Israelites with the Hyksos, or shepherd kings, belongs solely to Josephus, and is not shared by Manetho, whose narrative the historian misunderstands. This is, to say the least, doubtful. If we could depend on the genuineness of another quotation which Josephus gives from Manetho, "The nation, thus called shepherds, was also called captives in their sacred books,"⁵ it would put the matter beyond doubt. It is not an improbable hypothesis that Manetho merged the Israelites among the other nomads whom he groups under the designation Hyksos, and regards their exodus as the last act in the expulsion of the latter.⁶ The language he employs in describing their departure bears a singular re-

¹ The statements from Manetho in Josephus, etc., about this Sethos and Ramesses cannot be harmonized. Sometimes the two are brothers; sometimes the same person with different names; now they are placed after Merneptah (19th dynasty); again (in Eusebius, etc.) before Merneptah. In Manetho's leper-story Sethos appears in quite another series of events.

² Josephus, *C. A.*, i. 32.

³ Cf. Josephus, *C. A.*, i. 15; Flinders Petrie, *Hist.*, ii. p. 28. Syncellus says that Eusebius in this stands in contradiction with all other authorities (Müller, p. 578).

⁴ *C. A.*, i. 33.

⁵ *C. A.*, i. 14.

⁶ Dr. Naville shows that the expulsion of the Hyksos took place gradually, and continued as late as Thothmes III. *Transactions of Vict. Institute*, July 5, 1889.

semblance in many ways to the Scripture narrative. He tells how they were shut up by a king whom he calls Alisphragmuthosis¹ in a place named Avaris; how his son Thummosis (or Tethmosis), failing to dislodge them, came to an agreement with them that they should leave Egypt, and go whithersoever they would; how after this they went away with their whole families and effects, not fewer than 240,000 in number, and took their journey from Egypt, through the wilderness, for Syria; and how they built a great city in the country now called Judæa, and named it Jerusalem."² Nor does this conflict with the leper story, accurately read, for this latter folds back on the previous narrative, and describes help as being sought "from those who had been driven out of the land by Tethmosis to the city called Jerusalem,"³ who sent 200,000 men to aid the revolution of Osarsiph. It is more than likely that this second story, so far as it has any basis in fact, is a confused reminiscence of some purely native Egyptian event, and does not refer to the Exodus at all. The awkward mention of Moses at the end may well, in that case, be the result of interpolation.

A glance may be taken, finally, before passing to a positive statement, at the *time* when Manetho supposes this peaceable departure of a large body of his shepherds for Judæa (which Josephus, with some justice, identifies with the Exodus) to happen. The king is Tethmosis, and his father bears the name of Alisphragmuthosis, or more correctly Misphragmuthosis, as given by Eusebius.⁴ The confusion of order in the lists of the 18th dynasty, as compared with the monuments, is great, but this is evidently

¹ This is in all probability a simple misreading for Misphragmuthosis, as given in Eusebius (Armen. and Syncellus)—a supposition which solves some difficulties; and is again equivalent to Misphra-Tuthmosis. Thus Müller, *Fragmenta*, pp. 567, 588.

² *C. A.*, i. 14; cf. i. 26.

³ This view has been suggested by several writers.

⁴ See note above.

the king who appears with the same title 6th or 7th in the lists, and whom Prof. Flinders Petrie identifies with Amenhotep II. The Tethmosis, in this case, would be Thothmes IV. It seems to us more probable that the long designation is a reduplication of the name of the great king Thothmes III., who immediately precedes (Mispheguthmosis), and that Amenhotep II. is somehow omitted.¹ The king of the Exodus, therefore, will be one of the immediate successors of Thothmes III., viz., Amenhotep II., or Thothmes IV., a result the bearings of which will be seen directly. If, now, these same two names are found in Josephus's list at the *beginning* of the 18th dynasty, in place of the Amos (Aahmes) of Africanus, Eusebius, and the monuments, and so appear twice, this is explained by the fact that it was under Aahmes that the expulsion of the shepherds began, and some corrector may have thought that this was the proper place for the names to be introduced.

We now hasten to a brief statement of the positive suggestions we are disposed to make for a solution of this question, in harmony with the monumental evidence. Let us take first the indications which the Biblical books themselves afford, and see whither they lead. We begin with the categorical statement in 1 Kings vi. 1 that 480 years had elapsed from the Exodus to the founding of the Temple in the fourth year of Solomon.² The date is checked somewhat by the round 300 years given in Judges xi. 26 as the term to the days of Jephthah, showing at least that the Hebrews had a serious method of reckoning for the great events of their history. Starting, then, with 969 B.C. as

¹ The succession is Misaphris, Misphris, or Mephres, which most agree is Thothmes III.; then this Mispheguthmosis, or Mephramuthosis. Similar reduplications occur later in the lists. Cf. Flinders Petrie, *Hist. of Egypt*, ii. pp. 25-29. The suggestion of a reduplication is made in *The Theological Monthly* for March, 1889.

² We are aware of the doubts which attach to this number (the Septuagint, *e.g.*, gives 440, and Josephus, etc., do not mention it). But these doubts may be carried too far, and it is only fair to give the number a trial.

the date of the founding of the Temple, or taking it, with some high authorities, a few years later, about 965 B.C., we are brought approximately to 1445 B.C. as the period of the Exodus. Starting, again, on the upper side, from the date of Chedorlaomer, which we take, as before, at about 2100 B.C., and accepting 650 years or thereby as the Biblical interval from Abraham to the Exodus, we are brought to almost exactly the same point, 1450 B.C. This coincidence is a striking one, and suggests that we cannot be far wrong on either side. Taking next the Biblical *datum* for the duration of the sojourn in Egypt, 430 years,¹ and reckoning upwards, we get approximately 1880 B.C. for the descent into Egypt. We have now to compare these figures with the data of the monuments, and observe what synchronisms they yield. The results will prove sufficiently striking.

We have seen that the astronomical calculations of Dr. Mahler, confirming those of others, have succeeded in fixing with tolerable certainty the dates of Thothmes III., the most powerful Pharaoh of the 18th dynasty.² The years of his *sole* reign, as given in Prof. Petrie's table, are from 1481 B.C. to 1449 B.C. On this showing, our date for the Exodus would fall in the first years of his successor, Amenhotep II., and it is at least singular that though this monarch had an ascertained reign of over twenty-five years, "no monuments are dated above the fifth year—of the remainder of his reign we know nothing."³ It will be observed that this also is precisely the period in which Manetho places the departure of the shepherds who made their way to Judæa. Those who put the Exodus in the next reign, that of Thothmes IV., have the support of his Tethmosis; but

¹ Exod. xii. 40, 41.

² The succession of reigns in this dynasty was as follows: Aahmes, Amenhotep I., Thothmes I., II., III., Amenhotep II., Thothmes IV., Amenhotep III., Amenhotep IV. (Khunaten), etc.

³ Flinders Petrie, *Hist. of Egypt*, ii. pp. 155-7.

if, as we conjecture, his Misphragmuthosis is no other than Thothmes III., then the son of the latter would be, not Thothmes IV., but Amenhotep II., whom Manetho seems to omit. Meanwhile, we ask attention to our remaining date—that of the Descent into Egypt. According to all ancient testimony, Joseph went down into Egypt in the reign of the Shepherd King Apophis, or Apepi, whom it is customary to identify with the king of that name at the close of the Shepherd dynasty. The difficulty in this is—apart from the general chronology—that it would make Joseph outlive the great revolution which overthrew that dynasty, and established the 18th under Aahmes—a most improbable supposition. The Hyksos period, however, is now better understood, and it seems well ascertained that the six kings in the list of Josephus belong, not to the end, but to the *commencement* of the Shepherd rule.¹ There was, in fact, as the monuments show, an Apepi I., as well as an Apepi II., and when we turn to Prof. Petrie's table to find the dates of this older Apepi, when the Shepherd rule was in its prime, and extended over all Egypt, we find them given as 1898 B.C. to 1837 B.C., *i.e.*, again, precisely the period within which, on our reckoning, the life of Joseph, and the Descent into Egypt (1880 B.C.) fall. Coincidences so remarkable are surely not quite accidental.

Let us return for a moment to the reigns of Thothmes III., and of Amenhotep II., his son. If the Exodus falls, as we have placed it, in the first years of Amenhotep II., then the great Thothmes will take the place of Rameses II. as the oppressor of the Hebrews. Few who have read the annals of his reign will doubt that the conditions of the Israelitish history are fulfilled in it in a remarkable degree. A mighty builder, warrior, and conqueror, whose total reign extended through the long period of fifty-four years, he is exactly the kind of personage depicted for us in the Book of Exodus.

¹ C. A., i. 15. This, indeed, Josephus himself says.

It is to his reign, as is well known, that the famous tomb-picture of the brick-making by captives belongs, so often used as an illustration of the labours of the oppressed Israelites. The overseers are armed with sticks, and one of them speaks to the labourers, "The stick is in my hand, be not idle."¹ Many sunburnt bricks, bearing the stamp of Thothmes, have been discovered made without straw, whereas ordinarily chopped straw is used.² But there are other coincidences of this reign even more remarkable. For the lengthened period of thirty-five years, since the death of Thothmes I., the government of Egypt had been practically controlled by a woman—the bold and energetic Hatasu. This princess was first associated with her own father, Thothmes I., in the government; then, on his death, became the wife and consort of her feeble half-brother, Thothmes II.; lastly, exercised the government for over twenty years in association with her other brother (or nephew), Thothmes III., dying about 1481.³ This, in the first place, gives a remarkable continuity to the government for some eighty years before the Exodus, strikingly in agreement with the indications in the history; and, secondly, one can hardly help seeing in it a remarkable coincidence with the prominence there given to "Pharaoh's daughter" in the deliverance and upbringing of Moses. If Moses was, as commonly supposed, about eighty years old at the time of the Exodus, his birth would fall in the later years of Thothmes I., when Hatasu, his daughter—who at the time of association in rule "was about twenty-four years of age, of great capacity and power"⁴—was just attaining to woman-

¹ Brugsch, *Hist. of Egypt*, i. pp. 375-6.

² Palmer, *Egyptian Chronicles*, i. pp. 194-5. But such bricks are not confined to this reign or period; they are found, e.g., at Pithom.

³ See on her reign and character, Petrie, *Hist. of Egypt*, ii. pp. 79-96.

⁴ Petrie, *Hist. of Egypt*, p. 95. Moses' flight to Midian would, on this view, be close on the time of her death, when Thothmes III. was taking the full reins of power into his own hands.

hood. A more exact correspondence could not be conceived. As respects Amenhotep II., it is to be observed that he was yet young at his father's death—probably not above eighteen, and would consequently be about twenty-five years of age at the date we assume for the Exodus.¹ This decease of an old and powerful king, and the accession of one young and inexperienced, yet vain-glorious over his early expeditions and victories—as the monuments show him to have been—again suits well the conditions pictured in Exodus ii. 23, and following chapters.² As remarked above, the monuments preserve an unbroken silence on the events of his reign after the fifth year, though a wine-jar, dated in his twenty-sixth year, shows that the twenty-five years ten months assigned him by Manetho are not too long for his rule. He had several sons, but it is at least worth noticing “that unhappily all their names have been erased” from the monument that records them, except that of Thothmes IV., his successor.³

If the considerations we have advanced have, in their combination, any weight, their interest assuredly is not lessened by one coincidence yet to be mentioned. We have glanced at the bearings of our assumed date for the Exodus in an upward direction, and have seen its agreement with the time of Chedorlaomer, and the Descent into Egypt. When we look downwards, passing the unimportant reign of Thothmes IV., to the reign of his successors, Amenhotep III. and Amenhotep IV., we find ourselves, within a few

¹ He was born at Memphis, where the Court at this time sometimes had its residence (Petrie, *Hist. of Egypt*, ii. p. 162).

² On the other hand, the reign of Merenptah, as we now know it, seems eminently unsuitable for the Exodus. It was marked in its fifth year by the successful repelling of a great tempest of foreign invasion; this was followed by a period of marked tranquillity and security; in his eighth year, tribes from Edom were welcomed to settle in Succoth, etc.

³ Flinders Petrie, *Hist. of Egypt*, ii. pp. 154, 165. Amenhotep claims Palestine as a captive country (p. 157), which would give an upward limit by showing that the Israelites were not in Canaan then.

decades from our Exodus date, in the midst of the period on which such a flood of light has recently been cast by the recovered cuneiform correspondence of Tell-el-Amarna. It will be in itself a most interesting result if it should turn out, as probably it will, that this period of intense literary activity, and active communication between Egypt and Canaan, was not, as has been supposed, some century and a half before the Exodus, but was the very age of the Exodus itself.¹ On our hypothesis, the correspondence between Ebed-Tob of Jerusalem and the "heretic" king, Amenhotep IV., or Khunaten, would synchronise with the events described in Joshua or the early chapters of Judges. But just here we come on the remarkable fact—to which Conder and others have justly called attention—that these letters of the king of Jerusalem are full of appeals, and of expressions of terror occasioned by the resistless advance of a fierce people whom he calls 'Abiri, or *Khabiri*, coming from Seir, reducing to tribute the Canaanitish towns, and overturning the power of Egypt in Jerusalem and in the Philistine plains.² Flinders Petrie, Sayce, and others translate *Khabiri* simply by "confederates,"³ but Colonel Conder translates it boldly by "Hebrews," and observes, "It appears, therefore, that the 'Abiri conquest was not a mere local rising; it was the invasion of a people from the land of the 'Abiri, who came from Seir, and who destroyed all the rulers, and apparently wrecked the Canaanite temples. They refused to give tribute, and swept over all the country of Judah as far as Carmel, south of Hebron. . . . The tone of all the Canaanite letters is a despairing cry for help to Egypt, but

¹ The bearing cannot be overlooked in the composition of the literary sources of the Pentateuch.

² See the passages quoted in Conder's *The Bible and the East*, pp. 40, 41, 103-7; also *Tell Amarna Tablets*, pp. 141-57.

³ See *Hist. of Egypt*, p. 315. Prof. Petrie says, "The name points, therefore, to Hebron . . . Hebron was so named between the time of Abraham's visit and the Exodus." But this is hardly so. The name was Kirjath-Arba up to the time of the Conquest (Judges i. 10, etc.).

none of them record that any help was sent, though eagerly expected. They relate no victories over the 'Abiri, and the history of the reign of Amenophis IV. shows us only defeat and disaster."¹ Dr. Steindorff, a leading Egyptologist, in his recent notice,² thinks that the new discovery gives higher probability to the conjecture that the *Khabiri* are identical with the Hebrews. It is too early yet to say how this controversy will settle itself, but the indications, so far as they go, tally well with our hypothesis.

Here we are content to leave the issue. There is probably no single point we have advanced to which, in the divergent state of Egyptological opinion, exception of some kind may not be taken; but the same may be said with confidence of any theory that can be proposed. It is evident that the force of an argument of this kind lies largely in the connection of points as a whole, and in fairness this should be kept in view in judging of it. It is possible that, as Colonel Conder and others think, the Exodus may have taken place a little later than we put it—in the reign of Thothmes IV., but we think the conditions are better fulfilled in the previous reign. An earlier date, as in the reign of Thothmes II. (Canon Cook's hypothesis), seems precluded by the relations of the Pharaohs to Palestine; and those who adopted this date were usually led to it by too high a date for the founding of the Temple.³ The possibilities, if the Exodus is to be relegated to the 18th dynasty at all, lie within very narrow limits, and we have given reasons which seem to us of no little force for placing it where we do.

JAMES ORR.

¹ pp. 41, 106. The conjecture that the *Khabiri* were Hebrews was originally Dr. H. Zimmern's. Conder's suggestion was made independently in *Quart. Statement of Pal. Ex. Fund*, June, 1891. He thinks the term derived from the 'Abarim, or mountains E. of Jordan (*Tell Amarna Tablets*, p. 141).

² See *Zeitschrift für die alttest. Wissenschaft*, 1896, 2nd Part, p. 333.

³ 1012 B.C., since modified by Assyriological discovery.