

more detailed questions cannot claim to have received so decisive an answer as the general question: Have crocodiles existed in Palestine?

It is possible that with more settled conditions and increasing facilities for the investigation of Palestine questions, we may yet obtain evidence that crocodiles still exist, and at the same time add to the exceedingly meagre store of first-hand evidence of those who have seen them.

THE RED SEA (*YAM SŪPH*).

BY THE LATE JOSEPH OFFORD, M.R.A.S.

IN a lecture delivered before the "Institut Egyptien," and subsequently published under the title of *The Ten Plagues and the Passage of the Red Sea*, which also forms part of his book *From the Garden of Eden to the Crossing of the Jordan*, Sir William Willcocks used much of the information supplied in popular writings of Egyptologists upon the subject, including those of the late Dr. Brugsch.

From the views of the latter, or perhaps more from his personal knowledge of the Eastern Delta and the Palestine boundary upon the side of Egypt, Sir William has been led to the theory that the route adopted by Moses for the people, after leaving Egypt, was that along the Mediterranean littoral, on the coast road to Gaza, and that the *Yam Sūph* (or "Sea of Weeds," or "Reeds") of the Hebrew story in which Pharaoh's army was engulfed, was the Serbonic Marsh in the neighbourhood of Pelusium.¹ This was the district in which, according to Diodorus, a similar disaster befell a Persian army.

Sir William also, from his special knowledge of the Delta irrigation, past and present, includes in the term *Yam Sūph*, the ancient Pelusiatic or easternmost branch of the Nile.²

It may be pointed out that those Egyptologists who have possessed the profoundest knowledge of the old Egyptian writings,

¹ See *From the Garden of Eden*, p. 62.

² *Op. cit.*, p. 71. In support of the suggestion he there quotes Numb. xxxiii, 9; but verse 10 ("They left the *Yam Sūph* and camped in the Wilderness of Sin") would indicate the sea bordering the Sinai Peninsula.

including the Demotic script, which was rather obscure to scholars when Brugsch wrote, have never countenanced his hypothesis, and that since his time no monumental or papyrus text has been discovered directly supporting it.¹

To sustain Sir W. Willcocks' suggestion that the Pelusiatic Nile-arm, which, in Pharaonic and Persian times, was a wide and important fluvial artery, and the Serbonic marshy gulf, were intended by the term *Yam Sūph*, instead of those words signifying the "Red Sea," it becomes necessary, if possible, to re-identify several cities, posts and places mentioned in the Old Testament with those occurring in the Egyptian records of Eastern Delta topography as being different from those hitherto accepted by Egyptologists and Hebrew scholars.

In his researches upon this part of his subject Sir William does not appear to have studied the translation of the important but only partially legible papyrus in the Cairo Museum, first shortly summarised by Spiegelberg in that Collection's catalogue of Demotic papyri. This manuscript once contained what may be properly described as a Ptolemaic Gazetteer of the Delta. The catalogue of places it contains was more fully explained by M. G. Daressy, as commented upon at the time in the *Quarterly Statement*, because it so strikingly illustrates the geography of the earlier stages of the Exodus.

Its evidence is directly opposed to Sir William's theory, and therefore M. Daressy has now published, under the title *L'Exode et la Passage de la Mer Rouge*, an address which he delivered before the Société Sultanieh de Géographie explaining his own views as well as other Egyptological opinions, especially rediscussing place-names that occurred in the Cairo papyrus.

In the following remarks, attention will almost entirely be directed to the question as to what is the correct identification of the water indicated by the term *Yam Sūph*, leaving for another occasion the numerous other sites situated upon the Exodus route discussed by M. Daressy and others. In that specialist's introduc-

¹ Brugsch trusted to two inscriptions which he relied upon as saying that Rameses changed the name of the town of Tanis to Pi Rameses, but this was not universally accepted. In the *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, V, Dr. Alan Gardiner prints two lengthy essays to prove that the city of Rameses, which the Israelites helped to build, was near Pelusium, and, therefore, far distant from Pithom—the other town upon whose erection they were employed. This, if correct, would favour Sir William's view.

tion he expressly states that the conclusions he arrives at are attained purely from a scientific sifting of the geographical evidence, resigning to others any questions of religion or sentiment. If, therefore, he reaches decisions directly opposed to those of Sir W. Willcocks, it will be a more complete corroboration of the Exodus history than if he were biased by any theological presuppositions.

In our view the Brugsch-Willcocks theory contradicts the Hebrew records which, according to the Masoretic, the early Samaritan, and the Ptolemaic LXX versions, all agree that the people were led by way of the Wilderness of the Red Sea (*Yam Sūph*, יַם סוּף), and that, because they were not permitted to proceed "by way of the Philistines," that is to say, by the Mediterranean shore road, Moses or his guides appear, momentarily, to have hesitated which route to take when they were advancing eastward from the Wadi Tumilat, and their leader is said to have received supernatural instructions to "turn and encamp between Migdol, opposite Baal Zephon by the sea."¹ M. Daressy points out that the Hebrew words do not really mean a *volte face* or retracing of part of their track, but that what they signify is a deflection to the south, or to their right, there by the Red Sea border.

Confining attention to the true location of the *Yam Sūph*, the following remarks are mostly supplementary to those of M. Daressy. A very important factor in the matter is the meaning which an Israelite or Jewish writer would attach to the word *Yam*. Sir William endeavours to prove it might designate a river, as it does in Semitic, a variety of seas, and also a shallow lake. Sir William quotes Numb. xxxiii, 9, as supporting his view that the *Yam Sūph* was the Pelusiac Nile. But verse 8 is opposed to this. There the travellers pass through the *Yam Sūph* to Marah, then on to Elim and back to the *Yam Sūph*, and, in verse 11, left it finally to enter the Sin desert.

As to his contention that *Yam* may denote a river in the Hebrew, surely a fatal objection is Isaiah xix, 5: "The sea (*Yam*)

¹ As mentioned in a previous note upon Pithom, as the Israelites neared the Palestine frontier, they reached districts where Syrian deities were permitted to have shrines as well as Egyptian ones. Baal Saphan was a Semitic god. In the inscription in Aramaic of Zakir prince of Laish, published by M. Pognon, he mentions a Baal Saphon. See *Q.S.*, 1917, p. 140, for further references to Baal Saphan.

and the river" (*Nahar*). It is to be admitted that upon two occasions the Nile and Euphrates are so called, but no other river is so named. This is probably a kind of poetic hyperbole, founded upon the fact that they annually overflowed their banks, turning their border lands into temporary seas.

Large and deep water lakes, such as Genessaret or the Dead Sea, might be termed a *Yam*, but not such shallow waters as the Serbonic lake or Pelusiatic Nile branch, which latter Sir William claims as part of the Hebrew *Yam Sūph*.

This philological discussion is necessary because it dominates the question as to what water was meant by the *Yam Sūph*. Brugsch argued that, instead of meaning "sea-weed," or reeds of a salt-water sea, *Sūph* was a translation of Egyptian *fitou*, reeds, frequently meaning the fresh-water papyrus plants, which might have grown in an ancient lake (Menzaleh). The first trace in the Exodus narrative of *Yam Sūph*, meaning, "a Sea of Weeds," is found in the Coptic Version,¹ which, as is well known, is a slavish reproduction of the Greek LXX. But in Exodus the translators appear to have gone elsewhere, for they make the *Yam Sūph* into "The Sea of Shari." Theophrastus, Pliny, and Hesychius inform us that *Sari* (*σάρι*) was the name of an Egyptian water-plant.

But direct evidence upon our subject is overwhelming. First, it may be mentioned that the Hebrew-Egyptian translators of the Septuagint would be particularly likely to know what *Yam Sūph* was intended for, and to obviate any geographical misapplication of the name they render it Erythrean Sea. The Hebrew writers frequently refer to the *Yam Sūph* in passages unconnected with the Exodus.² Three of these indubitably can only mean the Red Sea. Thus, Exod. xxiii, 31, speaks of their promised land as stretching from the *Yam Sūph* to "the Sea of the Philistines," the last certainly standing for the Mediterranean. There is also a series of texts proving that the Hebrews used the words for a definite maritime geographical area, of which the Gulf of Akaba formed part. Thus, Numb. xxi, 4: "They journeyed by way of the *Yam Sūph*, from Mount Hor, to compass the land of Edom." In 1 Kings ix, 26, it

¹ There is a Coptic word $\chi\omicron\omicron\tau\phi$, which W. Max Muller thought might be identified with Egyptian *tu:fi* of a XIXth dynasty text.

² When the Hebrew writers had occasion to mention the Mediterranean, they called it the "Great Sea," or the "Western Sea" as in Josh. i, 4: "The great sea toward the going down of the Sun"; see also Numb. xxxiv, 6.

says: "Solomon made ships in Ezion Geber on the shore of the *Yam Sūph*." Here, however, the LXX translates the words (not as elsewhere identifying them) as "extremity of the sea" τῆς ἐσχάτης θαλάσσης), showing that they connected *Sūph* with the Hebrew *soph*, meaning extremity, or latter portion, and that they had thus no idea it stood for weed when used in the duplicate *Yam Sūph*.¹ Deut. i, 1, reads: "The words Moses spoke in the Wilderness, over against the *Sūph*, between Paran, Tophel, Laban, Hazeroth, and Dizahab." The R.V. reads: "In the Arabah over against the Red Sea." Numb. xiv, 25, and Deut. i, 40, confirm this. The list of halting places of the tribe in Numb. xxxiii, 6-12, and especially the site of Elim, which is either Ayūn Musa or Wadi Gharandel, clearly show that the northernmost projection of the Suez Gulf was included in the *Yam Sūph*. Also Deut. ii. 1-4, confirm the Gulf of Akaba as being embraced in the term. Jeremiah, much later, uses the words for the Akabah Gulf, because he says of the cries of the Edomites, whose territory was south of the Dead Sea, that they would be heard by the *Yam Sūph*.

The fact that the *Yam Sūph* was a Hebrew term for the Red Sea was known to their Semitic kinsmen, because Makrizi, when writing of Qalzoun being invaded by water, says it was by the sea called by the Hebrews *Yam Sūph*.

In any study of the question it is necessary to remember that at the Exodus era the Red sea extended further north towards modern Kantara than it does now. Isaiah (xi, 15) alludes to this in a prophecy of "the drying up of the tongue of the Sea of Egypt." This is a curious coincidence with the LXX in having applied the term extremity, or tip, to the similar ending of the Gulf of Akabah.

The fulfilment of the announcement must only have been partly accomplished by Roman times, because some of their geographers

¹ That *Sūph* was used for a sea water-weed is evident when the writer of Jonah ii, 5, speaks of it clinging around his head in the Mediterranean. It is true Moses was laid in the *Sūph* by the *Yeor*, but the last may mean an ancient canal or Nile-branch. In Isaiah xix, 6, the passage may read, "yeor brook of defence," namely, a sort of moat-canal between Palestine and Egypt. There is a remarkable coincidence between Isaiah's prophecy, verses 5 and 23, that "the river shall be dried up," and, "the Assyrian shall come into Egypt." Ears-haddon, in his account of his invasion of Egypt, speaks of its border river as *Nahal Musur*, and mentions that during this campaign it was "in drought," see Dhorme, *La Bible et l'Assyrie*, 1911, p. 201, who does not mention the parallel.

call Suez the Heroopolite Gulf, meaning that the sea at that time, although very shallow, reached to Heroopolis, or Pithom, the modern Tell el-Maskhutah. The savants Napoleon sent to survey Egypt came to a similar conclusion from geological evidence solely, from the quantities of recent shell-deposits of existing Red Sea species which showed that the sea had not long receded from as far up as Sabâ Biar. To this may be added as old Egyptian record that upon a sarcophagus found near Kantara, its owner's office under the administration is stated to be that of "preposé aux portes de la Mer." Without straining the meaning, it would seem he was a sort of inspector of the Mediterranean-Suez Isthmus port, and of the Red Sea one, and resided at Kantara, as being about midway between the two. If during his time there was a canal uniting the two seas (as we are told did exist for centuries) he may have had the guardianship of its north and south entries.

THE WATER SUPPLY OF DAMASCUS.¹

By E. W. G. MASTERMAN.

DAMASCUS lives on and lives from its vast irrigated plain known as the Ghûtah, and this is, and has always been, supplied by the two rivers known in Old Testament times (2 Kings v, 12) as the Amana (or Abana) and Pharpar, and to-day as the Barada and Awaj. Of these the most important and, so far as the actual city is concerned, the exclusive source of supply is the first named, the Barada—the Amana of Naaman, and the Chrysorrhœas of the Greeks. This river has its highest source about twenty-three miles from the city at 'Ain Barada, a spring rising in a pool three hundred yards long, situated at the southern end of a small plain in the Anti-Lebanon, nine miles north of Hermon. The stream flows through rush-grown muddy banks until it reaches the extreme southeast corner of the plain, where it plunges into the great winding rift leading in steep descent to the eastern desert. Down this, together with

¹ Portions of this article appeared in the *Expository Times* and in the *Biblical World* some years ago.