

Session I:

# Joseph and the Exodus

Emergence Winter Sessions, 2022–23





# Four Positive Evaluations of the Bible Against Historical and Archaeological Data

- Established, “proven,” or “factual.”
- Most Likely, although there are other possible interpretations of the data.
- Credible or plausible.
- Possible, but no real evidence outside the Bible to confirm or disconfirm.

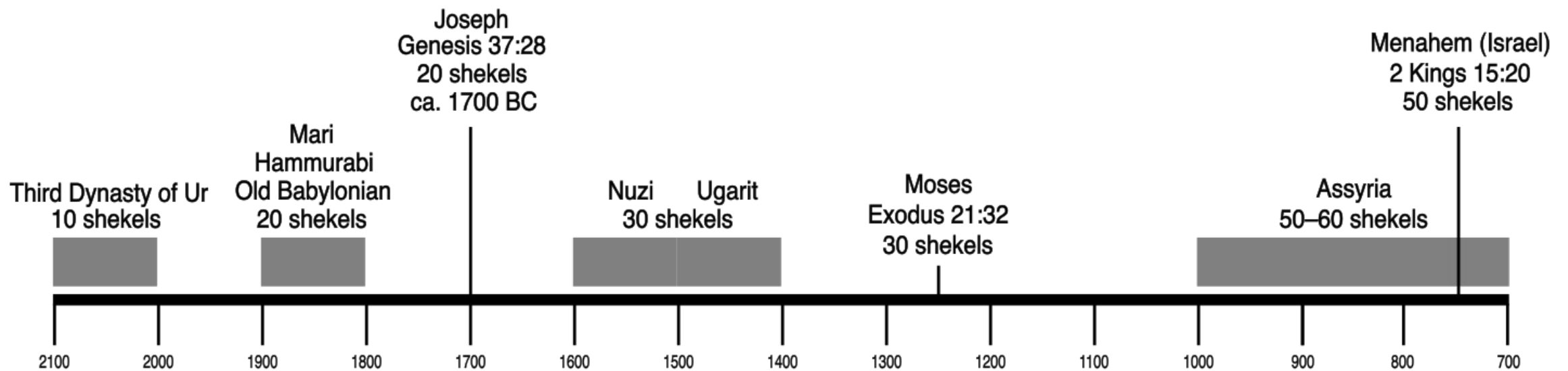
Bill T. Arnold, “The Genesis Narratives,” in *Ancient Israel’s History: An Introduction to Issues and Sources* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2014), 25.



“The Midianite traders passed by. And they drew Joseph up and lifted him out of the pit, and sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty shekels of silver.”

Genesis 37:28

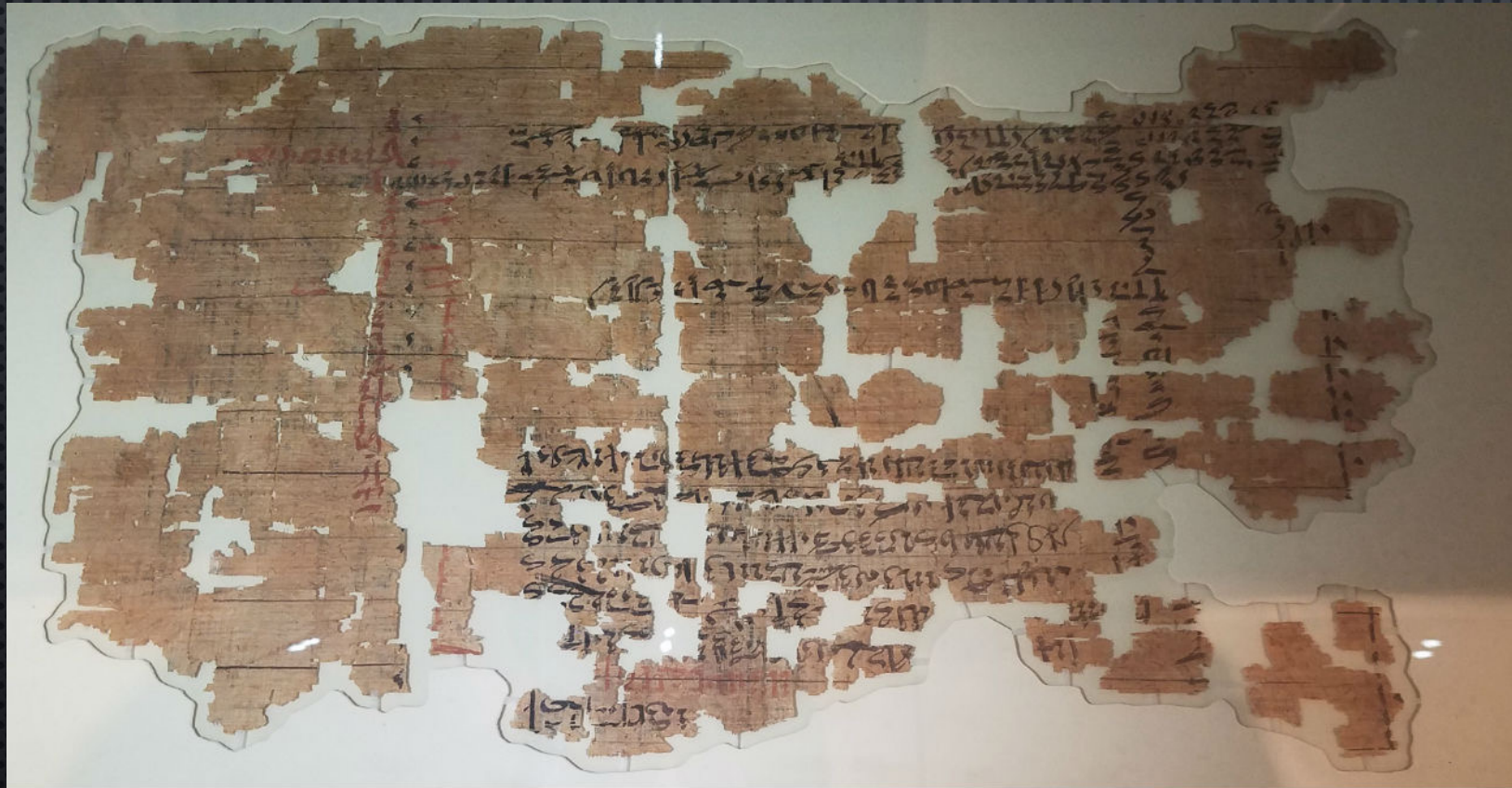
## Slave Prices in the Ancient East





“So Joseph found favor in his sight and attended him, and he made him overseer of his house (*‘al-bêtô*) and put him in charge of all that he had.”

Genesis 39:4





“Then Pharaoh took his signet ring from his hand and put it on Joseph’s hand, and clothed him in garments of fine linen and put a gold chain about his neck. And he made him ride in his second chariot. And they called out before him, ‘Bow the knee!’ Thus he set him over all the land of Egypt.”

Genesis 41:42-43





Figure 5. Reward ceremony of General Horemheb (ca. 1350 B.C.) in his Sakkara tomb. Photo courtesy of the Rijksmuseum, Leiden.

James K. Hoffmeier, *Israel in Egypt: The Evidence for the Authenticity of the Exodus Tradition* (New York: Oxford, 1996), 80.



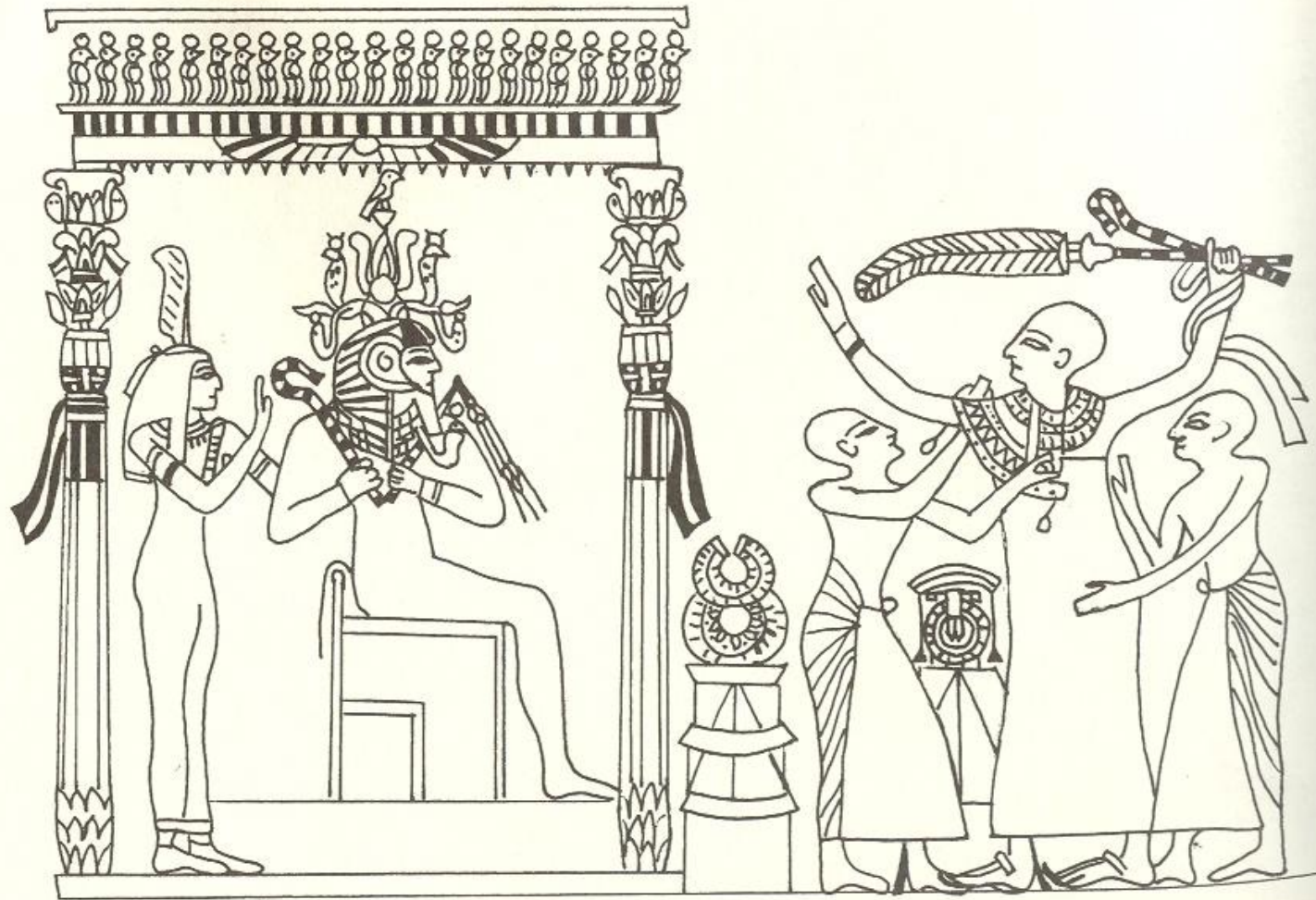


Figure 6. Investiture of Vizier Paser. From tomb 106 in the Theban Necropolis. From drawing by Kristine Henriksen.

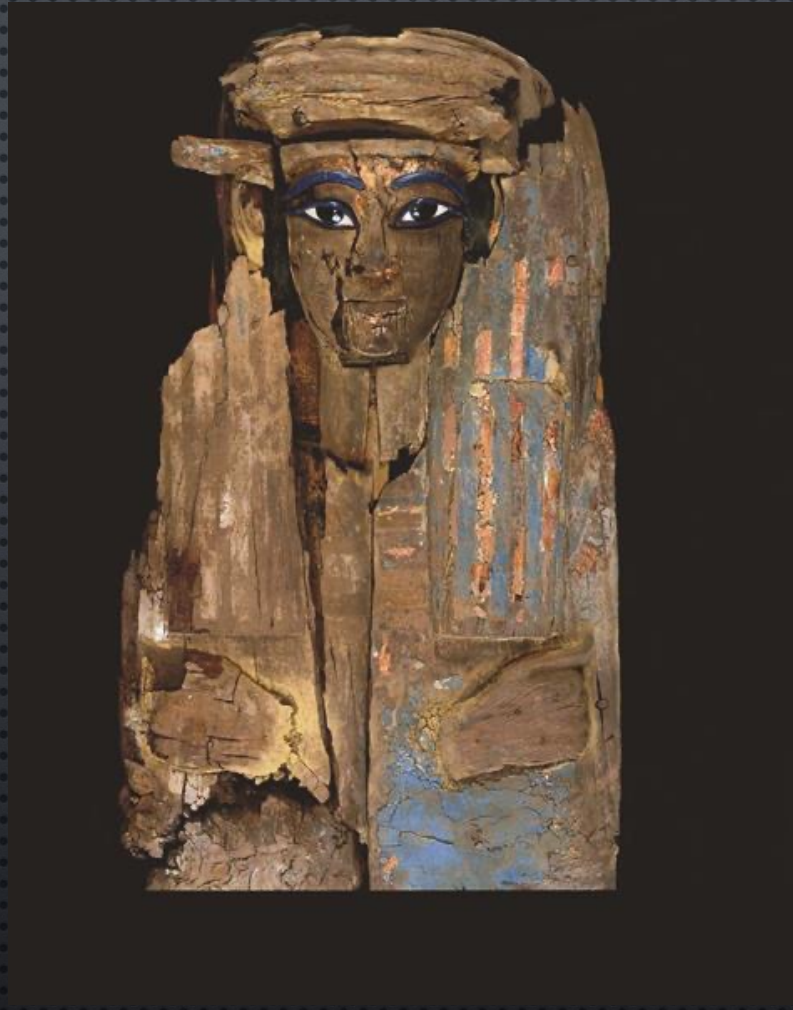
James K. Hoffmeier, *Israel in Egypt: The Evidence for the Authenticity of the Exodus Tradition* (New York: Oxford, 1996), 80.





Egyptian scribe Thai, from the reign of Amenhotep III (1391–1353 BC).





Egyptian vizier Aper El, from the reigns of Amenhotep III and Akenaten.



# Egyptian Personal Names in the Joseph Narrative

Potiphar: *p3 di p3 r* ‘ (“he whom Re has given”)

Asenath: *Iw.s n.t* (“she belongs to you”)

Potiphera, priest of On

Zaphenath-paneah: (Joseph) *dd (w) n.f* ‘*Ip- ‘nh* (“[Joseph] who is called ‘Ip-Ankh,” that is, “who recognizes life”)

“Pharaoh” without a personal name: *Pr* ‘*3* (“great house”)  
Cf. Shishak, Neco, So, and Hophra.

Moses: “Son” or “to beget a son”



# Israelite Personal Names in Genesis–Exodus

## Epigraphic Evidence:

Eighty-three percent Yahwistic  
Twelve percent Elohist  
Five percent pagan

## Hebrew Bible Evidence:

Sixty-four percent Yahwistic  
Thirty-two percent Elohist  
Four percent pagan

## Genesis–the time of the Exodus:

Zero percent Yahwistic

“I am Yahweh. I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, as ’Ēl Šaddāy, but by my name Yahweh I did not make myself known to them.”

Exodus 6:3



## The Merneptah Stele

“The foreign chieftains lie prostrate,  
saying ‘peace.’

Not one lifts his head among the Nine Bows.

Libya is captured, while Hatti is pacified.

Canaan is plundered, Ashkelon is carried off,  
and Gezer is captured.

Yenoam is made into non-existence;

Israel is wasted, its seed is not;

and Hurru is become a widow because of Egypt.

All lands united themselves in peace.

Those who went about are subdued by the king of Upper and Lower Egypt  
. . . Merneptah.”



James K. Hoffmeier, “The (Israel) Stela of Merneptah,” *COS* 2.6.41.



# The Merneptah Stele

Monophthals, Triumph-Hymn, Lyrics, 25-28; Kernal, 36-37. Ken d. Ullas Sate. IV, 19

<p> </p>	C	1
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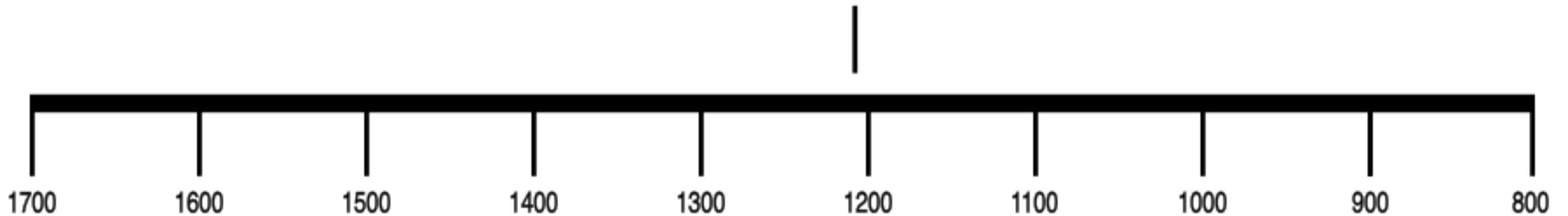
ISRAEL

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# The Merneptah Stele

Merneptah Stele (1208 BC)  
First mention of "Israel" outside the Bible

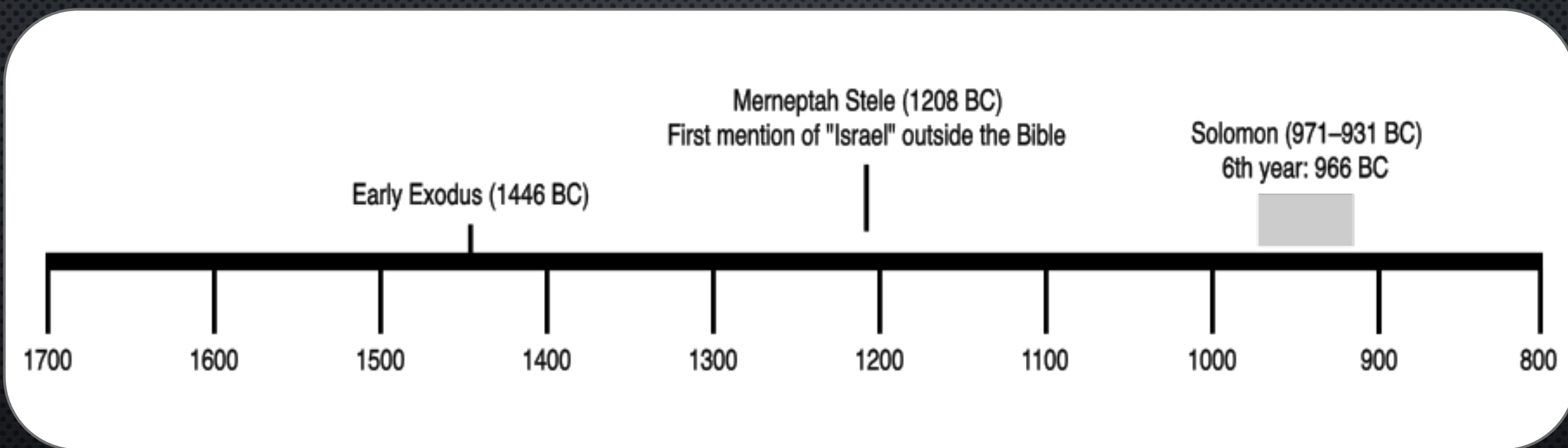




# The Early Date of the Exodus

“In the four hundred and eightieth year after the people of Israel came out of the land of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon’s reign over Israel, in the month of Ziv, which is the second month, he began to build the house of Yahweh.”

1 Kings 6:1

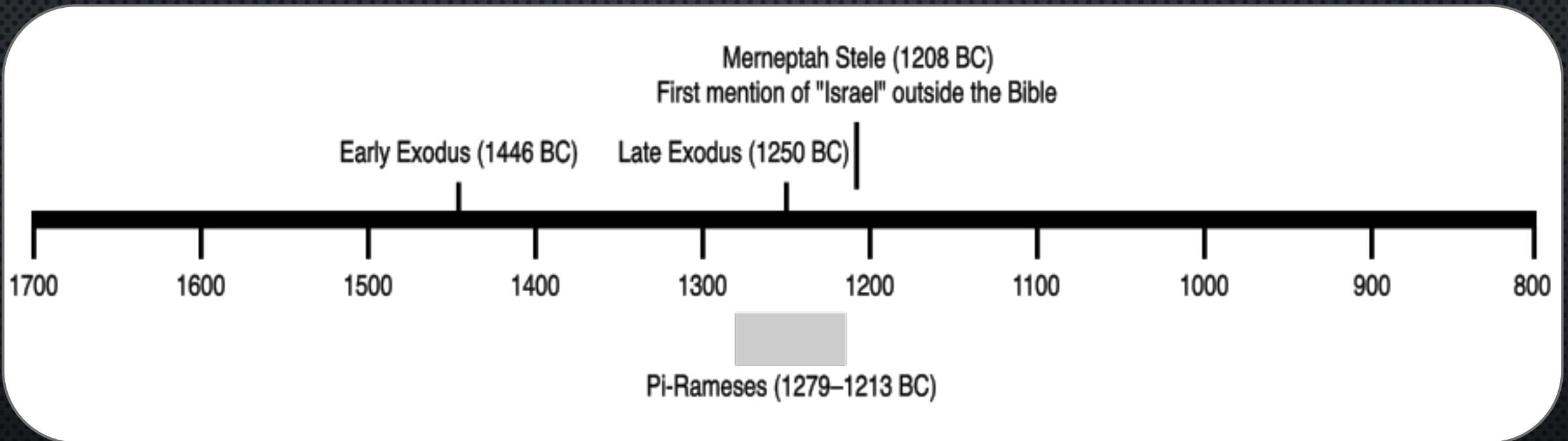




# The Late Date of the Exodus

“Therefore they set taskmasters over them to afflict them with heavy burdens. They build for Pharaoh store, cities, Pithom and Raamses .”

Exodus 1:11





## The Instruction for Merikare

<sup>84</sup> “The east (Delta) abounds with foreigners, their revenue [comes in].”

...

<sup>91</sup> “Now speaking about these foreigners, as for the miserable Asiatic, wretched is the place where he is;

<sup>92</sup> Lacking in water, hidden because of trees. Many and difficult are the paths therein because of mountains. He has not settled in one place.

<sup>93</sup> Food causes his feet to roam about. He fights since the time of Horus. He does not conquer nor is he conquered.



<sup>94</sup>He does not declare war, but is like a thief darting about in a group.

<sup>95</sup> But as I live and will be what I am, these foreigners were indeed a sealed wall, its gates were opened when I besieged it.

<sup>96</sup> I caused the Delta to attack it. I plundered their inhabitants, having captured their cattle.

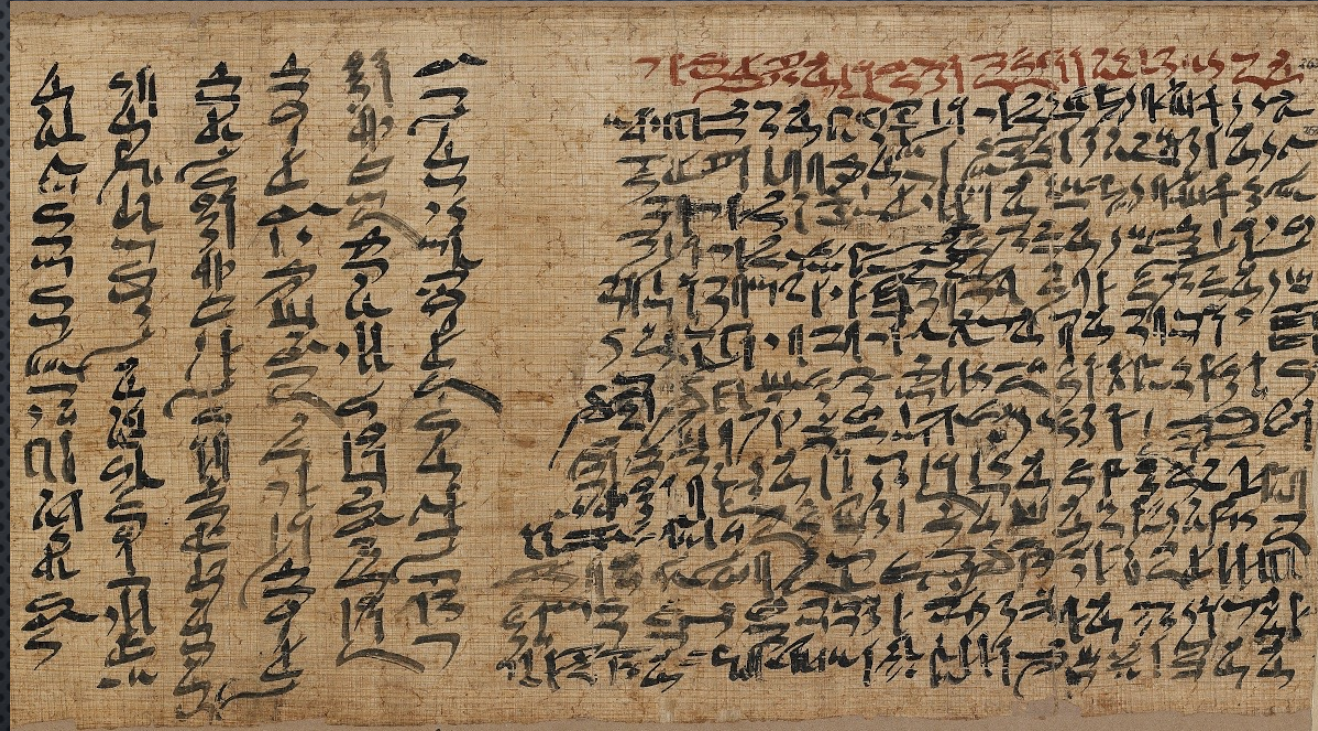
<sup>97</sup> I slaughtered [the people] among them so that the Asiatics abhorred Egypt. So don't be anxious about him,

<sup>98</sup> for the Asiatic is a crocodile on his bank. He robs on an isolated road, he does not steal in the vicinity of a populated city.”

Translation by Hoffmeier, *Israel in Egypt.*, 54–55.



# Sinuhe



“I reached the ‘Walls of the Ruler,’ which were made to repel the Asiatics and to crush the Sand-farers. I crouched in a bush for fear of being seen by the guard upon the wall.”

Miriam Lichtheim, “Sinuhe,” *COS* 1.38.







# Avaris (Tell el-Dab'a)

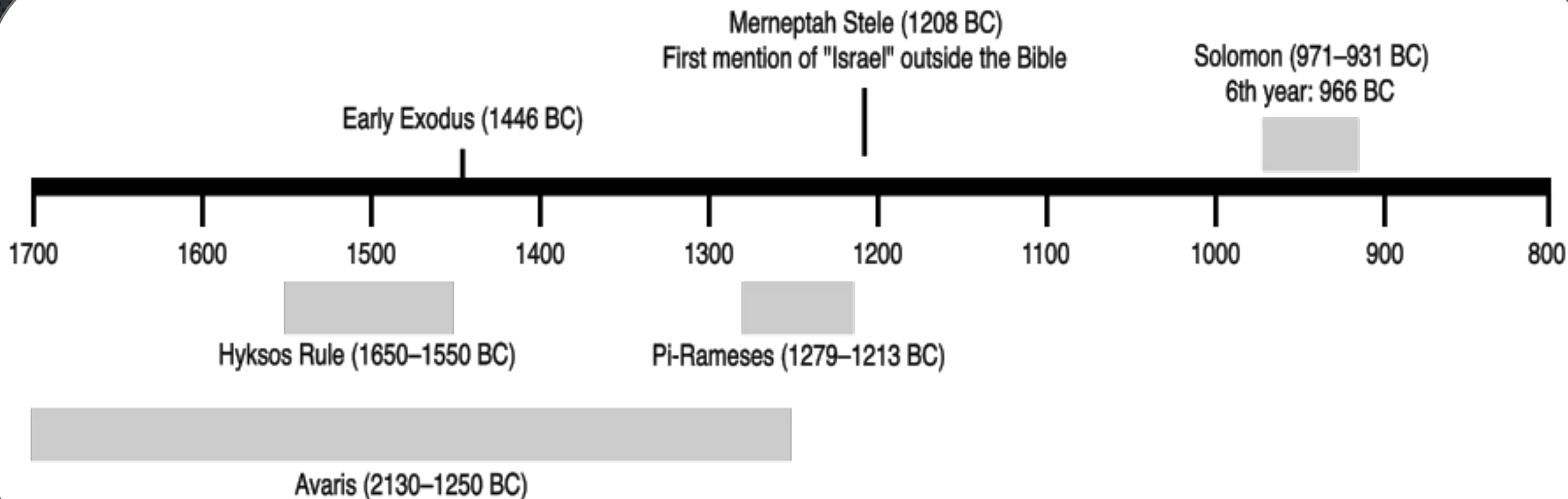


Photo courtesy of Manfred Bietak, © OAI/OREA



# The Hyksos and Pi-Rameses

“Now there arose a new king over Egypt, who did not know Joseph.”  
Exodus 1:8





# Annals of Thutmose III (1479–1425 BC)

Year 23: 340 prisoners of war from the battle of Megiddo.

Year 30: 181 male and female slaves.

Year 31: 492 prisoners of war.

Year 33: 66 male and female slaves with their children; 513 slaves as tribute from Retenu.

Year 34: 602 male and female slaves as tribute from Retenu.

Year 38: 522 male and female slaves as tribute from Retenu.



# Memphis Stela (1420 BC)

## First campaign

- 550 Maryanu
- 240 wives of Maryanu
- 640 Canaanites
- 232 children of princes
- 323 daughters of princes
- 270 concubines of princes

## Second campaign

- 127 chieftains of Retenu
- 179 chieftain brothers
- 3600 'Apiru
- 15,200 Shasu-Bedouin
- 36,300 Syrians
- 15,070 from Nagasu, and their families, 30,652



# Tomb of Rekhmire (ca. 1400 BC)





## Papyrus Anastasi 4 (ca. 1210 BC)

“I am staying at Kenkenento, unequipped, and there are neither men to make bricks nor straw in the neighborhood.”

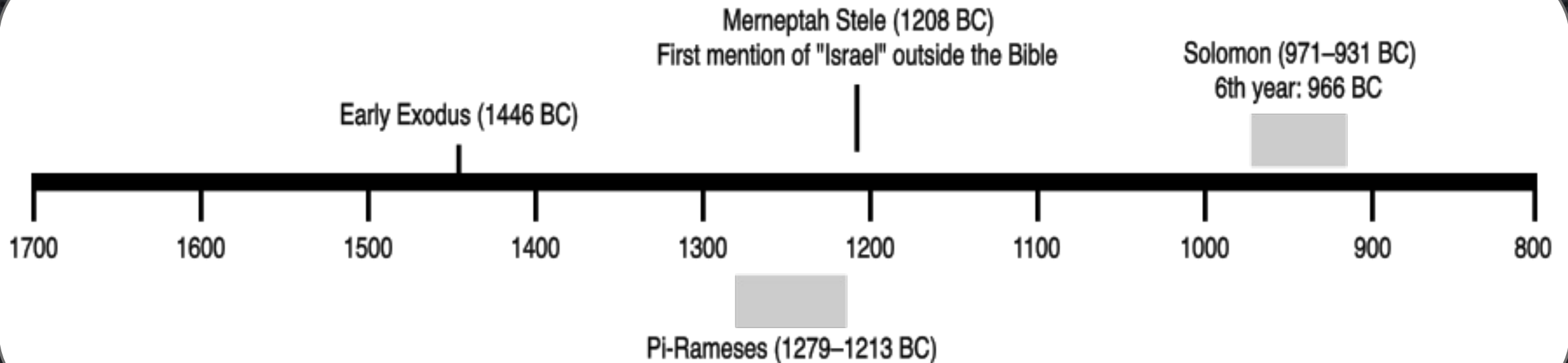
Alan H. Gardiner, *Late Egyptian Miscellanies* (Bibliotheca Aegyptiaca: Brussels: Édition de la Fondation Égyptologique Reine Élizabeth, 1937), 48.



# Pithom and Pi-Raamses

“Therefore they set taskmasters over them to afflict them with heavy burdens. They built for Pharaoh store cities, Pithom and Raamses .”

Exodus 1:11





# Pi-Raamses (Qantir)





## Distance between Avaris and Pi-Raamses

“The same day Pharaoh commanded the taskmasters of the people and their foremen . . .”

Exodus 5:6

“And Pharaoh rose up in the night, he and all his servants and all the Egyptians. And there was a great cry in Egypt, for there was not a house where someone was not dead. Then he summoned Moses and Aaron by night and said, ‘Up, go out from among my people, both you and the people of Israel; and go, serve Yahweh, as you have said. . . .’”

Exodus 12:30–31



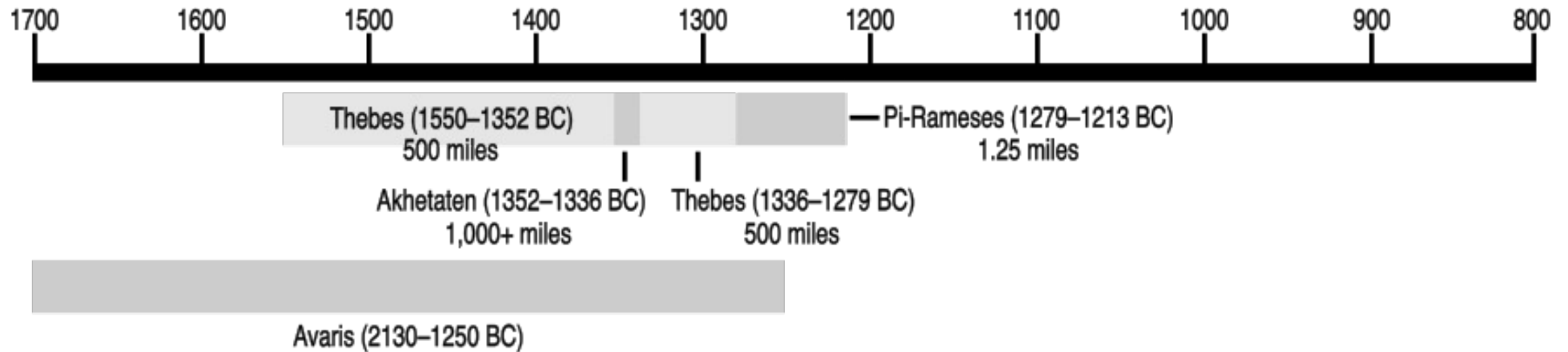
## Distance between Avaris and Pi-Raamses

“They set out from Rameses in the first month, on the fifteenth day of the first month. On the day after the Passover, the people of Israel went out triumphantly in the sight of all the Egyptians, while the Egyptians were burying all their firstborn, whom the Lord had struck down among them. On their gods also the Lord executed judgments.”

Exodus 12:30-31



# Distance between Avaris and Pi-Raamses





# A Clue to Dating Traditions

“In the sign of their fathers he performed wonders in the land of Egypt, in the field of Zoan.”

Psalm 78:12

“. . . when he performed his signs in Egypt and his marvels in the fields of Zoan.”

Psalm 78:43



# The Sea of Reeds

“And Yahweh turned the wind into a very strong west wind, which lifted the locusts and drove them into the Sea of Reeds (*yam/yāmâ sūp*).”

Exodus 10:19

Hebrew: *yam sūp* (“reed sea”)

Egyptian: *p3 tẓwḥ(y)* (“reed sea”)

Greek Septuagint: *hē erūthra Thalassa* (“the red sea”)



# The Sea of Reeds

“And Yahweh turned the wind into a very strong west wind, which lifted the locusts and drove them into the Sea of Reeds (*yam/yāmâ sûp*).”

Exodus 10:19





# The Sea of Reeds

“And they moved on from Succoth and encamped at Etham, on the edge of the wilderness. . . . Then Yahweh said to Moses, ‘Tell the people of Israel to turn back and encamp in front of Pi-hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea, in front of Baal-zephon; you shall encamp facing it, by the sea.’”

Exodus 13:20; 14:1–2

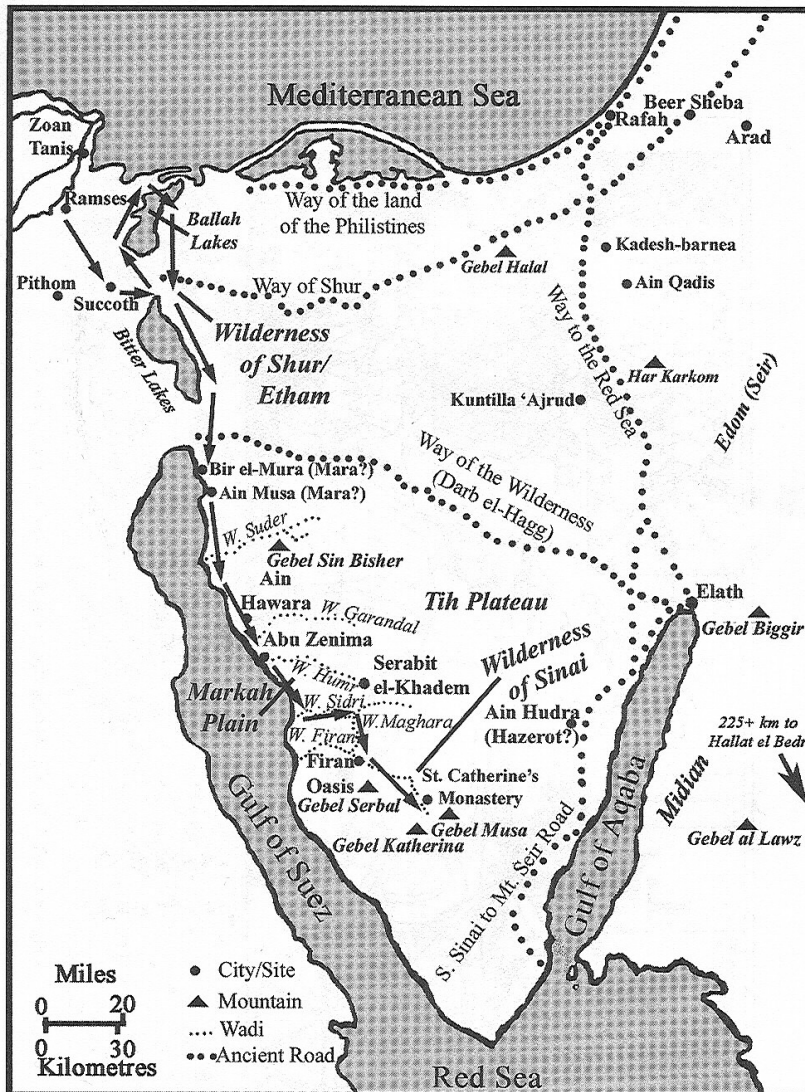


Figure 1. Map of Sinai (created by Jessica T. Hoffmeier)

Ancient Israel in Sinai, by James K. Hoffmeier, Oxford Press, 2005



# Egyptian Loanwords in the Biblical Account of the Exodus

Based on Benjamin J. Noonan, “Egyptian Loanwords as Evidence for the Authenticity of the Exodus and Wilderness Traditions,” in *Did I Not Bring Israel Out of Egypt? Biblical, Archaeological, and Egyptological Perspectives on the Exodus Narratives*, ed. James K. Hoffmeier, Alan R. Millard, and Gary Rendsburg (BBRSupp 13; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2016), 48–68.

## Exodus–Numbers

27 Egyptian loanwords:

1.172 % of all distinct lexemes

.591 % of the total word count

## Rest of the Hebrew Bible

51 Egyptian loanwords:

.635 % of all distinct lexemes

.122 % of the total word count



# Egyptian Loanwords in the Biblical Account of the Exodus

Exodus–Numbers

27 Egyptian loanwords:

1.172 % of all distinct lexemes

.591 % of the total word count

Esther, Ezra, and Nehemiah

26 Old Iranian loanwords:

1.455 % of all distinct lexemes

.448 % of the total word count

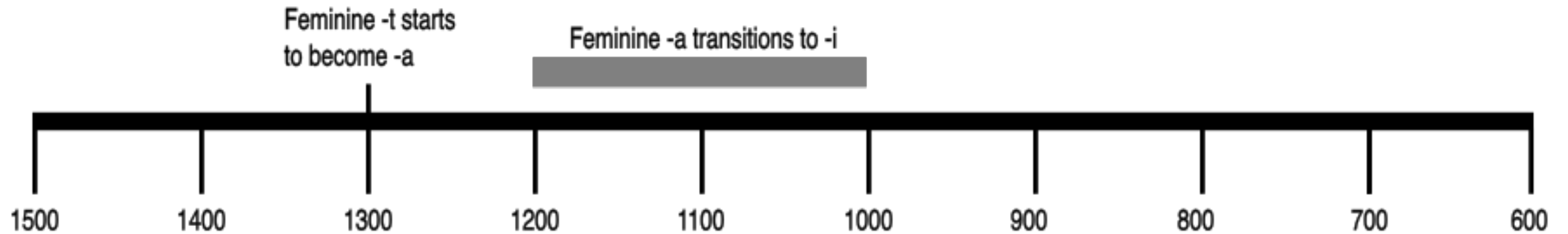


# Egyptian Loanwords in the Biblical Account of the Exodus

<i>ʾabnêṭ</i>	sash, girdle, wrap	<i>lešēm</i>	feldspar, amazonite, jacinth
<i>ʾaḥlāmâ</i>	red jasper/amethyst	<i>nōpek</i>	turquoise, eye paint
<i>ʾêpâ</i>	<i>ephah</i> (measurement)	<i>sûp</i>	reed
<i>bad</i>	pole, beam	<i>p<sup>e</sup> ʾêr</i>	headdress
<i>bad</i>	linen	<i>paḥ</i>	metal plating
<i>gābîa ʿ</i>	cup, candleholder	<i>piṭdâ</i>	topaz
<i>geme ʿ</i>	reed plant	<i>par ʿōḥ</i>	Pharaoh
<i>hîn</i>	<i>hin</i> (measurement)	<i>.sî</i>	ship, riverboat
<i>zepet</i>	pitch	<i>šittâ</i>	acacia wood
<i>zeret</i>	handspan	<i>šēš</i>	Egyptian linen
<i>ḥartōm</i>	magician	<i>tabâ</i>	ark, box
<i>ḥôtām</i>	seal, signet ring	<i>taḥārā ʿ</i>	leather vest
<i>.taba ʿat</i>	seal, ring	<i>taḥaš</i>	Egyptian leather
<i>y<sup>e</sup> ʾōr</i>	Nile, river		



# Shift in Egyptian Feminine Noun Endings





“The vast majority of Egyptian loanwords in the exodus and wilderness narratives relate to particular aspects of material culture, including terms for specific pieces of clothing (תַּחֲרָא, שֵׁשׁ), minerals (אֶחָלָמָה, לֵשֶׁם, נִכְפֹּךְ, פִּטְרָה), and plants (שִׁטָּה, סוּף, גִּמְא). Such technical vocabulary presumably would be hard to come by without research, assuming that resources for such research was even available. In any case, why would a late writer go through the effort of researching such mundane details, trying to make his account look authentic, especially when his audience probably would not even know the difference?”

Noonan, op. cit., 67.



