

Undoubtedly, the most important mention of Israel outside the Bible is that in the Merneptah, or "Israel," Stela. Discovered in 1896 in Merneptah's mortuary temple in Thebes by Flinders Petrie, the stela is a poetic eulogy to pharaoh Merneptah, who ruled Egypt after Rameses the Great, ca. 1212-1202 BC. Of significance to Biblical studies is a short section at the end of the poem describing a campaign to Canaan by Merneptah in the first few years of his reign, ca. 1210 BC. One line mentions Israel: "Israel is laid waste, its seed is not." Here we have the earliest mention of Israel outside the Bible and the only mention of Israel in Egyptian records.



The Merneptah Stela, now in the Cairo Museum, is probably the most analyzed ancient text outside of the Bible.

Since the date of the reference to Israel in the Merneptah Stela is during the time of the judges, prior to the establishment of the monarchy, it is of crucial importance to understanding Israel's formative period. For example, a popular theory among Biblical scholars today is that Israel emerged from peoples indigenous to Canaan in the mid 12th century BC. If this is true, then Biblical history and chronology prior to ca. 1150 BC would have to be jettisoned.

Proponents of the "12th century emergence theory" maintain that the Israelites did not come into Canaan from outside to conquer the land around 1400 BC, as the Bible indicates. The emergence scenario would also reject the historicity of the Wilderness Wanderings, Exodus, Egyptian Sojourn and the Patriarchal narratives. However, if Israel were an established entity in Canaan already in 1210 BC, as the Merneptah Stela implies, then the 12th century emergence theory would be refuted (Bimson 1991). If Israel was well established by the end of the 13th century, it could not have come into being in the middle of the next century.

As a result, the Merneptah Stela has been meticulously scrutinized and analyzed by scholars, perhaps more so than any text outside the Bible. They are out to determine what it "really" says, not that they would want to force any preconceived notions on the text! Michael G. Hasel, a doctoral candidate at the University of Arizona, has recently reviewed the various interpretations concerning the reference to Israel in the stela. Furthermore, he has done an in-depth linguistic study to determine as far as possible the intended meaning of text.

The discussion of the significance of Israel in the Merneptah stela revolves around the meaning of two words: "Israel" and "seed." A number of possibilities have been suggested, as summarized by Hasel. Scholars have

implied that the name Israel could be interpreted as Iezreel or Jezreel, the valley to the north of the country. Another idea is that the name has a descriptive meaning ("the wearers of the side lock") and applies to the Libyans. Or, in the time of Merneptah, the name Israel was a geographic term referring to a territory corresponding to Canaan. Hasel discusses the problems associated with each of these interpretations and concludes,

*Israel, identified by the determinative for people, is a socioethnic unity powerful enough to be mentioned along with major city-states that were also neutralized (1994: 51).*

Turning to the meaning of the Egyptian word *prt*, "seed," there are only two possibilities, "grain" or "offspring." Based on the use of *prt* in other Egyptian texts, Hasel deduces that it refers to grain. Thus, the phrase "its seed is not" indicates that Israel's food supply was no longer in existence. Hasel observes, *We may perceive Israel within the context and information of the Merneptah stela to be a rural sedentary group of agriculturalists without its own urban city-state support system (1994:54).*

This is exactly the picture we have of Israel from the Old Testament. Gideon lived close to the time of the Merneptah Stela and he was a farmer living in a small village (Judges 6).

Archaeological evidence supports the fact that the Israelites were agriculturalists in the late 13th century BC. Grain storage pits were a common feature of hill country sites of this period. Teeth from a tomb dating to ca. 1200 BC excavated by the Associates for Biblical Research at Kh. Nisya indicate that the inhabitants of the site ate grain.

Hasel's study of the Merneptah Stela is extremely important. It clears up a number of misconceptions and focuses attention on the true significance of the stela. It indicates that Israel was well established in Canaan in the late 13th century BC and was a significant political force to be reckoned with. Hasel concludes,

*Israel functioned as an agriculturally-based/sedentary socioethnic entity in the late 13th century B.C., one that is significant enough to be included in the military campaign against political powers in Canaan. ... While the Merneptah stela does not give any indication of the actual social structure of the people of Israel, it does indicate that Israel was a significant socioethnic entity that needed to be reckoned with (1994: 54; 56, n. 12).*

Scholars need to come to grips with these facts, which are entirely consistent with the Bible's description of Israel's origins.

#### RECOMMENDED FOR FURTHER READING:

1. Bimson, J.J. 1991 "Merneptah's Israel and recent Theories of Israelite Origins". *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 49: 3-29.

2. Hasel, M.G. 1994 "Israel in the Merneptah Stela". *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 296: 45-61.

## Biblical Archaeology: Evidence of the Exodus from Egypt

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### Merneptah Stele

One of the most important discoveries that relate to the time of the Exodus is the Merneptah stele which dates to about 1210 BC.

Merneptah, the king of Egypt, boasts that he has destroyed his enemies in Canaan. He states: Plundered is the Canaan with every evil; Carried off is Ashkelon; seized upon is Gezer; Yanoam is made as that which does



Merneptah pylon at University of Penn Museum

not exist; Israel is laid waste, his seed is not; (ANET 1969, 378). The word "Israel" here is written in Egyptian with the determinative for people rather than land (ANET 1969, 378 note 18). This implies that Israel did not have a king or kingdom at this time. This would be the time of the judges. The text also implies that Israel was as strong as the other cities mentioned, and not just a small tribe. The south to north order of the three city-states may provide a general location for Israel. There is an interesting place named in Joshua 15:9 and 18:15, "well of waters of Nephtoah," that may be the Hebrew name of Merneptah. The well which is probably anachronistically named after Merneptah would be near Jerusalem. The Egyptian Papyrus Anastasi III contains "The Journal of a Frontier Official" which mentions this well. It says: Year 3, 1st Month of the 3rd Season, Day 17. The Chief of Bowmen of the Wells of Merneptah Hotep-hir-Maat--life, prosperity, health!--which is (on) the mountain range, arrived for a (judicial) investigation in the fortress which is in Sile (ANET 1969, 258). Yurco has recently re-analyzed the Karnak battle reliefs, and has concluded that they should be ascribed to Merneptah and not Ramses II (1990, 21-38). There are four scenes which Yurco correlates with the Merneptah stele. One scene is the battle against the city of Ashkelon which is specifically named. Yurco argues that the

other two city scenes are Gezer and Yanoam. He concludes that the open country scene must be Israel. Rainey rejects this view because it shows them with chariots and infantry (1990, 56-60). Lawrence Stager suggests that the small horses pulling the chariot belong to pharaoh's army as in the Ashkelon scene (1985, 58). Rainey thinks the Shasu are Israelites, but others identify the Shasu as Edomites (Stager 1985, 60). Both scholars Yurco and Rainey agree that these battle scenes are from Merneptah's reign (Yurco 1991, 61; Rainey 1992, 73-4; Hess 1993, 134). Before the discovery of the Merneptah stele scholars placed the date of the exodus and entry into Canaan much later. They are now forced to admit that Israel was already in Canaan at the time of Merneptah. Israel was big and strong enough to challenge Egypt in battle. This stele puts a terminus ante quem date of 1210 BC for the exodus (McCarter 1992, 132).



Ancient bowl with curses  
against their enemies.  
Metro Museum of Art.

## Execration Texts

There are two types of execration texts from the 12th Dynasty of Egypt. The oldest type are inscribed red clay bowls that date to the reign of Sesostris III (1878-1842 BC). The second type, dating a generation or two later (Middle Bronze II, 1800-1630 BC) are clay figurines which list cities along major routes of travel (McCarter 1996, 43). The Egyptians practiced the magical cursing of their enemies by inscribing pottery bowls and figurines with the names of their enemies, and then smashing them to break the power of their enemies. "Iy-'anaq" is named which may be related to the Anaqim or giants who dwelt in Canaan before the conquest (ANET 1969, 328). There is the ruler of "Shutu" named Job. Shutu is probably Moab the sons of Sheth (Numbers 24:17; Ahituv 1984, 184). There are the rulers of Shechem, Hazor, Ashkelon, Laish, Tyre, and Pella ('Apiru-Anu). The ruler of Shamkhuna is Abu-reheni (Abraham). The tribes of 'Arqata and Byblos are mentioned (ANET 1969, 329). Jerusalem is named, but there is no mention of Israel. There is the interesting mention of the personal name "Zabulanu" which is similar to the cuneiform for "Zebulon" (ANET 1969, 329 note 6). This was probably not the son of Jacob, but just a popular name? In Ugaritic zbl is a place name (Gordon 1965, Text 1084:13; Glossary #815). Rohl finds the name Jacob and Joseph (Iysipi, E31), but this is

highly questionable (1995, 352; ANET 1969, 329). The Execration texts seems to parallel the time of the patriarchs.

## **Inscription of Khu-Sebek, Called Djaa**

A stele found at Abydos tells about an Asiatic campaign by Sen-User III (1880-1840 BC) which says: His majesty proceeded northward to overthrow the Asiatics. His majesty reached a foreign country of which the name was Sekmem. His majesty took the right direction in proceeding to the Residence of life, prosperity, and health. Then Sekmem fell, together with the wretched Retenu (ANET 1969, 230b). Some scholars think "Sekmem" is probably Shechem which is located in a pass between Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim. Shechem controlled an important trade route and the fertile valley to the East. It seems that Shechem was a very powerful and important city at the time of the patriarchs. The city was surrounded by massive embankments of earth with mudbrick walls on top. During the 17th century BC a rectangular fortress temple was built with walls 17 feet thick (Toombs 1985, 936; Wright 1962; See Judges 9:46). In the Amarna Letters the king at Shechem was Lab'ayu who was the most important ruler in central Palestine (Na'aman and Aviv 1992, 288). Lab'ayu is accused of going over to the side of the Hapiru. The Hapiru are probably the Hebrews during the time of the Judges. Joshua renews the covenant with Israel's leaders at Mount Ebal (Joshua 8) and again at Shechem (Joshua 24). Joshua never took Shechem so some scholars think that the Gibeonite deception included the city of Shechem (NIV, Joshua 9). Joseph's bones which were brought out of Egypt were buried at Shechem. There is no mention of Israel in this text.

## **The Story of Sinuhe**

The story of Sinuhe also gives us a background picture about Syria-Palestine life in the Middle Bronze Age which is most likely the patriarchal period. Sinuhe flees Egypt on hearing of the death of King Amenemhet I (1960 BC) and becomes an exile like Moses. His path of flight may have been similar to the Exodus, but his destination was Byblos. He says, "I came up to the Wall-of-the-ruler, made to oppose the Asiatic and to crush the Sand-Crossers....I halted at the Island of Kem-wer. An attack of thirst overtook me" (ANET 1969, 19; Lichtheim 1975, vol.1, 224; Gardiner 1916; Anati 1963, 386; Rainey 1972). This "Wall" is the fortresses on the eastern frontier near the present day Suez Canal. Kem-wer is the area of the Bitter Lakes. The ruler of the Upper Retenu (northern Palestine and southern Syria) then befriended him, and Sinuhe marries his eldest daughter. It is a tribal society which fights over pasture land and wells. One battle is similar to the story of David and Goliath. In his old age Sinuhe is allowed to return to Egypt. He leaves his eldest son in charge of his tribe and all his possessions of serfs, herds, fruit, and trees. Finally, Sinuhe receives a proper burial in a pyramid tomb. This story gives helpful background information, but there is no mention of Israel. There is a Movie called *The Egyptian* (1954) that tells the story of Sinuhe.

## **The Hyksos**



Hyksos princess crown



Tell el-Yahudiyeh ware

It seems most likely that Joseph rose to power during the time of the Hyksos, or just before in the 12th Dynasty when many Asiatics came into Egypt. It also seems most likely that the Exodus from Egypt should be equated with the expulsion of the Hyksos. Not all the Hyksos were Israelites. It says in Exodus that a great mixed multitude came out of Egypt with Moses (Exodus 12:38). The Greek name "Hyksos" was coined by Manetho to identify his fifteenth Dynasty of Asiatic rulers of northern Egypt. The word comes from the Egyptian Hk3(w) h3swt, which means "ruler(s) of foreign countries" (Meyers 1997, 3:133) which Manetho mistranslated as "Shepherd Kings". The Hyksos were of West Semitic background probably from southern Palestine who migrated down into northern Egypt during the 12th and 13th dynasties. At first they lived peacefully with the Egyptians until the deterioration of Egypt's power when in 1648 BC they captured the Egyptian capital at Memphis.

The Hyksos made Avaris their capital which is modern Tell ed-Dab'a, which was later known as Piramesse (Exodus 1:11). "Avaris" is the Greek term for the Egyptian Hwt-w'rt meaning "mansion of the desert plateau" (Meyers 1997 3:134). Other important Hyksos cities were Tell el-Yahudiyeh (meaning "mound of the Jews") known for its distinctive black and white ware, and Tell el-Maskhuta (probably Succoth in Exodus 12:37 NIV note, 13:20).

## Store Cities of Pithom and Rameses

Exodus 1:11 states, "So they put slave masters over them to oppress them with forced labor, and they built Pithom and Rameses as store cities for Pharaoh" (NIV).

Professor Hans Goedicke believes that the Biblical city of Ra'amezez is incorrectly equated with Pi-Ramesses. Hershel Shanks writing about Goedicke's view states, "But the fact is that the store city of Ra'amezez cannot be identified with Pi-Ramesses, the Residence of the Ramessides. This identification is impossible phonetically, as has been demonstrated conclusively more than 15 years ago (D.B.Redford, "Exodus I, II", *Vetus Testamentum*, Vol. 13, pp. 408-413, 1963). Moreover, the Residence of the Ramessides is never denoted in Egyptian sources by the use of the royal name Ramesses alone. When the Residence of the Ramessides is referred to, the royal name is always connected with the Egyptian

word pr, meaning house or residence: the reference is always in the form "Per Ramesses" (*BAR*, September/October 1981, p. 44).

Long before Per Ramesses, in the same area was Avaris the capital of the Hyksos kings and a border town when written in hieroglyphic transliteration is R3-mtny (Khatana) which is today called Tell ed-Dab'a and is being excavated by Manfred Bietak, Director of the Austrian Archaeological Institute in Cairo. The hieroglyphic R3-mtny can be projected back into Semitic transcription as Ramesen. Therefore Shanks concludes, "Biblical Ra'amezez can therefore almost certainly be identified with Tell el-Daba (*Ibid.*).

Pithom is most likely to be identified with Tell el-Rataba according to Goedicke (*Ibid.*)

## Jacob-El



Yakobher seal from Metro Museum of Art

According to the Turin king list there were six Hyksos kings who ruled for 108 years. One important ruler was named "Y'qbhr" or "Jacob-hr" (Albright 1934, 11). There have been several different translations of this name. Early scholars purposed the meaning of "Jacob-El" as "Jacob is my god", but Albright observed that the name is a name-pattern verb plus theophorous element (1935, 191, n.59; Ward 1976, 358). In Phoenician and Akkadian hr means "mountain". Ward states: Here hr, 'mountain,' appears as a synonym for 'ilu, 'god, much as Hebrew sur, 'rock,' and similar words were used, e.g., Suri-'el, 'El is my rock.' I would thus render Y'qb-hr as '(My mountain (i.e. god) protects,' which would be identical in meaning to Yahqub-'il (1976, 359). Hr meaning "mountain" or "rock" is identical to the word El or "god". In the Old Testament Zobel proposes: The name (Jacob) is a hyocoristic form of what was originally a theophorous name belonging to the class of statement-names made up of a divine name and the imperfect of a verb. Its full form, not found in the OT, was 'Jacob-El' (1990, 188-9; Shanks 1988, 24-25).

Therefore the name "Jacob" found in the Bible would be the same as the name "Jacob-El" which is found on a number of Hyksos Scarabs. Although this name was common among the Arameans, but uncommon among the Canaanites and Phoenicians (Zobel 1990, 189), R. Weil was the first to connect the Hyksos princes with the Biblical story of Jacob (Kempinski 1985, 134). In 1969 a scarab of Jacob-El

was found in the Middle Bronze II tomb at Shiqmona, a suburb of Haifa, that was from a mid-18th century deposit 100-80 years before the Hyksos (Kempinski 1985, 132-3). The Jacob-El of Shiqmona must have been a local Palestinian ruler, possibly the same Jacob of the Bible. According to Genesis 32:23-33 Jacob's name was changed to Israel. Steuernagel was the first to propose the idea of the "Jacob tribe" or "proto-Israelite Jacob group" (Zobel 1990, 194). It may be that the name "Israel" was not officially used until after the conquest of Canaan when a league of 12 tribes was formed. This would help explain the absence of the name "Israel" from early sources. Joseph Austrian Manfred Beitzak excavating Tell ed Dab'a, the ancient capital of the Hyksos, between 1984 to 1987 discovered a palace and garden dating back to the 12th Dynasty with a tomb containing a statue of an Asiatic with a mushroom hairstyle that some scholars think might be Joseph (Aling 1995, 33; 1981; Rohl 1995, 327-367). Much more evidence is needed to claim for certain that this is Joseph's tomb (Redford 1970). There is an interesting study done by Barbara Bell on the records of the Nile's water levels. She concluded that in the middle of the 12th Dynasty there were erratic Nile water levels that caused crop failure (Bell 1975, 223-269). Could this be Joseph's famine? There is "The Tradition of Seven Lean Years in Egypt" written during the Ptolemaic period about the reign of Djoser that states: To let thee know. I was in distress on the Great Throne, and those who are in the palace were in heart's affliction from a very great evil, since the Nile had not come in my time for a space of seven years. Grain was scant, fruits were dried up, and everything which they eat was short. Every man robbed his companion (ANET 1969, 31).

The Story of Two Brothers is an Egyptian text that dates to about 1225 BC that is very similar to the story of Joseph. This tale tells how a young man was falsely accused of a proposal of adultery by the wife of his older brother after he had rejected her advances (ANET 1969, 23-25; Lichtheim 1976, 2:203-211). In the 12th Dynasty Egyptian tomb of Khunum-hotep (1890 BC) at Beni Hasan is pictured a caravan of 37 Asiatics arriving in Egypt trading black eye paint (stibium) from the land of Shutu (ANEP 1969, fig. 3). The leader is named Ibsha and bears the title "ruler of foreign lands" from which the name "Hyksos" is derived (ANET 1969, 229). The land of Shutu is probably an ancient term for Gilead (Aharoni 1979, 146). The Ishmaelites who took Joseph down to Egypt came from Gilead through Dothan (Genesis 37:25). In the 13th Dynasty there were a number of Asiatics serving in Egyptian households. One text lists 95 servants from one Theban household with 37 of the names being Asiatics, and at least 28 females (ANET 1969, 553-4; Albright 1955, 222-233). There is a Asiatic women named Sekratu (line 13) which is related to "Issachar." In line 23 an Asiatic woman is called "Asher," and in line 37 another woman is called Aqaba which is related to "Jacob." This may indicate that some of the tribes of Israel were in Egypt at this time. In the Book of Sothis which Syncellus believed was the genuine Manetho it gives the specific time when Joseph rose to power under Hyksos king, Aphophis who ruled 61 years. It says: Some say that this king (Aphophis) was at first called Pharaoh, and that in the 4th year of his kingship Joseph came as a slave into Egypt. He appointed Joseph lord of Egypt and all his kingdom in the 17th year of his rule, having learned from him the interpretation of the dreams and having thus proved his divine wisdom (Manetho 1940, 239). Halpern



has concluded, "Overall, the Joseph story is a reinterpretation of the Hyksos period from an Israelite perspective" (1992, 98).



Coffin of Ahmos at Metro Museum of Art

## Expulsion of the Hyksos

The earliest document that describes the time of the Hyksos is from the Temple of Hat-shepsut (1486-1469 BC) At Speos Artemidos which says: Hear ye, all people and the folk as many as they may be, I have done these things through the counsel of my heart. I have not slept forgetfully, (but) I have restored that which had been ruined. I have raised up that which had gone to pieces formerly, since the Asiatics were in the midst of Avaris of the Northland, and vagabonds were in the midst of them, overthrowing that which had been made. They ruled without Re, and he did not act by divide command down to (the reign of) my majesty (ANET 1969, 231; Breasted 1988, 122-26; Shanks 1981, 49). The Hyksos worshipped Baal which was associated with the Egyptian god Seth. This led to the neglect of other gods and temples which upset the Egyptians. There is debate over the exact period of time that The Admonitions of Ipuwer describes. The text itself is from the 19th-20th Dynasty. John Van Seters strongly argues for the time of the Hyksos (1966, 103-120). It states: Foreigners have become people everywhere....the Nile is in flood....poor men have become the possessors of treasures....many dead are buried in the river....let us banish many from us....the River is blood (ANET 1969, 441; Lichtheim 1975, 1:151). This sounds similar to the event of the first plague against Egypt (Exodus 7:14-24). The river is not actually blood, but looks blood red because the Nile is flooding. Some speculate that the rest of the plagues are a result of the Nile flooding. The expulsion of the Hyksos was a series of campaigns which started with Kamose who was king in Thebes, and rebelled against the Hyksos. His son Ahmose was finally successful in pushing the Hyksos out. A commander named Ahmose records in his tomb the victory over the Hyksos. He says: When the town of Avaris was besieged, then I showed valor on foot in the presence of his majesty. Thereupon I was appointed to the ship, 'Appearing in Memphis.' Then there was fighting on the water in the canal Pa-Djedku of Avaris. Thereupon I made a capture, and I carried away a hand. It was reported to the king's herald. Then the Gold of Valor was given to me. Thereupon there was fighting again in this place....Then

Avaris was despoiled. Then I carried off spoil from there: one man, three woman, a total of four persons. Then his majesty gave them to me to be slaves. Then Sharuhen was besieged for three years. Then his majesty despoiled it (ANET 1969, 233). Note that Avaris was besieged, there is no mention of how Avaris was taken, and there is no burning of Avaris stated which still fits Josephus' account. Bietak who has been excavating ancient Avaris says that there is no evidence for a violent destruction of Avaris. He states: The archaeological material stops abruptly with the early 18th Dynasty. There are no scarabs of the 18th Dynasty type in Stratum D/2. The most likely interpretation is that Avaris was abandoned. No conflagration layer or corpses of slain soldiers have been found so far in the large and widely separated excavation areas A/II and A/V (Bietak 1988). The end of Avaris may have involved a surrender, or as Josephus has stated, an arranged retreat to Palestine (Against Apion 1.14.88, Bietak 1991, 47).

This exit from Egypt by the Hyksos probably included the Israelites as well. The story of the Exodus is most likely based on the expulsion of the Hyksos from Egypt, for there is no other record of any mass exit from Egypt (Robertson 1990, 36; Halpern 1994, 89-96; Redford 1897, 150). The evidence seems to fit well with Josephus' account. Although the Egyptians saw the expulsion of the Hyksos as a great military victory, the Israelites viewed this as a great salvation victory for them. This seems similar to other events recorded in ancient history where both sides claim a great victory. Ramses II battled with the Hittites and almost lost his life, yet he calls this a great victory, but so do the Hittites. In reality it was a stalemate, so they both signed a treaty (ANET 1969, 201; Soggin 1993, 213) Ahab is seen as a powerful king (ANET 1969, 279). Sennacherib claims a great victory over the Jews by taking 46 cities and surrounding Jerusalem. Hezekiah is said to be "like a bird in a cage" (ANET 1969, 288), yet he claims a great victory because Jerusalem is not captured. In the Mesha or Moabite stone (ANET 1969, 320) the king of Moab, Mesha claims a great victory over Israel, yet Israel claims a great victory over Moab (II Kings 3:4-27). So it seems that what the Egyptians saw as a great victory over the expulsion of the Hyksos, the Israelites saw as a great exodus victory of salvation.

## **The Sinai**

Archaeological surveys and excavations show that there was very little occupation during the Late Bronze Age (Anati 1986). This seems most likely due to Ahmose's campaign against the Hyksos, and to the Israelites migration to Canaan. The Israelites could not have come out of Egypt in the 14th century because of the lack of archaeological evidence in the Sinai. Two of the most influential German scholars von Rad and Noth argued, "The Exodus and Sinai traditions and the events behind them were originally unrelated to one another" (Nicholson 1973, 1). Von Rad saw the Sitz im Leben of the Sinai covenant in the feast of Tabernacles celebrated at Shechem while the settlement tradition was celebrated at Gilgal with the feast of Weeks. Von Rad also saw Heilsgeschichte (salvation history) strikingly silent about Sinai events (Deut. 26:5b-9). Noth put forth the idea that "early Israel took the form of a tribal league on the analogy of the city-state confederations later attested in Greece and Italy and known to the Greeks as "amphictyonies" (Nicholson 1973, 12-13). On the other hand Weiser vigorously debated the view that the Sinai and

Exodus traditions were independent of one another (Nicholson 1973, 33). In 1954 Mendenhall put forth the idea that the Sinai covenant is similar to the Hittite suzerainty treaties (1954, 50-76). Nicholson concludes that one is at an "impasse" since none of these views are convincing (1973, 53). There does seem to be clear parallels between the Sinai covenant and ancient suzerainty treaties, and ancient tribal leagues did exist (Chambers 1983, 39-59). There are various suggestions as to where Mt. Sinai is. De Vaux believes that the theophany of Sinai was a description of a volcanic eruption in northern Arabia (1978, 432-8). Exodus 19:18 describes the mountain like a furnace of smoke. From a distance it would look like a pillar of cloud in the day, and a pillar of fire at night. Following this cloud of smoke would lead them right to the volcano. There are no volcanoes in Sinai, but there are several in northern Arabia (Lee 1996, 20). The only known large eruption around this time is Santorini on the Greek island of Thera (Simkin et al. 1981, 111). Professor Goedicke thinks a giant tidal-like wave called a tsunami caused by the eruption of Santorini, destroyed the Egyptian army, and the eruption formed the pillar of cloud and fire in Exodus (Shanks 1981, 42-50; Oren 1981, 46-53). Note that at the time of Ogyges there occurred the first great deluge in Greece. Ogyges "lived at the same time of the Exodus from Egypt" (Eusebius 1981, 524). Maybe a tsunami caused this deluge in Greece? Jewish tradition seems to place Mt. Sinai in Arabia. Demetrius stated that Dedan was Jethro's ancestor which is identified with the oasis of el-'Ela, and when Moses went to Midian he stayed in Arabia (De Vaux 1978, 435). In Josephus' book Antiquities of the Jews he placed Sinai where the city of Madiane was (Antiquities, II.264; III.76). In the Babylonian Talmud (Sotah 5a) R. Huna and R. Hisda say, "the Holy One, blessed be He, ignored all the mountains and heights and caused His Shechinah to abide upon Mount Sinai" (Freedman and Simon 1935, 18-19). According to Old Testament passages Mt. Sinai is identified with Seir and Mt. Paran. Deuteronomy 33:2 says, "The Lord came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them; he shined forth from mount Paran" (KJV, see also Judges 5:4-5, Hab. 3:3,7; Axelsson, 1987; Simons 1959). It seems that the itinerary that was followed in Numbers 33:18-36 locates Sinai in northern Arabia. Midian was also located here (I Kings 11:18) where Moses lived with Jethro, priest of Midian, for forty years (Exodus 2:15, 3:1).

TABLE 9  
Archaeological Finds in Sinai\*

Period & Date	Kadesh Barnea	Central Negev	South Negev	Northeast Sinai	Southern Sinai
Early Bronze 3200-2200	Dense	Dense	High Density	Dense	Egyptian mines
Middle Bronze 2200-1550	Dense	Sporadic	High Density	Dense	Egyptian mines
Late Bronze 1550-1200	Sparse	Sparse	Copper mines	Sparse	Egyptian mines

Iron I 1200-1000	Sparse	Israelite forts & colonies	Copper mines	Sparse	Mining is sparse
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\*Based on Emmanuel Anati's book *Har Karkom: The Mountain of God* in 1986.

According to the New Testament, Paul in Galatians 4:25 states, "For this (H)Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia" (KJV). Paul is probably following Jewish tradition that placed mount Sinai in northern Arabia. From Egyptian topographical lists one area the Shasu lived in was Seir. One place is called "land of the Shasu Yhw" (Axelsson 1987, 60). Yhw is used as a toponym, a place-name, which is most likely named after a deity. Yhw corresponds to the Old Testament YHWH, which would make this the earliest known reference. Axelsson concludes, "Thus it is conceivable that the full name of the area in question was Yhw's land, Yhw's city, Yhw's mountain, or the like" (Axelsson 1987, 60). After further study Astour places this city north of Israel in Lebanon (1979, 17-34; for more on the origins of YHWH see, De Moor, 1990, Huffmon, 1971, Murtonen, 1951).

## **Middle Bronze Age Destruction**

The Late Bronze Age begins with the wide spread destruction of the Middle Bronze Age. This may be the result of Ahmose, the Hyksos, or even Israel. There is some question as to how far Ahmose went into Canaan. He did get as far as Sharuhén which a number of scholars think is Tell el-'Ajjul (Rainey 178-85; Shea 1979, 3-5). He besieged it for three years before he took it (ANET 1969, 233). This may be as far as Ahmose got (Hoffmeier 1989). This may also be as far as Israel got. Two years after the Exodus (Numbers 10:11) Israel tried to take Canaan from the South, but failed (Numbers 14:45). This would be at the same time Ahmose was still besieging Sharuhén. Moses may have thought while the Egyptians were keeping the Hyksos of Canaan contained at Sharuhén, that they could conquer the land, but since the Hyksos were strong enough to hold off the Egyptians for three years, they could easily beat Israel. With the defeat of the Hyksos by Ahmose 40 years later Joshua would be able to conquer Canaan, but only a small part of the central highlands was settled by Israel. In the past scholars concluded that Ahmose must have caused the destruction of the Middle Bronze Age, but Redford has shown that Ahmoses' campaign was restricted to Sharuhén and its neighborhood to punish the Hyksos (Redford 1979, 274; Bietak 1991, 58; Weinstein 1981, 1-28). The first substantial campaign against inland Palestine was by Thutmose III (Bietak 1991, 59). From a survey of the central hill country Finkelstein does not connect the Egyptian conquest with the end of the Middle Bronze Age. He states: There is no solid archaeological evidence that many sites across the country were destroyed simultaneously, and such campaigns would fail to explain the wholesale abandonment of hundreds of small rural settlements in the remote parts of the land (Hoffmeier 1990, 87). There are several key cities that will be considered, Jericho, Ai, and Hazor. First of all, is the city of Jericho which is highly controversial about when it was destroyed.

## **Jericho**



Jericho an oasis near the Dead Sea



Destruction layer at Jericho

The ancient city of Jericho is identified with Tell es-Sultan. The first large scale excavation was by Sellin and Watzinger from 1907 to 1909. The next major excavation was directed by Garstang from 1930 to 1936. Garstang believed that the fourth city was destroyed by Joshua just after 1400 BC. A third major excavation was done by Kenyon between 1952 to 1958. She challenged Garstang's date by insisting that the fourth city double walls were from the Early Bronze Age. Jericho was mainly abandoned during the Late Bronze Age, but the Middle Bronze Age was violently destroyed by fire. Kenyon states: The date of the burned buildings would seem to be the very end of the Middle Bronze Age, and the destruction may be ascribable to the disturbances that followed the expansion (expulsion) of the Hyksos from Egypt in about 1560 BCE (Stern 1993, Vol. 2, 680). Could these disturbances be the Israelite conquest? Both Kenyon and Garstang agree that the Middle Bronze Age city of Jericho was destroyed as a result of the expulsion of the Hyksos from Egypt. There have been many proposals to solve the time of Joshua's conquest. Courville cuts out over 600+ years by equating the end of the Early Bronze Age with Joshua's conquest around 1400 BC (1971, 151; Bimson 1981, 119). On the other hand Aardsma adds 1,000 years between the book of Judges and I Samuel (1993; Wood 1993, 97). Rohl has subtracted 300+ years from Egyptian history, and James also lowers Egyptian chronology by 250+ years (Rohl 1996; James 1991). One that has been influential in the public is Velikovsky's radical views that deletes 800+ years from history (1950; 1952; Newman 1973, 146-151; Yamauchi 1973, 134-39). Bimson (1981) only lowers the chronology by 100 year, but there is no need to be adding or subtracting years. Equating the Exodus with the Expulsion of the Hyksos from Egypt solves this problem. All the archaeological data seems to fit Biblical chronology when this is done, except AI which is highly controversial (See Table 10).

## AI

AI has been located at Et-Tell by Albright. A brief excavation was conducted here by Garstang in 1928. A second excavation was done from 1933 to 1935 by Marquet-Krause. A third excavation was conducted by Calloway sponsored by the American Schools of Oriental Research from 1964 to 1970. The major problem here is that AI was destroyed at the end of the Early Bronze Age, and was abandoned until the beginning of the Iron Age, yet Joshua is said to have destroyed it (Stern 1993; Zevit

1985, 58). There are several explanations for this. Livingston locates AI at Khirbet Nisya, yet there is no clear evidence for this (Bimson and Livingston). Yadin interprets the Bible etiologically here (Shanks 1988, 64). It explains how the ruins of AI got this way according to the writer. Millard believes that the villagers would only use Et-Tell as a stronghold when under attack (1985, 99). The name "AI" means "ruin," so AI was destroyed earlier, but reused only as a fort. This seems to be the best explanation.

TABLE 10  
 Modern Views of OT Chronology  
 (Not Endorsed by Most Scholars)

Person	Years Subtracted	Years Added
Aardsma		1,000
Bimson	100	
Courville	600	
James	250	
Rohl	300	
Velikovsky	800	

TABLE 11  
 Cities Destroyed by Joshua Compared to the Archaeological Data\*

Cities	Middle Bronze Age Destruction	Late Bronze Age Destruction
Jericho	yes	no
AI	no	no
Hazor	yes	yes
Bethel	yes	no
Hebron	yes	no
Dan	yes	no
Lachish	yes	yes

\*Mostly based on Bimson's Redating the Exodus and Conquest (1981, 216), and Rohl's Pharaohs and Kings (1995, 306).

## **Hazor**

Hazor was a major commercial center. It is mentioned in the Mari documents, and in the Egyptian Execration Texts (Stern 1993, 594). The first major excavation here was by Yadin from 1955 to 1958. Excavations were resumed in 1968 and in 1990. There is speculation that an archive is located in the royal palace (Rabinovich 1996, 8). This would be a major find, and shed much light on the Late Bronze Age in Israel. The Canaanite city of Hazor has been destroyed several times. The final destruction was at the end of the 13th century which Yadin believes was done by Joshua (Stern 1993). Judges chapter 4 tells about the battle of Deborah and Barak with Jabin the king of Hazor, and his commander Sisera. How could this happen if Hazor was destroyed by Joshua? Bimson thinks that the 13th century destruction of Hazor should be equated with Judges 4 (1981, 181-7). It is wrong to assume that Jabin, king of Hazor is the same person in Joshua 11 and Judges 4. Jabin is probably a dynastic name like Abimelech (Kitchen 1966, 68). A clay tablet with the name Jabin (Ibni) has been found at Hazor (Horowitz 1992, 166). Joshua's conquest of Hazor should be connected with the end of the Middle Bronze Age destruction. Dever places the destruction of Middle Bronze sites from 1550 to 1450 BC (Hoffmeier 1990, 87; Dever 1990, 75-81). This would be at the same time period that Joshua is conquering Canaan. Recent scientific radiocarbon dating of cereal grains from Tell Es-Sultan (Jericho) place the end of the Middle Bronze Age (MB-IIc) around 1540 BC (Bruins and Plicht 1996, 213-14). This would rule out the 1406 BC (Late Bronze Age) date by conservative scholars. Bimson states, "The admittedly poor 'fit' between Biblical tradition and Late Bronze Age archaeological evidence is universally conceded by scholars" (Bimson and Livingston 1987, 41; see Table 11). The problem with Bimson's view is that he eliminates one hundred years from history when there is no need to do this according to radio-carbon dating. New advances in tree ring dating correlated to Carbon 14 will be able to achieve more accurate dates (Bower 1996, 405-6; Renfrew 1996, 733-34; Kuniholm 1996, 780-83).

## **Egyptian Topographical Lists**

### **Thutmose III**



Thutmose and Dr. Meyers at Metro Museum of Art, NYC.

The topographical lists of Thutmose III (ca. 1481 BC) can be divided into two parts; the "Megiddo-list" or "Palestine-list, and the "Naharina-list, or "Northern-list" (Simons 1937, 28). The "Megiddo-list" names towns and places whose chiefs took refuge within the walls of Megiddo, and were taken captive by Thutmose III to Thebes. There are only three copies of this list that contain 119 topographical names (Rainey 1982, 345-359).

The "Naharina-list" is just the extension of the "Megiddo-list" containing over 300 place-names. These lists are found in the temple of Amon at Karnak. The lists are probably grouped geographically by regions according to three administrative districts (Aharoni 1979, 158). There were three headquarters during the El Amarna letter which seems to divide this list nicely; Gaza, Sumur, and Kumidi. The first four regions belong to the district of Kumidi; southern Beqa' (#3-11, 55-56), Damascus vicinity (#12-20), Bashan (#21-30), and the northern Jordan valley (#31-4). There are four regions of the Gaza district; the plains of Jezreel (#35-54), the coastal plain and the Sharon (#57-71), Judean hills (#103-6), and the Ephraimite hills (#107-17). The next two regions belong to the district of Sumur; the northern Beqa' (#72-9) and Upper Galilee (#80-102), (Aharoni 1979, 158). North sees the list reflecting the march of Thutmose's army first with numbers 53-119 in the right column, then with numbers 1-52 in the left column (Aharoni 1979, 157). Aharoni sees only a South to North geographic arrangement of place-names along the coastal plain of Sharon (#57-71), (1979, 157). Redford argues for a typical Bronze Age itinerary in numbers 89-101 of the list (1982, 55-74). Hoffmeier does an excellent job of comparing the Annal of Thutmose III with Joshua 1-11 (1994, 165-179; cf. Hess 1996, 160-170; 1994, 191-205; Younger 1990). There are many Old Testament names that are recognized in these lists, but there are two important place-names that effect this study. The first is number 78, Joseph-EI, which indicates the tribe of Joseph was already in Canaan before 1481 BC (Redford 1979, 277) which is the 23rd year of Thutmose's coregency (ANET 1969, 235). The second is number 102, Jacob-EI, which also indicates the tribes of Israel were already in Canaan at this time. A date earlier than 1481 BC is needed for the Exodus. It may be argued that the name Israel was not yet used at this time until a league of 12 tribes was formed. Others have studied these toponym lists in detail (Giveon 1979, 135-141; Ahituv 1984). Several different locations have been proposed for these palce-names. There are three other interesting name correlations given by Yeivin who states: There is a group of three such names, all connected with the same geographical unit, in which appears also the place-name Jacobel. The first is No. 100, i-i-rw-tw, which could be transcribed 'Ard, and identified in all probability with the Benjamine clan....The



second is No. 106 M-(M)-Q-R-W-T, which is transcribed Miqlot (Mikloth), and identified with another Benjaminite clan, descended from the 'Father of Gibeon'....The third place name is No. 108 S3-RW-TY-Y, which is to be transcribed Shelat, and most plausibly identified with Shela, the third and surviving son of Judah by his Canaanite concubine, Bat-shua (1971, 22).

There is an interesting story about how Joppa was captured by soldiers who hid in 200 baskets that were brought into the city on a ruse (ANET 1969, 22). This probably happened on Thutmose III's first campaign.

## **Amenhotep II**

Amenhotep II was the son of Thutmose III who ruled Egypt from 1453-19 BC. There are three known military campaigns into the land of Canaan (Aharoni 1979, 166). The lists of prisoners give a cross-section of the population at that time. Aharoni states: The first group included 550 maryannu (noble chariot warriors), 240 of their wives, 640 Canaanites, 232 royal sons, 323 royal daughters and 270 concubines. A final summary lists: 127 rulers of Retenu, 179 brothers of the rulers, 3600 'apiru, 15,200 living Shasu, 36,300 Huru, 15,070 living Neges, and 30,652 families thereof.... Among the residents of Palestine the Horites account for 66 per cent, the Shasu 27.5 per cent and the 'apiru 6.5 per cent (1979, 168-9; Lemche 1991, 43-46). The Israelites have been associated with both the 'apiru and the Shasu (Akkadian Shutu). Some scholars think the name "Hebrew" came from "'apiru." This does seem to give clear evidence for the Hebrews being settled in Canaan at this time.

## **Amenhotep III**

In the temple of Amon in Soleb (Nubia) there is a topographical list from the time of Amenhotep III (1408-1372 BC). In column IV.A2 is written t3 ssw yhw3 which means "Yahweh of the land of the Shasu" (Giveon 1964, 244; Redford 1992, 272; Astour 1979, 17-34). In the ancient Near East a divine name was also given to a geographical place where the god was worshipped (Axelsson 1987, 60). This is the first clear extra-biblical evidence of the name "Yahweh." The land of the Shasu may be the same area as the Midianites in the Bible where Moses stayed for 40 years (Axelsson 1987, 61; Giveon 1964a, 415-16). De Vaux says, "Geographers place Midian in Arabia, to the south-east of the Gulf of 'Aqabah" (1978, 332). This also is where Mount Sinai may be located. Astour locates the land in Lebanon (1979, 17). The Shasu were Bedouins who led a nomadic existence. "Shasu" was a general term the Egyptians used to describe any Bedouins East of the Delta. The Egyptians would define certain Shasu according to their location. For example there are the Shasu of Edom (ANET 1969, 259). The word "Shasu" became in Coptic shos meaning "shepherd" (ANET 1969, 259 note 2). It may be that the Israelites when they were wandering in the desert were probably grouped with the Shasu by the Egyptians. Giveon points out marked similarities between the Shasu and the Hebrews (1967, 193-196; Bietak 1987, 169). When they came out of the desert and into the hill country of Palestine, they were probably called Hapiru as in the El Amarna letters instead of Shasu. There is another very interesting name in the temple of Amon in Soleb on Column XA.2 it says, iswr or "Asher" (Giveon 1964,

250). From the position of iswr which is right after qrqms (Carchemish) in the list and before ipttn (column XA4) which may refer to Abez of Issachar (Joshua 19:20), the location of this place would be in northern Palestine. Giveon prefers the translation of "Asher" which may refer to the tribe of Israel. Giveon says, "Les autres toponymes de cette colonne indiquent une region a l'Ouest d'Assur, il est donc preferable d'opter pour Asher" (Translation: The other names in this column indicate a region to the West of Assur, it is therefore preferable to opt for Asher. 1964, 251).

On a statue-base of Amenhotep III at Kom el Hetan which is the funerary temple of Amenhotep III there is a topographical list with the place-name Yspir (Series a:1; Kitchen 1965, 2). This is the same name translated "Joseph-El" in Thutmose III's Topographical list (ANET 1969, 242). After Yspir in both lists the place-name Rkd appears (Series a:2 in Amenhotep III's list, and #79 in Thutmose III's list; Simons 1937, 112). Rkd is the same place-name as Ruhizzi in the El Amarna letters (EA 53:36, 56; EA 54:26; EA 56:26; EA 191:2; Rainey 1982, 354). The ruler of Ruhizzi is Arsawuya who seems to be located in northern Palestine or southern Syria (EA 53:36, 56; Moran, 125).

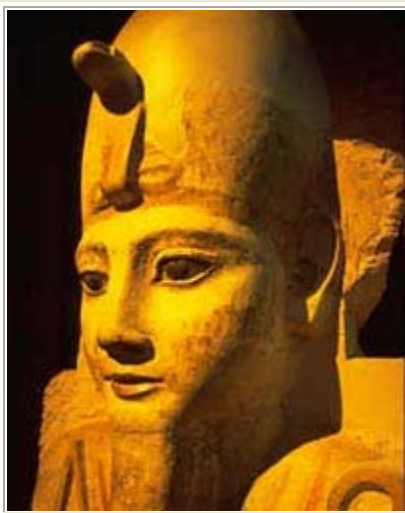
## Seti I

Seti I is the founder of the 19th Dynasty whose goal was to revive the Egyptian empire. The kings of the 19th Dynasty identified themselves with the Hyksos religious tradition of worshipping the god Seth (Baal) whom Seti (Seth's Man) was named after. In 1320 BC Seti celebrated the 400th year of the reign of Seth, and the beginning of the Hyksos rule (1720 BC). Ramese II (1279 BC) set up a 7.2 foot high granite monument called "Stele of the Year 400" at Avaris which he renamed Pi-Ramese, "House of Ramese" (ANET 1969, 252-3; Breasted 1988, 3:238-42; McCarter 1996, 46-7). This founding of the Hyksos rule is most likely alluded to in Numbers 13:22 which says, "Now Hebron was built seven years before Zoan (Avaris) in Egypt" (KJV; Mazar 1986, 21; Albright 1957, 242). In Seti's first campaign there is a battle with the Shasu which is pictured on the Karnak reliefs (ANEP 1969, fig. 323-9). The tribal chiefs of the Shasu are gathered on the mountains of Kharu (upper Galilee) to fight the Egyptians. It says: The foe belonging to the Shasu are plotting (5) rebellion. Their tribal chiefs are gathered in one place, waiting on the mountain ranges of Kharu. They have taken to clamoring and quarreling, one of them killing his fellow. They have no regard for the laws of the palace (ANET 1969, 254; Breasted 1988, 3:52).

Seti claims victory against "the Shasu from the fortress of Sile to the Canaan" which includes the "Upper Retenu" (ANET 1969, 254; Aharoni 1979, 177; Lemche 1991, 46-48; Giveon 1971). It seems that this general term "Shasu" is referring to the Hebrews who lived in the mountain ranges of upper Galilee. "They have no regard for the laws of the palace" may be because they are following the laws of Moses. "They have taken to clamoring and quarreling" seems to describe the period of the Judges. Note that they have "tribal chiefs" and no king at this time. There is one important name on the topographical list from Karnak, i-s-r (Simons 1937, 147). Aharoni believes that this name is "the earliest reference to the Israelite tribe of Asher. I-s-r (#265) also occurs in Ancient Egyptian Onomastica by Gardiner (1947,

192-3; Paton 1913, 39). A stele of Seti I discovered at Beth-Shean states that the Hapiru from Mount Yarumta with the Tayeru attacked the Asiatics of Rehem (ANET 1969, 255; Rowe 1929, 88-93). Mount Yarumta is probably Jarmuth of the tribe Issachar (Joshua 21:29). It seems that the tribe of Issachar is already in Canaan by this time (1303 BC; Aharoni 1982, 124). Breasted concluded that these Shasu (Bedwin) are the same as the Hapiru of the El Amarna letters. He says, "The attempt of the Hebrews to gain a footing in Palestine is undoubtedly involved in the larger movement of the Bedwin, which Seti here records" (1988, 50). On the next page is a summary of the keys names found in ancient Egyptian topographical lists (Table 12).

## Ramses II



Rameses II at U of Penn Museum.

Ramses II came to power in about 1279 BC And reigned for 67 years. A stele from his 9th year was discovered at Beth-shean that mentions the Shasu and the city of Per-Ra-messu which is the same name in Exodus 1:11 (Rowe 1929, 94-98). In the Nubian city of Amara-West the remains of a temple of Ramses was uncovered. A list of 104 Asiatic names were discovered which names places in the Negeb, Edom, the city of Dor, and some think Jericho (Horn 1953, 201-3). One interesting name that was found is yhw which is "Yahweh" in Hebrew (Horn 1953, 201; Giveon 1964, 244). The line reads t3 s3sw yhw which I translate as "Yahweh of the land of the Shasu" (Horn 1953, 201; Giveon 1964, 244; Astour 1979, 17). In reliefs from Luxor the land of Moab (m-w-i-b) and Dibon (t-b-n-i) are first mentioned in Egyptian (Aharoni 1979, 182). In Ramses II's topographical list the place-name "Jacob-El" (#9) appears again (ANET 1969, 242; Simons 1937). The first appearance was in Thutmose III's list. This means that this city of Jacob has been around for two hundred years. Contemporary with Ramses II is "A Satirical Letter" that describes the geography of Canaan. In this letter it mentions "Qazardi, the Chief of Aser" (i-s-r, Asher; ANET 1969, 477).

TABLE 12  
Egyptian Topographical Lists

Names	Tuthmosis III (1481 BC)	Amenhotep II (1440)	Amenhotep III (1386)	Seti I (1291)	Ramses II (1275)
Jacob-EI	yes				yes
Joseph-EI	yes		yes		
Asher			yes	yes	yes
Yahweh			yes		yes
Shasu		yes	yes	yes	yes
Hapiru		yes		yes	

See ANET, 242-3.

Aharoni states, "The use of this name to define a tribal group in Canaan at that time proves that it must be equated with the Israelite tribe of Asher" (1979, 183; Mazar 1986, 37). This description of Canaan seems to match the description of the border land of Canaan in Numbers 34. This brings us up to the time of Merneptah where Israel is specifically mentioned. One important group of letters that must be considered in depth is the El Amarna letters.

## The Amarna Letters



Akhenaton



Akhenaton's Cartuoch at U of Penn Museum

In 1887 an Egyptian peasant woman discovered a collection of cuneiform tablets at the site of Akh-en-Aton's capital from the 14th century BC, now called Tell El-Amarna. There were a total of 377 tablets found. Later some more tablets were found. About half of them were written in Akkadian by Canaanite scribes in Palestine

describing the conditions there. One major problem was the "Hapiru" who were taking over the land. They wanted the king of Egypt to send reinforcements. "Hapiru" is probably related to the word "Hebrew" (Greenberg 1955, 91-2). Hapiru (Akkadian) is sometimes spelled "Habiru" or "'apiru" (Egyptian). The Egyptian word is 'pr. In these letters "Hapiru" is spelled with the Sumerian logogram SA.GAZ. Hapiru was a general term for "robber" or "migrant" (Astour 1962, 382). Na'aman states, "Common to all the people designated as 'Habiru' is the fact that they were uprooted from their original political and social framework and forced to adapt to a new environment" (1986, 272; Buccellati 1977, 145-7). He believes the best meaning of Habiru is migrant, but in the Amarna letters it went beyond this to "a derogatory appellation for rebels against Egyptian authority" (Na'aman 1986, 275). Rowton says: The term 'apiru is of West Semitic origin, and it first appears in Mesopotamian urban society at a time when that society was being penetrated by Amorites. This suggests that it was brought in by the Amorites and that it originally denotes some aspect of tribal society....the economically and socially uprooted" (1976, 17). The use of the term "Hebrew" in the Old Testament is found primarily in the pre-monarchical period, and used in unfavorable contexts by foreigners like the Egyptians (Gen 39:14,17, 41:12; Ex. 1:16, 2:6) and the Philistines (ISam 4:6,9; 13:3,19; 14:11; 29:3). The bands of David and Jephthah give some of the clearest pictures of what the Habiru were like (Mazar 1963, 310-20). It seems that later in history the social meaning of Hapiru was changed to an ethnic term for Israel. The social term Hapiru disappeared in ancient texts (12th century BC) mainly due to the rise of national states, but was kept in Israel and developed into an ethnic term (Na'aman 1986, 286).

The El Amarna letter 288 from Jerusalem says: The strong arm of the king seizes the land of Nahrma and the land of Cush; but now the Hapiru are seizing the cities of the King! There is not a single governor (left) to the king; all are lost. Behold, Turbasu was slain at the gate of Zilu (but) the king kept silent. Behold Zimredda, the (sons of) Lachish smote him, slaves who have become Hapiru (Na'aman 1979, 678; Moran 1992, 330-32; ANET 1969, 488-89; Na'aman and Aviv 1992; Pfeiffer 1963, 50).

The El Amarna (EA) 299 from Gezer says, "Now the Hapiru are prevailing over us. So may the King, my Lord, take me away from the land of the Hapiru, so that the Hapiru will not destroy us" (Na'aman 1979, 679; Moran 1992, 340). EA 273 says, "May the king, my lord, be informed that war is waged in the land and that the land of the king, my lord, is being ruined by going over to the Hapiru" (Na'aman 1979, 680; Moran 1992, 318).

In EA 256 (line 18) the name "Yashuya" appears which some have tried to connect to the name "Joshua" (Weippert 1962, 128; ANET 1969, 486; Moran 1992, 309). Rohl equates this name with "Jesse" father of David (1995, 228). Albright does not think "Yashuya" is Joshua because Joshua would probably be written as Ya-hu-su-uh (1943, 12 note 27). This letter is from Mut-Ba'lu, prince of Pella, to the Canaanite Yanhamu who was the Egyptian commissioner for Palestine and Syria. Mut-Ba'lu denies he has hid Ayyab (Job), the prince of Ashtaroth (in Bashan) who was wanted by Yanhamu for robbing a Babylonian caravan (Albright 1943, 9-10; Na'aman and Aviv 1988, 181). "Yanhamu" may be of Hebrew origins (ANET 1969, 486 note 11). In

lines 22-24 it says, "all the towns of the land of Garu (Golan) were hostile--Udumu" (Albright 1943, 14). Albright says, "The name (Udumu) is clearly identical with that of Edom ('Udumu) and the legendary land of 'Udm ('Udumu?) in the Keret Epic of the fifteenth century BC" (1943, 14 note 36).

Pfeiffer says, "Although the place names of the Amarna texts are parallel to those of the Old Testament, the personal names are totally different" (1963, 53; Ahituv 1984). In the Amarna letters Abdi-Khepa is king of Jerusalem where as in Joshua Adonizedek is king (Joshua 10:3). Meredith Kline has therefore concluded that the Conquest by Joshua of Canaan precedes the Amarna Age. He sees the Hapiru as the oppressors in the book of Judges (1957; Pfeiffer 1963, 53).

Cities that are not mentioned in the El Amarna letters are also important to note. Bimson says: The fact that various Canaanite cities important in other periods do not feature in the Amarna correspondence is adequately accounted for by the fact that the incoming Israelites had destroyed them just a few decades before. Cities which do not feature include Gibeon, Jericho, Hebron (?), and Bethel (1981, 227).

The important cities of the El Amarna letters are the cities which were not taken by the Hebrews. These are Jerusalem (Judges 1:21), Megiddo (Judges 1:27), and Gezer (Judges 1:29). The cities of Hazor and Lachish revived quickly from destruction while Shechem probably went over to the Hebrews with the Gibeonites, and was never destroyed. In Joshua 11:10 Hazor is called "the head of all those Kingdoms" which are mentioned in the first three verses of Joshua 11. This description of Hazor as "the head of all those Kingdoms" does not fit well with the El Amarna letters (Late Bronze Age), but is an excellent description of the Middle Bronze Age (Bimson 1981, 228). The king of Hazor in EA 148 is charged with aiding the Hapiru which is just the opposite of what happens in the book of Joshua. EA 148 says, "The King of Hasura (Hazor) has abandoned his house and has aligned himself with the 'Apiru" (Moran 1992, 235).

Ahlstrom states, "several letters seem to indicate that most of Palestine is 'apiru territory" (1993, 245). The Hapiru of these Amarna letters seem to clearly be identified with the Hebrews of the Old Testament during the time of the judges before the monarchy.

The Hapiru are not just mentioned in the Amarna letters. In Ugaritic a tablet (2062:A:7; Gordon 1965, Glossary #1899) found in the oven when Ugarit was abandoned shows that the Hapiru were active here around 1200 BC. Not all Hapiru were Hebrews. Greenberg states, "Since the time of Bohl it has become commonplace that 'all Israelites were Hebrews (Hapiru), but not all Hebrews (Hapiru) were Israelites" (1955, 92).

In a letter found at Taanach the personal name Ahiyami, or Ahiyaw, was found which suggests this name is compounded with Yahweh. Paton says, "This favors the theory that the Habiru in Canaan were Israelites" (1913, 38). Albright claims that in EA 252 there is an archaic Hebrew proverb. About 40% of EA 252 is written in pure Canaanite (or Hebrew). In lines 15-18 there is a proverb which Albright compares

with Proverbs 6:6 and 30:25 about the ant which says, "If the ants are smitten, they do not accept (the smitting) quietly, but they bite the hand of the man who smites them" (1943, 29). This is more evidence that the Hapiru in Canaan were Hebrews.

There is a newly discovered prism of a new king named Tunip-Tessup of the kingdom of Tikunani that names a number of Hapiru (438) who were soldiers or servants (Shanks 1996, 22; Salvini 1996). When this is translated this may give us some more clues to who are the Hapiru.

## Ugaritic Texts

In the spring of 1928 a Syrian farmer was plowing his field when he uncovered a stone over a grave. Archaeologists were called in which led to the discovery of the near by ancient city of Ugarit, modern day Ras Shamra (Curtis 1985, 18; Craigie 1983, 7). Many clay tablets were uncovered which were written in cuneiform in a language now called "Ugaritic." See also Ugarit and the Bible. Since Ugaritic is very similar to Hebrew it can help illuminate Hebrew words. One of the most interesting personal names is ysril which equals "Israel" in Hebrew (Gordon 1965, Text 2069:3; Glossary #1164). It is the name of a charioteer (mrynm; Zobel 1990, Vol.6, 399). While this is not referring to Israel as a nation, it does show the use of this personal name in the Late Bronze Age. The name "Israel" may have originally meant "El rules" in Ugaritic (Zobel 1990, 401).

Another interesting name is yw (CTA 1 IV:14; Herdner 1963, 4) which may be identified with "Yahweh" in Hebrew according to Dussaud (Cooper 1981, 367). Herdner states that the reading yw is certain (1963, 4 note 3). Murtonen also argues for this reading (1951, 6-8). Gordon says, "Yahwe with -h- corresponds to Yw exactly like yhlm to Ug. ylm" (1965, Glossary #1084). The name yw appears in the Baal and Yam text which is part of the cycle of Baal myths. The supreme god El instructs Kothar-and-Khasis (the craftsman god) to build a palace for Yam (Sea) who is also called judge Nahar (river). As El sits in his banqueting hall he declares to the other deities that Yam's personal name was yw, but his new name is to be "darling of El" (Deut. 33:12). In order to secure his power Yam must drive his rival Baal from his throne. El then holds a feast to celebrate this naming ceremony (Gibson 1977, 3-4). The actual text in line 14 (CTA 1 iv:14; Herdner 1963, 4; Gibson 1977, 39) says, sm. bny. yw which I translate as "the name of my son is Yahweh." This would make Yahweh a rival of Baal which is reminiscent of the conflict of Elijah with the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel (I Kings 18).

Could Yahweh have originally been associated with the sea god Yam of the Canaanites? Murtonen sees Yw as a variant or epithet of Yam (Cooper 1981, 367). MacLaurin sees 'elohim as a composite of 'eloh + Yam meaning "the god Yam" (Cooper 1981, 368). This is probably very unlikely. Pope states, "Morphologically it ('elohim) is the plural of 'eloah" (1955, 9; Dijkstra, 1995, 53; Cross, 1973, 65). Pettinato suggested that Ya appears in Eblaite at the end of names like Baal does in Ugaritic. One example is dmrbl meaning "Baal is my sentinel" compared to dmry meaning "Ya is my sentinel" (Pettinato 1981, 277; Compare this with Exodus 15:2).

Pettinato later states that Ya does not refer to an individual god, "but rather an absolute or divine god" (1991, 180).

The Ugaritic personal name abmlk corresponds to the Hebrew name "Abimelech" (Gordon 1965, 348). The ab means "father", and mlk means "king", therefore meaning "father of the king." Closely related is the name abrm which corresponds to the Hebrew "Abiram" or "Abram" which Abraham was called before his name was changed (Genesis 17:5; Gordon 1965, Text #2095:4; Albright 1935, 193). The word abrm is probably from AB (father) plus rm (high) meaning "exalted father" (Clements 1974, 52-53; See the summary chart in Table 13). The place-name ablm in Ugaritic "probably connects with such Hebrew toponyms as Abel-beth-Maacah, Abel ha-Shittim, Abel Mizraim" according to Gaster (Astour 1975, 255). Barton thinks that Daniel and Aqht were pre-Israelite heroes of Galilee, and translates qrt.ablm as "city of the meadows" and identifies it with Abel-beth-Maacah in I Kings 15:20,29 (Astour 1975, 255). The word ablm may also mean "mourners" (Gordon 1965, 349; Glossary #27).

TABLE 13  
Ugaritic Texts with Old Testament Names

Transliteration	Translation	Ugaritic Text*
qrt . 'ablm	city of Abel	CTA 19 IV:165
abmlk	Abimelech	UT 314:8
abrm	Abraham	UT 2095:2,4
AB . 'adm	father of mankind (Adam)	CTA 14 III:151
atr . B'l	Asher Baal (place- name)	UT 62:7
wl . 'udm . trrt	and to well-watered Edom	CTA 14 III:109
ysril	Israel	UT 2069:3
bnmt	son of Moses	UT 2046:rev.5
yw	Yahweh	CTA 1 IV:14
y'l	Ya(hweh) is God	UT 311:7
zbl	Zebulon	UT 1084:13
*UT-Ugaritic Textbook by Gordon in 1965. CTA-Corpus Tablettes Alphabetiques by Herdner in 1963.		



The city ablm in Aqht is the "meadow" were Aqht, son of Daniel, was slain (CTA 19 IV:163-166; Astour 1975, 254; Gibson 1977, 199). Because of the spilling of Aqht's blood there would be crop failure for seven years. The land would dry up. Could there be a double meaning here, and in Genesis 4 for Abel meaning "meadow" and "mourner" (or dried up) was slain in a field? Cain also would have crop failure (Gen. 4:12).

The Ugaritic mt according to Aistleitner is derived from the Egyptian ms meaning "child" (Gordon 1965, 440; Glossary #1579). Gordon states, "The vocalization of the Eg.(Egyptian) mose (as in 'Thutmose') suggests that 'Moses' is the same n.(noun) that appears in Ug.(Ugaritic) lit.(literature)" (1965, 440; Glossary #1579).

In Ugaritic the place-name zbl is mentioned that is the same in Hebrew as "Zebulun" (Gordon 1965, Text 1084:13; Glossary #815). Both words come from the same root meaning "to raise, elevate" (Astour 1975, 284). This text is a list of the quantities of wine from the areas it was produced. Astour notes that zbl is "A town in the Piedmont district of the Kingdom of Ugarit, now Karzbil" (1975, 284). Although this does not refer to the tribe of Zebulun, it shows the use of this word during the Late Bronze Age (1550-1200 BC).

There is one tablet among the administrative records at Ugarit that mentions a man from Canaan. The text says y'l. kn'ny, "Ya'el the Canaanite" (Gordon 1965, 206; Text 311:7; Rainey 1963, 45). Ya'el may have been a Hebrew. This also seems to indicate that Canaan was "a district separate and distinct from the kingdom of Alalah" (Rainey 1963, 43; Na'aman and Aviv 1994, 403).

The Ugaritic story of Keret is about a just king named Keret who had no heir. He was told by El in a dream to gather an army and march seven days to Udm (Edom). He is then to wait seven days before he asks for the daughter of the king of Udm in marriage. He will then have eight sons and daughters. Albright says, "The name (Udumu) is clearly identical with that of Edom ('Udumu) and the legendary land of 'Udm ('Udumu?) in the Keret Epic of the fifteenth century BC" (1943, 14 note 36). Gordon states, "It is no accident that Udm (cf. & 'Idomeneus' the Cretan leader of the Iliad) occurs in the Krt text....The Caphtorians settled in Canaan, from Ugarit to Edom" (1965, 352; Glossary #85; CTA 14 III:108-9). The seven day wait is reminiscent of the seven day wait around the city of Jericho (Joshua 6:3-4). This story shows that Edom is already a kingdom at this time.

## **The Philistines**



Philistine pottery, U of Penn

Around 1200 BC the Philistines migrated in great numbers to Canaan after the great sea battle with the Egyptians. On the walls of Ramses III's temple of Medinet Habu there are reliefs showing the battle with the Philistines (ANEP 1969, figs. 7,9,57,& 341; Yadin 1963, 336-43; Dothan 1992, 16-22). In the topographical list of Ramses III the city of Jacob-EI is listed as well as the city of Levi-EI (ANET 1969, 242-3).

In the book of Judges the Philistines do not come into the picture until the end of the judges with Samson (Bimson 1981, 86-88). So most of the book deals with problems before the Philistines came to power in 1200 BC. The Philistines probably fled their homeland of Crete after the eruption of Santorini on the island of Thera. They are mentioned in the Iliad of Homer (Book I, Bierling 1992, 51, 72). Probably after the Trojan War the Philistines migrated south and tried to take over Egypt. Because they were not successful they settled in Canaan.

There are five groups of sea people, Philistines, Tjeker, Shekelesh, Denye(n), and Weshesh (ANET 1969, 262). One group of sea peoples called "Denye(n)" or "Dannuna" is what Dothan suggests could be the tribe of Dan in the Bible (1992, 215-19; Iliad, Book 1.56, 87).

## Settlement

There have been a number of theories that have questioned the conquest of Canaan. They opt for a peaceful infiltration or a peasant's revolt in the hill country. It was Alt who first suggested in 1925 that the Israelites gradually infiltrated into Canaan peacefully (Yamauchi 1994, 16). In 1962 George Mendenhall first proposed the "Peasant Revolt Model" which was further developed by Norman Gottwald (Mendenhall 1962, 66-87; 1973; 1958, 61-64). Mendenhall suggested that "Israel came into existence as the result of sociopolitical upheaval and retribalization among the Canaanites at the end of the Late Bronze Age" (Yamauchi 1994, 17-18; Freedman and Graf 1983). Some of the evidence that is put forth is that tribes are already in the land, but this is because they are assuming a late date for the Exodus. The names of the tribes, or patriarchs show that they were already settled in Canaan by Thutmose III's campaigns into Canaan (1490 BC).

An analysis of the genealogies in the Bible is very illuminating. According to the book of Chronicles there is no genealogy for the tribe of Dan, and Zebulun. Manassah had an Aramean concubine, while some claim Gad and Asher are Canaanite divinities. Yeivin states, "it should be observed that many of the names occurring in these genealogies are either blatantly geographical or connected with place-names; while others are definitely personal names" (1971, 11; De Geus 1993, 74-5). De Vaux goes into much detail on the origins of the different tribes mentioned in the genealogies of the Bible (1978).

The best explanation of this seems to be that Israel is a confederation of Hapiru tribes in the hill country of Canaan, that formed the nation of Israel in the Iron Age. Originally Abraham was part of an Amorite migration south into Canaan from Mesopotamia which continued down to Egypt climaxing in the Hyksos rule. In Deuteronomy 26:5 Jacob is called a "wandering Aramean" which is a late term for Amorite (De Vaux 1978, 200). The exodus is to be identified with the expulsion of the Hyksos from Egypt by Ahmose (1570 BC). Then they wandered in the wilderness being included among the Shasu, and caused the fall of MBIIIC cities in Canaan (the conquest). The Conquest was not total but just in the highlands for Egypt controlled the lower lands and coast. They were called Hapiru (from which the name Hebrew originates) in the Amarna period (time of the judges) until their league was consolidated into 12 tribes which became the nation of Israel in the Iron Age.

## Conclusion

It seems clear after looking at a number of ancient writers that all the ancient Jewish writers took the 430 or 400 years to cover the time in Egypt as well as Canaan. The Book of Jubilees counted 400 years from Abraham's entry into Canaan. Most of the Jewish writers counted the 400 years from Isaac's birth to the exodus. The actual time in Egypt was only 185 to 215 years according to most writers; however, Midrash Abkhir specifically states 86 years in Egypt (Rappoport 1966, Vol.2, 286-7). Another important note is that most of the Jewish writers pushed the date of the exodus back to about the time of the expulsion of the Hyksos. Joseph would have rose to power just before or during the time of the Hyksos.

Josephus says there are 592 years from the Exodus to the founding of Solomon's Temple (960 BC), while Sedar Olan Zutta says 480 years. The best explanation of this discrepancy is the omission of the oppressions in the Book of Judges (111 years). This was a common ancient practice as seen in ancient Egyptian king lists.

Josephus goes into detail quoting Manetho showing that the Jews were in Egypt. He equates the Jews with the Hyksos, and the Exodus with the expulsion of the Hyksos from Egypt by Ahmose who founded the 18th dynasty (1570-50 BC). Manetho had access to the original Egyptian hieroglyphics that modern scholars do not have. Yet modern scholars today, both liberal and conservative place the Exodus much later, and claim there is no evidence of the Exodus in Egyptian writings. The best explanation is to identify the Exodus from Egypt with the expulsion of the Hyksos for there is no other mass exit from Egypt.

A number of secular writers tell about the origin of the Jews with disdain. Some picture the Jews as leprous. They identify the Jews with the Hyksos who were expelled from Egypt by Ahmose. This expulsion is seen as a great defeat and humiliation, yet the Jews claim a great victory. This scenario is seen in other ancient writings like Ramses II and the war with the Hittites. Each side claims victory. Sennachrib destroyed 46 cities in Judah, yet Hezekiah claims a victory because he did not take Jerusalem.

The early Church Fathers all equated the Hyksos with the Jews, and the Exodus with the expulsion of the Hyksos from Egypt by Ahmose. The only exception is Eusebius who did not account for overlap of reigns, and omits the years of oppression.

A look at the New Testament gives convincing proof that Paul in Galatians 3:17-18 saw the 430 years starting with the promise to Abraham. The Jews were not in Egypt for 400 years, but the 400 years applied to their sojourn in Canaan as well which was controlled by Egypt. The LXX interprets it this way in Exodus 12:40. In Acts 13:20 it is clear that there are 450 years for the time of the judges, but this does not seem to square with the 480 years from Solomon's Temple to the Exodus, because the years of oppression are omitted. This would place the exodus back to the time of the expulsion of the Hyksos from Egypt.

A look at all the archaeological evidence shows that the best fit of the data is to identify the Exodus with the expulsion of the Hyksos from Egypt around 1570-50 BC. The most important discovery is the Merneptah stele that mentions Israel which forced the revision of a number of liberal theories. Before the discovery of this stele scholars placed the date of the exodus and entry into Canaan much later. They were now forced to admit that Israel was already in Canaan at the time of Merneptah. This puts a terminus ante quem date of 1210 BC for the exodus.

The execration texts which date back to at least 1630 BC mention city-states like Jerusalem, Shechem, and Hazor, but no mention of Israel. Another inscription of Khu-Sebek mentions Shechem, but not Israel.

Most scholars will place the Jews, pro-Israelites, or even Jacobites in Egypt at the time of the Hyksos. There are many scarabs with the name "Jacob-EI." This seems most likely to refer either directly or indirectly to Jacob of the Old Testament.

The expulsion of the Hyksos seems to fit well with the story of the Exodus. Not all Hyksos were pro-Israelites. It says in Exodus that a "mixed multitude" left Egypt. Although the Egyptians saw the expulsion of the Hyksos as a great military victory, the Israelites viewed this as a great salvation victory for them. This seems similar to other events recorded in ancient history where both sides claim a great victory.

The evidence from the Sinai shows little occupation during the Late Bronze Age which is probably due to the expulsion of the Hyksos, and when Ahmose marched to Sharuhem, and besieged it for three years. The Middle Bronze Age destructions seem to fit well with the conquest of Canaan by Joshua.

Egyptian topographical lists are key in showing who and where people lived. The oldest list is from Tuthmosis III which names "Jacob-EI" and "Joseph-EI" as cities in Canaan. It is paramount to understand that cities were named after an important person or god. This seems to be clear evidence that pro-Israelites were in Canaan at this time (1481 BC).

During Amenhotep II's reign (1453-1419 BC) there is a list of prisoners that mentions 3600 'apiru, and 15,200 living Shasu that were taken as prisoners from Canaan. Some of these were probably Hebrews.

In the temple of Amon in Soleb (Nubia) there is a topographical list from the time of Amenhotep III (1408-1372 BC) That gives the name "Yahweh of the land of the Shasu" (Giveon 1964, 244; Redford 1992, 272; Astour 1979, 17-34). In the ancient Near East a divine name was also given to a geographical place where the god was worshipped (Axelsson 1987, 60). This is the first clear extra-biblical evidence of the name "Yahweh." Also named are "Asher" and "Joseph-EI" which indicates that the Hebrews were in Canaan at this time.

In Seti's first campaign (1291 BC) There is a battle with the Shasu which is pictured on the Karnak reliefs (ANEP 1969, fig. 323-9). The tribal chiefs of the Shasu are gathered on the mountains of kharu (upper Galilee) to fight the Egyptians. It seems that this general term "Shasu" is referring to the Hebrews who lived in the mountain ranges of upper Galilee at this time.

In Ramses II's topographical list (ca.1275 BC) the place-name "Jacob-EI" (#9) appears again (ANET 1969, 242; Simons 1937). The first appearance was in Thutmose III's list. This means that this city of Jacob has been around for two hundred years. Another interesting name that was found is yhw which is "Yahweh" in Hebrew (Horn 1953, 201; Giveon 1964, 244).

It seems abundantly clear from all these topographical lists concerning Canaan that the Hebrews were in Canaan at this time, but they did not use the name "Israel" until their league of tribes was well formed by the time of Merneptah.

The El Amarna letters describe the troublesome Hapiru that were taking over the land of Canaan. This seems to fit well with the Hebrews during the time of the judges. The word "Hebrew" probably came from the word "Hapiru."

In Ugaritic texts one of the most interesting personal names is ysrl which equals "Israel" in Hebrew (Gordon 1965, Text 2069:3; Glossary #1164). While this is not referring to Israel as a nation it does show the use of this personal name in the Late Bronze Age. Another interesting name is yw (CTA 1 IV:14; Herdner 1963, 4) which may be identified with "Yahweh" in Hebrew. While one of these names alone is not conclusive, yet when all of the personal names and place names are considered, there seems to be abundant evidence for the Hebrews living in Canaan during the Late Bronze Age.

Therefore the best explanation for all of the archaeological evidence seems to be that Israel is a confederation of Hapiru tribes in the hill country of Canaan, that formed the nation of Israel in the Iron Age. Originally, Abraham was part of an Amorite migration south into Canaan from Mesopotamia which continued down to Egypt climaxing in the Hyksos rule. The exodus is to be identified with the expulsion of the Hyksos from Egypt by Ahmose (1570-50 BC; Frerichs and Lesko, 1997, 82, 96). Then they wandered in the wilderness being included among the Shasu, and caused the fall of MBIIIC cities in Canaan (the conquest). The Conquest was not total but just in the highlands for Egypt controlled the lower lands and coast. They were called Hapiru (from which the name Hebrew originates) in the Amarna period (time of the judges) until their league was consolidated into 12 tribes which became the nation of Israel in the Iron Age.

This paper has shown that most of the ancient writers equated the Exodus with the expulsion of the Hyksos from Egypt around 1570-50 BC. Most ancient writers put the Jews in Egypt for 215 years or less. According to most ancient writers the 430 years in Egypt was taken to start with the promise to Abraham, and the 400 years from the birth of Isaac. Others begin these years with Abraham's entry into Canaan. All of the ancient Jewish and Christian writers considered in this paper took the 430 or 400 years to cover the time in Egypt as well as Canaan. Biblical writers also agree with these ancient traditions, and the archaeological evidence reinforces these views.

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## Resources

*The Bible is History* by Ian Wilson. Washington, DC: Regnery Publishing, 1999. This is a very interesting book that has a similar view as mine.

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